

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSMENT STANDARDS & AUTHORIZED SERVICES

MENTAL FUNCTIONING

Memory

Recalling learned behaviors and information from distant and recent past.

The following is the application of functional rank specific to Memory with suggestions that may help inform the determination as to rank:

Rank 1: No problem: Memory is clear. Recipient is able to give you accurate information about his/her medical history; is able to talk appropriately about comments made earlier in the conversation; has good recall of past events. The recipient able to give you detailed information in response to your questions.

- **Observations:** Observe if recipient's responses to your questions indicate that he/she has good recall; knows his/her doctors' names; knows his/her own telephone number or the number of a close friend; is clear about sources of income and assets; knows who close relatives are and where they live. Observe if the recipient is mentally capable of following through on activities of daily living; if he/she has good social skills; if the recipient's thought process seems clear and he/she is able to keep track during a conversation.
- **Example:** An elderly women living alone in her home responds quickly and confidently to your questions to establish her eligibility for IHSS and determine her need for services. The recipient is reasonably organized. Her medications are in place. There are stamped bills in the mailbox. The trash appears to be picked up regularly. There is a grocery list ready for the IHSS provider.
- **Questions:** Who is your doctor? What medicine do you take regularly? What is your address and telephone number? When were you born? Where were you born? What is the date today? How long have you lived in this house? Where did you live before you lived here? What serious illnesses or surgeries have you had? How long ago was each illness or surgery?

Rank 2: Memory loss is moderate or intermittent: Recipient shows evidence of some memory impairment, but not to the extent where they are at risk. Recipient needs occasional reminding to do routine tasks or help recalling past events.

- **Observations:** Observe if the recipient appears forgetful and has some difficulty remembering names, dates, addresses, and telephone numbers; if recipient's attention span and concentration are faulty; if recipient fidgets, frowns, etc., possibly indicating a struggle to recall; if recipient repeats statements and asks repetitive questions; if recipient occasionally forgets to take his/her medication or cannot recall when they last took medication and if the problem is corrected with the use of a Medi-Set (pill distribution box) set up by someone else. Observe if the recipient may become bewildered or appears overwhelmed when asked about details; if the recall process aggravates mental confusion or causes intermittent memory loss; if the recipient becomes moderately confused when daily routine is altered.
- **Example:** Elderly man has to be prompted occasionally by his wife when he tries to respond to your questions. He apologizes for or tries to conceal memory lapses.

- **Questions:** What year were you born? How old are you now? How old were you when your first child was born? What medicines do you take? Tell me what you usually do during the day. Who telephones or comes to see you often? What do you have to eat for dinner tonight?

Rank 5: Severe memory deficit: Recipient forgets to start or finish activities of daily living that are important to his/her health and/or safety. Recipient cannot maintain much continuity of thought in conversation with you.

- **Observations:** Observe if the recipient has a blank or benign look on his/her face most of the time; if he/she is continually placing and replacing objects in the room to avoid answering your questions; if the recipient gives inappropriate responses to questions; if the recipient's voice and/or train of thought trails off in middle of conversations; if an activity is started and then he/she forgets to finish it; if the recipient consistently forgets to take his/her medications or takes them inappropriately, even with a Medi-Set. Determine if the recipient has a history of leaving stove burners on or the water running in the sink and/or tub causing overflows. Observe if the recipient cannot remember when he/she ate last or what was eaten; if the recipient is unable to remember names of close relatives, has loss of verbal ability; is impaired intellectually; displays abnormal and potentially dangerous behavior.
- **Example:** Middle-aged man suffering from Alzheimer's disease is totally unable to respond to your questions. He becomes very agitated for no good reason; arises from chair as if to leave room and stares in bewilderment; needs to be led back to his chair. He seems unconcerned with events in daily life and cannot articulate his need for services. His daily routine follows a set, rigid pattern. He relates to the situation on a superficial basis.
- **Questions:** What are the names and relationships of your closest relatives? Did you eat breakfast today? What did you eat? Can you tell me what I'm holding in my hand? How old are you? What is your birth date? Ask housemate: What happens when the recipient is left alone? Do they remember any events from the previous day, hour, or minute? Do they remember who you are? Do they remember how to operate the stove, shave themselves, or perform other tasks safely?

Orientation

Awareness of time, place, self, and other individuals in one's environment. The following is the application of functional rank specific to Orientation with suggestions that may help inform the determination as to rank:

Rank 1: No problem: Orientation is clear. Recipient is aware of where he/she is and can give you reliable information when questioned about activities of daily living, family, etc.; is aware of passage of time during the day.

- **Observations:** Observe if the recipient appears comfortable and familiar with their surroundings. Recipient makes and keeps good eye contact with you. The facial expression is alert and is appropriate to the situation. The recipient is spontaneous and direct. The recipient shows interest in maintaining a good personal appearance. The recipient is obviously in touch with reality; is aware of time and place; readily responds to questions about their living arrangement, family, etc.; is fully aware of reason for your

visit. Determine if the recipient is physically able to leave home unassisted and if the recipient can find his/her way back without getting lost and can get around using public transportation.

- **Example:** Recipient is ready and waiting for your visit. They initiate social amenities such as offering coffee, a chair to sit on, etc. The recipient introduces family members and/or is able to identify family pictures when asked and has the documents ready that you asked them to locate.
- **Questions:** Do you have relatives living close by? Why are you asking for help at this time? How have you managed to care for yourself until now? Do you have someone who helps around the home?

Rank 2: Occasional disorientation and confusion is apparent but recipient does not put self at risk: Recipient has general awareness of time of day; is able to provide limited information about family, friends, age, daily routine, etc.

- **Observations:** Observe if the recipient appears disheveled and the surroundings are chaotic. Observe if objects are misplaced or located in inappropriate places; if there is moldy food in and out of kitchen; if the recipient does not notice that the home is over heated or under heated until you mention it; if the recipient appears to be less confused in familiar surroundings and with a few close friends; if the recipient is able to maintain only marginal or intermittent levels of social interaction; if the recipient is able to provide some information but is occasionally confused and vague; if the recipient is not always aware of time, surroundings and people; if the recipient is able to respond when redirected or reminded.
- **Example:** Twice in the past year the recipient has called her daughter at 2:00 a.m. and was not aware that it was the middle of the night. When told what time it was, the recipient apologized and went back to bed. When you enter the recipient's apartment, the elderly woman asks, "Why are you here today? You said you'd be here Tuesday." You respond, "This is Tuesday." The recipient seems unprepared for your visit and has difficulty settling down for interview. She participates with some difficulty. She is not comfortable outside of her immediate environment and rarely ventures out. Her mail is left unopened occasionally, and her clothing and some perishable food items are not properly stored.
- **Questions:** What day is today? How many rooms do you have in your home? Where is the closest grocery store? Do you know who I am and why I am here? Do you go out alone? Do you ever get lost when you go out of the house alone? Do you know the name of the bus you take when you go to the store and where the bus stop is to go home? What month, year, season, holiday, etc.?

Rank 5: Severe disorientation which puts recipient at risk: Recipient wanders off; lacks awareness or concern for safety or well being; is unable to identify significant others or relate safely to environment or situation; has no sense of time of day.

- **Observations:** Observe if the recipient shuffles aimlessly throughout house; if he/she exhibits inappropriate behaviors such as giggling or making comments that are irrelevant to the conversation; if he/she handles objects carelessly; appears unkempt, displays poor personal hygiene; has a manner of dress that is inappropriate or bizarre; if when the social worker attempted to shake the recipient's hand, he/she tried to bite the social worker's

hand. Observe if the recipient is very confused, unaware of time, place, and/or individuals; goes to the mailbox and cannot find the way back to the apartment; does not recognize the apartment manager when the manager tries to help the recipient find the way back to the apartment and the recipient becomes highly agitated. Observe if the recipient appears to be disoriented and experiences hallucinations and displays a dazed and confused state of mind; is unable to answer simple questions appropriately; if their sleep-wake cycle may be abnormal; if the recipient confuses his immediate living relatives (son/daughter) with dead relatives (husband, etc); if emotional instability is present.

- **Example:** Family member or friend must answer door, as recipient is unable to maneuver in home without wandering. The recipient must be directed to chair. The recipient exhibits no awareness of the purpose of the social worker's visit. The recipient is unable to concentrate; they do not respond to questions or speak unintelligibly.
- **Questions:** What is your name? Where do you live? What is the date today? What year is it? Where are you? Where are you going? If the recipient is unable to respond or responds inappropriately, ask Housemate: What is the nature of ___'s mental problem? What can the recipient do for her/himself? What does the recipient do if left alone?

Judgment

Ability to make decisions that will not put self or property in danger. Recipient demonstrates safety around stove. Recipient has capacity to respond to changes in the environment (e.g., fire, cold house). Recipient understands alternatives and risks involved and accept consequences of decisions. The following is the application of functional rank specific to Judgment with suggestions that may help inform the determination as to rank:

Rank 1: Judgment unimpaired: Able to evaluate environmental cues and respond appropriately.

- **Observations:** Observe if home is properly maintained, and in safe repair; if recipient's responses show decision-making ability is intact; if recipient dresses appropriately for the weather; if recipient is able to form correct conclusions from knowledge acquired through experience; if recipient is capable of making independent decisions and is able to interact with others.
- **Example:** Recipient takes pride in managing their affairs and does so appropriately. The recipient has a list of numbers to call in case of emergency; takes measures to guard safety such as locking doors at night, not allowing strangers into home, etc.
- **Questions:** Do you have a list of numbers to call in case of an emergency? Do you have friends or family who could help out in a crisis situation? What would you do if your provider were unable to come to work one day?

Rank 2: Judgment mildly impaired: Shows lack of ability to plan for self; has difficulty deciding between alternatives but is amenable to advice; social judgment is poor.

- **Observations:** Observe if the home is in disrepair (leaking faucets, broken appliances, inadequate lighting, etc.); if debris has been allowed to accumulate in walk-way areas; if food in the home is of poor nutritional value; if recipient is unable to recognize that there are alternatives or unable to select between them and is unable to plan or foresee consequences of decisions. Observe if recipient is not capable of making decisions

without advice from another, is able to understand options when explained, makes correct choices; knows enough to turn stove and heat on and off.

- **Example:** Recipient wastes money on useless items while allowing needed repairs to go unattended. The recipient “makes do” with the condition of home even if it is inconvenient for the recipient. The recipient appears to be a “collector,” has difficulty throwing anything out even though access through home is limited. The recipient can’t decide which provider they want. The grocery list to the provider contains mostly junk food. The recipient stopped homebound meals when they decided they weren’t tasty rather than add salt. They refuse to use a walker or cane.
- **Questions:** Who would you call in case of emergency? If someone you did not know came to your door at night, what would you do? What are you able to do for yourself? Do you need anyone to help you? Who would you depend on to assist you if you needed a household repair done such as if your heater did not work?

Rank 5: Judgment severely impaired: Recipient fails to make decisions or makes decisions without regard to safety or well-being.

- **Observations:** Observe if safety hazards are evident: clothing has burn holes; faulty wiring, leaking gas, burned cookware, etc. Observe if utilities may be shut off; food supply is inadequate or inedible. If the recipient is a pet owner, observe if there are animal feces in home. Observe if the recipient is obviously unaware of dangerous situations, not self-directing, mentally unable to engage in activities of daily living; goes outside with no clothing on; if neighbors saw smoke from apartment several times; if they entered and extinguished fires on stove; if someone from the community calls to report that the recipient is defecating or urinating on the front yard. Observe if the recipient cannot decide to eat, dress, or take medications; if the recipient seems preoccupied, confused, or frightened; if the recipient is unaware or too frail or feeble to make decisions to maintain self safely at home; if they take a shower with clothes on; drinks spoiled milk, etc.
- **Example:** Recipient has open access to home to anyone who approaches. The recipient seems unaffected by stench or odors due to garbage, feces, urine, etc; exhibits no concern over obvious safety hazards (e.g., debris piled on stove, papers scattered near heater, etc.); lets injuries such as burns go unattended. In the past year, the recipient has recurrently started dinner and fell asleep and awoke to a smoke-filled kitchen.
- **Questions:** What would you do if you saw something on fire in your house? If you needed to get to the doctor what would you do? Ask Housemate: What happens when ___ is left alone? Can they recognize situations that would lead to danger? Are they capable of making rational decisions?