

## Therapist Guide: Functional Activities Worksheet

### Purpose & Rationale

This worksheet is designed to help clients identify, plan, and engage in activities across multiple domains of daily living:

- **Household Maintenance**
- **Social Relationships**
- **Self-Care**
- **Recreational and Community Activities**
- **Vocational/Academic/Work/Volunteer**

The goal is to promote **balanced functioning** by encouraging activity in areas that support independence, well-being, and quality of life. This tool aligns with **behavioural activation**, **occupational therapy principles**, and **recovery-oriented practice**, where structured activity engagement is used to improve mood, increase mastery, and reduce avoidance.

### When to Use

- With clients experiencing depression, anhedonia, or low motivation.
- As part of activity scheduling or behavioural activation in CBT.
- In rehabilitation or recovery contexts, when building structure after illness or life changes.
- To support clients with difficulties in daily living skills, such as those with severe mental illness or functional impairments.
- In relapse prevention, to help clients maintain balanced activity engagement.

### How to Introduce It

1. **Explain the rationale:**
  - *“When we’re struggling, it’s common to withdraw from activities. This exercise helps us look at different areas of life and make sure we’re keeping a balance—so that we’re not just focused on one area while neglecting others.”*
2. **Review the categories together:**
  - **Household Maintenance** – keeping living spaces clean, organized, and functional.
  - **Social Relationships** – connecting with friends, family, and others.
  - **Self-Care** – looking after health, hygiene, and physical well-being.
  - **Recreational & Community Activities** – enjoyable, meaningful activities that bring pleasure or connection.
  - **Vocational/Academic/Work/Volunteer** – productivity, learning, or contributing to the community.
3. **Identify current activities:**
  - Ask the client which activities they already do regularly. Validate these as strengths.

4. **Identify gaps or neglected areas:**

- Explore which categories are under-represented. For example, a client may be functioning well at work but neglecting self-care or social activities.

5. **Set small, achievable goals:**

- Collaboratively choose 1–2 activities to try during the week from categories that are less represented.
- Encourage realistic steps (e.g., “Take garbage out” before “Clean the whole house”).

6. **Plan for follow-up:**

- In subsequent sessions, review which activities were completed, how they affected mood/energy, and what barriers came up.
- Reinforce successes and troubleshoot difficulties with problem-solving.

### Therapeutic Goals

- Increase awareness of activity levels across life domains.
- Promote balance between responsibilities, social connection, self-care, and enjoyment.
- Reduce withdrawal and avoidance patterns associated with low mood.
- Strengthen mastery and accomplishment through structured tasks.
- Encourage clients to build routines that support resilience and recovery.

**Clinical Tip:** Many clients find it easier to start with **low-effort, high-reward activities** (e.g., “call a friend,” “take out garbage”) before moving toward more demanding ones. Use motivational interviewing strategies if clients feel resistant, highlighting how small activities can make a meaningful difference over time.