



## Supported Education

### 2.4.1 Functional assessment and skills inventory educational setting (SIES)

#### Abstract

#### What?

It is an assessment of the critical skills needed to be successful and satisfied in the educational setting of preference.

#### Why?

To understand which critical skills are needed to be successful and satisfied in the educational setting of preference and which skills are already present and which skills have to be learned.

#### Who?

Supported Education professional together with the student with psychiatric disabilities.

#### When?

In the phase of getting and/or keeping his/her educational setting of preference.

#### Where?

In a place chosen by the student.

#### How?

Using the functional assessment tool and/or skills inventory educational setting (SIES).

### 1. Introduction

The goal of a Supported Education program is to support access to schools and improve the maintenance within schools of people with psychiatric disabilities, helping schools become settings which are more respectful of diversity. In order to assist students in perceiving how their functioning may affect the achievement of their educational objectives, Supported Education professionals, in collaboration with the student, should do a functional assessment.

A functional assessment consists of supporting students to understand their functioning in the use of those critical skills needed to be successful and satisfied in a chosen educational setting. The success is to participate in all activities in the educational program in colleagues/universities and to learn all aspects of the curriculum necessities to obtain their goal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on WHO (2004). Disability and Health. ICF (International Classification of Functioning)

A functional assessment should be organic. This means, to understand the student in their educational setting, the assessment should not be only focus on students' characteristics, but also on what skills the student has to develop to deal with the educational setting limitations. In the end, the functional assessment will help understand which skills it is necessary to develop or unlock in order to achieve educational goals.

## **2. How to do it?**

For a student to be able to identify which critical skills are needed to achieve his/her overall educational goal, he/she must be integrated in the chosen educational setting; only then can the student understand what skills he/she needs to develop or which school barriers the student must overcome. This leads us to functional assessment, where the use of two tools (functional assessment and skills inventory tools) will help the student to recognize their functioning in the use of those critical skills needed to achieve success in the educational setting.

### ***Instructions***<sup>2</sup>

a. Support the student to identify which critical skills he/she considers to be the most important to achieve his/her educational goal. The critical skills assessment allows the student to evaluate his/her functioning as well as the school functioning through an analysis of the necessary goals related to educational settings and the defined important goals by the student. Start a dialogue with the student about the critical skills needed or, if this is not possible or too difficult, use the skills inventory educational setting (see SIES below) to choose which skills can be helpful to meet the student's needs.

b. Following the definition of which skills are critical to achieve a specific overall educational goal, the student must define actions to be able to perform a skill that goes towards the goal needed. Then it is necessary to define in which settings they will take place and finally to establish their regularity, taking into consideration and valuing the student's experience.

c. In order to evaluate the process, indicators need to be defined jointly between the student and the professional. This makes it easier to monitor the application of such skills in the educational setting. Also, it allows us to identify the skills that need development or the necessary skill needed to overcome a school barrier, generating the required evaluation instruments to contribute to the next step.

d. In functional assessment, students may need professional support to have greater involvement in the assessment activities. Information may be necessary to clear the students' doubts; this information can come from professionals as well as other students that share the experience, encouraging the student to talk about a specific subject. Students' experience must be valued in order to facilitate knowledge sharing; this will lead to a sometimes necessary negotiation between the student

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University

perspective and the professional perspective related to the assessment and the necessary support to achieve goals.

### 3. Functional assessment tool<sup>3</sup>

Required Skill Goal	Critical Skills *	Activities and Place	Indicators	Support		Evaluating
				Professional	Peer	

\* Critical skills (This column is for the student's or the school's required critical skills.)

#### Example.

John is very motivated with his law study, but it seems that he is having some problems being on time for classes, due to difficulties in adapting to new routines. Therefore, he asked the Supported Education professional to help him solve this problem.

Required Skill Goal	Critical Skills	Activities and Place	Indicators	Support		Evaluating
				Professional	Peer	
Be on time for classes	Managing time: following schedules	Have a schedule with all class hours	How many times per week arrived on time to classes	Help create a schedule plan	_____	Weekly meeting with professional to evaluate if schedule is kept or if it is necessary to reassess
	Coordination schedule with roommates	Establish a schedule for using bathroom in the house	How many times per week used the bathroom according to schedule	Strategies to negotiate the use of the bathroom	Help to follow schedule	

Mary is currently studying architecture. When she is in class she sometimes needs to close her eyes because she is tired due to her mental illness. Her professor thinks that she goes to bed too late or that she is using alcohol and he approaches her accordingly in front of the class.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University

Required Skill Goal	Critical Skills	Activities and Place	Indicators	Support		Evaluating
				Professional	Peer	
Teacher managing diversity	Help the student to learn how to negotiate with the teacher	Set up a meeting to explain the situation to the professor	If reprimanding stops	Attend the meeting and help student	-----	Weekly meeting with SEd professional to evaluate if the professor has changed his behavior

#### 4. Skills inventory educational setting (SIES)

##### What?

Listing the critical skills the student needs to be successful and satisfied at school.

##### Why?

All students need skills and support (resources) to be successful and satisfied at school. A student with psychiatric disabilities sometimes needs, next to the more general skills and resources, specific skills.

##### Who?

The Supported Education professional together with the student.

##### When?

After the student has set his overall educational goal, the Supported Education professional starts, together with the student, listing the critical skills. If needed and wanted, the Supported Education professional teaches the student the skill and/or helps the student to utilize the skill. Helping the student to perform the necessary critical skills makes the student more independent of people or other resources. Only when it is not possible for the student to learn or utilize the needed skill (for example, making an appointment) or when skills alone are not sufficient to solve the problem (for example, lack of transport to get to school), do we start listing resources.

##### Where?

Location of preference of the student.

##### How?

Listing the critical skills is a personalized process. The result of the inventory list of skills is different for each student and depends very much on the educational environment the student is in.

### **Types of skill**

- Environmental skills
- Academic skills
- Emotional skills
- Social skills
- Personal coping skills
- Dorming living skills

### ***Instructions***

1. Review the chosen overall educational goal with the student/consumer. Discuss with him/her if this is the education of his/her own preference and if he/she owns the educational goal him/herself (not the family, the mental health practitioner or the educational staff).
2. Review the requirements of the (community) college/university and the related skills in the skills inventory with the student/consumer.
3. Assess the student's/consumer's ability to perform each of the listed skills by exploring with the student/consumer his/her impression of whether he/she can do the skills (strengths) or needs help (deficits).
4. Explore the student's/consumer's feelings about the skill strengths and deficits and what it may take to achieve his/her educational goal.
5. Ask the student/consumer to select which skills he/she thinks are most critical in relation to his/her educational goal.
6. If the student/consumer is able to perform the skill (after teaching the skill lesson), but not as often or as well as needed, assess the barriers that hinder the student from performing the skill, and then assist the student/consumer to overcome the barriers so he/she can perform the skill as needed (skill programming).
7. If the student/consumer cannot perform the skill and has little or no knowledge of the skill, then develop a lesson plan to teach the student how to perform the skill and afterwards help the student to perform the skill as often as needed (skill programming).

Student/consumer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supported Education professional: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Overall educational goal: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Skills Inventory Educational Setting<sup>4</sup></b>				
<b>A.</b>	<b>Environmental Skills</b>	<b>Can do</b>	<b>Needs help</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	Commuting to campus			
2.	Maneuvering around campus			
3.	Using administrative services			
4.	Applying for educational finances			
5.	Selecting classes			
6.	Registering for classes			
<b>B.</b>	<b>Academic Skills</b>	<b>Can do</b>	<b>Needs help</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	Utilizing college resources (library, learning center, etc.)			
2.	Clarifying assignments			
3.	Managing time: scheduling			
4.	Managing time: following schedules			
5.	Taking notes			
6.	Completing assignments			
7.	Preparing for tests			
8.	Taking tests			
9.	In-class participation: asking questions			
10.	In-class participation: answering questions			
11.	In-class participation: working in small groups (in class)			
12.	In-class participation: working in small groups (outside class)			
13.	In-class participation: managing internal distractions			
14.	Meeting with professor/ adviser/other college staff			

<sup>4</sup> Revised from Jo-Anne Sharac (1997). *Opening doors: College and you*. Worcester: Quinsigamond Community College, Supported Education Services

<b>C.</b>	<b>Emotional Skills</b>	<b>Can do</b>	<b>Needs help</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	Managing emotions			
2.	Managing emotional themes			
3.	Responding to feelings			
4.	Coping strategies			
5.	Responding to feedback			
<b>D.</b>	<b>Social Skills</b>	<b>Can do</b>	<b>Needs help</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	Meeting people			
2.	Making small talk			
3.	Listening			
4.	Demonstrating understanding			
5.	Managing free time on campus			
6.	Participating in on-campus groups			
7.	Utilizing campus social places			
8.	Researching social activity listings			
<b>E.</b>	<b>Personal Coping Skills</b>	<b>Can do</b>	<b>Needs help</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	Adhering to medication regime			
2.	Remembering			
3.	Utilizing support			
	Utilizing resources			
	Determining barriers			
<b>F.</b>	<b>Dorming Living Skills</b>	<b>Can do</b>	<b>Needs help</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1.	Sharing living space			
2.	Coordinating schedules with roommate(s)			
3.	Resolving conflicts			
4.	Volunteering for dorm responsibilities			
5.	Maintaining quiet hours			