

National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.
Functional Ability Categories and Representative
Activities/Attributes

Gross Motor Skills

- Move within confined spaces
- Sit and maintain balance
- Stand and maintain balance
- Reach above shoulders (e.g., IV tubing, poles)
- Reach below waist (e.g., plug electrical appliance into wall outlets)

Fine Motor Skills

- Pick up objects with hands
- Grasp small objects with hands (e.g., IV tubing, pencil)
- Write with pen or pencil
- Key/type (e.g., use a computer)
- Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (e.g., manipulate a syringe)
- Twist (e.g., turn objects/knobs using hands)
- Squeeze with finger (e.g., eye dropper)

Physical Endurance

- Stand (e.g., at client side during surgical or therapeutic procedure)
- Sustain repetitive movements (e.g., CPR)
- Maintain physical tolerance (e.g., work entire shift)

Physical Strength

- Push and pull 25 pounds (e.g., position clients)
- Support 25 pounds of weight (e.g., ambulate client)
- Lift 25 pounds (e.g., pick up a child, transfer client)
- Move light objects weighing up to 10 pounds (e.g., IV poles)
- Move heavy objects weighing from 11 to 50 pounds
- Defend self against combative client
- Carry equipment/supplies
- Use upper body strength (e.g., perform CPR, physically restrain a client)
- Squeeze with hands (e.g., operate fire extinguisher)

Mobility

- Twist
- Bend
- Stoop/squat
- Move quickly (e.g. response to an emergency)
- Climb (e.g., ladders, stools, stairs)
- Walk

Hearing

- Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g., person-to-person report)
- Hear faint voices
- Hear faint body sounds (e.g., blood pressure sounds, assess placement of tubes)
- Hear in situations when not able to see lips (e.g., when masks are used)
- Hear auditory alarms (e.g., monitors, fire alarms, call bells)

Visual

- See objects up to 20 inches away (e.g., information on a computer screen, skin conditions)
- See objects up to 20 feet away (e.g., client in a room)
- See objects more than 20 feet away (client at end of hall)
- Use depth perception
- Use peripheral vision
- Distinguish color (e.g. color codes on supplies, charts, bed)
- Distinguish color intensity (e.g., flushed skin, skin paleness)

Tactile

- Feel vibrations (e.g., palpate pulses)
- Detect temperature (e.g., skin, solutions)
- Feel differences in surface characteristics (e.g., skin turgor, rashes)
- Feel differences in sizes, shapes (e.g., palpate vein, identify body landmarks)
- Detect environmental temperature (e.g., check for drafts)

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Smell

- Detect odors from client (e.g., foul smelling drainage, alcohol breath, etc.)
- Detect smoke
- Detect gases or noxious smells

Reading

- Read and understand written documents (e.g., policies, protocols)

Arithmetic Competence

- Read and understand columns of writing (e.g., flow sheet, charts)
- Read digital displays
- Read graphic printouts (e.g., EKG)
- Calibrate equipment
- Convert numbers to and/or from the Metric System
- Read graphs (e.g., vital sign sheets)
- Tell time
- Measure time (e.g., count duration of contractions, etc.)
- Count rates (e.g., drips/minute, pulse)
- Use measuring tools (e.g., thermometer)
- Read measurement marks (e.g., measurement tapes, scales, etc.)
- Add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide whole numbers
- Compute fractions (e.g., medication dosages)
- Use a calculator
- Write numbers in records

Emotional Stability

- Establish therapeutic boundaries
- Provide client with emotional support
- Adapt to changing environment/stress
- Deal with the unexpected (e.g., client going bad, crisis)
- Focus attention on task
- Monitor own emotions
- Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently
- Handle strong emotions (e.g., grief)

Critical Thinking

- Identify cause-effect relationships
- Plan/control activities for others
- Synthesize knowledge and skills
- Sequence information

Interpersonal Skills

- Negotiate interpersonal conflict
- Respect differences in clients
- Establish rapport with clients
- Establish rapport with co-workers

Communication Skills

- Teach (e.g., client/family about health care)
- Explain procedures
- Give oral reports (e.g., report on client's condition to others)
- Interact with others (e.g., health care workers)
- Speak on the telephone
- Influence people
- Direct activities of others
- Convey information through writing (e.g., progress notes)