

Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Problem List



Description

An important task during the assessment phase of therapy is to identify client difficulties. The clinician can draw upon multiple sources of information including direct reports from the client, the client's family / friends, information from other professionals, and psychometric measures. The *Problem List* worksheet is one way of gathering information about current difficulties. It includes client and therapist versions, with appropriate prompts for each. Therapists are reminded that as well as recording issues reported directly by the client, they should consider additional issues that the client may not be aware of, or may not consider a problem. Therapists should reflect upon whether an identified problem has a bearing upon safety, stability or client engagement.

Instructions

There are separate 'client' and 'therapist' versions of this tool. The client version can be given prior to or during an assessment appointment. Both versions include prompts to be considered by the client / therapist.

References

Persons, J. B. (2008). *The case formulation approach to cognitive behavior therapy*. Guilford.

Please describe the problem(s) that have brought you to therapy

What symptoms do you experience?

How severe are they?

What activities do they prevent or make difficult?

How often do you experience them?

In what circumstances do you experience them?

How do you cope with them? What do you do to manage feeling this way?

Problem List (Therapist Version)

Prompts

Open-ended: Can you describe the problem(s) that you are experiencing at the moment?

Domains: Psychiatric, interpersonal, occupational, medical, financial, housing, legal.

Description: What symptoms do you experience?

Frequency / severity: How often do you experience them? How severe are they?

Impact: What activities do they prevent or impede?

Context: In what circumstances do you experience them? (Where? When? Who with?)

Duration: How long have you experienced them for?

Coping: What do you do to manage feeling this way?

Safety: Does this problem pose a threat to the client's safety? Or that of another person?

Therapy-interfering: Does this problem pose a threat to successful therapy?

Blocking: Does this problem, if not solved, prevent the remission of another problem?

Client engagement: Which problem is the client most interested in solving?

Domino effect: Which problem would lead to the biggest gains?

Destabilization: Which problem, when tackled, may lead to destabilization of the client?

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