

GEM

Environmental Assessment

Gerontological Environmental Modifications

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How to Use The GEM Environmental Assessment

This comprehensive home assessment tool identifies both problems and possible solutions for each room of the dwelling unit and the immediate outdoor area. The assessment covers a broad range of environmental features, including accessibility, furniture, flooring, lighting, etc. You can use it as a basic resource for specific problems or certain areas within the environment, or to conduct a full assessment.

Throughout the assessment, there is a “(T)” for “trigger” next to specific activities. A “No” response to any of the trigger questions (T) may be indicative of functional or physical deterioration and may require additional action. Depending on the situation, you may need to contact a health professional, including a primary physician or nurse, request a functional assessment, and/or request equipment from a physical and/or occupational therapist.

We hope you find the GEM assessment tool useful in making environmental changes in your client’s dwelling.

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GEM Environmental Assessment

Living Room

Client Uses Living Room Y__ N__

Accessibility

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Client moves in/out & through room without bumping/tripping into anything (T) Suggestions: remove doorsill __, door frame __, door __, or clutter __ install offset hinges __ re-arrange furniture __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
|---|--------------|

Flooring

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Lamp, extension & telephone cords are located outside of walking path Suggestions: furniture re-arranged __ cords relocated __ outlets installed or repaired __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Area rugs in walking path are taped to floor with double-sided tape or have a non-skid pad Suggestions: tape rugs to floor __ purchase non-skid pad __ remove rugs __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Flooring is free from rips & holes Suggestions: flooring removed/repaired __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Furniture

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Client uses furniture for support while ambulating (T)</p> <p>If Yes Suggestions: cane/walker __ furniture replaced/repaired __ castors removed __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Low tables or ottomans are located out of walking path for person with low vision Suggestions: low lying furniture removed/replaced __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Table tops & floor are free of excessive clutter (answer no for either case) Suggestions: furniture needed __ baskets needed __ clutter reorganized __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Lighting (turn on all lights)

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Lighting is adequate to client (make recommendations if there are significant dark areas with lights on)</p> <p>Suggestions: new light bulbs ___ lamp(s) repaired ___ new lamp(s)___ lamp(s) relocated ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Client has lamp(s) nearby main seating area</p> <p>Suggestions: fixture relocated ___ new fixture ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Client can easily turn lights on/off</p> <p>Suggestions: switch or outlet replaced/repaired ___ table top pad switch or touch turn-on adaptor ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Seating

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Seating has firm seat that doesn't sag, arm rests on both sides (for chairs) & not too low or deep</p> <p>Suggestions: new chair ___ extender legs ___ seat or back cushion restuffed ___ or replaced ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>If wheelchair is used, it has a pressure relief seat cushion (not patient's own seat pillow) (T)</p> <p>Suggestions: Contact doctor for prescription ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Windows & Shades

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Client easily opens/closes at least one window & all blinds or shades</p> <p>Suggestions: reduce tension in window frame rods ___ remove paint on window casing ___ reorganize furniture ___ shades or blinds fixed ___ new shades/blinds ___ furniture relocated ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
|--|---------------------|

Bedroom

Client Uses Bedroom Y__ N__

Accessibility

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Client moves in/out & through the room without bumping/tripping into anything Suggestions: remove: doorsill __, door frame __, door __, or clutter __ install offset hinges __ re-arrange furniture __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
|--|--------------|

Bed

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|--|--------------|
| <p>Sitting on edge of bed, client's thighs are parallel with floor, with feet firmly on floor Suggestions: lower bed: remove castors __ cut wooden frame __ order new 3" frame __ Raise bed: new 7" frame __ leg extenders __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client has a handle to help get in & out of bed if needed (T) Suggestions: new handrail __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Bedcovering hangs above the floor Suggestions: hem bedcovering __ new bedcovering __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Hospital bed only: There is minimal spacing between mattress & siderails Suggestions: contact home care agency __ replace bed, mattress or rails __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Mattress is supportive & does not sag when sat on (assessor: ask client if you can sit on bed to test) Suggestions: replace mattress __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Bedside commode available if nighttime trips to bathroom are difficult (T) Suggestions: Doctor to prescribe commode __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Communication

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Telephone next to bed is usable by client Suggestions: large print dial overlay ___ new phone/large type ___ hearing impaired phone or flashing light adaptor ___ voice activated service ___ furniture rearranged ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Doorbell can be heard by client in bedroom Suggestions: plug-in remote doorbell ___ doorbell with flashing light ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Flooring

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Lamp, extension & telephone cords are located outside of walking path Suggestions: furniture re-arranged ___ cords relocated ___ outlets installed or repaired ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Area rugs in walking path are taped to floor with double-sided tape or have a non-skid pad Suggestions: tape rugs to floor ___ purchase non-skid pad ___ remove rugs ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>The flooring is free from rips & holes Suggestions: carpet removed/repaired ___ flooring patched ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Furniture & Storage

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Furniture is stable for support if client holds or leans on while ambulating (T) Suggestions: cane/walker ___ furniture replaced/repaired ___ castors removed ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Doorknobs/furniture knobs are easy-to-use Suggestions: Install "C" shaped handles ___ textured hand grip over doorknobs ___ lever adaptor ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Floors & tabletops are free of clutter Suggestions: clutter organized/removed ___ new dresser/night table ___ drawers repaired ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Closet clothing is accessible without client standing on tiptoes or chair Suggestions: hanging pole lowered ___ clothing rearranged ___ new door or door removed ___ hanging shoe bag ___ stepstool with handle ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
|--|--------------|

Lighting (turn on all lights)

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Pathway to bathroom is lit at night (by nightlights, flashlight or light left on) Suggestions: install automatic nightlights ___ battery sensor light ___ lighted switchplate ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Light switch at door entrance or light left on Suggestions: wireless switch ___ switch repaired ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Bedside lamp(s) is usable by client Suggestions: new lightbulb ___ lamp(s) repaired ___ new lamp(s) ___ lamp(s) moved ___ tabletop pad switch ___ or touch turn-on ___ switch repaired or installed ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Lighting is adequate to client (make recommendations if there are significant dark areas with lights on) Suggestions: new light bulbs ___ lamp(s) repaired ___ new lamp(s) ___ lamp(s) relocated ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Seating

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Chair is easy to get in/out of, firm seat, not too deep or low, arms on both sides (T) Suggestions: new chair ___ leg extenders ___ back or seat cushion refilled ___ or replaced ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>If wheelchair is used, it has a pressure relief seat cushion (not patient's own seat pillow) (T) Suggestions: Contact doctor for prescription ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Windows

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Client can easily open/close at least one window Suggestions: reduce tension in window frame rods ___ remove paint ___ reorganize furniture ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client can easily open/close blinds or shades Suggestions: shades/blinds fixed ___ new shades/blinds ___ furniture relocated ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | |

Hallway

Client Uses Hallway

Y__ N__

Location: _____

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Hallway lighting is adequate to client (make recommendations if there are significant dark areas with lights on) Suggestions: new light bulbs ___ new fixture ___ automatic sensor switch ___ lighted switch ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Hallways are free from clutter & flooring is free of rips & holes Suggestions: remove clutter ___ flooring to be removed __, replaced __, or repaired ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Area rug is taped to floor with double-sided tape or has non-skid pad Suggestions: tape rug to floor ___ purchase non-skid pad ___ remove rug ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Hallway (ask client if you can turn on lights)

Location: _____

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Hallway lighting is adequate to client (make recommendations if there are significant dark areas with lights on) Suggestions: new light bulbs ___ new fixture ___ automatic sensor switch ___ lighted switch ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Hallways are free from clutter & flooring is free of rips & holes Suggestions: remove clutter ___ flooring to be removed __, replaced __, or repaired ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Area rug is taped to floor with double-sided tape or has non-skid pad Suggestions: tape rug to floor ___ purchase non-skid pad ___ remove rug ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Bathroom

Client Uses Bathroom Y__ N__

Accessibility

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Client can get in/out of room without bumping/tripping into anything (T) Suggestions: Remove doorsill __, door frame __, door __, or clutter __ furniture re-arranged __ Install offset-hinges __ purchase/install curtain for door __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Sink is accessible Suggestions: remove vanity __ raise or lower sink __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Toileting

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Observation: raised toilet seat __ with attached grab bars __ toilet safety frame __ grab bar on wall __ other __</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client can easily get on & off the toilet (T) Suggestions: raised seat __ with attached grab bars __ toilet safety frame __ grab bar on wall __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Toilet paper roll is easy to use & less than one outstretched arm distance from toilet Suggestions: new roll __ relocate roll __ attachable bidet __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Bathing

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Observation: wall grab bar on back wall __ & side tub wall __ tub seat __ We do not recommend tub mounted grab bars as they can easily detach.</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client lowers into bathtub or showers Suggestions: check stability of wall surface & order/install grab bars along back __ & inner tub wall __ contrasting color __ tub bench/hand-held shower hose __ shower curtain __ bath lift __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client can easily reach/use faucets & controls Suggestions: lever adaptors __ hand-held shower hose __ hook at lower height __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>For frail elders at risk, anti-scald valves are installed in showerhead &/or bathtub spout Suggestions: install showerhead valve __ or bathtub spout __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Non-skid safety treads or mat on bottom of bathtub Suggestions: install treads/mat ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
|--|---------------------|

Flooring

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Bathroom flooring is non-skid (not slippery) with matte finish with no holes or rips Suggestions: no wax or non skid wax used ___ flooring repaired ___ new flooring ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Bathroom floor mat is non-skid with intact backing & hung on side of tub when not in use Suggestions: new floor bath mat ___ hang up floor bath mat ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Floor surface is free from clutter Suggestions: remove clutter ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Sink Area

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Faucets are easy-to-use Suggestions: faucet adaptors ___ non-flood faucets (for memory impaired) ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Client can reach medicine cabinet Suggestions: supplies rearranged ___ shelf installed ___ medicine cabinet lowered ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Lighting (assessor, ask client if you can turn on all lights)

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Lighting is adequate to client (make recommendations if there are significant dark areas with lights on) Suggestions: new light bulb(s) ___ fixture(s) repaired ___ new light switch ___ or outlet repaired ___ new fixture(s) ___ switch extender ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Nightlight is used (or flashlight or light left on) Suggestions: automatic nightlights ___ battery sensor light ___ lighted switchplate ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Kitchen

Client Uses Kitchen Y__ N__

Accessibility

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Client moves in/out & through the room without bumping/tripping into anything (T) Suggestions: remove: doorsill __, door frame __, door __, or clutter __ install offset-hinges __ re-arrange furniture __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Client has access to sink & to food preparation areas Suggestions: bottom cabinet removed __ cabinet under sink removed __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

Flooring

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Kitchen flooring is non-skid (not slippery) with matte finish with no holes or rips Suggestions: no wax or non-skid wax used __ flooring repaired __ new flooring __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
|---|---------------------|

Storage

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| <p>Client can easily access needed food & supplies Suggestions: organize supplies __ reacher __ lazy susans __ "C" handles __ loop strap on refrigerator __ tape on refrigerator door gasket __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
|--|---------------------|

Cooking & Serving

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>Faucets are easy-to-use Suggestions: faucet adaptors __ non-flood faucets (for memory impaired) __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Client can easily use appliances pots/pans (T) Suggestions: appliance repair __ new microwave __ new toaster oven __ automatic coffee maker __ tactile dots __ large print dials __ pan/handles both sides __ pan/flat bottom __ flame retardant pot holder __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |
| <p>Client can easily use utensils & plate (T) Suggestions: large handled utensils __ rocking knife __ can opener __ color contrast plate with scoop edge __ other __</p> <p>Resource:</p> | <p>Y__ N__ NA__</p> |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Client can easily transfer food from kitchen to table (T) Suggestions: wheeled cart ___ attachable tray for walker or wheelchair ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Stove area is clear of grease, towels & flammable materials Suggestions: cleaning service needed ___ rearrange materials ___ new hooks ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client Education: For fire safety, do not cook in clothing with long loose sleeves</p> | |

Lighting (assessor, ask client if you can turn on all lights)

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Lighting is adequate to client (make recommendations if there are significant dark areas with lights on) Suggestions: new lightbulbs ___ lamp(s) repaired ___ new fixture(s) ___ battery-operated undercounter lights ___ switch or outlet repaired ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
|---|--------------|

Indoor Stairs

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Stairs are in good repair & usable by client Suggestions: install handrails on one side ___ install handrails on both sides ___ re-anchor handrails ___ remove clutter ___ repair stairs ___ remove carpeting ___ install low pile carpeting ___ install lift ___ install chair glide ___ relocate washer/dryer to first floor ___ relocate sleeping quarters to first floor ___ install bathroom on first floor ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Edges of steps and landing are clearly visible Suggestions: install lighting/light switches ___ install color contrast paint/tape on step edge ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Outdoors: Walkways, Porch, Stairs, & Door

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Approach to house is adequate & well lit Suggestions: repair walkways ___ yardwork needed ___ install outdoor lighting ___ remove clutter ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Stairs are usable by client Suggestions: install handrails on one side ___ install handrails on both sides ___ re-anchor handrails ___ remove clutter ___ repair stairs ___ install lift ___ install chair glide ___ install or repair ramp ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <p>Staircase, edges of steps & landing are clearly visible Suggestions: install lighting ___ install color contrast paint/tape on step edge ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Porch has adequate railing, floor surface & lighting Suggestions: install/repair railing ___ install lighting ___ repair/replace flooring ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client can easily open/close door, open/close deadbolt & other locks, enter/exit dwelling, view visitors Suggestions: new doorknob ___ repair/replace lock ___ new door ___ new peephole ___ replace/remove threshold ___ new light fixture ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Door bell is in working order & heard by client Suggestions: replace doorbell ___ install remote doorbell ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Other

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Extension cord/outlet strip with circuit breaker is used with multiple fixtures Suggestions: new extension cord/outlet strip ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client uses pillbox that is easy to read & use Suggestions: weekly multiple compartment pill ___ automatic dispenser ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Walls & ceilings are free of holes & peeling paint Suggestions: repair ___ repaint ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Smoke detector is in working order Suggestions: replace battery ___ replace detector ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Temperature is comfortable to client (not overly hot or cold to assessor) Suggestions: repair windows ___ repair or purchase air conditioner ___ install large numeral thermostat ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>The dwelling is free of excess clutter and noxious odors Suggestions: cleaning service ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Food bowls & kitty litter are out of circulation path Suggestions: set food bowls on table ___ relocate bowls or kitty litter ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client wears footwear that have closed backs & medium thickness treads Suggestions: new shoes/slippers needed ___ elastic shoelaces ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Client uses glass ashtray (4"-6") with cutouts for cigarettes Suggestions: new ashtray ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |
| <p>Frail or at risk clients have a personal emergency response system Suggestions: contact doctor for Medicaid prescription ___ other ___</p> <p>Resource:</p> | Y__ N__ NA__ |

Follow-Up

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bathroom | Kitchen |
| Bedroom | Living Room |
| Stairs, Indoors | Outdoors, Including Stairs |

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