



Enhancing Family Leisure: A Factsheet for Providers

Family leisure provides the opportunity to connect with members of one's family through positive and enjoyable activities, which is essential for sustaining healthy relationships.

The numbers

- 80.5% of individuals with psychiatric disabilities consider entertaining family friends or visiting family and friends to be important.
- 72% of individuals with psychiatric disabilities consider getting together in the community or attending an event with family or friends to be important.

What is family recreation and leisure?

Family recreation and leisure are activities a family chooses to participate in during their free time that are fun while being beneficial to the family unit. Activities include things that the family enjoys, and activities that are not work oriented or do not involve life maintenance tasks such as housecleaning or work (paid and unpaid).

Why is it important?

There is a correlation between family leisure participation and healthy family interactions. Increasing positive family relationships can lead to healthy communication patterns, which can develop into a resource when families or individual members experience stress. Participation can also allow families to develop skills necessary for meeting the needs of stability, cohesion and flexibility when facing challenges.

Types of family leisure and recreation and their benefits

Core activities, which are common, everyday activities typically done at home. Examples include: shared meals, gardening, and playing games. Core activities provide family members with the opportunity to:

- Explore & develop roles
- Establish communication patterns
- Express emotions in non-threatening environment

Balance activities, which occur less frequently, typically involve more planning and take place outside of the home. Examples include family vacations, bowling, trips to fairs, and sporting events. Balance activities provide family members with the opportunity to:

- Opportunity to develop problem-solving skills and adaptability that can transfer to other situations

How to introduce the topic with clients and families

Promoting family-based recreation and leisure participation can serve as one strategy to develop and maintain a quality support network. Encourage your client to identify the important members of his or her family. It's not necessary to focus only on blood relations. Consider the client and the potential role(s) they may play in their family. For example, a client might be a son, a brother and an uncle. These different roles or identities provide different opportunities for that individual to connect and spend time with family. Find out what type of roles your client identifies with, and discuss the importance and influence those identities may have. Explore the value of relationships within each role. If being a brother is

more meaningful and relevant than being an uncle, consider activities that allow them to connect more with their siblings.

How to support clients to make a family plan for rec and leisure

Encourage open communication between your client and his or her family about the family leisure plan. As the planning process begins, be sure to encourage the use of joint-interest activities and develop strategies that yield input from all family members. This will help ensure everyone is included and values participation. Often individuals jump to planning grand-scale balance activities. However planning for core activities can be an initial step where individuals may experience more immediate success. Encourage the development of a comprehensive plan that includes both core and balance activities.

Core Activities

- **How Often:** Encourage participation at least once/week for family members the client engages with frequently
- **Selecting an Activity:** Activities that don't require special equipment or extensive planning are easier to accomplish
- **Consistency:** Support strategies to make this a part of the client's normal schedule. Make a calendar and check in on progress.
- **Include everyone:** Encourage clients to develop ways to include input from all participants
- **Focus on the positive:** Family recreation and leisure is supported to be fun and enjoyable. Keeping that in focus will help make the activity more successful.

Balance Activities

- **How Often:** Balance activities can happen as often as weekly, bi-weekly, or even monthly. Encourage the client to set specific dates and to consider frequency.
- **Selecting an Activity:** Balance activities can happen in the local community or activities that are further away.
- **Plan the budget:** Brainstorm how much the activity will cost and possible cost saving strategies. Help connect these financial expenses into the individual's broader financial goals.
- **Plan for success:** Brainstorm a list of supplies needed and develop some alternate plans in case of rain or cancelations.
- **Reflect:** Work with the individual to develop strategies to reflect with family members on enjoyable activities.

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