

Introduction to Level 5: “Beyond the Room”

People at this level are becoming more independent as they progress from following routines in controlled environments to developing self awareness of their cognitive deficits as they perform higher level activities. They are seen in inpatient, SNF and outpatient. Frequently those at this level are ambulatory although a wheelchair may still be necessary due to balance or endurance deficits.

Now that the person has shown they are able to make their way in the clinic area or house efficiently – it is time to start practicing navigating larger spaces such as a one-story building or store with only one door exit. Also the complexity of tasks is increasing so the person can be challenged with individual tasks that have more steps.

While the activities at this level afford the person the opportunity to practice navigation in larger spaces, another significant focus at this level is dealing with the person’s realization that he has cognitive deficits – there is more happening to them than just physical problems. As they see they have trouble calculating, reading and remembering things that were easier than before –emerging frustration, lowered self esteem, confusion frequently manifests as denial. This often is a major hurdle in progress.

Overall goal: Navigates safely and efficiently in single or multi-level buildings

Level 5 performance characteristics according to 3 global elements:

- Interpersonal: cues to clarify tasks before starting, argues or denies problems with tasks
- Environmental: knocks before entering rooms, navigates by written or verbal directions, carries schedule at all times
- Time: crosses off finished tasks on list, stays on tasks until complete, cues to estimate time needed for tasks

Treatment activities at this level:

- “Repeats”: navigates between start location and secondary location on same floor level repeatedly during session
- “Sequenced Route”: moves from location to location in sequence, then returns to start when finished
- “Complex Scavenger Hunt”: carries out multiple tasks in different locations throughout a building

Level 5 Goals:

- Interpersonal: expresses awareness that he is lost/confused, writes notes when given verbal directions
- Environmental: navigates efficiently within building, uses maps/landmarks/signs to navigate
- Time: monitors time while moving around the building, returns to start point on time, combines tasks along route

Conducting Sessions at Level 5

- Once the patient shows he is capable of scanning the immediate environment and is remembering locations – its time to travel farther.
- This includes traveling between 2 floors of a building to obtain information.
- The activity can be tried first by having the patient use trial and error.
- The second time he may need to practice planning a route.
- One of the awkward things about this activity is that the therapist needs to be “invisible” (not available for help).
- However it is important to keep an eye on a beginner so he doesn’t get lost
- The patient will have to use signs, a map, written or verbal directions.
- He can be expected to ask others for help and be able to write down what they tell him.
- It is important to make sure the patient knows the name of the location from which he starts so that he can get back to the same place.
- The beginner typically goes down the list without planning the most efficient route.
- He usually uses trial and error, not initiating asking others for help or just walking down random corridors.
- The patient may have to record directions as he goes along if he cannot write them down fast enough.
- Use letters or numbers to plan a specific route
- Use color coded highlighting to separate first floor activities from second floor

Teaching Tips for Level 5

If the person is not aware of his deficits:

- When you provide a verbal direction – record him agreeing to understanding it
- Play back the recorder to prove it to him
- At the outset of the session, have the patient use highlighter to indicate awareness of time points
- Have him go to a specific place and “check-in” by writing down on the [Route Sheet](#) what he has accomplished
- Have the patient estimate how long it will take to do tasks before he starts

To organize approach and save energy:

- Put numbers in front of each task to plan ahead
- Determine ahead of time what floor each task should be done
- Ask him if there are things he can do in the same places to avoid wasting time/energy
- Have him plot route by using floor plan of building and write on [Route Sheet](#)
- Cross off accomplished tasks as he proceeds