

Handy Tips

- Be sure to use specific behavioral examples that illustrate impairment. The following example illustrates clearly a link between the functional difficulty (personal hygiene) and the illness (depression): “Francis says that he is so depressed in the morning that he has no energy to shower and get dressed.”
- Have a colleague review your functional descriptions to ensure that the intended information is clearly communicated. (Get permission as needed.)
- To write a functional description as clearly and plainly as you can, imagine describing the person’s functional difficulties to someone who does not work in this field.
- The description of functional impairment should answer the questions: What is the impairment? How do you know it exists? What causes it? Why does it exist?
- Including a description of functional impairment in your Medical Summary Report is usually sufficient for DDS. In these instances, you may not need to complete the daily activity form for DDS. Work this out with DDS ahead of time.
- A case manager should keep in mind that, as soon as a DDS disability examiner (adjudicator) has enough information to approve an application, he or she can make a determination and does not have to wait for additional information. This can truly expedite benefits.
- Write functional descriptions using clear and simple language, in an active voice. Academic training teaches writing in a passive voice, but this may reduce the clarity of the information.