

Transcript: David's Preliminary IL Assessment

- VRC** So David, now that I've introduced you to IL services and you've agreed to go forward, we're ready to go through what's called a preliminary Independent Living (IL) assessment.
- David** You told me before but can you tell me again what that is?
- VRC** Of course—a preliminary IL assessment is an assessment of potential IL needs you may have. During this assessment you and I will discuss how much difficulty you have doing some specific tasks you do each day, such as taking care of your daily needs. Once we've completed the preliminary IL assessment, we'll talk about the next step—which is evaluating you more comprehensively to get more information on independent living needs you may have. If we identify IL needs we'll see what services we can provide to help you become more independent.
- David** Okay. That sounds good. What do we do first?
- VRC** First we're going to talk about some activities you do regularly each day. For each of these I want you to let me know how much difficulty you have had doing this task in the past month. And for those you don't do you can tell me the reason.
- Let's look at the first question. Are you having any problems eating by yourself? That would mean holding your spoon/fork, holding a cup do you need any help with that?
- David** I'm fine with that.
- VRC** Good, are you able to get dressed by yourself?
- David** Yes.
- VRC** Do you have any difficulty bathing or showering?
- David** Well...it's hard for me to get in and out of the bathtub—I'm afraid I'll slip and fall. My left side paralysis makes me unstable.
- VRC** Okay. So, you have difficulty because you are afraid of falling. Would you like to be able to get out of the bathtub and take a shower more independently?
- David** It would be really helpful.
- VRC** Let's talk about the next question. Tell me about moving in and out of a bed or a chair. How much difficulty do you have with that?
- David** You mean like can I get up out of the bed myself?
- VRC** Yes.
- David** Well, that can be difficult sometimes. I have trouble with balance sometimes.
- VRC** Okay, do you have any difficulty moving in and out of a chair?

David That's also difficult due to balance. If I take it slowly, I can do it using my cane.

VRC (Marks this on the form and the marked blocks). Let's look at the next two questions. How much difficulty do you have walking one block or several blocks?

David Well, I have this leg brace here so I can't walk very far at all. I get short of breath and dizzy if I walk very far. I have a lot of pain in my legs because of circulatory problems.

VRC That sounds difficult. Do you have any trouble going up and downstairs?

David I have a lot of trouble with the steps going to the front door of the house. As you could tell when you came in there's a lot of steps to get in the door. The ground is uneven and our lot slopes. It's very painful and difficult for me to go up and down steps because of my paralysis, my leg brace and leg pain. Can't do steps without someone helping me.

VRC (Marks this on the form) You may benefit from some sort of housing modification, such as a ramp. Have you applied for any home modifications grants through Specially Adaptive Housing or a Home Improvements and Structural Alterations?

David I don't know what those are.

VRC The Specially Adaptive Housing program offers a grant for Veterans with specific service-connected disabilities to adapt an existing dwelling to help the Veteran achieve independence.

Under the HISA program (Home Improvements and Structural Alterations) grant, Veterans may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities

David No. Haven't applied for either of those.

VRC Okay. That is not a problem. Actually, this program will work directly with SAH program to ensure you receive the necessary accommodations. That is, of course, if we determine there is a need for some home modifications. We will work through that together when the time comes. For now, let's continue with the rest of the assessment.

VRC Do you have difficulty walking around your house?

David Yes.

VRC Can you explain the type of difficulty you are having?

David Well, I can walk around if I use my cane. I do get tired easily and have some trouble with my balance.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Let's move on to the next question. How much difficulty do you have doing work around the house such as cleaning, light yard work or laundry?

David Well, I can't do any of those things because of my paralysis. Even if I do small things I lose my breath and have to sit down because I get so tired. My legs hurt real bad. My wife does the cleaning and laundry. We hire someone to mow the lawn and do yard work.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Thanks for that information. How much difficulty do you have doing errands, such as shopping?

David Well, my wife does most of the grocery shopping. Like I said I get tired pretty easily and have to use my cane to walk. I also get pretty anxious if I'm around too many people for very long.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Okay—thanks for telling me the type of difficulties you are having. Do you drive?

David No—I don't drive because of my medical problems. My wife drives me.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Do you have any problems visiting with friends?

David I don't really have any friends. I don't really get out much. I don't like being around a lot of people. It makes me nervous. I'd rather just stay home so I don't have to deal with people.

VRC Do you have any difficulty visiting with relatives?

David Talk to them on the phone sometimes and see some at Christmas if they are in town. I'd rather just keep to myself most of the time though.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Okay, do you attend church or any other spiritual organization?

David No. I don't believe in any of that stuff. I'd rather just stay home anyhow.

VRC Have you attended church...or part of a spiritual organization in the past?

David Not regularly.

VRC Do you volunteer or do any activity outside your home with other people?

David No, I really just like to be by myself. Like I said I get stressed and anxious if I'm around too many people so it's just easier to stay home.

VRC Let's look at item 15—Do you have any difficulties taking care of family members?

David Well, I do pay the bills. My checks help with the expenses.

VRC That's great. Are there any other ways you take care of your family members?

David No, because of my disabilities my wife has to take care of me.

VRC Would you like to take care of others?

David It would be nice if I could do more things for myself and others.

VRC I can understand that. Let's look at the next question. Do you participate in any recreational activities like golf or tennis?

David No. Don't have the stamina for anything like that.

VRC Have you ever participated in recreational activities in the past?

David Not really. Shot some baskets in college—long time ago.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Okay, thanks for that information. Do you have any trouble using a pen or pencil?

David Nah. I'm fine with that.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Do you have any trouble bending, stooping, and lifting?

David Can't bend, stoop or lift because of my paralysis and leg pain. My heart problems make me short of breath and dizzy.

VRC (Marks this on the form) Okay, thanks for those details. Do you have any trouble sleeping?

David Well yes. I have trouble sleeping.

VRC I'm sorry you have trouble sleeping. Can you explain the type of difficulties you are having?

David Well, I don't really like to talk about it, but I don't get much sleep because I wake up with nightmares.

VRC I'm so sorry. How many hours a night would you say you sleep?

David I don't know. Maybe I sleep 4 or 5 hours.

VRC That must be really difficult for you. Let's look at item 20. I see from your records you have been prescribed several medications. You have prescriptions for example for your diabetes, hypertension, and for anxiety. Do you take each of your medications?

David No, I don't really take them all every day like I should. I take the one for anxiety; sometimes the one for hypertension.

VRC Is there a reason why you don't take them?

David Well, there are too many of them. It's kind of hard to remember when to take what.

VRC Okay—well thank you for your honesty—that's important. Let's move on to the next question. Do you have any difficulty using the telephone?

David Yeah, I have a phone.

VRC Do you have any difficulty using it?

David No.

VRC You mentioned earlier that you pay household bills. Do you have any difficulty handling your finances?

David No.

VRC Okay, thank you for that information. Do you prepare meals for yourself?

David Sometimes.

VRC What meals do you prepare?

David I can fix my cereal if the bowl and box is on the counter for me.

VRC Do you have any difficulty preparing meals?

David Well—I have trouble standing at the kitchen counter. I also have trouble bending down to reach dishes in the lower cabinets or up to overhead cabinets.

VRC Is that something you'd like to do more independently?

David Yes.

VRC You've described some difficulties you have taking a shower. Do you have any difficulty using the toilet?

David Yes. Sometimes it hard to get up and down on the toilet because of my leg.

VRC Are you able to do participate in vigorous activities such as exercise?

David No. Not with my paralysis and my limitations with fatigue and shortness of breath.

VRC Do you have any other difficulties with your memory or concentration?

David Sometimes I forget things and have difficulty concentrating.

VRC We've talked about your difficulty getting up and down the stairs in front of your house. . . do you have any other type of difficulty getting in and out of your house?

David Sometimes I have trouble getting out.

VRC What type of difficulties are you having getting out of your home?

David Well, I just don't want to get too stressed out by being around a lot of people so I don't go to malls or any place with lots of people. I'd rather just stay at home.

VRC Thanks for explaining the difficulties you are having. Let's move on to the next question. Do you have any problems controlling the thermostat?

David No.

VRC Do you have any difficulties controlling the fan?

David No.

VRC How about the T.V.? Do you have any difficulty controlling the T.V.?

David We have a remote that works for the T.V. No trouble there.

VRC That's great. Let's look at the last question for this section. Can you tell me if you communicate with family or friends?

David Like talking with people?

VRC Right.

David Well—I talk with my wife.

VRC Right. And how is your communication with your wife?

David Well—she complains I get frustrated and angry with her pretty easily

VRC And what do you think?

David I think she's right. I do get frustrated pretty easy. That's why I don't like to go out much. I'm out I'm afraid I'm going to get so angry I'll get out of control and do something stupid.

VRC So would you say your frustration, anger, and anxiety keeps you from going out in public.

David Yes. That's fair to say.

VRC So—looking back through this list how would you rate your overall level of independence? Is it very high? High? Moderate? Low? Or Very low?

David Well, I'd say moderate.

VRC The next question asks if you have a personal care attendant. Do you have anyone who is paid to come and care for you?

David No.

VRC All right. We've completed the first section of this form which evaluates how well you can do activities of daily living. Now we're going to look at Part II. Do you now, or have you ever had any problems with alcohol or drug abuse?

David No.

VRC Okay, thanks. Let's move on to the next section. These are just some general questions about your living arrangements. You indicated earlier you live with your wife. Does anyone else live here?

David No.

VRC Do you own or rent your home?

David We own it.

VRC Are you having any problems with your current living arrangements?

David No problems.

VRC Do you feel safe in your home and the street?

David Yes, it's a nice neighborhood.

VRC Good. The next few questions are about some personal, emotional and spiritual needs. First, you rated your level of independence as moderate. Let's expand on that. How much control do you feel you have in your life and the choices that matter to you?

David About like everybody I guess . . .

VRC In general, how do you feel about yourself and your life?

David Okay, I guess.

VRC How much support does your family provide you?

David Well—my wife helps me out. Not very close to the rest of my family—they live far away.

VRC You told me earlier that you feel anxious when you are around a lot of people and don't get out of your house a lot. Can you explain any additional difficulties you have getting along with other people?

David I keep pretty much to myself. Like I said I earlier I get frustrated and angry when I get out in public so it's just easier to stay at home.

VRC Do you have any other hobbies right now?

David Not really.

VRC Are there any hobbies you did in the past you'd like to do but can no longer do?

David No.

VRC Okay—well thank you David for your assistance in completing this form. I appreciate your patience and detailed responses to these questions. Based on this evaluation, I think you'd benefit from completing a comprehensive independent living evaluation to determine appropriate services and assistance to increase your independence. I'd like to make a referral for an independent living evaluation. After the evaluation is completed, you'll meet again with me to further develop an appropriate plan of services for your independent living needs.

Would you like to complete the next step—a comprehensive independent living evaluation?

David Yes.

VRC Okay, great!