Dysfunctional Family System Activity

Participant Workbook | Family roles, patterns, and healthier choices

Instructions

For each role, you may identify a family member, yourself, a fictional character, or write “not applicable.” Describe three specific observations that may fit the role, then write an action you can control that could support a healthier relationship or boundary. You may appear in one or more roles, or none. Do not include names or details you would prefer to keep private.

The six family roles

Family Hero: Often feels responsible for achievement, stability, or making the family appear successful.

Chief Enabler: May protect someone from consequences or overfunction to keep peace; support and enabling are not the same.

Mascot: May use humor, distraction, or cheerfulness to reduce tension.

Scapegoat: May be blamed for broader family difficulties or cast as the problem.

Lost Child: May withdraw, stay quiet, or minimize needs to avoid conflict.

Identified Patient/Victim: May be designated as the person with the problem; the label can obscure wider patterns and must not minimize genuine illness or harm.

These roles describe possible family patterns, not permanent labels or diagnoses.

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

Family Hero

Person or fictional example (optional): _____

Reason 1 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 2 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 3 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Intervention — what can I do to create a healthier interaction or boundary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is outside my control? _____

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

Chief Enabler

Person or fictional example (optional): _____

Reason 1 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 2 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 3 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Intervention — what can I do to create a healthier interaction or boundary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is outside my control? _____

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

Mascot

Person or fictional example (optional): _____

Reason 1 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 2 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 3 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Intervention — what can I do to create a healthier interaction or boundary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is outside my control? _____

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

Scapegoat

Person or fictional example (optional): _____

Reason 1 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 2 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 3 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Intervention — what can I do to create a healthier interaction or boundary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is outside my control? _____

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

Lost Child

Person or fictional example (optional): _____

Reason 1 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 2 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 3 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Intervention — what can I do to create a healthier interaction or boundary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is outside my control? _____

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

Identified Patient/Victim

Person or fictional example (optional): _____

Reason 1 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 2 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Reason 3 — specific observation:

_____

_____

_____

Intervention — what can I do to create a healthier interaction or boundary?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is outside my control? _____

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.

My Family Relationship Plan

Describe what you can do to create a functional relationship with your family members.

A functional relationship may involve respect, safe communication, realistic expectations, mutual responsibility, or protective distance. You cannot make another person change.

A pattern I want to change: _____

One action I can take this week: _____

A boundary I can communicate or maintain: _____

A person or resource that can support me: _____

How I will know this action is helpful: _____

Reflection

What does “healthy family interaction” mean for me, given my actual circumstances?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Safety reminder: You do not owe contact, forgiveness, or reconciliation to someone who has harmed you. Seek qualified support if family contact could place you or someone else at risk.

Copyright © 2026 Blue Rabbit Clinical Resources. All rights reserved.