ROOTED CARE

Where Do We Start? Checklist

When the whole home feels overwhelming, choose one safe, realistic starting point - not the whole house.

Rooted Care approach: The first goal is not a perfect home. The first goal is one change that makes daily life safer, easier or less overwhelming.

Name / household: _____ Date: _____

Who is completing this? _____ With client? Yes / No

1. What is affecting everyday life the most?

- ☐ I cannot safely use a bed or sleeping area.
- ☐ The bathroom, toilet or shower is difficult to access or use.
- ☐ The kitchen or food-preparation area is difficult to use.
- ☐ A main doorway, hallway or stairway is blocked or hard to move through.
- ☐ I cannot comfortably sit, eat, work or relax in a main living area.
- ☐ Laundry, garbage, dishes or food buildup is making daily routines harder.

2. Is there anything that needs attention for safety first?

- ☐ An exit or entrance is blocked or difficult to reach.
- ☐ There are fall risks, unstable piles or narrow walking paths.
- ☐ There are concerns involving heat sources, outlets, cords or combustible items.
- ☐ There are pests, spoiled food, strong odours, leaks, mould or sanitation concerns.
- ☐ There is an inspection, landlord visit, pest treatment or other deadline coming up.

3. Choose ONE starting area

- ☐ Front entrance / main exit
- ☐ Hallway or stairs
- ☐ Bathroom
- ☐ Kitchen
- ☐ Bedroom / sleeping area
- ☐ Living room / seating area
- ☐ One table, counter or surface
- ☐ One category of belongings instead of one room

My first priority is: _____

Why this area matters to me: _____

_____

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Make the First Step Manageable

A useful first session should leave the home more functional - and the person more willing to continue.

Rooted Care approach: Progress can be one safe pathway, one usable room, one decision category, or one successful visit. Small changes that can be maintained matter more than a rushed cleanout.

4. Decide what "better" would look like today

- ☐ A clear path through the room.
- ☐ One doorway or exit that opens fully.
- ☐ A usable bed, chair, toilet, sink or countertop.
- ☐ Enough floor space to move safely.
- ☐ One bag or box of items removed from the home.
- ☐ One category sorted without trying to finish the whole room.
- ☐ A plan for what we will do next time.

5. Use a simple sorting system

- ☐ KEEP - stays in the home and has a place.
- ☐ USE ELSEWHERE - belongs in another room or area.
- ☐ DONATE - ready to leave the home for someone else to use.
- ☐ DISPOSE / RECYCLE - no longer usable or safe to keep.
- ☐ UNSURE - needs more time; set aside in one limited review container.
- ☐ SENTIMENTAL - pause and discuss rather than forcing a decision.

6. Watch for signs it is time to slow down

- ☐ The person is becoming distressed, shut down, angry or unable to make decisions.
- ☐ Decisions are being made too quickly just to finish the job.
- ☐ Family members are arguing or pressuring the person.
- ☐ The focus has shifted from safety/function to making the home look perfect.
- ☐ Items are being removed without clear consent.

Before finishing, answer these three questions

What improved today? _____

What still feels difficult? _____

What is the next manageable step? _____

Remember: The goal is not to make the home perfect in one day. The goal is to create a safe, realistic change that the person can live with and build on.

This checklist is a practical planning tool and is not a substitute for emergency, fire, medical, mental-health or professional safety services when urgent risk is present.