

Mental Health Assessment Information and Consent:

What is a mental health assessment?

These assessments evaluate emotional, social, and behavioural characteristics that can influence an individual's functioning (i.e., a mental health assessment). These assessments specifically assess for the most common mental health concerns and provide recommendation on how to support individuals should a concern be identified.

Why have a mental health assessment?

Ultimately, the most important reason to have mental health assessment is to help gain a better understanding of the individual and whether they may benefit from support or treatment. At times, the results of an assessment will suggest that certain accommodations are necessary and will suggest that the school or their workplace put these in place. These assessments can often determine the presence of concerns such as:

- Anxiety disorders
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity disorder
- Behavioural difficulties
- Mood disorders
- Social difficulties
- Personality disorders
- Suggest other conditions that may require further evaluation (e.g., learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders)

Ultimately, the most important reason to have an assessment is to determine how an individual is most likely to succeed and thrive. At times, the results of an assessment will suggest that certain accommodations are necessary and will suggest that the school/work put these in place. Typically, the results of the assessment also provide recommendations that can be implemented at home.

What is involved?

Typically, these assessments require the following: an initial interview to understand what concerns are being noted, a review of the client's history, completion of psychological measures, and a clinical interview. Once the assessment is complete, the psychologist/psychological associate reviews all the results and then meets with the client to discuss the results and recommendations. If requested, a written report is also provided that summarizes all of the relevant information.

Billing for mental health assessments

It is important to understand the billing process prior to commencing an assessment. If you have insurance coverage for the assessment, we highly recommend that you contact your provider and verify what they will cover. Typically, our receipts appear as follows, please note that the actual amount may be different for complex cases:

| <u>Activity</u> | <u>Hours Billed</u> | <u>Description on receipt</u> | <u>Name on Invoice</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Intake interview | 1 hour | Psychological Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent(s) name if for Child or Adolescent • Individual 18+ |
| Clinical Interview and completion of psychological measures | 3 hours total | Psychodiagnostics test administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Adolescent, or Individual 18+ |
| Scoring, interpretation, and associated writing | 2 hours | Psychodiagnostics test scoring and interpretation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Adolescent, or Individual 18+ |
| Interview with teacher or other involved profession (if needed & with your consent) | 15-30 mins | Psychological Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Adolescent, or Individual 18+ |
| Report writing, Supervision activities: Additions, review, and comments | 2 hours | Psychodiagnostics test scoring and interpretation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Adolescent, or Individual 18+ |
| Feedback session | 1 hour | Psychological Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent(s) name if for Child or Adolescent • Individual 18+ |
| Total Approximate hours | 9 hours (+ additional interviews) | | |

Note:

- a) Exact amounts vary depending on the location and psychologist/psychological associate with whom you are working. If testing is required for students in French Immersion an additional hour may be required.
- b) Items in blue are done by the psychologist/psychological associate without the client or parent
- c) There are occasions when additional time may be required for the assessment process, if this is the case the psychologist/psychological associate will review this with you in advance and seek your consent to proceed.
- d) The psych-education assessment report will typically be issued to you on receipt of payment for all billed services.

Risks and Benefits of a Mental Health Assessment

Before initiating a psychoeducational assessment, it is important to understand the risks and benefits of the assessment. Please read through this information carefully. Your psychologist would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Potential Benefits

1. Increased awareness or understanding of your own or your child's functioning, behaviour, emotional state, and/or relationships.
2. Formal identification of behavioural, emotional, developmental disorders, that may help you advocate for appropriate supports/interventions for you or your child.
3. Provide specific recommendations for treatment and/or accommodations at school or the workplace, such as educational placement decisions and individualized programming.
4. Monitor progress and change over time (in the case of multiple assessments).
5. Clarify complex historical and diagnostic pictures.
6. Integrate information from multiple sources to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of you or your child's history and current functioning.
7. Arrive at a new understanding of your own or your child's views and beliefs of himself/herself/themself, others, and the world.
8. Individuals often find the assessment process enjoyable and appreciate receiving one-on-one attention and interest from a supportive adult.

Risks

1. Assessment can uncover underlying problems/difficulties that you had not expected.
2. You or your child may receive a diagnosis, which can be a difficult process for some individuals, for example
 - i. You may need to learn about what that diagnosis means.
 - ii. Individuals, parents, and children may have to come to terms with the individual's limitations/weaknesses.
 - iii. Some individuals, parents, and children worry that diagnoses may be associated with social stigmatization (e.g., being singled out or treated differently than peers), if they choose to share the diagnosis with the school

or others.

- iv. Can be experienced as a loss of what you had expected for your or your child's life.
3. If a diagnosis was previously identified a re-assessment could find that the diagnosis is no longer appropriate. Therefore, it is possible that accommodations that have been in place will no longer be applicable. If this does occur, it is likely that transitional accommodation would be put in place to help the individual adjust.
 4. What you learn about you or your child may highlight the need for changes in your family and/or relationships.
 5. Although this information is helpful for schools in making decisions about placement and accommodations in the academic setting, we cannot guarantee that your or your child will receive the interventions/ accommodations that you are hoping for.
 6. What you learn about yourself or your child may not necessarily lead to a cure or complete resolution of the difficulties.
 7. Psychoeducational assessments are time consuming. They require individuals to collect information (e.g., school records, previous assessments), attend multiple appointments, and engage in testing. For some people, the testing can be lengthy, and some individuals feel fatigued, stressed, and/or frustrated with the process. Since the process is time-consuming, it can also be expensive particularly for individuals who do not have insurance for psychological services.
 8. In order for tests to be valid they require that individual put forth their best effort. In some circumstances, if sufficient effort is not put in the results will not be valid. In such cases this will be noted in the report and the conclusions drawn from the assessment will be limited. In other cases, it may be necessary to stop the assessment if the psychologist feels the results could not be interpreted and/or would not be useful to the child/individual.
 9. As part of the assessment, emotional functioning will be assessed. This may involve answering questions or discussing events that are painful or difficult to discuss. Sometimes individuals may experience intense feelings of sadness or anger, although this is usually temporary. However, if this is an important part of the evaluation it usually leads to an improved understanding of the difficulties that may be occurring.
 10. Although these assessments assess most aspects of an individual's functioning, they do not assess issues related to custody, access, or family functioning. They also do not assess intellectual abilities or academic skills. Those assessments require a different assessment process. Please ask your counselor for more details if this is what you are looking to assess.