

McGuire Psychological Services

ASSESSMENT TYPES

PSYCHOVOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

A psychovocational assessment is the “core” assessment. It includes the following testing:

- Assessment of general intellectual abilities (verbal and non-verbal reasoning abilities)
- Brief screening of academic skills
- Brief screening of learning and attention
- Assessment of manual work pace/dexterity
- Screening of emotional functioning and personality style
- Assessment of vocational interests

When should a referral for a Psychovocational assessment be made?

This referral is most appropriate when primary barriers are mental health and/or physical (i.e., when learning disabilities or specific cognitive deficits are not suspected).

LEARNING DISABILITIES DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Testing involves an extensive battery of academic skill measures, and measures to screen for other difficulties that affect learning (i.e., attention, memory and language measures). The Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Assessment is typically considered as an “add on” to the Psychovocational or Neuropsychological Assessment.

When should a referral for a *Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Assessment* be made?

This referral is most appropriate when there are indications of learning difficulties and/or limited academic skills in one or more domains.

A Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Assessment will determine whether or not the client meets diagnostic criteria for one or more Specific Learning Disorders, as per the DSM-5, or whether some of condition is likely more responsible for difficulties experienced with learning. Recommendations include specific classroom accommodations, as well as recommendations to accommodate deficits in the work setting.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

A neuropsychological assessment includes all measures included in the standard psychovocational assessment, as well as an extensive battery of tests to address functioning in major cognitive domains: complex attention, problem-solving/executive functioning, language, visual-spatial, and learning and memory.

When should a referral for *Neuropsychological Assessment* be considered?

A neuropsychological assessment should be considered when there is the possibility of specific deficits in one or more of the 5 primary cognitive domains. In other words, when there is the question of cognitive impairment secondary to either a congenital (from birth) or an acquired condition.

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Referral for Formal Assessment: What your client should know

The goal of the assessment is to outline strengths and weaknesses/barriers and to address how these impact training and employment options and support needs.

The tests are not pass/fail. The purpose is to determine what a client is good at and what he or she is not so good at, so that appropriate recommendations can be made.

If the client has a specific employment or training goal, the assessment will address whether the client is likely to succeed (i.e., the goal/plan is appropriate) and what supports he or she will need to ensure success.

There is nothing to do to prepare for the assessment, apart from having a good night's sleep and being free from substances for at least 24 hours prior to beginning the assessment.

- The client should bring reading glasses, if needed.
- Most assessments require at least a full day of testing and in many cases 2 days are required to complete testing.
- Clients are given a lunch break and other short rest breaks as needed.
- The assessment begins with an interview that addresses general personal history, schooling, work history, medical history, mental health history, and a review of current status/concerns.
- Approximately half of the testing is "face-to-face" where the client is asked questions and asked to solve puzzles and problems. There is very little writing for the client to do.
- The remainder of the testing is completion "paper-and-pencil" tasks that address school skills, likes and dislikes, and personal style characteristics. There are also some brief measures to screen for health and mental health issues. Most of these measures are not timed and again, little writing is required.

Once the testing is completed a report is written. This report is shared only with the referral source and the client.

A feedback or debriefing session is scheduled with the client and the referral agent/employment coach/case manager or advisor to go over the assessment report. This session is approximately 1 hour and takes place approximately 3 weeks after testing is completed. The client receives a copy of the assessment report at that time.