

BREAKING DOWN AND UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL:

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU

M. Connie Almeida, PhD, LSSP,
Licensed Psychologist
Licensed Specialist In School Psychology

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WHO PERFORMS A PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION?

- Licensed Ph.D. Psychologist
- Licensed Psychologist Associate (with PhD Supervision)
- Licensed Psychologists with Forensic Training (required for Competency to Stand Trial Evaluations)
- Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSP) – Educational settings

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION?

- Obtain information about psychological functioning in a standardized manner by a qualified professional
 - Assess emotional, mental, behavioral, cognitive, social functioning and capacity
 - Determine and/or delineate psychopathology
 - Make treatment suggestions

WHY ARE YOU ASKING FOR A PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION?

- What kind of information is needed?
- What are the goals of the evaluation?
- What is the status of the case?
- What are the issues and can testing help?
- Is everyone in agreement with the purpose and reasons for the evaluation?

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

- Mental Health assessment
 - Clinical interview
 - Screening for personality disorders, anxiety, depression
 - Co-occurring disorders
- Intellectual functioning
 - Standardized assessment of intellectual functioning (Wechsler Scales)
 - Standardized assessment of adaptive functioning
- In order to determine intellectual disabilities- need an IQ and ABL functioning assessment

EVALUATIONS IN ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES?

- Child Developmental Evaluations
- Child Mental Health Evaluations
- Child and Family Evaluations
- Adult Mental Health Evaluations
- Parental Competency Evaluations
- Psychosocial Evaluations

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS – ADULT

- Assess parents mental, emotional, cognitive and behavioral functioning
- Assess the impact of these domains on the parent's capacity to care for their children
- Discuss recommendations for intervention to address identified areas of need

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

- Court order and/ or referral information
- Relevant History
 - Developmental
 - Medical
 - Psychiatric
 - Legal
 - Educational
 - Child Protective Services
 - Family
 - H/o of Trauma
 - Military

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

- Sources of Information
 - Interviews
 - Review of records
 - Tests administered
 - Observation
- Assessment results
- Summary
- Diagnostic Impressions / Diagnosis
- Recommendations

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS – CHILDREN

- Developmentally appropriate assessment
- Observation across settings and with multiple caregivers
- Knowledge of developmental milestones is critical
- Take into consideration prenatal development

SUMMARY POINTS

- Therapist versus “Forensic evaluator”
- Clear communication regarding the purpose of the psychological evaluation
- Clear understanding of different types of evaluations, purpose and qualified providers
- Distinguish between psychosocial, psychological and psychiatric evaluations
- Early assessment are critical to guide service planning
- Coordinate assessment information
- Diagnosis of a mental illness should not be used as a “punitive measure for families or children. Mental illness are diseases that need accommodations and interventions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

M. Connie Almeida, PhD, LSSP

Licensed Psychologist

Licensed Specialist in School Psychology

Director of Behavioral Health

Fort Bend County - Richmond, TX

Connie.almeida@fortbendcountytexas.gov

281-238-3078