



GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF A NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The purpose of a neuropsychological evaluation is to assess various domains related to brain-behavior functioning.

A neuropsychological evaluation generally consists of three components:

1. Review of the relevant and available records
2. Diagnostic interview
3. Formal neuropsychological testing

The record review takes place outside of the face-to-face time spent between the examiner and the examinee.

The diagnostic interview usually takes two to three hours and typically covers matters such as current symptoms, course of symptoms, psychosocial history, and medical/mental health history. During the diagnostic interview, the examiner is both collecting historic information and making behavioral observations pertaining to the examinee's mental status, emotional functioning, and social functioning.

Formal neuropsychological testing occurs after the diagnostic interview, preferably on a separate occasion. Such practice reduces the burden placed on the examinee and mitigates fatigue, thereby facilitating optimal results.

The duration of the testing session varies considerably due to individual differences between examinees. For example, the time it takes to complete testing is highly influenced by the examinee's response time and performance. Nevertheless, in my practice, the usual time allotted for testing is 8 hours. Scheduling that amount of time is necessary in order to accurately administer tests assessing a wide range of functioning including emotional/behavioral, sensory/motor, attention, language/communication, intellectual abilities, learning/memory, executive functioning, and validity/response bias. Moreover, examinees typically require breaks, often including a 45-60 minute lunch break as well as one or more shorter breaks (e.g. to use the restroom).

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