Helpful Reminders

- Psychological testing should only be considered after first seeking consultation/clinical supervision and if multiple interventions have been tried.

- Psychological testing will not always result in a change of diagnosis or new information. It sometimes confirms what was already known.

- Testing cannot make specific recommendations for placement, child custody evaluations, or other psycho-legal referral questions (e.g., civil procedures, competency, dangerousness, malingering, etc.).

- If the question is solely regarding COGNITIVE functioning the more appropriate referral source is the school system.

- If the question is solely regarding ADAPTIVE or DEVELOPMENTAL functioning the more appropriate referral source is the Regional Center system.

- If the question is solely regarding the first onset of PSYCHOTIC SYMPTOMS in adolescence to early adulthood (12-30 years) the more appropriate referral source is SacEDAPT.

- If the client could benefit from a multidisciplinary team-based approach, the psychologist may recommend an evaluation with the CAPS Clinic Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (CMAT).

- Testing requires a commitment from both treatment providers and families. Please consider referring only when the child has relative stability, is not at-risk for hospitalization or out-of-home placement, and when the family is able to participate fully in the process.

Contact Numbers

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1st District  2nd District  3rd District  4th District  5th District

A Child and Family Specialty Mental Health Service

Rev. 05/05/2017
What is Psychological Testing?
- Psychologists use tests and other assessment tools to measure and observe a client’s behavior.
- These tests show a child’s performance at a particular time in his/her life and helps determine a diagnosis and guide treatment.
- The psychologist or supervised psychology intern/fellow will evaluate information from different sources (the child, caregivers, teachers, therapists) to better understand his/her strengths and difficulties.
- Results of testing can help therapists adjust treatment to better meet the child’s and family’s needs.

What May Be Assessed?
- Personality functioning
- Social-emotional functioning
- Behavioral functioning
- Interpersonal functioning
- Adaptive behavior
- Cognitive, visual, motor, auditory, language, memory, and achievement
- Medical, developmental, academic, familial, and social history
- Strengths and challenges
- The nature, presence and degree of any disabling conditions

Psychological Testing Process
- The referring therapist must first gather and review all available records and collateral information necessary to complete the referral form in its entirety.
- After reviewing history, speaking to caregivers, and determining that psychological testing is indicated, the evaluator may observe the child at his/her school and speak with his/her teachers.
- The evaluator will then meet with the child several times in the office, sometimes for several hours at a time.
- At the end of testing, the evaluator will score and interpret results, which will be integrated with relevant background information into a written report of the findings.
- Testing feedback will be provided to the client, client’s family, and treatment team to review the results and discuss the recommendations.

Good Referral Questions
- Differentiating between diagnoses that share similar symptoms (e.g., Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder vs. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder).
- A child’s symptoms seem to be getting worse without an explanation.
- Nothing is working in therapy despite multiple interventions.

Different Types of Psychological Testing
Once assigned, the evaluator may determine the type of testing:

1. **Targeted Screening Assessment**
   - A targeted version of the Psychological Testing Process to clarify diagnosis and symptomatology, and/or make appropriate referrals for a psychiatrist or other services.
   - May include: consultation, 1-2 administration sessions, feedback, and/or a brief 3-5 page report. *Timeline: ~1-2 months.*

2. **Standard Psychological Testing**
   - See description for Psychological Testing Process.
   - May include: 4-6 administration sessions, feedback, and a 10-15 page report. *Timeline: ~3-4 months*

3. **CAPS Clinic Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (CMAT)**
   - Psychological testing that includes a team of psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, and trainees observing behind a one-way mirror. These complex cases are typically involved in several systems of care. Team sessions are currently held Wednesday mornings.
   - May include: 4-6 administration sessions, feedback, and a 15-20 page report. *Timeline: ~4 months*