

# Psychiatric Evaluation



## What is a psychiatric evaluation?

A psychiatric evaluation may be needed to diagnose emotional, behavioral, or developmental disorders. An evaluation of a child, teen, or adult is based physical, social, thinking (cognitive), emotional, and educational behaviors. It also takes into account genes and a person's environment.

## Who is evaluated?

Many times, families, spouses, teachers, or friends are the first to suspect that their loved one has a mental health problem. This is often because of feelings, behaviors, or environmental conditions that cause them to act disruptive, rebellious, or sad. This may include problems with relationships with family or friends. Or it may cause problems with work, school, sleeping, or eating. It can also cause problems with substance abuse, expressing emotions, development, coping, attentiveness, and responsiveness. It's important for families who suspect a problem in any of these areas to seek treatment as soon as possible. Treatment for mental health problems is available.

## What is involved in a psychiatric evaluation?

These are the most common parts of a psychiatric evaluation. But each evaluation is different because each person's symptoms and behaviors are different. Evaluation may include:

- Description of behaviors, such as when do the behaviors happen, how long do they last, what triggers them
- Description of symptoms. This is both physical and mental health symptoms.
- How behavior affects work, school, and relationships
- Interview
- Personal and family health and mental health history
- Complete health history, including description of the person's overall physical health, list of any other illnesses or conditions present, and any current treatments
- Lab tests and in some cases imaging studies. These may be used to find out if the person has an underlying health condition. These may include:
  - Blood tests
  - Imaging studies to look for problems, especially in the brain structures
- Educational assessments
- Speech and language assessments
- Psychological assessments

## When a family member is being evaluated

It's natural and quite common for spouses and family members to question themselves when a loved one needs to be evaluated by a psychiatrist. You may have many questions and concerns as to their welfare and emotional well-being. Common questions include:

- What is wrong with my spouse, family member, or loved one?
- Are they abnormal?
- Did I do something wrong in my relationship with them to cause this?
- Do they need to go to the hospital?
- Will they need treatment?
- Will they "outgrow" or stop doing these behaviors at some point?
- Is this just "a phase" they are going through?
- How can I help them get better?
- What will treatment cost?
- Where do we go for help?
- What does this diagnosis mean?
- How can my family become involved?

Family involvement in treatment can be very important for any person with a mental health problem. The primary healthcare provider or mental health provider will address questions and give reassurance by working with you to establish long-term and short-term treatment goals for your loved one.

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