



Mental Health Related Evaluation, Assessment, and Testing Terminology Guide

The purpose of this document is to establish standard terms to be used when referencing the corresponding evaluation type. The following is a list of terms commonly used interchangeably and/or mistakenly, primarily related to referrals for specialty care. The goal is to ensure WVCH Members receive the appropriate evaluation for their unique needs. The terms listed contain the following elements: 1. Synonyms and other terms used to identify the same evaluation type; 2. The type of professional who commonly completes each evaluation type; 3. A general description of the evaluation geared to help differentiate between each evaluation; and 4. The appropriate referral pathway.

Mental Health Assessment- Also called MHA, Mental Health Evaluation, and Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation (CPT code 90791) when it is billed by a licensed mental health professional, MD, or PMHNP. A mental health assessment is most often completed by a mental health professional with at least Masters-level training in the mental health field. A mental health assessment is an intensive clinical and psychosocial evaluation of an individual's mental health and/or co-occurring (substance abuse and/or medical) conditions which results in an issuance of an integrated written document. This service may be conducted by an individual or by a multidisciplinary team and includes face-to-face interview contacts with the individual and may include the individual's family and/or significant others, collateral contacts and other agencies to determine the individual's problems and strengths, to identify the disability(ies), and to identify natural supports. An initial treatment plan, including discharge criteria and/or treatment recommendations is included as part of the assessment. The mental health assessment by non-physician (HCPC code H0031) is billed by a Qualified Mental Health Professional (non-licensed master's level clinician working in an agency with a Certificate of Approval from the Oregon Health Authority). Mental health assessments are considered a mental health benefit and generally follow a mental health referral pathway.

Psychiatric Evaluation - Also called Psychiatric Assessment, and Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation with Medical Services (CPT code 90792). This service is differentiated from Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation (CPT code 90791) in that it can only be used by a medical professional with psychiatric training and medical services must be included. It is performed by a medical professional with special training (courses and residencies in psychiatry). In practice, it is a medical doctor (most commonly a psychiatrist) or psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP). The purpose and conduct of a psychiatric evaluation depend on who requests the evaluation, why it is requested, and the expected future role of the provider in the patient's care. A general psychiatric evaluation has as its central component an interview with the patient. The evaluation often includes: history of present illness; psychiatric history; substance use history; medical history; review of systems; family history; personal and social history; examination, including mental status exam; and impression and plan. The interview-based data are integrated with information that may be obtained through other components of the evaluation, such as a review of medical records, a physical examination, diagnostic tests, and history from collateral sources. The outcome of the evaluation may or may not lead to a specific psychiatric diagnosis. The aims of a general psychiatric evaluation are 1) to establish whether a mental disorder or other condition requiring the attention of a psychiatrist/PMHNP is present; 2) to collect data sufficient to support differential diagnosis and a comprehensive clinical formulation; 3) to collaborate with the patient to develop an initial treatment plan that will foster treatment adherence; and 4) to identify longer-term issues that need to be considered in follow-up care. It is common practice for psychiatrists/PMHNP to treat patients using a combination of psychotherapy and psychopharmacology (medication management). Psychiatric evaluations are considered a mental health benefit and generally follow a mental health referral pathway.

Psychological Evaluation- Also called Psychological Testing and Psychological Assessment. A licensed psychologist who has completed graduate level education and training in the field of psychology conducts the psychological evaluation. According to the American Psychological Association (APA) tests and assessments are two separate but related components of a psychological evaluation. Testing involves the use of formal tests such as questionnaires or checklists. These are often described as “norm-referenced” tests meaning the tests have been standardized so that test-takers are evaluated in a similar way, no matter where they live or who administers the test. A psychological assessment can include numerous components such as norm-referenced psychological tests, informal tests and surveys, interview information, school or medical records, medical evaluation and observational data. A psychologist determines what information to use based on the specific questions being asked. One common assessment technique, for instance, is a clinical interview. When a psychologist speaks to a client about his or her concerns and history, they're able to observe how the client thinks, reasons and interacts with others. Assessments may also include interviewing other people who are close to the client, such as teachers, coworkers or family members. Together, testing and assessment allows a psychologist to see the full picture of a person's strengths and limitations. Psychological evaluations are considered a mental health benefit and generally follow a mental health referral pathway.

Neuropsychological Evaluation- Also called a Neuropsychological Assessment and Neuropsychological Testing. Neuropsychological evaluations are conducted by a Clinical Neuropsychologist who is a licensed, doctoral-level psychologist who applies principles of assessment and intervention based upon the scientific study of human behavior as it relates to normal and abnormal functioning of the central nervous system. Neuropsychological evaluation is an evaluation of the brain-behavior relationship. It is the unique integration of genetic, developmental, and environmental history with formal test data to create a narrative report that tells the story of the patient and gives highly specialized recommendations. Formal testing assesses cognitive, personality, and functional areas through: Intellectual and Academic functioning, Executive functioning, memory - attention, short and long-term memory, visual and auditory memory, language and reading skills, Phonology, gross motor development - balance, hemispheric dominance, fine motor control and speed, L-R discrimination. Executive skills assessment includes: problem-solving, planning, organization, inhibition, attention, and spatial relations. Personality functioning is often evaluated to understand how the patient feels about themselves and interacts with the world around them. Collateral information and behavioral assessment is often sought from parents, educators, doctors, and therapists when appropriate. Often, these assessments are used to assess epilepsy, TBI, stroke, brain infection, concussion, cancer, brain tumor, premature birth, birth trauma, etc. Neuropsychological evaluations are considered a medical benefit (not mental health) and generally follow a medical referral pathway.

Neurological Evaluation- Also called a Neurological Test, Neurological Assessment, or simply a Neurological. Neurological evaluations are completed by a physician with neurological specialty and training to assess, diagnosis, and treat neurological disorders. Neurologists examine patients who are referred to them by other physicians. A neurological evaluation typically includes: a comprehensive medical history, a physical examination focusing on evaluating the nervous system, assessment of the patient's cognitive functioning, cranial nerves, motor strength, sensation, reflexes, coordination, and gait. In some instances, neurologists may order additional diagnostic tests as part of the evaluation. Commonly employed tests in neurology include: computed axial tomography (CAT) scans, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and ultrasound of major blood vessels of the head and neck. Neurologists commonly treat headaches, radiculopathy, neuropathy, stroke, dementia, seizures and epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, Parkinson's disease, Tourette's syndrome, multiple sclerosis, head trauma, sleep disorders, neuromuscular diseases, and nervous system related conditions. Neurological evaluations are a medical benefit (not mental health) and generally follow a medical referral pathway.