Overview of the Assessment Process

- An Assessment has the following parts:
  - Referral Question
  - Clinical Interview
  - Mental Status Exam
  - Intellectual Assessment
    - Achievement Assessment
  - Personality Assessment

Definitions, Part 1

- Assessment
  - The overall process of determining a client's capabilities
- Evaluation
  - Sitting with a client to determine capabilities
    - The specific session
Definitions, Part 2

- Testing
  - Applying a given set of problems to a client to determine capabilities

The Referral Question

- Sine Qua Non of assessment
- Comes from a number of sources
- Provides the basis for completing the assessment
  - Evaluations change based on what the referral question asks
- Examples

Interview

- Main task is to identify the presenting problem
- Helps to provide a diagnosis
- Gives the first data point
- Single most important means of data collection

- Can do with a number of people:
  - Client
  - Family members
  - Teachers
  - Former therapist
Interview vs. Conversation

- Interview is designed to obtain certain goals
- Interview may require discussion of unpleasant thoughts, feelings, or events
- Interviewer is in control
- One-sided

Structured vs. Unstructured Interviews

- **Structured**
  - Increased reliability & validity
  - Decreased flexibility
  - May miss idiosyncratic info
  - May increase defensiveness and resistance
  - Allows for comparisons
  - Used in research and clinical settings
  - Can be scored by computer

- **Unstructured**
  - Decreased reliability & validity
  - Increased flexibility
  - Picks up idiosyncratic information
  - Increases rapport
  - Creates favorable changes and encourages self-exploration
  - Used in clinical settings

Hints to Help

- Use open-ended questions
- Only ask a single question
- Talk in the client’s language
- Choose the right probing question
  - Avoid “Why”
  - Focus on facts
- Avoid negative phrasing
Hints to Help

- Encourage precision
- Keep questions brief
- Keep on the lookout for new leads

Areas to Assess in the Interview

- Here is where you include information from the clinical interview
  - Psychological/emotional History
  - Suicide Assessment
  - Medical history
  - Alcohol and drug use
  - Family history
  - Developmental history
  - Social history
  - Education history
  - Employment history
  - Sexual history
  - Legal history
  - Financial history

Types of Assessment Instruments

- Use both idiographic and nomothetic instruments
  - Idiographic—look at the unique aspects of the individual
  - Nomothetic—look at how the individual compares to the population.
Mental Status Exam

- First description of client
  - Describes from outside (more objective) to inside (more subjective)
- Areas:
  - Attitude, Behavior, and Activity
  - Mood, Affect, and Emotional Reactions
  - Speech and Language
  - Thought Process, Content, and Perception

Mental Status Exam

- Sensorium
- Cognitive and Mental Functioning
- Insight and Judgment
- Mini-Mental Status Examination (MMSE)
  - 30-item brief measure of mental status
  - But not the ONLY way you assess mental status

Intelligence Assessment

- An evaluation of a client’s cognitive function
- Major tests:
  - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale/Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children/Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence
  - Stanford-Binet
  - Kaufman Adult Intelligence Test/Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children
Intelligence Assessment

- WAIS/WISC/WPPSI
  - Follow the same theory
    - General intelligence (g)
      - Then indices
        - Verbal Comprehension Index
        - Perceptual Reasoning Index
        - Processing Speed Index
        - Working Memory Index
      - Then Subtests
        - Block Design (PRI)

Intelligence Assessment

- Similarities (VCI)
- Digit Span (WMI)
- Matrix Reasoning (PRI)
- Vocabulary (VCI)
- Arithmetic (WMI)
- Symbol Search (PSI)
- Information (VCI)
- Visual Puzzles (PRI)
- Coding (PSI)

Evaluating Intelligence Assessments

- Psychometrics
  - Reliability
    - Internal Consistency
    - Test-Retest
    - Split Half
  - Validity
    - Construct
    - Face
Achievement Assessment

- An assessment of a client’s academic abilities
- Major Tests:
  - Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement
  - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test

Areas assessed

- Math
  - Calculation
  - Applied Problems
- Reading
  - Reading Comprehension
  - Reading Rate
- Writing
  - Written Expression
  - Spelling

Personality Assessment

- An assessment of the qualities that comprise an individual's personality and components of psychopathology
- Two types:
  - Projective tests
  - Objective tests
Personality Assessment

Major Projective Tests
- Rorschach Inkblot Test
  - Exner Comprehensive System
- Thematic Apperception Test
- Incomplete Sentences
- House-Tree-Person Projective Test

Major Objective Tests
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
- Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory
- Personality Assessment Inventory

Neuroticism, Extraversion Openness Personality Inventory

Narrow Band Assessments
- Psychopathology:
  - Depression
    - Beck Depression Inventory
  - Anxiety
    - Beck Anxiety Inventory
Personality Assessment

- ADHD
  - Clinical Assessment of Attention
  - Behavioral Assessment Scale for Children
  - Brown ADD Scales
- Normal Personality
  - Big Five Personality Traits
    - IPIP

Report Writing

- Why a report?
  - Answer referral question
  - Provide useful info
    - Structured
    - Objective
    - In-depth review of client
  - Clarifies behavior and explains why it occurs
  - Recommendations

Uses of Psychological Assessment, Part 1

- High Stakes Testing
  - Usually assessments involve making decisions about what happens in people’s lives
- Learning Disability Assessment
  - Primary School
  - Secondary School
  - Tests
Uses of Psychological Assessment, Part 2

- Social Security Disability Testing
  - Mental Disability
  - Tests
- Parenting/Custody Evaluations
  - Court involvement
  - Dangers
  - Tests

Uses of Psychological Assessment, Part 3

- Medical Evaluations
  - Bariatric Surgery
  - Pain Management Surgeries
    - Pain Pump
    - Spinal Stimulator
  - Tests

Uses of Psychological Assessment, Part 4

- Forensic Evaluations
  - Competency to Stand Trial
  - Insanity
    - Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity
    - Guilty But Mentally Ill
  - Tests
Uses of Psychological Assessment, Part 5

- **Diagnosis**
  - What we usually think of when we think of assessment
  - Tests

- **Treatment Outcome**
  - How we determine if psychotherapy is effective
  - Tests

**References**