Chapter 3
Assessing Psychological Disorders

Clinical assessment

Diagnosis
Assessing Psychological Disorders
• Like a funnel

Determining the Value of Clinical Assessment

Methods of Clinical Assessment
• Clinical Interview
• Physical Exam
• Behavioral Assessment
• Psychological Testing
• Neuropsychological Testing
• Neuroimaging
• Psychophysiological Assessment

Clinical Interview
• Unstructured vs. Semistructured
• Mental Status Exam
• Behavioral Observation

Mental Status Exam
• Presentation
  – Level of consciousness
  – General appearance
  – Attitude
• Motor Behavior
• Affect
  – Facial expression
  – Gestures
  – Speech
• Mood

Value Depends On
Reliability
Validity
Standardization
Mental Status Exam
- Cognitive Status
  - Orientation person
  - Attention
- Language
- Thought
  - Thought content
  - Thought process
  - Insight
- Fund of knowledge
- Intelligence

Physical Examination
Behavioral Assessment
- Formal observation
- Self-monitoring
- Behavior Rating Scales
- Problem of Reactivity

Psychological Testing
Projective Tests
- Rorschach Inkblot Test
  - Hermann Rorschach
  - John Exner - 1974
- Draw a Picture
- Sentence Completion Methods

Psychological Testing
Projective Tests
- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
  - Henry Murray – 1938
- Children’s Apperception Test (CAT)
  - Bellak, 1986
- Robert’s Apperception Test for Children (RATC)
  - McArthur & Roberts, 1982

Psychological Testing
Objective Tests
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI, MMPI-2, MMPI-A)
- Intelligence Tests
  - Intelligence Quotient MA/CA*100
  - Deviation IQ
  - Stanford-Binet Test
  - Wechsler Intelligence Tests

Wechsler Scales
- Verbal Comprehension Index
  - tasks that require a subject to listen to auditorially presented verbal stimuli & provide a verbal response
- Perceptual Organization Index
  - tasks that require a subject to look at visual stimuli & manipulate them with one’s hands
### Wechsler Scales

- **Working Memory Index**
  - Tasks that require a subject to listen to auditorially presented information involving numbers, manipulate them in one’s head, & then verbalize a response

- **Processing Speed Index**
  - Tasks that require a subject to examine visual stimuli, strategize, perform visual–perceptual discriminations, remember the visual stimuli, & then rapidly copy symbols or mark boxes with a pencil

### Neuropsychologist

- A clinical psychologist with a specialty in the applied science of brain–behavior relationships. The neuropsychologist quantitatively & objectively evaluates patients’ cognitive, behavioral, & emotional strengths & weaknesses & their relationship to normal & abnormal central nervous system functioning. The neuropsychologist uses this information to identify & diagnose impairment, & plan & implement intervention strategies.

### Neuropsychological Evaluation

- A comprehensive assessment of cognitive & behavioral functions using a set of standardized tests & procedures (e.g., WMS–III). Various mental functions are systematically tested including, but not limited to:
  - Intelligence; Academic Skills; Visual–Spatial Organization; Language; Attention, concentration, & information processing; Verbal Learning & Memory; Visual Learning & Memory; Concept formation, problem solving, planning & reasoning; Perceptual & motor abilities; Emotions, behavior & personality

### When is Neuropsychological Evaluation needed?

- It’s recommended for any situation in which brain–based impairment in cognitive function or behavior is suspected. Typical referrals include individuals with:
  - Traumatic brain injury, Developmental learning disabilities, Attention deficit disorders, Strokes, Seizure disorders, Dementing conditions, Effects of toxic chemicals & chronic substance abuse

### Neuroimaging

- **Images of Brain Structure**
  - Computerized Axial Tomography (CT)
  - Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

- **Images of Brain Functioning**
  - Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
  - Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT)
  - fMRI

### Psychophysiological Assessment

- Measurable changes in the nervous system that reflect emotional or psychological events

- **Electroencephalogram (EEG)**
  - Ongoing electrical activity
  - Evoked potential (aka event–related potential or ERP)

- **Waves**
  - Alpha
  - Delta
Psychophysiological Assessment
- Electrodermal responding
  - Skin conductance (was GSR)
- Heart Rate, Blood pressure, Sexual arousal
- Biofeedback

Diagnosing Psychological Disorders
- Idiographic strategy
- Nomothetic strategy
- Nosology
- Nomenclature

Classification Issues
- Classical or pure categorical approach (Kraepelin)
- Dimensional approach
- Prototypical approach

Reliability
- Interrater reliability
- Test–retest reliability
- Alternate form reliability
- Internal consistency reliability

Validity
- Construct validity
- Criterion (predictive) validity
- Content validity

Development of the DSM
- DSM-I (1952)
- DSM-II (1968)
- DSM-III (1980)
- DSM-III-R (1987)
- DSM-IV (1994) & the ICD-10
  - Text revision to clarify issues related to the dx of psych disorders

DSM-IV: A Prototypical --Dimensional Approach
- Thresholds for Diagnosis of Disorders
- Multiaxial Format
  - Axis I: Most Major Disorders
  - Axis II: Personality Disorders / MR
  - Axis III: Medical Diseases or Conditions
  - Axis IV: Psychosocial / Environment Problems
  - Axis V: Global Assessment of Functioning
- Some Problems With the DSM-IV