



Using Psychological Assessment to Inform Treatment

Aude Henin, PhD





MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

PSYCHIATRY ACADEMY

Disclosures

My spouse/partner and I have the following
relevant financial relationship with a commercial interest to disclose:

Oxford University Press



Common Types of Assessment

Semi-structured
clinician interview

Child- and parent-
report
questionnaires

Medical/neurologic
evaluation

Teacher-reports and
school observation

Neuropsychologic
assessment

Psychosocial
Assessment



Assessment Phase

- Diagnostic clarification with use of standardized measures
 - Semi structured interviews
 - Self-, parent-, and teacher-report measures
- Behavioral manifestation of symptoms in different contexts
 - Behavioral monitoring
 - Understanding of antecedents and consequences of behaviors



Semi-Structured Diagnostic Evaluation

- To determine diagnosis, usually according to DSM criteria
- Can be as simple as a DSM checklist
- Several diagnostic interviews exist
 - Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule for Children (ADIS C/P)
 - Kiddie Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia



Questionnaires



- Continuous measure of symptomatology
- Administer at baseline and regularly throughout treatment to evaluate progress
- General versus symptom specific questionnaires



Assessment Tools: Broad-based Questionnaires

- Assess overall functioning and/or symptom profiles:
 - Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)
 - Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC)
 - Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS)
 - Child Quality of Life Questionnaires

Assessment Tools: Disorder-Specific

- **Measures of Depression:**
 - Child Depression Inventory (CDI)
 - Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)
- **Measures of Anxiety:**
 - Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS)
 - Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children, 2nd edition (MASC)
 - Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED)
- **Measures of OCD:**
 - Children's Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (CY-BOCS)
- **Measures of ADHD:**
 - ADHD Rating Scale
 - Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF)



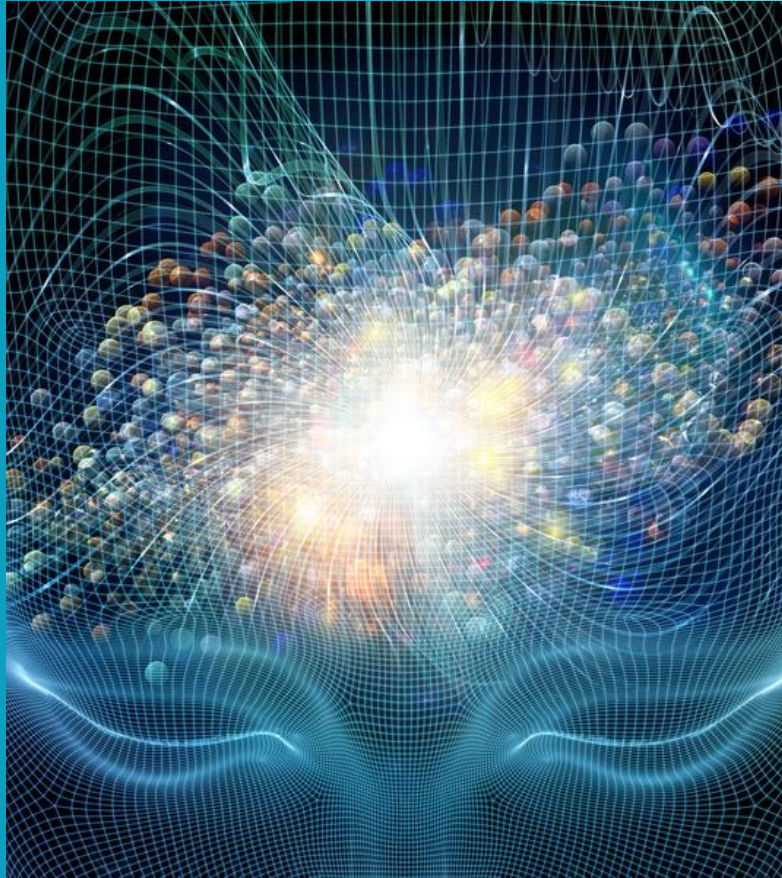


School-Based Assessments

- Review of report cards, standardized assessments, IEPs
- Teacher ratings on questionnaires
 - Behavior Assessment System for Children, 3rd ed. (BASC-3)
 - Child Behavior Checklist, Teacher Report Form (TRF)
 - Conners, 3rd ed.
 - Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function, 2nd ed. (BRIEF-2)
- School observations
 - Functional analysis of behavior
 - In what settings are the behaviors expressed?
 - What are the antecedents of behaviors?
 - What are the consequences? Adult responses? Peer responses?



Neuropsychologic Assessment



Allows for complementary evaluation of:

- Cognitive strengths and weaknesses
- Learning disabilities
- Executive functioning weaknesses

Should not be used to rule in or rule out
ADHD or ASD



Common Questions for Referral?

- Does the child have a specific learning disability? Dyslexia? Dyscalculia?
- Does the child have a nonverbal learning disability?
- Are there deficits in specific frontal lobe functions that are contributing to psychiatric symptoms or functional impairments?
- Does the child have impairments in executive functioning in addition to ADHD?



Quick Primer to IQ Testing

- Average is 100, 1 SD is 15 points
- For subtests, average is 10, 1 SD is 3 points
- Compared to same-age peers, how does the child score?
- Are there any discrepancies between subtests (1.5 SD+)?
 - Language versus visual-spatial?
 - Processing speed?
 - Working memory?
- Are there unexpected discrepancies between IQ and academic performance?



Language-Based Skills

Articulation

- Ability to accurately pronounce words

Expressive Language

- Ability to coherently express thoughts to others

Receptive language

- Ability to understand oral language

Phonological processing

- Use of the sounds of one's language to process spoken and written language
- Includes phonologic awareness, working memory, and retrieval
- May impact math skills

Reading

- Basic- and higher-level reading skills
- Includes reading decoding, reading fluency, and reading comprehension

Written language

- Ability to communicate thoughts in written form
- Includes spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Writing process and organization
- Writing product (including fluency, sentence complexity, etc.)



Visual-Spatial Skills

- Ability to understand, reason, and remember spatial relations among objects or space
- Includes 8 different skills including:
 - Visual discrimination
 - Seeing differences between similar shapes, letters, figures
 - Visual-motor processing
 - Difficulty using feedback from eyes to coordinate motor movement; body in space
 - Long- or short-term visual memory
 - Visual sequencing
 - Telling the order of symbols, words, or images
 - Visual-spatial functioning
 - Where objects are in space; judging space and time



Processing Speed

- Speed at which the child perceives, makes sense of, and responds to information
- Has a tremendous impact on:
 - Academic functioning (77% receiving services in school)
 - Social functioning (1/3 have social difficulties)
 - Anxiety
 - Behavioral problems
- Anxiety, mood disorders, and ADHD may also impact processing speed
- Some pharmacologic treatments may reduce processing speed



Memory Functioning

- Visual-spatial versus verbal
- Auditory versus visual
- Working memory
 - The ability to manipulate temporarily held information (storage + processing)
 - Limited in its capacity and vulnerable to distraction
 - Considered an executive function
 - Critical for other higher-order functions
 - Different from short- and long-term memory (though related)



Executive Functioning

- Govern planning, completion and evaluation of tasks and communication
- Core skills
 - Working memory
 - Inhibition
 - Behavioral inhibition
 - Selective attention/cognitive inhibition
 - Cognitive flexibility
- Higher levels skills:
 - Planning
 - Organization
 - Self-Monitoring
 - Reasoning
 - Problem solving
 - Emotion regulation





Common Questions re. EF Impairments?

- Does the child have deficits in any specific domains of EF?
- What is the relationship between EF functioning and emotional functioning?
- How are EF deficits impacting functioning?
- How might EF deficits impact treatment?



Recommendations

- Good testing offers specific, individualized feedback and recommendations
 - Accommodations in school
 - Specialized instruction in school
 - Outside treatment/therapies
 - Tutoring
 - EF training
 - Medication
 - CBT
 - Social Skills training
 - Strategies for creating a user friendlier environment at home and elsewhere
 - Mitigating difficulties
 - Building on strengths



Assessment of Family Factors

- Parental psychopathology
- Family cultural factors
- Family strengths
- Family conflict and parenting stress
- Sibling issues
- Family stressors
- Multi-generational households
- Family Accommodation:
 - Modifying family routines
 - Facilitating avoidance
 - Offering reassurance





Additional Considerations

Child Development

- Language and cognitive development
- Age-appropriate expectations
- Age-specific stressors



Cultural Factors

- Minority Stressors
- Resiliency
- Societal/community/ familial expectations
- Expressions of distress





Using Assessment to Inform Intervention

- Clarifying the diagnostic and symptom picture:
- Clarifying intervention goals
- Recognizing historical and current contributors to symptoms
- Identifying potential challenges/hurdles
- Identifying areas of strength and motivation
- Developing rapport with child and family
- Instilling hope and expectations for intervention
- Differentiating the child from his/her symptoms



Feedback from Assessment

- Give feedback to both child and parents
- Present findings from any assessments and questionnaire measures
- Discuss diagnoses if appropriate
- Introduce how CBT can be helpful
- Review intervention approach
- Discuss intervention format
- Discuss shorter-term, focused intervention goals
- Highlight between-session practice for generalization of skills
- Parent involvement is often key

Development of Goals for Therapy



- Develop specific, objective, and observable goals
- Regularly assess progress towards goals
- Involve parents as appropriate based on developmental and individual considerations



Goal Setting Strategies

- **The Problem:**

So, what seems to be the issue? Is this problem a feeling that is uncomfortable or something that you do? Has anyone else noticed this problem?

- **The Impact:**

How does this affect your life, at school, playing with friends, going on trips? How do you feel about yourself when this happens? What would be different in your life if you didn't have this problem?

- **Barriers:**

What skills do you have that could help solve this problem? What might get in the way of doing so? Who can support/coach you in working towards your goals?

- **Signs of Progress:**

What would be some signs that you are feeling better? How will you know if you are achieving your goals?