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What exactly is psychological testing?



Here at Psychological Health-Roanoke a variety of different psychological testing may be given to determine different diagnoses. This newsletter will explain the different between certain types of psychological testing in order to help you gain a better understanding of these tests. While some tests are more popular than others to be administered, it is good to have an insight into all different types of testing.

Intelligence Tests¹

These tests help to determine your intelligence or IQ (Intelligence Quotient). The intelligence tests do not measure what you've learned, as an achievement test would, but rather a measure of potential. These tests should be able to cross cultures, but for most test designers they find this aspect particularly challenging.

Achievement and Aptitude Tests¹

Achievement and aptitude tests are used mainly for educational or employment settings. These tests help you to measure a mastery of a particular area such as mathematics or spelling.

Neuropsychological Tests²

This type of testing helps to measure shortfalls in cognitive functioning due to some sort of brain damage (i.e. stroke or brain injury). The measures of cognitive functioning include categories such as one's ability to think, speak reason, etc. Other neuropsychologists use these tests to measure memory, learning, attention, and concentration. These tests may also be useful in that they may be able to pick up on brain damage that may have been too slight to have resulted visibly on MRIs, CTs, or X-rays.

Occupational Tests¹

Occupational tests are administered to help to match your specific interests with the same interest of persons in certain careers. For example, if you are

interested in most things that other school teachers are interested in, then it is said that you may make a good school teacher. While these tests are not always exact, there is a high probability of a successful occupation and personality match.

Personality tests¹

Another type of popular tests that are administered are personality tests. These tests help to measure your basic personality style, and are most usefully in research or forensic settings to help with clinical diagnoses. Two of the most well-known personality tests are the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the Rorschach (the "inkblot test"). The Rorschach is composed of several cards of inkblots. The patient would give a description of the images and feelings they would experience while looking at the blots. Please refer to the last part of this newsletter for information on the MMPI.

There are also specific clinical tests that aim to measure specific clinical matters, such as a person's current level of anxiety or depression.

Other Popular Test used:

- **Beck-** The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) is a 21 self-report inventory that helps measure the severity of depression. Some of the items included are hopelessness, irritability, guilt, feelings of being punished, fatigue, and weight loss.
- **STAXI-** The State Trait Anger Expression Inventory is a test that is designed to measure the components of anger in both a normal and abnormal personality. It addresses both the experience of anger and the expression of anger.
- **STAI-** The State Trait Anxiety Inventory is used to measure anxiety in adults. This test specifically separates anxiety and depression feelings.
- **SASSI-** The SASSI (Salmon and Steelhead Stock Inventory) is a test which measures those with substance dependence or those affected by substance misuse. The SASSI is 94 percent accurate.
- **McGill Pain Questionnaire-** Is a pain index test that was developed at McGill University. Patients will circle one word in a group of words that describe their current pain. Finally they will narrow their choices down to 7 words that the patient can take to their doctor which will describe both the quality and intensity of one's pain.

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Pre-Employment Evaluations



One type of testing which Psychological Health-Roanoke offers is pre-employment evaluations for health and public safety officers. These assessment instruments are appropriate and relevant to the assessment of law enforcement candidates. All evaluations utilized have been approved for use in employment settings. The specific tests that are administered include the MMPI-2, IS-5, and PRF-E. The MMPI-2 is a test composed of 567 "yes or no" questions. This test helps to correlate symptoms, behaviors, attitudes, and interest. The IS-5 (Inwald Survey 5) is made to aid organizations in selecting and/or placing employees. This test contains distinct scales which measure an individual's behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics. It also helps to predict future job adjustment difficulties. Finally the PRF-E (Personality Research Form-E) contains a set of scores for personality traits, which relate to the applicants functioning in particular situations. Twenty-two different personality scales yield from this test.

References:

- 1) "A Guide to Psychology and its Practice,"
<http://www.guidetopsychology.com/testing.htm>
- 2) "Introduction to Psychological Testing,"
<http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc>