



MDwise

Guidelines for:
Psychological Testing

Psychological testing for emotional and behavioral problems is appropriate for differential diagnosis, determining the presence of personality disorders in addition to clinical syndromes, and/or for when treatment is not progressing after sufficient use of evidence-based treatment. A thorough clinical interview and history are the necessary starting points for diagnosis and treatment planning but they are not of sufficient reliability to make a valid diagnosis in all cases. An accurate diagnosis is essential for appropriate treatment.

A referral for psychological testing should include:

1. Presenting problems.
2. Diagnostic questions to be answered.
3. A list of the tests that will be used to answer the diagnostic questions and the amount of time needed for each test. The tests chosen should be appropriate, reliable and valid for answering the diagnostic questions.
4. How treatment planning will be affected by the results.
5. If previous testing has been completed, have those results been obtained, reviewed, and utilized to determine what additional information is needed to answer the diagnostic questions?

The CPT code typically used for this type of testing is 96101.

Psychological testing is to be conducted by a doctoral level, licensed psychologist who has specific training and experience in administering and interpreting standardized tests.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTHORIZATION

1. Tests must be reliable and valid for answering the diagnostic questions under consideration. The tests must be the most recent editions, be age appropriate and meet the developmental and cultural requirements of the patient.
2. A mental health assessment must be completed by a behavioral healthcare provider prior to testing. For many disorders, this type of interview along with self-report scales or behavior rating scales will be sufficient for diagnosis and treatment planning.
3. A clear and specific rationale for testing must be provided. Additionally, the rationale should address the impact on treatment planning.
4. A Psychological Testing Prior Authorization Request Form must be completed. The psychologist must complete the section that covers the tests to be given and the amount of time needed for each. The referring clinician can complete the sections that cover clinical information and diagnostic questions to be answered.

MEDICAL NECESSITY

These three guidelines need to be met for testing to be authorized:

1. The tests selected must clearly provide the answers to the diagnostic questions put forth by the referring clinician and clearly relate to the treatment of the patient.
2. The referral questions cannot be answered by means of a diagnostic interview, behavioral observations and/or self-report scales.
3. The test results will have a meaningful impact on treatment.

REASONS FOR NON-AUTHORIZATION

1. Testing primarily for educational or vocational purposes.
2. Testing for legal purposes.
3. Testing primarily for cognitive rehabilitation purposes.
4. Testing that exceeds established standards for administration time.
5. Routine entrance into a treatment program.