



## PATIENT INFORMATION

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### **WHY HAVE YOU BEEN REFERRED FOR A NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION?**

Your doctor or healthcare provider has referred you for a neuropsychological evaluation. This evaluation may be of help in:

- 1) finding possible problems with your brain functioning,
- 2) forming a diagnosis,
- 3) defining your thinking skill strengths and weaknesses,
- 4) guiding treatment for your personal, educational or vocational needs,
- 5) making relevant recommendations to your health care provider(s), and/or
- 6) documenting possible changes in your functioning over time.

### **WHAT IS A NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION?**

A neuropsychological evaluation involves testing that is sensitive to problems in brain functioning. Unlike CT or MRI scans, which show what the structure of the brain looks like, neuropsychological testing examines how well the brain is working when it performs certain functions (for example, remembering). The types of tests that you will take depend upon the questions you and your doctor have. The tests may assess the following areas: *attention and memory, reasoning and problem-solving, visual-spatial functions, language functions, sensory-perceptual functions, motor functions, academic skills, and emotional functioning*. The tests are not invasive; that is, they do not involve attaching you to machines or using X-rays. Most of the tests will involve questions-and-answers, or working with materials on a table. Some tests may use a computer. The testing may be performed by the neuropsychologist or by a trained staff member. The neuropsychologist or a staff member will also spend some time talking with you about your medical, personal, and school history. The total time involved in your evaluation will depend upon the questions you and your doctor have.

### **WHAT IS A NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST?**

A neuropsychologist is a licensed psychologist specializing in the area of brain-behavior relationships. Although a neuropsychologist has a doctoral degree in psychology, he or she does not just focus on emotional or psychological problems. The neuropsychologist has additional training in the specialty field of clinical neuropsychology. That means a neuropsychologist is educated in brain anatomy, brain function, and brain injury or disease. The neuropsychologist also has specialized training in administering and interpreting the specific kinds of tests included in your neuropsychological evaluation. As a part of the required education, a neuropsychologist also has years of practical experience working with people who have had problems involving the brain. An official, more detailed definition of a clinical neuropsychologist has been approved by the National Academy of Neuropsychology and can be viewed at the NAN website ([www.NANonline.org](http://www.NANonline.org)).

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE EVALUATION?**

There are at least two ways you might expect to hear about the results of this evaluation. The neuropsychologist may schedule an appointment to go over the results with you and/or may send you a written report. With your permission, the neuropsychologist may send the results to the doctor or healthcare provider who referred you. This doctor may talk to you about the results of testing on your next office visit. If requested, the neuropsychologist will give you specific recommendations to guide your treatment or otherwise help you in your daily life.

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If you have any questions, ask the neuropsychologist or his/her staff. We want to be sure that you understand the evaluation procedure and have all your questions answered.

*The National Academy of Neuropsychology is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to preserve and enhance knowledge of the assessment and remediation of neurological impairments by psychological means, and foster the development of neuropsychology as a discipline, science and profession. Membership in the National Academy of Neuropsychology is not intended to imply endorsement by the Academy or evidence of competency in neuropsychology.*