



Mental Status Examination and Common Assessment Questions

excerpted from: The Florida Resource Guide for Serving People with Mental Health Conditions

Many mental health practitioners do what is called a mental status examination. Examination questions will usually include:

- How is the person functioning now?
- What is the individual thinking and feeling?
- Does the person know where he/she is?
- Does the individual know why he/she has been brought to the hospital or crisis unit?

Common Assessment Questions

Each person and his/her situation is unique, a reality which demands that mental health screeners or people conducting assessments take the time to thoughtfully and carefully gather information to get a perspective of the person and the individual's most pressing needs for assistance and treatment. Often, medication can assist in handling the immediate problem, but it is imperative that all of the factors that precipitated the immediate situation be carefully considered.

Many questions will be asked of the person and family. Questions will usually be asked of the family or other people who may have accompanied the person. Sometimes, previous records will be brought with the person, but this is often not the case with people with psychiatric disabilities.

Some of the questions that may be asked include:

1. What is the situation that brought the person here?
2. Is the person currently on any medication for a psychiatric or other health related problem?
3. Does the person have any medications with them?
4. Is law enforcement involved?
5. Is there anyone that the person would like to have contacted to let them know where he/she is?
6. Is the person a danger to him/her self or others?
7. Is the person receiving any psychiatric therapy, counseling, or other services for the mental health issue?
8. Should a psychiatrist, doctor, psychologist or counselor be called?
9. Does the person have any private insurance? Medicaid or Medicare?

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10. Is the individual receiving any services? From the school system, Children's Medical Services, religious minister / rabbi / priest, faith-based organizations?
11. Has the person been taking any medications that are not prescribed for the mental health condition?
12. Has the person been drinking alcohol, taking substances such as crack, cocaine, heroin, or other unprescribed medication?
13. Does the person need assistance with housing, food, clothing, transportation or any other immediate needs?
14. What are the person's strengths, abilities, or preferences?
15. What actions might make the person worse?
16. Is the person attending any school, university, college or community college?
17. Is the person working? Where? How many hours?
18. What is the individual's relationship with family members or other friends, acquaintances, or other people?
19. Has the person seen a primary health care provider lately for any medical or dental conditions?
20. Does the person have a lawyer who should be contacted?

Receiving this wide array of questions will assist people in knowing more about the person and the immediate situation(s) that need to be addressed.