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Assessment FAQ

What is the purpose of an assessment?

An assessment report by a registered psychologist provides a professional diagnosis along with recommendations and practical strategies for effective functioning.

The diagnosis (or diagnoses) are based on data collected through observation, interview, background history, medical or academic records, and / or standardized testing – and the criteria in the standard psychological reference manual, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed).

The type of assessment report is determined by the purpose, / goal / outcome, such as:

Assessment	Purpose / goal / outcome
Consultation	Evaluating a particular practical problem and identifying useful strategies, which can be used to advise a teacher or aide “what to do / what works”.
Clinical	Formal clinical diagnosis with support recommendations and strategies
Adaptive skills	A clinical assessment focused on problems in basic living skills, typically to support of an application for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD), Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and/or guardianship
Psycho-educational	Identify psychological / neurological and educational / learning differences to access school-based supports and implement an Individualized Program Plan (IPP) – or access post-secondary supports, accommodations and funding
Adult transition	Preparation for the transition to adulthood, addressing issues such as independent living, career training and employment
Employment	Diagnosis of a neurological difference and its practical effects, along with recommended accommodations and supports, in an employment situation (perhaps triggered by a stress leave)
Legal-related	Diagnosis of a neurological difference and its practical effects, along with recommendations, in a legal-related matter such as a wrongful dismissal, Human Rights Act violation, appeal with an employer / health care provider over an extended stress / disability leave, criminal charge, or divorce matter

Footnote: Typically, an adaptive skills report will be taken to a family doctor who will review it and use it as supporting evidence in signing a Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and / or guardianship application. If an individual has an extremely low IQ score, then a psychologist can sign the DTC form.



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What is the cost of an assessment?

The cost is based on the actual time involved and is charged at the PAA Recommended Fee Schedule (2023 rate is \$220 per hour / \$330 per hour for legal-related matters) plus GST.

The amount of time can vary depending on the complexity of the issues involved, but typically a clinical assessment or adaptive skills assessment is about 10-12 hours, and a psycho-educational assessment will be about 15-18 hours.

Clients pay us directly, and we provide receipts on letterhead with a breakdown of the dates and times of sessions, and our professional registration number.

If you have an extended health care plan, then some portion of your assessment might be reimbursed to you by your provider (but you will need to check with them for details).

Psychologist fees are also considered to be medical expenses by the Canada Revenue Agency, and non-reimbursed payments can be claimed on an income tax return.

Clients with FSCD funding for counselling can also obtain reimbursement for a portion of their payments (typically about \$100 or just under half the standard psychologist fee).

Special needs advisers at the post-secondary institution may be able to help you obtain partial reimbursement for the cost of a psycho-educational assessment (typically about \$1000-\$1200). Usually, the qualification criteria includes: full time attendance at an accredited post-secondary institution, a diagnosis that includes a learning disability, and a list of supports / accommodations.

Full-time post-secondary students who need academic accommodations because of a neurological / learning difference are also eligible to receive grant money each year.

What should I do to prepare for an assessment?

Obtain copies of all relevant medical and school records (i.e., cumulative file), and any previous assessment reports (e.g., speech and language, occupational therapy, psychological / medical).

Write up a summary timeline (in point form if you wish) of the major life stages (e.g., childhood and elementary school, junior and senior high school, post-secondary and career, independent adult life, marriage and family). For a younger person, there will of course be fewer life stages. Also include any difficulties (academic / social / emotional / behavioural) that were present in those life stages.