

APPENDIX #3

TYPES OF SPECIALIZED ASSESSMENTS

The Alberta Regions will establish processes to refer individuals for Specialized Assessments and payment of invoices from the service provider.

Educational

To determine the basic education level, learning difficulties or learning disabilities, preferred learning styles or strategies (see Learning Disabilities below). Educational psychologists frequently complete these types of assessments.

Functional

To determine physical ability to perform a variety of work-related tasks, for example, manual dexterity, Physiotherapists or Occupational Therapists often complete these types of assessments.

Vocational

To determine, through job tryouts or other means, what elements of a job can be completed. These are often completed by Occupational Therapists.

Please Note: *It is not recommended to refer individuals for assessment of aptitudes, interests and transferable skills, as these types of assessment can be obtained through the services provided in contracted workshops or at Delivery Centres.*

Medical

To obtain a current report on health conditions and disability completed by a medical professional.

Psychological

To determine the individual's mental health situation and the ability to function in social, training and workplace contexts. A medical professional or a clinical psychologist may complete these.

Psychological/Psycho-social/Personality assessments are useful for individuals suspected of:

- Anxiety Disorders, including panic attacks
- Depression
- Personality Disorders
- Behavioural Problems
- Other Emotional Problems

Psychological assessments are not the same as psychiatric evaluations, and are not intended to diagnose deep psychiatric disorders. Various psychological assessments, such as the Personality Assessment Inventory, can be administered to provide information about an individual's current state of mental/emotional

health and their ability to function in and cope with the demands of education/training, employment, or daily life.

Psycho-Educational

To determine information related to intelligence, achievement, behavior and learning. These assessments use standardized test batteries and usually address educational or intellectual capabilities as well as psychological functioning that will likely impact success in work or training. A basic neuropsychological screen for more complex brain dysfunction may also be part of the assessment. This testing is important as a screening tool to detect more complex problems that may require additional or more in-depth assessment. The selection of tests and interpretation depends on the skill and expertise of the examiner, but psychologists are required to adhere to the standards of practice identified by the College of Alberta Psychologists.

Psycho-educational assessments are useful for identifying:

- Intellectual Capabilities
- Giftedness
- Learning Disorders/Disabilities (math, reading, spelling)
- Intellectual Deficiencies
- School Readiness

These assessments may involve:

- Intelligence tests evaluating intellectual functioning and problem-solving capabilities
- Neuropsychological screens to identify potential brain function problems, memory, processing efficiency, etc.
- Academic achievement tests to identify appropriateness and readiness for training
- Eye-hand coordination and dexterity tests

Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Learning Disabilities (LD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are all considered neurologically-based disorders, permanent in nature. Learning disabilities affect HOW the person processes information, while ADD/ADHD affects WHEN the person is available to process the information – that is, the individual is not able to attend to the information at the time it is presented. ADHD may be associated with a Learning Disability.

People with Learning Disorders may require accommodations or assistive technologies to attend educational institutions, whereas people with ADHD may require medical attention, but may not require any additional accommodations.

An assessment by a psychiatrist, a registered psychologist with ADD/ADHD training, neuro -psychologist, or relevantly trained medical doctor is required to differentiate the diagnosis and the impact of the disability on learning. In order to determine supports, **if any**, necessary for a student with ADD/ADHD to pursue

post-secondary education or training, a psychological assessment may be beneficial.

Neuro-Psychological

A neuro-psychological assessment is designed to assess the change in brain function when brain damage occurs due to injury, stroke or a medical condition.

Neuropsychological assessments may be useful for evaluating the following suspected disorders:

- Attention and Concentration Disorders
- Brain Injury or Dysfunction
- Brain Tumors
- Head Injury
- Complex Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dystrophic)
- Conduct and Oppositional Disorders
- Cognitive Processing Disorders
- Dementia
- Fetal Alcohol Disorder (FAS)
- Impulse Control Disorders
- Memory Disorders
- Organic vs. Functional Disorders
- Perceptual Disorders (visual, auditory)
- Psychiatric, Psychotic and Mood Disorders
- Psychopathology
- Seizure Disorders
- Speech and Language Disabilities
- Stroke/CVA/Aneurysms
- Substance Induced Disorders/Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Suspected Neurological Impairment

Neuropsychological assessments are used when it is important to identify the nature, basis and degree of an individual's deficits and strengths. Arriving at a working diagnosis may be necessary when proof of a disability (documented disability) is required. This can be a complex task when brain impairment or dysfunction is suspected. Having a clear diagnosis is essential for developing appropriate action plans, rehabilitation or supports required in line with the individual needs of the individual.

Neuropsychological assessments differ from conventional psychological evaluations in that they involve the use of a very comprehensive battery of assessment tools specifically designed to systematically assess most of the major neuro-functional abilities. An adequate neuropsychological evaluation will go beyond a simple determination of the individual's intelligence or academic level that is frequently the focus of standard psychological assessment procedures. It

will make inferences about the presence or absence of brain dysfunction, identify significant strengths and weaknesses of the individual and make recommendations that will assist in treatment, goal selection and planning, determining employability status, and/or identifying modifications which need to be made to a learning, work or daily living environment.

Speech and/or Language

To determine conditions that will affect communication within social, educational, training, or workplace environments. Speech therapists may complete these assessments.

Qualified individuals who can do Specialized Assessments include, but are not limited to: Medical Specialists, Vocational Rehabilitation Experts, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Vocational Evaluators, Audiologists, Ophthalmologists, Speech and Language Therapists or Psychologists. The choice of professional will be dependent on the desired information.