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Procedures for Neuro-Behavioral Evaluations

Neuro-behavioral evaluations are a very useful service to provide for children, especially those presenting with emotional, behavioral, or academic struggles. The question we try to answer is “to what degree are the academic struggles due to Autism, poor effort (a behavioral problem), poor concentration due to depression or anxiety, ADHD, or a learning disability?” Accurately diagnosing a child can have a tremendously powerful impact on a child’s future happiness and academic success.

Some children are taking medications which yield minimal improvement. This is especially true of children with ADHD. Our neuro-behavioral evaluations can answer questions regarding to what extent are the medications helping or hurting the child’s ability to concentrate.

Autism is a diagnosis which directly impacts a child’s emotional and academic success. Unfortunately, there are many misconceptions about Autism, especially on the internet. Our providers are prepared to answer any questions you may have about how we diagnose Autism.

All of these are complex issues which require the use of sound procedures grounded in behavioral and neuro-psychological science. Our neuro-behavioral evaluations require in depth interviews of the child and parents, a review of records from collateral sources, and administration of cognitive testing and/or behavioral inventories. Parents will be able to observe their child during the procedures, and ask questions at the end of each session. This serves to empower parents as the complexities are unraveled and the science is explained. In the end, our goal is for parents to obtain a greater understanding of their child and why they struggle the way they do.

Session #1

Session #1 is a diagnostic exam in which we interview the child and parents to determine if there exists any emotional or behavioral diagnosis requiring treatment. Behaviors which can confound the diagnosis of a neurocognitive disorder include (but are not limited to) poor effort on homework, disrespect to teachers, defiance, and poor sleep. We make treatment recommendations for behavioral concerns first, before launching a neuro-behavioral assessment. Problematic behaviors will be targeted on the treatment plan which will be generated at Session #1.

At the first session parents are required to sign a Release of Information to gather collateral information from the child's school and any other practitioner that has previously done testing on the child. Copies of IEP's, previous psychological evaluations, and behavioral reports from teachers are critical to properly diagnosing your child. Requests for such records will be faxed to collateral sources before the second session. Conveying collateral information via phone is discouraged for liability reasons.

Sessions 2-4

In most cases testing can begin at the second session. To maximize your child's performance and ability to focus, we administer only 10-20 minutes of testing at each session. This allows your provider to explain the results of each testing "cluster" and how it relates to your child's study habits, adaptive life skills and academic achievement. Your provider will suggest ways in which to improve learning and retention if an area of weakness is identified.

De-Briefing Session

After testing is completed, a full report will be written which summarizes test results, diagnosis, and treatment recommendations. Unless your insurance is Medicaid, this will require some out-of-pocket expenses described below. During the de-briefing session, parents meet with the provider to review the written report. During this session the task is to review the report for accuracy, errors and spelling errors. Also discussed is the treatment plan, especially if ADHD, Autism, or any emotional or behavioral diagnosis is made.

Out-Of-Pocket Expenses

Achievement Testing to assess for a Learning Disability: After session 3 or 4, your child may be suspected to have a Learning Disability. The problem is that some insurance companies will not pay for the achievement testing required to make a diagnosis of a Learning Disability. You would then have three options:

- 1) Call your insurance company and ask if they would agree to pay for 2 hours of achievement testing,
- 2) Ask your child's school to complete the achievement testing, OR
- 3) Have our office complete the testing and agree to pay over a six month period of time. Administration of the WIAT will take about 2 hours and the charge is \$60 per hour. A six month payment plan can be agreed upon in writing at this time.

Report Writing: Scoring and writing Neuropsychological reports is a daunting task and typically takes 1-3 hours of work. This, again, is billed at a rate of \$60 per hour since some insurances do not allow us to bill for it. Medicaid does allow clinicians to bill for report writing. A six month payment plan can be agreed upon if needed.