

Medical Affairs Policy & Procedure

Title/Service: Psychological and Neuropsychological Testing

Revised	
Reviewed	12/28/09, 07/27/10, 09/16/2011
Developed	12/28/09
Policy Committee Approval	09/16/2011

Description:

Psychological testing is the use of valid, reliable, and standardized tests of emotional, personality, and/or intellectual functioning to produce information useful in clarifying a diagnosis and making specific treatment recommendations. Neuropsychological testing is the use of valid, reliable, and standardized tests of brain functioning to produce information useful in clarifying a medical diagnosis and making treatment recommendations.

Indications of Coverage:

Note: The provider performing the testing must be a covered provider under the illness and/or mental health benefit of the certificate, depending on the condition that is being evaluated.

- I. Psychological testing (PT) is considered medically necessary for any of the following conditions (there must be clearly distinct treatment options to be pursued based upon the differential diagnosis to be clarified through testing):
 - A. To differentiate between a psychological/psychiatric condition and a behavioral condition following a diagnostic interview, when the results of the interview are inconclusive (uncertain diagnosis) and the results of the testing will direct management of the individual
 - B. Unusual, complex, or comorbid symptoms are documented that require clarification that can only be accomplished through psychological testing.
 - C. For further evaluation after a trial of cognitive/behavioral therapy and medication has been attempted when the individual has not progressed during the trial and continues to be symptomatic
- II. Neuropsychological testing (NPT) is considered medically necessary for any of the following conditions:

- A. Evaluation of changes in cognitive function due to surgery, illness, or injury (for example, brain surgery, cerebral vascular surgery, epilepsy, stroke, or traumatic head injury)
- B. To differentiate between psychological/psychiatric condition or a medical condition (for example, when symptoms may be due to an illness or injury) as the cause of the cognitive decline
- C. Monitoring an individual with decreasing cognitive function due to a neurological disorder

Limitations of Coverage:

- A. Review contract and endorsements for exclusions and prior authorization or benefit requirements.
- B. If used for a condition/diagnosis other than is listed in the Indications of Coverage, deny as experimental or investigative.
- C. If used for a condition/diagnosis that is listed in the Indications of Coverage, but the criteria are not met, deny as not medically necessary.
- D. PT and NPT are considered not medically necessary when any of the following are documented:
 - 1. Uncomplicated attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity (ADD/ADHD)
 - 2. When the individual has been diagnosed with a pervasive developmental disorder (for example, autism or Asperger's syndrome) unless coverage is required by Federal or State mandate
 - 3. When the individual is abusing substances, since this may influence the results of the testing
 - 4. When more than eight hours of NPT are performed
- E. Repeat testing performed within twelve months of previous testing is not necessary.
- F. PT and NPT to evaluate educational performance (for example, dyslexia or other learning disabilities) is typically an exclusion of the certificate language, as the performance issues are generally not due to an illness or injury. This testing is generally provided by the school system.
- G. PT and NPT for disability evaluations or related to legal issues is typically an exclusion of the certificate language, as the testing is requested by a third party and is generally not for due to an illness or injury.

- H. PT and NPT for an individual who is self-referred is not medically necessary unless a diagnostic interview has been completed, the results from the diagnostic interview were inconclusive, and there is still the need to differentiate and/or clarify the diagnosis prior to making treatment recommendations (when the options for treatment would differ depending on the final diagnosis).

Documentation Required:

- Office notes
- Test reports

Rationale:

Psychological and neuropsychological testing can be used to evaluate a variety of conditions, but should be reserved for cases where a thorough evaluation has not established a definitive diagnosis and the testing is needed to differentiate between several conditions. Psychological testing is typically used to differentiate between behavioral conditions that do not have a medical component. Neuropsychological testing evaluates the effects of various medical conditions (typically due to an illness or injury) on cognitive and behavioral function and is used to differentiate between psychological/psychiatric conditions and medical/neurological conditions. Complete neuropsychological testing typically takes a maximum of eight hours to perform, which includes administering the test(s), scoring the test(s), and documenting the interpretation of the test results.

References:

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3. American Psychiatric Association. Practice guideline for the Psychiatric Evaluation of Adults. Second Edition. June 2006. Available at: www.psychiatryonline.com/pracGuide/pracGuideTopic_1.aspx. Accessed: 29 Aug 11.
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Approved by the Medical Director