

Neuropsychological Assessment

There are three broad goals of a neuropsychological assessment:

1. To diagnose and determine the nature of underlying problems;
2. To understand the nature of the brain injury along with the resulting cognitive problems and the impact on the survivor (This is important so a rehabilitation program can be formed and a therapy protocol selected); and
3. To assess. The assessment can help measure change in functioning over time and aid in determining the impact of a rehabilitation program.

A neuropsychological assessment attempts to evaluate the cognition, mood, personality and behavior of an individual. The evaluation usually includes a formal interview; a review of medical, educational and vocational records; interviews of significant others and testing using standardized neuropsychological instruments.

Aspects of cognitive functioning that are tested typically include:

- Perception – the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting and organizing sensory information
- Attention – selectively concentrating on one aspect of the environment
- Orientation – awareness of time, place and person
- Memory – the ability to store, retain and retrieve information
- Executive functions – processes such as planning, abstract thinking, selecting relevant sensory information, initiating appropriate actions and inhibiting inappropriate behaviors. ❖

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