



## Therapeutic Assessment & Systems Collaboration

Information Sheet for Caregivers & Guardians

Our assessments combine psychological testing with practical interventions to focus on questions about your child's symptoms or behaviors. We use what we find through our testing to figure out the best approach to treatment and recommendations for school and home environment.

We want clients to ask their own questions for the assessment. We want clients and their families to feel empowered to understand and deal with the questions they bring.

### Why Do An Assessment?

Assessments may address questions about school achievement and learning, puzzling or problematic behaviors, diagnostic questions related to attention, depression, past trauma, depression, social behaviors and thought processes. Data from the assessment can increase your understanding and connection to your child and makes it possible to develop a positive behavioral intervention.

### What will happen during a psychological assessment of my child?

Our assessments include the following phases:

#### Phase 1 – Assessment Framework

- Building a background and developing assessment

questions: this will include forming questions from all relevant persons including your child or adolescent, reviewing documents (school, past evaluations, court reports), gathering background history through interviews with caregivers and family members.

- We think together about how to introduce the assessment process to the child.
- Our initial sessions with caregiver and client address presenting concerns and help formulate questions from caregiver and child perspectives. We may ask you how you understand the problem and how this impacts the family/child relationship. Through this process we identify important people involved with your child and focus the goal of the assessment.

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### Phase 2 – Psychological Testing

- Test administration: we use test instruments based on your questions and we include cultural considerations
- Scoring and interpretation of test findings
- We may invite a family member to observe (in the room or through live video feed) portions of the process, paying special attention to how the child's responses address the assessment questions.
- This phase may include a family session based on the test findings. We take what we've learned and translate it to the family environment.

### Phase 3 – Report and Feedback

- Written Report: an accessible report is written integrating the assessment findings. Reports can be adapted for parents, social workers, and schools.
- The child/adolescent receives feedback in the form of a story or letter.
- The results offer concrete ways to intervene in different

environments – home, school, social situations, etc., tailored to the needs of the family and child.

- Summary feedback session: the assessor meets with family/members of treatment team to discuss results. These meetings can involve school, social workers, wrap-around providers, foster families and relatives.

### Phase 4 – Follow-Up

- Parents, caregivers and social workers give feedback about the assessment process via telephone interview with our research assistant.
- We will contact clients at three months and six months following the end of the assessment to check in on your satisfaction with the assessment, the goodness of fit of recommendations, and any leftover questions or concerns. These meetings will give you the opportunity to talk about how the assessment was for you and your child and what parts of it were most useful.

### What will I get out of the Assessment? Are there any downsides?

- We are committed to addressing your specific assessment questions. We want to explain results in understandable language. If you are unclear about anything during the assessment process, please tell your assessor
- When caregivers engage this fully in the assessment process, even possibly observing the assessment, seeing or hearing what lies behind behaviors can sometimes be challenging. Involvement in psychological assessment may cause some improvement in symptoms, but it can also raise issues that cause distress. If you notice changes in your child's behavior after an assessment session, let us know. We will also want to incorporate your responses and reactions into the assessment process.

### Special Considerations

- Assessment services can be provided in our clinic as well as in your community throughout the Bay Area.
- Assessments incorporate the young person's familial, cultural, and life context.
- Our assessments are comprehensive and often involve multiple systems. They may require extra time commitment on the part of caregiver and child. – for example feedback sessions with a parent may happen in

between testing sessions. A written report is likely to be completed within a month post-testing. If the assessment includes additional phases – interventions and meetings – the process may take an average of two to four months.

### Who We Are

We are a staff of fourteen psychologists all fully licensed or license eligible. The clinicians have been trained extensively in tests and assessment practice, clinical treatment and specialized training in collaborative assessment technique. We have a team of post-doctoral fellows and pre-doctoral interns who are also skilled and well-supervised in their work. We work closely and consult with Dr. Stephen Finn of the Center for Collaborative Assessment in Austin Texas, an international expert and developer of the therapeutic collaborative model.

### For More Information

If you would like more information on Therapeutic Assessment or the Assessment Program at WestCoast Children's Clinic, please contact:

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