



Tilley Psychological Services

201 10425 Princess Elizabeth Avenue • Edmonton, AB • T5G 0Y5

PHONE: 780-702-8905 • FAX: 1-888-350-3551

E-MAIL: linda@tilleypsych.com

Psychological Assessment

A psychological assessment is a process of examining a person's skills, emotions, behaviour, and personality to try and gain an in-depth understanding of who they are and how they function in the world. Psychological assessments are used for a variety of purposes, including tasks such as diagnosing mental illnesses, predicting repeat offenses from violent offenders, making career or job placement decisions, helping people get along better in organizations, and determining the impact of physical or psychological traumas. Obviously these tasks involve very different test procedures, but there are some basics that are included in almost every assessment:

- An in-depth interview, which usually covers a variety of areas (for example, developmental history, academic achievement, relationships, moods, and substance use, to name only a few)
- A battery of psychological tests, which varies depending on the purpose of assessment. An intelligence ("IQ") test or screening test is almost always given to provide a baseline measure of functioning
- Ratings of a person's emotional state, behaviour, or functioning in a wide variety of areas, again depending on the purpose of the assessment.
- Where appropriate, information may be gathered from other professionals, or from people who are close to the person undergoing the assessment (such as parents, siblings, or a spouse).

This information is then put together in a comprehensive manner to provide an overall picture. The results of an assessment should not be particularly surprising - they should confirm what a person already knows about himself or herself. What the assessment should do is to provide a deeper understanding of the forces driving behaviours. For example, many children with ADHD are viewed as angry and oppositional (and in fact are diagnosed with Opposition/Defiant Disorder), when in fact they are reacting out of frustration at their inability to cope with the world in the same way as other children. With this information, the person being assessed is better equipped to make decisions about their lives.