

FORMAL ASSESSMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A FORMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT?

- At DC Psychological Services, our formal psychological assessments deliver a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of your current functioning in areas such as learning abilities; attention; executive functioning; cognitive abilities; and behavioral, social, and emotional functioning.
- We offer comprehensive, evidence-based assessments for children, teens, and adults in Red Deer.
- Every assessment includes clinical interviews, standardized testing, scoring and interpretation, and a thorough written report with practical recommendations personalized for you.

WHY WOULD A FORMAL ASSESSMENT BE DONE?

- Assessments may help to identify many of the contributing factors beneath any challenges you may be experiencing and provide a more accurate understanding of oneself.
- Assessments can provide valuable insights into your strengths and weaknesses, allowing you to optimize your daily functioning and by providing others with ways to best support you.
- Whether or not the assessment leads to a diagnosis, the findings can help individuals reach their potential in various settings.
- Even in the absence of specific disorders, you'll still gain useful insights to address any challenges you or your child may face.
- The assessment report will offer recommendations for specialized services or resources that could be beneficial at home, school, or work, like individualized programs, assistive technology, access to specialized services, or extra time.
 - These reports are often needed to access services from governments, schools, community programs, and employers.

WHO CAN HAVE AN ASSESSMENT COMPLETED?

- Formal assessments are not just for young children but also for older children, teens, and adults as some people may have masked their difficulties over time, and as life demands grow, these challenges can become more noticeable.
- Assessments can also be beneficial for those attending post-secondary institutions. If a diagnosis is provided, the Canadian Student Grants Program may offer financial assistance. It is important to check with your college or university to explore how they can support your learning journey.
- DC Psychological Services offers assessments for anyone 8 years or older. Ideally, the individual should have had at least a year of basic literacy and numeracy instruction.
 - Age exceptions may be made depending on the assessment type; contact our office for more information.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MYSELF OR MY CHILD SHOULD HAVE A FORMAL ASSESSMENT?

- While you do not require a professional's referral to undergo an assessment, a physician, educator, or therapist may have recommended that you pursue a formal assessment for yourself or your child.
- If you are worried about social, behavioral, emotional, or academic challenges for yourself or your child, you might consider undergoing a formal assessment to identify the root causes of these difficulties.
- A formal assessment could be beneficial if you or your child frequently exhibit behaviors and/or attitudes resembling any of the following examples.
 - Drop in academic or employment performance or inconsistency in subject areas.
 - Changes in sensitivity to or seeking/ avoiding specific sensations.
 - Loss of interest in or feeling overwhelmed or anxious about school or work.
 - Struggling with workload or task completion.
 - Difficulty paying attention or behaving appropriately for the situation.
 - Trouble understanding new concepts or basic age-appropriate skills.
 - Needing extra help to complete tasks effectively.
 - Feelings of distress, low self-esteem, or lack of motivation.
 - Persistent, repetitive or restricted behaviors.
 - Challenges with social interactions, peer relationships, and fitting in.
- It's important to recognize that just because you or your child may not have shown these challenges earlier in life, it doesn't imply that you are simply "being lazy," "being dramatic," "being defiant," or "going through a phase."

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A FORMAL ASSESSMENT?

An initial intake session *(differs depending on the type of assessment being completed)*

- During this session, a clinical interview will be conducted, reviewing the completed intake form and gathering additional background information.
- Current medications will be discussed, as they may affect neurological and psychological abilities; it may be recommended they be paused on evaluation days to allow for the most accurate assessment.
- If the assessment is for a child or teen, only parent(s)/guardian(s) should attend, allowing discussion with the psychologist to be forthcoming and unfiltered.
 - *Teens aged 15 to 17 may participate if deemed beneficial.*

Evaluation Sessions *(differs depending on the type of assessment being completed)*

- During assessment sessions, a formal evaluation of cognitive, intellectual, emotional, behavioral, and attentional functioning is conducted using standardized tests, interviews, and observations.
- The tools and methods used as well as the duration of testing will depend on the individual's needs and aims to identify any neurological or psychological issues.
 - Extra costs for additional methods will be communicated before use.

Administration, interpretation, analysis, scoring, and documentation of:

- The assessment process includes collection, reviewing and documentation of all tests, interviews, observations, and additional input from people like teachers, partners, or employers. *(differs depending on the type of assessment being completed)*

A printed copy of the formal psychological report, potentially including a combination of:

- Summary of assessment methods used.
- List of diagnoses, if any.
- Personalized recommendations addressing the individual's strengths and challenges tailored specifically for personal, family, educational, or work settings.

Final Feedback Session *(differs depending on the type of assessment being completed)*

- The final debrief session with the psychologist will be scheduled about 3 to 4 weeks after the last evaluation, based on availability.
- In this session, the psychologist will discuss the assessment results and recommendations and answer any questions.
- If the assessment is for a child or teen, only parent(s)/guardian(s) should attend, allowing discussion with the psychologist to be forthcoming and unfiltered.
 - *Teens aged 15 to 17 may participate if deemed beneficial.*

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT DO YOU OFFER & WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Full Psychological or Psycho-educational Assessment

- An evaluation an individual's intellectual, academic, emotional, behavioral, and attentional functioning, providing insight into any neurological deficits or proficiencies present.
- A psycho-educational assessment emphasizes the academic aspect.
- This includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *6x 1-hour evaluation sessions*
 - *5x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *2-hour feedback session*

ADHD Focused Assessment

- This will typically focus on an individual's intellectual, attentional and behavioral functioning, evaluating ongoing patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity that disrupt daily life, focusing on symptoms that originated in childhood.
- This includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *3x 1-hour evaluation sessions*
 - *3x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *1.5-hour feedback session*

Autism Spectrum Disorder Focused Assessment

- Intellectual abilities, alongside other key components of autism spectrum disorder will be investigated, evaluating for social communication, interaction skills, repetitive behaviors, and various functioning abilities such as adaptive, cognitive, behavioral, sensory, or motor abilities. Standardized assessments, observations, and structured interviews are utilized to evaluate behavioral and socioemotional functioning.
- For an **adult** this includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *4.5 hours of evaluation sessions*
 - *4x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *1.5-hour feedback session*
- For a **child or teen** this includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *5 hours of evaluation sessions (parent/ guardian attendance is required for the 2-hour session)*
 - *4x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *1.5-hour feedback session*

Full Psychological or Psycho-educational including Autism Assessment

- An evaluation an individual's intellectual, academic, emotional, behavioral, and attentional functioning, providing insight into any neurological deficits or proficiencies present.
 - *A psycho-educational assessment emphasizes the academic aspect.*
- Key components of autism spectrum disorder will also be investigated, evaluating for social communication, interaction skills, repetitive behaviors, and various functioning abilities such as adaptive, cognitive, behavioral, sensory, or motor abilities. Standardized assessments, observations, and structured interviews are utilized.
- For an **adult** this includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *8.5 hours of evaluation sessions*
 - *7x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *2-hour feedback session*
- For a **child or teen** this includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *9 hours of evaluation sessions (parent/ guardian attendance is required for the 2-hour session)*
 - *7x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *2-hour feedback session*

ADHD & Autism Focused Assessment

- Focuses on attentional and behavioral functioning, identifying patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity that started in childhood. This will typically focus on an individual's attentional and behavioral functioning, evaluating ongoing patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, or impulsivity that disrupt daily life, focusing on symptoms that originated in childhood.
- Intellectual abilities, alongside other key components of autism spectrum disorder will also be investigated, evaluating for social communication, interaction skills, repetitive behaviors, and various functioning abilities.
- For an **adult** this includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *5.5 hours of evaluation sessions*
 - *5x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *2-hour feedback session*
- For a **child or teen** this includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *6 hours of evaluation sessions (parent/ guardian attendance is required for the 1.5-hour session)*
 - *5x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *2-hour feedback session*

Cognitive Assessment

- An evaluation of an individual's cognitive functioning, which may include intellectual abilities, reasoning, memory, attention, processing speed, executive functioning, or adaptive functioning.
- Dependant on individual needs, this may be used to support eligibility for Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program.
- This includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *3x 1-hour evaluation sessions*
 - *3x 1-hour blocks of time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *1-hour feedback session*

Competency Assessment (*Typically used for Guardianship and/or Trustee Applications*)

- An evaluation of an individual's decision-making capacity in relation to specific personal, financial, legal, or healthcare matters. The assessment examines the individual's ability to understand relevant information, appreciate the foreseeable consequences of decisions, reason through available options, and communicate a choice. Depending on the referral concerns, the assessment may also include measures of cognitive functioning, memory, judgment, and executive functioning.
- Dependent in individual needs, this may determine an individual's capacity for the specific decision or domain being evaluated and inform recommendations for appropriate supports, planning, or legal processes.
- This includes:
 - *1-hour intake session*
 - *1-hour evaluation sessions*
 - *Time for interpretation, analysis, and documentation*
 - *45-minute feedback session*

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE, AND HOW MUCH DOES A FORMAL ASSESSMENT COST?

- The cost for a formal assessment is all inclusive, billed at \$235 per hour, covering all aspects like the initial session, testing, analysis, reporting and final feedback session.
- Fees may vary depending on individual needs and methods used. Specific details about billing and scheduling will be discussed when booking.
- **Full Psychological/ Psycho-educational Assessment**
 - starts at \$ 3,290.00
 - typically takes 14 hours to complete over the course of 10-12 weeks
- **ADHD Focused assessment**
 - starts at \$ 1,997.50
 - typically takes 8.5 hours to complete over the course of 7-9 weeks
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder Focused Assessment**
 - starts at \$ 2,585.00 for **adults**
 - typically takes 11 hours to complete over the course of 8-10 weeks
 - starts at \$ 2,702.50 for **children or teens**
 - typically takes 11.5 hours to complete over the course of 8-10 weeks
- **Full Psychological or Psycho-educational including Autism Assessment**
 - starts at \$ 4,347.50 for **adults**
 - typically takes 18.5 hours to complete over the course of 12-14 weeks
 - starts at \$ 4,465.00 for **children or teens**
 - typically takes 19 hours to complete over the course of 12-14 weeks
 - typically takes 3 hours to complete over the course of 4-6 weeks
- **ADHD & ASD Assessment**
 - starts at \$ 3,172.500 for **adults**
 - typically takes 13.5 hours to complete over the course of 8-11 weeks
 - starts at \$ 3,172.50 for **children or teens**
 - typically takes 14 hours to complete over the course of 8-11 weeks

- **Cognitive Assessment**
 - starts at \$ 1,880.00
 - typically takes 8 hours to complete over the course of 7-9 weeks
- **Competency Assessment**
 - the cost is \$ 700.00
 - typically takes 3 hours to complete over the course of 4-6 weeks

WILL MY TOTAL ASSESSMENT COST CHANGE?

- Sometimes, additional testing might be needed, which requires more time and will be discussed beforehand.
- If you complete any required evaluation methods faster than anticipated and less time is needed, your schedule and fees will be adjusted.
- During or after the initial session, you and/or your psychologist might decide on expanding your planned assessment, or you might opt for a more focused one.
 - Fees and schedules will be adjusted in either case.
- Additional services like formal letters or insurance forms are available for a starting fee of \$120 per form, based on an hourly rate of \$235.
 - These fees are not billed directly to insurance. Please contact the office for more information.

HOW DO I SCHEDULE AN ASSESSMENT WITH DC PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES?

- To schedule a formal assessment, contact our office by phone, email, or the website inquiry form.
 - We will gather information to set up an account and answer any questions you have.
 - We will arrange the assessment schedule based on availability and provide details about intake and consent forms.
 - We will discuss your insurance coverage with you.
- We require you to complete the Formal Assessment Processes & Payments Consent form within 3 business days of receiving the schedule to confirm your booking.
 - A credit card is required when completing this form, but alternative arrangements can be made if needed.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND, CAN I CANCEL MY ASSESSMENT?

- If you no longer require an assessment to be completed, and you choose to cancel your (or your child's) schedule, we require at least one week's notice to cancel an assessment schedule.
- If you cancel less than one week prior to the scheduled intake session, you will be charged a cancellation fee of \$235 (equal to a 1-hour session).
 - These fees will not be billed directly to insurance.

DOES INSURANCE COVER ASSESSMENTS?

- Before scheduling an assessment, it's recommended that you contact your insurance company to determine specific details about your coverage, such as whether psychological services are included, and the yearly and daily maximum coverage amounts.
 - Additionally, it is helpful to inquire if there is separate coverages for therapy, assessments, and report writing.
- It's also crucial to find out if psychologists can bill your insurance directly and whether you have health care spending options that can be used for these services.
 - This information will help you effectively plan an assessment schedule.
- Before we can bill your insurance directly, you will need to complete an Insurance Consent Form and provide all necessary details.
 - This includes the Insurance Provider's Name, the Group, ID, Policy, or Certificate Number, as well as the plan member's name, birth date, and your relationship to the plan member.
- Subject to individual plans and insurance provider approval, we are able to bill directly to most insurance providers on your behalf.
 - Please contact the office to determine if your provider is included.