BRAIN INJURY
ASSOCIATION
O F   V I R G I N I A

# Neuropsychological Evaluations

**QUICK GUIDE**

Diagnosing a brain injury is not always as simple as getting a scan or picture of the brain. Even with a "normal" scan, the person may have trouble with how they think and how they behave. This is why something like a neuropsychological evaluation can help pinpoint the issues someone is having, what it causing it, and how to treat it effectively.

## What is a neuropsychological evaluation?

The evaluation is not one test and instead uses a variety of tests to measure functions such as:

- Academic skills
- Ability to learn new things
- Planning how to get a task done
- Memory
- Language skills
- Organizing thoughts, work
- Attention & focus
- Problem solving
- Perceptual abilities

The evaluations can also look at how well a person can multi-task, deal with frustration, and assess mental health issues like depression. The tests help the patient and their doctors understand their strengths and weaknesses so they can work together to form a treatment plan.

## What will this type of evaluation tell me?

**Neuropsychological evaluations can:**

- Confirm or clarify a diagnosis
- Better understand strengths and weaknesses since the injury
- Document a disability (for example, for a Social Security Disability claim)
- Guide treatment planning – including referrals to other therapists such as a Speech-Language Pathologist or an Occupational Therapist
- Provide ideas and strategies to help cope with challenges in day to day activities
- Answer questions about competency, the ability to handle funds or live independently;
- Decide if the person is ready to be left alone, go back to work/school or resume driving
- Make recommendations about what accommodations are needed for school or work
- Document progress if a person is tested several times over a period of time

## What is the evaluation process like?

A referral is usually needed from a doctor for a neuropsychological evaluation to happen. The evaluation is then conducted by a Neuropsychologist, which is a clinical psychologist with additional training in brain-behavior relationships and administering and interpreting these tests. The clinician will review medical records and interview the injured person. If possible, a family member who knows the individual well may also be interviewed. Some of the testing is done with paper and pencil, while some is on the computer. The testing can take up to 6 or 7 hours and may be scheduled all on one day or spread out over a few days.

**Before the evaluation, make sure to:**

- Get a good night's rest and eat breakfast
- Leave enough time for travel and parking
- Take medicine as normal, unless told otherwise by the clinic
- Complete and bring any questionnaires provided beforehand

- Bring medical records regarding the injury or arrange for them to be sent in advance
- Bring academic records if in school
- Bring insurance card and ID
- Wear glasses and hearing aids, if needed

**After the evaluation, make sure to:**

Request to talk with the Neuropsychologist about reviewing the test results with you. You are likely to get a more thorough explanation and a better understanding of the results if you meet with the Neuropsychologist. If the patient is already seeing other doctors or therapists, make sure to provide permission to share the results with them.

**REMEMBER** »  Coverage for the cost of testing will vary depending on circumstances. Health insurance may cover the testing, but some will have limits on the number of hours for which they will pay. Please check with your insurance provider BEFORE agreeing to an evaluation.

**Brain Injury Association of Virginia** can help you better understand brain injury and consult with you about your personal situation. We can then direct you to services in your area you might need. Our services are confidential and free.

**To get in touch:**

Call **1-800-444-6443**

Visit **biav.net**

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