

Psychoeducation Assessments In Northern Schools

Presented by:

Karen Cox-Gurdon B.Ed, B.A hons, OCT

Samantha Stouffer B.Ed, B.A hons, Special Education Specialist, OCT

What is a Psychoeducational Assessment?

A formalized assessment of a student to determine...

- Strengths and Weaknesses
- How a student rates compared to specific knowledge/education stages
- If a student has a formal exceptionality, which will affect their educational journey
- Provides teachers with clear strategies and suggestions on how to better educate the student according to their learning needs

Why Students Need These Assessments

- Psychoeducational Assessments provide students with formal diagnoses of learning exceptionalities.
- With these diagnoses Special Education departments can apply for additional funding.
 - This allows SpecEd departments to access more meaningful resources, validly for additional support staff hiring and the purchasing of specific educational technology.
- Allows for teachers to have a greater understanding of the student as a whole.
- Allows students to be covered under the Ontario Disability Act
 - The Act can provide them with additional support throughout their Post Secondary Education journey.

Determining Which Students To Assess

- Recommendations from classroom teachers.
- Recommendations from families.
- Past educational history.
- General testing scores - reading running records, math assessments, ect.
- Special Education testing scores - KTEA-III
- Daily observations and notes.
- Age of student

Determining which students should receive a psychoeducational assessment should be a team effort. Many members of staff should be consulted along the way.

Why Families Need To Be Supportive

For a Psychoeducational Assessment to happen families must provide consent.

It is extremely important that families understand they must be part of the process

- Families have a number of different surveys and interviews to complete
- At least 2 in person meetings with the Psychotherapist
- Insure their child attends school during these assessments

This process can be challenging to some families, if a family is in support of the assessment they are more willing to work through these challenges.

How To Get Family Support

- Be upfront about why the assessment is being recommended
- Be positive - how will this benefit their child in the long run
- Be persistent - letters, phone calls, face to face meetings
- Be open to questions, concerns, defensive behaviour - reassure families you are here to help and not judge

What Is The Role Of The SERT

As the SERT you will be working with the assessment team - Psychotherapist, Psychologist, and Psychometrist.

- The Psychologist has the final say in the assessment results and diagnoses

You will be expected to ...

- Get the consent forms completed and signed
- Go over and complete background surveys with families and teachers
- Arranging all the meetings between families/students and the assessment team
- Keeping your principal and teachers informed and updated
- *Arranging accommodations for the assessment team
- Be present for all final meetings between families and the Psychologist

Moving Past The Assessments

As the SERT you will be responsible for going over the assessment results with your colleagues.

- Updating IEPs to reflect the new information
- Providing classroom teachers with support and knowledge on how they can fully support their students now that an exceptionality may have been identified
- Providing follow up assessments (OT, SPL, Physio, medical specialists)
- Ensure that future Special Education funding is reflective of any new exceptionalities identified
- Communicate with families - ensure they understand the results and how they can support their child in the home
- Keep track of when the next psychoeducational assessment should be (ideal is every 3 years)

Challenges

- Location
- Availability
- Funding
- Support
- Families
- Time / Life