

# Treating Mental Illness



# Identifying Mental Illness

- Assessment - collecting relevant information in an effort to reach a conclusion
  - To understand the individual (idiographic)
  - To predict behavior
  - To plan treatment
  - To evaluate treatment outcome
- Clinical diagnosis – the process of determining whether the individual meets the criteria for a psychological disorder




# Psychological Assessments

- Three procedures commonly used in psychosocial assessments include:
  - Assessment interviews
  - Clinical observation of behavior
  - Psychological tests



# Clinical Interviews

- Mental status exam
  - Appearance and behavior
  - Thought processes
  - Mood and affect
  - Intellectual functioning
  - Sensorium
- Semistructured clinical interviews (DICA, ADIS - IV)



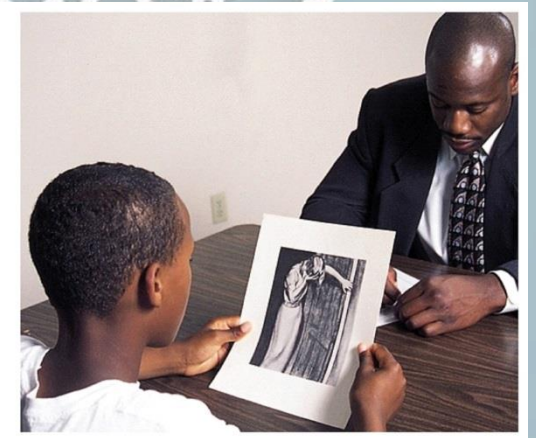
Mental status exam	Frank
<b>1. Appearance and behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overt behavior</li><li>• Attire</li><li>• Appearance, posture, expressions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persistent twitch</li><li>• Appearance appropriate</li></ul>
<b>2. Thought processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rate of speech</li><li>• Continuity of speech</li><li>• Content of speech</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flow and content of speech reasonable</li></ul>
<b>3. Mood and affect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Predominant feeling state of the individual</li><li>• Feeling state accompanying what individual says</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anxious mood</li><li>• Affect appropriate</li></ul>
<b>4. Intellectual functioning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Type of vocabulary</li><li>• Use of abstractions and metaphors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intelligence within normal limits</li></ul>
<b>5. Sensorium</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awareness of surroundings in terms of person (self and clinician), time, and place—“oriented times three”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oriented times three</li></ul>

**Subsequent focus**  
Possible existence of disorder characterized by intrusive, unwanted thoughts and resistance to them

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# Psychological Tests

- Two general categories of psychological tests for use in clinical practice are Intelligence and Personality Tests
  - Projective Personality Tests - Unstructured stimuli are presented. Meaning or structure projected onto stimuli. Projections reveal hidden motives
    - Rorschach Inkblot Test
      - Subjects examine inkblots and describe what they see, used to find underlying issues
    - Thematic Apperception Test
      - Designed to reveal a person's social drives or needs by their interpretation of a series of pictures of emotionally ambiguous situations
    - Sentence Completion Test
      - Participants given a sentence starter to see how they finish a certain idea (ex. My family is....)



# Psychological Tests and Objective Tests

- Objective tests
  - Roots in empirical tradition
  - Test stimuli are less ambiguous
  - Require minimal clinical inference in scoring and interpretation
- Personality tests
  - Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
  - Extensive reliability, validity, and normative database



# Physical Examinations

- Many psychological problems have physical components either as causal factors or symptom patterns
- Neurological tests used to determine site of organic brain disorder and extent of organic brain disorder
  - Involves use of expanding array of testing devices
  - Measures cognitive, perceptual, and motor performance
  - Provides clues to extent and location of brain damage



# Benefits of Classifying a Disorder

- Introduction of order
  - Labels something as a disorder and establishes what exactly is going on
- Prevalence rates
  - Helps give an idea of how common it is, how severe, an idea of progression, etc...
- Clarification of treatment issues
  - Lets person know what medical field can, and cannot do (and what insurance will cover)





# Making Treatment Decisions

- Begin with assessment information and diagnostic decisions to determine a treatment plan
  - Use a combination of idiographic and nomothetic (broad, general) information
- Other factors:
  - Therapist's theoretical orientation
  - Current research
  - General state of clinical knowledge – currently focusing on empirically supported, evidence-based treatment



# Effectiveness of Treatment

- Therapy outcome studies typically assess one of the following questions:
  - Is therapy in general effective?
  - Are particular therapies generally effective?
  - Are particular therapies effective for particular problems?
- Meta-analysis - the average person who received treatment was better off than 75% of the untreated subjects
  - 5-10% do worse
  - Not every treatment works with every person

