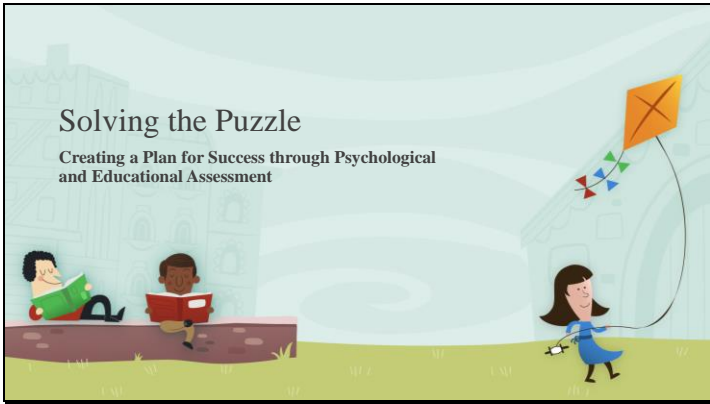



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Dr. Lisa Ahern, PhD
Director of Psychoeducational Services
The Center for Emotional Health
Cherry Hill & Princeton, NJ



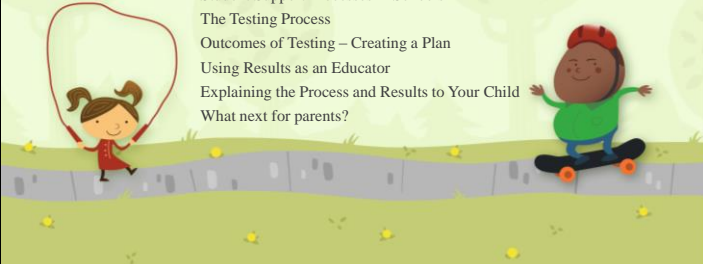
- NC State – PhD in School Psychology
- NCSU Psychoeducational Clinic
- Wake County Public Schools (NC)
- Duke University ADHD Program – Director of Learning Disorders Clinic
- CHOP Center for Management of ADHD
- Mount Laurel Public Schools (NJ)
- Adjunct Professor – PCOM School Psychology Program
- Licensed Psychologist
- Certified School Psychologist



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Overview

- When to Consider Testing
- What is “psychoeducational testing”?
- Student Support Processes in Schools
- The Testing Process
- Outcomes of Testing – Creating a Plan
- Using Results as an Educator
- Explaining the Process and Results to Your Child
- What next for parents?

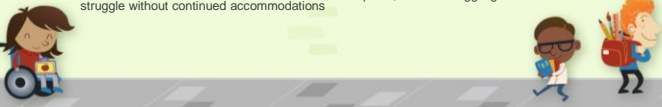


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When to Consider Testing

- Ages 4 through young adulthood
- Struggling in school with:
 - Learning
 - Behavior
 - Emotional concerns
 - Work completion
 - Social skills
- Have ruled out medical causes (e.g., medical condition, sleep problems, vision and hearing problems)
- Have discussed with teachers and interventions in place, but still struggling or would struggle without continued accommodations

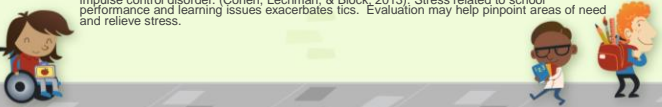


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What is psychoeducational testing?

- Evaluation to determine:
 - How a child processes information
 - Learning strengths and weaknesses
 - Diagnosis of psychological, developmental, and/or learning disorders or disabilities
 - e.g., ADHD, OCD, Tourette's, ASD, dyslexia/dysgraphia/dyscalculia (SLD), Anxiety, Depression
 - Determine eligibility and classification for special education
 - Determine eligibility for college accommodations/extra time on the SAT
 - Determine eligibility for gifted services
- Ninety percent of children with Tourette's Syndrome also have comorbid conditions, such as Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or an impulse control disorder. (Cohen, Lechman, & Block, 2013). Stress related to school performance and learning issues exacerbates tics. Evaluation may help pinpoint areas of need and relieve stress.




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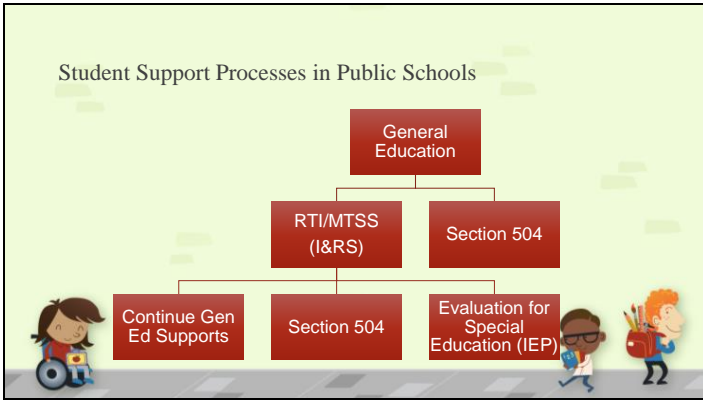
What is psychoeducational testing?

- May include:
 - Developmental/Social/Educational History and Record Review
 - Clinical Interviews
 - Classroom observation
 - Cognitive/IQ testing
 - Achievement testing (reading, writing, math, oral language)
 - Neuropsychological tests and/or tests of processing weaknesses
 - Behavioral Rating Scales



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Student Support Processes in Public Schools

I&RS	Section 504	IEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Interventions by general ed teacher or RTI Specialist (interventionists) Data Collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be committee or guidance counselor Diagnosed or Perceived Disability that affects a major life activity (learning) Accommodations May have adjunct services like OT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Study Team/Testing Diagnosed disability Affects educational performance* Need for specialized instruction* Accommodations, Goals, Adjunct Services

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- Testing Process
- In NJ - Child Study Team: School Psychologist, Learning Consultant, Social Worker. Most other states: School Psychologist
 - Private Psychologist – in a private practice or clinic/hospital setting
 - Interviews with parents and teachers – what are concerns?
 - Behavioral (attention, executive functioning, social, emotional)
 - Educational (reading, writing, math, oral language, memory)
 - Developmental and medical history
 - Interventions already tried – data?
 - Clinical Interviews – review psychological symptoms for diagnosis

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Testing Process

- Classroom Observation (not always done with private evals)
 - During instruction, during group or independent work, during free time (lunch recess), various settings if behavior is different
 - May be structured (on task/off task) or qualitative or both
 - Compare to behavior of other students
 - Observe teacher interventions/responses




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Testing Process

- Behavioral Rating Scales
 - Parent, Teacher, Self report of behavior – compare to national norms/other boys or girls child's age
 - General scales (BASC, CBRS)
 - Specific scales (Conners or Vanderbilt for ADHD, ASRS/CARS for ASD, BRIEF or CEFI for executive functioning, MASC for anxiety, CDI for depression, Tic Inventories)
 - Multiple Informants

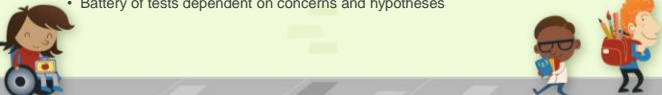


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Testing Process

- Standardized Tests – why use them?
- Cognitive Tests/IQ – e.g., WISC-V, Stanford Binet-V, DAS-II, K-ABC, UNIT, CTONI, WJ Cognitive
- Achievement Tests – e.g., WIAT-III, WJ-IV, K-TEA, DAB
- Processing Tests – e.g., NEPSY-2, D-KEFS (exec functioning), CTOPP-2, PAL-2, FAR, FAM, WRAML-2, Wechsler Memory Scale
- Speech/Language (optional) – completed by speech/language pathologist (SPL)
- Battery of tests dependent on concerns and hypotheses




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Testing Process – Example Batteries

ADHD	Dyslexia/Reading Disability	Autism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clinical InterviewsObservationConners Rating ScalesPossibly: IQ/Achievement to rule out LD or examine effect on achievementPossibly: Neuropsych tests or rating scales for executive functioning or memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">InterviewsGather intervention dataIQ and Achievement testing – may be more in depth reading/spelling inventoriesProcessing eval: CTOPP-2, PAL-2, FAR – to examine phonological and orthographic processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Clinical InterviewsObservationIQ/Neuropsychological testing – examine processing strengths/weaknessRating scales – ASRSPragmatic Language evaluation (SPL)ADOS – Autism Diagnostic Observation ScheduleMaybe achievement also

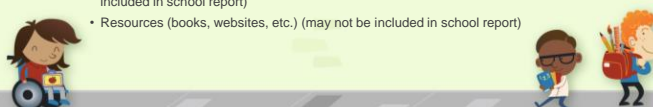


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Outcomes of Testing: Creating a Plan

- Thorough reports should include:
 - Background information and full description of the problems and child's strengths
 - Behavioral Observations – either during testing, in classroom or both
 - Description of each test and how to interpret the scores
 - Test scores and observations of behavior during those tests if necessary
 - Interpretation of test scores and analysis of full profile
 - Diagnoses, if any (may not be included in school report)
 - Recommendations for support at school, home, and personally (may not be included in school report)
 - Resources (books, websites, etc.) (may not be included in school report)




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What happens next?

- Private Report
 - Suggestions for general ed teacher
 - Enter RTI/MTSS process
 - Be considered for 504
- Be considered for IEP – meeting to discuss eligibility for SPED (school may want to do further evaluation or RTI first)
- Give to other providers (e.g., physician for medication, OT or SPL, therapist, tutor)

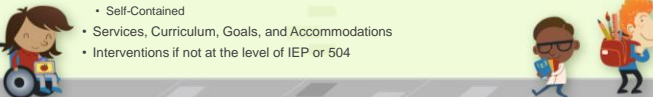


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What happens next?

- School Evaluation
 - IEP meeting to discuss eligibility for Special Education (or move to 504)
- If eligible for SPED, also discuss under what category – for example:
 - SLD – Specific Learning Disabled
 - OHI – Other Health Impaired
 - AU – Autism
 - CI – Communication Impaired
 - ID – Intellectually Disabled
 - ED – Emotionally Disabled
- Discuss placement – LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)
 - Inclusion/Co-teaching/In Class Resource/Push-in
 - Resource/Pull-Out
 - Self-Contained
- Services, Curriculum, Goals, and Accommodations
- Interventions if not at the level of IEP or 504

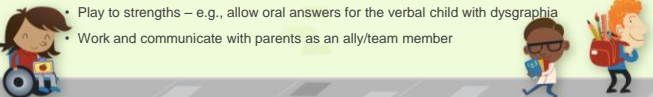


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Using Results as an Educator

- Understand the disability - May not change placement of the student
- Be aware of accommodations and goals
- Be prepared to differentiate and modify
- Leveling the playing field – what is “fair”?
 - Fair = everyone gets what they need to learn
 - Many disabilities are not visible or may appear to be “bad behavior”
 - E.g., eyeglasses, not everyone needs them so don't give them to everyone
- “Just because I could do it yesterday, doesn't mean I can do it today” – shape toward more consistent or better behavior
- Play to strengths – e.g., allow oral answers for the verbal child with dysgraphia
- Work and communicate with parents as an ally/team member

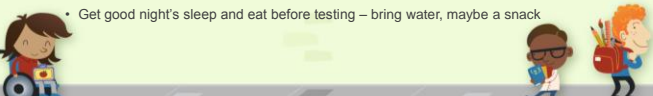


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Explaining the Process To Your Child

- Avoid using the word “testing” when possible – especially “IQ” testing
- Each person has their own unique brain that is not like anyone else's, so each person learns differently
- Activities to see how THEIR brain works and how they learn best
- Then we can help teachers know the best ways to help them learn
- Many activities are fun! Put blocks together, pick out pictures that finish patterns, talk about what words mean – many “school” activities are short
- Starts out very easy, but gets harder as it goes along because the tests go all the way up to college age – just try your best!
- Get good night's sleep and eat before testing – bring water, maybe a snack

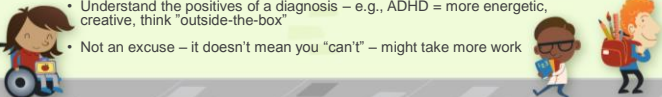


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Explaining Results to Your Child

- If old enough, child may sit in on feedback session (let examiner know in advance if you plan to do this!)
- Do not focus on numbers – talk about strengths first, and then areas that were more difficult; some people strong at music or soccer, some need more practice to do well
- Connect those areas to their experiences (e.g., "this is why it feels like reading is so much harder for you than math, but now that we know why we can work on making it easier for you!")
- Empower kids to self-advocate – not something wrong, just do it differently than some other kids – know when you need help and why!
- Understand the positives of a diagnosis – e.g., ADHD = more energetic, creative, think "outside-the-box"
- Not an excuse – it doesn't mean you "can't" – might take more work




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What next for parents?

- Lots of info – can be overwhelming
- Ask provider to prioritize – what is most important step to do first?
- May have referrals – therapists, speech, OT, social skills groups, etc.
- Consider family impact/schedules – provide downtime & time for strengths
- Consider family therapy or individual therapy for parents if stress is high
- Find support – local parent groups and organizations




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Resources

- Understood.com - general information about learning issues
 - <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>
- CHADD – Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder
 - www.chadd.org
- Decoding Dyslexia NJ
 - <http://decodingdyslexianj.org/>
- International Dyslexia Association
 - <https://dyslexiaida.org/>
- Hoagie's Gifted
 - <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>
- Wright's Law
 - <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

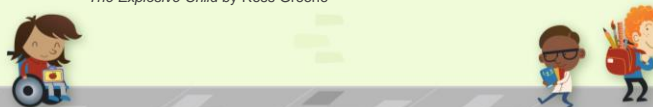


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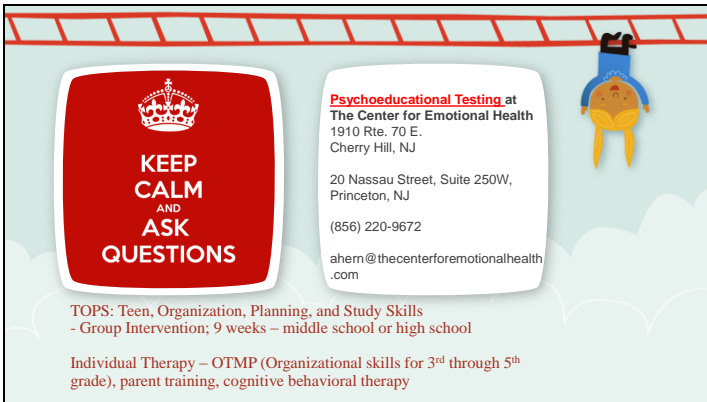
Resources – Dr. Ahern’s favorite books

- *Taking Charge of ADHD* by Russell Barkley
- *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Sally Shaywitz
- *What to Do When...* series by Dawn Huebner (workbooks for anxiety, OCD, anger management, sleep issues, negative thinking)
- *Freeing Your Child from Anxiety* by Tamar Chansky
- *1,2,3 Magic* and *Surviving Your Adolescents* by Thomas Phalen
- *The Explosive Child* by Ross Greene



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KEEP CALM AND ASK QUESTIONS

Psychoeducational Testing at
The Center for Emotional Health
1910 Rte. 70 E.
Cherry Hill, NJ

20 Nassau Street, Suite 250W,
Princeton, NJ

(856) 220-9672

ahern@thecenterforemotionalhealth.com

TOPS: Teen, Organization, Planning, and Study Skills
- Group Intervention; 9 weeks – middle school or high school

Individual Therapy – OTMP (Organizational skills for 3rd through 5th grade), parent training, cognitive behavioral therapy
