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Dr. Rick Whatley is a Clinical  
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**Clinical  
Neuropsychology**

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# What is a Clinical Neuropsychologist?

A neuropsychologist is a psychologist who specializes in studying brain behavior relationships. A clinical neuropsychologist is a licensed psychologist with expertise in how behavior and skills are related to brain structures and systems. They have extensive training in the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the nervous system. Clinical neuropsychologists study brain behavior relationships under very specific circumstances which are both controlled and standardized.

# What is a Neuropsychological Evaluation?

A Neuropsychological evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of cognitive and behavioral functions using a set of standardized tests and procedures. Various mental functions are systematically tested to determine what functions are impaired and what functions are not impaired. Some abilities may be measured in more detail than others, depending on your needs.

# What is Assessed?

- General intellect
- Higher level executive skills (sequencing, reasoning, conceptualization, problem solving)
- Planning and organization
- Attention and concentration
- Learning, memory, and academic skills
- Language
- Visual-spacial skills (perception)
- Motor and sensory skills
- Emotions, behavior and personality

# What will the Results Tell Me?

Test results can be used to understand your situation in a number of ways:

- Testing can identify weaknesses in specific areas. It is very sensitive to mild memory and thinking problems that might not be obvious in other ways. When problems are very mild, testing may be the only way to detect them. For example, testing can help determine whether memory changes are normal age-related changes or if they reflect a neurological disorder. Testing might also be used to identify problems related to medical conditions that can affect

memory and thinking, such as diabetes, metabolic or infectious diseases, or alcoholism.

- Test results can also be used to help differentiate among illnesses, which is important because appropriate treatment depends on accurate diagnosis. Different illnesses result in different patterns of strengths and weaknesses on testing. Therefore, the results can be helpful in determining which areas of the brain might be involved and what illness might be operating. For instance, testing can help to differentiate among Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and depression. Your physician will use this information along with the results of other tests, such as brain imaging and blood tests, to come to the most informed diagnosis possible.

- Sometimes testing is used to establish a "baseline," or document a person's skills before there is any problem. In this way, later changes can be measured very objectively.

- Test results can be used to plan treatments that use strengths to compensate for weaknesses. The results help to identify what target problems to work on and which strategies to use. For example, the results can help to plan and monitor rehabilitation or to follow the recovery of skills after a stroke or traumatic brain injury.