1.0 INTRODUCTION

Assessment is the process of collecting information with regard to abilities, interest, aptitude, personality, attitude and beliefs. It is an integral part of day to day life, and is one of the important work of the counselor. Without assessment the counselor can not reach any conclusion; so it is a basic step to get information related to the client. For psychological assessment in counseling the counselor uses various assessment techniques for which the most known is the standardized tools named as psychological test to assess clients’ behaviour. Formal assessment is planned and is based on certain predetermined criteria whereas some assessment techniques are non standardized such as case study, interview, observation etc. In this unit you’ll know the principles, purpose and methods of assessment, the difference between psychological assessment and testing, and different types of psychological tests.
1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the meaning of psychological assessment;
- Differentiate between psychological assessment and psychological testing;
- Describe the purposes for which psychological assessment is used;
- List out the important principles of assessment;
- Describe the different methods of assessment;
- Select a good psychological test; and
- Describe the different types of psychological tests.

1.2 MEANING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Let us first define the term assessment. It can be defined as “the use of standards or systematic procedure for observing our behaviour.” Assessment describes the status of a phenomenon at a particular time; it describes without value judgment a situation that prevails; it attempts no explanation of underlying reasons and makes no recommendations for action. It may deal with prevailing opinion, knowledge, practice, or conditions. The definition of assessment for our purpose can be the process of collecting information to be used as the basis for informed decision by the assessor or by those to whom results are communicated.

Psychological assessment usually involves a more comprehensive assessment of the individual. This process of assessment makes use of psychological tests or other qualitative method. Therefore, it is a process of collecting information which can be formal, informal, qualitative and quantitative.

Psychological assessment is a process that involves the integration of information from multiple sources, such as tests related to ability, intelligence, interests or attitudes, as well as information from personal interviews. Collateral information is also collected about personal, occupational, or medical history, such as from records or from interviews with parents, spouses, teachers, or previous therapists or physicians. Moreover the psychological assessment is a structured interview that gathers information from and/or tests a person to evaluate his or her mental health. It is “an extremely complex process of solving problems (answering questions) in which psychological tests are often used as one of the methods of collecting relevant data” (Anastasi, 1990).

The psychological assessment gathers information about the individual to provide him/her guidance and counseling. It is the first step in any guidance and counseling situation. The process typically starts with a key complaint or presenting problem—this is usually what prompts the person to seek help. A complete psychological assessment should include: bio psychosocial history, neurological assessment, psychological testing and physical examination.

Once it is completed, the assessment will help to establish either a tentative or definitive diagnosis. With this information, the counselor can inform to the client about the results, and psycho therapy/counseling can be given.
Thus, a psychological assessment is the attempt of a skilled professional, usually a psychologist, to use the techniques and tools of psychology to learn either general or specific facts about another person, either to inform others of how they function now, or to predict their behaviour and functioning in the future.

Maloney and Ward describe assessment as follows. It

1) Typically does not involve defined procedures or steps
2) Frequently uses tests
3) Contributes to some decision process to some problem, often by redefining the problem, breaking the problem down into smaller pieces, or highlighting some part(s) of the problem
4) Requires the examiner to consider, evaluate, and integrate the data
5) Produces results that can not be evaluated solely on psychometric grounds
6) Is less routine and inflexible, more individualised.

The point of assessment is often diagnosis or classification. These are the act of placing a person in a strictly or loosely defined category of people. This allows us to quickly understand what they are like in general, and to assess the presence of other relevant characteristics based upon people similar to them.

Assessments can be both process and product oriented. Process-oriented assessments do not necessarily produce a finished product; they are primarily tools used to guide ongoing relationships to direct activities and plans. Of course, assessments frequently overlap in their nature and purpose. Product-oriented assessments are assessments that result in the creation of a report or document. For example, a medical history is required when patients are hospitalized and mental status examinations and their results concerning emotional and cognitive functioning are documented.

1.3 PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

The purposes of assessment in guidance and counseling situation are as follows:

1) **Self Understanding**: The basic purpose of carrying out an assessment is for gaining insight in helping the client understand themselves better, helping them to know what they can do and cannot do including their strengths and weaknesses.

2) **To Diagnose Student’s Problem**: To diagnose the client’s problem is another purpose that assessment data fulfills. By using the data properly, we can interpret causal factors. It also helps to identify various aspects such as family background, physical health, academic performance etc.

3) **To Help in Career Planning and Education**: Assessment done with the help of various psychological tools guides the students in making choices for their career and selection of subjects/courses.

4) **To Help Predict the Future Performance**: Counselors use assessment data to estimate individual’s attitude, ability, personality, etc that have implication for the success and adjustment which help to predict the future performance of the individual. Moreover, the counselor can also motivate the client in a direction where he/she can get more success.
5) **To Evaluate the Outcome of Counseling:** Assessment is done prior to counseling as well as at the end of it. This gives the counselor valuable insights for further intervention and to achieve the expected outcome.

### 1.4 PRINCIPLE OF ASSESSMENT

The principles of assessment have been given by Shertzzer and Linden which states that assessment should be Holistic, Ongoing, Balanced, Accurate and Confidential. These are explained below.

1) **Assessment should be Holistic:** This principle involves multiple methods in collecting information. The use of a combination of assessment techniques increases the likelihood of applying positive intervention and consequently the achievement of the desired goals. The principle of holistic assessment follows a systematic process to arrive at an understanding of the individual. To make the assessment process more systematic a counselor needs to keep in mind three important factors i.e. What to assess, when to assess and in which state of assessing is required.

Assessment should be within the context of life pattern of the individual, i.e., supportive information regarding other aspects of the person need also to be considered to better understand the problem. For example, a student may experience difficulty in school due to limited academic preparation. However, it may not be the only factor; other factor such as self esteem which might not be evident, but could influence the academic achievement of the students.

Assessment measures and procedures must be based on the demands of the situation. The selection of the tool and procedure to be used will depend on the demands of the presented situation. Therefore, first the basic data should be collected and examined before obtaining information on the supporting factors through administering different tests.

Special condition and situation for understanding client’s behaviour should also be given due consideration in the process of assessment. In addition to this the counselor should also keep in mind the capacity, motivation and other aspects related to client’s behaviour while assessing. The counselor should be alert to behaviour which is observable through nonverbal cues. Nonverbal behaviour shows many hints which can be noted through body posture, facial expressions, hand movements etc. of the client.

In holistic assessment it is necessary for the counselor to know the culture and the social context of the client, as it can explain the nature and personality of the client. Different characteristics of the client such as self reliance, assertiveness, competiveness and adjustment with the group members can be understood in the context of the client’s cultural context.

2) **Assessment should be on Going:** Ongoing assessment allows comparison between the client’s initial present problems and the client’s current functioning. It appraises the counselor of possible new and urgent needs which may arise after the initial assessment, therefore psychological assessment must take into account the dynamics nature of the human behaviour which involves his/her needs, goals, abilities etc.
In assessment, the conceptualization of an individual must be continuous. This is important because the counselor keeps on refining his conceptualization of the client in the light of more and more information collected and interaction between the client and the counselor. Hence, assessment needs to be considered as ongoing and not episodic. As far as possible, assessment should be based on the longitudinal data i.e. understanding of individual’s behaviour is better and more meaningful if the data is collected over a period of time rather than on current information. e.g. longitudinal data is helpful for the diagnosis of the maladaptive behaviours.

3) **Assessment should be Balanced:** Assessment makes use of normative information as well as individualised data. Both types of data combined try to give a better understanding about the client. It is the purpose and the situation that decides which type of assessment data is required.

4) **Assessment should be Accurate:** The assessment device used should be accurate and the counselor should have the skill for interpreting the data. Counselors must keep in mind the possibility of errors, as all tools may not be 100% accurate; so they must try to minimize the errors by using standardized procedures.

Predictions of future behaviour should always be stated in terms of probabilities as human behaviour is so complex and dynamic. Assessment therefore can only provide useful insights to derive inferences rather than making prediction in absolute terms.

5) **Assessment should be Confidential:** Clients need to be assured of confidentiality of their personal information. This will develop trust with the counselor. It is one of the basic ethic of counseling as well. The client will also be able to build a good rapport based on mutual trust and respect.

### Self Assessment Questions

1) Define psychological assessment.

   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................

2) Describe the different ways in which assessment can be used in guidance and counselling situation.

   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
   .............................................................................................................
**1.5 PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is always a systematized and planned process involving a number of steps. These are as follows:

- Formulating goals
- Identifying tools and techniques
- Data collection
- Interpreting specific assessment data
- Integrating data from different sources
- Formulating assessment information
- Reformulating goal

![Fig. 1.1: Process of Assessment](image)

The first step in the assessment process always starts with defining or formulating goals for counselling. According to the goals decided, the tools and techniques for assessment are identified. This assessment tools aim at providing data with regard to the goals established. Then the actual data collection process starts; the data collected then are interpreted. This results in getting information about the client and his situation. However, for a comprehensive understanding of the client, the interpretation of the data collected is also collated with data obtained from different sources. Interpretations are then translated into their implications for
various decisions, conclusions and recommendations. In the process of assessment, if the counselor finds that goals set were not properly formulated, then the goals are reformulated.

1.6 METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

The counselor can make use of different methods of assessment. It depends on the requirement of the case, e.g., if the client is suffering from mental or developmental problem, the counselor may use case study method. The various methods of assessment are interview, observation and case study. These are described below.

1.6.1 The Interview Method

The interview is probably the most commonly used assessment tool. Counselors use interview method to help gather information about clients and clarify results of other assessments. Assessors must be appropriately trained. Their skills and experience are essential for the interviewee.

Below are several aspects which must be kept in mind:

**Verbal and face-to-face:** what does the client tell you? How much information are they willing/able to provide?

**Para-verbal:** how does the client speak? At normal pace, tone, volume, inflection? What is their command on language, how well do they choose their words? Do they pick up on non-verbal cues for speech and turn taking? How organised is their speech?

**Situation:** Is the client cooperative? Is their participation voluntary? For what purpose is the interview conducted? Where is the interview conducted?

There can be two types of interview: Structured and Unstructured. That is, the interview can range from being totally unplanned i.e., unstructured to carefully designed i.e., completely structured.

i) **Structured Interview:** The most structured interviews have characteristics such as standardized questions, trained interviewers, specific question order, controlled length of time, and a standardized response evaluation format. A structured interview will be more reliable and valid. It is designed to provide a diagnosis for a client by detailed questioning of the client in a “yes/no” or “definitely/somewhat/not at all” forced choice format. It is broken up into different sections reflecting the diagnosis in question. Often Structured interviews use closed questions, which require a simple pre-determined answer. Examples of closed questions are “When did this problem begin? Was there any particular stressor going on at that time? Can you tell me about how this problem started?” Closed interviews are better suited for specific information gathering.

ii) **Unstructured Interview:** Interviews can also be less structured and allow the client more control over the topic and direction of the interview. Unstructured interviews are better suited for general information gathering. Unstructured interviews often use open questions, which ask for more
explanation and elaboration on the part of the client. Examples of open questions are “What was happening in your life when this problem started? How did you feel then? How did this all start?”

Major functions of interview method are:

**Description:** Interview has been found to be particularly useful in providing insight into the interactive quality of social life. The verbal interaction enables the interviewer in understanding how people view the subject under investigation.

**Exploration:** In this the interviewer tries to explore some new variable for study as it also helps in conceptual clarity. A review of the work done in the related area also is taken into account.

The advantage of interview method is that it allows greater flexibility in the process of questioning. It facilitates the counselor in obtaining the desired information.

**1.6.2 Observation Method**

Observation method is a fundamental technique of the data collection. It refers to watching and listening to the behaviour of the client over time without manipulating and controlling it. It also records findings in ways that allow some degree of analytic interpretation and discussion. Thus, observation involves broadly selecting, recording and coding behaviour; therefore, it is scientific. It tells us, How does the person act – nervous, calm, smug? What do they do and not do? Do they make and maintain eye contact? How close to you do they sit? Often, some of the most important information you can gather from the observation of behaviour. Behavioural observations may be used clinically (such as to add to interview information or to assess results of treatment).

Type of Observation Method:

1) **Naturalistic observation**

2) **Structured observation**

3) **Unstructured observation**

4) **Participative observation**

1) **Naturalistic observation:** Naturalistic observation is particularly good for observing specific subjects. It provides ecologically valid recordings of natural behaviour. Spontaneous behaviours are more likely to happen.

2) **Structured observation:** Allows control of extraneous factors and the reliability of results can be tested by repeating the study. It provides a safe environment to study contentious concepts such as infant attachment.

3) **Unstructured observation:** Gives a broad overview of a situation. Useful where situation/subject matter to be studied is unclear.

4) **Participant observation:** Gives an “insiders” view. Behaviors are less prone to misinterpretation because researcher is a participant. It provides opportunity for the researcher to become an “accepted” part of the environment.
The advantages of the observation method are that it removes any kind of artificiality. It is one of the valid forms of assessment as it is direct and capable of analysing the situation or behaviour of the client.

1.6.3 **Case Study Method**

A case study is an in-depth investigation/analysis of a single person. Counselor uses case study to investigate in detail a specific situation or person. Case studies are often used in clinical cases or in situations when lab research is not possible or practical. Typically data are gathered from a variety of sources and by using several different methods. Experiments, interviews, questionnaires, observations, diaries, and psychometric tests can all be used within a case study.

Case study can be based on an individual, a family, a social group, event, or series of events.

The case study research method originated in clinical medicine (the case history, i.e. the patient’s personal history - idiographic method). The case study method often involves simply observing what happens to, or reconstructing ‘the case history’ of a single participant or group of individuals (such as a school class or a specific social group). Case studies allow a counselor to investigate a topic in far more detail than might be possible if they were trying to deal with a large number of research participants.

Therefore it has advantages as case study method provides sufficient basal factors of the client on which opinion can be drawn easily.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Assessment Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Describe the various steps in the process of assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.......................................................... .......................................................... .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) What are the different types of observation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.......................................................... .......................................................... .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Describe the major functions of the interview method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.......................................................... .......................................................... .......................................................... .......................................................... ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.7 MEANING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

Psychological testing is a field characterised by the use of samples of behaviour in order to assess psychological construct(s), such as cognitive and emotional functioning, about a given individual. The technical term for the science behind psychological testing is psychometrics. By samples of behaviour, one means observations of an individual performing tasks that have usually been prescribed beforehand, which often means scores on a test. These responses are often compiled into statistical tables that allow the evaluator to compare the behaviour of the individual being tested to the responses of a norm group.

Psychological tests are written, visual, or verbal evaluations administered to assess the cognitive and emotional functioning of children and adults. It is “an objective and standardized measure of a sample of behaviour.” Psychological testing is a standard procedure of measurement designed to measure characteristics, abilities, personality, etc. They are used to measure the quantified characteristics and have standards.

According to Anastasi (2003), psychological test can be defined as a sample of an individual’s behaviour, obtained under standard conditions and scored according to a fixed set of rules that provide a numeric score. Test can be used to compare the same individual on one or more tests; at the same time two or more persons can also be assessed and compared. A psychological test is characterised by a standardized procedure of administration, scoring, and interpretation which are uniform across the different examiner and settings.

Thus a psychological test is an instrument designed to measure unobserved constructs, also known as latent variables. Psychological tests are typically, but not necessarily, a series of tasks or problems that the respondent has to solve. Psychological tests can strongly resemble questionnaire which are also designed to measure unobserved constructs, but differ in that psychological tests ask for a respondent’s maximum performance whereas a questionnaire asks for the respondent’s typical performance. A useful psychological test must be both valid (i.e., there is evidence to support the specified interpretation of the test results) and reliable (i.e., internally consistent or give consistent results over time, across raters, etc.).

1.7.1 Difference between Psychological Assessment and Psychological Testing

A term closely associated with assessment is psychological test, which Anastasi and Urbina (1997) defined as an objective and standardized measure of a sample of behaviour. Cronbach’s (1990) definition is similar, with a test being a systematic procedure for observing behaviour and describing it with the aid of numerical scales or fixed categories. As these two similar definitions suggest, there are some commonalities among all the definitions of assessment. They all discuss getting a measure or using some type of measurement. In assessment, counselors often want an indication of quantity (e.g., How depressed is the client? Are the test scores high enough to get into Harvard?).

In simple terms, many test questions are related to whether there is a lot of “something” or just a little. In counseling, practitioners are often interested in
human constructs such as emotions, intelligence, personality factors, self-esteem, and aptitudes. These constructs, however, cannot be directly measured. For example, individuals cannot give a pint of emotions in the same way they can give a pint of blood. Humans, for the most part, indicate their emotions by their behaviour, their statements, or even the answers they give on a questionnaire.

It is important to remember that speaking and responding to a questionnaire are behaviours. When working with clients, a counselor must consider this sample of behaviour and then reflect on two important questions: first, is the sample of behaviour indicative of how the person usually behaves, and second, are the inferences being made correct?

Psychological assessment is similar to psychological testing but usually involves a more comprehensive assessment of the individual. Psychological assessment is a process that involves the integration of information from multiple sources, such as tests of normal and abnormal personality, tests of ability or intelligence, tests of interests or attitudes, as well as information from personal interviews. Collateral information is also collected about personal, occupational, or medical history, such as from records or from interviews with parents, spouses, teachers, or previous therapists or physicians. A psychological test is one of the sources of data used within the process of assessment; usually more than one test is used. Many psychologists do some level of assessment when providing services to clients or patients, and may use for example, simple checklists to assess some traits or symptoms, but psychological assessment is a more complex, detailed, in-depth process. Typical types of focus for psychological assessment are to provide a diagnosis for treatment settings; to assess a particular area of functioning or disability often for school settings; to help select type of treatment or to assess treatment outcomes; to help courts decide issues such as child custody or competency to stand trial; or to help assess job applicants or employees and provide career development counseling or training.

A distinction is there in assessment and testing given by AERA, APA and NCME (1999). It defines assessment as a broader term referring to a process that integrates test information with information from other sources e.g. from schools, hospitals etc.

**Difference between Psychological Assessment and Psychological Testing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Assessment</th>
<th>Psychological Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Assessment is a broader term</td>
<td>1) Testing is a narrow term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Assessment is process of collecting information through various techniques such as formal, informal, qualitative and quantitative</td>
<td>2) Test is a standardized procedure of measurement designed to measure characteristics such as ability, personality, aptitude, interest etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Professional psychological assessment usually also includes: interview, demographic information, medical information, personal history, observations by others</td>
<td>3) Psychological testing (e.g., an intelligence test, personality test, or mental health test) occurs as <em>part</em> of the process of psychological assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) An objective and standardized measure of a sample of behaviour”</td>
<td>4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Historically, testing and assessment have been important foundations of counseling and applied psychology. Tests have important roles both as tools to facilitate the goals of counseling and for assessment.

1.8 PURPOSE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

Psychological tests are used to assess a variety of mental abilities and attributes, including achievement and ability, personality, and neurological functioning.

For children, academic achievement, ability, and intelligence tests may be used as tools in school placement, in determining the presence of a learning disability or a developmental delay, in identifying giftedness, or in tracking intellectual development. Intelligence testing may also be used with teens and young adults to determine vocational ability (e.g., in career counseling).

Personality tests are administered for a wide variety of reasons, from diagnosing psychopathology (e.g., personality disorder, depressive disorder) to screening job candidates. They may be used in an educational setting to determine personality strengths and weaknesses.

Tests are thus used in the selection, classification, diagnosis, prediction. The counselor makes use of it to determine client’s behaviour, know her/his personality and help the client in making educational and vocational planning.

In short it can be said that the Psychological tests are formalized measures of mental functioning. Most are objective and quantifiable; however, certain projective tests may involve some level of subjective interpretation. Also known as inventories, measurements, questionnaires, and scales, psychological tests are administered in a variety of settings, including preschools, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, healthcare settings, and social agencies. They come in a variety of formats, including written, verbal, and computer administered.
1.9 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST

A test used in counseling / guidance or for training and development is considered good if the following can be said about it:

1) The test measures what it claims to measure. For example, a test of mental ability does in fact measure mental ability and not some other characteristic.

2) The test measures what it claims to measure consistently or reliably. This means that if a person were to take the test again, the person would get a similar test score.

3) The test is purpose-relevant. In other words, the test measures one or more characteristics that are important to specific career decisions or for predicting or monitoring training and development outcomes.

4) By using the test, more effective decisions can be made by and about individuals. For example, an interest inventory helps you to guide a client toward careers in which he or she is more likely to be satisfied. A mechanical aptitude test may help you predict who would benefit from mechanical training.

Thus, a good test is both reliable and valid, and has good norms. Test reliability and validity are two technical properties of a test that indicate the quality and usefulness of the test. These are the two most important features of a test. The counselor should examine these features when evaluating the suitability of the test. Reliability refers to the consistency of the test results. Validity refers to how well a test measures what it says it does. Norms are designed to tell you what the result of measurement (a number) means in relation to other results (numbers).
Introduction

The “normative sample” should be very representative of the sample of people who will be given the test. Thus, if a test is to be used on the general population, the normative sample should be large, include people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds, and include people from all levels of income and educational status.

A good psychological test is thus a standardized test with a manual which gives complete information about the development of the test, administration, scoring and interpretation of the results.

However, whenever you use a psychological test you should keep in mind a few things. Good test use requires:

- Comprehensive assessment using history and test scores
- Acceptance of the responsibility for proper test use
- Consideration of the Standard Error of Measurement and other psychometric knowledge
- Maintaining integrity of test results (such as the correct use of cut-off scores)
- Accurate scoring
- Appropriate use of norms
- Willingness to provide interpretive feedback and guidance to test takers.

1.10 TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

The psychological tests vary in their content as well as the way they are administered. Thus there are verbal test and nonverbal tests; power test and speed test; group test and individual test. Psychological tests can be of various types such as achievement tests, aptitude tests, mental ability tests, interest inventories, personality inventories etc. Now let us know about these tests.

**Intelligence test:** IQ tests purport to be measures of intelligence, IQ (or cognitive) tests and achievement test are common norm-referenced tests. In these types of tests, a series of tasks is presented to the person being evaluated, and the person’s responses are graded according to carefully prescribed guidelines. After the test is completed, the results can be compiled and compared to the responses of a norm group, usually composed of people of the same age or grade level as the person being evaluated. IQ tests which contain a series of tasks typically divide the tasks into verbal and non verbal and performance test. Some of the important IQ tests are, Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Wechsler Adult Intelligence scale, Draw a man, Bhatia’s Battery of Performance Test of Intelligence, Raven’s Progressive Matrices Test.

**Tests of Interest and Aptitude:** Tests of Interest assesses the likes and dislikes of the client whereas aptitude tests aim at measuring the potential of the client in a particular field. These are mainly used for the educational and vocational counselling. Examples of Interest test are Strong Vocational Interest Blank and Kuder Preference Record. Commonly used aptitude tests are Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) and DBDA.
**Attitude tests**: Attitude tests assess an individual’s feelings about an event, person, or object. Attitude scales are used in marketing to determine individual (and group) preferences for brands, or items. Typically, attitude tests use either a Thurston Scale or Likert Scale to measure specific items.

**Tests of Achievement**: Achievement tests measure the individual’s performance in a particular area. It assesses the acquisition of knowledge and skills by the individual after the completion of a course/training. Achievement tests can be standardized or informal achievement tests made by teachers. Achievement tests help in finding out the student’s strengths and weaknesses in particular areas and assessing student’s performance over a period of time.

**Neuro-psychological tests**: These tests consist of specifically designed tasks used to measure a psychological function known to be linked to a particular brain structure or pathway. They are typically used to assess impairment after an injury or illness known to affect neuro-cognitive functioning, or when used in research, to contrast neuropsychological abilities across experimental groups.

**Personality tests**: Personality tests and inventories evaluate the thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and behavioural traits that comprise personality. The results of these tests can help determine a child’s personality strengths and weaknesses, and may identify certain disturbances in personality. Psychological measures of personality consist of rating scale or self-report measures and free response measures or projective tests.

**Objective tests, i.e., rating scale or self-report measure**

These have a restricted response format, such as allowing for true or false answers or rating using an ordinal scale. Prominent examples of objective personality tests include the MMPI, MCMI and Child behaviour check list. Objective personality tests can be designed for use in organisations for potential employees, such as the NEO-PI, the 16PF, and the Occupational Personality Questionnaire, all of which are based on the Big Five Factor Model of normal personality.

**Projective tests (Free response measures)** attempt to measure personality based on the theory that individuals tend to project their own unconscious attitudes into ambiguous situations. An example of this would be the Rorschach test, in which a person states what each of ten ink blots might be. Other projective tests include Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), the House-Tree-Person Test, Robert’s Apperception Test, and the Attachment Projective.

**Direct observation tests**

These are also used in many situations. Although most psychological tests are “rating scale” or “free response” measures, psychological assessment may also involve the observation of people as they complete activities. This type of assessment is usually conducted with families in a laboratory, home or with children in a classroom. The purpose may be clinical, such as to establish a pre-intervention baseline of a child’s hyperactive or aggressive classroom behaviours or to observe the nature of a parent-child interaction in order to understand a relational disorder. Direct observation procedures are also used in research, for example to study the relationship between intrapsychic variables and specific target behaviours, or to explore sequences of behavioural interaction.
1.11 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learned about one of the important task carried out by a counselor, i.e., psychological assessment of the client. There are various things to be kept in mind about the assessment process. These principles of assessment were described in detail. You also learned about the purpose and the steps in the process of assessment. The methods of assessment – interview, observation and case study were described. Psychological assessment is a broader term which includes psychological testing. The purpose of testing was described and the characteristics of a good psychological test were delineated. You also came to know the different types of psychological tests available which a counselor can make use of to collect information about the client.

1.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) Describe the purposes for which psychological assessment data are used.
2) Enumerate the important principles of assessment.
3) Illustrate the process of assessment.
4) Differentiate between psychological assessment and psychological testing.
5) Explain the various methods of assessment.
6) Explain the various types of psychological test.
7) Discuss the seven steps of assessment process.
8) Explain the purpose of psychological testing.

1.13 GLOSSARY

Psychological Assessment : Any method used to measure characteristics of people, programs, or objects (process of collecting information).

Psychological Test : A standardized procedure of measurement designed to measure characteristics- ability, personality, attitude etc. It is a task upon which people are asked to try their best (aptitude & achievement tests). They measure maximum performance.

Questionnaires and Inventories : Evaluate typical performance. Personality and interest inventories elicit self-reports of opinions, preferences, and typical reactions. Standardized Assessment versus Non-standardized Assessment

Standardized Assessment : Meet certain criteria of test construction, administration, and interpretation. This includes uniform testing procedures, objective scoring methods, and representative norm groups for test interpretation, reliable test scores, and studies of validity.
Non-standardized Assessment: (Ratings scales, projective techniques, behavioural observations, and biographical measures) Produce less reliable and less valid results than standardized assessments but allow counselors to consider aspects of behaviour or the environment not covered by traditional psychological tests. Nomothetic Assessment versus Idiographic Assessment

Nomothetic Assessment: Greek for “law”. Emphasis is placed on variables that show lawful or meaningful distinctions among people. The group provides a frame of reference for determining which variables are present and how to interpret the results.

Idiographic Assessment: Greek for “personal”. Emphasis is placed on those variables that can be most helpful in describing the individual. The individual serves as the reference point to identify relevant variables and how to interpret the data. Quantitative Assessment versus Qualitative Assessment

Quantitative Assessment: Most psychological tests are quantitative procedures, yielding a specific score on a continuous scale. Quantitative procedures have been studied in terms of reliability and validity.

Qualitative Assessment: Procedures such as interviews and autobiographies produce verbal descriptions of a person’s behaviour or of a situation that can be placed into one of several categories. (Examples: developmental stages or personality types). Qualitative procedures provide a holistic and integrated view of clients, encourage activity on part of the client, form part of the treatment in addition to assessment, and can be easily adapted for clients from different backgrounds. Individual Assessment versus Environmental Assessment

Individual Assessment: Counselors have historically paid more attention to assessment of individuals.

Environmental Assessment: Counselors recently have begun devoting more attention to the environment in determining one’s behaviour.
1.14 SUGGESTED READINGS


