Mental Status Exam (MSE)

-best tool for establishing a psychiatric diagnosis
-combination of observations, impressions, & interpretation of client responses
-Eval of patients:
• appearance
• behavior
• speech
• affect
• thought process
• thought content
• cognition

mental health

"a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community"

mental status

-refers to emotional (feeling) and cognitive (knowing) function
-functioning is inferred through assessment of an individual's behaviors:

- consciousness
- language
- mood and affect
- orientation
- attention
- memory
- abstract reasoning
- thought process
- thought content
- perceptions

Factors that affect the interpretation of the MSE

culture
native language
educational level
literacy
social factors

MSE: Appearance

-posture
-dress
-grooming

-physical appearance
• distinguishable markings; scars or tattoos
-facial expressions
level of alertness
-attitudes
-Self-esteem
-Personal statement

MSE: Behavior

how the client presents themselves during the examination
-eye contact
-psychomotor activity
• increased or decreased
-movements
-mannerisms
-stereotypies
-posturing
-how the client responds to the exam
• responses appropriate to topics?
• sit still through exam?
-gait
-movements
• coordinated, slowed, excessive

MSE: Speech

Assess general speech qualities:
-rate
• fast, rapidly, slowly
-rhythm
• monotone or slurred
-latency
-volume
• soft, normal, or loud
-content
-increased or decreased pauses between questions and answers?
-General quality

individual who presents with an extremely rapid and pressured speech with constant interruptions may be experiencing _____ or _____

hypomania or mania

An absence of speech is seen with some diagnoses such as _____

dementia

non-sensical speech is often associated with _____

psychotic disorders

MSE: Mood and Affect

Mood
-client's state of mind or prevalent emotional state
-subjective
-typically self-reported
-Stable: mood is appropriate to their current situation
-other: bright, happy, angry, agitated, irritable, labile, anxious, depressed, or euphoric

Affect
-physical manifestation of the client's emotional state as observed by the provider
-normal, blunted, flat, bizarre, dysphoric, or euphoric
-Qualities of affect
• stability (stable or labile)
• appropriateness
• range (does it change with diff. situations)
• intensity

MSE: Thought Process

-rate of thoughts and how they flow and are connected
-coherent vs. incoherent
-Normal: linear & goal-directed
-Other: loose, circumstantial, or tangential
-Clients may experience flight of ideas with little connection between thoughts or words
-Assessment: questioning client, listening to responses

MSE: Suicidal and Homicidal Ideation

-Direct terms should be used to assess suicide preoccupation and planning
-assess for homicidal ideation, intent, attempts, and plans
-critical to determine whether a plan exists
• access to the resources needed to execute the plan
• more detailed and thorough the plan, the higher the risk
• assess if plan is composed of fleeting thoughts rather than action steps
• assess whether the client is angry and lashing out or intending to bring actual harm
-SCREENING FOR SUICIDAL AND HOMICIDAL IDEATIONS IS AN ETHICAL OBLIGATION OF THE PMHNP & IS ESSENTIAL FOR PROTECTING ONESELF, THE CLIENT, & THE PUBLIC

MSE: Cognitive Assessment