

What is psychological testing?



A psychological test, or assessment, is one way for Centrelink to help work out what kind of assistance is most suitable for you.

As part of your Job Capacity Assessment, you may be referred to a Centrelink Psychologist to complete a psychological test. This test can help the psychologist better understand your situation and your potential. These tests are just one aspect of a psychological assessment and can provide valuable information to help you clarify the issues you are facing and to identify options for progress.

The tests used by Centrelink Psychologists use the same questions and activities for each person so that your answers can be compared to a set of standard results. The tests meet Australian standards for validity and reliability, which means that the tests are recognised as giving dependable and fair results.

How can psychological testing help?

Psychological testing is used widely in the community. People may be asked to take a psychological test for a variety of reasons related to areas such as employment, education or personal issues.

Employers have used psychological tests for many years because they can provide useful information about a person's personality, motivations, abilities and interests. Using tests to measure ability or personality can help in selection for a job, or in assessing training or development needs.

Testing can provide information about how a child, young person or adult approaches a particular task, and can highlight areas of strengths and areas of difficulty in learning or intellectual capacity.

Psychological tests may also be used to explore health, psychological and emotional concerns. For example, tests may be used to:

- measure the extent of cognitive impairment following a head injury
- clarify psychological disturbance and distress in mental health and primary care services, or
- monitor behavioural change in people with a learning disability.

Such assessments can be used to determine the nature of some psychological problems, to plan treatment, to monitor change over time and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention.

Do I have to take the test?

No. You always have the option not to take the test, but to help you make your decision, the psychologist will explain:

- the reasons for recommending the test
- how taking the test could help you in your particular situation, and
- exactly what the test will involve.

Who gives the test?

Psychological tests are conducted by Centrelink Psychologists who hold registration with their relevant State or Territory Psychology Board. Some tests (like an IQ Test) can only be conducted by a psychologist, while other tests (for example, some tests of emotional distress) can be given by other professionals.



What happens after the test?

After the test, the psychologist will discuss the results with you. These results, along with other information obtained during the interview will be used to provide information regarding eligibility for services and referral options.

Are the results private?

The original test results will be held by Psychology Services for a period of time, as required by law. The report relating to your test results is available to you on your request, and will only be released with your written consent.

In exceptional circumstances, it is possible that certain information may have to be released in accordance with the law. This would only occur where your safety or the safety of others is involved, in criminal matters, or in response to a court direction.