

Caitlin B. Dunning, Psy.D. LLC
Psycho-educational Assessment Services
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Informed Consent for Assessment

Thank you for making the decision to pursue an evaluation at our practice. This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Please read it carefully and discuss with us any questions or concerns you might have. When you sign this document, it will represent an agreement between us.

Credentials

Dr. Dunning holds a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Loyola University Maryland and is a Licensed Psychologist (#4498) in Maryland. Dr. Nail holds a doctoral degree in Human Services Psychology (Clinical Psychology) from University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and is a Licensed Psychologist (#5974) in Maryland.

Assessment Services

A comprehensive psycho-educational assessment can provide valuable information about your child's strengths and weaknesses, yield diagnostic information, and lead to recommendations for educational and/or treatment planning. The process of assessment often has significant benefits, and most people find it to be a helpful experience. More specifically, the information provided by a comprehensive evaluation can inform treatment planning and develop educational interventions that are tailored to your child. It often promotes increased understanding of your child and/or self-understanding, and can assist parents with advocacy efforts if indicated. Risks of assessment are minimal, but can include identification of specific areas of weakness as well as diagnosis of a psychological disorder, which may be uncomfortable for some people. Should you or your child experience any discomfort during the assessment process, please notify us so that we can address this with you.

The process of assessment includes three types of face-to-face interactions: an intake interview, the testing session(s), and a feedback session. During the intake interview, we will discuss your concerns and gather relevant background information to help us develop a battery of tests to address your specific questions. We may also review prior records and communicate with other professionals involved in your child's care (with your written authorization). Testing is usually completed in two sessions on separate days, but occasionally we may decide that three shorter sessions are more appropriate for your child. During the feedback session, we review the results of the evaluation with parents or guardians, make recommendations, and answer any questions you may have. This feedback session is typically scheduled within two to four weeks of completion of all testing procedures and/or receipt of additional materials. Following the feedback session, you will be provided with a written report summarizing the testing results and recommendations (generally provided within an additional two weeks). Additional services, including consultation with schools and/or attendance at school meetings, may be available upon request.

Please be aware that we do *not* provide assessment services for custody evaluations, forensic issues, or other court proceedings. If you require such a service, please notify us and we will provide you with appropriate referrals.

Payment and Cancellation Policies

Payment is due at the time of service and can be made by cash, check, or credit card (all major cards accepted). We are not members of any managed care plans and are therefore considered out-of-network providers for all insurance companies. We do not accept insurance as a form of payment; however, we will provide you with a detailed receipt when fees are paid in full. You may choose to submit this receipt to your insurance company, which may then reimburse you according to your plan. There is a great deal of variability in coverage and reimbursement policies for psychological and educational testing, and no amount of reimbursement can be guaranteed. In addition, some insurance companies require pre-authorization for psychological testing. You are responsible for knowing and following the requirements of your insurance plan. We are available to assist you with this process if necessary. Please be aware that you are responsible for the full amount of our fees independent of any reimbursement from your insurance company. Specific fees are outlined in the Fee Agreement.

Please be aware that returned checks will be subject to a \$25 processing fee. If you have an outstanding balance that has not been paid in a timely way and payment arrangements have not been agreed upon, we have the option of using legal means to secure the payment. This could involve hiring a collections agency or going through small claims court. Should such action become necessary, its costs will be included in the claim. In most collection situations, the only information released would be a patient's name, the nature of services provided, and the amount due.

Your appointment time is reserved specifically for you. In the event that you must cancel or reschedule an appointment for any reason, please give a *minimum* of 24 hours notice. Also, please contact us by telephone if this is the case; email is not sufficient for cancellation. If a minimum of 24 hours notice is not given, you will be charged a fee. The cancellation fee for an initial consultation or therapy session is \$100; due to the large amount of time reserved for testing, the cancellation fee for an evaluation is \$200. Please be aware that insurance companies do not reimburse for these charges. We understand that emergency situations do occasionally arise, in which case an exception to this policy may be made at our discretion.

Contacting Us

Telephone is the best way to contact us, but please be aware that we do not answer calls when we are in session. When we are unavailable, our telephones are answered by voicemail that we monitor frequently. We will make every effort to return your call within 24-48 hours with the exception of weekends and holidays; however, we cannot guarantee that we will always be able to do so. If you are unable to reach us and feel that you cannot wait for us to return your call, you are advised to contact your family physician or the nearest emergency room and ask for the psychologist or psychiatrist on call. If we will be unavailable for an extended time, we will provide you with appropriate contact information.

We are willing to use email to communicate with clients with your permission; however, your decision to use email indicates that you understand that it is not considered a secure form of communication and can be intercepted by a third party. Please note that we typically use email for scheduling appointments and administrative issues rather than exchange of clinical information. If you would like to receive your report in PDF format, please notify us and we can send it with password protection using an encrypted email account.

Confidentiality

In general, the privacy of all communications between a psychologist and patient is protected by law, and we can only release information about your child with your written permission. However, there are a few exceptions to this rule. In the event that we do release confidential information about your child, we will make all reasonable attempts to discuss this with you before we proceed. In the following situations, no authorization is required:

In most legal proceedings, you have the right to prevent us from providing any information about your child's evaluation. However, in proceedings involving custody or those in which your child's emotional condition is an important issue, a judge may order our testimony if he or she determines that the issues demand it. If you choose to include your child's mental or emotional status as part of a court proceeding, understand that by doing so, you waive your privilege of confidentiality. If you are involved in litigation, you are encouraged to consult with your attorney to discuss these issues in more depth.

If a patient or patient's parent/guardian files a complaint or lawsuit against us, we may disclose relevant information regarding that patient in order to defend ourselves.

Parents may have the right to receive information about their child's treatment or evaluation if that child is under the age of 18.

There are also some situations in which we are legally obligated to take action that we believe is necessary to attempt to protect your child or others from harm. In these situations, we may have to reveal some information about your child's evaluation. They include:

If we have reason to suspect child abuse or neglect, we are mandated to notify the appropriate authorities.

If we have reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, we are obligated to notify the appropriate authorities.

If we have reason to believe that your child may seriously harm him/herself or another person, we must take protective action to attempt to ensure the safety of your child or others. This may include informing family members of the threat, warning an intended victim, notifying the police, or seeking hospitalization.

If you submit your bill to your insurance company for reimbursement, they require that we provide a clinical diagnosis and may also request additional information.

In some cases, we may find it helpful or necessary to consult with another professional about your child. During a consultation, we would make every effort to protect your child's identity. Please be aware that other professionals are also legally and ethically bound to keep this information confidential.

Minors

The law may allow parents to examine and obtain copies of their child’s records, including evaluation, for patients who are under the age of 18 and are not emancipated. In addition, records regarding minors who are 16 or 17 years of age and seek evaluation without their parents’ consent may be released to their parents according to our professional judgment. We understand and value privacy; however, parental involvement is typically very important in the assessment process. As a result, we typically request an agreement from minor patients and their parents that allows me to use my professional judgment in deciding what information to share with parents and include in the assessment report. Should a situation arise in which we believe information should be shared with the parent, we will explain this to the minor patient and give him/her the choice to be involved in the discussion.

Regulatory Agency

The Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists is the regulatory agency that licenses individuals for the practice of psychology in Maryland. The Board of Examiners also investigates and acts upon complaints against licensed psychologists. Any questions, concerns, or complaints regarding our services may be directed to the Maryland State Board of Examiners of Psychologists at 4201 Patterson Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21215.

Caitlin B. Dunning, Psy.D. LLC is an independent practice and is not affiliated with any other providers or institutions.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. More specifically, your signature indicates that:

- You have been informed of and understand the nature of services to be provided.
- You have been informed of the limits of confidentiality.
- You understand and agree to our payment and cancellation policies.
- You accept full responsibility for all fees incurred in receiving our professional services.

I agree to receive the report by email. I understand that it will be sent in PDF format using password protection and encryption.

I do not agree to receive the report by email.

Patient Name: _____

DOB: _____

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

Printed name of parent/guardian

Relationship to patient

Signature of witness

Date