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Comprehensive, Strengths-Based, User-Friendly Report Writing

Developed by Psyched Services
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Training Guidelines

To get the most out of this training, please take a moment to review the following guidelines:

- Download all training materials
- Have pen and paper ready
- Learn, so that you can *do*!

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Learning Objectives


At the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Identify at least three reasons why comprehensive, strengths-based, and user-friendly reports are a professional imperative
- Demonstrate the ability to use a testing matrix to ensure that their testing battery results in a comprehensive evaluation of each student
- Describe how to use the Report Writing Style Guide to maximize report readability and give four examples of appropriate capitalization usage in reports
- Provide three examples of how to highlight a student's strengths in reports
- Demonstrate the ability to self-evaluate their report writing to ensure that reports are strengths-based and user-friendly

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Agenda

- Comprehensive Evaluations and Report Writing
 - Using the Psyched Services Assessment Matrix
- User-Friendly Report Writing
 - Using the Psyched Services Report Writing Style Guide
- Strengths-Based Evaluations and Report Writing
 - Review of the Psyched Services Implementation Guide
- Self-Assessment
 - Using the Psyched Services Key Component Checklist
- Tying it All Together
 - Review of a Sample Report




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Comprehensive Evaluation

According to IDEA, schools must conduct comprehensive, individualized evaluations when determining:

- whether a student meets eligibility under one of the disability categories
- the student's educational needs and the most appropriate supports to best meet those needs




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Comprehensive Evaluation: Individualization

The evaluation must be individualized, meaning that districts, school psychology departments, and/or independent practitioners should not merely use the same standard battery of tests for every student

(Reschly, 2000; Yell, 2019)




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Individualized Assessment Decision-Making

Decisions about which assessment measures to utilize should be based on:

- the reason for referral
- parent/guardian's input and concerns
- the individual student's characteristics, such as
 - developmental level
 - communication skills
 - language proficiency
 - strengths and challenge areas
 - learning and behavioral presentation


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Comprehensive Evaluation and Report Writing

A comprehensive and individualized evaluation:

- Includes every area of suspected need
- Includes multiple sources of data using a variety of assessment tools and procedures
- Does not use a single score or measure in the decision-making process about the student's placement or services


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Self-Reflection in Action

On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your tendency toward using the same or similar batteries for most evaluations of the same referral type?


What is an action step you can take to increase your individualization with regard to test batteries?

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Potential Action Steps to Increase Individualization

- Be self-aware of what preferences you have and why
- Catalogue which assessments you have access to and what areas they evaluate
- Create (or obtain) a write-up of all potential tests you could use so you don't have to recreate the wheel during crunch time
- Upskill/seek PD on new or unfamiliar tests
- Collaborate with peers
- Be open to trying new measures/don't get in a rut

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PSYCHED SERVICES ASSESSMENT MATRIX: FALL 2023

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Psyched Services Assessment Matrix

Covers 9 IDEA Categories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Autism (AUT)

Emotional Disturbance (ED)

Hearing Impairment (HI)

Intellectual Disability (ID)

Orthopedic Impairment (OI)

Other Health Impairment (OHI - ADHD)

Other Health Impairment (OHI - other)

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Visual Impairment (VI)

Considerations for Use

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Psyched Services Assessment Matrix

Includes seven evaluation areas

Suspected Disability	Review of Records	Professionals to Include	Interviews/ Informal Input	Rating Scales	Classroom Observations	Assessment Observations	Direct Measures
<p>AUT</p> <p>Suspected Disability: Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability that affects communication and social interaction skills. It is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities.</p> <p>Review of Records: Review IEPs, state and federal records, and other relevant documents for evidence of ASD.</p> <p>Professionals to Include: School psychologist, special education teacher, and other professionals who have worked with the student.</p> <p>Interviews/ Informal Input: Interview parents and other professionals who have worked with the student.</p> <p>Rating Scales: Use rating scales such as the Autism Spectrum Quotient (ASQ) or the Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales Developmental Profile (CSBS-DP).</p> <p>Classroom Observations: Observe the student in the classroom for evidence of ASD.</p> <p>Assessment Observations: Observe the student during assessment activities for evidence of ASD.</p> <p>Direct Measures: Administer direct measures such as the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) or the Autism Spectrum Inventory (ASI).</p>							

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Suspected Disability	Review of Records	Professionals to Include	Interviews/ Informal Input	Rating Scales	Classroom Observations	Assessment Observations	Direct Measures
AUT	Review IEPs, state and federal records, and other relevant documents for evidence of ASD.	School psychologist, special education teacher, and other professionals who have worked with the student.	Interview parents and other professionals who have worked with the student.	Use rating scales such as the Autism Spectrum Quotient (ASQ) or the Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales Developmental Profile (CSBS-DP).	Observe the student in the classroom for evidence of ASD.	Observe the student during assessment activities for evidence of ASD.	Administer direct measures such as the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) or the Autism Spectrum Inventory (ASI).

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Assessment Planning Caveats

- For all students, consider possible language and cultural implications, when relevant.
- Evaluation of students should be completed in their primary language when feasible, and communications with parents/families (e.g., interviews, rating scales) should also be completed in their primary language when possible.
- For all evaluation types, ensure that there is consideration of the student's individual strengths so that they can be included in the report as well as leveraged in intervention planning.

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Additional Points to Consider

- Observations
- Rating Scales
- Standardized Academic Measures
- Curriculum-Based Assessments/Curriculum-Based Measures
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Data



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Suspected Disability	Review of Records	Professionals to Include	Interviews/ Informal Input	Rating Scales	Classroom Observations	Assessment Observations	Direct Measures
ED	Review cumulative file, discipline file, special education or IEP records, outside assessments provided by parent, note any social manipulation meetings and threat assessments. Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavioral Support Plan (PBS).	School nurse Academic assessor Possibly behavior specialist	Parent/teacher questionnaires and/or interview via phone call, in person, or Zoom. Student interview if appropriate for developmental level, note history of social and emotional functioning.	Select at least one formal measure: BASC-3, Conners CBRS, SAED-3. If available, select one state measure depending on area of emotional concern: BCSSA-2, PARS, Learning 3, BASC-3, CTS-2, BGS-2, TST. If adaptive functioning concerns: AAAD-3, Vineland-3. If attention/EF concerns: Conners-4, Conners-4 Short, ADOS-4.	Observe in structured and unstructured settings (1-2 hrs total).	Note any emotional/ anxiety observed during testing (e.g. anxiety, frustration level, etc.).	IQ Processing measures (Consider working memory and/or processing speed, since these may be impacted by emotional factors). Academic measures. If utilized to your location, include projective measures completed directly with the student.



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Suspected Disability	Review of Records	Professionals to Include	Interviews/ Informal Input	Rating Scales	Classroom Observations	Assessment Observations	Direct Measures
ID	Review cumulative file, discipline file, special education or IEP records, outside assessments provided by parent.	School nurse Academic assessor SLP-assess core language Possibly OT if fine motor concerns	Parent/teacher questionnaires and/or interview via phone call, in person, or Zoom. Student interview if appropriate for developmental level, document when early childhood milestones were achieved, include question on level of independence at home.	Adaptive Functioning Select one: Vineland-3	Observe in structured and/or unstructured settings (30 min to 1 hr).	Note level of independence during test sessions. Note communication skills (receptive and expressive), motor skills, social skills, and self-care.	If student has functional communication: Full Scale IQ. If student has significantly impaired communication: Nonverbal IQ. If severely impaired select one: EP-4 (cognitive section), FIEP-3 (cognitive portion), Play-based/ qualitative observations of cognitive skills. Academic measures (if in state policies).



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[illegible]

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[illegible]

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[illegible]

Self-Reflection in Action

Is there an area of evaluation, such as record review, interviews, observations, rating scales, direct measures, etc., that you'd like to focus on more in your evaluation planning process?

What is an action step you can take to increase your skills or efficiency in that area?



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Potential Action Steps in Evaluation Planning

Record reviews: a checklist that delineates all records to access and a Google Doc for taking notes

Interviews/informal data collection: checklists or informal questionnaires in Google Docs

Observations: format for completing and summarizing observations

Rating scales and direct measures: evaluation planning sticky note (that can be modified as the process unfolds) to mark off



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User-Friendly Report Writing

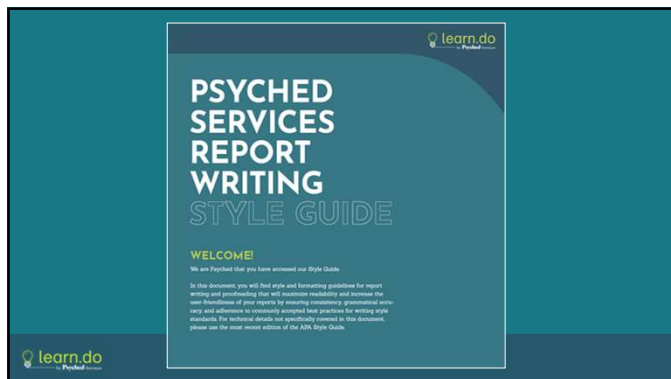
Is more than accurate and "legally defensible"

Should have high "readability" which means:

- Consistent writing style
- Correct grammar and spelling
- Same use of formatting throughout



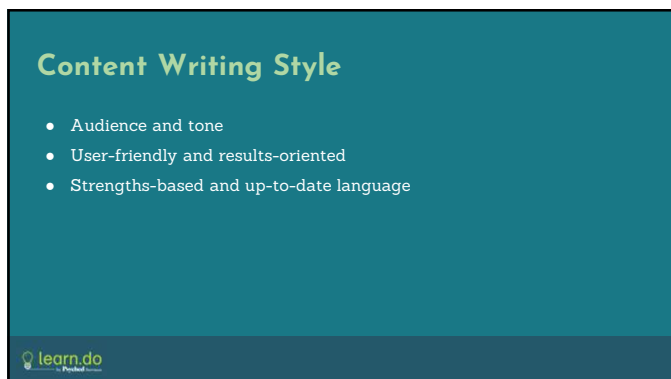
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Audience and Tone



- Consider the purpose of the evaluation and report
- Write for parents/families and educators, not other practitioners
- Keep in mind the importance of these reports

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User-Friendly and Results-Oriented

- Strive for brevity and simplicity
- Minimize technical jargon
- Provide context (real-world examples)
- Provide background knowledge
- Recommend practical strategies
- Provide resources and implications to increase meaningfulness

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Strengths-Based and Up-to-Date Language

- Use inclusive, child-centered language
- Use positive alternatives to deficit-based language
- Focus on strengths in results and leverage them in recommendations
- Stay up to date with professional verbiage and labels

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Use person-first language

Words are important! Our evaluations convey an important message. Many of the children we serve may have disabilities, but they are not defined by them. It is important that we maintain the integrity of the whole child.

Correct

- ✓ Terrell has been diagnosed with a mental illness by a pediatrician.

Incorrect (defines Terrell by his illness)


- ✗ According to Terrell's doctor, Terrell is mentally ill.

Correct

- ✓ Shay has had an amputation.
- ✓ John has paraplegia.
- ✓ Silvia has a Specific Learning Disability.

Incorrect

- ✗ Shay is an amputee.
- ✗ John is a paraplegic.
- ✗ Silvia is learning disabled.

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REFERRING TO PEOPLE

For comprehensive guidance on using unbiased language, please see the Guidelines for Unbiased Language at www.apastyle.org


Use emotionally neutral expressions

Correct

- ✓ Patsy experienced a stroke at 7 years of age.
- ✓ Ronald has multiple sclerosis.

Incorrect (has negative overtones and suggests helplessness)

- ✗ Patsy is a stroke victim.
- ✗ Ronald suffers from multiple sclerosis.


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Self-Reflection in Action

Where do you fall on the continuum of writing reports for other practitioners on the one hand, or for families/educators on the other?

What are some action steps you can take to improve the tone and user-friendliness of your reports?

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Potential Action Steps for Improving Tone

Ensure all verbiage is:

- Inclusive
- Student-centered
- Person first
- Straightforward
- Up to date

Edit/improve verbiage that is:

- Deficit-based
- Technical jargon

Be sure to include:

- A focus on strengths
- Context (real-world examples)
- Practical strategies



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Acronyms

Write out in the first instance, use acronyms thereafter. If the term is only used once in the report, just spell out the term without adding the acronym in parentheses.

Correct

- 1 Relsie transitioned to the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE).
- 2 The MCOE program's principal reported that Relsie came to school regularly last year.
- 3 John has a medical diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- 4 John's mother reported that John struggled at school due to his ADHD.


Always spell out special education eligibilities (parents are not familiar with these acronyms)

Correct

- 1 Patsy is currently eligible for a Specific Learning Disability.


Incorrect

- 1 Patsy is currently eligible for SLD.



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Capitalize	Do Not Capitalize
Dr. Naglieri	research psychologist
Principal Jones	principal
Child Find, Section 504	pre-referral team
Austin High School	a high school
Algebra II, World Geography	math, history, inclusion class
Prozac	fluoxetine
Bookshare	a reading intervention program
LEGOs	building blocks



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Capitalize

- Speech or Language Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Autism
- Tourette syndrome
- Positive Behavior Intervention Support
- Zones of Regulation
- BASC-3, WISC-V

Do Not Capitalize

- generalized anxiety
- major depressive disorder
- autism spectrum disorder
- gestational diabetes
- cerebral palsy
- behavior interventions
- positive reinforcement
- social-emotional learning
- atypicality
- verbal comprehension
- psychoeducational evaluation
- speech and language therapy
- applied behavior analysis

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Hyphenate phrases used as adjectives when they come before the term they modify

Correct

- word-by-word recitation
- to-be-recalled items
- all-or-none scenario

Sometimes hyphenate words with prefixes
DO NOT hyphenate most words with prefixes. Instead, write as one word.

Correct

antisocial	minimization	reevaluation
bilingual	nonsignificant	socioeconomic
coworker	overaggressive	subtest
extracurricular	posttest	unbiased
midterm	pretest	underappreciated

DO hyphenate words with prefixes if they could be misunderstood.

Correct

- re-pair (to pair again)
- re-form (to form again)
- re-create (to create again)

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Always hyphenate compound words with self, whether they are adjectives or nouns

Correct

- self-report questionnaire
- the assessment was self-paced
- self-esteem

Hyphenating numbers
DO Use an en dash for spans of time and estimates of time, distance, or other quantities, unless the word 'from' or 'similar' is used; then the word 'to' should be spelled out rather than using a hyphen.


Correct

- 1–2 hours per day
- 3:15–3:45 p.m.
- 1999–2016
- from 9:15 to 10:45

Do not hyphenate racial and ethnic group names

Correct


- Victoria is Asian American.
- They are an Asian American family.

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Strengths-Based Evaluation and Report Writing

Evaluation results should tell a story about the student that is helpful for the student, their family, and their educators/relevant service providers in meeting their individual needs for educational, social, and/or community success.

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Where in the report should strengths be included?

THROUGHOUT the report, in as many sections as you can!

- Background
- Observations
- Report Body
- Summary
- Recommendations


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PSYCHED SERVICES KEY COMPONENT CHECKLIST:

**COMPREHENSIVE,
STRENGTHS-BASED,
USER-FRIENDLY
REPORT WRITING**

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Sample Report: Reason for Referral

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Psychoeducational Triennial Report
Confidential

Name	Clark Kent	Birthday	3/11/2010
School	Fortress of Solitude Public School	Age	13.1
Parents	Martha & Jonathan Kent	Grade	8th
Address	2313 Pine Trail Sunshine, FL 32134	Dates of Testing	4/12-4/13/2023
Examiner	Wonder Woman, SSP, NCSF	Report Date	4/25/2023

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Clark is a 7th grade student who is described as being loving and supportive. Clark is currently eligible for special education under the Other Health Impairment category. Clark attends a general education classroom 45% of the day and receives specialized academic instruction 300 minutes per week. He also receives counseling and guidance 180 minutes weekly and individual counseling 60 minutes weekly. This triennial evaluation is to provide additional information to the IEP team to assist with eligibility and programming decisions.

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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sources: Parent interview, cumulative records, special education records

Clark is a 13-year-old African American student who lives with both parents and his sister. Clark's father is a teacher, and Clark's mother is a lawyer. Clark also has two older sisters who no longer live in the home. Clark likes to play basketball and video games. The family does many activities together. Clark's strengths are being loving and supportive. Clark is helpful and giving; he does his best to encourage others and is very empathetic to how others feel.

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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

At school, Clark's ELA teacher and math teacher reported strengths in receptive language skills, specifically in Clark's ability to comprehend word meanings, follow oral directions, comprehend classroom discussions, and respond to questions within the expected time period. Clark requires support in the area of remembering information just heard. Clark's special education teacher noted that Clark requires support in the areas of comprehending word meanings, remembering information just heard, and responding to questions within the expected time period. In the area of expressive language skills, Clark showed strengths in displaying age-appropriate vocabulary, expressing himself fluently, and speaking clearly and distinctly. Clark benefits from support in using age-appropriate grammar, expressing himself in social conversations, and expressing information in an organized way. Clark's teachers reported age-appropriate functional communication skills. In particular, Clark often responds appropriately when asked a question, often is clear when telling about personal experiences, and is able to track down information when needed.

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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

Potential Functional Implications

Language/Communication Strengths:

- Clark shows strengths in his functional communication skills, indicating he is able to find information on his own and ask for help when needed.
- Clark has good listening skills and is able to follow directions and answer questions about information he has heard.
- Clark exhibits strong expressive language skills and uses age-appropriate vocabulary, speaks clearly, and responds fluently in the classroom.

Language/Communication Areas of Need:

- Clark may have difficulty recalling the names of common objects, items, and concepts.
- Clark may struggle with remembering information just heard, expressing himself in an organized way, and expressing himself in social situations.



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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

Potential Functional Implications

Cognitive Strengths:

- Clark may do well with remembering auditory information in a specific order.
- Clark is able to accurately decipher the individual sounds used to form words.

Cognitive Areas of Need:

- Clark may struggle with developing, selecting, evaluating, and using plans or strategies to solve problems.
- Clark may struggle with tasks that require him to understand relationships among words, pictures, or ideas.
- Clark may struggle with focusing and resisting distractions.
- Clark struggles to quickly pull information (e.g., numbers, letters, names, objects) from long-term memory.



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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

Other Subjects

Clark's current art grades are meeting grade-level expectations.

Potential Functional Implications

Academic Competencies:

- Clark has a good attitude toward school and shows a growth mindset at home.
- Clark shows a strength in decoding and reading fluently.
- Clark shows strong spelling skills.

Academic Areas of Need:

- Clark struggles with showing appropriate learning and organizational behaviors.
- Clark struggles with expressing himself in writing and answering questions about what he has read.
- Clark struggles with basic math facts and word problems.



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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

Potential Functional Implications

Social/Emotional/Behavioral Strengths:

- Clark is loving, caring, and sweet.
- Clark is helpful and supportive to others.
- Clark is very social and knows a lot of people on campus.
- Clark described himself as having a good sense of rhythm.

Social/Emotional/Behavioral Areas of Need:

- Clark struggles to remain calm and seated in the classroom and has a history of eloping from the classroom.
- Clark has difficulty focusing his attention on work and not getting distracted by peers or things going on outside the classroom.
- Clark often engages in a threatening and aggressive manner toward peers, which leads peers to avoid him.
- Clark experiences a high level of social anxiety, generalized anxiety, obsessions and compulsions, and physical symptoms of anxiety.
- Clark seems to experience many functional problems related to depression, as well as a negative mood and interpersonal problems.



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Sample Report: Strengths-Focus

Potential Functional Implications

Adaptive Strengths:

- Clark has well-developed gross motor coordination and enjoys physical activity, such as playing basketball.
- Clark has well-developed fine motor coordination and is able to complete tasks such as writing and arts-and-crafts projects.
- Clark is able to independently navigate his day at school.

Adaptive Areas of Need:

- At home, Clark is often careless with belongings and needs to be reminded to complete basic hygiene tasks.



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Sample Report Summary

Clark's home language is English. Clark's listening comprehension skills were age-typical. His oral expression skills were lower than expected when compared to same-age peers. Cognitive testing indicated strengths in Clark's ability to remember auditory information for a short period of time and understand the parts of words. Clark has difficulty with tasks that involve developing, selecting, evaluating, and using plans to solve problems; understanding relationships among words, pictures, or ideas; focusing and resisting distractions; and pulling information from long-term memory. Clark performed best with academic tests involving basic reading, reading fluency, and spelling and had difficulty in the areas of math problem-solving, math calculation, reading comprehension, and written expression when compared to same-age peers.

Regarding social, emotional, and behavioral development, Clark's strengths in being loving, caring, sweet, helpful, supportive, social, and musical are assets that can be used to support learning. Clark's significant difficulties with hyperactivity, impulsivity, distractibility, inattention, aggression, and peer relationships seem to lead him to experience feelings of anxiety and depression. Clark's adaptive skills were noted as age-appropriate in the areas of daily living skills at school and motor skills. Clark continues to need reminders to take care of his belongings and perform hygiene tasks at home.



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Strengths-Based Verbiage: Recommendations/Intervention Planning

- Provide Clark with opportunities to practice social skills, build positive peer relationships, and manage emotions by:
 - Providing Clark with social skills training in how to make and maintain friends.
 - Facilitating peer interactions during recess, unstructured settings, and transitions with support and intervention at the onset of peer conflict. Intervention should include explicit modeling of how to resolve the conflict and prompts for Clark to practice the modeled response. Clark should be provided with positive feedback and reinforcement when attempts are made to perform the behavior.
 - Teaching Clark to understand and practice boundaries and personal space by providing direct instruction, modeling boundaries, facilitating practice in varied social scenarios, and reminding Clark of expectations related to personal space.



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Strength-Based Verbiage: Recommendations/Intervention Planning

- Implement strategies designed to accommodate for Clark's high need for activity, such as:
 - Offer ideas and opportunities for Clark to engage in movement that is minimally distracting to peers. This could include using a wiggle chair, permitting standing or pacing in the back of the room, using rubber bands as fidgets, or permitting drawing or doodling during lectures.
 - Assign structured breaks for movement within the classroom. Examples include prompting Clark to complete a few problems at a time, then bring them to the teacher to review, or assigning "class-helper" chores, such as sharpening pencils, throwing away trash, or handing out papers.
 - Minimize visual and auditory distractions in the classroom. This may look like using a cardboard desktop partition, providing noise-canceling headphones, or creating a quiet workspace in the corner of the classroom.
 - Provide proximity control and close monitoring of peer interactions.
 - Break lengthy assignments into shorter segments.



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Self-Reflection in Action

How much do you focus on strengths in your reports?

What are some action steps you can take to enhance strengths-based report writing?



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Action Steps for Strengths-Based Report Writing

- Add 2-3 positive qualities of the student within the first sentence in the reason for referral
- Ensure positive qualities are included in the background, observations, body of the report, summary, and recommendations
- Reframe negative, deficit-based verbiage
- Consider deficits or weaknesses as areas of growth
- Leverage the student's individual strengths in intervention planning



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Conclusion

Now that you have completed this session, you should be able to:

- Identify at least three reasons why comprehensive, strengths-based, and user-friendly reports are a professional imperative
- Demonstrate the ability to use a testing matrix to ensure that your testing battery results in a comprehensive evaluation of each student
- Describe how to use the Report Writing Style Guide to maximize report readability, and give four examples of appropriate capitalization usage in reports
- Provide three examples of how to highlight a student's strengths in reports
- Demonstrate the ability to self-evaluate your report writing to ensure that reports are strengths-based and user-friendly



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Next Steps: What is Your Action Plan?

- Use the assessment matrix to plan comprehensive testing batteries
- Increase individualization within your testing batteries
- Implement a new procedure to increase efficiency (i.e., record review checklist)
- Use the Style Guide when writing and/or proofreading reports
- Engage in report writing practices designed to improve tone and increase use of strengths-based verbiage
- Engage in a process of self-evaluation to continually enhance your school psychology skills and practices



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THANK YOU

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