

# CONSULTATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

## Consultations

Anyone wishing to arrange an initial 30 to 45 minute consultation, should phone DSF to make an appointment. For individuals who are unable to attend an appointment at the DSF Clinic, a telephone consultation can be arranged. Consultations provide an opportunity to discuss: concerns about academic achievement; difficulties with learning; self-esteem; education; or, career prospects. A consultation is generally recommended prior to booking an assessment. If the purpose of a consultation is to discuss a child under 15 years of age there is no need for him or her to attend. The purpose of the consultation is to explore available options. It is not possible to make clinical judgements or diagnoses from a consultation alone.

Parents wishing to discuss their child's difficulties should send copies of original unedited samples of work; copies of recent school reports; and, copies of any other relevant reports (e.g. psychologist, developmental optometrist, auditory processing, occupational therapist, speech pathologist etc.). It is important that these documents are sent prior to the consultation to provide sufficient time for the psychologist to consider the information.

If a telephone consultation has been arranged, these reports must be sent in prior to the appointment.

An adult should bring (or send in advance) a sample of their own writing, a completed biographical information form, and any other evidence that might help in discussing their situation.

## Psychological Assessment

Full psycho-educational assessments are generally requested to identify a person's learning strengths and weaknesses, and to ascertain whether an identifiable learning disability exists.

Individuals attending the DSF Clinic for an assessment have usually struggled with one or more of the core academic skill areas (e.g. reading, writing, spelling, mathematics) for an extended period of time. The degree to which they struggle is often unexpected given their apparent capabilities in other areas and the educational opportunities they have been provided with. It is also generally the case that attempts to remediate the difficulty have not been successful (or at least have been less successful than would have been expected).

All assessments are conducted by a fully registered psychologist, with clinical experience in the field of educational psychology. All information gathered remains confidential and only appropriate and approved professional assessment tools and methods are used. Most people (including children) find the various assessment tasks quite interesting and generally quite enjoyable.

The questions asked change according to age so that people will not be asked questions that are too challenging. There are usually opportunities to do practice items before each test so that people know what to expect. There is always time, both before and after the assessment, to ask questions of the psychologist.

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# CONSULTATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS (cont)

A written report is sent approximately two to three weeks after the assessment. Copies of the report are not sent to schools, employers, doctors or other specialists, unless the client approves this request beforehand. The value of an assessment report is more in the recommendations than in the scores. The strategies recommended by the psychologist will refer to both remediation (interventions that address the area of weakness specifically) and accommodations (approaches that can be adopted by schools – or tertiary institutions - to ensure that the student is able to access the curriculum and demonstrate skills and knowledge). It is important to revisit these on a regular basis to ensure that appropriate action is being taken.

An assessment is completed over two sessions. Each session runs for 1 ½ to 2 hours. The appointments are scheduled approximately one week apart and may be in the morning (from 9.00am to 11.00am) or afternoon (from 1.30pm to 3.30pm).

A Supplementary Assessment is also available for children or adults who have already had an assessment of their cognitive abilities (i.e. when an IQ test such as the WISC-IV has been administered) within the past two years. Detailed information is sought from the psychologist who conducted the cognitive ability assessment and this information is combined with the results of the DSF assessment. A full report can then be prepared.

For information regarding fees and charges please contact DSF or review the Fees and Charges schedule.

