

ACTIVITY: Why We Need Evidence-Based Assessment

Answer Guide

Instructions: Take this opportunity to reflect on the following questions. It is recommended that these questions could be used as pre- and post-test reflection questions after the first and last topic of this module.

Answers provided below are not complete answers. Instead, answers provide some general guidance about how answers may be answered pre- and post-completion of this module.

1. When you think of evidence-based practice, do you think of assessment?

PRE: No—most answers are expected to reflect that assessment is not thought of when thinking about evidence-based assessment.

POST: Yes—answers should change to reflect that assessment is a part of evidence-based practice.

2. Is informal discussion with colleagues sufficient as a sole source for informing assessment decisions? Why or why not?

PRE: Answers will likely vary but may reflect responses such as, “Yes, if the colleague is an expert or has experience in the area.”

POST: Answers should reflect that a decision-making process should be used for each client, which should include consideration of the purpose of assessment, psychometrics, and client characteristics.

3. What is your own resistance, if any, to using psychometrics (i.e., reliability, validity, sensitivity, specificity) when selecting an assessment? If you do not have any resistance, why do you think that is?

PRE: Answers will likely vary but may include things such as: “I don’t know how to interpret them;” “There are too many psychometrics to keep track of;” or “They don’t really matter when the district tells me that I have to use a certain assessment.”

POST: Ideal answers should reflect less resistance such as, “I understand how use a decision-making process to evaluate the psychometrics that are relevant to the purpose of the assessment that I am doing.”

4. What are some assumptions or habits that you may have in your assessment practices? How do you check these?

PRE: Answers could either reflect, “I don’t have any assumptions or habits in my assessment practices” or “I may have some assumptions or habits in my assessment practices, but I don’t know how to check these.”

POST: Yes, I have assumptions and habits in my assessment practices. I can use the

SUM Approach to keep these assumptions in check when I am conducting assessments.

5. Do you use any decision-making processes or tools for assessment (e.g., flowchart, checklist)? If so, what are they and how do you use them? If not, why do you think a decision-making process or tool could be helpful for you?

PRE: No, I do not use any decision-making processes or tools for assessment. They might be helpful for checking what I do and making sure that I am consistent.

POST: Yes, I now know how to use decision-making tools to help me ensure that I am consistently checking and assessing what I am doing for each client rather than depending on habits.

6. To what extent do you use reflective thinking (i.e., thinking about the purpose, context, evidence-base, and implications or thinking of the 'so what' instead of just the 'what') in assessment? Think about either clients you have had or cases you have studied; where would it have been good to use some reflective thinking in these case studies?

PRE: Not at all, I only reflected on what I did rather than what I did and the broader implications of those decisions.

POST: Yes, reflective thinking forces me to think from multiple perspectives and think about the implications of my decisions. By doing this, I can think about the external evidence, internal evidence, client/family perspectives, and my own expertise and how all of those components of evidence-based practice impacted the assessment approach and outcome.