

Mental Status Exam Guidelines

DSHS 13-865 Addendum

A mental status exam (MSE) must accompany all Mental Incapacity Evaluations, including narrative reports and DSHS form 13-865.

A mini mental status exam (MMSE) cannot be substituted for a MSE.

MSE GUIDELINES

The MSE must include detailed observations regarding the person's appearance, speech, attitude, behavior, mood, and affect. If not within normal limits, the MSE must also include detailed observations regarding the person's thought process and content, orientation, perception, memory, fund of knowledge, concentration, abstract thought, insight, and judgment.

Category	Examples of observation detail
a. Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person well groomed or unkempt? • What is the person wearing? • Are clothes appropriate for weather and situation?
b. Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person's speech normal, pressured, tangential, or circumstantial?
c. Attitude and Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person calm, cooperative, uncooperative, or belligerent?
d. Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person's mood euthymic, irritable, elevated, anxious, or depressed?
e. Affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person's affect within normal range, depressed, constricted, flat, labile, blunted, reactive and mood congruent, or tearful?
f. Thought Process and Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person goal-directed and logical or disorganized? • Are there any delusions, phobias, or obsessions/compulsions? • Is the person suicidal and/or homicidal?
g. Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person oriented to time and place?
h. Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the person display signs of hallucinations or delusions during interview?
i. Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote—can person remember past events? • Recent—can person remember 3/3 objects after 5 min? • Immediate—how well can the person perform digit span?
j. Fund of Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person aware of current events? Give examples. • Does the person know the names of the president and governor? • Can the person answer simple geography questions, such as naming bordering states?
k. Concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serial 7's or 3's. • Spell WORLD forward and backward. • Is the person able to follow a three-step command?
l. Abstract Thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the person able to interpret proverbs?
m. Insight and Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the person have insight into his/her condition? • Does the person show good judgment (e.g. when asked what he/she would do if they smelled smoke in crowded theater)?