Mental status exam cheat sheet

Free template from soapnotes.xyz. Fill it in by hand or type over it.

APPEARANCE

Apparent age: looks stated age, looks younger than stated age, looks older than stated age

Build: thin, average, heavy, muscular

Dress: appropriate to setting and weather, casual, neat, disheveled, eccentric, unsuited to the weather

Grooming and hygiene: well groomed, adequately groomed, unkempt, poor hygiene, body odor noted

Notable features: scars, tattoos, visible injuries, glasses, hearing aid, mobility aid

BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDE

Eye contact: good, fair, poor, intermittent, avoidant, staring

Attitude toward the interviewer: cooperative, engaged, friendly, guarded, evasive, suspicious, defensive, irritable, hostile, withdrawn, uncooperative

Psychomotor activity: within normal limits, agitated (restless, fidgeting, pacing, hand-wringing), slowed (slow movement, long pauses before acting)

Movements: no abnormal movements, tremor, tics, mannerisms, repetitive movements, unusual posture

Gait: steady, unsteady, slow, shuffling, uses a mobility aid

SPEECH

Rate: normal, slow, rapid, pressured (rapid and hard to interrupt)

Volume: normal, soft, loud

Tone: normal variation, monotone, dramatic

Amount: normal, talkative, minimal, poverty of speech (very little speech), mute

Articulation: clear, slurred, mumbled, stuttering

Latency: normal, delayed (long pause before answering)

Spontaneity: speaks spontaneously, answers questions only

MOOD (what the person reports, in their own words)

Write their words in quotes: "low", "stressed", "fine", "on edge"

Clinical terms you may add: euthymic, depressed, dysphoric, anxious, irritable, angry, euphoric, elevated, expansive

AFFECT (what you observe)

Quality: euthymic, dysphoric, anxious, irritable, angry, fearful, tearful, euphoric

Range: full, restricted (also called constricted)

Intensity: normal, heightened, blunted (clearly reduced), flat (little or no expression)

Stability: stable, labile (shifts quickly between emotions)

Congruence: congruent with stated mood, incongruent with stated mood

Appropriateness: appropriate to content, inappropriate to content (for example laughing while describing a loss)

THOUGHT PROCESS (how thoughts connect)

Linear, logical, goal-directed: clear and reaches the point

Circumstantial: long detours and extra detail, reaches the point in the end

Tangential: drifts off the question and does not return

Flight of ideas: rapid jumps between loosely linked ideas, often with fast speech

Loose associations: shifts between ideas with no clear link

Word salad: words strung together with no meaningful connection

Thought blocking: sudden stop mid-thought

Perseveration: keeps returning to the same word or idea

Clang associations: words chosen for sound or rhyme

Neologisms: invented words, or words given a private meaning

Poverty of thought: very few ideas expressed

THOUGHT CONTENT (what thoughts are about)

Themes: preoccupations, worries, ruminations, guilt, hopelessness

Obsessions: unwanted, intrusive, repeated thoughts, images or urges

Compulsions: repeated acts done to reduce distress

Phobias: marked fear of a specific object or situation

Overvalued ideas: unusual beliefs held strongly, short of delusional certainty

Delusions: fixed false beliefs not explained by the person's culture (persecutory, grandiose, referential, somatic, nihilistic, erotomanic, jealous, guilt)

Paranoid ideation: suspicion of being watched or harmed, held less firmly than a delusion

Ideas of reference: passing belief that neutral events carry a personal message

Suicidal ideation: asked, and the answer (passive or active, plan, intent, access to means)

Homicidal ideation: asked, and the answer (target, plan, intent)

Self-harm: thoughts or recent acts, asked, and the answer

PERCEPTION

Hallucinations: auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory, gustatory

Command hallucinations: voices telling the person to do something

Illusions: a real stimulus perceived wrongly

Depersonalization: feeling detached from oneself

Derealization: feeling the surroundings are unreal

Observed: appears to respond to internal stimuli, or no sign of responding to internal stimuli

COGNITION

Level of consciousness: alert, drowsy, lethargic, fluctuating

Orientation: person, place, time, situation (oriented x4 when all four are correct)

Attention and concentration: serial sevens, spelling WORLD backward, digit span; intact, impaired, easily distracted

Memory: immediate (repeats three words), recent (recalls them after about five minutes), remote (past events); intact or impaired

Abstraction: proverbs, similarities; abstract or concrete

Fund of knowledge: in keeping with age and education, or limited

INSIGHT

Good, fair, limited (partial), poor, absent. Say what you based the rating on.

JUDGMENT

Good, fair, impaired, poor. Base it on recent decisions and how the person handles everyday problems.

Educational template, not medical or legal advice. Follow your employer and regulator rules.