

Juvenile Forensic Evaluations

Types of Juvenile Forensic Evaluations

- Psychological screenings
- Full psychological evaluations
- Competency/Fitness to Proceed Evaluations
- Lack of Responsibility Evaluations
- Certification/Juvenile Waiver Evaluations

Psychological Screenings

- Brief psychological evaluation
 - Includes abbreviated psychological testing to determine youth's IQ and academic standing
- Addresses presence of mental health problems (if any) and if further evaluation is required
- Provides a general overview of youth's emotional and behavioral functioning to determine:
 - Treatment needs
 - Placement recommendations

Full Psychological Evaluation

- More in depth evaluation that determines youth's level of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning
 - Includes IQ, academic, and personality testing
- Addresses presence of risk and protective factors and provides release/placement recommendations for the court
 - Evaluate important characteristics of the youth that are relevant to understanding delinquent conduct
- Provide specific treatment recommendations/implications for rehabilitation based on the youth's needs

Competency/ Fitness to Proceed Evaluations

- Determine if presence of serious mental illness or intellectual disability impacts youth's *present* competence related abilities
- Assess if the mental illness impacts youth's factual understanding of the legal system (adversarial nature, courtroom personnel, consequences, etc.)
- Evaluate the youth's rational understanding of proceedings against him/her
- Determine if youth is presently able to consult with his/her lawyer and aid in his/her defense

Lack of Responsibility Evaluations

- Evaluate presence of serious mental illness or intellectual disability, and if present, how any of these may have directly impacted the youth's involvement in instant offense
- Determine if at the time of the alleged act, the youth, as a result of mental illness or intellectual deficiency, lacked substantial capacity either to:
 - Appreciate the wrongfulness of the conduct or to conform conduct to the requirements of the law

Certification/Juvenile Waiver Evaluations

- Factors relevant to certification:
 - Seriousness of the crime
 - Sophistication and maturity of the child
 - Record and previous history
 - Public safety
- Psychological evaluations aid the court in addressing the following factors:
 - Risk/potential for dangerousness
 - Sophistication and maturity
 - Amenability to treatment
 - Youth's understanding of legal process/meaning of certification