

Diagnostic Assessment

Identifying uncomfortable or painful symptoms and developing a collaborative treatment plan between clients and therapists is a *process* of evaluating individual and family history, identifying any emotional, cognitive, or behavioral learned patterns, and assessing how these various factors may impact an individual's life experience.

The process of gathering information that may identify a specific diagnosis is determined by your therapist, or in the communication between your therapist and physician. This includes client self-report, family input, identification of relationship dynamics, school, social, or work-related issues, along with your therapist's or your physician's observations.

A particular diagnosis is a tool that facilitates communication between clients and their psychotherapist and/or physician in the process of developing and monitoring the benefit of a specific treatment plan. A diagnosis identifies a specific pattern of symptoms and behaviors that an individual may be experiencing within a given timeframe.

An initial diagnosis may change after a period of time and with new information that may be presented. However, a *working diagnosis* clarifies what an individual might benefit from in therapy and/or medication management, and is also a code that communicates a valid reason for treatment to managed care insurance companies.

It's important to remember that each diagnosis describes a set of symptoms that an individual is experiencing at a particular time and does not define one's identity.