

# Ψ Northwest Neuropsychology Incorporated

**Clinical Neuropsychology  
Counseling and Psychotherapy**

800 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 103  
(1/2 block north of Route 72 [Higgins Road] at Plum Grove Road and  
Woodfield Road)  
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4718

**Rehabilitation Psychology  
Neurofeedback & Traditional Biofeedback**

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## Psychological Evaluations for Chronic Pain Patients

### Holistic Approach (Mind-Body Connection)

Pain Clinics who consider their patients as “whole human beings” have the best opportunity to identify the best types of interventions to help patients obtain relief from chronic pain. You are not just a slipped disc that needs to be “fixed” or a muscle that needs to be “loosened.” You are a whole human being!

If your doctor has suggested that you schedule a psychological evaluation, please do not be offended. The doctor needs to know your typical coping strategies, the nature and amount of stress you have in your daily life, your thinking and memory skills, and if you are experiencing any serious emotional issues like clinical depression or generalized anxiety. If you have self-defeating behavioral patterns like alcohol or drug abuse --- even addictions to food or nicotine --- your doctor needs to know that information. In this way your doctor can provide you with a “tailor-made” treatment plan designed for success.

### Psychological Evaluation Procedure (What You Should Expect)

**Psychological Evaluations are “labor-intensive” for the psychologist!** This means that your psychologist will devote one or more hours to you personally during an interview in which you share pertinent aspects of your medical, psychological, and social history. (We suggest that patients prepare a printed copy of their personal “time-line” of significant events in their lives, like birthday, schools attended, medical or surgical procedures, marriages, divorces, significant successes, significant losses, and so on.) After you complete paper-and-pencil questionnaires --- and sometimes computerized tests --- the psychologist must then score the tests, interpret the results, and prepare a report that typically is five to eight pages in length. (This requires another three to four hours of the psychologist’s time.) The report covers your test-taking behavior, attention, concentration, memory, thinking abilities, speech and language functioning, and personality/emotional status.

**Psychological Evaluations are “labor-intensive” for you, too!** You will be administered standardized, statistically based, scientific, psychological tests. Your results will be compared to other people in your age group. Your results will also be compared to non-patients as well as chronic pain patients. The best results are obtained when patients “try their best” and are forthright and candid about how they act and what they feel.

The screening “battery” typically consists of a brief vocabulary and cognitive (problem-solving) test, a psychological symptom checklist (your self-report of headaches, back pain, sleep problems, sadness, worry, etc.), a test of posttraumatic stress (PTSD) for patients who experienced a serious accident or trauma, and a personality/emotional functioning inventory. This last questionnaire is the most thoroughly researched, valid, and reliable “objective” personality “test” used by psychologists in the United States. It is the “gold-standard” of objective psychological tests. But it is long! It consists of nearly 600 true and false questions! While some patients complete all of the paper-and-pencil testing within a couple of hours or less, some patients need three, four, or five hours to complete all of the testing. Usually, patients who are terribly distracted by their pain, patients with learning disabilities, or patients who are very perfectionistic take longer than other types of patients.

Because testing takes so long, we recommend that patients schedule their testing on a day in which you can devote at least four hours. Some patients are interviewed in the morning, go out for lunch, and then return to the office to complete the questionnaires. Some patients --- especially those suffering from diabetes or who are hypoglycemic --- bring a snack or a complete lunch along to the office. We want you to be comfortable, satisfied, and happy during the long testing process. Inform staff of your particular needs.

### Test Results (Your Rights and Responsibilities)

During your first visit to Northwest Neuropsychology, you will complete a *Patient Registration Form*, sign an *Outpatient Services Contract* that explains details about all procedures (nature and purpose of evaluations and interventions, insurance reimbursement issues, privacy and confidentiality), and a *Release of Information* form. The *Release of Information* form allows your psychologist to share the results of the evaluation with your referring pain

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treatment specialist. If you do not want the report sent to the referring doctor, do not sign the *Release of Information*. If you wish to have a copy of the report, or if you wish to discuss the results with your psychologist, please inform us. **(Before discussing results with other doctors --- or your family or friends --- you should always talk with your psychologist first.** Sometimes patients are offended or upset with their reports. In most instances, it is because the terminology or “lingo” is not understood by the layperson. Discuss your concerns with your psychologist. Ask questions. Obtain information to put your mind at ease.)

## **Professional Fees and Insurance Reimbursement**

Charges for psychological screenings for chronic pain patients will vary. Charges depend upon the number of hours necessary to complete the interview, administer/score/interpret tests, and prepare the evaluation report. Typically, the charges are in the \$1,000.00 “retail” range. **As preferred providers for a number of different health insurance companies, we accept the “usual and customary” reimbursement rate which is often considerably less than the “retail charge.”** (See below for the list of behavioral [mental] health insurance carriers for which we accept the “usual and customary” rate.)

In circumstances of unusual financial hardship, your clinician may be willing to negotiate a fee adjustment or installment payment plan. A billing service will maintain a computerized accounting of services rendered, including dates, procedures, outstanding payments, etc. Remember, however, that you --- not your insurance company --- are responsible for full payment of the fee that you and your clinician have agreed to. Therefore, it is very important that you find out exactly what psychological services your insurance policy covers. In some instances, patients will need to contact their insurance companies to obtain *behavioral health* --- sometimes called “mental health” or “mental health/substance abuse” --- authorization for psychological testing. In other instances, the patient will receive a referral to the psychologist for the interview only and then the psychologist is required to complete a handwritten or on-line form to obtain authorization for the psychological testing. **Please look carefully at the front and back of your insurance card. Although the front of the card might display your major medical insurance carrier, you may find that an entirely different company manages your “behavioral health” (“mental health/substance abuse”) benefits. Call the toll-free number on your card to clarify these issues.** Because of insurance company regulations, patients may need to be seen on two separate days, one for the interview and the second for the paper-and-pencil testing. Northwest Neuropsychology psychologists will work with you to obtain the insurance benefits you deserve by billing appropriately to behavioral health insurance carrier, but ultimately you are responsible for the charges.

## **Insurance Companies Contracted with Northwest Neuropsychology Incorporated**

Blue Cross/Blue Shield PPO  
United Healthcare/United Behavioral Health  
Humana/CorpHealth  
Motorola/Motorola Rewards/APS Healthcare  
Private Health Care Systems (PHCS)  
Medicare  
Aetna  
Magellan Behavioral Health

(Other insurance? If your insurance company is not listed, call the *behavioral/mental health* carrier listed on your insurance card and ask if procedure codes 90801 [Diagnostic Evaluation], 96101 [Psychological testing with report per hour], and 96118 [Neuropsychological testing with report per hour] are covered.)

## **Questions? Compliments? Complaints?**

**Patient satisfaction is our foremost goal. If you are pleased with our holistic approach to your care, let us know. If you are dissatisfied with anything, please inform us so we can continuously improve our assessments and interventions. If you have any questions, please contact Northwest Neuropsychology at 847.240.0444 and press #. Or e-mail us at [nwneuropsych@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nwneuropsych@sbcglobal.net).**