10 TIPS FOR ADMINISTERING ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

1. **Know the assessment tools you intend to use.** Understand each tool's psychometric properties (e.g., reliability and validity), unique qualities (e.g., complex scoring), and language level (e.g., suitable for low literacy). Purchase and read the user manuals. If possible, complete each assessment tool yourself, before using it with clients.

2. **Train the entire assessment team.** Understand the "levels" assigned to assessments (i.e., "A" level does not require specific training; "C" level generally requires a PhD) and select only tools your team is qualified to use. Ensure psychometric assistants have been properly trained to administer and score assessments.

3. **Be prepared.** Determine whether you are using online or paper-and-pencil tools and know the implications of both (e.g., paper-and-pencil are often cheaper and easier to administer but can also provide less detailed reports). For online tools, ensure you have stable access to testing site (and you understand how to use it), correct test codes, and strategies to cope with technology challenges (e.g., pop-up blockers). Decide if you are working with a group or individual clients for both administration and interpretation. If working in groups, think about how you will address the confidentiality of results.

4. **Seek supervision and support.** Reach out to your network to get the support your need to begin using assessment tools. Publishers can be a good source of support, as can educators and colleagues. Know who in your network has assessment expertise.

5. **Obtain informed consent.** Ensure that your clients understand what you are assessing, why and how the results will be used.

6. **Accommodate clients' needs.** Ensure the tools you've selected are appropriate for you clients and, where not, know what accommodations you might need to make. Ensure you've planned for clients who can't sit through a battery of assessment tools - or can't physically sit at all, have visual or other impairments, or literacy or language fluency issues that may make it challenging to complete the tools. Strive to minimize any test anxiety.

7. **Allocate sufficient time.** However, also allow "wiggle room" as the time to complete an assessment tool can vary greatly between clients. Although test publishers will often indicate a time to complete, this is an average that might be completely unrealistic for your clients. When working in groups, be prepared for some clients to finish early and others to take twice as long as anyone else.

8. **Ensure instructions are clear.** Check for understanding throughout the assessment process (i.e., from instructions to complete the assessment, to scoring paper-and-pencil tools and interpreting results).

9. **Be available but not influential.** Don't skew the results by offering too much assistance or by coaching clients in a way that implies there is a "best" answer. Remember that translating items into other languages will result in a non-standardized assessment; if literacy or language is an issue, try a different assessment tools or provide clients with a dictionary.

10. **Prepare "Plan B."** No matter how well prepared you are to administer tools, have additional tools available to make substitutions, solve problems, or keep relevant clients engaged.

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