

MENTAL STATUS EXAM: DEFINITIONS

GABA (General Appearance, Behavior, Attitude)

General Appearance (patient at rest)

Age/gender, younger/older than stated age, body habitus, type of clothing, hygiene (e.g., smelling of alcohol, urine, feces, cigarette smoke, etc.), grooming, physical abnormalities (e.g., pupil size, bruises, needle marks/tracks, cuts, teeth, etc.), tattoos, body piercings

Behavior (patient in action)

Posture, eye contact, mannerisms, tics, activity level, psychomotor retardation/activation.

Akathisia: Inner restlessness with inability to stay still.

Automatism: Spontaneous verbal or motor behavior without patient awareness.

Catatonia: Extreme motor inactivity or hyperactivity.

Choreoathetosis: Involuntary combination of chorea (irregular migrating contractions) and athetosis (twisting/writhing).

Dystonia: Twisting/repetitive movement or abnormal fixed posturing.

Tremor: Unintentional, rhythmic, oscillatory movement.

Attitude (patient interaction)

Cooperative/uncooperative, seductive, flattering, charming, eager to please, entitled, controlling, hostile, guarded, critical, antagonistic, childish

Mood: Patient reported emotional tone in quotations. Equivalent of chief complaint.

Affect: Physical expression of a person's immediate feeling state, typically focusing on facial expression

Type:

Euthymic: Normal display of emotion.

Hyperthymic: Intense display of emotion.

Elevated/euphoric: In an excited state of intense happiness.

Dysphoric: In a profound state of unease or dissatisfaction.

Irritable: Easily annoyed or angry.

Anxious: Feeling worried or nervous, typically over an uncertain future outcome.

Quality/range: depth and range of feelings shown.

Intense > Full > Constricted > Blunted > Flat

Motility: shifting of emotional states

Labile > Supple/Stable > Sluggish

Appropriateness to content: Appropriate or not appropriate.

Speech

Rate: Pressured > Rapid > Regular > Slowed

Pressured speech: Rapid, frenzied speech driven by an internal sense of urgency.

Rhythm: prosody, cadence, latency (pauses before speaking), spontaneity (ability to make small talk)

Articulation: dysarthria, stuttering

Accent/dialect, tone, volume/modulation (loudness/softness)

Dysarthria: A mechanical dysfunction with speech.

Echolalia: Meaningless repetition of another person's spoken words.

Neologism: Making up of new words.

Clang associations: Groupings of words (usually rhyming), based on similar-sounding sounds, regardless of logical grouping.

Thought Process

Goal-directed/logical: Linear progression of thought without veering from subject at hand.

Circumstantial: Inability to answer a question without giving excessive, unnecessary detail. Does eventually return to the original point.

Tangential: Wandering from the topic and never returning to it or providing the information requested.

Loosening of associations: Incoherent slippage of ideas further and further from point of discussion.

Flight of ideas: Rapid shift from one topic to another.

Perseveration: Repetition of a particular response (e.g., word or phrase), regardless of the absence or cessation of a stimulus.

Thought blocking: Abrupt cessation of speech without explanation in the middle of a sentence

Goal-directed, logical, circumstantial, tangential, loosening of associations, flight of ideas, perseveration, thought blocking, echolalia, neologisms, clang associations

Thought Content

Poverty of thought: A global reduction in the quantity of thought.

Overabundance of thought: A global increase in the quantity of thought.

Delusions: Fixed, false beliefs that do not change even when presented with evidence counter to them, and are outside of cultural, societal or religious norms.

- Somatic delusion: Delusion that one's bodily function, sensation or appearance is abnormal.
- Delusion of grandeur: Delusion of possessing superior qualities such as fame, wealth or supernatural powers.
- Paranoid delusion: Delusion of mistreatment, usually persecution (e.g., being spoken about behind one's back, "people are out to get me").
- Delusion of reference: Delusion where an otherwise insignificant event is misconstrued as having special significance specifically to oneself.
- Delusion of thought insertion: Delusion where one believes one's thoughts to be externally placed from an outside party.
- Delusion of thought control: Delusion where one believes one is being controlled by an outside party or parties, and self-control is lost.
- Delusion of thought broadcasting: Delusion where one's thoughts are made known to everyone in the outside world.
- Erotomanic delusion: Delusion where one believes that prominent figures or superstars are in love with or in a relationship with oneself, when that is not the case in reality.
- Nihilistic delusion: Delusion where one believes that nothing is real. This is in contrast to derealization or depersonalization, which have more to do with an altered reality, not the lack of it.

Depersonalization: Loss of all sense of identity, wherein one's thoughts and feelings are no longer felt to be one's own.

Derealization: A change in the perception or experience of the external world to where it feels unrealistic.

Illusion: A misinterpretation of existing stimuli.

Hallucination: A perception perceived in the absence of any existing stimuli.

Hypnagogic hallucination: A hallucination experienced before falling asleep.

Hypnopompic hallucination: A hallucination experienced upon waking up from sleep.

Obsession: Repeated intrusive and unwanted thoughts, images or urges.

Compulsion: Repetitive behavior or mental acts in response to obsessions.

Phobia: Persistent fear of an object or situation.

Suicidal ideation: Thoughts of, or preoccupation with, suicide.

Homicidal ideation: Thoughts of, or preoccupation with, homicide.

Insight = awareness/understanding of situation, illness and available choices

Full > Partial/limited > None

Judgement = patient's decision-making ability (based on HPI and recent behavior)

Excellent > Good > Fair > Poor

Cognition --- GOAL CRAMP

General consciousness: alert > drowsy > lethargic > stuporous > comatose

Orientation: x4 (person, time, place, situation)

Attention: WORLD backwards, serial 7s from 100

Language: name objects, repeat words/sentences

Calculation: ability to add/subtract

Right hemisphere: intersecting pentagons, clock-face

Abstraction: explain similarities between objects, understand simple proverbs

Memory: immediate (repeat after me), short-term (what were the words?)

Praxis: engage, applying, exercising, realizing or practising ideas