



fifth edition

# Assessment in Counseling

A Guide to the Use  
of Psychological  
Assessment Procedures

**Danica G. Hays**



AMERICAN COUNSELING  
ASSOCIATION

5999 Stevenson Avenue

Alexandria, VA 22304

[www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)



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*For Chris—my partner, best friend, and colleague.  
Thank you for making everything more meaningful.*



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## Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide information about the various assessment procedures that are specifically relevant for practicing counselors. The book deals with the use of these assessment procedures in the counseling process and emphasizes the selection, interpretation, and communication of psychological test results and highlights the basic principles of psychological assessment. It stresses the importance of integrating assessment results with other information about the client. One primary assumption undergirds this text: Counselors engage in assessment practices *every day*, and these practices affect relationships, treatment decisions, and culturally responsive counseling. Furthermore, assessment involves both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

The book is not designed to be a comprehensive textbook or desk manual on the various assessment tools themselves. There are a number of excellent books that describe psychological tests and other assessment procedures in detail. It is expected that counselors will make use of such publications along with other resources as they evaluate assessment tools. As with the previous editions, the latest developments regarding those assessments commonly used by counselors and other mental health professionals are included. New to this edition are some innovative ways to integrate assessment into the counseling profession.

Some of the key features of the fifth edition of the text include the following:

- bolded key terms to facilitate comprehension of major concepts;
- chapter pretests (“Test Your Knowledge”) to gauge previous learning;
- self-development activities, such as reflective exercises and class and field activities;
- “Tip Sheets,” or practical, user-friendly information about major assessment concepts, issues, and practices;
- inclusion of practitioner voices of various assessment topics (“Assessment in Action”);
- case examples that highlight assessment issues and score reports;
- sample assessment items with an expanded list of common assessment tools;
- coverage of the history of assessment, test access issues, cultural bias in assessment, high-stakes testing, qualitative assessment, and specialty areas of assessment and related standards;
- review questions and chapter summaries;
- sample assessment report; and
- common statistical formulas used in assessment.

The text is organized into five sections. Section I, Foundations of Assessment in Counseling, includes introductory concepts of assessment that are useful for conceptualizing measurement and statistical concepts and working with various types of assessment. The four chapters in this section include a discussion of basic assessment terms; the history of assessment; purpose and use of assessment; the assessment process related to selection, administration, interpretation, and communication; ethical, legal, and professional issues in assessment and related assessment standards; and multicultural assessment practices. Section II, Basic Statistical and Measurement Considerations, includes two chapters that address foundational knowledge in statistics and measurement. Specifically, the following concepts are discussed: scales of measurement; reliability, validity, and correlation; test development; measures of central tendency and variability; and raw score transformation. Section III, Initial Assessment in Counseling, includes two chapters related to common assessment tasks typically found at the beginning of the counseling relationship to gauge mental health and substance abuse symptoms. This section addresses the intake interview; mental status examination; several general screening inventories; specialized assessment of suicide risk, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, anger, self-injury, eating disorders, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; and use of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

Section IV, Types of Assessment, is the largest section and includes six chapters. The section is devoted to specific classes of assessment, including intelligence, ability, career development, and personality. In this edition you will find expanded coverage in areas such as high-stakes testing, projective assessments, and interpersonal assessment involving intimate partner violence and child abuse. Furthermore, recent revisions in intelligence and ability assessment are discussed. Section V, The Assessment Report, provides one chapter that outlines general guidelines for communicating assessment findings to a client and other stakeholders as well as developing a research report. The text also includes several appendices: names and acronyms of commonly used tests with publisher contact information (Appendix A), web links for ethical guidelines and assessment standards (Appendix B), common statistical formulas (Appendix C), a sample assessment report (Appendix D), and an answer key for “Test Your Knowledge” items (Appendix E).

In graduate courses that cover the use of tests and other assessment procedures in counseling, information about the various tools is typically covered, but the actual use of psychological assessment procedures in counseling often must be learned through trial and error. This text should help remedy that situation by providing information to assist the counselor in choosing, administering, and interpreting assessment procedures as part of the counseling process.

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I appreciate the contributions of Albert B. Hood and Richard W. Johnson to the practice of psychological assessment in general and as authors of the previous editions of this text. The counseling profession has certainly been influenced by their countless achievements in research and practice, and I am humbled to build on their work in this fifth edition.

Finally, I am thankful for my students and mentors in the assessment world who remind me every day of the important role of assessment.

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## About the Author

**Danica G. Hays, PhD, LPC, NCC** is an associate professor of counseling and chair of the Department of Counseling and Human Services at Old Dominion University. She is a recipient of the Outstanding Research Award, Outstanding Counselor Educator Advocacy Award, and Glen E. Hubele National Graduate Student Award from the American Counseling Association as well as the recipient of the Patricia B. Elmore Excellence in Measurement and Evaluation Award and President's Special Merit Award from the Association of Assessment in Counseling and Education (AACE). Hays served as founding editor of *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation*, a national peer-refereed journal of the AACE, and is editor of *Counselor Education and Supervision*, a national peer-refereed journal of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. She served as president of the AACE in 2011–12. Her research interests include qualitative methodology, assessment and diagnosis, trauma and gender issues, and multicultural and social justice concerns in counselor preparation and community mental health. She has published numerous articles and book chapters in these areas and coauthored or coedited five books to date: *Developing Multicultural Counseling Competence: A Systems Approach*; *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings*; *Mastering the National Counselor Exam and the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam*; *The ACA Encyclopedia of Counseling*; and *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments*.

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