

Mental status exam

DOMAIN	DEFINITION / FOCUS	EXAMPLES / CLINICAL NOTES
Appearance	Physical presentation, hygiene, grooming, clothing appropriateness	Well-groomed; appears stated age; disheveled; inappropriately dressed for weather
Behavior	Motor activity, eye contact, movements, engagement level	Restless; cooperative; psychomotor retardation; avoids eye contact; tearful
Speech	Rate, rhythm, volume, spontaneity, articulation	Pressured; slow; slurred; tangential; normal
Mood	Client's self-reported emotional state	"Depressed"; "Anxious"; "Fine"; "Numb"
Affect	Observed emotional expression; range, intensity, congruence with mood	Flat; restricted; appropriate; incongruent; labile
Thought process	Organization and flow of thoughts	Linear; circumstantial; tangential; flight of ideas; loose associations
Thought content	Preoccupations, delusions, obsessions, suicidal/homicidal ideation	No SI/HI; paranoid delusions; obsessive thoughts; preoccupied with health
Perception	Hallucinations, illusions, depersonalization, derealization	No perceptual disturbances; reports auditory hallucinations
Cognition	Orientation, attention, memory, concentration, abstract thinking	Alert and oriented ×4; short-term memory intact; distractible; poor concentration
Insight	Awareness and understanding of mental health condition	Good insight; limited awareness; denies symptoms despite evidence
Judgment	Ability to make safe, responsible decisions	Sound judgment; impaired decision-making; risky behavior noted

