

Preface

Clinical neuropsychologists routinely assess persons with known, suspected, or disputed neurobehavioral impairment and then provide a written report that presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Neuropsychological reports provide a permanent record of the services that were provided. In addition, depending on the setting, these reports can be used for a variety of potentially important purposes, such as feedback to a referring physician regarding differential diagnosis and treatment planning, advocacy with the schools for special education services, or informing the trier of facts in a legal context about the mental state of the examinee.

The purpose of this book is to provide guidelines and methods for preparing neuropsychological reports that are evidence-based, yet intelligible and practically useful to the intended reader, while adhering to relevant ethical, legal, and professional standards. Considering that the format of the report will typically vary with the context and purpose of the evaluation, this book covers applications in various settings (e.g., educational, legal, medical) and pertaining to both adult and pediatric examinees. It is not intended to cover every possible scenario in which neuropsychological reports may be generated. Instead, it focuses on some of the most common practice settings of neuropsychologists who typically prepare written reports based on an in-person evaluation of an individual.

All chapters in this volume were written by known experts in their respective fields. They have all used material from actual cases (with all identifying details disguised) to address the unique variables that need to be addressed in each particular context. Throughout the volume, they have

consistently used a format of illustrating specific points by means of contrasting problematic versus more effective ways of describing the findings in neuropsychological reports, ranging from describing how the background is presented all the way to discussing the results and providing conclusions and recommendations. Although this book contains many practical examples of how to present information in the most useful manner to the reader, it does not offer any simple cut-and-paste, cookie-cutter, or boilerplate material. There are no shortcuts to preparing neuropsychological reports. The ultimate responsibility for the content and quality of the report lies with the practicing clinical neuropsychologist who has to consider the unique brain–behavior relationships in each individual patient, with due regard to the context in which the evaluation occurs.

The various chapters will show that no single format for a neuropsychological report works equally well in any and all settings. I hope that the various illustrations of “less desirable” versus “more desirable” ways to present information in such documents will be helpful to practitioners in considering how to serve their examinees and referral sources most effectively and most efficiently.

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