



# Psychiatric Evaluations

A psychiatric or psychological evaluation looks at a party's mental health when it is an issue in the case, often because of how it may affect parenting. It is done by a licensed professional, either by agreement of the parties or by court order.

## How it works

- 1 When It Is Ordered.** A judge can order an evaluation when a party's mental condition is truly in question and there is good reason for it.
- 2 Who Performs It.** A licensed psychiatrist or psychologist. The order or agreement usually names the professional and who pays.
- 3 Interviews.** The evaluator meets with the party being evaluated to discuss their history, daily life, and any treatment. They may also meet with the other party or collateral witnesses, but that is not common.
- 4 Testing.** The party may complete standard psychological tests or questionnaires.
- 5 Records Review.** The evaluator may review treatment records or speak with the party's providers, usually with a signed release.
- 6 Written Report.** The evaluator summarizes the findings in a report, shared as the order or agreement directs.

## How results are used

**Focused Purpose.** The evaluation addresses the specific issues in the case, not every part of a person's life.

**Limited Use.** Access to the report is generally limited to the parties, their attorneys, and the court.

**The Judge Decides.** The evaluation is one piece of evidence. The judge weighs it with everything else.

**Next Steps.** Results may lead to recommendations, such as counseling, that support the family.

## What to keep in mind

Seeking mental health treatment is not a weakness. It is often viewed as a positive, responsible step.

If you are being evaluated, be candid. Honest answers carry more weight than guarded or polished ones.

Continue any current treatment and follow your providers' recommendations.

Do not discuss the evaluation with your children.

Check with us before signing any release of your medical or counseling records.

This guide provides general information about psychiatric and psychological evaluations in Georgia family law matters and is not legal advice about your specific case. Your attorney will explain how an evaluation applies to your situation.

## YOUR ROLE

If you are being evaluated, attend every appointment and answer honestly. Either way, check with us before signing a records release or sharing information about the evaluation.

## QUESTIONS?

As always, all questions and requests should be directed to the team via email to [team@pepitone.law](mailto:team@pepitone.law).