

# The Mental State Examination

Nursing

A structured description of how a person presents, in observable terms.

*A snapshot of the present, recorded so another clinician can compare tomorrow.*

## Domains

**Appearance and behaviour**

**Speech: rate, volume, form**

**Mood, described and observed**

**Thought: form and content**

**Perception: any disturbance described**

**Cognition, insight and judgement**

## How to write it

**Record observations, not interpretations**

**Quote the person where wording matters**

**Separate what was said from what you inferred**

**Note what could not be assessed, and why**

**Date and time it; presentation changes**

**Avoid labels that describe the person, not the state**

**Educational reference. An examination of the present state, not a diagnosis. Diagnostic formulation is a multidisciplinary process.**