



Clinical Practice Procedures: Assessment/Mental status

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Date	February, 2021
Purpose	To ensure a consistent procedural approach to undertaking a patient mental status assessment.
Scope	Applies to Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) clinical staff.
Health care setting	Pre-hospital assessment and treatment.
Population	Applies to all ages unless stated otherwise.
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Mental status

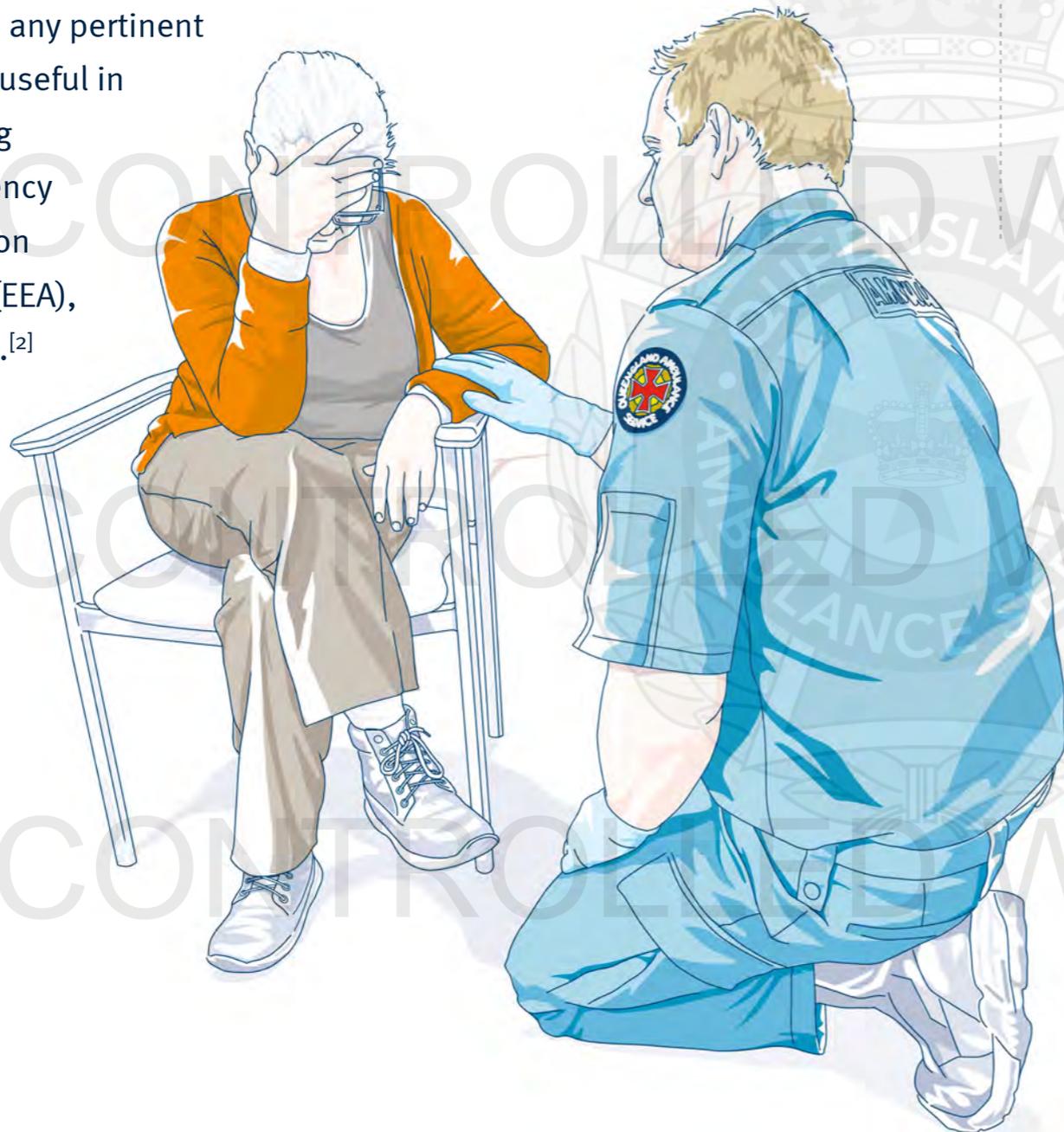
February, 2021

A **mental status assessment** is the process of conducting a systematic evaluation of the patient's thought processes at a particular time.^[1]

The intention of such an examination is to guide the clinician in identifying pertinent behavioural manifestations, but not to diagnose a specific condition. The information gained,

along with any pertinent history, is useful in

completing an Emergency Examination Authority (EEA), if required.^[2]



Indications



- Behavioural abnormalities

Contraindications



- Nil in this setting

Complications



- Violent patients
- Refusal of assessment and/or treatment
- Cultural differences in the understanding of mental health

Procedure – Mental status

1. Assess the patient appropriately and attempt to ascertain the cause of the presenting signs and symptoms.
2. Exclude and/or manage causes of abnormal behaviour where possible.
3. Attempt to treat the patient only if safe to do so.
4. Using the guide to mental status examination; observe, question and note relevant information. This must be conducted in a highly respectful and empathic manner. Judgemental attitudes, interrogatory questioning styles or other disrespectful stances will usually only serve to exacerbate a patient's condition.
5. Be mindful that different cultures hold different beliefs about mental illness. For some cultures, mental health is determined by physical and/or spiritual influencers. For others, mental illness is a taboo subject and is not discussed openly.

MENTAL STATUS ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grooming • posture • build • clothing • cleanliness 	Thought form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount • rate • derailment • flight of ideas
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eye contact • mannerisms • gait • activity level 	Thought content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disturbances • delusions • suicidal • obsessions
Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rate • volume • pitch • tone • flow • pressure 	Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illusions • thought insertion • broadcasting • hallucinations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - auditory - olfactory - tactile - visual - gustatory
Mood	Emotion as described: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anxious • depressed • cheerful 	Insight & judgement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cognition • illness • understanding • cause & effect
Affect	Emotion as observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restrictive • blunted • labile 		