

ATLANTA PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

A Case Study in the Importance of Evidence-based Assessment Solutions

Atlanta Psychological Services is a comprehensive mental health practice that specializes in psychological testing and evaluation. As an associate psychologist and part owner of the practice, J. Todd George, Psy.D., is an important resource for the surrounding area of primary care physicians, therapists, and psychiatrists who often refer individuals with complex psychological issues to him. Dr. George's practice is also the go-to resource for government agencies and attorneys working in both civil and criminal cases where psychological testing and forensic work is needed. In addition, he has an advanced, hands-on training program for post-doctoral fellows and graduate students working on their doctorate in psychology.

As an expert in evaluating individuals for behavioral health disorders, Dr. George relies on empirically validated assessment tools, such as the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (M.I.N.I.) from nView Health. nView Solutions follow the latest DSM-5 criteria and have been cited in more than 20,000 studies. Widely used in both research and clinical settings for more than 25 years, nView Solutions support evidence-based evaluations for virtually all major psychiatric disorders.

According to Dr. George, "When it comes to evaluating individuals with complex conditions, it is important that we use evidenced-based resources such as the M.I.N.I. to accurately and precisely diagnose the specific condition or conditions that are driving the behaviors or presenting concerns. The specificity of the questions and the intuitive algorithms make the M.I.N.I. the ideal assessment solution for the type of work we do."

"I have found that the M.I.N.I. asks detailed questions and leaves little room for ambiguity. This is particularly important to us when our evaluations must stand up to scrutiny from attorneys in court."

- DR. TODD GEORGE,
ATLANTA PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Efficiency Gains

Prior to using the M.I.N.I., Dr. George was using a series of pen and paper in-house checklists and tools that were based on DSM-5 criteria as part of his evaluations. But when he found nView's digital assessment solution, he realized there was a much more efficient way to perform his evaluations. Now, he has the flexibility of emailing the diagnostic interview to the patient or caregiver as part of the initial intake process, which helps quickly clarify potential diagnostic impressions.



PROFILE AT-A-GLANCE

- ✓ Atlanta-based psychological practice specializing in testing, psychotherapy & training
- ✓ State referrals, court mandated & criminal court evaluations
- ✓ atlantapsychological.com

BENEFITS

- ✓ Streamlining clinical interviews with important diagnostic insights in advance of the first visit
- ✓ Strengthening referral relationships to grow the practice with closed-loop reporting and transparency
- ✓ Preparing the next generation of mental health specialists with hands-on training programs

“By having patients complete the M.I.N.I. as part of the initial intake process, I am able to make better use of the time I have with the individual. The M.I.N.I. score report is easy to review, and seeing which diagnostic criteria were met helps me focus my clinical interview questions when I am with the patient. It helps me attend to the interaction with the patient and get to the most complete and accurate diagnosis faster.”

Dr. George is also able to use the report generated by the nView electronic assessment to assist in requesting prior authorization from insurance companies when further psychological testing may be needed. The comprehensive report can be easily converted to a PDF and used to show the patient or referral source which diagnostic criteria were identified as the basis for the individual's diagnosis. Not only does this help educate the referral source, patient, or caregiver, but it helps build trust through transparency with referral sources and patients, which ultimately helps grow the practice.

Powerful Insights

As digital technology has become a primary means of communication among people among all ages, Dr. George often finds that patients are more forthcoming with information when they can respond in the privacy of their own home or personal space. For example, one of his referral sources recently sent him an adolescent patient who had experienced multiple traumatic events in her past that had resulted in drug abuse, signs of an eating disorder, and withdrawal from family

and friends. Prior to the first visit, the patient completed the M.I.N.I. assessment, endorsing many concerning diagnostic criteria that were consistent with other sources of information. In person, the patient became extremely defensive and guarded when asked certain questions, and as a result provided limited information.

Multiple Modules for Any Situation

Dr. George's practice sees a wide variety of patients, including all ages and conditions. He appreciates the fact that the nView Solution offers multiple modules in one

platform that evaluate for up to 17 adult and 24 pediatric commonly diagnosed DSM-5 disorders and other related disorders. For example, when an adolescent is being evaluated, Dr. George will administer the M.I.N.I. Kid that has language that is appropriate for adolescents. In addition, he asks the parents or other members in the patient's circle to complete a version of the assessment that uses appropriate language to help them report on what they have observed. By getting a more wholistic view, he is able to more accurately diagnose the patient.

“For many people, the ability to respond to the sensitive questions via electronic means vs. sitting face to face with a stranger is far more comfortable. In this case, I was able to rely on the self-reported responses she had given in the digital M.I.N.I. to more fully understand the situation. If it wouldn't have been for the M.I.N.I., it would have been extremely difficult to properly diagnosis her complex condition.”

– DR. TODD GEORGE



“When I'm getting inconsistent signals from the patient, parent, and/or physician, I find that the M.I.N.I. is particularly helpful in clarifying the diagnosis. It covers many different conditions in one assessment, and it asks detailed questions that leave very little room for ambiguity.”

– DR. TODD GEORGE



In addition, Dr. George uses certain nView modules for specific evaluations. For example, he has seen a recent surge in the number of referrals for child and adult ADHD evaluations from primary care physicians who are becoming increasingly uneasy with this diagnosis, especially when diagnosis is complex due to overlapping symptoms and conditions. The comprehensive nature of the nView Solution allows him to quickly evaluate the patient's ADHD symptoms while also uncovering underlying conditions that may be contributing to the patient's challenges.

Preparing the Next Generation

With the ongoing shortage of trained mental health professionals, Dr. George's work with giving doctoral candidates and post-doctoral fellows hands-on training is equally as important as the work he does with patients.

"When working with students, I've found the M.I.N.I. score report to be extremely helpful in that it hits on so many different diagnostic possibilities. It helps students better understand what questions to ask, various ways to word questions during an in-person interview, and even how to elicit conversation with the patient."

Dr. George sees many other advantages of students working with the nView Solution during their training. "The M.I.N.I. does a great job of not just giving the textbook terminology when it comes to substance use disorders that are so prominent in our society today. It breaks down complex clinical terms associated with substance use into more common everyday language and exposes students to technical and informal names for the different drugs they could be expected to hear about today. Without using the M.I.N.I. in these cases, students may not have gotten exposure to this important language."

Great Confidence with Validation

Testifying in court cases is a common occurrence for Dr. George and his associates, where their evaluations are often under extreme scrutiny by attorneys. The nView M.I.N.I. strictly follows all DSM-5 guidelines, which helps eliminate subjectivity in the evaluations. Also, the thousands of industry citations for the M.I.N.I. bring added credibility to substantiate how Dr. George arrived at his conclusion.

A Perfect Partnership

Atlanta Psychological Services appreciate the great partnership they have found with the nView Health team. According to Dr. George, "Unlike other tools, the M.I.N.I. is easy to administer, and most patients are able to complete the survey without any technical issues or questions. And whenever I have questions about anything, the customer success team is very quick to respond. It's been great working with the nView team, and I look forward to expanding my practice's use of some of the new tools they are releasing."



ABOUT NVIEW HEALTH

nView Health is the premier provider of evidence-based software and solutions used by research organizations and healthcare professionals around the world to help them identify, treat, and monitor mental health disorders, a critical requirement for measurement-based care. nView is the worldwide exclusive licensee for a broad array of behavioral health screening solutions, structured interviews, and post-diagnosis severity measurement scales to monitor patient outcomes. To learn more, please visit nview.com or follow nView Health on LinkedIn or Twitter.

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