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DEFINITIONS for MENTAL STATUS EXAM

affect: expression of mood, temperament, and feelings; overt emotional state.

aloof: distant physically or emotionally; reserved and remote: *stood apart with aloof dignity*.
At a distance but within view; apart.

circumstantial: of no primary significance; incidental.

coherent: logically consistent; connected; able to think or express one’s thoughts in a clear or orderly manner.

compulsions: repetitive behaviors; such as hand washing, checking things, counting, putting things in order.

confide: to trust.

constricted affect: diminished variability and intensity with which emotions are expressed.

delusion: a false belief strongly held in spite of invalidating evidence.

disheveled: being in loose disarray; unkempt, as hair or clothing; untidy.

euphoric: to perceive extreme well being.

grandiose: characterized by greatness of scope or intent; grand.

hallucination: An imagined *perception* of some object or phenomenon that is not really present. It may involve hearing nonexistent voices (*auditory hallucination*), seeing objects that are not there (*visual hallucination*), smelling (*olfactory hallucination*), and touching (*tactile hallucination*).

hygiene: a person’s state of cleanliness.

ideas of reference: an inaccurate belief that the behaviors of others have some effect on the individual.

Human Services Program
Passaic County Community College
Definitions for Mental Status Exam

ideation: to form an idea of; imagine or conceive.

illogical: without logic; senseless.

incoherent: lacking connection; unable to think or express one's thoughts in a clear or orderly manner.

in-sight: self-understanding and awareness of one's feelings, motivations, and problems.

irrelevant: unrelated to the matter at hand; not important.

labile affect: abrupt shifts and excessive variation in an individual's expression of mood.

logical: reasoning or capable of reasoning in a clear and consistent manner.

loose association: shift abruptly from one thought to another with little or no connection.

magical thinking: the idea that one's thoughts or actions influence the environment or cause events to occur.

meticulous: extremely careful and precise; extremely or excessively concerned with details.

mood: an emotional state that influences an individual's perception, cognitive functions, and actions.

obsessions: persistent ideas, thoughts, and impulses.

oriented: aware of the world in relation to one's self.

phobia: a persistent, abnormal, or irrational fear of a specific thing or situation that compels one to avoid the feared stimulus; a strong fear, dislike, or aversion.

psychosis: a severe mental disorder loss of contact with reality and causing deterioration of normal social functioning.

psychotic: of, relating to, or affected by psychosis.

relevant: having a bearing on or connection with the matter at hand; what is important.

self-depreciative: to undervalue or belittle oneself.

tangential: merely touching or slightly connected; only superficially relevant.

temperament: the manner of thinking, behaving, or reacting characteristic of a specific person: *a nervous temperament.*