

MENTAL STATE EXAMINATION TERMINOLOGY

DERAILMENT

aka Loosening of Associations
Patient begins by answering question put forward but deviates into unrelated topic(s) and continues until interrupted by interviewer.

CIRCUMSTANTIALITY

Patient eventually answers question put forward, but only after an excess amount of irrelevant information.

TANGENTIALITY

Patient does not answer question put forward but instead digresses from original conversation, introducing topics that are irrelevant and unrelated.

WORD SALAD

aka Incoherence
Random words/phrases linked together in an unintelligible manner (e.g. "Break dinner silence harm.")

CLANG ASSOC.

Grouping of words based on similar-sounding sounds, not meanings (e.g. "Call meat the mall ball small tall.")

FLIGHT OF IDEAS

Patient has rapid and continuous speech and jumps between many topics or ideas (loosely associated) erratically and abruptly.

NEOLOGISM

Patient coins a new word that is meaningless except to the patient.

THOUGHT BLOCKING

Patient stops speaking abruptly and with no explanation amidst a sentence.

HALLUCINATION

Patient has a sensory perception (i.e. visual, olfactory) in the absence of a stimulus (e.g. they hear voices in a silent room).

ILLUSION

Patient misinterprets a real stimulus (e.g. they mistake a stick to be a snake).

PSYCHOMOTOR AGITATION

An increase in motor activity and restlessness.

PSYCHOMOTOR RETARDATION

A decrease in spontaneous movement and slowing in voluntary movement.