

# DIAGNOSTIC & EVALUATION BENCHCARD

## Guidance for Ordering a Diagnostic and Evaluation on Youth

This Benchcard is designed to assist judicial officers considering motions for a youth to undergo a diagnostic and evaluation (D&E).

### 1 Is a D&E needed?

*Is the information being sought available from an existing source?*

- Did anyone check with DCS to see if prior assessments/D&Es already exist?
- Does the youth have previous cases? If so, did anyone check preliminary inquiry, dual status assessment team records, pre-dispositional report, etc.?
- Has the youth been in residential placement, Department of Correction, or had an acute mental health stay? If so, did anyone check to see if those facilities have similar records?
- Do the parents/guardians have similar reports already?
- Do local mental health service providers have similar records that can be accessed?
- Has anyone checked with the family about Bureau of Disabilities Services (BDS) involvement or eligibility?
- Does the youth's school(s) have similar records, perhaps from Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) development?

### 2 Timing of Diagnostic

- If a D&E is being requested pre-adjudication, the youth has 5th Amendment rights that must be protected, and may impact quality of report/recommendations.
- If being requested for Disposition or Modification, consider how duration of D&E process will impact case timeline, especially for youth in placement/detention.

### 3 Safety Concerns

- Are there identified safety concerns if the youth is left in the community to participate in D&E on an outpatient basis?
- Consider how any identified safety concerns will impact the D&E facility and evaluators.

### 4 Diagnostic Goals

*What are we hoping to get from the D&E?*

- What do we not know about the youth already?
- The D&E report will ideally include:
  - ➔ Mental health diagnoses, including IQ
  - ➔ Treatment recommendations
  - ➔ Placement recommendations
  - ➔ Aftercare planning recommendations, including involvement of family/local services
- Will a D&E really add much to what you already know about these areas?

### 5 Trauma Informed

- Will the D&E process pose undue harm/stress to the youth or the youth's family?
- Consider the impact on education, including the youth's IEP and/or BIP.

### 6 Funding Issues?

- Has anyone verified a funding source for the D&E?