Myths and Facts of the Educational Psychology Service

The role of the Educational Psychologist has changed on a national level over the last decade or so. This can leave confusion around exactly what services a Local Authority Psychological Service offers. Below are 7 myths and facts that will hopefully clarify matters for everyone.

Myth #1 - One of the main things Educational Psychologists do is carry out ‘IQ’ or ‘Cognitive’ tests.

FACT - Educational Psychologists provide assessments using a range of techniques. They work on the principle of least intrusion, meaning that the least intrusive method of assessment will be used in any given situation. As such, while Educational Psychologists can carry out cognitive assessments, this will only happen if it is the least intrusive method of gathering the information required and has a clear rationale. For more information on Educational Psychology assessment in Scotland see: http://sdep.bps.org.uk/sdep/publications/assessment.cfm and www.aspep.org.uk.

Myth #2 - Educational Psychologists diagnose conditions such as Autism or ADHD.

FACT - Educational Psychologists do not make any medical diagnosis. They support health colleagues to do this by gathering information within the school/education context. They work to help those involved find ways to address particular needs, whether they have a name or not. This means that it is not important whether a child or young person has a named condition in order for them to access support within the education system.

Myth #3 - Educational Psychologists ‘diagnose’ Dyslexia.

FACT - Dyslexia is a cluster term for literacy difficulties that cannot be explained by other reasons e.g. missing a lot of school, having a hearing difficulty etc. As such, there is no one test for Dyslexia. As it is not a medical condition, it cannot be ‘diagnosed’. Dyslexia is usually identified over a period of time in a collaborative manner, beginning with school professionals and parents. The psychologist will become involved if there is a particular need for them to be, e.g. if the child is presenting with a more complex profile of difficulties. For more information on South Ayrshire’s policy on Dyslexia identification see: http://www.eps.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/images/SAC_Dyslexia_Support_Pack.pdf.
**Myth #4 - Educational Psychologists are ‘experts’.**

**FACT** - Educational Psychologists work alongside other professionals to improve outcomes for children and young people. An important part of their role is ensuring that the most appropriate professional/service is at the forefront of delivering what is needed. They can have an overview of the context which the child and/or family are in, so are holistic in their view alongside other services. They do not have all the answers alone, instead working in partnership helps lead to better outcomes.

**Myth #5 - An Educational Psychologist’s main function is to work with individual children.**

**FACT** - Educational Psychologists can work individually with children, but their role is actually far more diverse. They work across five strands (Consultation, Assessment, Intervention, Training and Research) and three levels (Individual and Family, School/Establishment and Local Authority) of service delivery. For more information see: [http://sdep.bps.org.uk/sdep/careers/the-role-of-educational-psychologists-in-scotland.cfm](http://sdep.bps.org.uk/sdep/careers/the-role-of-educational-psychologists-in-scotland.cfm).

**Myth #6 - The Psychological Service provides an emergency response.**

**FACT** - A big part of the Educational Psychologist’s role in a crisis situation is making sure that all the appropriate services/professionals are involved as necessary and to consult with/support staff involved. Psychological service can be flexible in order to respond to the individual needs of their service users as they arise.

**Myth #7 - An Educational Psychologist’s recommendation can guarantee supports/resources.**

**FACT** - Educational Psychologists are part of a multi-agency team that assess and support the needs of children and young people. Multi-agency assessments are submitted centrally in order that the Local Authority can consider all options available. Each service involved has an important role to play in the assessment process.

If you have any other questions or queries, try browsing our website or get in touch via one of the contact methods below:

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