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.
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-deprecative: 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.