



ABOUT THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

The Canons of the Episcopal Church require that each applicant for Holy Orders be possessed of the physical and psychological health necessary to serve and thrive as an ordained person. In the Diocese of New York a thorough medical and psychological screening is conducted at the applicant's expense, at the beginning of the discernment process, as a way to begin discerning the vocation to which God and the church may be calling him or her. In order for an applicant to proceed in the discernment process, it is necessary that the examining psychiatrist's report testify that there are no contraindications to continuing in discernment for ordination. The forms used by the applicant and by the appointed professionals have been prepared by the Church Pension Fund for this purpose. A brief explanation of this part of the process follows:

Medical Examination

The physical examination will be conducted by the internist of the applicant's choice.

Behavior Screening Questionnaire

Each of these questions is to be answered in full and the document is to be witnessed.

Life History Questionnaire

This is a resource document for self-examination and assessment which is completed at home, before the psychological testing, then given to the test administrator at the time of the testing appointment. The questionnaire asks for detailed information in regard to social history; the questions are those asked during a standard psychiatric interview to help assess broad psychological patterns.

Psychological Testing and Evaluation

The psychological evaluation consists of several standardized tests, with the possibility of additional tests as may be recommended by the psychologists or the psychiatrist during the discernment process. After evaluating the applicant's responses to the standardized tests and Life History Questionnaire, the evaluating psychologist forwards a report to the examining psychiatrist who will conduct an interview with the applicant. The examining psychiatrist then writes a report to the Bishop attesting to the applicant's psychological and emotional suitability for the ordained ministry. If the evaluation and interview demonstrate that the applicant is in good psychological health and has the emotional resources to thrive in the ordained ministry, it is beneficial to determine that early in discernment with the Diocese. On the other hand, if the evaluation and interview find otherwise, it is also in the best interest of everyone involved to know this as early as possible. The recommendation of the examining psychiatrist is final.

Authorization to Release Information

Before the psychological testing, each applicant signs a standard consent form that protects the confidentiality of the clinicians involved, and also the applicant's confidentiality insofar as that is appropriate to a vocational assessment process. The evaluating psychologist is not an employee of The Episcopal Church and his/her office and records are separate from any church offices or church record-keeping location. The diocesan psychiatrist, the Bishop and the Canon for Ministry DO NOT see test materials. They are stored confidentially, and then destroyed after a period of time by the evaluating psychologist who follows the professional guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association. The only test materials actually reviewed by the Bishop are the Behavior Screening Questionnaire and the psychologist's and psychiatrist's reports. The test materials, raw data, or reports cannot be released to the applicant or to any other party during the discernment process or at any other time. Because this is a vocational assessment process to enter into the leadership of a religious institution, the Authorization to Release Information would not be subject to the legal process. By his/her voluntary entry into the process, an applicant agrees to accept the guidelines stated in the consent form.

Fees

The psychological testing, scoring and evaluation fees total \$2,000, which is payable to Kenwood Psychological Services at the time of the first testing appointment. The fee for the interview is from \$300 to \$350, payable directly to the psychiatrist at the time of the interview appointment. It is appropriate for the applicant to ask his or her sponsoring parish to assist with these expenses, either with an outright grant or a loan. Diocesan funds are not available for this purpose.