



Beyond Diagnosis: The Value of Case Conceptualization

A diagnosis tells us what a client is experiencing, but not why the difficulty persists, or how best to help. Case conceptualization helps bridge that gap, supporting clinical decisions from intake to termination.

Why Conceptualization Matters

Clinical reasoning is demanding, and like all human reasoning it can be shaped by **common cognitive tendencies** that can affect everyone, regardless of skill or experience:

Anchoring

Early impressions can carry extra weight, even as new information emerges.

Premature closure

A working hypothesis can feel settled before the full picture is clear.

Confirmation bias

Noticing information that fits initial hypothesis more readily than information that challenges it.

Diagnostic momentum

Once a label is in place, it can be carried forward without being revisited.

How Case Conceptualization Helps

*It makes clinical hypotheses **explicit, testable, and open to revision** throughout treatment, integrating three sources of evidence into one personalized plan:*

Evidence-based assessment data

The research literature on the difficulty and its treatment

The client's characteristics, values, and preferences



Join Dr. Bryce D. McLeod to explore a science-informed approach to case conceptualization that guides treatment from intake to termination.