

**REFERRAL CRITERIA FOR PRE-SURGICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING (PPS):**

1. Exaggerated or inappropriate signs and symptoms of spine injury.
2. Suspected clinical depression or high anxiety level.
3. Severe sleep disturbance.
4. Unrealistic expectations about surgical outcome.
5. High level of Marital Distress or unexplained sexual difficulty.
6. History of physical or sexual abuse (with women).
7. Emotional lability or mood swings.
8. Extended period of disability (> 3 months)
9. Any substance abuse or large dosages of narcotics or anxiolytics.
10. Evidence of financial gain or litigation related to spine injury.
11. Poor work attitude (anger toward employer) or vague return to work plan.
12. Previous “unsuccessful” surgeries.

**REFERRAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- 0–1 items Not necessary to refer unless desired by patient  
2–3 items Consider referral for PPS  
4+ items Strongly consider referral for PPS

**CRITICAL POINTS TO EMPHASIZE WITH PPS REFERRAL:**  
(SEE PATIENT INFORMATION HANDOUT BELOW)

- The PPS is a mental health (psychological) evaluation.
- The PPS is a routine procedure, like any other medical test, to assist in developing the most effective treatment plan.
- The PPS is a critical procedure, as important to surgical decision as any medical test.
- The PPS will help determine if the patient is ready for surgery.
- The PPS will help determine those patients who are likely to not report satisfactory improvement following a successful surgery.
- Upon referral, the physician emphasizes that the patient has a legitimate injury and that the pain is real but that emotional factors influence how pain is processed by the body and ultimately experienced.
- The PPS can identify factors that if treated, improve surgical outcome.