Adjudicative Guideline I

Psychological Conditions

The Concern

Certain emotional, mental, and personality conditions can impair judgment, reliability, or trustworthiness. A formal diagnosis of a disorder is not required for there to be a concern under this guideline. A duly qualified mental health professional (e.g., clinical psychologist or psychiatrist) employed by, or acceptable to and approved by the U.S. Government, should be consulted when evaluating potentially disqualifying and mitigating information under this guideline and an opinion, including prognosis, should be sought. No negative inference concerning the standards in this guideline may be raised solely on the basis of mental health counseling.

Disqualifying Conditions

Conditions that could raise a security concern and may be disqualifying include:

(a) behavior that casts doubt on an individual's judgment, stability, reliability, or trustworthiness, not covered under any other guideline and that may indicate an emotional, mental, or personality condition, including, but not limited to, irresponsible, violent, self-harm, suicidal, paranoid, manipulative, impulsive, chronic lying, deceitful, exploitative, or bizarre behaviors;

(b) an opinion by a duly qualified mental health professional that the individual has a condition that may impair judgment, stability, reliability, or trustworthiness;

(c) voluntary or involuntary inpatient hospitalization;

(d) failure to follow a prescribed treatment plan related to a diagnosed psychological/psychiatric condition that may impair judgment, stability, reliability, or trustworthiness, including, but not limited to, failure to take prescribed medication or failure to attend required counseling sessions; and

(e) pathological gambling, the associated behaviors of which may include unsuccessful attempts to stop gambling; gambling for increasingly higher stakes, usually in an attempt to cover losses; concealing gambling losses; borrowing or stealing money to fund gambling or pay gambling debts; and family conflict resulting from gambling.

Mitigating Conditions

Conditions that could mitigate security concerns include:

(a) the identified condition is readily controllable with treatment, and the individual has demonstrated ongoing and consistent compliance with the treatment plan;

(b) the individual has voluntarily entered a counseling or treatment program for a condition that is amenable to treatment, and the individual is currently receiving counseling or treatment with a favorable prognosis by a duly qualified mental health professional;

(c) recent opinion by a duly qualified mental health professional employed by, or acceptable to and approved by, the U.S. Government that an individual's previous condition is under control or in remission, and has a low probability of recurrence or exacerbation;

(d) the past psychological/psychiatric condition was temporary, the situation has been resolved, and the individual no longer shows indications of emotional instability;

(e) there is no indication of a current problem.

Clarifying Guidance – Concern Explained

Below is clarifying guidance for Adjudicative Guideline I: Psychological Conditions, with the concern outlined and explained in three parts.

Concern	Explanation
"Certain emotional, mental, and personality conditions can impair judgment, reliability, or trustworthiness."	Mental health is a security concern because it affects perception, decision-making, and stress management. Certain psychological conditions can impair judgment and reliability, posing risks to security. High stress can worsen these conditions, leading to errors or unpredictable behavior. Additionally, untreated mental health disorders may increase vulnerability to exploitation by adversaries.
"A formal diagnosis of a disorder is not required for there to be a concern under this guideline. A duly qualified mental health professional (e.g., clinical psychologist or psychiatrist) employed by, or acceptable to and approved by the U.S. Government, should be consulted when evaluating potentially disqualifying and mitigating information under this guideline and an opinion, including prognosis, should be sought."	A formal diagnosis is not required for a mental health disorder concern to be considered relevant to security. The focus is on whether an individual's behavior indicates unreliability, poor judgment, or untrustworthiness. These behaviors, regardless of diagnosis, may signal a potential security risk. When such concerns arise, a qualified mental health professional should be consulted.

“No negative inference concerning the standards in this guideline may be raised solely on the basis of mental health counseling.”	The guideline makes clear that seeking mental health counseling does not, by itself, warrant a negative judgment. Getting support is not automatically viewed as a security risk under Guideline I. Individuals are encouraged to seek help without fear it will harm their career or trust eligibility. What matters is whether their behavior poses an unacceptable risk to national security or job performance.