Should I testify to this opinion?

Is there specific research that supports this specific opinion?

No

Do you have clinical experience, then that supports your opinion?

Sort of?

This is a yes or no question—anything else is speculation. You shouldn’t be testifying to an opinion just because it feels like it is correct. So which is it?

No

Don’t do it!

Yes

Proceed, but with clear understanding you’re testifying based on experience alone

I don’t know

Yes


Is there more than a single study supporting your opinion?

No

Proceed cautiously—unless it’s to support an obscure point or to disprove an “always” or “never” theory, you’re on slippery ground

Yes

Is some of the research on this topic from the past decade?

No

Proceed cautiously—some older research is still quite reliable, but if there hasn’t been anything published on the topic in the literature in the last decade, make sure it’s not because the opinion is outdated.

Yes

Does the general body of research on this topic agree with your opinion, too?

No

Time to do the analysis—is the methodology in the research on which you’re relying sound? Have any other publications been critical of the study you are using? Does the field agree it’s reliable? If not, proceed cautiously and be prepared to address this on cross.

Yes

Go ahead and give the opinion!