

Rorschach Interpretation Assistance Program™

Forensic Report

by

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Client Information

Name:	Sample A. Client	Gender:	Male
Client ID:	123-45-6789	Ethnicity:	Caucasian
Birthdate:	11/12/1963	Age (years):	38
Marital Status:	Married	Group:	Diagnostic Group A
Referral Reason:	Forensic evaluation		
Reported Symptoms/Complaints:			
Behavioral:	Blackouts; Destruction of property; Physical assaultiveness		
Interpersonal:	Physical abuse of others; Problems with parents; Recent separation		

Protocol Information

Test Date:	02/11/2002	Description:	Sample Entry of Coded Responses
Test Setting:	Clinic office	Examiner Gender:	Male
Institution Type:	Forensic		

Caveats

The Rorschach Interpretation Assistance Program (RIAP) Version 5 for Windows® provides computer-generated quantitative data and narrative statements that are based on the Comprehensive System. The scoring guidelines and interpretive strategies were primarily derived from the following sources: *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System, Volume 1: Basic Foundations* (4th ed., Exner, 2003); *A Rorschach Workbook for the Comprehensive System* (5th ed., Exner, 2000); *The Rorschach: A Comprehensive System, Volume 3, Assessment of Children and Adolescents* (2nd ed., Exner & Weiner, 1995); and *Principles of Rorschach Interpretation* (2nd ed., Weiner, 2003). The RIAP5 incorporates the new Comprehensive System variables included in *A Rorschach Workbook for the Comprehensive System* (5th ed., Exner, 2001). Additional interpretive information about the Comprehensive System is also presented in *A Primer for Rorschach Interpretation* (Exner, 2000). The quantitative data include a Sequence of Scores, a Structural Summary, a Constellations Table, and a Summary of Response Contents. The narrative statements consist of interpretive hypotheses derived mainly from the structural features of a Rorschach protocol and take only modest account of the thematic imagery contained in individual responses. These computer-based interpretive hypotheses identify various personality characteristics associated with quantitative aspects of Rorschach data and can contribute to forming valid and comprehensive impressions of an individual's psychological functioning. However, the narrative statements produced by the RIAP5 for Windows describe the implications of Rorschach findings among people in general, and they do not necessarily apply in all respects to the functioning of any one person. To ensure a thorough and accurate description of a particular individual's personality characteristics and behavioral tendencies, examiners should consider qualitative as well as quantitative features of the person's Rorschach protocol, and they should also judge the applicability of RIAP5 interpretive hypotheses in light of information from other sources concerning the person's clinical status and past and present life circumstances. This interpretive assistance program is intended for use by or under the supervision of qualified professional persons with training and experience in Rorschach assessment. Utilization of the RIAP5 in the absence of such qualifications may violate ethical guidelines for providing services only within the boundaries of one's competence.

Introduction

Psychologists conducting forensic assessments provide consultation in cases involving criminal issues, personal injury issues, and family law issues. Rorschach findings contribute to opinions and recommendations in cases such as these by identifying personality characteristics that are relevant to their psycholegal aspects. This forensic narrative delineates these personality characteristics and describes the psycholegal implications of the present Rorschach protocol.

The first section of the narrative that follows addresses the validity of the present protocol and any indications of malingering that appear in it. As noted in introducing the RIAP5 narrative report, Rorschach protocols should contain at least 14 responses, without any card rejections, in order to support valid inferences based on the structural data. As for malingering, which consists of a deliberate effort by respondents to appear more disturbed or impaired than is actually the case, Rorschach findings help to identify simulation or exaggeration of symptoms and complaints by two types of inconsistency, external and internal. External inconsistency involves a striking divergence between the degree of disturbance or impairment suggested by the Rorschach data and a much lesser degree of disturbance or impairment evident in a person's behavior and life history. Documentation of external inconsistency requires comparing the Rorschach data with information from other sources, including interviews, behavioral observations, collateral reports, and historical documents. Internal consistency involves striking divergence among certain patterns of Rorschach responses with respect to the degree of disturbance they suggest. Such internal inconsistencies can be recognized by examining the protocol itself, independently of other sources of information.

Accordingly, assessment of possible malingering is limited in this report to internal evidence from Rorschach data. In addition to noting any internal inconsistencies, forensic examiners should always assess external consistency in apparent degree of disturbance or impairment by comparing Rorschach findings with data from other sources. As a further limitation in assessing impression management, Rorschach data provide little assistance in identifying efforts at deception by persons who are attempting to appear more capable and better adjusted than they actually are. Occasionally, records will be "too good to be true," by, for example, including all 13 Popular responses (compared to a range of 5 to 7 among nonpatients). Records that are unusual by virtue of an overabundance of common responses may reflect coaching or careful preparation and, thus, provide a clue to deception (faking good). In other instances, persons attempting to conceal problems and concerns may give brief or guarded records. The forensic implications of guardedness will be considered in this report, but they are not specific to deliberate efforts to deceive. Hence, the scanning of this protocol for indications of impression management is limited to evidence of internal (not external) inconsistency.

Following the section on validity and malingering, this narrative continues with whichever of the three sections is selected by the examiner: a section on criminal case issues that addresses considerations in making recommendations with respect to competency, criminal responsibility, probation, and parole; a section on personal injury case issues that focuses attention on psychic injury manifest in anxiety and posttraumatic stress reactions, depressive reactions, and psychotic reactions; and a section on family law case issues that addresses personality characteristics likely to be associated with relatively effective and relatively ineffective parenting. From a forensic perspective, each of these sections elaborates on various interpretive hypotheses in the RIAP5 narrative report and should be used in conjunction with that report.

Validity & Malingering

This protocol contains a sufficient number of responses to provide an otherwise reliable and interpretively valid record. There are no obvious indications of deliberate efforts to malingering psychotic or mood disorder in the structural data. Although malingering or exaggeration of symptoms cannot be ruled out on this basis, it can at least be said that the Rorschach data do not provide positive evidence that this person is attempting to appear more disturbed than is actually the case.

Criminal Case Issues

Psycholegal issues arise in criminal cases both before and after persons are convicted of an offense. Prior to conviction, questions may be raised concerning the competency of the accused person to proceed to trial or concerning the person's degree of responsibility for the alleged criminal behavior. Following conviction, questions may be raised concerning factors that bear on decisions about whether the person found guilty should be incarcerated or given a suspended sentence (i.e., probation), and about whether an already incarcerated person should be released early (i.e., parole).

A. Issues of Competency

Competency to stand trial is the most common referral question posed to psychologists consulting in criminal cases. Competency in this context consists of having a rational and factual understanding of the legal proceedings a person is facing and being able to participate effectively in his or her own defense. These principle components of competency are commonly translated into several more specific questions, such as the following: (a) does the defendant appreciate the charges against him or her; (b) does the defendant appreciate the range and nature of possible penalties he or she may be facing; (c) does the defendant understand the nature of the adversarial process and the roles of the key people in it; (d) is the defendant able to disclose pertinent facts about the case to his or her attorney; (e) is the defendant capable of testifying relevantly in his or her own behalf; and (f) can the defendant show appropriate behavior in the courtroom.

With respect to personality functioning, these aspects of competence are measured by indices of disordered thinking and impaired reality testing. The following Rorschach findings address these personality characteristics.

This person gives evidence of seriously impaired capacities to think logically and coherently and to perceive people and events realistically. As a consequence of his disordered thinking and poor reality testing, he is at considerable risk for having difficulty grasping fully and accurately the charges and penalties he is facing, for appreciating the nature of the adversarial process, and for testifying relevantly in his own behalf.

B. Issues of Criminal Responsibility

Criminal responsibility is determined by whether an accused person was legally sane at the time of his or her alleged offense. Insanity in legal terms, is defined in some jurisdictions as a cognitive incapacity that prevented the person from recognizing the criminality of his or her actions at the time of the alleged offense, or that prevented the person from appreciating the legal or moral wrongfulness of this conduct (M'Naghten standard). In other jurisdictions, insanity is defined either as a loss of cognitive capacity or as a loss of behavioral control, such that the person was unable to alter or refrain from his or her criminal conduct at the time (American Legal Institute standard).

With respect to personality functioning, the parameters of cognitive incapacity and behavioral dyscontrol are measured by indices of disordered thinking, impaired reality testing, and poor impulse control. Rorschach and other personality test findings are likely to bear directly on issues of competency, which concern a defendant's present-state functioning. When criminal responsibility is at issue, the findings, with respect to thinking, reality testing, and impulse control (if applicable), will have only indirect relevance because legal sanity is defined by the person's state of mind at the time of an alleged offense, not at the time of the present examination. Accordingly, sources of data other than those currently obtained from the Rorschach or other test protocols are critical in drawing conclusions about criminal responsibility. These sources of data include (a) descriptions by defendants of their state of mind immediately prior to and during their alleged offense and (b) observations of defendants' behavior by witnesses to their alleged offense and by the law enforcement officers who arrested them.

Nevertheless, three guidelines are helpful in using presently obtained test data to estimate sanity at some previous point in time. First, the more seriously a person shows disordered thinking, impaired testing, and poor impulse control (if applicable) at the moment, the more likely the person was to have been legally

insane on some past occasion, and vice versa. Second, the more chronic and the more stable a person's disturbance appears to be, the more likely the person was to have been disturbed at some previous point in time. Third, once the question of temporary insanity at the time of the alleged offense has been raised in the case of a person who is now functioning reasonably well, a diathesis-stress perspective can be employed. From this perspective, the more stressful the circumstances were at the time of or leading up to the offense, and the fewer resources for coping with stress the person presently shows, the more likely it is that he or she did experience a temporary decompensation with loss of cognitive capacity or behavioral control. Conversely, the less stressful the situation appeared to be during or shortly before the occurrence of the criminal act, and the more coping capacity is shown by the current test data, the less likely it is that events at the time of the offense precipitated legal insanity in this person.

As previously noted, this person gives evidence of seriously impaired capacities to think logically and coherently and to perceive people and events realistically. These serious cognitive impairments make it highly likely that he was unable to recognize the criminality of his actions or appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct at some previous point in time. The less time that has elapsed between the alleged offense and the present examination, the greater the likelihood of his being unable to recognize the criminality of his actions at the time of the offense.

C. Probation and parole

Decisions concerning whether convicted persons should receive a suspended sentence (i.e., probation) or be released early from prison (i.e., parole) often hinge on three questions about their psychological status, particularly when they have given evidence of a symptomatic or characterological disorder. The first of these questions concerns whether the person is amenable to treatment, motivated to receive it, and likely to benefit from it. The second and third questions concern whether the person is at risk for behaving violently toward others or for engaging in suicidal behavior.

1. Amenability to treatment

Generally speaking, participation and progress in psychological treatment is facilitated by openness to experience, adequate adaptive capacities, and subjectively felt distress. In addition, psychotherapy typically proceeds most effectively with people who are cognitively flexible, emotionally responsive, interpersonally receptive, and personally introspective. Conversely, personality characteristics that interfere with (but do not necessarily prevent) beneficial engagement in psychotherapy include an avoidant or guarded approach to experience, limited adaptive capacities, being self-satisfied and set in one's ways, having difficulty recognizing and expressing one's feelings, being interpersonally aversive or withdrawn, and lacking psychological mindedness. With respect to these personality characteristics, this person's Rorschach responses indicate the following:

There are indications in this person's Rorschach responses that he approaches experience in a reasonably open manner without showing indications of a narrow frame of reference, limited attention to subtle nuances of events, or tendencies to oversimplify situations and seek easy solutions to complex problems. This personality characteristic should facilitate his working effectively in psychotherapy and tolerating detailed explorations of the motivations and implications of his maladaptive behavior.

As previously noted, he shows above average capacities to manage the demands in his life without becoming unduly distraught. This state of freedom from subjectively felt distress commonly characterizes both well-functioning individuals and dysfunctional persons with chronic or characterological disorders. In either case, his prominent tendency to ignore or minimize the implications of events that should capture his attention and cause him concern is likely to foster considerable stability and self-satisfaction on his part, rather than motivation to change. For this reason, he is less likely than most people to seek psychotherapy or to enter into it voluntarily. If he does enter into psychotherapy, he will be less likely than most people to work effectively in treatment sessions, at least initially, and more likely to drop out of the treatment prematurely.

He appears to be a flexible person who is able to view people and events from multiple perspectives and is willing to consider modifying his opinions and beliefs. His relatively open mind is likely to contribute to

effective participation and change in the course of psychotherapy, whether the treatment is focused on gaining insight or achieving cognitive restructuring.

This person gives evidence of at least adequate ability to become aware of his feelings and to express these feelings to others, but he shows a preference for avoiding or withdrawing from emotionally arousing situations. This pattern of emotional responsiveness should contribute to his being capable of conveying and examining his affective experience in the course of therapy, which would facilitate progress in the treatment, but also to his being reluctant to communicate affect, which would constitute an obstacle to progress. Attention to helping him tolerate rather than flee from emotional arousal may be a necessary step in getting him meaningfully engaged in the treatment process.

He appears capable of forming close relationships with other people. His interpersonal receptivity is likely to help him feel comfortable in a treatment relationship. This comfort would, in turn, contribute to good progress in psychotherapy and a beneficial outcome. On the other hand, he does not show much anticipation of collaboration in interpersonal relationships, which may detract at least initially from his confidence in the treatment process and delay his progress.

This person appears to be about as introspective as most people. He should be sufficiently psychologically minded to become effectively involved in psychotherapy and benefit from it.

2. Violence potential

Estimation of violence potential is a complex process that requires careful consideration of an individual's personality characteristics, his or her interpersonal and sociocultural context, and any previous history of violent behavior. Personality characteristics do not by themselves provide sufficient basis for concluding that someone poses a danger to the safety and welfare of others. On the other hand, there is good reason to believe that certain personality characteristics increase the likelihood of violent behavior in persons who have behaved violently in the past and now find themselves in annoying, threatening, confrontational, or combative situations of a kind that have previously provoked aggressive responses in them. These personality characteristics include (a) being a selfish and self-centered person with a callous disregard for the rights and feelings of other people and a sense of entitlement to do and have whatever he or she wants; (b) being a psychologically distant person who is generally mistrustful of others, avoids intimate relationships, and either ignores people or exploits them to his or her own ends; (c) being an angry and action-oriented person inclined to express his or her anger directly; and (d) being an impulsive person with little tolerance for frustration or a psychologically disturbed person with impaired reality testing and poor judgment.

Each of these personality characteristics has correlates in Rorschach variables that assist in identifying their presence. However, neither these characteristics nor the Rorschach variables that identify them are specific to persons who show violent behavior. Many different kinds of people are angry and action-oriented, for example, or lacking in capacities for intimacy or impulse control, and even among people who exhibit all of the previously listed characteristics, many or most may never consider physically assaulting another person. On the other hand, in persons with a history of violent behavior who become exposed to violence-provoking circumstances, each of these personality characteristics increases the violence potential risk. The more numerous these characteristics, and the more pronounced they are, the greater the violence risk they identify. Conversely, personality characteristics directly opposite to those associated with violent behavior toward others can usually be expected to decrease risk potential in this regard, although they do not inevitably do so. This person's Rorschach data contain the following indications of personality characteristics likely to elevate or diminish violence potential:

This person does not give evidence of overvaluing his personal worth or focusing attention selfishly on his own needs at the expense of concern about the needs and welfare of others. He accordingly does not appear to feel entitled to do whatever he wants or to externalize blame and responsibility for any difficulties he encounters. This finding does not rule out the possibility of his behaving violently toward others. However, the lack of evidence for these personality characteristics, which are often associated with violence potential, does diminish this possibility.

As previously noted with respect to his amenability to treatment, this person gives evidence of adequate ability to form close relationships with other people. He appears as likely as most people to be nurturant

and caring in his relationships and likely to seek or anticipate mutually supportive interactions with others. He does not show any unusual tendencies to mistrust people or to avoid intimate relationships. These findings do not rule out the possibility of his behaving violently toward others, but they do diminish the likelihood of his doing so.

This person shows at least an average interest in being around other people and paying attention to what they are saying and doing. This finding does not rule out the possibility of his behaving violently toward others, but it does decrease the likelihood of his doing so.

As noted in discussing this person's criminal responsibility, he shows adequate psychological resources for coping with stress, average or better tolerance for frustration, and few tendencies toward emotional outbursts or impulsive actions. Although these personality characteristics do not rule out the possibility of his behaving violently toward others, they decrease the likelihood of his doing so.

As noted in discussing this person's criminal responsibility, he shows severe impairment of his ability to perceive people and events accurately. For this reason, he is likely to have marked difficulty anticipating the consequences of his actions and recognizing the boundaries of appropriate behavior in various kinds of situations. Considered within the context of the previously mentioned caveats in estimating violence potential on the basis of personality characteristics, his markedly poor reality testing and faulty judgment increase the risk of his behaving violently toward other people.

With respect to the personality characteristics discussed in the introductory statements in this section but not mentioned in the preceding statements concerning violence potential, the structural features of this person's Rorschach responses do not provide clear indications that would point to increased or decreased risk in this regard.

3. Suicide potential

Suicide potential is shown on the Rorschach by the suicide constellation (S-CON), which includes an array of variables that measure cognitive, affective, and attitudinal characteristics associated with the risk of taking one's life.

In this protocol the S-CON is not similar to patterns found in people who have killed themselves within 60 days after being examined and does not identify suicide risk. In considering suicidal potential, however, examiners should keep in mind that the S-CON is useful primarily by virtue of indicating risk of suicidal behavior when it is elevated. A score that is not elevated on this index may diminish the likelihood of people taking their own life, but the possibility of suicidal behavior should never be ruled out on this basis.

Personal Injury Case Issues

Personality assessment becomes relevant in personal injury cases when a question is raised concerning the extent to which a person has become emotionally distressed or incapacitated as a consequence of irresponsible behavior on the part of another person or some entity. As prescribed by tort law, this circumstance exists when the potentially liable person or entity has by omission or commission of certain actions been derelict in a duty and, thereby, has directly caused the aggrieved person to experience psychological injury that would otherwise not have occurred.

Definition of duties and what constitutes failure to discharge them is a legal matter outside the purview of psychology. Current emotional distress or incapacitation can be identified in part with psychological testing, but other data sources must be consulted to determine whether current distress can be attributed to alleged misconduct by the defendant and whether this distress constitutes a decline in functioning from a previously higher level before the misconduct occurred. These other data sources include life history information preceding the alleged misconduct, especially with respect to the aggrieved person's mental health; results of previous testing, if available; and reliable third-party information concerning the person's present daily functioning (which can be especially helpful in identifying possible malingering of psychological disorder as well as other possible sources or causes of presently observed psychological problems).

Emotional distress caused by the irresponsible actions of others most commonly appears in the form of certain specific personality dysfunctions that can be identified in Rorschach responses. Chief among these are indications of anxiety, particularly in the form of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD); depressive affect and cognitions; and psychotic loss of touch with reality. Evidence for the presence of these conditions contributes to documenting that emotional injury has occurred in persons who have experienced or witnessed a physically or a psychologically threatening event. Findings in this Rorschach protocol related to PTSD, depression, and psychosis are the following:

A. PTSD

Posttraumatic stress disorders are commonly conceived as consisting of (a) the re-experiencing of distressing events, (b) efforts to avoid emotions and situations that might precipitate or exacerbate psychological distress, and (c) a state of mental and physical hyperarousal. Several Rorschach variables help to identify personality characteristics associated with these PTSD manifestations. Persons with a stress disorder manifested primarily in reexperiencing and hyperarousal typically produce a flooded Rorschach protocol that is notable for the incursions of anxiety on comfortable and effective functioning. Those with a stress disorder manifested primarily in avoidance typically produce a constricted Rorschach protocol that is notably guarded or evasive. In both instances, the critical Rorschach indices are associated with other disorders as well, and none of them is specific or unique to PTSD. Moreover, the absence of Rorschach indices of reexperiencing, avoidance, and hyperarousal cannot be taken as a sufficient basis to rule out the possibility of a stress disorder. However, in persons known to have experienced or witnessed events that threatened their sense of personal safety and physical well-being, each of these indices increases the likelihood of a stress disorder.

This person shows considerable preoccupation with concerns about bodily functioning or bodily harm and about being hurt or damaged by accidents or aggressive acts. This preoccupation is consistent with, though not necessarily indicative of, the presence of nightmares, flashbacks, and other unpleasant recollections. Accordingly, within the context of the previously noted caveats, this finding increases the likelihood that he has a stress disorder.

This person gives evidence of at least adequate ability to become aware of his feelings, but he shows a preference for avoiding or withdrawing from emotionally arousing situations. Within the context of the previously noted caveats, this avoidant stance with respect to emotional arousal increases the likelihood that he has a stress disorder.

This person's unusual frequency of vague responses suggests a tendency to avoid looking at his experiences in a precise and clearly focused manner. Within the context of the previously noted caveats, this evasiveness in his manner of viewing situations increases the likelihood that he has a stress disorder.

This person does not show usual Rorschach indications of substantial stress overload that would identify hyperarousal. Although this finding does not rule out the possibility of a stress disorder, it decreases its likelihood.

B. Depression

Depression is typically characterized by some combination of (a) dysphoric mood, as manifest in sadness, hopelessness, and an inability to experience pleasure (anhedonia); (b) negative attitudes toward the world, the future, and oneself, as manifest in cynicism, pessimism, low self-esteem, and a sense of helplessness; (c) energy depletion, as manifest in lassitude, disinterest and withdrawal from previously enjoyed pursuits, and psychomotor retardation (e.g., slowed speech and movements, impaired concentration, and limited mental productivity); and (d) disrupted bodily functioning, especially sleep disturbance and loss of appetite.

Many of these identifying characteristics of depression are best assessed from factual data (e.g., amount of weight loss) or behavioral observations (e.g., sagging shoulders and lack of speech inflection). Behavioral observations during a Rorschach examination can be very informative in this regard, as can thematic imagery that suggests depressive concerns. Several manifestations of depression are measured by coded Rorschach variables, particularly those associated with pessimistic thinking, negative self-attitudes, and

constricted or dysphoric affect. Fourteen such variables are included in the Depression Index (DEPI), which shows the following result for this person:

This person's Rorschach responses indicate some susceptibility to episodes of depression involving either dysphoric mood, negative cognitions, or both. Examiners should keep in mind that Rorschach indices of depression are more sensitive to persistent or recurrent depressive states than to acute or reactive depressive episodes. For this reason, careful attention should be paid to other information sources that would clarify whether his dysphoria, negativity, or both preceded or emerged subsequently to the dereliction of duty at issue.

C. Psychosis

Psychosis is best used, in psychological terms, to designate a severe degree of mental disturbance that prevents a person from dealing realistically with the ordinary demands of everyday living. Being psychotically disturbed can be conceptualized accordingly as being out of touch with reality. Psychotic behavior typically reflects errors in judgment that occur when people form inaccurate impressions of themselves or other people, when they misinterpret the meaning of events, or when they fail to anticipate correctly the consequences of their actions. The form quality of Rorschach responses provides a dependable index of whether people are able to perceive people and events realistically and hence whether they are likely to be psychotically impaired. The form quality results for this person indicate the following:

This person shows severe impairment of his ability to perceive people and events realistically. This degree of impairment is highly likely to be associated with poor judgment and psychotic disturbance.

Family Law Case Issues

Personality assessment enters into family law cases primarily in the context of disputed child custody and visitation rights. In determining how a child's time and supervision should be divided between separated or divorced parents, family court jurists frequently make their determinations partly on the basis of information about the personality characteristics of mother, father, child, and other closely involved persons, especially stepparents. Likewise, in deciding whether persons should have their parental rights terminated altogether, courts often seek information about their personality strengths and weaknesses as identified by a psychological examination. There are no infallible guidelines concerning which of two persons would be the better parent for a particular child; nor is there any perfect measure of suitability to parent. However, there are personality characteristics that are likely to enhance or detract from parents' abilities to meet the needs of their children. These characteristics, which can be effectively measured in Rorschach examinations, include (a) presence or absence of serious psychological disturbance, (b) adequacy of coping skills, and (c) degree of interpersonal accessibility.

A. Serious psychological disturbance

Having a diagnosed psychological disorder or receiving treatment from a mental health professional does not prevent a person from being a good parent. Generally speaking, however, being seriously disturbed or psychologically incapacitated is likely to interfere with a person's having sufficient judgment, impulse control, energy, and peace of mind to function effectively and responsibly in a parental capacity. This person's Rorschach protocol shows the following with respect to serious psychological disturbance involving thinking, depression, and anxiety disorder as well as risk of suicide.

This person gives evidence of seriously impaired capacities to think logically and coherently, and to perceive people and events realistically. His disordered thinking and poor reality testing are likely to detract substantially from his ability to exercise good judgment and function in a sensible and organized manner as a parent. In particular, he may be prone to forming mistaken impressions of what children's behaviors signify; to making ill-advised childcare decisions without appreciating the consequences of these decisions; and to acting or expressing himself in inconsistent or confusing ways that are difficult for children to understand. These possibilities should be considered carefully in observing and obtaining reports regarding his parental behavior.

There is some suggestion in this person's Rorschach responses of susceptibility to episodes of depression involving either dysphoric mood, negative cognitions, or both. Such episodes could involve a lack of energy and enthusiasm or a degree of discouragement and despondency that may interfere with his ability to function effectively as a parent. This possibility should be considered carefully in observing and obtaining reports regarding his parental behavior.

He appears to have more than adequate psychological resources for coping comfortably with the demands in his life, and, he is more capable than most people of managing stresses without becoming unduly upset. His above average tolerance for stress should help him remain calmer and less flustered than most people in crisis situations. These personality strengths should facilitate his being able to function effectively as a parent.

In this protocol, the S-CON is not similar to patterns found in people who have killed themselves within 60 days after being examined and does not identify suicide risk. In considering suicidal potential, however, examiners should keep in mind that the S-CON is useful primarily by virtue of indicating suicide risk when it is elevated. A score that is not elevated on this index may diminish the likelihood of people taking their own life, but the possibility of suicidal behavior should never be ruled out on this basis.

B. Coping skills

Good parenting is facilitated by adequate coping skills, including capacities for good judgment, careful decision making, flexible problem solving, and effective stress management. Conversely, limited coping skills, as reflected in poor judgment, careless decision making, an inflexible approach to problems, and inability to manage stress without becoming unduly upset, interfere with effective parenting. In these respects, the Rorschach data lead to the following conclusions:

As noted in considering whether he might be seriously disturbed, this person shows severe impairment of his ability to perceive people and events realistically. This degree of impaired reality testing is highly likely to cloud his judgment on many occasions, preventing him from anticipating the consequences of his actions and appreciating the boundaries of appropriate behavior in a variety of situations. His frequent instances of poor judgment will quite probably interfere with his functioning effectively as a parent. This possibility should be considered carefully in observing and obtaining reports regarding his parental behavior.

There are indications in this person's Rorschach responses that he is at least as careful as most people in making decisions. Before coming to conclusions or committing to a course of action, he typically takes enough time and collects sufficient information to weigh alternative choices and arrive at well thought out decisions. His thoroughness and adequate attention to relevant considerations should facilitate his being able to make appropriate decisions as a parent. He may even be overly careful in making decisions, examining situations more thoroughly than is necessary. At times, this personality characteristic may lead him to feel that he lacks sufficient information on which to base decisions that need to be made. At such times, he may be indecisive and delay coming to conclusions. In his role as a parent, his cautious nature may minimize the likelihood of bad decisions, but may also frustrate or disadvantage children in situations that call for quick decisions.

He appears to be a flexible person who is able to view people and events from multiple perspectives and is willing to consider modifying his opinions and beliefs. His relatively open mind is likely to contribute to his functioning effectively as a parent and responding in an understanding and accepting way to the frequently changing nature, demands, and expectations of children as they grow up.

As noted in considering whether he might be seriously disturbed, this person appears to have more than adequate psychological resources for coping comfortably with the demands in his life and is more capable than most people of managing stresses without becoming unduly upset. As also noted previously, his above average capacities to manage stress effectively help him remain calmer and less flustered than most people in crisis situations and constitute a valuable parental skill.

C. Interpersonal accessibility

The quality of child care that parents can provide is enhanced by interpersonal accessibility, which consists

in large measure of being a person who is interested in people and comfortable being around them, a person who is nurturant and caring in his relationships with others, and a person who is sufficiently empathic to understand what other people are like and recognize their needs and concerns. By the same token, interpersonal disinterest and discomfort are likely to detract from parental effectiveness, as will being a detached, self-absorbed, or insensitive person. The following conclusions in this regard are suggested by the Rorschach findings:

This person shows an above average interest in other people and in paying attention to what they say and do. This interest should contribute considerable to his personal accessibility and, consequently, to his effectiveness as a parent. He may, for example, be quite attentive in responding to children's needs and concerns. As an additional personality asset in this regard, he does not give evidence of feeling uncomfortable in his interactions with other people. Hence he is unlikely to be the kind of person who avoids spending time with children or detaches himself from their activities. These possibilities should be considered in observing and obtaining reports regarding his parental functioning.

There are indications in this person's Rorschach responses that he is capable of forming close and intimate relationships with other people. He does not give evidence of being a self-absorbed person who places a higher priority on his own needs than on the needs of others. His capacities to form attachments and his apparently genuine concern for the welfare of others, as well as himself, suggest that he is both a caring and a nurturant person. These characteristics should contribute considerably to his being a personally accessible and effectively functioning parent.

He appears to have difficulty forming accurate impressions of what other people are thinking and feeling and why they act as they do. His limited empathic capacity is likely, at times, to prevent him from understanding what people are like and recognizing their needs and concerns. Insensitivity to the needs and concerns of his children may detract from his personal accessibility and the effectiveness of his functioning as a parent. This possibility should be considered in observing and obtaining reports regarding his parental behavior.

End of Report