

THE REPORT

Preparing psychological assessment reports for Boards of Ministry and District Committees on Ministry.

Disclaimer

- This presentation is for the purposes of stimulating thought and conversation.
- The material presented reflects neither an official position of the Advisory Committee on Clergy and Candidate Assessment, nor any claims of professional expertise on the part of the presenters.
- Always use your own best professional judgment, in consultation with all available resources.
- Your results may vary.

Agenda

- The Assessment Battery
- The Report
- A Sample

The Assessment Battery

- MMPI2
- 16PF
- Incomplete Sentences Blank
- References
- PDI

MMPI2 Validity

- Candidates tend to respond defensively
 - “Emphasizing the positive, minimizing the negative”
 - “Putting the best foot forward”
 - This is typical of a personnel selection context,
 - But more so here, as morality and righteousness weigh on candidates
- Extremes
 - Positive possibilities (highly defensive, impression management)
 - Shame (anxious about being exposed)
 - Grandiosity (who I am = who I ought to be)
 - Lack of sophistication/awareness and/or repression of negative affect
 - Negative possibilities (inappropriately disclosive, negative sense of self)
 - Hyperscrupulosity
 - Cry for help
 - Poor judgment
 - Excessively trusting

MMPI2 Clergy Scale Stand-outs

- Common
 - Hy2/Pa3: I'm great, you're great
 - Hy1, low Si: I love a party!
 - Sc and subscales: Korean-American
 - O-H: peace-makers (or conflict-avoiders)
 - Sc: religious experiences
- Not uncommon, and worrisome
 - Pd3/Ma3: Teflon, Kevlar (see example later in presentation)
 - S: Practically perfect in every way
 - R, low A & Pt: No worries, no depth
 - Pd2, low RE: &^%\$ the System!
- What would you add?

MMPI2 – Resilience

- The ability to bounce back from adversity,
- Having ego strength
- scores on depression and anxiety scales and subscales
 - RCd (demoralization),
 - RC2 (low positive emotions),
 - RC7 (dysfunctional negative emotions),
 - Es (Ego strength)
- Also: check personal history –
 - adversity in life and how they have dealt with it
 - ability to seek help when they need it
 - self-care

Common High Point Codes

- Quick sample of 215 profiles

Code	Freq	Code	Freq	Code	Freq
13-31	18	13	10	31	8
49-94	15	49	10	94	5
69-96	13	69	9	96	4
34-43	13	34	8	43	5
46-64	12	46	8	64	4

16PF

- Extremes:
 - A 1 or a 10 reflects the 99th percentile on that personality factor
 - Too much of a good thing!
- Key Scales
 - Accommodating/deferential: how does this person lead or deal with conflict?
 - Introverted/reserved/serious: how does this person relate?
 - Unrestrained/lively/socially bold/tolerates disorder: are there problems with judgment?
 - Concrete: is there enough intellectual horsepower?
 - Reactive/apprehensive/tense: how fragile?
 - Vigilant/private: how paranoid? (Congregation splitter?)
 - Rule-following/perfectionistic: how rigid? (Interpersonal alienator?)

16PF Clergy Scale Standouts

- Extremely low Anxiety, extremely high Self-Esteem
 - lack of self-awareness and a repression of negative affect

16 PF – Emotional Intelligence

- Awareness of one's own and other's emotions
- Having mature and effective ways to deal with feelings, both internally and interpersonally
 - Factor O: Self-Assured
 - Factor C: Emotionally Stable
 - Factor I: Emotionally Sensitive
 - Q-4: Relaxed
- From the “Social Skills” section:
 - Emotional Expressivity
 - Emotional Sensitivity
 - Emotional Control
 - Empathy

Combined MMPI2 and I6PF

- MMPI Hy2 with 16PF Social Boldness, Lively, Extroverted
 - Good charisma, but what about boundaries and self-care?

Vocational Information: Social

- High

- Of the six General Occupational Themes, the applicant scored highest in the Social theme. The Social theme reflects a preference for associating with other people, and with nurturing, caring relationships; such an individual enjoys helping and instructing. This theme is most closely associated with satisfaction in parish ministry.

- Low

- The Social theme (helping, instructing), which is most closely associated with vocational satisfaction in parish ministry and teaching, comes in third/fourth/fifth/sixth out of six general occupational themes. This suggests that the applicant would find limited satisfaction in extensive interactions with others, particularly as those activities focused on nurture and care-giving.

Incomplete Sentence Blank

- “Greatest weakness”: build feedback around this if possible
- Themes
 - People I consider my superiors *are few and far between.*
 - When I see the boss coming *So what. I work the same if he sees me or not.*
 - My feeling about married life is *there is nothing that I do better.*
 - Criminals *need to be caught and punished/need compassion*
- Pairs
 - I think most boys *love to get dirty.*
 - I think most girls *need a loving father figure in their life.*
- Level of self-disclosure/authenticity
 - Goldilocks zone – neither defensive nor overdisclosive
- Information
 - My greatest weakness is *looking at good-looking women.* (3rd marriage)

ISB #2 (White Male, 40s)

- Most boys *like to have fun*
- Most girls *are very kind*
- My mother *did everything for me*
- My family *treats me like a king*
- A real friend *will do many things for you*
- A perfect woman *would understand me*
- The people I like best *are a lot like me*
- When someone attractive flirts with me *I don't mind*

ISB #3 (Korean-American Female, 30s)

- I am afraid of *being denied*.
- If people work for me *I would be very thankful*.
- My family treats me like *I am a brave woman*.
- What I like least about men *is that they have little empathy*.

Reference Forms

- “Average” is unusual/worrisome
- Look for confirmation of clinical information
- Look for information about the applicant:
 - Health concerns
 - Workaholism
 - Lack of openness to other points of view
 - Professional role issues: boundaries, social appropriateness
 - Recent divorce
 - Family conflicts
 - History of alcoholism, financial difficulties, job problems, etc.

PDI

- Immigration status
 - Any psychological assessment must make a wide variety of assumptions about the individual's perceptions, assumptions, language, values, identity, and so on. When undertaking to provide a psychological assessment of someone from another country or culture, caution is important, as well as an openness to considering alternate explanations for the test results. This applicant reports having been born in _____, and having spent _____ developmentally critical years there prior to her arrival in the United States. Clergy Assessment Services is not in a position to provide expertise specific to individuals from the _____ culture. With that in mind, we offer a more cautious assessment report, and strongly suggest that the reader keep in mind the limitations of assessment across cultures, ethnicities, and languages.

Use the Behavioral Health Guidelines!

- If the PDI information meets criteria, cut-and-paste or give the link.
- Common:
 - Multiple marriages and/or recent divorces
 - Morbid obesity
 - Alcohol and other drugs
- Let the BHG take the heat!

PDI

- Height & weight: consider Behavioral Health Guidelines
 - Information provided by the applicant suggests that he may well be morbidly obese. The committee is encouraged to review the section labeled “Category: Physical Health” on page 2 of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry’s document, “Behavioral Health Guidelines”, which is available online (go to gbhem.org, select “Networking”, then “Boards of Ordained Ministry” then find the section labeled “Behavioral Health Guidelines”, then click on “Download PDF”). The Behavioral Health Guidelines offer exploratory questions as well as recommendations with regard to physical health concerns, to help ensure that applicants are being responsible in managing their health issues.
 - Again, the focus of the Guidelines is on ascertaining that the applicant is behaving responsibly with regard to his health and in relationship to compliance with medical treatment. If there is concern about responsibility and compliance, the committee might consider inviting the applicant – prior to moving on in the next step toward ministry – to work with medical professionals to develop and follow a program of better physical health as a way of demonstrating the consistency and responsibility that would also serve him well in ministry.

PDI

- Ethnic Background

- The applicant indicates that he is African-American. It is important to note that most psychological instruments were developed in European-American contexts. Extensive efforts have been made to ensure that these instruments are also accurate and appropriate for persons of other races, cultures, and ethnicities. At the same time, in reading this report it is important to keep in mind that such assessments cannot be perfectly racially/ethnically/culturally fair: it is possible that there could be inadvertent bias.

PDI

- Prior divorces
 - The applicant indicates that he has been married four times, and is currently divorced. Having been married more than twice is a “critical behavior” as outlined in the DOM's “Behavioral Health Guidelines.” The Committee is invited to review the appropriate section, “Divorce or Infidelity”, on page 6. It provides exploratory questions and offers recommendations. (The “Behavioral Health Guidelines are available online: go to www.gbhem.org, select “Boards of Ordained Ministry” from the list on the left, and then find the section labeled “Behavioral Health Guidelines”).

PDI

- Strengths & weaknesses
 - Looking for the “Goldilocks zone”: disclosive as appropriate to personnel selection
 - Looking for authenticity: is this a real person?

The Report

Approach to the Report

- What do BOMs and DCOMs want to know?
- What do you need to tell them?
 - Two bottom lines:
 - Overall mental health
 - Goodness of fit with traits associated with effective ministry *appropriate to the context of testing*
 - Candidacy: potential
 - Probation: fitness
 - Ordination: readiness
 - Deacon track: ?? (Risk management? Fitness for stated vocational direction?)
- Are you writing for the Committee Liaison (who may have some training and sophistication) or for the committee as a whole?
 - Assume the committee is comprised of individuals with graduate degrees as well as individuals who have not completed high school.

What BOMs & DCOMS want...

- With an obviously strong candidate
 - Not much – they can tell the candidate is a keeper
- With a moderately strong candidate
 - Shaping (how might they best employ this individual)
- With a moderately weak candidate
 - What kinds of problems are they going to run into with this candidate, and how serious might they be?
 - “If there are deal-breaker issues, please make them unmistakable.”
- With an obviously weak candidate
 - Not much – mainly cover for the decision they’ve already made.

What BOMs & DCOMS want...

- Emotional Intelligence

When the report is most helpful

- The “dark side” candidate
 - A candidate whom the BOM or DCOM can tell has many obvious strengths, but also subtle or hard-to-define personality issues
 - They want to know
 - What is really going on with the candidate
 - How much of a downside they’re looking at
 - What the risks are
 - What remediation might be available
- The likable but inadequate candidate
 - Examples: low IQ, high somatization, general immaturity
 - DOMs and DCOMs often want to hope for the best
 - The report helps the group face pragmatic realities

Setting up the Report

- Give explanations about your explanations
 - For the instruments
 - For the sections

Give explanations about your explanations

- Examples:
 - Mike's prefaces to elements of the assessment battery:
 - The Personality Research form is an excellent personality test with solid reliability and validity. Further, unlike the MMPI-2 which is based upon psychopathology, the PRF is based upon normal mental functioning.
 - The 16 PF is a widely used and well respected personality test that has recently been added to the national battery. Like the PRF, it too, is based upon normal mental functioning, and not psychopathology.
 - These letters [of recommendation] provide valuable information as well as insight as to how the applicant is experienced by third parties.

Give explanations about your explanations

- My prefaces to sections:
 - *Validity*: In completing the materials, did the applicant present his strengths and weaknesses without undue exaggeration or minimization? An applicant's emphasis on strengths, though technically considered defensive, is expected and appropriate in the context of applications for careers and positions.
 - *Leadership*: Effective leadership is associated with emotional self-sufficiency and independence; good social skills and social judgment; constructive social attitudes, steadiness, and a capacity for self-restraint. These traits enable the individual to elicit the confidence and social approval of others, which in turn may enable them to ascend to positions of leadership and responsibility within a group. More specifically, strong relationship needs, extroversion, idealism, and high energy are often seen as desirable traits for effective clergy leadership. This combination suggests an individual who would draw others to him/her.
 - *Self-Image*: A trait generally seen as highly desirable and clergy candidates is *authenticity*. This section explores a key element in authenticity: does the applicant see him/herself as others see him/her?

Give explanations about your explanations

- *Vocational Interests:* Will the applicant find vocational satisfaction in the work of ministry?
- *Evaluations:* As part of the assessment, the applicant was asked to select 4-6 individuals to a) provide 29 ratings regarding his abilities, personal characteristics, and potential for effective ministry, and b) to comment on strengths, weaknesses, communication, and concerns. This allows for “real-world” input to supplement the psychological profile. Overall, raters for clergy candidates tend to emphasize the applicant’s positive attributes; “average” ratings are unusual.

Elements of the Report

- Validity
- General Content
- Overall Profile
- Summary

Elements of the Report: General

- Work orientation (initiative, individual/team, role comfort)
- Relationships (introverted/extroverted, trust)
- Resilience (everyday stress, relational injury)
- Responsibility (Goldilocks zone: not too much or too little)
- Authority (deferential/rebellious, view of self as authority)
- Emotional Sensitivity (compassion, thick/thin skinned, imperturbability)
- Empathy (including comfort with “negative” emotions)
- Leadership (assertiveness, confidence)
- [Nancy – these can be enhanced or added to. I’m looking at: what are the key psychological factors BOMs care about?]

Elements of the Report: Summary

- Strengths (repeat through report)
 - Show balance: what looks good as well as what raises concerns
 - Show respect: this is a valued candidate
 - Suggest contexts/tasks in which the candidate might excel
- Areas of concern (pull together primary material)
 - If there's going to be trouble, what kind of trouble will there be?
 - Suggest areas of focus for mentoring and supervision
- Two bottom lines
 - From a psychological perspective, is the candidate adequately healthy to withstand the pressures of the job?
 - How does the candidate's profile compare to the profile of effective ministry?
 - Whatever that is...

Looking at a Sample Profile

A “cumulative” approach – 16PF

- This candidate is extremely concrete in his approach to reasoning (B).
- This candidate is an extremely concrete individual who is unusually warm (A), lively (F), sensitive (I).
- This candidate is an extremely concrete individual who is unusually warm, lively, sensitive, and grounded (M).
- This candidate is an extremely concrete individual who is unusually warm, lively, sensitive, and grounded, and who has the social presence and pragmatism that characterize effective leaders (Last section).

A “cumulative” approach – MMPI2

- This candidate is extroverted (SI, INTR).
- This candidate is extroverted and sees family as an unpleasant, noxious environment; he is likely indifferent and perhaps has severed ties; he is likely to be reluctant to form new attachments (FAM2).
- This candidate is an extroverted person who sees family as an unpleasant, noxious environment, and is a glib, smooth operator (Pd2).
- This candidate is an extroverted person who sees family as an unpleasant, noxious environment, and is a glib, smooth operator who generally wants his own way (Ma4); he is rather socially composed and tends to be indifferent to the feelings of others (Ma3).

A “cumulative” approach - ISB

- Negative comments re parents/family (1,16,17,19,20,27,33,37)
 - My father often *drank*.
 - I feel that my father seldom *showed love*.
 - I feel that my mother seldom *show* [sic] *me love*.
 - My family treats me like *I am not a part*.
- Theme of mistreatment (12, 15)
 - The women over me *have given me little support*
- Theme of sacrifice and service (22, 23)
 - My idea of the perfect man *make* [sic] *sacrifices for family*.
- Greatest weakness: “giving too much”
- Summary: This candidate reports mistreatment from parents, is sensitive to mistreatment, values sacrifice and service, and sees himself as “giving too much.”
- [Sic]: supports 16PF concrete

Pulling it together

- 16FP: This candidate is an extremely concrete individual who is unusually warm, lively, sensitive, and grounded, and who has the social presence and pragmatism that characterize effective leaders.
- MMPI2: This candidate is an extroverted person who sees family as an unpleasant, noxious environment, and is a glib, smooth operator who generally wants his own way; he is rather socially composed and tends to be indifferent to the feelings of others.
- ISB: This candidate reports mistreatment from parents, is sensitive to mistreatment, values sacrifice and service, and sees himself as “giving too much.”

A stab at synthesis

- This is a candidate with limited cognitive resources who does quite well, by his own standards, in relationships: he is outgoing, energetic, caring, and attentive to others. He would be unflappable, practical and well-intentioned.
- The candidate's relational standards seem likely to be superficial and immature. He does not appear to have a capacity for age-appropriate depth and intimacy. In parallel, his self-awareness seems quite limited. He would intend to be caring and helpful – even sacrificial – but his lack of awareness would limit his ability to relate to others helpfully and appropriately. He would tend to deflect (rather than give consideration to) input about these limitations.
- The candidate may find it helpful to explore Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) resources.
- A question for the clinical interview: Does he have the intellectual and relational resources for effective professional ministry?

Now the big questions...

- Strengths:
- Areas of concern:

- Psychological health
- Potential/fitness/readiness for ministry