Assessing Identity in Children and Adolescents
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Assessing Identity in Children and Adolescents

Incidence Adults

Estimates range as high as 10 to 11% of the general population (Weissman 1993) and 50% of those receiving psychotherapeutic treatment (Merikangas and Weissman 1986) -- suffer from impairments attributable to one or more personality disorders.
Incidence Youth

- Longitudinally evaluated 733 youngsters from randomly selected families
- Age range from 9 - 19 years
- 31.2% met criteria for a moderate personality disorder
- 17.2% were at a severe level

D. Bernstein et al. 1993
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Assessing Descriptive Characteristics: Developmental History
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Borderline Personality Disorder

- Argues a lot (3)
- Complains of loneliness (12)
- Cruelty, bullying, or meanness to others (16)
- Deliberately harms self or attempts suicide (18)
- Destroys his or her own things
- Feels or complains that no one loves him or her

- Impulsive or acts without thinking (41)
- Physically attacks other people (57)
- Screams a lot (68)
- Sudden changes in mood or feelings (87)
- Talks about killing self (91)
- Temper tantrums or hot temper (95)
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NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER

- Bragging and boasting (7)
- Disobedient at home (22)
- Disobedient at school (23)

- Feels he or she has to be perfect (32)
- Showing off or clowning (74)
Antisocial Personality Disorder

- Cruel to animals (15)
- Cruelty, bullying, or meanness to others (16)
- Destroys things belonging to his or her family or others (21)
- Doesn’t seem to feel guilty after misbehaving (26)
- Gets in many fights (37)
- Impulsive or acts without thinking (41)

- Lying or cheating (43)
- Runs away from home (67)
- Sets fires (72)
- Steals at home (81)
- Steals outside the home (82)
- Threatens people (97)
- Truancy, skips school (101)
- Vandalism (106)
Histrionic Personality Disorders

- Demands a lot of attention (19)
- Interaction with others is often characterized by inappropriate sexually seductive or provocative behavior (73)
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Paranoid Personality Disorder

- Easily jealous (27)
- Feels others are out to get him or her (34)
- Secretive, keeps things to himself or herself (69)
- Suspicious (89)
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Schizoid Personality Disorder

- Would rather be alone than with others (22)
- Doesn’t get along with other kids (25)
- Strange behaviors (84)

- Withdrawn, doesn’t get involved with others (111)
- Strange ideas (85)
Avoidant Personality Disorder

- Fears he or she might think or do something bad (31)
- Self-conscious or easily embarrassed (71)
- Shy or timid (75)
General Personality Disorder Traits

- Feels worthless or inferior (35)
- Gets hurt a lot, accident prone (36)
- Gets teased a lot (38)
- Hangs around with others who get in trouble (39)
- Nervous, high strung, or tense (45)
- Not liked by other kids (48)
- Too fearful or anxious (50)
- Poorly coordinated or clumsy (62)
- Prefers being with older kids (63)
- Prefers being with younger kids (64)
- Sulks a lot (88)
- Talks too much (93)
- Teases lot (94)
- Thinks about sex too much (96)
- Worries (112)
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Assessing Structural Characteristics

Identity
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Components of Identity
Akhtar and Samuel (1996)

- A realistic body image
- Subjective self-sameness
- Consistent attitudes and behaviors
- Temporal continuity
- Authenticity
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Superego or conscience
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Identity Crisis and Identity Diffusion
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The Personality Assessment Interview (PAI)


Demonstrates personality function in a focused way in terms of these variables: self- and object- representations, cognition, affects, reflective capacity or observing ego, and empathy with the interviewer.
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Neurotic Personality Organization

- Cognition
- Affect
- Self-Representation
- Object-Representation
- Ego- or Self-Reflectiveness
- Empathy

DSM IV:
- Avoidant PD
- Dependent PD

Non DSM IV:
- Obsessive Compulsive PD
- Hysterical PD
- Passive-Aggressive PD
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Borderline Personality Organization

- Cognition
- Affect
- Self-Representation
- Object-Representation
- Ego- or Self-Reflectiveness
- Empathy

DSM IV:
- Histrionic PD
- Borderline PD
- Narcissistic PD
- Antisocial PD
- Schizoid PD
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Assessing Defense Mechanisms
Cluster One

- Adaptation
- Anticipation
- Problem-Solving
- Suppression
- Sublimation

- Altruism
- Affiliation
- Identification
- Humor
Cluster Two

- Intellectualization
- Rationalization
- Isolation
- Doing and Undoing
- Negation
- Reaction-Formation
- Repression

- Projection
- Introjection
- Regression
- Somatization
- Turning Aggression Against the Self
- Avoidance
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Cluster Three

- Denial
- Splitting
- Projective Identification
- Primitive Idealization
- Primitive Devaluation
- Omnipotent Control
- Identification with the Aggressor
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Cluster Four

- Dedifferentiation
- Constriction
- De-animation
- Dispersal
- Dismantling

- Autistic Encapsulation
- Fusion
- Freezing
- Hypochondriasis
- Reversal of Affect

P. F. Kernberg
(1994)
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Assessing Structural Characteristics:
Psychological Testing
This variable is extraordinarily stable. For example, repeated testing finds the same form level (Exner 1995). Thus low form level by an elementary school-age child indicates impaired reality testing, and the perceptual inaccuracy or vagueness of his response should not be attributed merely to his being a child. This finding is consistent with the finding that loose associations do not occur in normal children over 7 years of age.
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Assessing Structural Characteristics

Identity
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ASSESSING IDENTITY IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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