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PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Consumer: CIOFFI, Tony

Tests Administered:

Test Date: March 12, 1996

WAIS-R

WRAT-R

Counselor: Rita Gordon
Warren BVR

WMS-R

Rorschach

HISTORY:

Tony Cioffi is a 32 year old, divorced male with three children and an eleventh grade education. He suffers from an industrial injury to his left knee, and he has a suspected learning disorder. Indeed, he attended DH classes before dropping out of Niles McKinley High School, and he continues to report having significant academic deficits. He explains that he was primarily raised in foster homes and that nobody seemed to take the time to help him academically. His sister was sent to a special school, and she can now read, and Tony hopes that BVR can now help him the same way. His three sons are all in special education classes due to similar problems. Tony feels that he needs "one on one" help with his academics, which he sees as his primary hurdle in finding a good career.

Reportedly, Tony has an extremely attenuated work history. He was employed as a laborer for two months in 1981, at which time he sustained traumatic knee injuries. He has had multiple corrective surgeries, but he still cannot stand for any length of time without his leg burning or going numb. He has not been gainfully employed since then, and he is subsisting on SSI benefits. Without a "good education" he feels that he cannot get a good job, in part, because of his physical limitations.

Psychological testing was therefore requested to explore and document the presence of a learning disorder, Tony's learning style, and his prospects for vocational rehabilitation. There are no reports of previous testing.

BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATIONS:

Tony is a tall and slender Caucasian male with brown hair, blue eyes, and a mustache. He arrived early for his appointment casually attired in jeans, a blue sweatshirt, dark glasses, and a black vinyl jacket that he donned throughout. He proved to be alert and well-oriented, and restless. He addressed the examiner formally as "Sir," and he never quite relaxed. He seemed tense, intense, and potentially catastrophically reactive. Fortunately, however, testing progressed uneventfully.

TEST RESULTS:

On the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised, Tony earned a Verbal IQ of 76, a Performance IQ of 77, and a Full Scale IQ of 75, which placed him in the overall Borderline range. Superficially, Tony impressed as being brighter than this, although even after age-correction most areas of tested functioning were below average. Relative strengths were noted in his visual alertness (Picture Completion) and visual-motor speed (Digit Symbol). Otherwise, however, he presented a dearth of general knowledge (Information), weak attentional and auditory memory abilities (Digit Span), and below average academic potential (e.g. Vocabulary/Arithmetic). His conceptual resources were limited (Similarities), and, qualitatively, his ideation appeared to be concrete. Yet even when language was circumvented, and he was required to do non-verbal problem-solving he faltered. Indeed, he displayed below average spatial-mechanical aptitudes (Block Design/Object Assembly), and he is deficient in terms of his abilities to "read" social events/or engage in sequential reasoning (Picture Arrangement). The latter relates to such things as planning, forethought, anticipation, and seeing logical cause-effect relationships. Indeed, Tony's executive abilities seemed to be quite weak, and he seemed to rely more on reflexive and physical reactions to problem-solve. Since his sister and all of his children also have learning difficulties, Tony's cognitive underdevelopment might have a familial or genetic basis.

Information	4 (4)	Picture Completion	9 (9)
Digit Span	6 (6)	Picture Arrangement	5 (6)
Vocabulary	5 (5)	Block Design	6 (6)
Arithmetic	7 (7)	Object Assembly	4 (4)
Comprehension	6 (6)	Digit Symbol	8 (8)
Similarities	7 (7)		

Tony's basic academic skills were also explored with the Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised. He generated

an overall Education Quotient of 55, which is in the Mentally Retarded range and significantly (more than one Standard Deviation) below IQ expectation. He is only nominally literate, lacking good phonic skills and relying principally on a sight or word recognition vocabulary. His arithmetic skills are somewhat better, but even these are rudimentary and essentially limited to simple addition and subtraction. Division, fractions, decimals, and measurement conversions are apparently beyond him. Unfortunately, these results do not bode well for remediation, and it is quite possible that even with intensive and protracted individualized instruction Tony might not be able to develop skill levels sufficient to pass a GED exam.

Reading	47	Standard Scale	.04%	ile	Below 3rd Grade Level
Spelling	56	Standard Scale	.4	%ile	Below 3rd Grade Level
Arithmetic	63	Standard Scale	1	%ile	4E Grade Level

In an effort to explore possible learning styles, Tony was also administered the Wechsler Memory Scale-Revised. He developed a General Memory Quotient of 84, which is in the Low Average range and higher than IQ expectation. Indeed, these results contraindicate the presence of mental retardation, and they tend to implicate the presence of a Learning Disability instead. Tony's illiteracy is not solely due to an absence of intellectual ability. Indeed, his memory is relatively good, and he appears to be equally adept at visual and auditory learning channels. In all probability, however, he will need multi-channel instruction that incorporates tactual/or kinesthetic cueing as well.

Verbal Memory Quotient	84
Visual Memory Quotient	88

Finally, Tony's personal adjustment was explored with the Rorschach, which revealed him to be a man of modest basic intelligence who is suffering from chronic organic brain syndrome of unknown origin. The organicity probably arose perinatally, but in any event it has served to dampen and distort Tony's learning abilities and render him developmentally disabled. Moreover, it seems to have affected Tony's emotional and behavioral controls, and it is hypothesized that Tony also suffers from an attention deficit disorder as a consequence.

Indeed, Tony is an intense, nervous, flighty, and distractable person who is low in stress or frustration tolerance, impatient, and prone to catastrophic reactivity.

He is vigilant for signs of criticism or rejection, failure-avoiding rather than success-striving, and quite defensive in his dealings with others. He is insecure, harboring strong feelings of insufficiency or inadequacy, and potentially quite unstable. Alcohol or substance abuse is possible as a form of self-medication for stress and as a social lubrication, and there seems to be a lot of unresolved nurture issues, bonding difficulties, and frustrated dependency that might stem from an impoverished family background during the formative years. Some type of acting-out behavior seems likely, although this probably stems more from unhappiness and nagging frustration than from any kind of meanness. Tony also appears to be prone to somatization of anxiety and stress, and it is quite possible that he unwittingly dramatizes his aches, pains, and injuries for attention or other forms of secondary gain. He is a rather insightful, immature, dependent, and yet demanding person whose superficial cooperativeness is transient and only thinly masking tendencies toward intractability.

VOCATIONAL PROJECTIONS:

Tony has yet to develop a clear sense of who or what he is, and he has no idea what kind of career direction to take. He is not particularly goal-oriented or aspiring, although he has decent energy and he will exert effort on his own behalf when it so moves him. However, his motivation will tend to run in spurts, he is apt to shift direction, and he is so low in frustration or self-discipline that he tends to actually accomplish little despite his expenditure of effort. He is a concrete person who deals with the here-and-now while having difficulty maintaining focus, interest, and effort over the long haul.

Vocational planning will need to focus on relatively short-term goals, but even then it is possible that Tony is not convinced that he is able to work. He might also not know how to work, and he perhaps harbors attitudes of entitlement or expectations that he should receive maximal rewards for minimal efforts. He will tend to want immediate if not easy results, and he will be prone to taking things quite personally. He is particularly unsettled in his feelings of manliness, and yet he over-compensates for this with displays of masculine bravado. He can be a touchy, haughty, and cavalier person who is difficult to realistically counsel and whose ego needs frequent propping up.

Tony's employment history consists of only a few weeks of manual labor, and one has to wonder about his work ethic at this juncture. He tends to spend most of his time now socializing with friends, and he might prefer this lifestyle to the grind of a regular work schedule. Moreover, he seems to possess few marketable skills, and while his vocational ambit is seriously constricted due to his physical and intellectual limitations his ego might also tend to get in the way and cause him to reject jobs because they do not interest him or carry enough prestige. Placement will tend to be very difficult with Tony, and he appears prone to developing an erratic work record entailing low skill jobs.

Nevertheless, Tony is probably very serious about learning to read and generally improve his academic skill levels. Unfortunately, his prospects for significant gains are not very good, and even then his employability might not be greatly enhanced. Remedial education should nevertheless be attempted. Meanwhile, a Work Evaluation should be conducted to round out his functional picture and prospects for sedentary albeit manual work activities.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Tony Cioffi is a 32 year old, divorced male with three children, an eleventh grade special education, and an extremely attenuated work record. He is multiple disabled by a traumatic knee injury and by a developmental learning disability. Nevertheless, at this juncture, he has turned to BVR for assistance in learning how to read; getting a job seems to be only a distant or vague consideration that in Tony's mind hinges exclusively on his academic development.

Psychological testing revealed Tony to be a man of Borderline demonstrated intelligence, although his memory functions are in the Low Average range and he is fundamentally brighter than he can show. Indeed, he is suffering from a chronic organic brain syndrome that has rendered him developmentally disabled and only nominally literate. Moreover, he evidences at least a mild attention deficit disorder and potential for behavioral problems as well. His prospects for significant gains in academic prowess are poor to guarded, but efforts should be made in that direction anyway. Meanwhile, a Work Evaluation is recommended to identify possible "hands on" careers, although his prognosis for vocational rehabilitation is also poor to guarded. He will need selective job placement services and possibly OJT considerations if he ever gets to that point.

