



### I4 Use of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory®-2 (MMPI®-2) and Rorschach Test in Forensic Psychological and Psychiatric Evaluations Regarding Parenting in the Context of Marital Conflicts

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**Learning Overview:** The goal of this presentation is to reinforce the importance of correctly using reliable tests to make accurate assessments for couples in conflict who undergo evaluations in the forensic field by the courts.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting the importance of correctly using reliable tests to make accurate assessments of couples in conflict who undergo evaluations in the forensic field by the courts.

Evaluation of parenting skills and competencies is an interdisciplinary activity. It involves various subjects, including adults, minors, and families, in addition to the contexts to which they belong. These assessments appear to be even more decisive and important when unresolved conflicts and tensions occur between couples who have children. Such situations require the intervention of judicial authorities, keeping in mind the best interests of the children involved. Given the sensitivity and importance of these assessments, which also assume a prospective profile for the decisions that judges make, it is essential that psychologists and psychiatrists, appointed by magistrates and lawyers, carry out such evaluations by applying scientific protocols recognized by the scientific communities at national and international levels.

The MMPI®-2 and Rorschach tests are the most widely used psychodiagnostic tools in the world as personality assessment instruments and guarantee great scientific reliability; they are instruments that are widely used in many studies all over the world.

The hypothesis of this study is that couples in highly turbulent relationships who involve their children in their conflicts create many psychological problems for them. The higher the level of conflict, the higher the scores on psychodiagnostic indices of the two tests should be.

**Methods:** Fifty-nine couples who had come to the attention of ordinary courts and tribunals for minors were evaluated in Italy: 118 people in total. All Rorschach and MMPI®-2 tests that were administered to both members of these couples were examined. During the appraisals, two different tests were used—the MMPI®-2 and the Rorschach—to better guarantee higher scientific objectivity measurements by crossing the psychodiagnostic data of two different instruments, which are equally valid in personality assessment.

**Results:** Parental suitability: (1) in 8% of cases, parental suitability was evaluated as fully present both in the father and the mother; (2) in 11% of cases, parental suitability was considered fully present in the mother, and deficient but recoverable in the father; (3) in 5% of cases, parental suitability was fully present in the father, and deficient but recoverable in the mother; (4) in 2% of cases, parental suitability was a recoverable deficit in the mother, but in contrast, not recoverable in the father; (5) in 7% of cases of parental suitability, there was a recoverable deficit in the father, but not recoverable in the mother; (6) in 50% of cases, parental fitness was assessed as deficient but recoverable for both the mother and father; (7) in 3% of the sample, mothers were assessed as deficient but recoverable, but not evaluative in the father (i.e., the inability to evaluate derives from the subject being removed from the administration of psychodiagnostic tests, which were experienced as persecutory); and (8) in 14% of cases, at the outcome of the appraisals, the judges evaluated the situation of conflict and violence in the family, in which the children were also involved, to be so serious as to suspend parental authority of both parents and to award custody of the children to other people or to place them in communities for minors.

The initial hypothesis of this study was confirmed. Most conflicted couples had high scores on the MMPI®-2 test relative to the clinical scales of social/relational isolation, of suspiciousness, the scales that signal manipulative behavior. Regarding the Rorschach test, on the other hand, the psychodiagnostic indices most often represented in the most highly conflicted couples concerned the area of psychosocial adaptation, those of relational problems, and those of difficulties in controlling emotions and impulses.

**Conclusion:** If correctly used, the MMPI®-2 and Rorschach tests are confirmed as excellent tools for conducting measurements and evaluations in relation to expert activities concerning the evaluation of competence and parenting skills.

#### Marital Conflicts, Tests, Courts