

# Week 10

## The MMPI-A

### II. Interpretation of the MMPI-A

A. Remember, elevations on the scales are in comparison to other adolescents, not other people in general

- 1) so, kids with elevations are experiencing more rebelliousness, for example, than a typical adolescent (who, it could be argued experiences more rebelliousness than a typical adult)

B. Validity Scales

- 1) use the information in the MMPI-2

C. Basic Scales

1) **Scale 1: Hypochondriasis (Hs)**

- a. 32 items (compared to 33 on MMPI-2)
  1. one item dropped because of objectional content
- b. **items identify respondents with a history of symptomatology characteristic of hypochondriasis**
- c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. complain of many different physical ailments
  2. are unlikely to be doing well in school
  3. if female, are likely to report more family problems, including parental disagreements and financial problems
  4. see also the MMPI-2 interpretation for other indicators of high (and also low) scores
- d. unusual for adolescent boys in clinical settings to have an elevated Hs Score
- e. somewhat unusual for adolescent girls in clinical settings, too

2) **Scale 2: Depression (D)**

- a. 57 items (compared to 60 on the MMPI-2)
  1. 3 items dropped because of objectional content
- b. **index of a general dissatisfaction with one's life, including feelings of discouragement, hopelessness, and low morale**
- c. Harris Lingoes Scales:
  1. subjective depression
  2. psychomotor retardation
  3. physical malfunctioning
  4. mental dullness
  5. brooding
  6. (same as MMPI-2)
- d. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. if inpatient, are rated by clinicians as being motivated to engage in therapy and relatively open to discussing their feelings and

attitudes

2. if girls, are unlikely to be doing well in school and are more likely to report a worsening of their parents arguments
3. if girls, are less likely to engage in acting-out behaviors, including sexual promiscuity
4. if girls, are likely to be socially withdrawn, have few or no friends, have eating problems, somatic concerns, and low self-esteem
7. if boys, are guilt-prone, fearful, withdrawn, perfectionistic, clinging, and worrying

### 3) Scale 3: Hysteria (Hy)

- a. 60 items (60 in MMPI-2)
- b. **identifies individuals who respond to stress with hysterical reactions that include sensory or motor disorders without an organic base**
- c. Harris-Lingoes Scales:
  1. denial of social anxiety
  2. need for affection
  3. lassitude-malaise
  4. somatic complaints
  5. inhibition of aggression
  6. (same as MMPI-2)
- d. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. if scale 3 is the highest scale, have high levels of intelligence, achievement, and SES
  2. are perceived by others as dependent, non-assertive, and capable of rapidly modifying their behavior to meet social expectations and demands
  3. are prone to express anxiety or stress through somatization and physical symptoms
  4. if male, have problems in school
  5. if male, are likely to have a history of suicidal ideation or gestures

### 4) Scale 4: Psychopathic Deviate (Pd)

- a. 49 items (compared to 50 on the MMPI-2)
  1. 1 item dropped due to inappropriate content
  2. 1 item re-written to simplify language
- b. **developed on the basis of responses of young women and men with patterns of lying, stealing, sexual promiscuity, and alcohol abuse**
- c. on the MMPI-2, adolescents typically have higher scale 4 scores than adults
  1. however, remember, elevations on the MMPI-A are **compared to other adolescents**
- d. Harris-Lingoes Scales:
  1. familial discord
  2. authority problems

3. social imperturbability
4. social alienation
5. self-alienation
6. (same as MMPI-2)

**d. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. exhibit delinquent behavior
  - a) in fact, the higher the score, the worse the delinquent behavior
2. have problems with school conduct and school adjustment
3. are hostile and rebellious
4. are unmotivated in psychotherapy
5. are likely to abuse drugs and alcohol
6. are likely to have legal problems
7. lie, cheat, and steal
8. have temper outbursts and are aggressive
9. (combined with a high scale 9) have a history of criminal behaviors
10. if male, are likely to have run away or to have been physically abused
11. if female, are likely to be sexually active and may have been sexually abused

**5) Scale 5: Masculinity-Femininity (Mf)**

- a. 44 items (compared to 60 on the MMPI-2)
  1. 16 items were eliminated in order to shorten the MMPI-A
  2. eliminated the redundant items
- b. **developed as a measure of the masculinity and/or femininity of the respondents**
  1. elevations in boys = more feminine than typical
  2. elevations in girls = more masculine than typical
- c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of boys who:**
  1. endorse an unusual pattern of stereotypically feminine interests
  2. are intelligent and have higher grades than those boys who score low on Mf
  3. have few acting-out behaviors
- d. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of girls who:**
  1. endorse many stereotypically masculine interests
  2. less likely to be highly intelligent and have lower standardized test scores than girls scoring low on Mf
  3. typically have few acting-out behaviors
  4. generally have good school conduct

**6) Scale 6: Paranoia (Pa)**

- a. 40 items (compared to 40 on the MMPI-2)
- b. **identifies patients who are manifesting paranoid symptomology, including ideas of reference, suspiciousness, feelings of persecution, rigidity, and moral self-righteousness**
- c. Harris-Lingoes Scales:

1. persecutory ideas
2. poignancy
3. naivete
4. (same as MMPI-2)
- d. on the MMPI-2, adolescents have higher scores than adults on Scale 6, especially on the H-L persecutory ideas scale (Pa<sub>1</sub>)
  1. however, remember, elevations on the MMPI-A are in **comparison to other adolescents**
- e. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. are oversensitive to the remarks and inferred attitudes of others
  2. if boys, are likely to have dropped out of school
  3. if girls, are intelligent but have poor school adjustment
  4. if girls, have disagreements with their parents
  5. are likely to be distrustful, suspicious of others, and may have delusions of persecution or paranoia
  6. are aggressive and exhibit acting-out behaviors
  7. may have school problems, such as failing subjects and being suspended
  8. are hostile, dependent, and withdrawn

**7) Scale 7: Psychastenia (Pt)**

- a. 48 items (compared to 48 on the MMPI-2)
- b. **measures the symptoms of OCD, including physical complaints, unhappiness, problems in concentration, obsessive thoughts, anxiety, and feelings of inferiority**
- d. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. are overly self-critical
  2. are anxious, tense, and nervous
  3. are restless
  4. if boys, are likely to have low self-confidence
  5. if boys, may have a history of sexual abuse
  6. if girls, are likely to have a history of suicidal threats
  7. if girls, are likely to have a history of stealing
  8. if girls, may be depressed
  9. if girls, have a history of discord with their parents

**8) Scale 8: Schizophrenia (Sc)**

- a. 77 items (compared to 78 on the MMPI-2)
  1. 1 item was deleted because of inappropriate content
- b. **created to identify individuals with diagnoses of various forms of schizophrenia, including such behaviors as bizarre thought processes, peculiar perceptions, social isolation, disturbances in mood and behavior, and difficulties in concentration and impulse control**
- c. Harris-Lingoes Scales:
  1. social alienation
  2. emotional alienation
  3. lack of ego mastery-cognitive

4. lack of ego mastery-conative
5. defective inhibition
6. bizarre sensory experiences
7. (same as MMPI-2)

**d. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. are likely to be less intelligent, to have poor academic achievement, and to drop out of school
2. are mistrustful
3. are vulnerable to stress
4. are withdrawn and socially isolated
5. have problems which impair reality testing
6. have school problems, disagreements with parents, and a lack of achievement
7. if boys, are likely to have numerous severe problems, such as somatic complaints, behavior problems, internalizing-schizoid behavior, psychotic symptoms, low self-esteem, and a possible history of sexual abuse
8. if girls, are likely to have a history of sexual abuse and disagreements with their parents

**9) Scale 9: Hypomania (Ma)**

- a. 46 items (compared to 46 on the MMPI-2)
- b. **developed to identify clients who were manifesting hypomanic symptoms, including grandiosity, irritability, flight of ideas, egocentricity, elevated mood, and cognitive and behavioral overreactivity**
- c. Harris-Lingoes Scales:
  1. amorality
  2. psychomotor acceleration
  3. imperturbability
  4. ego inflation
  5. (same as MMPI-2)

**d. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. have a high level of enthusiasm and energy
  - a) again, remember, this is in comparison to other adolescents
2. perform antisocial acts or have irrational manic behavior
3. become restless and stir up excitement for excitement's sake
4. if girls, have problems both in school and at home
5. if girls, are not likely to participate in social organizations
6. if girls, tend to be academic underachievers
7. if boys, likely have a history of using amphetamines
8. have experiences with drugs
9. have poor motivation for therapy, are less willing to explore their feelings, and are insensitive to criticism

**10) Scale 0: Social Introversion (Si)**

- a. 62 items (compared to 70 on MMPI-2)

1. 7 items were only on Si, so they were dropped
2. 1 item was objectionable, so it was dropped

**b. measures social relational problems**

**c. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. are withdrawn socially
2. have low self-esteem
3. if girls, have eating problems with reported weight gain
4. if girls, tend to be depressed and have a history of suicidal ideation and gestures
5. if girls, have few or no friends
6. if girls, are described as withdrawn, timid, shy, physically weak, uncoordinated, fearful and depressed
7. if girls, are unlikely to be interested in heterosexual relationships or to act in a sexually provocative manner
8. if boys, are unlikely to participate in school activities

**D. Content Scales**

1) interpretation

a. high scores > 65

1. client endorses most, if not all, of the statements

b. moderate elevations 60-65

1. client endorses fewer symptoms or problem behaviors

2) **A-anx (Adolescent Anxiety)**

a. 21 items (23 on MMPI-2 ANX scale)

1. 20 items in common

**b. measures general maladjustment, as well as specific symptoms like depression and somatic complaints**

**c. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report many symptoms of anxiety, including tension, frequent worrying, and sleeping difficulties (nightmares, disturbed sleep, and difficulty falling asleep)
2. report confusion, problems with concentrating, and an inability to stay on task
3. feel that life is a strain and believe their difficulties are insurmountable
4. worry about losing their minds and feel something dreadful is about to happen
5. appear to be aware of their problems and that they are different from other adolescents

d. scale reasonably valid for both boys and girls

3) **A-obs (Adolescent-Obsessiveness)**

a. 15 items (16 on MMPI-2 OBS scale)

1. 12 items in common

**b. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report unreasonable worrying, often about trivial matters
2. may have ruminative thoughts about “bad words” or they may

- count unimportant items
  - 3. may be unable to sleep at times because of these worries
  - 4. report great difficulty in making decisions
  - 5. dread having to make changes in their lives
  - 6. report that others sometimes lose patience with them
  - 7. often regret things they have said and done
  - c. related to general maladjustment and also to dependent, anxious behaviors in clinical boys and to suicidal ideation/gestures in girls
- 4) **A-dep (Adolescent Depression)**
- a. 26 items (33 on MMPI-2 DEP scale)
    - 1. 25 items in common
  - b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. report many symptoms of depression, including frequent crying and fatigue
    - 2. feel other people are happier than they are
    - 3. are dissatisfied with their lives
    - 4. report many self-deprecating thoughts, including feeling like they have not lived the “right” kind of lives, that they are useless, and that they are condemned and their sins are unpardonable
    - 5. feel their future is hopeless and life is neither worthwhile nor interesting
    - 6. report feeling blue most of the time and often wish they were dead
    - 7. possibly have suicidal ideations
    - 8. report loneliness, even when surrounded by other people
    - 9. feel that the future is too uncertain for them to make serious plans and have periods of time when they are unable to “get going”
    - 10. have a sense of hopelessness and do not care what happens
    - 11. have an inclination to take things hard
- 5) **A-hea (Adolescent Health Concerns)**
- a. 37 items (36 on the MMPI-2 HEA scale)
    - 1. 34 items in common
  - b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. report numerous physical problems that interfere with their enjoyment of after-school activities and that contribute to significant school absences
    - 2. report that their physical health is worse than their friends
    - 3. have physical complaints that cross several body systems, including gastrointestinal problems, neurological problems, sensory problems, cardiovascular symptoms, and respiratory problems
    - 4. report worrying about their health and feeling as if their problems would disappear if only their health would improve
    - 5. misbehave in school, have poor academic performance, and

have

other school problems

**6) A-aii (Adolescent Alienation)**

a. 20 items

b. new scale

**c. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report considerable emotional distance from others
2. believe that they are getting a raw deal from life and that no one cares about or understands them
3. do not believe they are liked by others
4. do not get along well with others
5. do not believe they have as much fun as others
6. report that they would prefer to live alone away from others
7. feel that others are out to get them and are unkind to them
8. have difficulties self-disclosing and feel awkward when they have to talk in a group
9. do not appreciate hearing others give their opinions
10. do not believe others are sympathetic and feel that other people often block their attempts at success

**7) A-biz (Adolescent Bizarre Mentation)**

a. 19 items (24 on the MMPI-2 BIZ scale)

1. 17 items in common

**b. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report strange thoughts and experiences, including auditory, visual and olfactory hallucinations
2. characterize their experiences as strange and unusual, and they believe there is something wrong with their minds
3. may believe that they are being plotted against or being poisoned (paranoid ideation)
4. may believe that others are trying to steal their thoughts and ideas or control their minds, perhaps through hypnosis
5. may believe that evil spirits or ghosts possess or influence them
6. are likely to have problems in school and receive low grades
7. may have psychosis

**8) A-ang (Adolescent Anger)**

a. 17 items (16 on MMPI-2 ANG scale)

1. 11 items in common

**b. T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report considerable anger control problems
2. often feel like swearing, smashing things, or starting a fist fight
3. frequently get into trouble for breaking or destroying things
4. report having considerable problems with irritability and impatience with others
5. throw temper tantrums to get their way
6. are hotheaded and often feel that they have to yell in order to make a point



7. occasionally get into fights, especially if they have been drinking
8. do not like others to hurry them or get in front of them in a line
9. are likely to have a history of assault and other acting-out behaviors

9) **A-cyn (Adolescent Cynicism)**

a. 22 items (23 on the MMPI-2 CYN scale)

1. 21 items in common

b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. believe that others are out to get them and will use unfair means to gain an advantage
2. look for hidden motives whenever someone does something nice for them
3. believe that it is safer to trust no one because people make friends just to use them
4. see others as inwardly disliking to help another person and are on guard when people seem friendlier than expected
5. feel misunderstood by others and think other people are very jealous of them

10) **A-con (Adolescent Conduct Problems)**

a. 23 items (22 on the MMPI-2 ASP scale)

1. 7 items in common

b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report a number of behavioral problems, including stealing, shoplifting, lying, breaking or destroying things, being disrespectful, swearing, and being oppositional
2. have peer groups who are often in trouble
3. are frequently talked into doing things they know they should not do
4. at times try to make others afraid of them just for the fun of it
5. are entertained by criminal behavior
6. do not blame people for taking advantage of others
7. admit to doing bad things in the past that they cannot tell anyone about

11) **A-lse (Adolescent Low Self-Esteem)**

a. 18 items (24 on MMPI-2 LSE scale)

1. 18 items in common

b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. report very negative opinions of themselves, including feeling unattractive, lacking self-confidence, feeling they are useless, have little ability, have several faults, and are not able to do anything well
2. will change their minds or give up arguments under pressure from others
3. tend to let other people take charge when problems have to be solved

4. do not feel that they are capable of planning their own future
5. become uncomfortable when others say nice things about them
6. may be confused and forgetful
7. do poorly in school
8. if girls, may be depressed

12) **A-las (Adolescent Low Aspirations)**

- a. 16 items
- b. new scale for the MMPI-A
- c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. are not interested in being successful
  2. do not like to study and read about things
  3. dislike lectures on serious topics and prefer work that allows them to be careless
  4. do not expect to be successful
  5. avoid newspaper editorials and believe the comics are the only interesting part of the paper
  6. report difficulties in starting projects and quickly give up when things go wrong
  7. let other people solve problems and avoid facing difficulties
  8. other people describe as being lazy
  9. may be involved in some antisocial tendencies, such as running away, truancy, and sexual acting out

13) **A-sod (Adolescent Social Discomfort)**

- a. 24 items (24 items on the MMPI-2 SOD scale)
  1. 21 items in common
- b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. report finding it very difficult to be around others
  2. are shy and much prefer to be alone
  3. dislike having people around them and frequently avoid others
  4. do not like parties, crowds, dances, or other social gatherings
  5. will not speak unless spoken to first
  6. others describe as being difficult to get to know
  7. have difficulties making friends and do not like to meet new people
  8. if girls, may be depressed and have eating problems
  9. if girls, probably do not exhibit acting out behaviors

14) **A-fam (Adolescent Family Problems)**

- a. 35 items (25 items on the MMPI-2 FAM scale)
  1. 15 items in common
- b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. report considerable problems with their parents and other family members, including high levels of discord, jealousy, fault-finding, anger, beatings, serious disagreements, lack of love and understanding, and limited communication
  2. do not believe they can count on their families in times of trouble

3. long for the day when they can leave home
4. feel their parents frequently punish them for things they did not do
5. feel like their parents treat them like children
6. report their parents dislike their peer groups
7. report high levels of disagreements with and between their parents
8. report a variety of delinquent and neurotic symptoms and behaviors

15) **A-sch (Adolescent School Problems)**

- a. 20 items
- b. new scale
- c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. who have poor grades, suspension, truancy, negative attitudes toward teachers, and a dislike of school
  2. report that the only pleasant aspect of school is their friendships
  3. do not participate in school activities or sports
  4. believe that school is a waste of time
  5. have been told that they are lazy
  6. report frequent boredom and sleepiness at school
  7. may even report being afraid to go to school

16) **A-trt (Adolescent Negative Treatment Indicators)**

- a. 26 items (26 items on the MMPI-2 TRT scale)
  1. 21 items in common
- b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. report negative attitudes toward doctors and mental health professionals
  2. do not believe that others are capable of understanding them or care about what happens to them
  3. report having several faults and/or bad habits that they feel are insurmountable
  4. do not feel that they can plan their own future
  5. report great unwillingness to discuss their problems with others and indicate that there are several issues they would not be able to share with others
  6. report being nervous when asked personal questions and have many secrets they feel that are best to keep to themselves

E. Supplementary Scales

1) **A (Anxiety)**

- a. 35 items
- b. assesses the first dimension that emerges when the basic validity and clinical scales are factor analyzed
- c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
  1. have distress, anxiety, discomfort, and general emotional upset
  2. are inhibited and overcontrolled

- 3. are incapable of making decisions without hesitation, uncertainty, and comforting
  - 4. are easily upset in social situations
  - 5. are fearful, guilt-prone, and self-critical
  - d. **T-Scores > 40 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. are energetic, competitive, and socially outgoing
    - 2. may be unable to tolerate frustration and usually prefer action to contemplation
- 2) **R (Repression)**
- a. 33 items (compared to 40 items on the MMPI-2)
  - b. assesses the second factor that emerges when the basic validity and clinical scales are factor analyzed
  - c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. are conventional and submissive
    - 2. strive to avoid unpleasantness or disagreeable situations
    - 3. are inhibited and less spontaneous than other adolescents
  - d. **T-Scores > 40 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. are outgoing, energetic, expressive, uninhibited, and informal
    - 2. have an enthusiasm for living
    - 3. are emotional, excitable, aggressive, shrewd, and dominant
- 3) **MAC-R (MacAndrew Alcoholism Scale-Revised)**
- a. 49 items
    - 1. 5 items have been replaced from those in the MMPI-2
  - b. assesses alcohol/drug use and potential for abuse
  - c. **T-Scores > 65 (Raw Score > 28) are indicative of:**
    - 1. substance abuse
      - a) there will be a high rate of false positives at this level for adolescents, though
    - 2. persons who are socially extraverted, exhibitionistic, and willing to take risks
  - d. **T-Scores > 40 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. are introverted, shy, and lacking in self-confidence
- 4) **ACK (Alcohol/Drug Problem Acknowledgement)**
- a. assesses the willingness of the client to acknowledge the problematic use of alcohol and other drugs and the symptoms associated with such use
  - c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. admit to having a number of problems concerning alcohol and drug use
- 5) **PRO (Alcohol/Drug Problem Process)**
- a. 36 items that assess the **likelihood of alcohol/drug problems for the client and includes assessments for a negative peer group influence, stimulus seeking, rule violation, negative attitudes toward achievement, friction with parents, and bad judgment**
  - b. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**
    - 1. have a high potential for developing alcohol/drug problems

6) IMM (Immaturity)

a. **assesses the degree to which the client reports behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions of self and others that reflect immaturity in terms of interpersonal style, cognitive complexity, self-awareness, judgment, and impulse control**

b. 43 items

c. **T-Scores > 65 are indicative of persons who:**

1. are oriented toward the present rather than making plans for the future
2. lack self-confidence
3. lack insight or introspection
4. lack cognitive complexity
5. have interpersonal and social discomfort, suspiciousness, and alienation
6. are hostile and have antisocial attitudes
7. are egocentric
8. blame others for their problems
9. have academic difficulties
10. are disobedient and defiant