

Positive Solutions Associates Outcomes Based Measure

Positive Solutions Associates (PSA), staff analyst is Kristoffer B. Kristensen, Ph.D. his specific responsibilities are to assess the effectiveness of all the cognitive skill sites that use PSA's curriculum. Dr. Kristensen has chosen, and is licensed to use, both the OQ-45 and the YOQ-2 for conducting these evaluations (development of testing instruments specifically for criminal justice programs is on-going). These tests were designed primarily for use in educational and treatment programs, the dimensions measured by the tests are substantially and directly relevant to criminal justice programs. One of the goals of cognitive skill programs, such as Positive Solutions Associates, include the improving interpersonal relations, social skills, cognitive restructuring and behavioral dysfunction. As can be seen in the following descriptions, the OQ-45 and YOQ-2 measure these dimensions.

The OQ-45 measures three important dimensions of an individual's life: 1) subjective discomfort (intrapsychic functioning), 2) interpersonal relationships and 3) social role performance. These areas of functioning suggest a continuum from how the person feels inside, how they are getting along with significant others, and how they are doing in important life tasks such as work and school.

The YOQ-2 is divided into six subscales: 1) Intra-personal Distress, 2) Somatic, 3) Interpersonal Distress, 4) Critical items, 5) Social Problems, and 6) Behavioral Dysfunction. **Intra-Personal Distress** focuses on emotional distress as seen through a client's presentation and defined by such traits as anxiety, depression, hopelessness, fearfulness, and self-harm. **Somatic** addresses issues such as stomachaches, nausea, headaches and bowel difficulties that the child may be exhibiting. **Interpersonal Relations** is designed to tap relevant relationships with parents, peers, and adults. **Critical Items** identifies special needs of children and adolescents who may need mental health services. **Social Problems** assesses behavioral problems that are social in nature such as sexual problems, running away from home, substance abuse and truancy. **Behavioral Dysfunction** discovers behaviors that are consistent with ADHD and focuses on attention span, impulsivity and the child's (in)ability to concentrate and handle frustration.

Clearly, many of the dimensions of the OQ-45 and the YOQ-2 are relevant to correctional programs. However, it must be remembered that the OQ-45 and YOQ-2 are outcomes based and are not designed to be diagnostic. These tests measure relative intrinsic change over time (i.e. pre- and post-training). These tests differ substantially from other tests in that they have **well established reliability and validity**. They also directly measure specific social, personal, and behavioral goals of criminal justice programs. Further, a growing database of information using these tests in the criminal justice settings suggests that Positive Solutions Associates Cognitive Skill programs are effective in producing desirable outcomes in the lives of offenders. For these reasons, Positive Solutions Associates is confident that these tests demonstrate the effectiveness of the program

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