

Station Number

AFFIX CANDIDATE
LABEL HERE

CANDIDATE No:.....

Instructions for Candidates

Scenario

Jason Brown is a 35-year-old man with a history of anxiety symptoms and low mood.

Instructions

Assess his premorbid personality.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO HAND YOUR IDENTITY LABEL TO THE
EXAMINER**

Station Number

AFFIX CANDIDATE
LABEL HERE

History Taking: Premorbid Personality

CANDIDATE No:.....

Instructions for Patients

Answer questions based on the following scenario.

Do not volunteer information unless asked.

This station tests the candidate's ability to assess aspects of a patient's personality.

You are Jason Brown, a 35-year-old man. You trained as an accountant, and work for a successful local firm. You have been with them for the last eight years.

Key Attributes

You answer all the candidate's questions openly and freely.

Key Dialogue

1. *Prevailing mood*

- a. You see yourself as being generally positive about things, and not prone to long periods of depressed mood
- b. At times of stress, you can get a little irritable, and occasionally anxious, but these do not affect function or your relationships
- c. You have never been treated for depression

2. *Hobbies & interests*

- a. You enjoy swimming, cycling, and hillwalking
- b. You also enjoy reading crime thrillers and the cinema

3. *Relationships*

- a. You have been married to Sarah, a publisher's assistant for the last 9 years
- b. You have a satisfactory sex life
- c. You have two children, a boy and a girl, aged 7 and 4
- d. You had one long-term relationship (three years) at University, but no other significant relationships – you have always been heterosexual, and have had no homosexual encounters
- e. You have a number of good friends, some of whom you went to school with. You play five-a-side football, and go out drinking with your team-mates.
- f. You get on reasonably well with your family, although you haven't spoken much to your older sister who moved to the USA six years ago. You never really got on.

4. *Personality traits*

- a. You deny impulsivity and consider yourself a cautious person
- b. You have no obsessional traits
- c. You have never been in trouble with the police and deny any aggressive tendencies

5. *Coping strategies*

- a. You think that you cope reasonably well with stress, although at times you do feel that things are getting on top of you.

6. *Beliefs*

- a. You were brought up by quite strict Catholic parents and consider yourself a religious person. You try and attend mass as much as possible, and often feel guilty if you cannot attend

7. *Drugs*

- a. You smoked cannabis a few times at University but have not taken any drugs since.
- b. You smoke 6-10 cigarettes per day, and drink about 2 or 3 pints of beer with friends, once or twice a week. Occasionally, you will have up to 10-12 pints over a weekend if you are playing football with your team.

Station Number

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History Taking: Premorbid Personality

CANDIDATE No:.....

Instructions for Examiners

***REMEMBER TO ASK THE STUDENT FOR THEIR IDENTITY LABEL AND
AFFIX IT TO THE TOP OF THE MARK SHEET.***

This station tests the following skills:

1. Tact and sensitivity when inquiring into personal details
2. Ability to assemble a wide range of information to make judgements about the personality of a patient
3. Knowledge of the kind of questions which elicit information about a patient's personality

Station Number

Examiner's Name:

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AFFIX CANDIDATE
LABEL HERE

CANDIDATE No:.....

History Taking: Premorbid Personality

Marking Sheet

Please circle the appropriate mark for each criterion. The standard expected is that of a psychiatric Senior House Officer.

Criterion	Performed competently	Performed, but not fully competent	Not performed
Approach to the patient – Rapport, empathy, and style	2	1	0
Prevailing mood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predisposition to low mood • Reactivity of mood to external events • History of anxiety 	2	1	0
Assesses Personal Interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobbies, interests • Capacity for self-stimulation and maintaining interests • Able to motivate self and initiate actions 	2	1	0
Relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current friendships and relationships • Previous relationships – ability to establish and maintain • Childhood shyness and relationships at school – do they still have school friends? • Family relationships • Sociability • Hostility/ Paranoid view of the world 	2	1	0
Impulsivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous history of ill-judged actions • Previous history of violence or aggression • Forensic history 	1	½	0
Obsessionality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of obsessional or compulsive traits • Magical thinking? 	1	½	0
Coping strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does patient cope with problems? • Do they tolerate stress? • Do they have sufficient coping strategies? 	1	½	0
Beliefs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious beliefs; depth and consistency of beliefs • Occult/ spiritualism 	1	½	0
Drugs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current or previous use of drugs, alcohol, etc. 	2	1	0

Fantasy Life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indulging in activities that would suggest rich fantasy life (e.g. role-playing) • Do they indulge in fantasies 	1	½	0		
Sexuality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and previous partners • Activity and enjoyment of sex 	1	½	0		
Overall Approach to Task	4	3	2	1	0

Score (Max 20)	<input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>
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Overall Grading of station	Clear Pass	Borderline	Clear Fail
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Trickcyclists' Tip Sheet

- Assessing personality can be difficult, but people generally take two approaches: Firstly, get an idea about work, relationships, hobbies, drugs, coping with stress, etc. or secondly, to focus much more on taking a history of personality disorder. The information below takes the latter approach.

Quick Personality Assessment Schedule (PAS-Q)

The following are the questions asked as part of the quick form of the Personality Assessment Schedule (PAS). Scoring details are not provided – you should look up scoring if you intend to use the scale clinically. The questions are provided so that candidates can ask focused and relevant questions about aspects of personality which might be pointing to the presence of personality disorder.

The full PAS includes screening questions, and additional questions which are asked if the initial questions are positive. Only the screening questions are given, which assumes that you will only want to highlight personality traits which might be causing problems to the individual.

Introductory Questions

- I should like to find out what sort of person you were before your present problems began. Could you tell me in a few words how you would describe yourself in this respect?
- I wonder if you could tell me a bit more information about yourself. Are you married or have you ever been married? Have you any children? Where are they living now?
- Are you working at present, if not, when was the last time you were in work?
- What are the jobs you have been mainly involved in since leaving school?
- What were the circumstances in which you lost your last job(s)?
- Have you even been in trouble with the police? What was the problem? Were you arrested?
- Have you ever had any problems with alcohol or drugs?
- Have you ever felt that these take over your life and you can't control them?
- Do you gamble? Has this been a problem?
- How many times have you moved house in the last 10 years?
- What were the reasons for moving?
- Have you ever been homeless?

Suspiciousness

- How well in general do you get on with other people?
- Do you normally trust them or are you suspicious of them, at least at first?
- How long does it normally take for you to get to know people before you trust them?

Sensitivity

- Are you a touchy or sensitive person, or does it take a lot to upset you?
- Does it bother you when people criticise you? How do you normally react?

Aloofness

- Are you a person who likes to stay apart from other people or do you prefer to have close relationships?
- Do you have any really close relationships? Does it trouble you that you don't have more?

Eccentricity

- Do you have any unusual habits or interests that make you different from other people?

Aggression

- Do you lose your temper easily or does it take a lot to make you angry?
- How do you react when you get angry?

Callousness

- Are you easily affected by other people's feelings or can you ignore them?
- Do you care about other people?

Impulsiveness

- Do you always think carefully before you do something or do you act on impulse?
- Have you ever done things on impulse and regretting them afterwards?

Irresponsibility

- Do you ever do things without caring about the consequences or are you always careful in what you do?
- Would you describe yourself as a responsible or irresponsible person?

Childishness

- Do you ever act in a childish way or would you regard yourself as fairly mature?

Lability

- Do your spirits change from day to day or week to week, or do they stay more or less the same?

Conscientiousness

- Are you normally a fussy or a carefree person?
- Do you plan everything in detail or do you seldom plan anything in life?

Rigidity

- Do you find it difficult to adjust to new situations or are you an adaptable person?
- Do you get upset if your plans are changed for any reason?

Anxiousness

- Are you normally an anxious or a calm person?

- Are you less nervous, about the same, or more nervous than most other people?

Shyness

- Are you normally a shy person or are you confident with other people?
- Do you lack self-confidence?

Resourcelessness

- When you are faced with a challenge do you usually respond to it well or do you give in to it?
- Are you someone who can normally tackle problems in life alone or do you need other people's help?

Vulnerability

- Do you find that when things go wrong in your life (e.g. loss of job, death in family) you are disturbed a great deal, or do you cope with them well?
- Does it usually take a short or a long time to get back to normal after upsets in your life?

References

Tyrer, P., Alexander, M. S., Cicchetti, D., et al (1979) Reliability of a schedule for rating personality disorders. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **135**, 168-174.