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Using the Rorschach within a personality assessment for the case conceptualization and treatment planning of eating disorders

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Given the serious medical complications, high rates of hospitalization, suicide attempts and mortality, the careful psychometric assessment is essential for case conceptualization and treatment planning of eating disorders. There are many useful tools available to aid in the diagnosis of eating disorders. While some may argue that conducting a full personality assessment is too time consuming and perhaps not cost effective, in the long run, the data obtained is well worth the investment of both time and money. A multi-method personality assessment provides incremental validity by adding information from different methods. By obtaining a complete picture of the client early in the treatment setting, the clinician is able to more fully make an accurate diagnosis, gauge motivation for treatment, and more accurately provide appropriate recommendations. Hopefully, the added cost at the outset reduces the risk for potential relapse. Performance based personality tests (such as the Rorschach) challenge the respondent to perform a task, solve a problem, or demonstrate a process to make personality processes and behavioural patterns amenable to observation and quantification. The use of the Rorschach provides the clinician with information on self-perception, interpersonal functioning, affect modulation (or lack thereof), capacity for control and stress tolerance, reality testing and information processing, all of which proves to be invaluable when working with clients diagnosed with eating disorders.

Biography

Bridget Rivera is a full time Faculty Member for the Undergraduate Psychology Department at Kaplan University. She is a licensed Psychologist with over 15 years of clinical experience, which includes private practice, University counselling centre and consulting work. She has facilitated body image groups and worked with clients diagnosed with eating disorders. Her research interests involve personality assessment of children and adults. She was awarded the Martin Mayman Award from the Society of Personality Assessment, for distinguished contribution to the literature in 2010.

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