A New Social Cognitive Measure of Self and Other Understanding called the Reflective Function Questionnaire for Youth (RFQY)

Carolyn Ha, B.S. and Carla Sharp, Ph.D.
University of Houston, Department of Psychology
Developmental Psychopathology Lab

BACKGROUND

- Key aspect of treatment response across all therapies is the patient’s ability to build and maintain a relationship with a therapist (Shirk & Karver, 2003).
- Patient’s social-cognitive capacity
- Secure attachment linked to development of social-cognitive capacities (Sharp & Fonagy, 2008)
- Reflective Function (Fonagy et al., 1991)
- Poverty of social-cognitive measures for this age range.
- The Child Reflective Function Scale (CRFS; Target et al., 2001)

METHODS

Participants
- Inpatient adolescents ages 12-17
- Consecutive admissions
- N = 100

Measures
- MENTALIZATION
  - Reflective function coded off the Child Attachment Interview

Instructions: On the following pages, please read each statement and select the one response that you feel describes you most clearly. Do not think too much about it – your first responses are usually the best.

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, DS = Disagree Somewhat, AS = Agree Somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFQY</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People's thoughts are a secret to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I worry a lot about what people are thinking and feeling.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My picture of my parents change as I change.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I realize that I can sometimes misunderstand my best friends' reactions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that my parents' behavior towards me should not be explained by how they were raised.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other people tell me I'm a good listener.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I often have to force people to do what I want them to do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I always know what I feel.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Movie for the Assessment of Social Cognition (MASC; Dziobek, Fleck, Kalbe, Rogers, Hassenstab, et al., 2006)

EMPATHY

- Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Joliffe & Farrington, 2006)

RESULTS

Criterion and Convergent Validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. RFQYTOT</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. BESTOT</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CRFS GLOBAL</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CET</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>-.076</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. MASCTOT</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MASC HYPMZ</td>
<td>-.254</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>-.219</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>-.809</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. MASCNUMZ</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>-.231</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.491</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. MASCNUMZ</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.187</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>-.362</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, ** p < .001

CONCLUSION

Together, these findings support the criterion and convergent validity of the RFQY as a self-report measure of social cognition in adolescents. It is important to adequately assess social cognition in adolescents as this is an integral part of establishing therapeutic alliance. Teens with impaired social cognition may benefit from early interventions targeting these areas.

REFERENCES


What is Sandra feeling?

A. Her hair does not look that nice
B. She is pleased about his compliment
C. She is exasperated about Michael coming on too strong
D. She is flattered but somewhat taken by surprise

What is Sandra feeling?

A. Her hair does not look that nice
B. She is pleased about his compliment
C. She is exasperated about Michael coming on too strong
D. She is flattered but somewhat taken by surprise