



SASSI Identifies Substance Dependence in Young Offender

The profile is of a 23-year-old male whom we will call "Ben." Ben was in his 4th week of detention at a local midwestern jail. He was arrested after turning himself in for a prior domestic violence offence committed while under the influence of alcohol and for which he had fled the state. Ben had one prior arrest for receiving stolen property which he had subsequently traded for drugs. The treatment provider conducting the assessment had been meeting with him at the jail for several weeks. The court was particularly interested in determining the level of risk that Ben would again flee the area.

When examining a SASSI profile, it is important to begin by looking at the most basic data-random responding, decision rule results, and defensiveness. Notice that Ben seemed to respond to the SASSI items in a meaningful manner (RAP=0) and that there is no test evidence of defensive responding (DEF=4). The results of the decision rules indicate that he is likely to have a substance dependence disorder ("Yes" on Rules 1,2,3,6,7 and 9).

Ben acknowledges extensive and severe alcohol and drug problems (FVA=23 and FVOD=29). Although he claimed to have been abstinent during several weeks prior to incarceration, his substance use history likely includes substantial substance-related problems including loss of control, negative consequences, and social functioning.

There is significant evidence that Ben's life experiences include living in social environments where the abuse of alcohol and other drugs and associated consequences is a relatively common and routine occurrence (SYM=8). Despite Ben's awareness of behavioral problems related to his drinking and drugging, the normalization of such problems in the milieu in which he lives may make it difficult for him to fully accept the severity of his addiction.

In addition, Ben's responses are remarkably similar to substance dependent individuals who often lack awareness and insight regarding the impact of alcohol and drug use on their psychological and emotional functioning (SAT=5). He may be unaware of related symptoms such as emotional avoidance, fear of intimacy, and obsession with maintaining personal power and control. In spite of these limitations, Ben does seem to acknowledge some awareness of possessing behavioral characteristics and traits commonly associated with substance dependence (OAT=7). These may include such things as low frustration tolerance, impulsivity, self-centeredness, and irritability.

While there may be some moderate risk of ongoing legal problems (COR=9), Ben's score is well below the cutting point. Therefore, it would be prudent to recognize the limitations of the COR scale, especially when making case disposition decisions.

Treatment Recommendations:

This case presents us with a good example of the value of early identification of substance dependency problems in criminal justice settings. Ben's SASSI results clearly demonstrate a well-established pattern of substance dependency that will require relatively intensive intervention. Therefore, he may be a solid candidate for diversion into an alcohol and drug treatment program as a way of reducing the risk of future offenses.

Treatment planning should include interventions designed to build upon Ben's willingness to be open about his alcohol and drug problems. Efforts to increase his self-awareness and insight regarding the pervasive nature of substance dependence in his life would be valuable. Cognitive approaches may be beneficial in helping Ben to reframe his view of the social environment in which he lives. Community self-help groups and therapeutic group modalities may be particularly helpful in providing an environment that encourages abstinence and in establishing new social support networks.

The recommended level of care should include adequate supervisory support and structure to ensure successful completion of treatment and transition into aftercare. Random toxicological screens, cognitively based behavior management strategies, and possible use of transitional living arrangements may be of benefit. In addition, anger management and impulse control issues should be addressed to reduce the risk of continued domestic violence.

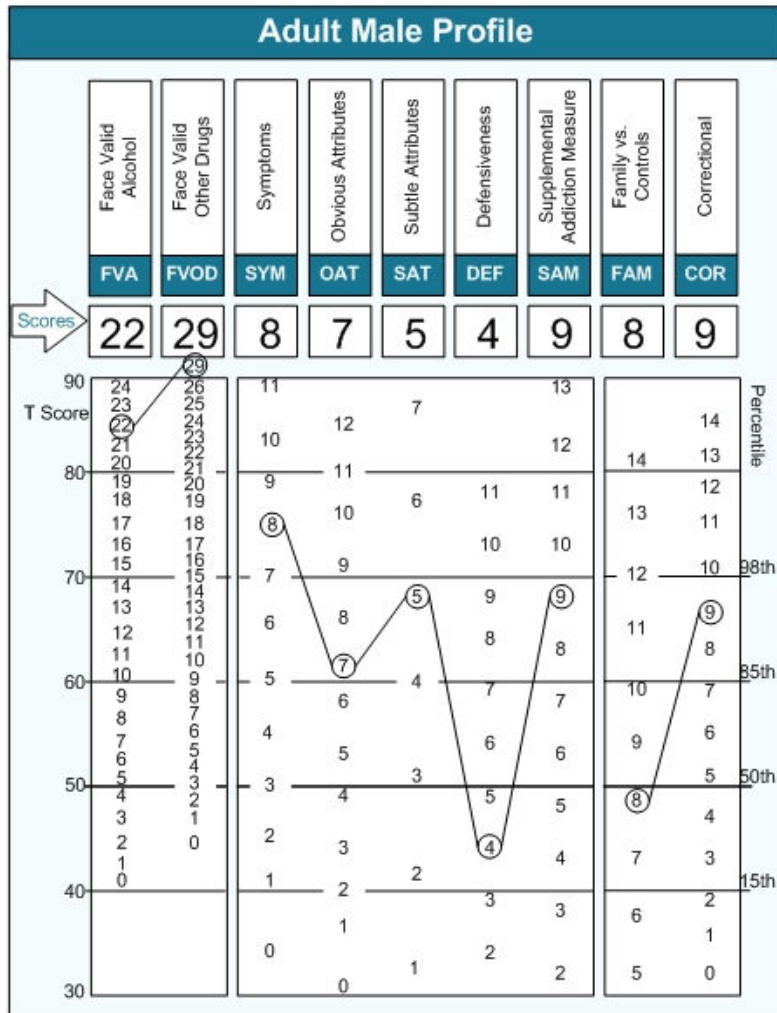
SASSI-3 Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory

For free consultation on this profile 1-888 BY SASSI 1-888-297-2774 M-Th 8-6 Fri 8-5 EST



Name **Ben** Gender **M** Age **23**

Case Number _____ Test date _____



RAP Random Answering Pattern

0 — Check if RAP is 2 or more. Results may not be meaningful. Try to resolve problem before proceeding. Such profiles have an average decreased accuracy of approximately 20%.

Check every rule, yes or no.

- Rule 1** FVA 18 or more? yes no
- Rule 2** FVOD 16 or more? yes no
- Rule 3** SYM 7 or more? yes no
- Rule 4** OAT 10 or more? yes no
- Rule 5** SAT 6 or more? yes no
- Rule 6** OAT 7 or more and SAT 5 or more Both? yes no
- Rule 7** FVA 9 or more OR FVOD 15 or more OR SAM 8 or more and Both? yes no
- Rule 8** OAT 5 or more and DEF 8 or more and SAM 8 or more All three? yes no
- Rule 9** FVA 8 or more OR FVOD 6 or more OR SAT 2 or more OR DEF 4 or more OR SAM 4 or more and and and All four? yes no

THE DECISION RULE:

ANY rule answered "yes"?

HIGH PROBABILITY of having a Substance Dependence Disorder

ALL rules answered "no"?

LOW PROBABILITY of having a Substance Dependence Disorder

— Check if DEF is 8 or more. Elevated DEF scores increase the possibility of the SASSI missing substance dependent individuals. Elevated DEF may also reflect situational factors.

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