

Trauma Content Index (TC/R) for the Rorschach

Bob:

Of course you are right to remind us that we should not diagnose PTSD (or pretty much anything else) from the Rorschach alone, but I think that the Rorschach can tell us about more than just stylistic aspects of test takers' personality. There is some literature to support that trauma survivors with PTSD tend to produce certain types of content on the Rorschach more than others--particularly those who have experienced sexual abuse.

Armstrong and Loewenstein (1990) developed a Trauma Content Index (TC/R) for the Rorschach that differentiated sexually abused test takers from controls with a one standard deviation effect size. The TC/R sums all of the BI, An, Sx, MOR, and AG responses and divides by R. Their inpatients with various types of DID obtained scores averaging .50 (ranging from .30-.80). Nordstrom and Carlsson (1997) obtained a mean of .51 on the TC/R for borderline women in outpatient therapy with documented histories of child sexual abuse and .77 for women who had been sexually abused as adults (compared to .35 for non-abused outpatient controls). Levin (1997) reviewed numerous studies supporting a finding of increased primary process content in the Rorschach in traumatized test takers. Kamphuis, Kugeares, & Finn (2000) used the TC/R on the Rorschachs of outpatients, about 1/3 of whom had well documented histories of sexual abuse. The sexually abused outpatient group had a mean of .32 (as compared to .18 for non-sexually abused outpatients and about .10 for Exner's original nonpatient sample). Using a cutoff for the TC/R of .30 (at the .34 base rate), the TC/R achieved impressive specificity (.84) for classifying the sexually abused outpatients, with .74 for overall diagnostic power.

Again, none of this argues that an elevated TC/R or any other Rorschach finding should be used alone diagnostically, but it would seem reasonable if one found a very high one, there is good reason to look more closely at the sexual history and history of traumatic experiences.

Robert E. Erard, Ph.D. Psychological Institutes of Michigan, P.C. Franklin, MI
rerard2000@ameritech.net

-----Original Message----- From: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com
[mailto:Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com] On Behalf Of Robert McGrath Sent:
Tuesday, November 08, 2005 10:52 AM To: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com
Subject: RE: [Rorschach_List] trauma

I know the list frequently gets requests of this type, but I'm curious how others feel about

them? I find myself feeling uncomfortable, as they seem like diagnostic rather than stylistic questions, and therefore inappropriate for the Rorschach and perhaps even misleading. Sort of like asking what are the indicators of sense of humor on the MMPI. Anyone willing to try to reduce my discomfort?

Bob

From: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com [mailto:Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com]
On Behalf Of Joel Schwartz Sent: Tuesday, November 08, 2005 10:42 AM To:
Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com Subject: [Rorschach_List] trauma

I have just tested a patient for out Graduate School Clinic (standard battery: WAIS, TAT, Rorschach, Sentence Completion). She is hyper-vigilant, and entirely cut off from emotion. WsumC=2, and no C'. She's not holding back, she's just cutoff. This and other indications from the TAT and Sentence completion leaves me to think that she has had significant trauma. Her therapist also feels that she is hiding trauma. Is there anything I should be looking for specifically in the Rorschach that may show a clearer indication of trauma? I only know the CS. I am aware of other scoring systems that may be more sensitive to Trauma. Any suggestions?

Joel Schwartz