

Psychological Evaluation

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Name: Homer Brine
Date of Birth: 1-11-65
Date of Evaluation: 7-30-08
Clinician: A. Adler, PhD

Reason for Referral

Brine was referred by the Division of Family Services for a psychological evaluation to assess his current level of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functioning and to provide recommendations for outpatient mental health services and family reunification.

Background History

The following background information was obtained from an interview with Brine and a review of available records.

Brine is a forty-three-year-old Caucasian male who was referred for a psychological evaluation by the Division of Family Services to assist with providing recommendations for outpatient mental health services and family reunification. He became involved with the Division of Family Services after he was arrested for sexually abusing his daughter. Brine was informed that the results of the evaluation would be utilized to develop opinions and conclusions regarding the likelihood that he would revictimize his daughter. In addition, he was told that the report or the examiner might appear at his court proceedings to give evidence regarding his past, present, or potential future mental state. Brine chose to participate in the evaluation recognizing the nature of the evaluation and its purpose.

Brine was born in York County, Pennsylvania, in a rural farming community near the Maryland state line. He was the older of two children raised in a "traditional Christian home." When Brine was a young boy, his family moved to Wheeling, West Virginia, due to his father's employment with a mining company. Brine's mother was a "stay-at-home mom" who was actively involved in her sons' school-related activities. Brine described his parents as hardworking people who always supported him. He reported that he had begun having school learning problems in middle school related to comprehending and retaining learned materials. Brine described himself as a "quiet" child who "always had difficulty in school." He described being involved with special educational services throughout his secondary education (middle school and high school). He received small group instruction and individualized assistance with learning arithmetic skills, developing memory skills, and improving his comprehension. Brine was an impulsive, distractible, and active boy who had difficulty completing school assignments and interacting with peers in the classroom. He obtained part-time employment after school and during summer vacations and worked for the Natural Services Department cleaning campgrounds. Although Brine enjoyed working for the Natural Services Department, he was unable to obtain full-time employment after his high school graduation due to his learning problems.

Brine continued to live with his parents after he graduated from high school, moving back to York County, Pennsylvania, with his family after his father lost his job (was laid off). He reported having felt awkward in social situations throughout his teenage years, choosing not to date due to a fear of being rejected by his female peers. Brine's difficulty with social skills not only affected his interactions with others but also interfered with his ability to communicate with his coworkers and supervisors in a work-related environment. He has had difficulty maintaining employment as evidenced by his history of losing jobs due to poor attendance and insubordination. After many failed vocational pursuits, Brine and his family began working

with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to assist him with job training and social skills development. He described having participated along with several work crews doing janitorial work at local schools, office buildings, and small businesses. Brine stated that he enjoyed working independently due to the difficulties he faced in relating to his coworkers. He often needed assistance with handling interpersonal conflicts and managing his anger (negative mood).

While at OVR, Brine met his wife, Kelda Brine, after an introduction by mutual friends. Their relationship progressed rapidly and within months, they began living together. Brine described his wife as a “mentally retarded” and “slow” woman who “needs a lot of guidance.” She reportedly has difficulty with decision making and lacks appropriate parenting skills. Brine and his wife argue frequently due to her irresponsibility and irritable mood. They have a history of verbal and physical aggression toward one another, which has included pushing, saying hurtful things, and threatening to kill each other. Brine acknowledged having made statements that he did not mean and feeling remorseful after their arguments. Brine acknowledged that he was unable to set appropriate boundaries or create a structured environment at home. Although his parents often attempted to help him with establishing limits in his home, his wife would refuse. Brine’s mother and wife have a strained relationship due to their inability to communicate and their differences in parenting styles. Consequently, his wife has refused to accept help from her in-laws due to the fear that they “would take her daughter away.” After the Division of Family Services became involved with his family, his wife’s biggest fear came true—their daughter was removed from the home and placed with his parents.

Brine stated that he was incarcerated because he sexually molested his kid—he was in the closet naked with her. He described having had a pornographic magazine that he showed to his daughter and reportedly touched her inappropriately. Brine stated that he did “not remember” touching his daughter at that time; however, he admitted to having his daughter touch him in his private area in the past. He spoke of their sexual relationship beginning when his daughter was seven years old. Brine had told his daughter “not to talk about it” to anyone. He reported that his wife had walked in on them two years ago, saw what was happening, and didn’t say anything. He stated that his wife probably did not understand what was happening or did not want to know about it. Brine described the abuse as including both contact and noncontact acts. The sexual abuse involved multiple incidents over time as the activity progressed from less invasive to more invasive (began with exposure and fondling and had moved to digital and oral penetration). Although Brine denied having engaged in sexual intercourse with his daughter, he stated that she “would be able to describe what it is” due to having walked into their (her parents’) bedroom without their knowledge.

Brine and his wife have been referred counseling for marital therapy and assistance with parenting. He described having difficulty setting limits for his daughter and struggling with decision making. He reported that his daughter “is in charge at home,” often ignoring her parents when she is told that she cannot do something. He has disciplined his daughter by taking something away from her, making her sit in her room, yelling at her, or thumping her on the head. The two household rules that are enforced include not going out of the yard without permission and going to bed at 8:00 p.m.

Brine denied recent alcohol or drug use, stating that he only experimented with alcohol and marijuana as a teenager. Legal history is significant for a previous charge of Arson (1990) that resulted in a ten-day jail sentence and a year of supervised probation and his current charge of incest.

Behavioral Observations

Brine is a forty-three-year-old Caucasian male of average build who appeared to be older than his stated age. He has short-cropped dirty blonde hair and several missing teeth and was dressed in an outfit issued by the county jail (orange jumpsuit). He was pleasant and cooperative during the evaluation, appearing motivated to answer all questions posed to him in an honest and forthright manner. Brine seemed alert and well rested, exhibiting no unusual mannerisms and relating quite appropriately to the examiner. He maintained good eye contact, smiled appropriately, and made spontaneous comments about various tasks that were presented to him. Brine would refuse to complete items that he described as difficult due to his fear of making mistakes (arithmetic section on the Wide Range Achievement Test—Third Edition [WRAT-3]). He was asked to read the instructions for the 16PF Questionnaire, and from his performance on that

task, it was apparent that his reading ability was of a level sufficient to enable him to complete the instrument without assistance. He reported that he was not taking any medication that could have hindered his performance during any phase of this evaluation. From an environmental perspective, the temperature and lighting of the room where Brine completed the 16PF Questionnaire and Parenting Stress Index (PSI) conformed to room conditions used in the standardization of that instrument. Therefore, given the aforementioned behavioral and environmental observations, it is believed that the results of this evaluation provide an accurate estimate of Brine's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functioning.

Review of Prior Assessments

Brine was previously evaluated in July 2005 to determine his level of cognitive functioning and to determine whether he was competent to stand trial. The results from this previous evaluation suggest that Brine is functioning within the Low Average range of cognitive functioning (Full Scale IQ of 85) with a significant difference evident between his verbal and nonverbal reasoning abilities (Verbal IQ of 80 and Performance IQ of 94). At this time, Brine demonstrated uneven cognitive development with scores ranging from the Borderline to Average range with relative strengths in his perceptual organization and a relative weakness in his processing speed.

Tests Administered

16PF Questionnaire: Fifth Edition
PSI
WRAT-3
Clinical Interview

Mental Status Examination Results

Brine came across as an anxious man who wanted to cooperate with the evaluation despite feeling uncomfortable at times. He spontaneously and candidly spoke of the inappropriateness of his actions toward his daughter and of the problems in his marriage. He spoke of his difficulty in coping with stressful situations and of not having adequate problem-solving or parenting skills. He appeared genuine in his request for assistance, often stating that he "knows he needs help." He spoke of the difficulty he had in comprehending information and of his wife's cognitive limitations. He described his wife as having difficulty with making decisions and with being responsible. He described his daughter as having been "in charge" at home, stating that she often told her mother what to do. His responses were unrehearsed and no loose associations in his cognitive processes were observed. Brine was oriented to person, place, and time and denied having experienced auditory or visual hallucinations. He stated that he had had thoughts of suicide since he had been incarcerated, however, he would never attempt to hurt himself in any way. His affective display was appropriate and within normal range. He reports having had several mutual fulfilling relationships and indicated that he got along quite well with a variety of people. His medical history is significant for acid reflux disease and a repaired hernia.

Assessment Results and Interpretations

Intellectual Functioning

Brine's WRAT-3 performance showed high school-level reading skills, seventh grade-level spelling skills, and third grade-level arithmetic skills. He achieved an Average range standard score on the reading subtest, a Low Average range standard score on the spelling subtest, and a Deficient range standard score on the arithmetic subtest. Results suggest that his academic functioning is below average and discrepant from his intelligence test scores. A significant discrepancy exists between Brine's potential and achievement as measured by standardized tests and supported by interview and observation. This suggests that Brine may have a specific learning disability.

Personality Assessment Results

The 16PF Questionnaire was administered to assess Brine's personal attitudes, beliefs, and experiences.

Brine's 16PF Questionnaire profile suggests that he is not experiencing a level of psychological distress that would warrant clinical attention. However, his profile should be interpreted with caution due to his responses, indicating that he may have been inattentive to item content or may have answered randomly. Brine's responses indicated that he is interested in activities that involve fewer interactions with people. It is likely that he prefers to work independently as opposed to working closely with others. He might be described as a skeptical man who has difficulty trusting. Brine has difficulty understanding the emotional cues of others or relating to their feelings. He might experience feelings of insecurity or feel uncomfortable in social situations. When under stress, he may become reactive and have difficulty considering another person's point of view.

Parenting Assessment Results

The PSI was administered to assess the degree of stress in his parent–child relationship. Brine is currently reporting that he is experiencing a great deal of life stress due to being financially overwhelmed, having a limited support system, and being recently involved with the court system. He views his daughter as hyperactive, demanding, and unable to adjust to changes in her physical or social environments. Brine describes his daughter as having qualities that make it difficult for him to fulfill his parenting role. In addition, he endorsed several items, which indicate that the source of his stress and potential dysfunction of the parent–child systems may be related to dimensions of his child's functioning. He does not experience his child as a source of positive reinforcement due to the failure of their interactions to produce good feelings in himself. This may be caused by her inability to respond to events in a predictable manner, which causes Brine to misinterpret his daughter's behaviors. Brine describes himself as an incompetent parent who is often depressed and feels unable to observe and understand his child's feelings or needs accurately. Overall, he acknowledged having difficulty in managing his daughter and balancing his own needs with those of his family. The parent–child system is under stress and is at risk for dysfunctional parenting behaviors.