

# **The Developmental Profile Registration Protocol**

R.E. Abraham

*Stichting Ontwikkelingsprofiel*  
[www.developmental-profile.nl](http://www.developmental-profile.nl)

Translated by Danny Guinan from the original Dutch text, 2023



Developmental Profile							© R.E. Abraham, 2005			
	SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR	RELATIONSHIPS	SELF-IMAGE	NORMS	NEEDS	COGNITIONS	PROBLEM-SOLVING BEHAVIOUR thinking and feeling actions		MISCELLANEOUS THEMES	
90. MATURITY	91. Stepping back	92. Altruism	93. Authentic self-image - existential	94. Authentic norms - existential	95. Significance	96. Metacognitions	97. Synthesis	98. Restructuring	99. Dying	
80. GENERATIVITY	81. Responsibility	82. Care	83. Authentic self-image - social	84. Authentic norms - social	85. Integrity	86. Context-related cognitions	87. Respecting controversial (sub)cultures	88. Reorganising	89. Grieving	
70. SOLIDARITY	71. Living together	72. Mate	73. Authentic self-image - relational	74. Authentic norms - relational	75. Intimacy	76. Empathy	77. Respecting the controversial other	78. Aligning	79. Collectiveness	
60. INDIVIDUATION	61. Productivity	62. Equal	63. Authentic self-image - individual	64. Authentic norms - individual	65. Identity	66. Self-reflection	67. Respecting the controversial self	68. Assertiveness	69. Primary process thought	
50. RIVALRY	51. Status	52. Unattainable love	53. Ideal-driven self-image	54. Excessive ideals	55. Triumphant	56. Theatrical cognitions	57. Reversal	58. Pretending	59. Feelings of sexual inadequacy	
40. RESISTANCE	41. Defiance	42. Oppressor	43. Norm-related self-image	44. Excessive norms	45. Dominating	46. Objectifying cognitions	47. Elimination	48. Defensiveness	49. Moral masochism	
30. SYMBIOSIS	31. Dependency	32. Parent	33. External self-image	34. External norms	35. Passive need for love	36. Suggestive cognitions	37. Detaching	38. Giving up	39. Lack of basic trust	
20. EGOCENTRICITY	21. Soloist	22. Supplier	23. Inflated self-image	24. Selfish norms	25. Mirroring	26. Self-referring cognitions	27. Disclaiming	28. Self-overestimation	29. Coldness	
10. FRAGMENTATION	11. Changeability	12. Framework	13. Vague self-image	14. Dichotomous norms	15. Sensation-seeking	16. Non-personality-related cognitions	17. Primitive externalisation	18. Acting out	19. Dissociation	
00. LACK OF STRUCTURE	01. Bizarre behaviour	02. Absence of affectivity	03. Lack of self-image	04. Lack of norms	05. Basic need satisfaction	06. Absence of psychic phenomena	07. Falsification	08. Impulsive behaviour	09. Absence of structure	



©2023, Developmental Profile Foundation

No part of this publication may be reproduced without acknowledging the source and without prior written permission from the board of the Developmental Profile Foundation.

This publication is a translation of the *Het Registratieprotocol* by Prof. R.E. Abraham (2005).

For more information about the Developmental Profile please visit the website [www.developmental-profile.nl](http://www.developmental-profile.nl)

## Developmental Lines

**Social behaviour:** Habitual behaviour in the social environment.

**Relationships:** The meaning or role a person assigns to their significant others or to others in general.

**Self-images:** Criteria that determine the feeling of self-worth.

**Norms:** A frame of reference for judging the correctness or desirability of one's own behaviour.

**Needs:** A desire to possess something that one is lacking, usually accompanied by an urgency to fill that void.

**Cognitions:** The way in which a person assigns meaning to their experiences.

**Problem-solving behaviour (thinking and feeling):** Thinking and feeling as a reaction to internal or external stress.

**Problem-solving behaviour (actions):** Actions as a reaction to internal or external stress.

**Miscellaneous themes:** Level-specific, primarily affective habitual patterns of behaviour.

## SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: Habitual behaviour in the social environment

### Bizarre behaviour (01)

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The meaning of or reasons behind the client's thoughts, feelings or actions are incomprehensible and often peculiar to others.

The terms 'incomprehensible' and 'peculiar' refer to the interactive meaning of the behaviour. Others, including members of the client's own subculture, are unable to fathom the reasons behind the client's actions. As a result, they are generally regarded as being 'detached'.

The emphasis is on comprehending and not on explaining the behaviour. Typically, the client is also unable to explain their own behaviour.

Examples include concretism, which refers to the literal interpretation of abstract statements, a dysfunctional preoccupation with specific issues or objects and non-intentional behaviour – acting impulsively without any inner motivation to do so. Bizarre behaviour also includes the overt expression of 'inhumanly' aggressive sexual desires or fantasies and acting upon these impulses without regarding them in any way as strange.

Not included in this category is unusual or deviant behaviour whose motivation or meaning is clear to others. A statement such as 'Sometimes I lose it entirely and throw a brick through a window for no reason at all or punch someone in the face when I get angry' can be characterised as impulsive behaviour (08). If, however, the client experiences no anger while displaying this behaviour, it is characterised as bizarre behaviour (01).

#### Examples:

- 01 You can't say goodbye to someone who is already gone.
- 01 I can only feel a connection with someone when I touch them.
- 01 I live my life according to Brahmanism and the Theosophical Society. (? -)
- 01 I often do things I wasn't planning to do. (?) Yes, just like that.
- 01 I sometimes think I'd like to kill someone. Break a kid's neck and chop off their pecker; slice open a woman's belly.
- 01 I become sexually aroused by the idea of my mother making love to her boyfriend.

### Changeability (11)

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client's behaviour is characterised by a highly changeable intentionality.

Changeable intentionality manifests itself in frequent changes in the client's affective involvement with another person or in an activity or situation without any reasonable explanation for doing so and in frequent and brief (and equally unexplainable) mood swings. It often occurs together with the letting go of old goals and the formation of new ones. The old goal's former significance is often lost and the relationship, hobby or work is no longer viewed as a fruitful period that has come to an end but rather as a missed opportunity. In

due course, the new objective also meets a similar fate, regardless of how attractive it appeared at first.

The social behaviour of the changeable client reveals a trail of unfinished educational programmes, extremely diverse career choices and broken relationships. Sometimes the client manages to find a suitable setting for their changeability, for example a job that involves a lot of travelling and very diverse activities so that they are never in the same place for more than a few weeks at a time.

Switching from one job to another through an employment agency or as part of a consistent career plan does not fall under changeability. The same applies to clients from a subculture not characterised by long-term commitments to work or relationships. The term maladaptive only applies when the client is unable to achieve their goals as a result of their tendency to change.

When the client changes their behaviour abruptly without any apparent reason this can also be regarded as a sign of impulsivity (08).

What distinguishes changeability (11) from a lack of structure is the fact that the client spends a certain amount of time on realising their new plans in a consistent manner (09).

The term 'dichotomous thinking' applies when the client suddenly regards the 'old' goal as useless or deficient (14).

Changeability can but does not always have to be associated with sensation-seeking (15).

Unlike with acting out (18), the client is prepared to discuss their behaviour.

Unlike with doubtfulness (control – defensiveness, 48), in the case of changeability there is no lack of ability to make choices.

Unlike with unattainable love (52), the client does not agonise interminably over a failed relationship or believe they are unable to maintain a long-term relationship. 'I'm glad I'm rid of him because it was never going to work.'

### **Examples:**

**11** One moment I feel fine and the next moment all I want to do is die.

**11** I can be very kind one moment and completely uninterested the next.

**11** I can commit myself one hundred per cent to something, only to think later on, 'Why am I doing this? I'm not enjoying it at all.'

**11** I studied Spanish for six months and then switched to studying law. Now I'd like to become a vet but I think I'll do some travelling first.

**11** I began thinking the relationship I was in wasn't good for me, so I just packed my bags and left.

**11** I switch jobs pretty regularly. I get bored quickly and start looking for a new adventure.

### **Soloist (21)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client's behaviour is characterised by an entirely self-centred outlook.

The client is only interested in or capable of looking after themselves, including in situations where the activities involved require participation in a group. The consequences of this attitude are determined primarily by the client's capacities and the need for those capacities

in their environment. 'Loners' who on the basis of their exceptional athletic, artistic or intellectual ability have earned a place on the winner's podium are usually praised or, at the very least, accepted because they have fulfilled a social need despite their egocentric behaviour. If they attain a position of leadership on the basis of these qualities, it often results in problems because of their tendency to jump the gun or deny others the opportunity to display their talents. When loners do not possess any special capacities or when their capacities do not fulfil any social need, they tend to operate alone. If they fail to secure a position of leadership, their inability to work with others manifests itself in diverse relational conflicts.

The term individualist does not apply to those who give up after experiencing disappointment or withdraw from activities for fear of being criticised or left out.

The client who functions as a loner implicitly places everyone else in a marginal position and is often regarded as haughty or arrogant as a result. However, they do not do this in order to gain victory over others (55). That would imply a competition in which victory may be gained over the other but also in which there are two separate rivals. For the loner, their place at the centre of everything is an indisputable fact because they can see no other options.

**Examples:**

**21** Everyone must do exactly as I say. Otherwise I cannot work with them.

**21** I prefer to work alone so that no one gets in my way.

**21** I can never take a holiday because no one can do my job the way I do it.

**Dependency (31)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client's behaviour is characterised by the inability to function independently of others.

A lack of independence manifests itself in the client's inability to:

- (a) live alone or be alone at home when they live together with someone;
- (b) undertake activities outside the home on their own or travel alone;
- (c) make decisions independently of others.

It is important to take the client's (sub)culture into consideration when assessing the above.

The inability to make decisions independently of others sometimes only becomes apparent when the client has to abandon the role of child or student and take the initiative themselves or assume a level of responsibility.

A more indirect manifestation of an inability to make decisions independently of others is allowing other people to make important choices for you. For example, when the client accepts a job offer without questioning whether it suits them or not or enters into a relationship with someone simply because the other person wants them to.

Dependency as a result of illness or external circumstances does not fall under the definition. If such factors are in play when the client is being assessed, the ten years preceding the

current situation must also be evaluated. Expectations with regard to the possible persistence of these factors in the future play a role in the formulation of a treatment plan.

The inability to make decisions independently of others differentiates itself from doubtfulness (defensiveness, 48) through the lack of alternatives and, in particular, the willingness of the client to allow others to make decisions for them that they then follow.

**Quantification:**

The client's level of dependency is the sum of the assessments of their ability to live alone, undertake activities outside the home on their own or travel alone and to make independent decisions.

**Examples:**

**31** I wanted to study Ecology but that meant moving to a different city. So I chose Economics instead. (a)

**31** I can't be on my own. When my husband has to go out of town for work my mother comes and stays the night here. (a)

**31** I always go to the gym with my neighbour. I never go if she can't go as well. (b)

**31** I worked as an au pair for three months and it was a disaster. I was so homesick that I spent hours on calling home on the phone every day. (b)

**31** I can't make decisions myself. Someone always has to come with me when I go shopping for clothes. (c)

**31** I didn't know what I wanted to do and this job just came along. (c)

**31** A friend of mine found a new girlfriend who had a sister. I just ended up dating her. (c)

**31** College was going fine until I went on a work placement and suddenly had to take on responsibility for things myself. (c)

**Defiance (41)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client's behaviour is characterised by an excessive tendency to defend their freedom to think, feel and act.

This refers to the inner feeling of freedom, the desire to be your 'own boss'. The client often feels restricted in their freedom even when that is not the case or they react strongly to situations in which limits are placed on their freedom. The need for an inner sense of freedom manifests itself indirectly through the refusal to obey rules, including those related to the client's own norms: 'When I *have* to do something I become resistant, even when I'm the one who makes the rules.' This resistance also manifests itself in a preoccupation with perceived injustices, excessive criticism of authority figures and the need to constantly defend and prove one's own independence and actively seeking opportunities to do so by making provocative remarks or openly engaging in prohibited activities.

A striking aspect of this fierce urge to defend one's freedom is that it actually limits that freedom. The client continues to feel oppressed and powerless. Even when the client has won a particular battle they are not satisfied. Instead they immediately go in search of the next potential conflict.

Unlike with acting out (18), the client is aware of their own constant need to defend themselves.

Feeling oppressed by someone else is registered as oppressor (42).

Defiance can also be accompanied by the need to dominate (45) or obstruction (defensiveness, 48).

**Examples:**

41 I hate it when I *have* to do something.

41 I don't want to be diagnosed because that means I will be labelled.

41 I am very stubborn. I don't take orders from others.

41 I can't tolerate injustice.

41 I am allergic to authority.

41 I love driving fast and playing cat and mouse with the cops.

**Status (51)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client's focus is primarily on enhancing their social status.

The word 'primarily' has two separate meanings here. Firstly, to indicate that the client's main objective is to enhance their social status. This is usually pursued at the expense of their own free time and relationships and even their health. Secondly, it indicates that social status is a goal in itself. In other words, the client is focused not so much on the value of the activities they undertake as they are on being recognised as an 'important person'. They aspire to attaining an elevated position not because their work is important to them but because of the social status that comes with it. This becomes apparent when the client fails to realise what the position actually demands of them or when they discover that it doesn't bring them any satisfaction.

The pursuit of status manifests itself indirectly in the need for symbols of success, such as an award or prize. For those who fail to reach such heights, the working world has plenty of costly alternatives, such as a luxury car, a tailor-made suit, exclusive watches and pens, or a holiday. Other 'rewards' include membership of an exclusive club or a photo with a head of state or some other very important person. This heightened sense of self-importance can also manifest itself in being 'crazy busy, all of the time' and always turning up late for and being called on the phone during meetings. The average person generally has to make do with celebrating other people's success: 'We just won the World Cup!'

If this pursuit of status is regarded as 'not done', it may be disguised (reversal, 57) as false modesty. Often, it is only when the client loses their 'status' that they realise how important it was to them.

The pursuit of status is only viewed as maladaptive when it is deemed excessive in relation to the above. This criterium is subject to time- and culture-related factors.

Unlike with an inflated self-image (23), the client knows they have no undeniable right to this coveted status but that it has to be earned. A second difference is that status is an interactional phenomenon in which others – a jury, an audience or society as a whole – play a collective and crucial role. Someone becomes a 'star' only by the grace of others.

When the pursuit of social status is linked to one's self-worth or elevating oneself above others, it is registered as ideal-driven self-image (53) and triumphing (55).

**Examples:**

51 I wanted to be a civil servant because it used to be a respectable position.

51 I only do things that will make my CV look more interesting.

51 I want to be admired, to be at the centre of attention.

51 I want to become CEO, whatever it costs. Then I'll be important.

51 I want to be famous, successful, appear on TV and have my picture in the newspaper. That's my goal in life.

51 As chairman, CEO, minister I was an important man. When all that was gone I was nothing, just an ordinary citizen (also ideal-driven self-image, 53).

**Productivity (61)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client is able to undertake socially relevant activities.

The term 'socially relevant' refers to activities that are regarded by society as meaningful, such as:

(a) Following an educational programme aimed at securing employment. If the person decides not to pursue a career in the profession for which they have studied, being awarded a diploma is not regarded as a sign of productivity.

(b) Being gainfully employed.

(c) Domestic and voluntary work, when also carried out for the benefit of others.

The criteria for socially relevant activities are subject to time- and culture-related factors.

**Quantification:**

Productivity is calculated as the mean of a, b and c (rounded down).

The assessment covers both the quality and quantity of the activities.

External factors, such as illness or involuntary unemployment, are also taken into account.

If the client has not been able to complete an educational programme within the normal time period, one or two points will be deducted.

Both paid and voluntary work are only assigned a score when they apply to a time period of at least twelve consecutive months. This is also the case when the client has held several different positions at different employers during that time. The aim is to calculate a maximum score (xxx) for a client who, in their own opinion and that of relevant others, has performed satisfactorily. If the client has only worked for a limited amount of time during this period without any mitigating external factors or has not applied themselves fully to their work, one or two points will be deducted from their score. This also applies when the client, once again without any mitigating factors, carries out work for which they are overqualified, unless they do so for ideological reasons.

**Examples:**

- 61 Has completed their educational programme within a reasonable period of time.
- 61 Performs well in their job.
- 61 Is a stay-at-home parent in a family with children.
- 61 Is a church elder, voluntary member of the fire brigade, treasurer of a sports club or volunteer at a shelter facility for youths.

## Living together (71)

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client has voluntarily been sharing their daily life for a significant period of time with a self-chosen partner in a manner that is acceptable to both parties.

The nature of the relationship is based on the manifested behaviour of both the client and their partner. Claiming to have one or more 'good friends' is not a valid alternative. Sharing your daily life with another person implies a relatively large degree of communality. This may but does not have to involve a sexual relationship. The definition does not exclude living at separate locations, as long as there is intensive contact on a daily or almost daily basis.

A 'significant period of time' is at least one year for clients under the age of 25 and at least two years for those over 25.

A self-chosen partner does not include family members or relationships that have been formed through coercion or on the basis of the client's lack of independence.

Sharing one's daily life in a manner that is acceptable to both parties includes the following:

- domestic duties: performing household tasks
- finances: earning and managing income
- parenthood: caring for children

In short, it involves sharing the entire range of tasks, though this does not mean that each partner must do as much as the other in all areas. If one of the partners has to work, it is reasonable to expect that the other partner will spend more time on domestic tasks and caring for the children.

An assessment of the client's ability to live together with a partner must also take subcultural norms into consideration.

The definition of living together does not include living in a group setting without having an intensive relationship with another member of the group. Neither does it include a marriage in which the partners rarely see each other.

The adequacy or inadequacy of other aspects of the relationship, such as talking to each other, spending free time together and lovemaking, are registered under intimacy (75) and do not form part of the assessment of living together.

### **Quantification:**

Living together is assessed on the basis of the shared responsibility for the aforementioned tasks.

### **Examples:**

**71.3** Three years married. No children. Happy with how household tasks are shared. Both partners employed. Each with their own budget but decisions regarding large expenses are shared.

## **Responsibility (81)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client believes they share the responsibility (in a genuine and realistic manner) for the functioning of society and/or the general well-being of others.

The word 'realistic' precludes the client from taking on more responsibility than is deemed reasonable or possible, while 'genuine' implies that the client acts according to their convictions.

Someone who does something that is coincidentally of benefit to others cannot be said to be behaving in a 'responsible' manner. However, an action for another person that may also be of benefit to the client does fall under the definition, as long as they also feel genuinely responsible for the well-being of that person.

The desire to help others or society as a whole distinguishes responsibility from a passive need for love (35), defiance (41) and status (51) in which satisfying one's own needs is paramount.

### **Examples:**

**81** Works a few evenings each week as a volunteer at a shelter facility (also productivity, 61).

**81** Is a member of an environmental group and takes steps in their own home to enhance sustainability.

## **Stepping back (91)**

*Social behaviour*

**Operational definition:** The client voluntarily hands over social tasks and responsibilities to others when it is practical and useful to do so.

Stepping back refers to a reorientation in which the client recognises the value or necessity of handing social tasks over to others or making other changes to their way of living. This usually becomes more relevant after the age of fifty, although a professional athlete may have to step back much earlier than that.

One of the main characteristics of stepping back is that the client often believes this to be an essential act on their part, however difficult it might be. Stepping back often goes hand in hand with new and meaningful activities, for example spending time with grandchildren.

When assessing the effect of stepping back, consideration must be given to the client's (sub)cultural norms and specific situation.

A self-employed sole trader generally wishes to (or must) continue working longer than someone with a good pension.

The definition does not cover stepping back as a result of illness or retirement (voluntary or otherwise).

Stepping back must be differentiated from an unwillingness to continue working due to damaged pride (28), giving up (38) in the face of difficulty, refusing to participate as a result of passive aggressive resistance (defensiveness, 48) or neglecting activities due to a fear of failure (58).

**Examples:**

**91** I am not very familiar with the new technological developments in my profession. So I have decided to hand this specific responsibility over to a younger colleague.

**91** I've been running the place for over twenty years now. It's time for someone with a fresh perspective to take over.

**RELATIONSHIPS: The meaning or role a person assigns to their significant others or to others in general**

**Absence of affectivity (02)**

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client lacks the need to assign a role of importance to anything or anyone in their life.

'Anything or anyone' can mean an object, activity or living being. An absence of affectivity is characterised by:

- a lack of verbal and non-verbal manifestations of feelings in situations to which, generally speaking, the client would be expected to be able to assign a positive or negative emotional meaning
- not seeking to satisfy needs
- no desire to enter into relationships, including sexual relationships

An important characteristic is the lack of affectivity. These clients are never enthusiastic, happy or sad, angry or anxious and are immune to rewards and punishment. They are usually single and experience attempts at interaction by others as odd and sometimes even threatening. The latter can also be characterised by *fusion anxiety* (absence of structure, 09). Sometimes they are able to enter into a relationship at the instigation of someone who respects the client's aloofness. Another characteristic is that the client does not regard their lack of feelings or relationships as a deficiency and this is what differentiates an absence of affectivity from an affective disorder. The client's apparent lack of needs differentiates their lack of affectivity from giving up (38) and isolation of affect (elimination, 47).

**Quantification:**

The quantification of the lack of affectivity is the sum of the quantifications of:

- a lack of verbal and non-verbal manifestations of feelings in situations where these would normally be expected;
- not seeking to satisfy needs;
- no desire to enter into relationships, including sexual relationships.

**Examples:** (*The lack of affectivity often manifests itself in a non-verbal manner. In that case the non-verbal behaviour is described*)

**02** I don't need other people. Never did.

**02** I don't have much contact with others but I don't feel the need for it either.

**02** I don't need sex. I've never understood what all the fuss is about.

## Framework (12)

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client relies on relationships to maintain their inner structure.

The client must feel a connection with something or someone in order to maintain their own inner structure. A relationship with another person or an educational programme, job or membership of a group can serve as their framework. The actual or potential loss of these connections is closely linked to the fear of losing their grip on their own structure and ultimately themselves before eventually disintegrating (disintegration anxiety, lack of coordination – absence of structure, 09). This can also happen when the client ends the relationship themselves.

The need for a framework manifests itself when the client indicates that they require a relationship in order to function. However, the framework character of a relationship often only becomes apparent after the client has disintegrated as a result of the ending or potential loss of that relationship.

An earlier indication is the desire to exercise complete control over the behaviour of the other person. The client does everything for this other person but leaves them little or no room for their own independence. Their aim is not to dominate them (dominating, 45) but rather to ensure that the other person will not attempt to break the relationship. Stalking can also be a manifestation of this kind of object relation. To prevent the other from leaving, the client may even resort to killing them!

It can be difficult to differentiate a framework-type object relation from a parent-type (32) object relation. Both are of existential importance because the client cannot function without the relationship. However, while the loss of a parent (32) is usually followed by a short period of crisis characterised by feelings of loneliness, emptiness and apathy, while the loss of a framework and the accompanying disintegration anxiety is often characterised by an inability to perform even the most mundane tasks (absence of structure, 09).

### Examples:

**12** My horse gives structure to my life. I wouldn't know what to do without her.

**12** I wasn't afraid to drive when I was going out with my boyfriend, even when he wasn't in the car. Now that we've broken up I'm too scared to drive (also absence of structure, 09).

**12** I was a broken man when she left me and I walked around like a zombie (also dissociation, 19).

**12** I had to kill her. I couldn't bear the thought of her leaving me.

## Supplier (22)

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client views others exclusively in terms of how they can fulfil the client's wishes.

An essential word here is 'exclusively', as it demonstrates the one-sided character of the relationship. Others only ever have any meaning to the client when they are of some use to them. As 'extras' or part of a cheering audience they can play an essential role but as people they are unimportant and therefore replaceable.

An indirect manifestation of this attitude is establishing 'intimate' contact with others, at the client's behest, without having to get to know them at a deeper level.

A collective, such as a group, society or institution or even God can also fall into the category of 'suppliers'.

Using others as suppliers is difficult to recognise, as the suppliers tend to accept the client's behaviour.

Unlike relationships in which the other person is used, for example in the framework (12) or parent (32) type, in the case of the supplier it is the client who calls the shots.

This kind of relationship can also go hand in hand with coldness (29). Suppliers are often rewarded for their efforts with gifts or other tokens of appreciation. However, the relationship is ended immediately when they can no longer fulfil the wishes of the client or when someone who can do that more effectively comes along.

Sexual seduction and humiliation is seen as a manifestation of feelings of sexual insufficiency (59).

**Examples:**

22 I never had a problem getting any woman I wanted.

22 He is important to me because I have nothing else.

22 I married my husband because I didn't want to be left on the shelf.

22 Do I have important people in my life? No. No one I would miss, in any event.

22 I broke up with her when she got pregnant. That wasn't supposed to happen (also coldness, 29).

22 I can be intimate with anyone if I want.

**Parent (32)**

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client depends entirely on the involvement of another for their emotional well-being.

The word 'entirely' is crucial here. Most people regard the involvement of a significant other as an essential part of their life. The end of a relationship is usually a traumatic experience but people are generally able, though sometimes with difficulty, to carry on functioning and eventually restore their mental balance.

For symbiotic clients, the relationship with a significant other forms the basis or safe haven they need to be able to function. Metaphorically speaking, they still haven't cut the umbilical cord and so have not yet been able or willing to lead their own independent lives. The relationship becomes a precondition of their ability to function: 'I'm like a lightbulb. When

I'm plugged in I work perfectly. But if someone plugs me out, my light goes off.' The client will do everything possible to prevent this from happening and may even go as far as terminating their own life so they can be 'reunited' with a deceased parent.

Other manifestations of this parent-child relationship are *separation anxiety* and *stepping stone relationships* in which the client moves seamlessly from one relationship to the next.

When the parent-child relationship is absent, the need for such a relationship manifests itself in a preoccupation with feeling lonely and abandoned. The urgent need for this kind of relationship can also manifest itself in the rejection of all other potential relationships for fear of committing oneself only to eventually be abandoned again.

A group, an institution or God can act as a parent and sometimes this existential need can be fulfilled by an object. *Transitional objects*, such as a teddy bear, a security blanket or a warm coat can function as a substitute for a parent and provide solace. For some clients, a baby or pet – 'something that is always there, that you can hug and gives warmth' – can do the same. Attaching value to transitional objects only becomes maladaptive when the client cannot function without them.

The so-called 'transference cure' in which the client's symptoms disappear during the initial phase of treatment is the result of their feeling safe in the therapist's hands. However, the symptoms usually reappear when the client is informed that the end of their treatment is drawing near.

A well-documented type of medical malpractice is encouraging a symbiotic client to end their dependency relationship before they are able to function independently themselves or foster relationships whose level of dependency is less detrimental.

It is often difficult to distinguish between a parent-type and a framework-type (12) object relationship. Both object relationships are existential, as the client is unable to function normally on their own. When the client is abandoned by a parent they lose their interest in life and become apathetic and depressed, while the loss of a framework causes them to disintegrate and lose all inner structure.

Reacting angrily to abandonment and accusing others of being unwilling to show enough love or solve the client's problems for them (although they are still able to function) is seen as a manifestation of a frustrated passive need for love (35).

Abandonment by a parent can but does not have to go hand in hand with detaching (37) and giving up (38). These reactions may not even occur when the abandonment is compensated for by another parent figure.

The need for understanding and support or feelings of loneliness and abandonment distinguish this pattern from basic distrust (39) in which the client regards their inability to 'fit in' as inevitable. Sometimes, even in despair lies hope.

It is important to draw a clear distinction between refusing help out of a fear of becoming too dependent on the one hand and resisting oppression (42) and passive-aggressive resistance (defensiveness, 48) on the other.

Harsh disapproval of one's own dependence on a parent is also registered as excessive norms (44).

### Examples:

- 32 I can't live without my parents. When they are gone there will be no point in carrying on.
- 32 Why I got involved (in the robbery)? Because otherwise I'd be left out!
- 32 When I'm here (in therapy) I feel strong, but I lose all my courage the minute I walk out the door.
- 32 I have a constant fear of being abandoned.
- 32 I don't want to become attached to others anymore. When you become attached to someone you can't live without them.
- 32 I would love to have a child because then I would have something of my own that will never leave me.

## Oppressor (42)

### *Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client regards the other person as someone who can bend them to their will.

The client allows the other person to determine how they think, feel and act. In other words, the oppression is partly a product of their own submission. It is the client who affords the other person the position of top dog and takes on the position of underdog themselves, usually without being conscious of the fact.

The oppressor may be a tyrant who only acts in their own best interests or a benevolent despot who makes decisions in the interest of the client. Fate, an institution or God can also fill the role of oppressor. An indirect manifestation of these kinds of object relations is a tendency to avoid relationships for fear of being oppressed: 'Get married and lose my freedom? Over my dead body!'

In a relationship with an oppressor there is no room for negotiation or compromise. The only way to escape the underdog position is to enter into a power struggle with the aim of eliminating or, at the very least, dethroning the top dog and taking over that position yourself (dominating, 45). Clients who have accepted the position of underdog have, by definition, already given up the fight, usually for fear of losing the struggle and being eliminated themselves or because they do not actually want to destroy the top dog. The result is an all-consuming but impotent *sense of rage* or, if this is felt to be too threatening, a *fear of conflict or anger* in general. This is known as disrupted aggression regulation.

When the client becomes angry it is usually expressed as a *fit of anger* or an uncontrollable blind rage in which most of the damage is done to themselves and the existing balance of power remains unchanged.

Impotent anger or a fear of conflict only fall under the category of oppressor when the client feels they are being oppressed.

Being subjected to oppression does not necessarily mean that the client is actually allowing themselves to be oppressed. Further exploration of the client's motives may reveal that the circumstances are very much beyond their control or that the perceived oppression is the result of their fear of being abandoned. The former is regarded as a manifestation of the parent-type object relation (32).

If the client admonishes themselves for their own submissiveness or powerlessness, this is an indication of a derived self-image (43).

An unwillingness or inability to express anger can also be related to the elimination (47) of anger, although it is important to draw a distinction between the two.

**Examples:**

**42** Although I didn't want to end the relationship, I had to because of my parents. (?) They were adamant I should end it.

**42** I just can't say 'No'. When I go shopping I always end up buying stuff I don't need or want.

**42** I prefer to be on my own. Then I can do whatever I want.

**42** I never get angry because what's the point? It never solves anything (also rationalisation – elimination, 47).

**42** It's my own fault when I let people walk all over me. I'm just weak (also derived self-image, 43).

**42** I sometimes start throwing things around out of pure frustration. That only makes me feel worse and it solves nothing.

## **Unattainable love (52)**

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client is unable to combine love with sexuality.

The client experiences little or no sexual arousal with the person to whom they are attached and those they find sexually attractive are either beyond their reach or regarded with contempt.

This attitude manifests itself most clearly in relationships in which the client is desperately in love and will do anything to make the relationship a reality, only to find, to their great disappointment, that the spark is quickly quenched: 'The thrill is only in the chase.' In other words, the passion never translates into love.

Another manifestation is the client's inability to satisfy their desires. They repeatedly fall in love with one unattainable idol after another or with someone who is, in fact, willing to enter into a sexual relationship with them but unwilling to commit themselves fully.

The gap between love and sexuality becomes even clearer when the client does have a desire for intimacy and commitment but can only experience sexual arousal in sporadic and often anonymous circumstances, such as one-night stands, visiting a prostitute and group sex or in situations where the other is unidentifiable or physically absent, such as in a dark room or through masturbation fantasies.

The need for sex without any desire for intimacy is seen as a supplier object relation (22).

When sexuality is regarded as somehow 'bad' or contemptuous it also falls under the category of excessive norms (44). Paradoxically, this negative view of sexuality is often a precondition for sexual arousal: 'It was more fun when it wasn't allowed.'

If the client repeatedly falls in love with partners who abuse them, this is registered as moral masochism (49).

If finding a special partner is necessary for the client to enhance their sense of self-esteem or is regarded as a kind of 'conquest' or as proof of their own sexual appeal, these can be registered respectively as ideal-driven self-image (53), triumphing (55) and exhibitionism (59).

**Examples:**

52 I love my wife. But there's not much sexual arousal to speak of.

52 I keep falling in love but when it turns into a relationship I get bored very quickly.

52 I always fall for the stunning/macho type but there's usually very little under the skin.

52 He was intelligent, charming and married. But I couldn't stop seeing him, even though I knew I would end up regretting it (also moral masochism, 49).

**Equal (62)***Object relations*

**Operational definition:** The client takes the wishes and views of others expressly into consideration, insofar as this can be reasonably expected and also possible.

In this definition, 'expressly' means that the behaviour is not limited to a declaration of intent but also that the client believes this is how they should behave. 'Reasonably expected' and 'possible' indicate that the client does not make their own needs subordinate to those of others. Equivalence and equality are not the same thing. Unequal relationships, for example between client and therapist or between employee and employer, can also be equivalent in terms of the above.

Expressly respecting the views of another often goes hand in hand with being able to stand in someone else's shoes (empathy, 76).

**Examples:**

62 I don't like being alone when my husband goes out to play cards on Wednesdays. But I never complain because I know he enjoys it.

62 We hold completely different political views and often have heated discussions. But we respect each other's opinions.

62 I don't like it when my wife doesn't want to make love but I can accept it. It takes two to tango.

62 If we can't agree on something, we draw lots or take turns so that he can have his say one day and I'll have mine the next.

62 We always have a vote about what to watch on TV. The programme with the most votes wins.

62 When our child was born I took a part-time job so that my wife could continue working.

**Mate (72)***Object relations*

**Operational definition:** The client is a significant other for their own self-chosen significant other.

This concerns newly formed relationships that are relatively intensive and long-term – a minimum of six contact moments a year and a long-term duration of at least one year for clients aged under 25 and two years for those over the age of 25. The relationship does not have to have the same level of intensity for both partners. In this definition, 'self-chosen'

does not include family members or relationships that have been formed through coercion or on the basis of the client's lack of independence.

The mutual character of the relationship means that it is not one-sided, for example being important to someone while that person is not important to the client or vice-versa. The fact that the person is a significant other distinguishes this type of relationship from a more transactional one in which the overriding factor is what those involved can gain from the transaction. It is often very difficult to distinguish a mate-type relationship from the *collusion* type in which people stay together because they compensate each other's problems, as is often the case with long-term relationships in which the partners are important to each other but the relationship itself is not very gratifying. The relationship is then either a necessary arrangement or is maintained for lack of a more satisfying alternative.

**Examples:**

**72** My girlfriend and I have no secrets between us.

**72** My boyfriend is very important to me. And I to him.

**72** My girlfriend plays a very important role in my life. And I am the one she always turns to if she has a problem.

**72** I have a few friends I can call in the middle of the night if I need to. And they can do the same with me.

**Care (82)**

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client lends their unconditional help in a realistic manner to others in need.

The needs of the other are the focus of attention, not the client's own need to help, and the help they offer is actual and not only an intention on the client's part. In this definition, 'realistic' implies that the client does not provide more help than is necessary. The aim of their help is also to reinforce the other's ability to help themselves, without unduly overburdening the client. In this definition, 'unconditional' means that the other is not expected to do anything in return. Any self-interest, for example sharing in the other's pleasure at receiving help, must be of secondary importance.

The definition does not include care provided on a professional basis, as that care is never unconditional. This also applies when the help offered is not strictly required or when the help is coerced, including through inner compulsion (e.g., feelings of guilt) and external compulsion (e.g., the threat of sanctions). If compensating for one's own needs in terms of help plays an important role in the desire to care for others, then that 'care' is quantified as 'limited in scope' (x) and registered as a passive need for love (35). Unlike with dominating (45) and triumphing (55), the activities are not aimed at conquering or outdoing the other. And unlike with aligning (78), the care is not limited to serving the common good.

**Examples:**

**82** Helps the children with their homework and plays games with them.

- 82 Helps family members or neighbours in need.
- 82 Visits senior citizens regularly.
- 82 Is a trusted confidant for friends and colleagues.

## Altruism (92)

*Relationships*

**Operational definition:** The client helps others when required or possible and without any hint of self-interest.

Help is offered to the other without expecting any gratitude in return. Self-interest includes not only material rewards but also immaterial needs, such as feeling satisfied about one's own performance or amplifying one's self-esteem.

Identifying with the person to whom the care is being provided indicates an attempt to satisfy one's own passive need for love (35). When help is offered at the expense of one's own needs, it is an indication of excessive norms (44) or moral masochism (49).

### Examples:

92 People who are ill also need care even when they cannot be cured. That's why I help them.

## SELF-IMAGES: Criteria that determine the feeling of self-worth

### Lack of self-image (03)

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client does not believe they are complete as a person.

The client sees themselves as somehow less than whole. This manifests itself in the lack of an intuitive frame of reference they can use to orient themselves. For example, the client does not 'know' what having contact with others means. Some clients are cognisant of the fact that they lack an intrinsic core self.

A lack of self-image sometimes goes hand in hand with an absence of affectivity (02). Being aware of this lack of an intrinsic core distinguishes a lack of self-image from an absence of psychic phenomena (06).

Unlike with a vague self-image (13) and doubtfulness (defensiveness, 48), the client cannot see the options that may be available to them.

When the client is able to recognise how the lack of an internal frame of reference manifests itself in how they think, feel and act, this is an indication of self-reflection (66).

### Examples:

03 I don't know whether I can 'feel' what's going on.

03 Whether something suits me or not? How am I supposed to know that?

03 I don't know what it (sex) is. But people seem to find it pretty important.

- 03 A relationship. Does that mean living together with someone?
- 03 I don't know what it means to live. I just try to copy what other people do.
- 03 I don't have any inner structure or core.

### Vague self-image (13)

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client is unable to define themselves due to their lack of intuitive orientation.

The client has a range of options but they miss the emotional inner knowledge required to determine what is best for them, which leaves them unable to choose. This is also known as *identity diffusion*. Sometimes the client tries to determine the meaning that events or situations have for them in an indirect manner: 'I've been doing this work for years, so I must like it.'

An *indistinct sexual orientation* also belongs to this category and is characterised by doubts about one's own sexual preferences, not about the nature of the choice facing them. The client who is sure of their own homosexuality does not have a vague self-image. In other words, it is not about what the client chooses but about whether they have been able to choose. The definition does not apply to clients who reject their sexuality or are ashamed of it.

An indirect manifestation of a vague self-image is when the client often describes people, events or situations in completely different ways. For example, the client says that their father is the most important person in their life before revealing later on that they never have any contact. The client becomes confused when confronted with this apparent contradiction. At the end of interview the therapist often feels that even though the client may have revealed a lot about themselves, they still can't form an accurate picture of how the client functions in their daily life.

The statement 'I don't know who I am' does not provide enough information to draw a distinction between a 'vague' and a 'lack of' (03) self-image. More questions need to be asked to determine whether the client is unable to make choices (e.g., 'I don't know whether I'm gay or heterosexual' – vague self-image) or is unable to imagine what the choice actually entails (e.g., 'What is sexuality?' – lack of self-image, 03). A vague self-image is different from an absence of psychic phenomena (06) because the client is aware that they don't know what is best for them. The lack of intuitive orientation distinguishes a vague self-image from the inability to make choices without the approval of others (dependency, 31) or for fear of making a mistake (doubtfulness – defensiveness, 48). When the client is able to describe what it is like to have a vague self-image or what that means to them, this is an indication of self-reflection (66).

#### Examples:

- 13 I am heterosexual. But if someone (of the same sex as the client) were to fall in love with me, I wouldn't know what to do.
- 13 Sometimes I feel gay but then I think, 'No, that's not possible.'
- 13 Kickboxing? Yes, I enjoy that. Otherwise I wouldn't do it.

**13** Cycling is very important to me. (?) I spend a lot of time on my bike.

### **Inflated self-image (23)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client behaves as if they are superior to others.

An important characteristic of this feeling of superiority is that it is assumed. It is not backed up by exceptional performances or comparison with others.

Sometimes others are also regarded as superior but this is usually because they are related to the client in one way or another ('My children are incredibly talented'). Similarly, groups with which the client identifies are also regarded as exceptional ('Our kind are the ones who set the benchmark for others'). An inflated self-image manifests itself in the client's tendency to rank themselves above others or above society in general. They grant themselves the right to judge or instruct others and assume that the rules that apply to others do not apply to them.

They gladly accept applause or other manifestations of recognition and appreciation because they befit their self-image, but they do not need them as confirmation of that self-image. Any criticism or unwillingness by others to accept their superiority as a fact are completely out of the question!

An indirect manifestation of an inflated self-image is the difficulty the client often experiences in carrying out their plans. Their will should be law after all ('God only had to say the words for the Earth to be created'). Having to toil like others to realise their plans does not befit the client's self-image.

An inflated self-image can sometimes be accompanied by disclaiming (27) or self-overestimation (28).

An inflated self-image sometimes hand in hand with coldness (29). The client often stresses how well they are able to get along with 'ordinary people and colleagues'.

An inflated self-image can be distinguished from excessive ideals (54) through the lack of feelings of inadequacy.

#### **Examples:**

**23** If... then you are obviously superior.

**23** He is very intelligent. He thinks exactly the same as me.

**23** I corrected him on several occasions and that made him angry. He said he had just dropped in for a visit and not for a lecture on language. He should be grateful that I took the time to help him (also self-referring cognitions, 26)

**23** That's all very mundane stuff. I couldn't be bothered wasting my time on it.

**23** I didn't obey the rules because they didn't suit what I was doing.

**23** When I have decided what has to be done I find it very difficult to spend any time or effort on debating it.

### **External self-image (33)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The significance or worth that the client assigns to themselves is determined primarily by the opinions of others.

Most people value the opinions of others. However, in the case of an external self-image the opinions of others far outweigh the client's own opinion of themselves ('You are what others think you are'). As a result, the client often has to try very hard to appease other people and being ignored or bullied is the worst possible scenario.

A more indirect manifestation of an external self-image is basing your self-worth exclusively on what you mean to others.

The external character of the client's self-image often only becomes clear when they feel worthless because they are of no obvious importance to others. For these clients, being abandoned means they do not deserve to be loved. This is a common problem among clients whose parents have rejected them.

**Examples:**

**33** What other people think of me is very important in terms of my self-esteem.

**33** I am happy when I do something well, as long as others are happy too.

**33** I feel like a nobody when someone I know doesn't return my greeting. It makes me feel like I don't exist.

**33** She makes me feel like I can be myself.

**33** I am not worth the effort, otherwise my mother would not have left me.

**33** I only feel worthy when I mean something to others.

**Norm-related self-image (43)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The significance or worth the client assigns to themselves is determined primarily by the extent to which they are able to live up to excessive norms.

'You are worthy when you do your duty.' This often refers more to procedural or quantitative aspects than to the quality or meaning of the eventual outcome. The norms applied are determined by time- and culture-related factors. For example, not so long ago a forty-year career at a single employer was regarded as a terrific achievement but today, working in the same job for more than a few years is associated with a lack of imagination and flexibility. Clients with a norm-related self-image often describe themselves by summing up their achievements: 'I am a good mother. I'm a pretty good cook and I'm creative, too.'

Pride in one's ability to live up to accepted standards (and, conversely, a sense of dissatisfaction when unable to do so) is generally not regarded as maladaptive. This is only the case when the norms are extreme and often form an impediment to personal development.

Unlike with an external self-image (33), the client judges themselves.

Unlike with an ideal-driven self-image (53), it is not about delivering excellent performances but rather about meeting general expectations.

**Examples:**

- 43** When I achieve something, no matter how small, I don't feel as useless.  
**43** If I achieve nothing, I am nothing. Being unemployed means you are useless.  
**43** I am a useless partner and can't even have children.

### **Ideal-driven self-image (53)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The meaning or value the client assigns to themselves is derived from their ability to live up to their excessive ideals.

Everyone derives their sense of self-worth partly from their abilities. In the case of an ideal-driven self-image the client's sense of self-worth is determined by their ability to draw on exceptional capabilities: 'Being is all about being exceptional.'

This need to be exceptional can be both absolute and relative. The criterium that determines the client's sense of self-worth is their position in a hierarchy. 'Being is all about being more.' They draw comfort from the fact that others may be even greater failures than they are themselves and feel inadequate when others outperform them: 'Coming in second means you are the first loser.'

An ideal-driven self-image manifests itself directly in the client's need to demonstrate their exceptional capabilities. When introducing themselves to others, they recite a list of impressive or exceptional achievements as proof of their abilities. Their behaviour is characterised by a fundamental uncertainty regarding their own self-worth. This manifests itself not only in the severity of their efforts to prove their worth but also in their constant need to do so. 'It's like running the 400m hurdles. With each hurdle you are in danger of falling. And when you get over one hurdle you still haven't achieved anything, except that you can move on to the next one.'

An ideal-driven self-image usually manifests itself in feelings of inadequacy when the client is unable to demonstrate their exceptional capabilities. The excessive nature of the demands the client places upon themselves often only becomes clear when they are asked to explain why they believe they are underachieving: 'I feel useless. I'm nowhere near being an Einstein or a Mozart or a Rembrandt.'

An ideal-driven self-image differentiates itself from a norm-related self-image (43) through the client's need to meet exceptional as opposed to everyday demands and also that the client not only expects but also wants to deliver the required performance.

The pursuit of status (51), the realisation of excessive ideals (54) and the wish to triumph (55) are all manifestations of an ideal-driven self-image when the client also needs to achieve these in order to substantiate their sense of self-worth.

#### **Examples:**

- 53** I drive a 50-tonne truck. With a police escort. Then you really are the man.  
**53** I always take on difficult assignments so I can prove my capabilities and value.  
**53** I feel useless. I've never done anything worth talking about (also excessive ideals, 54).  
**53** My sister is much better looking. That's where my inferiority complex comes from.  
**53** When someone else achieves something I always feel completely inadequate.  
**53** I don't feel like a failure when compared with my brother, but he's useless too.

### **Authentic self-image – individual (63)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client regards living their life in way that suits them best as an important aspect of their personality.

This involves the actual realisation of ideological beliefs and not just holding those beliefs. Generally speaking, clients who live their life the way they believe suits them best have very little outward need to make this known to others.

An individual and authentic self-image often goes hand in hand with behaving according to authentic individual norms (64)

**Examples:**

**63** I took the course because it matched my abilities. That gave me a lot of confidence.

**63** I made it clear that I didn't agree with him. That made me feel good about myself.

**63** I could have been rich if I had taken all the backhanders offered to me. But I'm very glad I didn't (also authentic norms – individual, 64).

**63** I like a bit of praise now and again but I never try to curry anyone's favour. I'm too proud for that (also authentic norms – individual, 64).

### **Authentic self-image – relational (73)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client views enjoying mutually meaningful relationships with others as an important aspect of their personality.

This involves the actual building of relationships and not only believing that they are beneficial. Generally speaking, clients who live their life the way they believe suits them best have very little outward need to make this known to others.

**Examples:**

**73** My partner, my children, my friends – they are the most important things in my life.

### **Authentic self-image – social (83)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client views contributing to the welfare of others or society as a whole as an important aspect of their personality.

Evaluating one's own contribution to the welfare of others or society as a whole is a central feature. As in the case of responsibility (81), it is not one's own honour and glory that are of primary importance but rather the desire to help others.

An 'authentic social self-image' manifests itself indirectly through feelings of guilt, shame or inadequacy when the client realises they have done less for others than they could have

done. This is only registered as ‘authentic social self-image’ when the client makes an effort to compensate for this shortcoming.

**Examples:**

**83** I consider it an honour to be able to contribute to the education of the next generation.

**83** We were able to ensure that the playground was built. That still gives me a good feeling.

**83** I feel like my life has meant something. Because of my work, cases of that disease in developing countries have fallen dramatically.

**83** I’ve worked hard and made a lot of money. But I know this has no value in itself, so I have set up a foundation with the aim of helping underprivileged kids to learn a profession.

**Authentic self-image – existential (93)**

*Self-image*

**Operational definition:** The client regards behaving in a manner that is in accordance with their personal vision on the meaning of life (however concrete that vision may or may not be) as an important aspect of their personality.

If the client has grown up in an environment with distinct religious or political traditions, it is important to establish the extent to which they still adhere to those traditions.

**Examples:**

**93** I am happy. I can live with the idea that we don’t know what happens after we die.

**NORMS: A frame of reference for judging the correctness or desirability of one’s own behaviour**

**Lack of norms (04)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** In their behaviour, the client does not take into consideration the legitimate needs of others or the consequences of their own behaviour for themselves.

Despite the fact that the client is often aware that their actions are forbidden and can cause harm to others, this makes no difference to them and they feel no guilt. They often attempt to excuse their own behaviour by refusing to accept responsibility for their actions after the fact. They didn’t ‘mean it’ or ‘acted without thinking’. It was a ‘mistake’, a ‘misunderstanding’ or ‘it just happened all by itself’ or they were the victim of their own emotions: ‘That’s just the way I am. I can’t do anything about it.’ When they label their behaviour later on as ‘wrong’ or ‘bad’ it is because they have been punished and not because they are sorry for their behaviour.

A lack of norms often goes hand in hand with basic need gratification (05), though this is not always the case. The client’s basic need gratification may also lack a sense of urgency: ‘I just did it without thinking.’

The legitimisation of behaviour can also be accompanied by disavowal, (falsification, 07). In the most extreme cases, the client may completely deny their actions: 'I didn't do it and anyone who claims I did is a liar.' This can also be the result of delusional ideas (falsification, 07): 'They tricked me into doing it.'

A lack of norms sometimes goes hand in hand with impulsive behaviour (08). The client often knows exactly what they are doing but is unwilling to change their behaviour.

Often it is not the act but rather the actor that is object of denial. The client explains their behaviour as an inevitable consequence of their circumstances. Others, even including the victim, are blamed instead (also primitive externalisation, 17): 'They shouldn't have let me drive when I was so drunk. Then the accident would never have happened!' or 'If she hadn't moved, I wouldn't have shot her.' The client ignores the fact that they put themselves in a situation in which they had no control over their actions or were unable to force a different outcome, for example by walking away. This is also the case when the client legitimises their actions by claiming they are the inevitable result of an unfavourable social environment or an unhappy childhood.

Similarly, in the case of selfish norms (24), the client pays no heed to the interests of others and often blames them for what happened. They do this deliberately and purposefully. They are also conscious of the possible reaction from others and often take measures to avoid sanctions.

#### **Examples:**

**04** (Man who attacked an innocent bystander with his friends) We just did it for the fun. (?) We were in the mood for trouble.

**04** It (the murder) was not my fault. I didn't do it on purpose.

**04** I couldn't do anything about the brawl. I was drunk.

**04** I didn't stab him. He just walked into my knife (also disavowal – falsification, 07).

**04** If they take away your benefits, you're going to end up stealing instead. (primitive externalisation, 17).

**04** I know now that it was wrong to break into the house. (?) Because I got caught!

### **Dichotomous norms (14)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** The client's opinion is extreme, unfounded and non-negotiable.

The client judges people, events and situations as either absolutely good or absolutely bad without apparent reason. Someone or something that is absolutely good cannot be in any way bad and vice versa. This is also referred to as primitive idealisation or primitive devaluation.

An important characteristic of dichotomous norms is that they are non-negotiable, though the client's opinion can change at any time. They are aware that their opinion may have been different in the past but this does not affect their current position in any way.

When such an opinion influences the client's reaction to events or situations that are perceived as stressful, with the result that the blame is placed on others, this is registered as primitive externalisation (17).

An absolute value judgment can also be found in the case of selfish (24), external (34) or excessive norms (44), though the client is better able to explain their opinion in such cases. The criterium for selfish norms (24) is the client's own value judgment, while for external norms (34) it is the opinion of others. Excessive norms (44) fall under a more general classification.

**Examples:**

**14** He's a good person in every way. A real saint. (?) Why? You can just see it in him.

**14** He's a bastard. I don't want to have anything to do with him anymore. (The last time you said he was your best friend). That was then. Now I know he's good for nothing (no factual arguments; also primitive externalisation, 17).

**Selfish norms (24)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** In their behaviour the client makes a conscious decision not to consider the legitimate interests of others.

This involves deliberate actions in which the client takes the possible consequences for themselves into consideration. The client also takes the wishes of others into account if they believe this will help them to achieve their goals: 'Quid pro quo'.

If necessary, the client camouflages or conceals their behaviour, but if revealed they then rationalise that behaviour: 'There's nothing wrong with that', 'Everyone does it', 'If I don't do it, somebody else will'.

Selfish norms are often revealed indirectly through denial (reversal, 57): 'I'm as honest as they come' or 'Honesty is very important to me.' Any admission of guilt does not necessarily imply regret but is more often an attempt to escape punishment.

**Examples:**

**24** (Benefit fraud) There's more than enough to go around. I have a right to my share (also rationalisation – elimination, 47).

**24** I took money from the till at work every day. A company that size will never miss it and anyway they underpay me (also rationalisation – elimination, 47).

**24** (Shop assistant) I know that toy is dangerous but it's not my responsibility (also denial – reversal, 57).

**24** (Man talking about his affair) For God's sake, we all need a change of scenery every now and then. It meant nothing to me.

**24** (Man caught drink-driving) Thank God nothing happened. I could have lost my license.

**External norms (34)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** When assessing their own behaviour the opinion of others is the most important criterium for the client.

It is not what you do or the consequences of your actions that determine whether your actions are 'good' or 'bad' but rather the opinion of others. A relatively innocent example of

this attitude is keeping up with the latest trends in fashion before deciding that those trends are no longer 'hip' because they are out of fashion.

'External norms' manifest themselves indirectly through the fact that the client may only feel guilt after their behaviour has been criticised: 'Ignorance is bliss.' Another indirect manifestation is the capacity to allow others take the blame instead.

That the human conscience is determined to a large degree by external factors becomes apparent when normal and often apparently decent people become murderers or rapists in a situation in which this kind of behaviour is rewarded or at the least not punished.

A more extreme manifestation of external norms is feeling guilty about everything that has gone wrong, including incidents for which the client bore no responsibility, that were beyond their control or in which they were not even involved. The client is only able to escape from this 'punishment without the crime' by ensuring that they 'make everything all right again'. And that is exactly what they try to do, often at great cost to themselves.

Interpreting criticism of their actions as an attack on their person is regarded as a manifestation of an external self-image (33).

**Examples:**

**34** I have my own views but I often doubt myself when someone puts forward a different opinion.

**34** When someone doesn't like something I've made, I stop liking it myself.

**34** I did it because he said I could.

**34** I thought, 'Well, if everyone is doing it, it can't be that bad.'

**34** When my boss told me the accident was not my fault I stopped feeling guilty about it.

**34** When I see my supervisor walking around with an angry look on his face I'm always afraid I've done something wrong, even when I know that's not the case.

**34** My parents got divorced when I was two years old. I've always believed it was my fault.

**Excessive norms (44)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** The client judges their behaviour on the basis of extremely strict and rigid rules.

An example of strict adherence to the rules is when fantasies are treated the same as real actions. An 'incorrect' thought is then as bad as an incorrect action. The client is unable to allow for circumstances that would justify breaking the rules. The letter of the law is more important than the spirit: 'Orders are orders!' Accepting these kinds of moral clichés is also ambivalent. They represent obligations you are required to meet because you yourself believe them to be correct.

The strictness of these rules means that the client is almost always breaking them. Excessive norms also manifest themselves indirectly in feelings of guilt, destructive self-criticism with regard to your own failures, placing excessive demands on yourself to compensate for those 'failures' and denying yourself pleasure through self-punishment, taking on unpleasant tasks, inflicting harm on yourself and, in extreme cases, committing suicide. This self-punishment is

often indirect. The client does something that is forbidden, but in such a way as to guarantee their own failure or provoke some kind of punishment.

Excessive norms are determined to a large extent by (sub)cultural and time-related factors. A certain rule of behaviour that has been regarded as correct by a particular community for a certain period of time can be interpreted later on (or by a different community) as ridiculous or even criminal.

Unlike with dichotomous norms (14), the client can explain their norms by pointing to the rules governing those norms.

Feeling 'extremely guilty' about one's behaviour but at the same time being able to carry on as normal, including exhibiting the same 'bad' behaviour, is not regarded as a manifestation of excessive norms. The same applies to self-punishment with the aim of avoiding even heavier sanctions. Further exploration may reveal the latter to be a case of selfish norms (24).

Overloading oneself with destructive self-criticism for other reasons, for example because of an excessive level of dependency (31, 32) or powerlessness (42) or losing out to a competitor (55), is registered not only as a sign of a maladaptive attitude but also as a manifestation of excessive norms.

When the client criticises not only their actions but also themselves, this is registered as norm-related self-image (43).

Feeling useless without any apparent reason or an inability to enjoy positive or otherwise pleasurable experiences are registered respectively as lack of basic trust (39) and moral masochism (49).

In the case of both excessive norms and excessive ideals (54), the client places too many demands on themselves. In the case of the former, however, this refers to demands the client regards as appropriate but that are placed on them by others, while the latter refers to demands the client places upon themselves.

#### **Examples:**

**44** Complaining = self-pity.

**44** I don't like criticising others (during therapy) when they are not here to defend themselves.

**44** You should always tell the truth, regardless of the consequences.

**44** Criticising people who love you or who do their best to help you is a breach of trust.

**44** I am a bad person. I have wicked thoughts.

**44** When I'm not feeling well I feel terribly guilty because I stop doing the things I should be doing. I punish myself by denying myself certain things or working myself to the bone.

### **Excessive ideals (54)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** The client demands too much of themselves.

In this definition, the word 'themselves' implies that the client experiences these demands as coming from within – they want to do what they have to do. As a result, resistance is low. They may complain consistently about the effort involved in performing a strenuous task or

achieving an ambitious goal, but they are prepared to do whatever is required: 'Otherwise there's no point and you might as well give up.'

Excessive ideals are directly manifested in the nature of the goals the client sets for themselves or the extreme effort they require. However, the satisfaction experienced upon successfully completing a task is short-lived and the client often moves swiftly on to the next challenge.

While feelings of success may be fleeting, failures tend to be remembered for longer.

Excessive ideals manifest themselves in feelings of dissatisfaction or shame about activities that normally would not give rise to those feelings. It often only becomes clear just how extreme the demands the client places on themselves are when their dissatisfaction is examined. The same applies to the way in which their efforts to attain perfection hinder their ability to achieve a good (i.e., the best possible) result.

It is not always easy to distinguish between excessive ideals (wanting too much) and excessive norms (demanding too much, 44). This is primarily because the norm is often elevated to the level of an ideal – something you 'should want'. In that case, those who fail to live up to a certain norm are made to feel ashamed as opposed to guilty.

Additionally, a certain manner of functioning, for example the ability to work without the help of others, can be both a norm and an ideal.

Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of excessive norms and excessive ideals. In cases of overlap, the client is often able to quantify both the 'must' and the 'want' aspects of their behaviour: 'I donate a large part of my income to the church. That's how things are done in our church. (?) I want to help, of course, but 70% of it is because I 'should' help.'

*Table 1 Criteria for the assessment of own behaviour at levels 4 and 5*

<b>Excessive norms (44)</b>	<b>Excessive ideals (54)</b>
Something you believe you should do	Something you want to do
Formal, impersonal. Relates primarily to following general rules of behaviour	Functional, relative, personal. Relates primarily to achieving one's goals
Inner resistance	No inner resistance
Failure results in feelings of guilt	Failure results in feelings of shame

Global or abstract statements such as 'I demand a lot from myself' or 'I'm a perfectionist' are not specific enough to allow classification. They require further exploration, including a description of the thinking, feeling and acting processes and, if possible, an examination of the meaning that the client assigns to their behaviour.

Unlike with self-overestimation (28), the client is aware of the fact that they are assessing themselves.

Perfectionism that is based on the fear of being rejected and perfectionism based on the fear of being abandoned are registered respectively as external self-image (33) and parent (34).

Unlike with defensiveness (48), perfectionism with regard to excessive ideals is aimed at optimising the end product and not merely the elimination of errors. When the client's sense

of self-worth is dependent on their ability to deliver an outstanding performance, this is registered as an ideal-driven self-image (53).

The excessive nature of the demands the client places on their performance is what differentiates excessive ideals from authentic individual or relational norms (64,74).

**Examples:**

**54** I can't do anything normally. It always has to be something new or impressive. Otherwise it's no use.

**54** I want to do something exceptional and change the world. Otherwise what's the point of living?

**54** I'm never satisfied with average grades. They always have to be the best.

**54** I think everything I do can always be done better.

**54** My father used to say, 'Where there's a will, there's a way'. That's why I always feel ashamed whenever I fail at something.

**54** I always have to perform at my best. But even when I do I'm never happy for very long. Failures, on the other hand, linger much longer.

**Authentic norms – individual (64)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** When assessing their behaviour the client uses their own choices in terms of goals and resources as the main criterium and takes both their own interests and those of others into consideration.

The client checks everything against their own standards. While they always abide by the law, exceptions are allowed when the letter of the law is deemed unreasonable or impossible to follow, including when this may lead to formal punishment. In other words, the spirit of the law is always as important as the letter of the law and sometimes even more important.

The client is able to explain the criteria they use to assess whether something is good or bad and they do not insist on the correctness of their judgment but rather assess whether the price they must pay for achieving their goal is worth it.

Failing to act in accordance with one's own standards causes feelings of self-betrayal and genuine guilt when this is detrimental to the well-being of others. This usually results in efforts by the client to reverse or compensate for the negative consequences of their actions. In this definition, 'genuine' indicates that both the intensity of the feeling of guilt and the efforts to repair the damage are contingent on the seriousness of the wrongdoing.

Considering the interests of others differentiates authentic individual norms from selfish norms (24), while the individuality and feasibility of authentic norms distinguishes them from excessive norms (44) in which strict rules form the guiding principle.

The realistic nature of the demands differentiate authentic norms from excessive ideals (54).

**Examples:**

**64** If I don't like something, I usually say it. I think it's important to be straight and honest.

**64** I did my best. That's all I could do.

**64** I feel bad when something I do goes wrong. But if I've done my best, I can usually live with it.

64 If I don't feel like making love, I don't feel like I have to force myself to do it.

### **Authentic norms – relational (74)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** When assessing their own behaviour, taking other people's legitimate interests into consideration is an important criterium for the client.

The word 'legitimate' implies not only that the interests of others must be reasonable but also that the client examines the sacrifices they have to make in order to meet them.

Feelings of guilt as a result of 'bad' behaviour are a realistic outcome, depending on the seriousness of the wrongdoing. It is not the self-reproach that is of primary importance but rather compensating for the impact of this behaviour on others.

Guilty feelings that do not result in compensation when compensation is possible are not regarded as adaptive.

Taking one's own interests into account and retaining control of the situation are the characteristics that differentiate authentic relational norms from external norms, in which one's own interests are entirely subordinate to the wishes of others.

#### **Examples:**

74 My daughter recently said I was never there for her. That really had an impact on me. I now bring her to swimming lessons, instead of my wife, and we do something she likes every weekend as well.

74 I feel bad about not doing something when I realised he was drinking too much. I call him regularly now and have told him he can phone me any time if he feels like he's losing the plot again.

74 I always lose it when the kids are being difficult. But when I slap them I always regret it afterwards. I have signed up for a course where you can learn how to change this behaviour.

74 I told him truthfully that his painting was worth a lot more than he thought it was.

### **Authentic norms – social (84)**

*Norms*

**Operational definition:** When assessing their behaviour, making a contribution to the well-being of others or society in general is an important criterium for the client.

The difference between authentic social norms and authentic social self-image (83) is that the former is related to the assessment of one's own behaviour, while the latter is related to judging one's own character.

#### **Examples:**

84 I try to live like a Christian – to be honest and to treat others the way you would like them to treat you.

84 I don't eat meat because the bio-industry does not provide animals with proper living conditions.

**Authentic norms – existential (94)***Norms*

**Operational definition:** The client regards behaving in a manner that is in accordance with their personal vision on the meaning of life (however concrete it may or may not be) as an important aspect of their personality.

If the client has grown up in an environment with distinct religious or political traditions, it is important to establish the extent to which they still adhere to those traditions.

**Examples:**

**93** I am happy and can live with the idea that we don't know what happens after we die.

**NEEDS: A desire to possess something that one is lacking, usually accompanied by an urgency to fill that void****Basic need satisfaction (05)***Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client is not prepared and often unable to abstain from basic need satisfaction.

The client 'must have what they want'. Usually immediately but sometimes in the short term when fulfilling their needs require some preparatory work or when the current situation does not facilitate it. In the case of the latter, the need continues to dominate the thoughts, feelings and actions of the client. This is also known as a lack of frustration tolerance. The client is often aware of the damage their behaviour causes to themselves but they can do nothing about it.

Unlike with addictive behaviour and compulsions, the client does not feel that their behaviour is forced upon them.

When the legitimate interests of others are not taken into consideration this is registered as a lack of norms (04) or selfish norms (24).

If the client has not thought about the execution, meaning or consequences of their behaviour in advance, this is registered as impulsive behaviour (08).

**Examples:**

**05** When I want something I have to have it and I'll scream like a little child until I get it.

**05** I get really mad when things don't go my way. I start shouting and throwing stuff around or run out the door (also impulsiveness, 08).

**05** When I like something I do it immediately, only to often find out later on that I shouldn't have done it (also impulsiveness, 08).

**05** I found the story so sad that I ended up handing over more money than I should have (also impulsiveness, 08).

**05** When a man is kind to me I simply can't say no and always end up in bed with him, even though I know it is bound to end in tears.

## Sensation-seeking (15)

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client has a need for excitement and undertakes activities that produce a high level of stimulation.

An important characteristic is the constant need for excitement and agitation when it is not forthcoming. Excitement is sought in risky activities, such as driving too fast, hazardous sports for which the client has not prepared themselves sufficiently, unprotected sexual contact with strangers and aggressive behaviour, often in combination with the use of alcohol or drugs.

Sometimes the dominant characteristic is not agitation but a desire to avoid feeling empty on the inside. The client may even harm themselves in order to feel that they are alive. This is known as self-harm.

Sensation-seeking can sometimes go hand in hand with impulsive behaviour (08), changeability (11) or acting out (18). When sensation-seeking is accompanied by confusion or disintegration anxiety, this is registered as absence of structure (09).

### Examples:

**15** Things are only interesting when they're new or challenging. When everything stays the same I become restless and have to move on to something else.

**15** If I'm not doing a hundred things at the same time, I'm afraid I'll get stuck in a kind of no-man's-land.

**15** There always has to be something going on. Something to distract me, crazy stuff, even trouble and misery if needs be. Otherwise I become insecure and restless. I sometimes used to smoke pot to ease the tension.

**15** Sometimes I have to harm myself to feel alive.

## Mirroring (25)

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client's attention is focused entirely on themselves.

In this definition, 'themselves' can refer to the client's own physical or psychological characteristics or to issues or activities that interest the client or are, for whatever reason, important to them.

These issues or activities do not have any social meaning in the sense of wanting to do something with or for others or attempting to win other people's approval. The client reads, collects, pursues hobbies and travels with the sole purpose of satisfying their needs. This is also referred to as narcissism, by analogy with the handsome young man who only had eyes for his own mirror image without any interest in achieving anything else through his beauty. The word 'entirely' is essential in this definition. The client is unwilling and often not even capable of paying attention to other people or to matters that are of no interest to them. When a conversation does not interest them they switch off, walk away or even fall asleep!

Unlike with bizarre behaviour (01), the client's behaviour is understandable and instead of displaying a lack of affect they value the contact they have with like-minded others.

Mirroring can sometimes go hand in hand with attitudes that are typical of individualist (21), supplier (22), inflated self-image (23) and disclaiming (27) types.

Mirroring must be distinguished from an excessive preoccupation with enhancing one's appearance, developing one's abilities or performing in an excellent manner with the aim of improving one's social standing (status, 51), delivering exceptional performances (ideal-driven self-image, 53, or excessive ideals, 54), outdoing others (triumphing, 55) or presenting oneself as a kind of superman or superwoman (feelings of sexual inadequacy, 59).

**Examples:**

**25** I have neither the time nor interest for anything apart from my studies.

**25** I live for my stamp collection. Nothing else interests me.

**25** I often forget the things I've promised others, like meeting up with someone, because they don't really interest me or because I have more important things on my mind (also inflated self-image, 23).

**25** I often fall asleep in the company of others. The stuff they talk about is so uninteresting I can't stay focused (also devaluation – disclaiming, 27).

**Passive need for love (35)**

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client's needs are primarily those that can be satisfied by someone or something else.

Satisfying one's needs through someone or something can be regarded as adaptive and even as a precondition for a rewarding relationship. It offers people the opportunity to care for each other. This attitude only becomes maladaptive when it is the only way in which a person can satisfy their needs and they are completely unable to fulfil those needs themselves.

Satisfaction can come in all kinds of forms, such as a gift (material), attention (immaterial), a hug (physical) or a reward (psychosocial). In addition to people, a good TV show, hot bath, food, alcohol or drugs can also provide the desired external satisfaction. A passive need for love manifests itself in the frustration that arises from excessive self-pity and the need to treat oneself to sweets or alcohol or to call in 'sick' at work, i.e., *passive stress reduction*.

The client often does not ask others to satisfy their needs but instead expects them to know when they need something: 'Otherwise it doesn't count.' These needs also tend to know no bounds and attempting to satisfy them is like trying to fill a bottomless pit.

Sometimes the client behaves like a spoiled child that becomes angry or upset when they don't get their way. They also don't like having to share things with others and not being the centre of attention. However, these clients are sometimes very active at persuading others to provide them with what they want. Provoking negative attention by drawing criticism from others can also be a manifestation of a passive need for love. When making an indirect appeal to others, the client presents themselves as a frightened child that feels lost in a strange and terrifying world or they choose to suffer in silence.

Another indirect manner of satisfying a passive need for love is to satisfy that same need in others. The client can get what they need themselves by identifying with the person receiving care, who of course must be willing to cooperate, make few demands and be very grateful.

The passive character of an indirect appeal is often rationalised (47) by the client: 'I know I should do it myself,' or denied (57): 'I'm not asking you to solve my problems for me, but...'  
Unlike with dominating (45), the client's primary aim in the case of a conflict is not to dominate the other but to win their care.

An excessive passive need for love can be accompanied by a passive-aggressive rejection (48) of attempts by others to fulfil that need.

If the indirect satisfaction of the client's need to be helped is their main focus when helping others, this is a sign of *pseudo-altruism*. When both the client's needs and the needs of others are satisfied, then both the client's passive need for love and the provision of care (82) to others are fulfilled.

During treatment these clients are often prepared to do whatever is asked of them, but they also expect the therapist to cure them without having to draw on their own sense of responsibility.

A silent appeal often manifests itself when the therapist begins to feel worried or guilty and becomes inclined to take on responsibility for everything the client needs.

### Examples:

**35** What I'd really like is to just sit in someone's lap all day and not have to do anything else.

**35** I feel terribly lonely when I'm on my own. I often make myself a bowl of soup and sit up against the radiator with my teddy bear (also dependency, 31 and transitional object as parent, 32).

**35** I spend all day watching TV. It helps me to escape to another world.

**35** I don't know how/I can't do it/I just want give up. Tell me what I need to do. (...) Okay, but that's exactly what I'm not able to do/that doesn't help at all (also obstruction, 48).

**35** The world frightens me. I feel lost in it.

**35** I have to do so much for other people and I get really angry when they won't cooperate.

## Dominating (45)

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client's needs are closely linked to gaining power over others.

Clients who dominate others either spend enormous amounts of time and effort on proving the validity of their actions or go to great lengths to show that they are the boss. It is not about achieving certain goals but about power and the need to be the top dog and control others. The client will do this even if it harms their own interests: 'I'd rather go down fighting than fainting.'

Dominating often has a defensive character, with the intention being to prevent domination by others. This appears to be a common motivation for a preoccupation with various means of power, such as muscle strength, money or a hierarchical position: 'If you are strong, no one will mess with you,' 'Money is power. He who pays the piper calls the tune!' or 'I want to be the boss because then no one dares to argue with you.'

In extreme cases, in which the client make others physically powerless or causes them pain, this is referred to as *moral sadism*.

Frustration of the need to dominate or being subjected to an oppressor (42) often goes hand in hand with outright and impotent anger.

When assessing this attitude it is also important to consider the norms that are relevant to the client's situation. In some (sub)cultures, exercising power over others is regarded as normal or even necessary.

Assuming that other people will adopt your opinion or do what you want them to do, and an inability to accept the situation when they are unwilling to do so, is a manifestation of inflated self-image (23). These clients believe they are always right and are unable to regard resistance to this 'inalienable fact' as a threat to their position of power.

Unlike with triumphing (55), attempts at domination are not focused on gaining victory over others but have the more defensive aim of preserving the client's position or retaining control over their situation.

Opposing domination by others by forcefully opposing suppression in all its forms or resisting dominant behaviour in a relationship are registered respectively as defiance (41) and oppressor (42).

Striving to attain a higher hierarchical position or more wealth in order to achieve greater social status, prove one's own exceptional qualities or gain power over others are registered respectively as status (51), ideal-driven self-image (53) and triumphing (55). When the client experiences sexual arousal through depriving others of power or causing them pain, this is registered as feelings of sexual inadequacy (59).

#### **Examples:**

45 I have always have to have the last word.

45 I thought that when you're the managing director it means you're the boss and everyone has to do what you say. But the reality is a lot different.

45 Money, power, influence – that's what's important. They make you untouchable.

45 I get really mad when my dog/child doesn't come to me when I call them.

45 I can't stand it when things don't go my way. It makes me so angry.

45 I like teasing people just to see if I can put them off balance (also 'moral sadism').

## **Triumphing (55)**

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client's needs are primarily related to their being victorious over others.

triumphing, i.e., gaining a victory that demonstrates one's own qualities, is not necessarily maladaptive. Being a winner does not preclude the possibility of others winning too – 'Everyone who finishes a marathon is a winner.' Winning only becomes maladaptive when one person's victory automatically means everyone else is a loser or otherwise inferior to the victor. The division of roles is absolute. You are either a winner or a loser. Honour in defeat is not an option: 'The winner takes it all.'

In the description above, triumphing over others is generally not regarded as socially acceptable behaviour and is rarely referred to as such.

A well-known form of triumphing is devaluing other people's status or symbols of success: 'Christ, are you still using that thing?' (an older model of smartphone) or 'Not a bad car really, if you can't afford anything better.' This destructive kind of attitude can also be

manifested in a fear of aggressive behaviour in others. They are jealous or unable to allow the client to enjoy their success and try to frustrate their efforts. This is also known as *projection* (covering up, 57). Triumphant is often manifested in the rebuttal of a hurtful remark by devaluing the messenger.

The need to triumph over others usually manifests itself indirectly in the feeling that you are being devalued by another and feelings of hate towards whoever has humiliated you by outperforming you in some way or other. The client often devalues themselves, too, but they also believe that others are even more useless than they are.

Another indirect manifestation of triumphing is having guilty feelings about the vanquished: 'The poor woman. It must be so humiliating that after all those years of marriage her husband left her for me' or 'I hope your husband finds himself a good job like mine some day.'

Triumphant must be differentiated from disclaiming (27) in which a different opinion is dismissed as 'obviously wrong'.

Triumphant must also be differentiated from dominating (45), i.e., being victorious over others in order to exercise control over them.

Triumphant is often accompanied by a (negative) ideal-driven self-image (53) and is characterised by feelings of hate towards the victor.

Devaluing the other in order to feel less useless about oneself is a manifestation of an ideal-driven self-image (53).

**Examples:**

55 I read a lot. I don't want to end up not knowing what other people are talking about.

55 When someone else succeeds at something I feel really inadequate.

55 (Woman) When I walk past a café and see all those young girls, I often wish the ground would open up and swallow me.

55 I don't feel useless compared with my boyfriend. He's a loser, too.

55 The fact that they are critical of my work just proves they don't understand it.

55 My friends always give me a strange look every time I wear something new. That really annoys me.

**Identity (65)**

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client regards the important choices they make in life as suited to them.

This does not apply to wishes or intentions but to what the client actually does or has done. The choices may relate (where relevant) to:

- relationship with a partner
- parenthood
- education
- work

- sport and hobbies
- religious or political activities

The definition does not include choices the client finds pleasurable but not particularly important. Their opinion while performing an activity, however, is crucial. For example, if someone who has played football for a number of years regards it as an activity that is suited to them, it fits the definition of identity, even if they don't play football anymore. The same applies when someone has studied something they regarded as suited to them at the time but has now chosen to study something else because they want to do work in a different profession. If it is not possible to make suitable choices because of circumstances beyond one's control, this is of no consequence. These circumstances may be external, based on the client's particular situation, and may make it difficult for them to achieve their ambitions, for example to go to college, or they may be internal, for example when the client is reluctant to form a relationship with someone because they are afraid to do so or does not want children because they have a particular disability. A deliberate choice to take no action, for example not to enter into a relationship or not to have children, does match the definition when the client regards their choice as the right one for them.

This does not apply to so-called negative choices, i.e., choices made to prevent something worse from happening, such as 'I like going to work, at least it gets me out of the house' or 'I like living with someone. I could never live on my own.' Rational choices, i.e., choices aimed at achieving a separate goal, also fall under this category (e.g., 'He suits me; he's very wealthy' or 'I believe in God because he protects me.')

#### **Quantification:**

Identity is assessed on the basis of the average score (rounded down) for the choices listed above (where applicable). With the exception of parenthood, only those activities with which the client has at least one year's experience are scored.

#### **Examples:**

65 We get on great together. I'd like to grow old with him.

65 Always wanted to have children.

65 I was born to be a nurse.

65 I think voluntary work is essential.

## **Intimacy (75)**

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client derives satisfaction from mutual activities with their partner.

Mutual activities include:

- Communication: talking to each other about things that occupy your mind
- Shared activities: taking part in leisure activities together
- Sex: making love

Of central importance is the ability to integrate love, friendship and sexuality. This concerns relationships of at least one year in duration for clients younger than 25 and a minimum of two years for clients over 25.

Both parties must experience the activities as pleasing, though not necessarily for the same reasons or to the same extent.

In the definition, 'mutual' implies freedom of choice for both parties.

The definition does not include satisfying the other person's wishes and participating in activities that have little significance for one of the partners for the sake of 'keeping the peace'.

When assessing intimacy it is important to take the client's (sub)cultural norms and environment into consideration. In some cultures it is not common to talk about important issues with each other. This is mostly done with family or friends. The same applies to leisure activities.

### **Quantification:**

Intimacy is assessed on the basis of the average score (rounded down) for the level of satisfaction with regard to talking to each other, taking part in leisure activities together and making love (see examples). The degree of intimacy does not correlate directly with the value the client attaches to the relationship. It is possible to be satisfied with a relationship in which there is no interpersonal communication, shared leisure activities or love-making.

### **Examples:**

**75.1** Seldom talk to each other (1); few shared leisure activities (1); love-making satisfactory (2):  $(1+1+2=4:3=1)$

**75.2** Reasonable level of communication (2); and shared leisure activities (2); love-making enjoyable (3):  $(2+2+3=7:3=2)$

## **Integrity (85)**

*Needs*

**Operational definition:** The client regards living according to their own authentic norms and ideals as an important need.

The client acts in accordance with their authentic norms and ideals but is also realistic about their chances of fulfilling their needs and the sacrifices that may have to be made.

### **Examples:**

**85** I knew I was putting my job at risk but I found it all so unfair that I simply had to say something (also authentic norms – individual).

**85** I'm glad I didn't use my gun. Being robbed is better than killing someone (also authentic norms – relational).

**85** I could have made a lot of money if I hadn't said anything about the goods being out of date. But I just believe you can't do that to others (also authentic norms – relational).

**Significance (95)***Needs*

**Operational definition:** For the client, viewing their personal life within a wider context is an important need.

Finding meaning in life implies being able to recognise the significance of life. It has the attributes of a well-thought out philosophy. An important condition is that the client actually applies that philosophy in their own life too.

**Examples:**

**95** I don't know the meaning of life. But we have been given this life and the world we live in, so we need to treat them with care.

**COGNITIONS: The way in which a person assigns meaning to their experiences****Respect for the controversial other (06)***Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** When describing their experiences the client is unable to recognise psychic phenomena such as thoughts and feelings.

The client describes their experiences in terms of physical feelings or sensations, such as lust and discomfort, and is unable to use their imagination. When asked what they think or feel the client is unable to provide an answer or they repeat their earlier description, sometimes substituting a particular physical sensation with a synonym. Something is 'shitty' just because it is or because it 'sucks'. This use of synonyms is also referred to as a *tautologic reaction*. These clients often become irritated or confused when questioned further because they are literally unable to answer questions related to their experiences.

Respect for the controversial other is also known as *alexithymia* (no words for emotions).

Others are usually aware of how the client reacts to a certain event or situation because they can see that it makes them angry, for example. Given the client's inability to recognise psychological phenomena, they are also unable to understand the reactions of others.

If the client comes from a culture in which psychic phenomena are not recognised as such, this must also be recorded.

**Examples:**

**06** I suffer from stress. (?) It gives me a headache.

**06** And then my grandfather died. (?) Yeah, well, not much else I can say about that.

**06** (How is your relationship with your wife?) ... Well, my wife is my wife.

**06** My relationship with my parents? I see them every evening for dinner.

**06** It happened the way it happened. It is what it is.

**06** (What is your opinion of our conversations?) Well, I suppose I get to talk about a lot of things. (But what was it like to talk?) Erm, yeah... I don't know.

## Non-personality-related cognitions (16)

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** The client experiences events in life as things that happen to them in which they play no direct role.

The client does not believe they play any role in how their thoughts and feelings are formed. The client's thoughts and feelings client are not 'personal' in a way that would define them as a person. Instead, they are formed externally. If they like a certain tree, it's because the tree is beautiful and not because they have a love of trees.

A feature of non-personality related cognitions is that the client is able to describe their experiences but cannot answer questions regarding their own involvement, e.g., 'What do you like about that tree?'

When the way in which the client experiences life implies a value judgment, this is registered as a manifestation of dichotomous norms (14).

Holding the external world entirely responsible for their well-being is registered not only as non-personality related cognition but also as primitive externalisation (17).

Unlike with self-referring cognitions (26), the absolute degree of truth of the client's own experiences is not determined by the validity of their own opinion but by the indisputability of the facts.

Similarly, in the case of self-reflection (66), while the client often cannot explain why they think, feel or act the way they do, they do experience their behaviour as originating from within.

### Examples:

*(An important characteristic is not the way in which the client thinks or feels but rather the way in which they experience their thoughts and feelings, i.e., as something that happens to them in which they play no direct role.)*

**16** I suffer from anxiety. I can't explain it any better than that.

**16** That man is untrustworthy. (?) You can just see it (also intuitive norms, 14).

**16** I have to get divorced. She makes me depressed. (?) She just does (also primitive externalisation, 17).

## Self-referring cognitions (26)

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** The client refers exclusively to their own views, opinions and needs.

An important feature is the unequivocal nature of this behaviour. While the client may acknowledge the subjective character of their opinions, they regard those opinions as the only possible or valid point of view. An indirect manifestation of self-referring cognitions is using one's own personality traits as the basis for describing others: 'He's just like me in many respects, apart from...'

An important consequence of self-referring cognitions is a lack of empathy. The client does not understand how others can think, feel and act differently from the way they do. They only ever recognise phenomena that do not match their expectations when they form an

obstacle to their plans and they are unable to see the possible consequences of their behaviour for others.

Sometimes the client acknowledges their own inability to treat other people equally and they may suffer themselves as a result. However, any possible suffering is often more related to their own frustrations than to those of others.

If their vision is not shared by other people, the client often regards this as a lack of understanding on the part of others and their opinions are then often devalued (disclaiming, 27): 'There are only two options when it comes to taste: good and bad.'

Self-referring cognitions often go hand in hand with selfish norms (24) but a distinction must be drawn between the two, as people whose deliberate actions are aimed solely at satisfying their own needs (selfish norms, 24) are often good at pandering to the needs of others.

If the client is unable to show an interest in the opinions of others, this can also be registered as mirroring (25) and when another person's unsolicited opinion is dismissed as 'obviously wrong' this can be registered as disclaiming (27).

### Examples:

26 I always take other people seriously, unless their opinion differs from mine, of course.

26 My wife says I treat her like a maid. But that's ridiculous (also devaluation – disclaiming, 27).

26 Religion is nonsense. I can't imagine that an intelligent person would believe in God.

26 I still don't understand how people didn't listen to those songs. They were so good.

26 I don't understand all the commotion about firing those people. It was the only way to keep the business viable.

## Suggestive cognitions (36)

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** How the client feels is a direct reflection of the way in which they experience the outside world, while, conversely, their experience of the outside world is a direct reflection of the expectations the client holds of that world (under the condition that they are not suffering from any perception disorder).

The outside world, other people, events and situations directly affect the client's thoughts and feelings. 'If everything looks bad on the outside, it feels bad on the inside too.' They often expect that changes in the outside world automatically go hand in hand with changes in the way they feel: 'I'd be happier if I were somewhere else.' This is also referred to as *semi-permeability* with regard to perception. Conversely, the client's perception of the outside world is determined to a large extent by their own assumptions. The client who feels guilty believes that other people look at them as though they are in fact guilty of something. This has nothing to do with a distortion of perception, as other people – the man behind the shop counter, passers-by on the street – may of course have looked at the client, but rather with the way in which the client experiences their own perception. Another manifestation of suggestive cognitions is stepping into another person's shoes or *identification*. Identification can be supportive and constructive and is only ever registered as a maladaptive cognition when it interferes with the client's ability to function, for example if it causes them to feel interminably miserable. A less severe example of identification is second-hand

embarrassment, in which the client identifies with someone who has done something stupid or wrong. Wishful thinking, unfounded expectations that your wishes will be fulfilled and hoping for a miracle also belong to this category, as do all forms of superstition.

Reality testing, i.e., the client's perception of the outside world, is not disrupted by the above and this is what distinguishes suggestive cognitions from delusional ideas (falsification, 07). Unlike with projection (reversal, 57), the client does not attempt to deflect their own assumptions or fantasies.

**Examples:**

**36** Whenever someone says to me that I look pale, I immediately feel ill. They just put the idea in my head.

**36** I'm going to move to x. It's beautiful there and it's a place where I can be happy. (Client has never been to x and has no friends or work there.)

**36** I changed my name. I thought it would make me happier.

**36** When my partner got a stomach ache, I got one too.

**36** When the first traffic light I come to is green, I just know it's going to be a good day.

**Objectifying cognitions (46)**

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** The client describes people, events and situations on the basis of their external characteristics or other factual information.

The client's description has the character of an objective report, one that gives a clear account of the situation. However, what they feel or what the situation means to them remains unknown.

The client often adopts a dry or lecturing tone of voice, even when the situation is related to personal matters, and they sometimes state explicitly that they do not wish to talk about sensitive matters but only about 'practical stuff' and in a pragmatic manner.

Unlike with non-personality-related cognitions (16), the client regards observations that involve them directly as characteristic of their personality.

Unlike with elimination (47), this does not involve a reaction to stressful matters but relates instead to habitual behaviour.

**Examples:**

**46** My sex life is fine. We make love at least five times a week.

**46** My partner is six feet tall and blonde. He's the sporty type. He's usually pretty calm but he can also lose his rag sometimes.

**46** I decided to study psychology because I find humans very interesting.

**46** For me, being employed is an important part of my socio-economic identity.

**Theatrical cognitions (56)**

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** The client describes their experiences in an emotional and excessive manner.

The excessive character of the client's thoughts and feelings manifests itself in an incongruence between the actual nature of the situation and the client's reaction to it or the tone of their remarks or between their verbal and non-verbal behaviour. They may react in a very emotional manner to situations in which their involvement is negligible or that have little meaning to them personally, remark that they are 'deeply moved' without this being evident in their behaviour or reveal that they are suffering from a serious illness while smiling at the same time. The latter is also referred to as *belle indifférence*.

The client's behaviour often appears to be 'fake', partly because of its lack of nuance. Another manifestation of theatrical cognitions is the frequent use of superlatives. It is often the tone or other non-verbal aspects of the client's behaviour that lends their remarks their excessive character. In that case it is necessary to include a written description of their behaviour.

When assessing the excessiveness or otherwise of the client's remarks, it is important to take their subcultural norms into consideration, as they may influence the way in which strong emotions are expressed in certain situations.

#### **Examples:**

*(Given that theatrical cognitions manifest themselves primarily in non-verbal behaviour, this must also be described in addition to the client's verbal remarks)*

**56** Is 'devastated' by the death of a neighbour (whom they barely knew).

**56** Says that they are 'very depressed' (without making a vacant or even mournful impression).

**56** I don't see my friends very often. But I have a very sincere and meaningful relationship with them.

## **Self-reflection (66)**

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** The client is able to describe their behaviour in a concrete and detailed manner, elucidate it by explaining how they interpret their own behaviour and explicate their interpretations by reliving the experiences on which those interpretations are based.

Through self-reflection the client is able to contemplate their actions while carrying them out. This is also referred to as *reflection* or the ability to adopt a *third-person perspective*.

#### *Describing own behaviour – concrete and detailed*

The client describes their thoughts, feelings and actions and the conditions under which they were experienced. They make clear exactly how they behave, for example when they say, 'I don't like being on my own because it makes me anxious. I usually flee the house or end up under the covers with a bottle of wine.' This kind of description explains their actions but not their thoughts or feelings. The client spends little time alone at home and when they do stay home they drink too much because they don't like being alone. However, this still does not explain why they don't like spending time on their own.

When providing this clear kind of description the client does not try to manipulate it. In other words, they don't resort to maladaptive cognitive styles or maladaptive problem-solving strategies in order to change or influence the way in which they experience things. For example, when the client angrily remarks that they are not angry and are not bothered about the fact that their partner has left them, this is registered as denial (reversal, 57) and not as self-reflection.

A description that makes the client's actions clear creates the possibility to predict and influence their behaviour. There is a considerable chance that the client who finds it difficult to be on their own may become anxious if their therapist announces that they will be going on holiday. In that case, establishing contact with the therapist's replacement regarding their availability is often enough to provide the client with the sense of security they require.

#### *Interpreting own behaviour*

The client describes the *personal meaning* they assign to their experiences. For example, 'I hate being alone. I feel like I'm lost in space' or 'When I'm playing tennis I always have to win. Otherwise I'll feel inferior.' This explains why the client thinks, feels and acts the way they do. They cannot be alone because that spells disaster. And they have to be better than everyone else so as not to feel inadequate.

When the client realises that the meaning they assign to various phenomena is determined to a large extent by their own interpretation (i.e., that meaning is not only factual but also, and particularly, constructed in character), this is also known as *formal operational thinking*. Facts can be ignored or eventually accepted for what they are but they can never be changed: 'Being alone means being alone.' Interpretations of facts, however, can be changed: 'Being alone doesn't have to mean disaster.' Acknowledging the way in which one assigns meaning can therefore have enormous therapeutic consequences.

#### *Reliving primary experiences*

It is not clear how the client assigns meaning in the way they do, why being alone leads to disaster and why they feel they must continually prove their adequacy. All of this can be clarified when the client relives the situation in which they arrived at these conclusions, for example when they describe a situation in which they were left helpless and were unable to help themselves: 'I was left alone on the playground by another mother I didn't know. I felt vulnerable and cried and cried until she eventually came back.'

This reliving of a situation is not only cognitive but also, and particularly, affective. The affects often manifest themselves in a non-verbal manner. The client appears helpless as they tell how they were left on their own as a young child and the therapist feels as if they are dealing with an abandoned child. Reliving a situation does not mean just 'talking about' an experience but rather talking about it *as it was experienced*, i.e., from the perspective of the young child in this case. It must therefore be distinguished from how the adult would describe problems from the past in the present moment (66.1), however difficult that may be.

Placing themselves in in the original situation in this manner offers the client the possibility of reassessing the experience, but then from a safer place in which they can use their capacities as an adult and draw on the support of new and significant others, including the

therapist. This is also known as *reversible regression* or *regression in the service of the ego*. It is usually applied to negative experiences, though this does not always have to be the case. In difficult situations the client can also find support by reliving positive experiences from their past: 'I don't know what to do right now, but in the past a solution has always presented itself.'

Describing the *pathogenesis*, i.e., the way in which maladaptive thoughts and feelings have been formed, is not the same as identifying the causes, i.e., the *aetiology*. Other factors play a role too, such as genetic makeup, positive and negative experiences later on in life, social circumstances and physical disorders.

Simply providing an analogy from the past without reliving that past, for example 'I can't handle being on my own. It was the same when I was a kid', does not qualify as reliving the past. The same applies to causal explanations in which past events are identified as the source of problems in the present, for example 'I always argue with my bosses. My father was a tyrant too (?-).' Being able to separate the present from the past is what distinguishes the adaptive reliving of a situation from the possible traumatic reliving of an experience in which contact with the present is lost. The latter does not occur within a new and safe context and does not aid the process of healing but instead leads to retraumatisation.

The most common problem when classifying self-reflection is that it is difficult to clarify whether the therapist has stimulated this sufficiently in the client during the interview.

Clients often make upbeat global and sweeping statements, use intriguing metaphors, draw analogies, admit to being aware of their avoidance behaviour and even intrapsychic conflicts or point to causal or precipitating factors without being able to explain their comments further. In all of these cases there is (still) no self-reflecting cognition.

The same applies when the client does provide a concrete and detailed description of their overt behaviour but appears to experience it as something that happens to them without them playing an active role (non-personality-related cognitions, 16) or as a reaction that is characteristic of the person or thing to which they have reacted (primitive externalisation, 17).

With regard to self-reflecting cognitions, the client often does not know why they think, feel or act the way they do. However, they do experience their behaviour as self-made, i.e., something they do themselves as opposed to being done to them by others.

Finally, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the client's description of their thoughts and feelings from their own interpretation. In a description the behaviour is internally consistent, for instance when the client is inclined to do what others want them to do for fear of being rejected, but their description does not provide an explanation of why they find rejection so hard to take. An interpretation does offer an explanation, however. For example, the belief that rejection means losing your place in the world.

**Quantification:** (In case of doubt, quantification can be registered as the lowest option.)

No self-confrontation

**66.1** Description. ('What am I doing?', 'What am I getting myself into?')

Concrete, detailed description of own thoughts, feelings and actions and, where relevant, the context in which these occur. Minimum of three examples.

**66.2** Interpretation = 66.1 + underlying meaning. ('Why do I act this way?')

The way in which meaning is assigned must be both affective and cognitive. The issue in question is described in a sufficiently clear manner (this can also be done later on in the interview). Includes one or more examples, depending on the clarity of the interpretative character of the client's remarks.

**66.3** Reliving of primary experiences = 66.2 + reconstruction ('What makes me act the way I do?')

The client relives the situation that prompted them to assign the underlying meaning. One example may be sufficient, as long as it is clear, detailed and meaningful.

### Examples:

(?) Explorative questions like: 'Could you tell me a bit more about that?' or 'What does that mean to you?'

(? -) The client is unable or unwilling to engage in further exploration.

- I'm so much of a perfectionist that I never get anything done. (?) I try not to be but it never works. *(Concrete description but lacking the kind of details the client cannot provide when asked to do so. The result is a lack of clarity. Does the client demand too much of themselves? (excessive ideals, 54). Is their perfectionism rooted in doubt (control – defensiveness, 48.)? Do they fear rejection (external norms, 34)? Or do they feel like they are losing their grip on both the situation and themselves (disintegration anxiety – 'absence of structure, 09)?*
- I detest figures of authority. They're only interested in filling their own pockets and ordering everyone else around. *(The client's point of view only characterises the person they are describing and not themselves (primitive externalisation, 17). How they deal with figures of authority, including those who perform poorly, is not relevant here.)*

**66.1** I jumped into bed with every guy I met because I was afraid no one would like me otherwise. (?) If I didn't then I wouldn't fit in. *(The behaviour is consistent. If you are afraid of not fitting in, you will do what others want you to do. It is unclear why the client is willing to accept these conditions in order to fit in or why it is so important to her that she fits in.)*

**66.1** When someone tries to tell me what to do it makes the hairs stand up on the back of my neck and I immediately go on the defensive because I don't like people bossing me around. *(The client describes their behaviour and the context in which it occurs in global terms but at the same time clearly enough. If they do not provide any concrete examples in the course of the interview, it can be useful to ask for examples at the end of the interview. It is not clear why they find it difficult to deal with orders and feel like they are being bossed around.)*

**66.1** When I feel insecure I become aggressive because I am afraid people will try to make a fool out of me. (?) At a party recently I heard a few guys bragging about their cars. I told them they all had small dicks and that wasn't exactly appreciated. *(Concrete description, initially global but then more detailed when asked for an example. Also indicates an interpretation: 'I'm afraid of not being good enough.' However, the client appears not to acknowledge this meaning themselves.)*

**66.2** I offered to help the neighbours with their renovation work even though I'm extremely busy myself. I always feel I have to go out of my way to help others because otherwise I won't be welcome. (66.1) (?) I don't think people see much value in me or feel anything for

me at all. *(A lack of basic trust (39) is usually seen as an unquestionable fact and is very difficult to change, regardless of how willing the client is to talk about it.)*

66.2 Whenever I sit in a waiting room I feel like I'm just a number, a product on the conveyor belt. I know that's silly, but I often feel like people barely tolerate me and that I just have to live with that fact. And there's nothing I can do about it, apart from blowing my top every now and then. *(I'm too afraid to stand up for myself.)*

66.2 When I go to work in the morning I'm always afraid that I won't be able to answer a simple question and that people will think I know nothing about the job and have just been pretending all along (66.1). I often feel like a little boy in short pants in a world full of men wearing long trousers who pretends he fits in. *(I don't feel like a grown man.)*

66.3 Christmas at home with my wife and children was really nice. But somehow I can never join in completely in the fun and I always feel very alone. (?) I got my first bicycle when I was six years old, at Christmas, but my father never bothered to watch me riding it. And it was too big for me as well. My parents gave me everything a child could want but they never asked me what I really wanted or needed. *(also lack of basic trust, 39)*

66.3 I gave a presentation yesterday on our Internet Sales Strategy. It went well and it was well received. And yet I wonder why I always have to push the boat out for this kind of thing. It's like everything has to be groundbreaking and revolutionary for others to appreciate it. Or maybe I should say 'for others to appreciate me'. (66.1) There was nothing my father couldn't do. He was a professor and even worked as a minister. My mother worshipped him. He was almost never at home but when he was the world revolved around him. I often thought to myself, 'I'll never be that good!' and I still feel that way. *(also ideal-driven self-image, 53)*

66.3 I shot someone because he didn't want to get out of my way in the pub. That's not right, of course, but I didn't have a choice. If you let people walk all over you, you will lose your position on the ladder. And that's all I have to hold on to right now. (66.1) (?) My brother was always better, stronger and smarter than me. He was the apple of my father's eye. He got sent to college. I was the black sheep, the troublemaker. The only way I could outdo him was by becoming a criminal. Partly out of revenge, too, I suppose, because they are appalled by what I do. *(also parent (32). The father-son relationship still determines, in a negative manner, the client's behaviour)*

## Empathy (76)

Cognitions

**Operational definition:** The client is able to understand and share the feelings of another person.

This involves the capability to understand and appreciate the meaning for another person of events and situations or the client's own behaviour. Merely describing the overt behaviour of the other is not sufficient. This also applies when the client makes reference to a meaning assigned by another person but then points out their inability to follow it in an affective and cognitive manner: 'He says he visits prostitutes because the spark is gone out of our relationship. He says it makes him feel like a hunter again. I don't get that.' It is often difficult to ascertain whether the client understands the other person or not or whether they are simply repeating what the person said. In that case it is important to ask the client how they arrived at their description.

This is often necessary in order to check whether the client's description is actually related to the behaviour of the other person or a reflection of their own expectations with regard to that behaviour. The latter can be an indication of suggestive cognitions (36), when the client assumes that the other person thinks, feels and acts the same way they do, or of projecting (reversal, 57) when the client assigns bad or otherwise impermissible thoughts, feelings and actions that are 'alien' to the client without any plausible reason.

The description of an interaction from both the client's perspective and the perspective of the other is registered as self-reflection (66). Empathy can but is not always accompanied by respect for the controversial other (77).

**Examples:**

**76** When my brother acts arrogantly it usually means he is feeling insecure.

**76** He's a proud man. Being unemployed and having to live on benefits must be very hard for him.

**76** He doesn't like me doing things on my own. I think he's afraid I might leave him. His first wife left him and that was an enormous blow.

**Context-related cognitions (86)**

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** The client acknowledges that the behaviour of people is partly determined by factors such as gender, age, culture, religious beliefs and socio-economic status.

The client knows that their own behaviour and the behaviour of others is partly determined, either implicitly or explicitly, by subcultural or cultural norms and values; that the meaning of events or situations for young and old people, men and women and people with different religious or political persuasions and cultural backgrounds can vary significantly. This also applies to the behaviour of the individual in different roles, such as employee, child, brother, sister, friend, partner and parent.

Acknowledging circular causality – the realisation that unacceptable behaviour in others is often partly determined by one's own attitude towards others – also belongs to this category.

An indirect manifestation of acknowledging that the meaning of behaviour is context related is the ability to recognise paradoxes. The client acknowledges that a particular kind of behaviour can have different and even contradictory meanings depending on the environment in which they take place. Breaking the law can be an act of kindness but can also be punished in order to prevent the setting of precedents. It is important to differentiate between paradox and ambivalence, i.e., recognising contradictory but not incompatible phenomena, for example that a person can have both good and bad qualities.

**Examples:**

**86** People are able to push me beyond my limits because I'm very vulnerable (circular causality).

**86** It's crazy. I'm a grown man with lots of qualities but at the same time I often behave like a little child who's afraid of his father (paradox).

**86** During the war I killed a member of our resistance group because they were about to give our names to the enemy. I probably saved our lives and the lives of our families too. I'd do it again if I had to. At the same time, I believe I did something that no human should ever do – deciding the fate of a fellow human being (paradox; also authentic norms – existential, 94).

## **Metacognitions (96)**

*Cognitions*

**Operational definition:** When assessing their own behaviour the client is able to explain it with the help of an abstract frame of reference.

This ability to explain one's own behaviour makes it possible to assign meaning to behavioural phenomena that would otherwise remain incomprehensible. The term 'unconscious behaviour', which indicates behaviour that can be determined by an experience that is not actually 'lived', is an example of this kind of metacognitive concept.

As is evident from the operational definition, metacognitions can be used to expand further on self-reflection (66). This criterium eliminates 'wise' but impersonal remarks that are relevant only to others or to humans in general, as well as purely rational explanations of one's own behaviour (elimination, 47).

The ability to think in a metacognitive manner is particularly important in situations where new strategic visions must be developed.

### **Quantification:**

One or more examples, depending on their clinical relevance.

### **Examples:**

**96** I had a dream about a castle-like building that also looked a bit like a train station. I'm certain I've never seen that kind of building before. It made me realise that a lot more stuff goes on in your dreams than you are ever conscious of.

**96** I realise that everything I said about my relationship is subjective. You see what you expect or hope to see and even what you fear. And you probably don't see the things you don't want to see.

**96** There must be some kind of higher power but I know that can never be proved. It's all just a matter of faith.

**96** If a client resists the therapy they asked for themselves, then their resistance becomes the object of the treatment.

**96** Assigning meaning is primarily a matter of interpretation. There is no end to the number of possible meanings.

## **PROBLEM-SOLVING BEHAVIOUR (THINKING AND FEELING): Thinking and feeling as a reaction to internal or external stress**

### **Falsification (07)**

*Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors through disavowal, delusions and hallucinations (not associated with schizophrenia) or conversion disorder symptoms.

#### *Disavowal*

Disavowal is the refusal to acknowledge external phenomena and their meaning. This often relates to events or situations that the client regards as extremely threatening. However, disavowal can also have an effect on the client's behaviour. A man who has been convicted of violent conduct and then rapes a woman while on probation will think he is not being taken seriously when his request to be released again two months later is refused even though he says he will never do it again. Disavowal is also known as psychotic denial.

Unlike with denial (reversal, 57), disavowal is associated with a failure to understand the external reality.

#### *Delusions and hallucinations*

In the case of delusions, the client's interpretation of events or situations does not match with the facts and their reality testing can be said to be distorted.

One particular form is *hypochondriac delusion* in which the client is certain they are suffering from a serious physical illness without having any convincing evidence to back up their claim. Believing that *ghosts* and *monsters* are an existential threat or having an enormous but unfounded fear of burglars also belong to this category, as does the belief that one can influence the external reality with the help of *supernatural powers* or *magic*. Delusions are also referred to as *psychotic projection*.

In the case of hallucinations, the client's sensory experiences do not match with reality.

As indicated in the operational definition, delusions and hallucinations associated with schizophrenia are not registered in the client's profile but are recorded separately.

#### *Conversion disorder symptoms*

Conversion disorder symptoms relate to the random loss of motor skills or sensory functions, for example through paralysis or blindness, without any obvious physical explanation. When diagnosing these symptoms it is important to remain alert to the possibility that a physical ailment may manifest itself at a later stage.

#### **Quantification:**

The level of falsification is the sum of the assessments of denial, delusions/hallucinations and conversion disorder symptoms. It is important to take the degree of reality falsification into account, as remarks made by the client indicating their own doubt regarding their validity are of less relevance.

**Examples:**

- 07 I know that unprotected sex is risky. But I feel fine, so I don't think there's a problem. (denial)
- 07 I've never had sex with anyone, but I'm still afraid of catching AIDS (no other forms of contact made with the risk of becoming infected with AIDS – hypochondriac delusion).
- 07 I don't know how she does it but I'm certain she's been cheating on me (delusion).
- 07 I'm afraid of the bookcase. It was my father's and I was very afraid of him (magic-related delusion)
- 07 It's my penis that is the problem. It's too small. It makes me less of a man (hypochondriac delusion).
- 07 When I feel stressed I often hear voices in my head (pseudo-hallucination).
- 07 I wasn't able to walk properly for months before my PhD exam. But afterwards everything was fine again.

**Primitive externalisation (17)***Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client experiences their behaviour as being determined entirely by external stressors.

The outside world is to blame for all of the client's problems and complaints. Although they admit they control their own behaviour, the client experiences their thoughts, feelings and actions as a logical or obvious reaction to the outside world. They hate authority figures because they are annoying and not because the client is unable to deal with them.

Given the fact that their problems stem from the outside world, the obvious solution is to eliminate that world: 'The relationship I'm in isn't good for me, so I've got to end it.' Initially, their attitude is often denied (57) or rationalised (47): 'I must be doing something wrong' or 'It takes two to tango'. However, the client's behaviour demonstrates that they blame their problems on someone or something in the outside world.

Manifestations of primitive externalisation include splitting and projective identification.

Splitting involves trying to solve problems by dividing the world up into good and bad. The bad part includes people or situations the client blames for their problems, while the people and situations for which the client has a preference make up the good part. If the client manages to find people who support his point of view, this results in a splitting not only of their internal world but also of the external world. A well-known situation is when the client's 'ideal' new therapist goes along with the client's criticism of their previous therapists.

Through projective identification the client elicits a reaction from others that legitimises their own behaviour. For example, the host who doesn't trust their guests and has their suspicions confirmed when their behaviour is 'strange'. Projective identification is the product of an interaction and is therefore often difficult to identify as an anamnestic response.

If the client's behaviour has caused harm to others but they still fail to acknowledge the problem, this is a sign of a lack of norms (04). When an extreme, unfounded and non-negotiable judgment is used to solve a problem, this signals both splitting and dichotomous norms (14).

In the case of projecting (57), the client does not acknowledge certain, mostly impermissible, thoughts or feelings. Instead, they attribute them to others before reacting with anxiety or disapproval.

This reaction is subsequently regarded as entirely their own and is often not open to debate. For example, the female client who, for no apparent reason, reacts anxiously when men look at her in a 'sexual' way, but who also sees her anxiety as integral to the way in which she reacts, can be said to be projecting. Similarly, the man who admits to having raped a woman because she seduced him and is unwilling or unable to acknowledge their own role in the incident is 'externalising'.

### Examples:

**17** When my boss appears in the office I immediately feel stressed. (?) Because he's a very big man and always looks cross (also respect for the controversial other, 06).

**17** I started drinking because of the stress at work.

**17** I feel terrible. It's all because of the relationship I'm in (unable to provide any examples). I'm going to get a divorce. That will make me feel better (splitting, and if the client is unable to acknowledge the consequences of their actions for their partner, also lack of norms, 04).

**17** You're telling me that if I can't trust you the therapy is not going to work. Well, I've never trusted you and now you've proven my point (projective identification).

### Disclaiming (27)

*Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by acknowledging them while at the same time regarding these stressors as not applicable to themselves.

The client is able to perceive unpleasant or otherwise uncomfortable facts as such, but they do not accept their meaning or possible consequences as reality. Sometimes they do not even accept that an event has actually happened: 'That can't be true!'

A feature of problem-solving strategies at this level, i.e., for disclaiming and self-overestimation, is the destructive anger the client experiences if they are not able to turn the situation to their own advantage in some way or another. This is also known as narcissistic rage.

As opposed to labelling the other person as 'all bad' (splitting, 17), in the case of disclaiming the client sees themselves as the judge and not the victim.

Disclaiming is often accompanied by self-referring cognitions (26), with the result that the contrary opinions of others are dismissed as 'obviously wrong'.

Unlike the sense of anger and powerless felt in the case of oppression (42) by another where the client must adopt a subordinate position, the disclaiming client is a vengeful god who destroys his own creation when it displeases him.

It is important to draw a distinction between disclaiming and an inability to feel (isolating the affect – elimination, 47).

Disclaiming must also be distinguished from proving one's point by disqualifying the messenger in the case of unwelcome information (triumphing, 55).

**Examples:**

- 27 We're never able to discuss our differences of opinion. She just doesn't get it.
- 27 I gave in when she said she wanted to have children. It wasn't important for me but it was for her. So I just thought, 'Let her have her way, at least it'll keep her busy.'
- 27 Nothing you said is news to me. For me it's all useless information.
- 27 How can the woman you live with just decide on her own to end the relationship?

**Detaching (37)***Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by displaying a relatively intense and prolonged lack of interest.

The client reacts to defeat, setbacks or disappointments in a manner that is characterised by an extreme or prolonged loss of interest or feelings of pointlessness or emptiness.

Initially, this lack of interest can be related primarily to the object of the unfulfilled need: 'Never mind, I don't need it anymore.' However, detaching can also escalate into apathy and a lack of interest in life in general or, in other words, a state of *reactive depression*.

An important feature of detaching is the excessively intense and prolonged nature of this kind of reaction. However, recovery time can also be very short when the stressor is removed, for example when a relationship that has broken down is mended or replaced by another relationship.

Temporary emotional withdrawal is a normal reaction to bitter disappointment. This kind of behaviour only becomes maladaptive when it is excessive. In that case it is usually accompanied by a stagnation in the emotional processing of the event.

It is important to draw a distinction between detaching and a reduced level of interest resulting from an affective disorder when there is no clear causal factor and the client's mood cannot be altered by compensating factors or when there is a family history with regard to the disorder.

Detaching can but does not always go hand in hand with giving up (38). Detached clients often carry on with activities even after losing all interest in them. When the aim of detaching is to blame or frustrate others (implicitly or explicitly) it is also registered as passive aggressive behaviour (defensiveness, 48).

**Examples:**

- 37 Ever since I got passed up for promotion I have lost interest in my work.
- 37 Something broke inside me when I found out he had been seeing someone else as well for years. I can't even be mad or upset about it. (Situation has been like this for two years)
- 37 When, despite all my prayers, my child died I lost all faith in God.
- 37 Life had no meaning for me when she broke up with me (also parent, 32).
- 37 When everything is going against me, all I can do is wait until I can take my sleeping pills and switch off for a few hours (also passive need for love, 35).
- 37 When something goes wrong or someone disappoints me, I tend to drop them. I just don't want to waste any energy on them anymore (also giving up, 38).

**Elimination (47)***Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors through isolation of affect, sometimes with a tendency to intellectualise and rationalise, or through displacement.

*Isolation of affect*

Isolation of affect manifests itself in the absence of emotion in relation to events or situations that are of significance to the client. For example, they may refer to a disappointing or otherwise negative experience without any obvious signs of anger or sorrow or describe a successful business venture without appearing to be happy or satisfied. An important feature is the use of language in which the 'I' perspective is replaced by the more anonymous 'you' or 'they'.

When the client 'intellectualises' an event they describe it in a contemplative manner without any reference to what it means to them personally, while to rationalise an experience means to describe it in terms of its cause. The client indicates (implicitly or explicitly) that what has happened is entirely logical or understandable and that it is therefore neither necessary nor reasonable to react to it in an emotional manner.

The fact that the situation the client describes is of some significance to them distinguishes isolation of affect from an absence of affectivity (02).

Coldness (29) implies that while the client denies others the opportunity to display any empathy, they are still capable of displaying an affective reaction themselves.

Habitually intellectualising, rationalising or isolating the affect (as opposed to reacting to a significant event or situation) is registered as objectifying cognitions (46).

*Displacement*

In the case of displacement, the client focuses their anger regarding a frustrating experience on someone or something else or on themselves. They kick their dog, shout at their partner or children, make self-deprecating remarks, break something that is of great value to them personally or even harm themselves. The client is often aware of the reason for their reaction but does not understand why their reaction is so extreme.

**Quantification:**

Elimination is scored on the basis of the sum of the assessments of isolation of affect and displacement.

**Examples:**

**47** (Man who has been passed up for promotion) Shit happens. You just have to learn to live with it (isolation of affect, also intellectualising)

**47** (How did your mother's death affect you?) No one can live forever. Everyone knows that. (isolation of affect, also intellectualising)

**47** I understand why he couldn't come to my birthday party. He's very busy with his studies. (isolation of affect, also rationalising)

**47** (Woman whose partner said they should see less of each other) Seeing each other less often is better than fighting all the time. (isolation of affect, also rationalising)

**47** When I've had a bad day at work my wife and kids need to leave me alone. Otherwise I'm bound to lose my temper. (displacement)

**47** It's my own fault that people are able to walk all over me. I'm just weak. (displacement, aggression focused on self)

## **Reversal (57)**

*Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors through denial, covering up or projecting.

### *Denial*

In the case of denial, the client refers explicitly to the absence of certain affects or cognitions. Trivialising problematic events or situations also belongs to this category. The client's remarks are often spontaneous and are often characterised by a sense of urgency and a tendency towards repetition.

Denial is only recorded as a maladaptive problem-solving strategy when the client uses it to avoid confrontation with the stressor. The client who states that they don't care that their partner has left them, before going on to say how empty their life has become, or who bursts into tears when the therapist remarks how difficult this must be for them is not in a state of denial. However, denial does apply to the client who refuses to expand further on the matter with the therapist.

Denial refers to the internal reality, while disavowal – falsification (07) refers to the external reality. In order to distinguish it from disavowal – falsification (07), denial is sometimes referred to as *neurotic denial*.

When denial is combined with rationalising (elimination, 47) both are registered. This combination often manifests itself in the client's reaction to extremely stressful experiences: 'What I went through isn't as dramatic as it sounds. Worse things happen in the world.'

### *Covering up*

In the case of covering up, the client reacts in a manner opposite to what might reasonably be expected. The client who has suffered a major loss is neither angry nor miserable but instead pronounces happily that life has plenty more to offer. Sometimes the client is aware of this themselves: 'Whenever I'm feeling low I force myself to smile and act happy. Just to fool everyone, including myself.'

Intentionally acting in a contradictory manner, for example being nice to someone you don't like just to avoid conflict, is not registered as covering up. One particular manifestation of covering up is the fear of a doom scenario in situations where the possibility of that happening is negligible. These kinds of situations are often frustrating for the client and they often cover up their anger by displaying a sense of concern: 'I was very worried that something bad might happen to you (therapist) when you were on holidays.'

A feature of covering up is the authenticity of the client's experience. The client who acts happy when feeling low may feel they are dancing on their own grave but at least there's still some blood running through their veins! And the client who dreamt that the therapist's airplane crashed while they were travelling to an undoubtedly wonderful destination may not have slept a wink that night but they were very happy and relieved when the therapist showed up the following week.

The fear that something bad might happen to someone, or of doom scenarios in general, can also have other underlying meanings, for example the fear of being abandoned (parent, 32) or disintegration anxiety (absence of structure, 09).

### *Projecting*

Projecting is the assigning of objectionable thoughts, feelings or actions to others without good reason and which the client asserts (implicitly or explicitly) not to possess themselves. A common manifestation of projecting is the fear of aggressive or sexual behaviour in others in situations where that behaviour would not be expected. For example, when the client is extremely afraid of burglars even though they live in an apartment block where no one has ever broken in.

Unlike with delusions (falsification, 07), the imagined scenario is not entirely incompatible with reality and that is why this form of projecting is also referred to as *non-psychotic projection*.

Unlike with primitive externalisation (17), the client experiences their behaviour as indicative of their character.

Unlike with suggestive cognitions (36), the client does not recognise themselves in the other person. It is sometimes necessary to ask the client to explain their perspective. For example, 'I haven't told anyone I'm out sick from work. When you do, people usually shut you out.' (?) 'No, I've no problem with that myself' (= projection)/'I suppose I'd react the same way.' (The client believes everyone else thinks the same way they do = suggestive cognition, 36.)

### **Quantification:**

Reversal is scored as the sum of the assessments of denial, covering up and projecting.

As already mentioned, it is not the number of denials that is conclusive but rather the degree of resistance.

The client who repeatedly says they are not angry before eventually explaining why they are is not a state of denial. However, denial does apply to the client who says they don't care that their partner has left them and that they have now closed that book.

### **Examples:**

57 WE don't make love very often but it doesn't bother me that much. (a)

57 The treatment didn't help me at all, but that's not to say the therapist was no good. (a)

57 I wouldn't like to be a woman. The very idea of a man sticking his you-know-what into you fills me with dread. (a)

57 I'm distraught about spilling red wine on our beautiful new carpet. I'll never be able to get rid of the stain! I don't know how it happened. One minute I had the glass in my hand and the next... etc., etc. (b. *Over-the-top reaction to the accident; rubs the stain so hard they make it worse. Covering up their aggression with remorse; also theatrical cognitions, 56.*)

57 My girlfriend has asked me to take care of her pony while she's away on holidays. I hope it doesn't die while she's gone. (b)

57 I'm always afraid that something terrible is going to happen to my children. I even gave up my job to look after them. I'd do anything for them. (b)

57 That's fine. When you (therapist) are on holidays I can use the time to tidy up the garden. And I'll be saving money on the therapy, too! (b)

57 Any time a man looks at me I always think he wants to sleep with me. (c)

57 I'm often afraid that people think I'm gay just because I've got a good physique. (c)

57 When I look through my binoculars at the neighbours across the street in the evening, they are always watching blue movies. They're nothing but a bunch of voyeurs! (c)

### **Respecting the controversial self (67)** *Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** When reacting to internal and external stressors the client is able to acknowledge aspects of how they function that they themselves regard as undesirable without losing their sense of self-worth.

For the client, poor functioning does not override efficient functioning and vice versa. 'Doing something wrong' does not necessarily translate into 'being wrong'. As a result, the client is better able to deal with setbacks. An important precondition is that the client describes the controversial aspects of their behaviour very clearly, i.e., in accordance with the criteria for self-reflection (66). This can also happen later on in the interview.

The client acknowledges the seriousness of their situation but their problems do not point to any incompetency on their part. Similarly, recognising those problems is not the end of the story but marks the first step in their efforts to solve them. This manifests itself in a positive attitude towards 'work in progress', even when results have not yet been forthcoming. The client often finds motivation in self-supporting thoughts, positive expectations or statements such as 'I'll get through this' or 'I know what I'm capable of'. Sometimes they even see their problems as a challenge. However, it is important that the client's positive attitude also leads to action.

Another indirect manifestation of respect for the controversial self is humour in the form of light-hearted self-mockery: 'The intensity of my fear of failure is exceeded only by the extent of my ambition.'

The client's ability to show respect for the controversial self means they are able to use their adaptive capacities to change their maladaptive behaviour. This kind of attitude is an important criterium for recommending a non-directive form of psychotherapy in which the client is able to find their own way, with or without outside help.

#### **Examples:**

67 It's strange. I can deal with confrontational situations with regard to work. But I'm useless at standing up for myself.

67 I love my wife dearly, but I find it very difficult to express my love to her.

67 I made a mistake. I'll need to be careful not to do the same thing again in the future.

67 Things have improved a lot in the last few years. But I still have a long way to go.

67 I decided to end the relationship, even though I loved him a lot. My father didn't think he was right for me and his word was law back then.

## **Respecting the controversial other (77)** *Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** When reacting to internal and external stressors the client is able to acknowledge another person's behaviour that they regard as inexplicable without devaluing the behaviour or the person exhibiting that behaviour.

Conflicts often arise or are exacerbated as a result of an inability to understand each other's position when the incomprehension displayed by the other person is viewed as a sign of rejection or as a negative act.

Hurtful or otherwise frustrating behaviour in others is often easier to accept when the cause or meaning of their behaviour is clear. This behaviour is often not hostile in terms of its intention, regardless of how annoying it might be. Knowing that the sudden irritability of your partner may be due to their menstrual cycle or problems at work can significantly reduce the amount of stress you experience yourself as a result. Communicating to the other person that you understand their point of view can often help to de-escalate a potential conflict.

Gaining an insight into the motives of others also makes it easier to respond in an adequate manner and even to predict their reaction. However, understanding the behaviour of others does not mean it must be accepted. An important feature of respect for the controversial other is the ability to acknowledge the limits of one's own capacity for empathy. The other person is the only one who really knows what they are thinking and feeling and so they always have the last word in that regard.

It is important to differentiate between respect for controversial other and rationalising (elimination, 47) in which the behaviour of the other is explained in such a way as to force the emotional significance of that behaviour for the client into the background. Respect for the controversial other can sometimes be accompanied by empathy (76).

### **Examples:**

**77** Trying to talk to him during the reorganisation was a complete waste of time. I told him I realised how stressed out he was but also that he needed to control himself, especially in front of the children (also assertiveness, 68 and empathy, 76)

**77** Most criminals have a story that they tell to explain their behaviour. I don't condone the things they do but I have a better idea now of what drives them into crime.

## **Respecting controversial (sub)cultures (87)** *Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** When reacting to internal and external stressors the client is able to respect the behaviour inherent to other (sub)cultures that they themselves regard as inexplicable or undesirable.

Conflicts often arise or are exacerbated as a result of an inability to respect other (sub)cultures.

Controversial behaviour that is inherent to a (sub)culture is often not hostile in terms of its intention, regardless of how frightening, difficult or frustrating it may seem.

Respecting the context in which the other behaves makes it possible to search for solutions that are acceptable to both parties.

**Examples:**

**87** I didn't understand why they had to buy those ridiculously expensive sneakers until I realised how important it was in terms of fitting in with everyone else. We went out and bought normal sneakers in an exclusive colour and that did the trick just as well.

**87** I found it difficult at first to accept that her children had different fathers until I realised it doesn't necessarily imply a lack of morals. In her culture it often happens that a man goes looking for a different partner after a while.

**87** It's understandable that there's a lot of corruption in a poor country without any social safety net. It's the only way to survive.

**Synthesis (97)***Problem-solving behaviour – thinking and feeling*

**Operational definition:** The client is able to deal with difficult events or situations by examining and then bringing seemingly irreconcilable elements together.

This integration of different elements can be seen, for example, in the ability to redefine the relationship between apparent contradictions or in the ability to combine different frames of reference in a multiaxial or multidimensional model.

**Examples:**

**97** Power is the ability to deal with powerlessness.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING BEHAVIOUR (ACTIONS): Actions as a reaction to internal or external stress****Impulsive behaviour (08)***Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client's reaction to internal or external stressors is characterised by the absence of a decision-making process with regard to their own behaviour.

A complete lack of control is what lends this kind of behaviour its reflexive character: 'I just blurted it out' or 'I acted without thinking'. There is also an absence of long-term planning: 'I did it because I like doing it' or 'I stopped doing it because I wasn't enjoying it anymore.' Another important feature is that the client does not learn from their experiences, even when they are aware of the negative consequences of their behaviour in the past, and is unable to act differently.

Clients who have broken the law often say that it was because of their impulsive behaviour, in the hope that they will be given a reduced sentence on account of their diminished responsibility. The profile interview can determine whether the client's behaviour is in fact habitual, i.e., whether the client has often acted in a certain way or are trying to make excuses for their behaviour.

It is important to differentiate between impulsive behaviour and an arbitrary decision to relinquish control during a creative process or when reacting to an emergency situation.

If the client's behaviour causes harm to others without their acknowledging that harm, this can be registered as a lack of norms (04).

Impulsive behaviour sometimes goes hand in hand with basic need gratification (05).

If the client's behaviour is primarily chaotic, it is registered as an absence of structure (09).

Impulsive behaviour is sometimes accompanied by sensation-seeking (15) and acting out (18).

Recognising impulsive behaviour implies the need to follow a training programme in self-control techniques. Otherwise the client is in danger of engaging in an endless series of dispiriting failures and repeating this behaviour despite their best intentions.

### Examples:

**08** If I like doing something, I always do it immediately. It's only afterwards that I often find out I shouldn't have done it.

**08** I met a group of guys who were going to X and I just went along with them. (?) It seemed like fun. It was only later on that I realised they were going on a long hike and it wasn't long before I had to give up.

**08** Their story was so sad that I ended up giving them more money than I should have.

**08** I always say what I'm thinking and that's not always appreciated. Afterwards I often regret opening my big mouth.

**08** I often join in with what others are doing without giving it a second thought.

**08** When she told me my radio was too loud, I gave her a clout without thinking (also lack of norms, 04 and basic need gratification, 05).

## Acting out (18)

### *Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client is unable to connect their actions with thoughts and feelings that would explain those actions.

Acting out can also be defined as 'doing instead of thinking and feeling'. When asked to do so, the client is unable to explain the reasons for their actions or what the consequences of their actions mean to them. This makes their behaviour unpredictable, including for themselves. Sometimes the client will admit to feeling a vague sense of unease after the event or will try to rationalise their behaviour, albeit unconvincingly.

An important feature of acting out is that the client is unwilling to discuss their behaviour.

Others are sometimes able to establish a connection afterwards between the nature of the client's behaviour and the events or situations involved, but the client is usually neither prepared nor able to acknowledge this connection.

Repeatedly referring to traumatic experiences also belongs to this category.

The term acting out is often incorrectly used to disqualify client behaviour that the care professional regards as harmful or otherwise disruptive.

Unlike with bizarre behaviour (01), with acting out the client's actions are understandable.

Acting out is sometimes accompanied by impulsive behaviour (08). The client's actions are often explicit and yet they are unable to explain their actions.

**Examples:**

**18** I don't have a job anymore. When I left here today (therapy session in which therapist announced they are going on holidays) I went straight to work and told my boss I was quitting. (?) I've no idea why I did that. It just had to happen sooner or later.

**18** After I passed my exams I tried to commit suicide. I didn't see the point in living anymore. (?) Weird, I know. I had worked so hard for the exams.

**18** I met him at the bakery and he moved in the very same day. Now I can't get rid of him and I don't know what to do. (Why did you let him move in with you?) At the time I thought it was a good idea but now I just want him to be gone.

**18** I don't know why I'm late again. I got up on time but still left the house too late.

**18** It happened again (rape). I was walking home one night when two men appeared and there was no one else around. (?) I don't know why I was walking on my own so late at night. It felt like I was dreaming (also dissociation, 19).

**Self-overestimation (28)***Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** When reacting to internal or external stressors the client is unable to acknowledge the limits of their own possibilities or the situation in which they find themselves.

What the client wants simply has to happen. Sometimes they take irresponsible risks that usually lead to failure but that also prove successful every now and then. Failed attempts at finding a solution are often repeated, against the client's better judgment. An important feature is the impatience and, in particular, the anger with which the client reacts to situations they are unable to control themselves. Persistent frustration can lead to destructive reactions in which the insufferable outside world, or even life itself, is rejected or destroyed. This is also known as *narcissistic rage*.

Self-overestimation is sometimes accompanied by disclaiming (27).

Because the client is not prepared to accept their own limitations, they are also unable to accept help. The same applies to treatment, too. Offering to assist the client or to fulfil the role of supplier for them improves the chances of success.

**Examples:**

**28** I can't stand it when things go against me.

**28** I knew it was dangerous but I figured nothing bad would happen to me.

**28** I can't accept the fact that I failed the exam and sitting it again is not an option.

**28** I've decided to stop drinking as of Monday. (Has tried to do this repeatedly before but without success)

**28** If I want something, I simply have to have it. I keep trying and never give up.

**28** I believe that being afraid is an insult to my intellect.

**Giving up (38)***Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by immediately doing everything possible to avoid them.

When difficulties arise, the client stops performing activities that were previously important to them, adopts an entirely passive attitude and avoids stressful situations. This *passive avoidance behaviour* can develop into an attitude that prevents the client from ever taking the initiative.

The word ‘immediately’ indicates the absence of any inner conflict regarding the decision whether to fight or flee. The choice has already been made: flee.

Obediently doing whatever you are told without assuming any responsibility can also be registered as giving up.

The above definition does not include giving up after attempting to fight one’s fears or overwhelming external stressors. The same applies to switching to other activities, for example burying yourself in your work in order to avoid relational conflicts. This means that avoiding situations that prompt separation anxiety (parent, 32), fear of aggression (oppressor, 42) or fear of failure (pretending, 58) are only registered as giving up when the client regards their avoidance of such situations as self-evident.

It is important to differentiate between giving up and the inability to make decisions independently of others – dependency (31). When the client chooses the path of oblivion by staying in bed all day or by using alcohol or drugs, this can also be registered as passive need for love (35). Giving up sometimes goes hand in hand with detaching (37). The client can give up something but continue to regard it as desirable or important to them.

A distinction must be drawn between giving up and passive-aggressive behaviour (resistance, defensiveness, 48) whose primary aim is to display aggression towards or frustrate others. In that case, the lack of action takes on the form of a protest: ‘If you carry on like this, I’m going to throw in the towel.’

Recognising giving up as a habitual problem-solving strategy is an important element when drawing up a treatment plan, as chances are the client will react in a similar way during treatment.

**Examples:**

**38** I put off tackling difficult things until it’s too late to do anything about them.

**38** When things go wrong I either give up or become ill.

**38** There’s no point in trying to deal with it. Nothing is going to change anyway.

**38** I didn’t apply for a new job when our work was reorganised. I just sat back and waited.

**38** (Client after attempted suicide) I rang the priest but no one answered. Same thing happened with the social worker. So I just thought, what’s the point in carrying on? (also detaching, 37).

**Defensiveness (48)***Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by attempting to exercise strict control (usually ineffectively) or by obstructing others.

### *Controlling*

The aim of controlling is to prevent or limit stress through suppression, carrying on as normal and pretending as if nothing is wrong or by resorting to excessive procedural measures.

This attitude also manifests itself as resistance to any kind of change, unless the proposed change is guaranteed to be a success. Active avoidance over a longer period of time, for example by working hard in order to keep the mind occupied, also belongs to this category.

An indirect manifestation is doubtfulness – persistent uncertainty regarding the correctness of decisions one has made or the effectiveness of measures taken: ‘Maybe I should have done things differently’ or ‘Have I made the right choice or not?’ This can lead to avoidance behaviour, procrastination or deciding not to do anything at all.

Stressors that appeal to the client’s sexual or aggressive needs can result in a fear of losing control or a sudden urge to respond to these impulses in an unbridled and reckless manner.

Obstruction manifests itself in hindering others without good reason, for example by refusing to accept their ideas or proposals. The client’s response often starts with the words: ‘Okay, but...’ Obstruction often occurs in an indirect and passive-aggressive manner. The client ‘forgets’ what they previously agreed to do or carries out an instruction differently from what was agreed as a result of a ‘misunderstanding’.

The obstruction can also be related to tasks the client has set for themselves that seriously diminish their own ability to function. Sometimes the client solves this problem by switching to a different task, for example cleaning the house instead of studying. Clients who run up against this kind of dead end often ask their therapist to force them to do the things they least like doing before inevitably obstructing the very process they requested. This attitude also manifests itself in the phenomenon of *the help-rejecting complainer* – the client who pleads for help and then rejects all subsequent proposals as futile or impossible to carry out.

Deliberately sabotaging yourself in order to prove someone else wrong or to punish them also belongs to this category.

Defensiveness, as defined here, refers to habitual behaviour that is sometimes reinforced by relatively mild stress. Resorting to these problem-solving strategies in the short term in response to a serious trauma is not regarded as maladaptive.

The fear of losing control must be distinguished from disintegration anxiety (09) where the perceived threat is not related to a flood of aggressive or sexual impulses but rather to the collapse of the client. Controlling that is aimed at preventing disintegration, for example ‘trying very hard not to go crazy’ is also registered as absence of structure (09).

The fear of making mistakes can have other reasons too, for example the fear of not being loved (fear of being abandoned – parent, 32) or the fear of failure (pretending, 58).

Unlike with giving up (38), goals are not abandoned but achieving those goals is obstructed by doubtfulness.

Obstruction is sometimes accompanied by defiance (41), resistance against an oppressor (42) or a power struggle aimed at dominating (45). Trying too hard not to make mistakes in order to avoid criticism and prevent uncontrollable anger is registered as defiance or oppressor (42). If the controlling behaviour is aimed primarily at dominating others or making them powerless, this is a manifestation of the need to dominate (45). If the main aim

of perfectionism is to achieve extraordinary performances or is a manifestation of unrealistic ideals, these are registered respectively as ideal-driven self-image (53) and excessive ideals (54).

The emphasis on procedures and the lack of tangible results distinguish this maladaptive form of controlling from assertiveness (68) and reorganising (88).

**Quantification:**

Defensiveness is scored on the basis of the sum of the assessments of controlling behaviour and obstruction.

**Examples:**

48 I am always so busy organising things and making lists that I never get any actual work done. (controlling)

48 I can never make decisions because I'm always afraid I've overlooked something. (controlling)

48 (Man who has never done anything impulsive) If I let myself go, I'm afraid I'll lose control.

48 If I keep myself busy then I won't have time to worry (controlling behaviour aimed at preventing disintegration; also absence of structure, 09).

48 I got my degree because my parents wanted me to, but it was never any use to me. (obstruction)

48 Things are terrible but there's no point in trying to help. There's nothing you can do. This is just how I am. (obstruction, passive aggressive resistance, 'help-rejecting complainer')

**Pretending (58)**

*Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by feigning possession of the kinds of capacities that will provide trouble-free solutions.

Pretending is the keeping up of false appearances. The client behaves as if they possess capacities they have never before proven capable of, presents intentions as facts and exaggerates the significance of their achievements.

Another manifestation of pretending is *daydreaming* regularly about success. The client is unable to refrain from pretending, even though they know that the role they are playing is far removed from reality and that their behaviour may eventually cause them problems: 'I must be mad. I keep making promises to my clients that they never asked me to make in the first place.'

The client is often afraid they will be unmasked and this fear can be very real. However, doubts regarding their own abilities can also be related to capacities they have proven to possess in the past or activities that on the basis of those capacities they should have no trouble performing. Even the most famous musicians approach each new show with the kind of trepidation one would feel when sitting an exam.

In such situations, the client fears they will no longer be able to draw on the capacities they need to be able to perform and that, just like in the story *The Emperor's New Clothes*, everyone will see right through them.

This is referred to in psychoanalytical literature as *castration anxiety*.

Sometimes this fear manifests itself in dreams in which the client has to retake an exam or where they find themselves in an educational or professional situation without the required qualifications.

The fear of failure manifests itself indirectly in the tendency to avoid situations where the client is required to perform a certain activity or when they are reluctant to take on a position of responsibility at work.

It is important to differentiate between pretending and delusions (07), in which the client is convinced they are being who they want to be, and self-overestimation (28), in which they are aware of the reality of a situation but are unwilling to accept it.

Pretending can be accompanied by covering up (57), for example when the client says they are afraid of nothing and no one.

**Examples:**

**58** I'm a manager at the soft drinks department (loads crates in the warehouse).

**58** (Man who boasts about his successful business activities turns out to be unemployed or earns his living some another way.)

**58** I often say, 'I'll look after it, I can take anything on' before thinking, 'What have I gotten myself into? How on Earth am I going to pull this off?'

**58** I live in a fantasy world. I get completely lost in the books I read and the films I watch.

**58** Whenever I have to give a presentation, I'm always afraid I won't know what to say when the time comes. That I literally won't have anything to say.

**Assertiveness (68)**

*Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client is able to look after their own interests in an adequate manner.

The word 'adequate' indicates that it is important to take into account both the client's and the situational possibilities and limitations with regard to the means required to achieve the desired goal.

Other manifestations include being open to the criticism of others and having the capacity to change.

Being open to criticism means that the client is able to take both negative and positive criticism seriously, and ask others for their opinion, but does not adopt those opinions unquestioningly without first assessing them. The capacity to change involves the ability to learn from experience and a willingness to explore new solutions. This can also mark the first stage of reorganisation (88) or restructuring (98).

Being assertive doesn't mean being negative or aggressive. Saying no to everything and everyone is not a sign of assertiveness.

Neither is assertiveness purely defensive in character. The willingness to express feelings such as appreciation and love or anxiety and uncertainty can play a very important role in establishing meaningful relationships with others.

Being assertive is no guarantee of success and getting your own way through a fit of rage is not a sign of assertiveness, either. Conversely, defending things you believe to be important is assertive, including when it does not lead to the desired outcome.

Assertiveness is not the same as doing everything yourself. Being assertive also means looking for help, but then without transferring the responsibility for solving your own problems onto another person.

Clients who possess qualities of resilience usually make full use of all offers of help that come their way.

**Examples:**

68 When I don't agree with something, I say so.

68 I knew he had different plans but I figured he should at least listen to my ideas.

68 I was good enough to play on the first team but they wanted to keep me in the reserve team because they needed good players. I couldn't accept that and so I left the club.

68 I told him that his fits of rage scared me. He said it was never his intention to scare me and promised to do better.

68 We spent a lot of time talking about my loss. That helped me get over it.

**Aligning (78)**

*Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by forming an alliance with the aim of finding a solution.

Forming an alliance involves not only a sense of common interest in which one retains one's sense of responsibility but also a sense of loyalty so that the other benefits equally from the alliance. There is more to it than just creating a win-win situation in which the primary aim is to serve one's own interests and the joint effort ends once it is no longer fruitful or necessary. The quality of an alliance is determined primarily by the level of mutual trust.

The alliance is aimed primarily at the joint execution of activities but it can also involve the joint development of an organisation or a joint effort to establish a new vision that can be operational, tactical or strategic in nature. The contribution of the participants can be equal or varied and although the aim is to achieve a common goal, the significance of that goal can be different for different parties.

Sharing the responsibility for each other's interests distinguishes an alliance from opportunistic transactions that involve selfish norms (21).

Being responsible for solving one's own problems distinguishes an alliance from a passive need for love (35) and giving up (38).

Recruiting the help of experts is registered as assertiveness (68) because it does not involve finding a solution to a common problem. The loyalty in this case is one-sided. One can expect the expert to share the responsibility for their client's interests but the reverse does not apply to the client. Pursuing a common interest without any sense of mutual solidarity is not registered as aligning but as assertiveness (68).

Aligning sometimes goes hand in hand with reorganising (88) or restructuring (98). Pursuing one's own interests also distinguishes aligning from altruism (92), in which activities are carried out with the aim of serving only the interests of others.

**Examples:**

**78** I take good care of my staff. It motivates them to produce good work.

**78** He had the technical expertise required to finish the design; I had the business acumen needed to turn it into a successful business for both of us.

**Reorganising (88)**

*Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by taking well-considered and realistic measures to improve their own behaviour and, if required, the prevailing situational conditions.

The terms 'well-considered' and 'realistic' imply a methodical approach that takes into account the possibilities and limitations that apply to both the client and their environment. When the changes go hand in hand with changes in the client's fundamental beliefs, this is also registered as restructuring (98).

Intentions and wishes or a reduction in the client's suffering without improvements in their behaviour do not fall under this definition. Similarly, attempts to find temporary solutions, changes that are forced upon the client and sudden improvements that are not the result of the client's own actions, such as an unexpected improvement in health or a miraculous cure, are not registered as reorganising.

**Quantification:**

The quantification is related to a reduction in the maladaptive attitude and an increase in adaptive attitudes in the client's profile. The changes must persist over a period of at least six months, with the expectation that they will become permanent.

**88.1** Obvious reduction in the client's maladaptive behaviour (where relevant) or recovery on the basis of long-term changes in their adaptive behaviour.

**88.2** Obvious reduction in the client's maladaptive behaviour (where relevant) + clear improvements in their adaptive behaviour.

**88.3** Very obvious reduction in the client's maladaptive behaviour (where relevant) + very clear improvements in their adaptive behaviour.

**Examples:**

**88.1** After it became clear that the shop wasn't making enough money, we decided to move the business to a more populated area. This turned out to be a wise decision, despite the extra costs.

**88.1** I have rediscovered the joy of reading ever since I retired.

**88.1/2** When I realised the merger was inevitable, I agreed to join the board of the new company. If you can't beat them, join them. It was the best way to ensure that we could continue doing what was important to us.

**88.2** I couldn't climb the promotion ladder any higher, so I decided to take a training programme. The result was a better job and I really enjoyed the learning process.

**88.2** I've started working less hours now that I'm approaching retirement age. I get to spend more time with my grandson and we both really enjoy that.

## **Restructuring (98)**

*Problem-solving strategies – actions*

**Operational definition:** The client reacts to internal or external stressors by choosing a different solution in order to achieve their goals.

This solution can involve setting new goals or redefining the problems that are making it difficult for the client to achieve their goals.

In both cases the client adopts a new perspective that results in new possibilities for solving the existing problem. Redefining the problem can go hand in hand with a new outlook. In other words, a change in the client's fundamental beliefs or a paradigm shift.

The capacity for restructuring is particularly important with regard to fluctuating situations, for example as a result of life-changing events or the transition to a new phase in life. The ability to anticipate structural changes is important when long-term planning is a necessity, for example in relation to decisions that require significant investment or that may have long-term effects.

Restructuring is usually accompanied by an increase in adaptive behaviour (reorganising, 88). The fact remains, however, that this can cause problems when others are unwilling to accept the client's new perspective or the possible consequences.

### **Examples:**

**98** When I realised we couldn't have children I had to think long and hard about what I wanted out of life. Eventually I decided to pursue an old ambition to become a doctor and so I went back to college at the age of thirty to study Medicine. I knew I would have the time and energy to do it.

**98** When clients are reluctant to engage in a certain kind of treatment, their resistance is the issue that needs to be addressed first.

## **MISCELLANEOUS THEMES: Level-specific, primarily affective habitual patterns of behaviour**

### **Absence of structure (09)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client appears to lack certain crucial mental functions.

These crucial mental functions are:

- (a) coordination of own behaviour
- (b) structuring in terms of space and time;

(c) differentiating between the 'I' and the 'not-I'.

(a)

The inability to coordinate one's behaviour manifests itself in various ways: an inability to maintain focus, being habitually overcome by emotions and chaotic behaviour that prevents the client from thinking or acting in a structured manner. It is sometimes accompanied by disintegration anxiety, i.e., the fear of falling apart and losing one's mental balance. High levels of this kind of anxiety are referred to as *micropsychotic episodes*.

An indirect manifestation of the inability to manage one's behaviour is the need for *external structure* in which another person tells you exactly what you must do and checks to see that you actually do it. *Chaotic behaviour* is only registered as absence of structure when it is habitual or occurs regularly when stress levels are relatively low. An occasional incident in the case of exogenous stress or physical illness is not registered as absence of structure. The same applies to random chaotic behaviour through which the client attempts to get out of doing something or avoid confrontation with something they find difficult.

(b)

The inability to manage one's time means that the client is only able to live in the present moment. They have no grip on the past and so it doesn't exist for them and they also display a complete lack of anticipation with regard to the future. For them it is always and only 'now'. Another manifestation is an absence of *object constancy*, i.e., the inability to retain memories of a significant other when that person is no longer physically present.

(c)

The inability to differentiate between the 'I' and the 'not-I' manifests itself in the feeling of being overcome by relatively minor external stimuli. This is also referred to as the *absence of a stimulus barrier*. Another manifestation is *fusion anxiety*, i.e., the fear of losing oneself through contact with another person or in a new situation.

Identifying an absence of structure offers the possibility of finding activities and interventions in the client's own environment that could be of help to them. For example, 'If I feel I am becoming anxious and losing my grip on myself, I can do some yoga exercises.' In the case of fusion anxiety, the therapist must maintain a suitable professional distance between themselves and the client because overtly expressing their empathy can be interpreted as a threat by the client.

#### **Quantification:**

Absence of structure is scored as the sum of the assessments of the client's ability to coordinate their own behaviour, manage their time and space and distinguish between the 'I' and the 'not-I'.

#### **Examples:**

**09** When she cheated on me I lost my temper with her and then begged her to ditch the other guy. After that we slept with each other. I really despise her. (Becomes confused.) (chaotic behaviour – a)

**09** I need more structure and someone who can help me manage things. Otherwise I just walk around like a headless chicken all day. (chaotic behaviour – a)

- 09 Time seemed to stand still and I just panicked. I couldn't think or even move. All I could do was wait for it to pass. (disintegration anxiety – a)
- 09 When my therapist went on holidays, it felt like he was gone forever. (absence of object constancy – b)
- 09 When I'm alone it's like the whole world just disappears. (absence of object constancy – b)
- 09 Loud noises make me panic and there's nothing I can do about it. (absence of stimulus barrier – c)
- 09 Shaking hands with someone gives me the creeps. It feels like I'm being swallowed up. (binding anxiety – c)
- 09 Whenever I take a bath or shower I am afraid I will disappear down the drain along with the water. (fusion anxiety – c)

## **Dissociation (19)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** A temporary change in self-perception (depersonalisation, derealisation), a psychogenic twilight state or psychogenic amnesia.

In the case of depersonalisation and derealisation the client views themselves or their environment as unreal: 'It's like I'm watching a movie.'

In the case of a psychogenic twilight state the level of consciousness is reduced. Clients often refer to the feeling of 'living in a dreamlike state'.

Psychogenic amnesia is characterised by a complete loss of memory of an event the client has experienced.

Under extreme external stress, such as in a life-threatening situation, the client can resort to dissociation, depersonalisation or a twilight state in order to prevent disintegration. The same applies when the client adapts their consciousness when confronted with or reliving traumatic events, such as a woman who has been a victim of incest and is only able to tolerate sexual contact with her partner when in a twilight state. When the client dissociates under relatively low levels of stress, for example when taking an exam, this is registered as a maladaptive reaction.

Regarding one's own experiences of reality as 'strange' distinguishes dissociation from isolation of the affect (elimination, 47).

### **Examples:**

- 19 I often feel like nothing is real.
- 19 During the exam I felt like I was playing a part in a movie. It was like a dream.
- 19 I often find myself standing somewhere and wondering how I got there.

**Coldness (29)***Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client treats others as lifeless objects.

The client shows no respect for other people's ideas, sensitivities or needs. This is evidenced by their actions, the way they speak about others and, in particular, the way they react to complaints about their behaviour.

Coldness differentiates itself from absence of affectivity (02) through the fact that the client does value contact with other people.

Coldness is sometimes accompanied by object relationships of the supplier (22) type, selfish norms (24), mirroring (25) and self-referring cognitions (26). Unlike with elimination (47), manifestations of coldness are affective, even though the client's feelings may relate only to themselves.

**Examples:**

**29** He was killed in an accident just after we had decided to go into business together. That was very upsetting.

**29** When we argue, my wife always proceeds to annoy me by crying for hours on end.

**29** She finds making love painful. But there's nothing I can do about that.

**29** I would like to have a relationship with someone but I wouldn't want it to get in the way of what I like doing myself.

**29** Sex? Anything with a hole in it will do. And anyway I always do it in the dark (also supplier, 22)

**29** My wife tells me I'm heartless. I have no idea what she means by that (also self-referring cognitions, 26).

**Lack of basic trust (39)***Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client regards themselves as a person without value or meaning.

Basic trust is contingent on the idea that each person's life has meaning, regardless of their flaws: 'It is good to be alive.'

In the absence of basic trust, this existential certainty is missing. The client does not believe their life has any meaning. They have nothing to offer and they do not expect any attention from others, either positive or negative. They can neither believe nor accept signs of appreciation or affection from others: 'I never feel it'.

Not having any intrinsic value and being therefore incapable of making any kind of contribution manifests itself in the feeling of always being left out, of having no rights or even a place in the world and of being but not existing at the same time: 'There is no role for me in the play they call life. I'm merely part of the decor.'

Absence of basic trust manifest itself in attempts to earn or pay for contact. The client always brings a gift along when visiting someone and they adopt a deferential attitude because they believe they are not necessarily welcome.

When determining the required course of treatment it is important to identify this attitude because these kinds of clients are often cooperative during treatment without expecting that their condition will change, which indeed is often the outcome. When this attitude is not all-pervasive, i.e., when the client can see their own worth in some activities and interpersonal relationships, albeit in a limited way, the treatment can be effective. However, treatment may be accompanied by a period of deep despair and depression, as claiming one's place in life often involves reliving the feeling of being existentially lonely and lost.

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between an absence of basic trust and a concealed depression. Differential diagnostic criteria include the habitual character of this attitude in combination with other symbiotic features, not reacting to anti-depressive medication, the absence of affective disorders in the family and being abandoned or neglected as a child.

Not wanting to believe that one can be important to another person for fear of being abandoned is registered as an object relation of the parent (32) type.

Living only for others is regarded as a manifestation of an external self-image (33) when the client is capable of seeing themselves as having some importance. However, when the client feels that any potential value applies only to what they give and not to the giver, this indicates an absence of basic trust.

It is important to distinguish between an absence of basic trust and excessive norms (44), in which the client's disqualification of themselves is related to a norm violation, and moral masochism (49), in which the client actively rejects the good in everything because they find the idea unbearable.

When the client's perception of themselves as worthless is accompanied by unfounded destructive self-criticism, this is also an indication that they aim their aggression towards themselves (shifting, elimination, 47).

#### **Examples:**

**39** I am not worth loving.

**39** I don't have anything to offer.

**39** I don't belong anywhere. I don't think I'm important to anyone.

**39** I've always had the feeling that I was never wanted. It would be better if I had never been born.

**39** I find it very difficult to accept the love of others. I don't think I'm worth it.

**39** I couldn't believe he really liked/loved me.

### **Moral masochism (49)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** Satisfying or otherwise positive experiences are unbearable to the client.

Moral masochism manifests itself in the active rejection or negation of 'lust' or in the creation of 'discomfort'. The client often indicates that they are unable to bear the idea of things going well for them.

This is often accompanied by all-round and unfounded self-condemnation: 'I don't deserve it. I don't have the right to live. I am bad, I'm good for nothing. I don't know why, exactly, but

it's the truth.' However, the client can also prevent or negate good experiences without being able to explain why they do so. Even more striking is the intensity with which they reject or negate changes for the better. Making the wrong choices without good reason or against their own better judgment also belongs to this category.

The definition is not related to *sexual masochism*, i.e., experiencing sexual arousal from being humiliated, beaten or otherwise abused. Neither does the definition cover self-destructive activities with a clear purpose, including self-harm with the aim of reducing disintegration anxiety (sensation-seeking, 15), not being able to accept good things for fear of being disappointed or misbehaving out of a fear of being abandoned (parent, 32), provoking punishment in order to attract 'negative' attention (passive need for love, 35) and self-punishment arising from unacceptable behaviour. The same applies to the negative consequences of giving up (38).

The idea that one doesn't deserve anything good distinguishes moral masochism from absence of basic trust (39). However, moral masochism and absence of basic trust (39) can go together.

Identifying moral masochism is important when drawing up a treatment plan, as moral masochism is often one of the reasons behind a *negative therapeutic reaction* in which the client may experience an increase in complaints, end the treatment or attempt to commit suicide even though the treatment is going well.

#### **Examples:**

*(When asked, the client is unable to explain why they deny themselves the good things in life and subject themselves to the bad, except by offering an unfounded existential judgment of themselves as 'bad'.)*

**49** I don't look after myself. When my shoes are worn out, I keep wearing them until they can't be repaired anymore.

**49** I hate myself. I'm a meaningless, odd and sometimes nasty person. I don't believe people who tell me I'm not like that. They don't know me (also absence of basic trust, 39).

**49** Sometimes I break something I own just to punish myself, even when I've done nothing wrong.

**49** I kept on taking the pills, even after I found a new job.

**49** I kept on lending him money, even though I couldn't afford to and knew that I wouldn't get it back.

**49** I fell into the same trap again (a relationship with a married man), even though I knew it would end badly.

## **Feelings of sexual inadequacy (59)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client doubts their own sexual prowess.

Feelings of sexual inadequacy manifest themselves directly in uncertainty about one's sexual appeal or in the unfounded fear of not being able to perform sexual intercourse, which leads to a fear of potential sexual partners. It is often accompanied by a preoccupation with sex and sometimes destructive feelings of anger towards the 'seducers'.

Most manifestations of feelings of sexual inadequacy are indirect, such as *sexual exhibitionism*, accentuating sex-related physical features and boasting about one's sexual performance. In other words, presenting oneself as a sexually desirable 'superman' or 'superwoman'.

This generally has nothing to do with establishing a sexual relationship with someone but rather with a desire to confirm one's own sexual appeal. When the client says later on that 'it' meant nothing to them, they are usually telling the truth. In any case, it is rarely their intention that 'it' goes any further than it already has. Many of these clients regard sex as threatening or dirty. They generally fail to acknowledge their own doubts regarding their sexual prowess but those doubts remain despite their continued 'success' in the sexual arena and so the client is forced to repeatedly prove their prowess.

If the client's preoccupation with sex manifests itself in lending sexual meaning to certain activities or objects that are not meant to be sexual in any way, this is an indication of *sexualisation*.

Other indirect manifestations of feelings of sexual inadequacy include wanting to find a superman or superwoman as a partner in order to confirm one's own sexual appeal. These types of relationships are characterised by a fear of commitment, as there is always the chance that someone more beautiful, wealthy or attractive will come along.

*Pathological jealousy* and the seduction and dumping of sexual partners are also indirect manifestations of feelings of sexual inadequacy.

In the latter case, the client uses their superman or superwoman qualities to attract a partner who often has to make enormous sacrifices, such as ending their existing relationship or quitting their job. This new partner is then dumped or ignored after a short period of time. The she-woman becomes a *femme fatale*, the he-man a *Don Juan* and the relationship a *liaison dangereuse*.

Feelings of inadequacy arising from a sexual dysfunction (impotence, anorgasmia) do not belong to this category.

When assessing this behaviour it is important to consider (sub)cultural norms with regard to sexuality.

When the client's sexual prowess plays a role in determining their sense of self-worth this is registered as ideal-driven self-image (53).

Sexual exhibitionism is also an indication of pretending (58).

### Examples:

59 I feel like a boy wearing short trousers in world full of men wearing pants.

59 I hate women. They're dumb, superficial and always out to snare men.

59 I never admit to anything. It's not manly to do that. (sexualisation)

59 That's a really feminine dress/very manly bowtie. (sexualisation)

59 I've slept with other fifty women in the past few years.

59 When I'm in a relationship I enjoy flirting with other women. It makes me feel attractive.

59 The fact that a woman as beautiful as her fell for me is very good for my ego. (superwoman as sexual attribute; may also indicate ideal-driven self-image, 53)

59 I can't stand it when he looks at other women. (pathological jealousy)

59 For me it was all about proving I could get her. After that I just dropped the frigid bitch as quickly as I could and I have to say I enjoyed that. (seduction and rejection)

## Primary process thought (69)

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client is able to explore their immediate, arbitrary and unstructured thoughts.

This relates to complex thinking that is not governed by logic and has no structured content or coherence. These thoughts can have contradictory meanings and be related to different periods of time and different locations. They are categorised as primary process thought, while thoughts that are the product of focused and logical thinking are categorised as secondary process thought.

The ability to explore these thoughts refers to the client's ability to describe what primary process thoughts mean to them. In other words, the ability to connect their primary process thought and secondary process thought with each other.

Visual advertising often makes use of primary process thought to include subliminal messages that would be rejected as absurd if subjected to logical thinking. The aim of these messages is to create a connection between a product and a desired situation. The cool cowboy smoking a cigarette communicates the message that this is a cool cigarette meant for cool men and that you can be cool too by smoking the same cigarette. This message does not create any resistance because the primary process thought is not subjected to the reality of the situation. In its verbal form, 'Smoking this cigarette makes you a cool guy', the message is entirely absurd and an insult to the consumer's intelligence.

Primary process thought manifests itself in:

- free association
- dreams
- creative expression

### *Free association*

The client verbalises each thought that crosses their mind. Randomly establishing connections between different things also belongs to this category: 'The red colour of her dress made me think of my mother's favourite scarf.'

### *Dreams*

Dreams are a well-known primary process phenomenon: 'I was standing in a large hall, like in a strain station.' (But it was also your room here.) 'My father was there too but he had red hair like yours. I was walking hand in hand with him, like a young boy would, and that's really weird because I was lying here on the couch watching the very same scene' (primary process). 'The train station made me think of when you announced you were going on holidays. For some reason or other I don't think you prefer the train to flying. And I feel kind of lost now. You're going away and there'll be no one to hold my hand' (secondary process).

### *Creative expression*

Some clients are better able to describe what they are feeling through creative expression, usually in the form of a drawing or painting and sometimes through music. This often makes it easier for them to express their true feelings.

### **Quantification:**

Primary process thoughts are only scored when assessed and clarified on the basis of secondary process thoughts, i.e., when self-reflecting cognitions (66) are present.

The quantification is related to the clinical relevance of the relevant themes.

## **Collectiveness (79)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client believes they form part of a group.

This 'we' feeling goes hand in hand with the belief that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is also referred to as *interdependency*.

An important element is that the client retains their sense of independence while still acknowledging that the group can achieve more together than the client can on their own. They choose to become part of the greater whole but can also opt out if they wish to do so.

Functioning as an individual in a group, becoming involved just for the fun of it or because you can do so anonymously, but not feeling connected to the group is not registered as collectiveness.

Being able to retain one's independence distinguishes collectiveness from borrowing one's identity or inner structure framework (12) primarily from being a member of a group (external self-image, 33).

### **Examples:**

**79** I work on a tall ship. Working on such a large boat and dealing with difficult situations brings everyone together.

**79** I enjoy singing in a choir. I love being able to create something beautiful together with other people.

## **Grieving (89)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client has been able to cope with significant losses in their life.

This can include the loss of an important person, the loss of certain physical or mental capabilities and desires or ambitions that have not been fulfilled.

Processing loss requires the ability to deal with the thoughts and feelings related to that loss, such as helplessness, anger, grief and fear, in such a way that they do not dominate the client's life or limit their ability to function normally.

Paradoxically, the process of grieving often enhances the client's ability to enjoy other things and to find a new path in life in due course.

The fact that the loss is experienced as painful distinguishes grieving from affect isolation (elimination, 47).

Finding new meaning in life after grieving is also registered as reorganising (88).

**Examples:**

**89** When he left me I spent at least half a year either in a complete rage or in tears. Eventually I started to calm down again.

**89** I have started to realise that my invention is not going to bring me the fame and fortune I thought it would. It was a nice fantasy and it's a shame it's over but it was fun while it lasted.

**89** I've never really had much contact with my father and I've always missed that. Now he's dead and there's nothing I can do about it. That's very sad.

**89** What I really wanted was to go hiking in remote places all over the world but I had a family to feed. And now that I've got enough money, it's my health that's stopping me from pursuing that dream. I became a member of a sailing club instead and I really enjoy that. It's not a million miles away from venturing into the unknown and coming face to face with the struggle for life (also reorganising, 88).

**Dying (99)**

*Miscellaneous themes*

**Operational definition:** The client is aware of their own mortality.

This relates to the ability to face death on a cognitive and affective level without losing the will to live. It often goes hand in hand with a fear of the unknown and an intensification and greater appreciation of life itself.

The definition does not cover terminating life when one considers it to be pointless and without joy.

**Examples:**

**99** We shared the inheritance among our children. It felt good to be able to do that while we are still alive.

**99** The thought of dying scares me but it also makes me appreciate life more.

**99** I know my time is coming to an end and I am ready for it.