The Work Personality Profile

Brief history
The Work Personality Profile (WPP) [1,2] was developed at Arkansas Research and Training Center in Vocational Rehabilitation, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, USA, ‘to make available a comprehensive observational instrument for assessing critical work role requirements’. The WPP has been used to assess workers with a range of clinical disorders.

Description
The WPP [1,2] comprises 58 ‘behaviourally oriented’ items relating to work attitudes, values, habits and behaviours. These are rated on a four-point scale: ‘4’—‘a definite strength, an employability asset’; ‘3’—‘adequate performance, not a particular strength’; ‘2’—‘performance inconsistent, potentially an employability problem’ and ‘1’—‘a problem area, will definitely limit the person’s chance for employment’. A parallel self-rating form provides useful data independently of staff completed scores. The WPP was standardized on 243 people attending vocational rehabilitation centres. The WPP is a useful clinical tool.

Items
The 58 items form 11 ‘rationally derived scales’: acceptance of the work role, ability to profit from instruction or correction, work persistence, work tolerance, amount of supervision required, extent ‘trainee’ seeks assistance from supervisor, degree of comfort or anxiety with supervisor, appropriateness of personal relations with supervisor, teamwork, ability to socialize with co-workers and social communication skills. Factor analysis identified five separate factors ‘task orientation’ (21 items)—cognitive skills and good work habits (e.g. learning, initiative, independence, adaptability, responsibility); ‘social skills’ (12)—ability to relate to co-workers in terms of being appropriately sociable, outgoing, friendly and emotionally expressive; ‘work motivation’ (8)—willingness to accept work assignments and move readily to new tasks, work at routine jobs without complaining; ‘work conformance’ (9)—appropriate behaviour at work (e.g. ‘good judgement’ in expression of negative behaviour, even-temper, ‘controlled self-presentation’) and ‘personal presentation’ (8)—interaction with supervisors and attention to personal hygiene and appearance. On our programme therapist completed scales are based on subject observation at work or undertaking work-related activities.

Validity
The WPP was reported to be predictive of successful service outcomes in terms of both completion and general competence in vocational training. Good internal consistency and test–retest reliability are reported. However, due to lower inter-rater reliability, it is suggested that ratings from two or more observers are averaged for diagnostic purposes.

Key research
The WPP was found to be sensitive to vocational difficulties after traumatic brain injury [3]. The WPP has been used routinely on ‘Working Out’ (brain injury vocational rehabilitation programme), Community Head Injury Service, Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust. Staff ratings of participants with severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) were significantly lower than the normative group on all factors. Staff ratings were significantly less positive than self-ratings on all factors with no significant correlation. The WPP was sensitive to common difficulties with awareness, self-monitoring and judgement after TBI. Those returning to employment on programme completion were rated significantly more positively in task orientation and social skills. (Ratings of work motivation and personal presentation also exceeded $P < 0.05$.) [4,5] Our experience on the Working Out Programme is that the WPP is of great value in providing a structured assessment of work attitudes, performance and behaviour after brain injury including comparison of self- and staff ratings. It highlights many difficulties with behaviour at work after brain injury and facilitates dialogue about related interventions.

Source
The WPP can be downloaded free from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, Utah State University at www.ncrtm.org.

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References

