

Foundational Assessments for Personalized Mental Health Care

A Framework for Building a Personalized Internal Family Systems Model

Executive Summary

This white paper outlines the foundational psychological assessment framework utilized by Goodman Mental Health. We detail four key psychometric instruments: the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), the Multidimensional Schema Scale (MSS-v1.4), the Personality Inventory for DSM-5–Short Form (PID-5-SF), and the Attachment Style Questionnaire–Short Form (ASQ-SF). These research-backed assessments provide crucial insights into an individual's personality, core beliefs, and attachment style. The data gathered from these tools serves as the empirical basis for constructing a personalized Internal Family Systems (IFS) model, enabling a more targeted and effective approach to mental health care. By integrating these assessments, we create a comprehensive understanding of an individual's internal landscape, facilitating deeper self-awareness and tailored therapeutic interventions.

Introduction

Effective mental health treatment begins with a deep and accurate understanding of the individual. A one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient for addressing the complex and unique internal worlds of clients. To facilitate a truly personalized therapeutic journey, it is essential to employ reliable, validated tools that can map out key psychological domains. At Goodman Mental Health, we have established a foundational assessment protocol designed to provide this critical initial insight.

This paper explores our use of four specific psychological tests. These instruments are not merely diagnostic tools; they are the building blocks for creating a personalized Internal Family Systems (IFS) model. By systematically evaluating personality traits, ingrained schemas, and attachment patterns, we can develop a comprehensive map of a client's internal system. This evidence-based approach ensures that therapeutic strategies are tailored to the individual's specific needs from the very beginning.

The Problem: The Need for a Structured and Personalized Approach

Many individuals entering therapy struggle to articulate the root causes of their distress. They may be aware of symptoms like anxiety, depression, or relationship difficulties, but lack a clear understanding of the underlying psychological structures driving these experiences. Without a structured framework for exploration, therapy can become a lengthy and unfocused process, leading to client frustration and suboptimal outcomes. The challenge for clinicians is to quickly and accurately identify the core dynamics at play to develop an effective and efficient treatment plan.

Proposed Solution: A Four-Pillar Assessment Protocol

Our solution is a multi-faceted assessment protocol that provides a holistic view of an individual's psychological makeup. This protocol is built on four pillars, each represented by a specific, research-backed assessment. The cumulative insights from these tests form the basis of a personalized IFS model, which helps both the therapist and the client understand the different "parts" of the self and how they interact.

The estimated time commitment for completing these assessments is manageable, with the more comprehensive tests requiring approximately 15 minutes each and the shorter test about 5 minutes.

Pillar 1: Understanding Personality with the IPIP

The International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) is a public-domain collection of items used in personality psychology. This assessment helps to map an individual's personality profile, often based on the Five-Factor Model (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism).

- **Purpose:** To provide a broad overview of an individual's enduring personality traits.
- **Insights Gained:** Understanding personality helps identify natural tendencies, communication styles, and potential areas of strength or vulnerability. In an IFS context, these traits can inform the characteristics of different internal "parts."
- **Time to Complete:** Approximately 15 minutes.

Pillar 2: Identifying Core Beliefs with the MSS-v1.4

The Multidimensional Schema Scale (MSS-v1.4) is designed to identify early maladaptive schemas—deeply ingrained beliefs and feelings about oneself and the world, often developed in childhood. Examples include schemas of Abandonment, Defectiveness, or Unrelenting Standards.

- **Purpose:** To uncover the core beliefs that shape an individual's perceptions, emotions, and behaviors.
- **Insights Gained:** Identifying these schemas is critical for understanding the root of recurring negative patterns. Within the IFS model, these beliefs are often held by vulnerable, younger "parts" (Exiles) and protected by managerial or firefighting "parts."
- **Time to Complete:** Approximately 15 minutes.

Pillar 3: Assessing Maladaptive Traits with the PID-5-SF

The Personality Inventory for DSM-5–Short Form (PID-5-SF) assesses maladaptive personality traits across five key domains: Negative Affect, Detachment, Antagonism, Disinhibition, and Psychoticism. It provides a dimensional understanding of personality pathology.

- **Purpose:** To identify specific problematic personality traits that contribute to dysfunction and distress.
- **Insights Gained:** The PID-5-SF offers a more granular look at the challenging aspects of personality that may manifest as protective "parts" in the IFS model. For example, high Detachment may relate to a part that isolates the self to avoid pain.
- **Time to Complete:** Approximately 15 minutes.

Pillar 4: Mapping Relational Patterns with the ASQ-SF

The Attachment Style Questionnaire–Short Form (ASQ-SF) evaluates an individual's attachment style, such as secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, or fearful-avoidant. These styles are formed in early relationships and profoundly influence adult connections.

- **Purpose:** To understand how an individual forms and maintains relationships.
- **Insights Gained:** Attachment style provides crucial context for interpersonal difficulties. It helps identify the relational patterns that different parts of the internal system have learned to expect and enact, informing how a client relates to the therapist and others.
- **Time to Complete:** Approximately 5 minutes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The integration of the IPIP, MSS-v1.4, PID-5-SF, and ASQ-SF provides a robust, multi-dimensional foundation for effective mental health therapy. By investing a small amount of time at the outset, clients and clinicians gain invaluable, structured insights that accelerate the therapeutic process. These research-backed assessments allow for the creation of a personalized Internal Family Systems model, transforming abstract feelings and behaviors into a clear and manageable internal map.

We recommend this foundational assessment protocol as a best practice for any therapeutic approach aiming for personalization and depth. It empowers clients with self-knowledge and equips clinicians with the data needed to devise targeted, efficient, and empathetic interventions that honor the unique complexity of each individual.

Take the First Step

Ready to gain deeper insights into your mental health? Take the foundational psychological assessments now by visiting [Goodman Mental Health](#).

Bio

Goodman Mental Health is dedicated to providing innovative, evidence-based approaches to mental wellness. We specialize in creating personalized therapeutic models by integrating foundational psychological assessments with established frameworks like Internal Family Systems (IFS). Our mission is to empower individuals with the self-understanding and tools necessary for profound and lasting healing.