CHAPTER 14

Other Conditions of Clinical Interest

RATHUS ASSERTIVENESS SCHEDULE

Purpose and Development

Rathus (1973) developed this 30-item self-report measure of assertiveness to measure changes produced by assertiveness training, which is now a common part of psychological interventions for chronic mental illness (Benton & Schroeder, 1990), as well as a type of training provided to individuals who have no psychological disorder. Rathus based the items on assertiveness items from multitrait scales, on assertion situations described by Wolpe and Lazarus, and on behaviors described in assertion diaries of college students.

The scale has been translated into Brazilian Portuguese (Pasquali & Goveia, 1990), French (Bouvard, Cottraux, Mollard, & Messy, 1986), Italian (Galeazzi, 1989), Spanish (Flores-Galaz, Diaz-Loving, & Rivera-Aragon, 1987), and Swedish (Gustafson, 1992).

Andrasik, Heimberg, Edlund, & Blankenberg (1981) reported that a tenth- to twelfth-grade reading level is needed for the scale instructions and an eighth- to ninth-grade level is needed for the items. In response, McCormick (1985) developed a more easily read version of the scale, but it has been little used in research.

Administration and Scoring

Respondents use a continuum of −3 to +3 to respond to each of 30 items. The scale score is the sum of all the responses, after reversing the
sign (− or +) of responses on items 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11−17, 19, 23, 24, 26, and 30. Scores can range from −90 to +90, with higher scores indicating more assertiveness.

Sample Scores

Several studies of the scale have produced scores for a total of almost 2,000 college students. The mean scores have ranged from −1 to 12, SD = 22 to 28 (Chandler, Cook, & Dugovics, 1978; Hollandsworth, 1976; Hull & Hull, 1978; Morgan, 1974; Nevid & Rathus, 1978). For groups with a total of 35 inpatient or outpatient schizophrenics, Rathus and Nevid (1977) reported means of −23 to −12, SD = 4 to 35. For 71 assertion training participants from the community, Mann & Flowers (1978) reported an initial mean score of about −4 (no SD).

Reliability

Beck and Heimberg (1983), in a comprehensive review of assertiveness scales, reported Rathus Assertiveness Schedule internal consistency coefficients from several studies. These ranged from .59 to .86, with a median of about .76. The review also reported test–retest reliability in two studies of .78 and .80 for periods of 5 weeks and 11−15 days respectively.

Validity

Beck and Heimberg (1983) noted that studies have repeatedly found high correlations between scales scores and other assertiveness measures. Rathus (1973) found correlations between scale scores and both peer ratings of assertiveness and oral descriptions by the subjects of what they would do in certain assertion situations.

In the decade since Beck and Heimberg (1983) published their review of the scale, studies have found correlations between high scale scores and (a) observed assertiveness (Starke, 1987); (b) observed quantity and volume of speech during role-playing (Kimble & Musgrove, 1988); (c) low communication apprehension (Beatty, Plax, & Kearney, 1984); and low depression (Nezu, Nezu, & Nezu, 1986).

Studies have repeatedly found significant decreases in scores produced by assertion training (Beck and Heimberg, 1983; Brown & Carmichael, 1992; McIntyre, Jeffrey, & McIntyre, 1984; Starke, 1987).

Beck and Heimberg (1983) noted that some scale items do not on their face distinguish between assertiveness and aggression. However, there appears to be no evidence that these items harm the validity of the scale.