Therapist and Client Experience of Collaborative Assessment: A Qualitative Study

John Danna

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THERAPIST AND CLIENT EXPERIENCE OF COLLABORATIVE
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation
Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
John V. Danna

May 2011
THERAPIST AND CLIENT EXPERIENCE OF COLLABORATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

THERAPIST AND CLIENT EXPERIENCE OF COLLABORATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By
John V. Danna
May 2009

Dissertation supervised by Constance T. Fischer

Within the field of assessment psychology, only recently have efforts been made to study the potentially therapeutic benefits of increasing the involvement of client participation in the assessment process. Little attention has been paid to the experiential aspects of this style of assessment from both therapist and client perspectives during the assessment and discussion sessions. Gaining insight into these experiences in order to better inform and enhance the practice of a collaborative and therapeutic style of psychological assessment is the primary focus of this research project. This study’s methodology draws from qualitative methods used previously to study the process of both assessment and psychotherapy. The analysis focused on the accounts provided by psychological assessors and assessment clients regarding their experiences during collaborative assessment. Nine individuals (five clients and four therapists) provided
written descriptions of their assessment experience and participated in individual audio-taped interviews during which we watched video tape selections of their assessment and discussed those video segments along with segments from their written descriptions. These interviews were then transcribed and interpreted by means of qualitative methodology. The analysis yielded thematic experiences for both clients and therapists that were grouped into larger general experiential categories – three for clients and four for therapists. Clients and therapists share three of these general experiential categories: finding assessment experiences to be helpful or enjoyable, finding assessment experiences to be difficult or unpleasant, and descriptions of the assessment process. The additional experiential category for therapists explores the effect that the extent of one’s practice conducting assessments can have on his or her experience of it. The dissertation provides insight into what it is like to experience a collaborative assessment as either a therapist or client, give suggestions for therapists regarding approaches they use during a collaborative assessment that can make it more fruitful and enjoyable for both participants, and make interesting comparisons to other research on this type of psychological assessment.
DEDICATION

For my family, teachers, friends and all those who supported me throughout this journey.
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I would like to thank my family, especially my parents, for their constant support and for everything they have taught me about life and how to live it.

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List of Abbreviations

C1 through C4b: Client Participants
T1 through T4b: Therapist Participants
R: Researcher
C1WD through C4bWD: Client Participant’s Written Descriptions
T1WD through T4bWD: Therapist Participant’s Written Descriptions
TC1 through TC4b: Client Participant’s Transcribed Interviews
TT1 through TT4b: Therapist Participant’s Transcribed Interviews
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Chapter One:
Introduction
Psychological assessment can be an invaluable therapeutic tool. It can help clinicians to know and understand their clients, while simultaneously helping clients to develop insights and perspectives on the ways they cope with and move through the world. Traditionally, the teaching and practice of psychological assessment has largely ignored its potentially therapeutic aspects. The benefits that could be gained by implementing a collaborative relationship between assessor and client also traditionally have been ignored in favor of a style of assessment that focuses on information-gathering for the sake of communicating data about clients to other clinicians.

Within the past few decades, however, a different style of psychological assessment has been taking the field in a new direction and is continuously drawing attention and support. This style of psychological assessment is commonly referred to as individualized, collaborative, interventional, or therapeutic assessment, and it will be the focus of the research project presented in this dissertation. I will begin by painting a picture of what this unique type of psychological assessment is and discussing why the research I conducted regarding it is relevant before laying out the research project itself. I will generally refer to this particular style of psychological assessment as “individualized” assessment until I later distinguish between other versions of this kind of assessment.

One of the primary functions of individualized psychological assessment is to provide access to an individual’s life situation or life world. It explores the different ways individuals experience the world and contribute to their experience of the world through the ways they choose to negotiate whatever obstacles they confront in their particular situations. Assessment of this process can be therapeutic in that it can offer
individuals not only the opportunity to recognize and better understand the typical ways they respond to and deal with the obstacles they face in their daily lives, but also the opportunity to try out different ways of facing the challenges they encounter that can prove to be healthier, more productive, and fulfilling. Of course, there are circumstances in which full collaboration is not appropriate, such as in certain forensic cases. Before we get into the process itself, let us take a look at some of the theoretical foundations of this approach and how it came about.

**Historical and Theoretical Foundations**

Individualized psychological assessment is theoretically and practically grounded in humanistic and human-science psychology. Ironically, however, most of the humanistic psychology movement was in some way or another opposed to the practice of psychological assessment all together and criticized it as a judgmental, objectivistic, reductionistic, deterministic, and dehumanizing process. Humanistic psychology, as well as human-science psychology, is concerned with the fundamentally human aspects of psychology and looks to the human context for the development of psychological theory. It values human agency, meaning, choice, responsibility, and intentionality and it emphasizes subjectivity and the uniqueness of human contexts. One might see from this why some humanistic clinicians and theorists (Brown, 1972; Bugental, 1963, 1964, 1965; May, 1958; Rogers, 1951) questioned and disagreed with certain practices in psychological assessment that were characteristic at the time.

Nonetheless, there were other psychologists who shared in the same humanistic ideologies as these objecting psychologists and still recognized the utility and therapeutic potential of assessment (Craddick, 1972; Dana, 1982; Fischer, 1970, 1972; Sugarman,
1978). They heard these arguments and were not discouraged by them. Instead, they took them as a call for change. These psychologists believed that assessment could readily incorporate humanistic principles by undergoing some modifications and adaptations to the way it was conducted. They also realized that these changes would not only answer some criticisms by filling some gaps in the assessment process, such as the one between assessor and client, but they could also enhance the process itself and increase its efficacy.

Humanistic psychotherapy was itself revolutionary in practice because it made the client the focal point of therapeutic work in ways no other form of therapy had done before. It has been referred to as “client-centered” therapy because it did just that, it placed the client at the center of the therapeutic framework and structure (Rogers, 1951). Similarly, the major shift in the practice of psychological assessment was to invite the client to be much more involved in the assessment process. The clients were called upon to become active contributors in the process itself. Clients were invited not only to become contributors, but also to participate in a feedback session with the assessor in which they discussed the results of the testing. Providing feedback to clients was something that clinicians had been strongly warned against in the past out of fear that it could prove detrimental to the client’s well being (Klopfer, 1954). However, many practitioners recognized this as vital and necessary to the change process. Over time, the field of psychology came to realize not only the benefits of providing clients with assessment feedback, it declared that psychologists have a moral and ethical obligation to do so (American Psychological Association, 1990).
Providing clients with assessment feedback has been shown to have several general and therapeutic benefits for specific clients such as decreased symptomatology, reduced feelings of isolation, greater self-awareness and understanding as well as increased self-esteem, feelings of hope, and motivation to seek mental health services or more actively participate in psychotherapy (Finn & Butcher, 1991). During the same time when the inclusion of feedback sessions in assessment was gaining acceptance and acclaim, other research advocated the increased involvement of clients as participants throughout the assessment process (Allen, 1981; Berg; 1985; Fischer, 1970, 1987, 1989, 1985/1994; Jaffee, 1988). These changes in the practice of psychological assessment effectively began to blur the line between assessment and therapy, with the primary factor of change responsible for this blurring effect being the client assuming a more involved role in the assessment process.

A Portrait of Individualized Assessment

Before discussing the specific ways individualized assessment seeks to involve clients as participants in the assessment process, it is important for us to first take a brief look at the unique perspective this approach takes toward clients. This means fleshing out the ways this approach encourages assessors to understand or get to know the clients they are assessing. Individualized assessment is an assessment of process in that it seeks to understand the ways a person approaches, deals with, moves through, and processes his or her own experiences in the world. In life, we come to understand each other and ourselves by paying attention to what we do and where we are going. Another way of putting this would be to say that we are attuned to the intentionality and comportment of others and ourselves. Intentionality refers to the way we, as human beings, are always in
relation to the world and how our thoughts and actions are always meaningfully and purposefully directed toward different aspects of our lived world. Comportment can be understood as one’s conduct, demeanor, or behavior; but it can be better understood as one’s style of moving through the world or “the way one carries oneself” (Fischer, 1985/1994, p. 54). This is what is meant by saying individualized assessment encourages assessors to understand clients, and clients to better understand themselves, by paying attention to what the client does (his/her comportment) and where the client is going (his/her intentionality). Although intentionality and comportment can be seen as the realms through which individualized assessors seek to gain access to their clients’ worlds, these realms are never expected to “explain” a person or their personality, motives, and so on. We must also remember that these realms are opened up in psychological assessment with the aid of the testing materials themselves and how the materials are specifically taken up or put to use.

Test materials are the necessary tools of psychological assessment. Besides providing statistical profiles as starting points for exploration they allow the assessor to bring the client’s context into the assessment room. If a client with a pervasively tranquil demeanor reports that his friends and family tell him that he has outrageous outbursts of anger when he is in a situation where he has difficulty figuring things out, it would be somewhat absurd to try to get a sense of how he is in these moments by actually following him around in his daily life. It would be much easier to put him in a situation using testing materials where he will certainly have to struggle to complete a task. This tactic effectively brings the “having-difficulty-figuring-it-out” situation into the
The testing materials are a vital part of the assessment process for all kinds of psychological assessment. One feature that distinguishes individualized assessment from other styles of assessment is the way it encourages assessors to take up these tools. In Individualizing Psychological Assessment (1985/1994), Constance Fischer outlines this human-science approach to assessment according to six guiding principles, which serve more to provide a vivid characterization of this approach than to lay out rules of conduct. The first guideline for this approach is that it is descriptive, which means that it considers the client’s comportment and experience of particular life events to be its primary data rather than numbers, constructs, and categories. The second guideline is that individualized assessment is contextual. Contexts that are typically worth consideration can range from the physical and temporal setting of the assessment space and the physical condition of the client, to the life world of reported behavior and experience, and the interpreted meanings and relationship between assessor and client. The third guideline is that individualized assessment is collaborative, which means that the assessor encourages the client to take an informed and active role in the assessment process as “co-evaluator” or “co-assessor.” This key aspect includes inviting the client to make contributions from the point of first contact with the assessor through the writing of the assessment reports. Collaboration may involve discussing DSM diagnoses with clients, and including in reports clients’ disagreements with the assessor’s opinions.

The fourth guideline of individualized assessment is that it is interventional. It is interventional not only in that it serves an indexical function for the assessor and client by
calling certain aspects of the clients’ behavior to their attention, but also in the sense that it provides an opening beyond limitations, a space to explore new perspectives, styles, and possible ways of being or moving through the world. The assessor might ask clients to provide real world examples of how a certain aspect of their comportment pointed out by the test materials applies to their lives, as well as examples of times when they might be otherwise. The assessor may also say something like, “You tried it this way and it didn’t work for you, how about trying it this way (or another way)….‖ The fifth guideline is that individualized assessment is structural, which means the assessor is not searching for particular causal explanations for the client’s behavior, but is instead trying to form a more holistic picture of the client’s style and experience of the world. This guideline is similar to the descriptive guideline in that it looks to create a descriptive structure of the client’s experience by asking questions like “how,” “what,” and “when” (and when not) rather than “why?” The sixth and final guideline is that this approach to assessment is circumspect, which reminds us that these are “guidelines” for the practice of a style of assessment and not static or dogmatic rules for conduct. As assessors, we should mind our surroundings, exercise our own judgment, and leave room for authentic flexibility when going through the assessment process with clients. This guideline also helps us remember that when the assessment process is complete, we are still always left with an unfinished, incomplete picture of the client.

We can view these principles as drawing a solid sketch of individualized assessment by showing what this approach is, does, and looks like. Maybe we can also fill in this sketch a bit and gain a fuller, more enriched, perspective on this approach by taking a look at what it is not (or by asking, “when not?”). We have already compared
this approach to traditional approaches to assessment in some general ways, but now it is
time to make some more specific comparisons. We just discussed how Fischer
(1985/1994) provided us with six guiding principles for the practice of individualized
assessment. In similar fashion, Steve Finn and Mary Tonsager (1997) contrast this
individualized approach to assessment with the traditional approach to psychological
assessment, or the Information-Gathering Model, by looking at these two approaches
across six different aspects of assessment.

The first aspect concerns the goals each approach seeks to achieve through
assessment. The information-gathering model attempts to describe clients in terms of
pre-existing categories in order to improve communication between professionals and
make decisions about, or for, clients. In contrast, the individualized approach attempts to
provide clients with new experiences and new information about themselves so they can
in turn make changes in their lives by exploring new ways of thinking, feeling, coping,
and being. The information-gathering model typically views the assessment process as
occurring in three steps: data collection, deductive unilateral interpretation of that data,
and recommendations (to other professionals). Collaboration between assessor and
client, or any social interaction for that matter, is discouraged throughout the process.
Despite using the same test materials and following a three-step method, the
individualized approach is drastically different when it comes to process. Its three steps
consist of establishing empathetic connections with the client, working with the client
collaboratively to define goals of assessment, and providing the client with information
for mutual exploration throughout the entire assessment process. The goal here is to
increase understanding between assessor and client rather than between assessor and other professionals.

The information-gathering model views test materials primarily as a means to gaining standardized samples of the clients’ behavior in order to make comparisons and predictions about their behavior. Individualized assessment values the testing materials because of the access they allow to the clients’ comportment and world which increases the assessors’ appreciation of the clients’ experience. They are also seen as opportunities for dialogue leading to change in perception and style. The focus of attention in the information-gathering model is mainly on the test scores (results) and the decisions to be made about, not with, the clients. The assessors in this model pay very little, if any, attention to their own feelings and thoughts during the assessment or to the clients’ experience of the assessment process. On the other hand, the primary focus of attention for the individualized approach is the experience of both assessor and client separately, as well as the relationship and process that develops between them.

Continuing Finn and Tonsager’s (1997) portrayal of assessment, the role of the assessor in the information-gathering model is characterized by striving to be an objective observer who exerts the least influence on the data and findings as possible. In contrast, in the individualized assessment approach assessors are expected to play the role of a participant as well as an observer and to contribute to the assessment process from their end just as the clients are contributing from theirs. Lastly, the information-gathering model defines assessment failure as determining the data collected to be unreliable or invalid, making a wrong decision about the client as a result of the assessment, or the client or person responsible for the client’s care not using the recommendations. The
individualized approach also defines assessment failure in three ways: relational, interventional, and intrapsychic. Relational failure occurs when the client does not feel engaged, respected, appreciated, and understood by the assessor. Interventional failure happens if the client is able to walk away from the assessment without feeling that he or she has been given the opportunity to change and to try out new perspectives or styles. Intrapsychic failure is if the client leaves the assessment feeling discouraged, incapable, or even taken advantage of or abused as a result of their experience in assessment. Overall, we can see from Finn and Tonsanger’s (1997) comparisons how individualized assessment helps to establish its own identity by diverging from traditional assessment in relation to goals, process, view of tests, focus of attention, role of assessor, and definition of failure. However, Finn still argues that these approaches to assessment are complementary because they simply try to understand clients in different ways.

We should differentiate between two very similar but ultimately distinguishable styles within this particular approach to psychological assessment. Up to this point I have been using the term “individualized assessment” to refer to the unique type of assessment we have been discussing, but it is really an over-arching umbrella for two styles of assessment: collaborative assessment and Therapeutic Assessment. These two specific styles are so similar that many psychologists who follow the more general individualized approach to assessment often combine various aspects of these styles. Indeed, the term “collaborative therapeutic assessment” has come into common use. Both of these styles of assessment invite the client to actively participate in the assessment process. However, the distinctive aspects of these two styles can be found in
the particular stages of the assessment process in which they engage the client collaboratively.

Collaborative assessment, as introduced by Fischer (1985/1994), seeks to engage the client collaboratively throughout the entire assessment process, including the initial stages, testing, and report writing. In a sense, this approach is intended to turn the entire assessment process into a mutual feedback session. Finn’s (1997) therapeutic approach begins the same way by mutually agreeing on assessment goals with clients. But the collaborative assessor will discuss the test findings with clients during the testing itself in order to help clients make sense of their own comportment and style so they can try out new ways of being in an “on the spot” manner. The collaborative assessor will then write a report that includes the experienced insights and understandings he or she believes the client has gained, as well as any acknowledged disagreements between assessor and client. The client’s changes or objections to the report content are then included in the final assessment report.

Therapeutic Assessment, as introduced by Finn and Tonsager (1997), Finn (2007), and described by Fischer and Finn (2008), typically begins by working with the client to formulate some questions to be addressed by the assessment. Then, the assessor accumulates and examines all of the test data before discussing the results in a feedback session with the client. The assessors who follow this style are more likely to contain much of what they think they know from the test data until the latter stages of the assessment process. The assessors will then assist the clients in realizing for themselves insights provided by the test data. Specifically, the clients are placed in situations similar to those that produced the insights for the assessor during the testing and the assessor
guides the clients through the “re-experiencing” toward the insight itself. This step typically occurs during an “assessment intervention session,” after an initial feedback session, toward the end of the assessment process.

The similarities and differences between a collaborative and therapeutic approach to assessment were expounded in a chapter on psychological assessment that was co-authored by Fischer and Finn in 2008. Both of these approaches involve providing clients with feedback at some points during the assessment. Let me again stress that what is meant by feedback here is not a unilateral sharing of data from assessor to client. What is meant here is that assessors share their impressions and understandings with the clients in the hopes that the client will not simply accept them, but will challenge and elaborate upon them by supplying real life examples of when they “fit” the tests’ descriptions of them and when they do not. However, despite the fact that these two approaches share many commonalities, including the kind of feedback they provide, there are still distinct differences between them. The most salient difference is that Therapeutic Assessment places more emphasis on the closing intervention session by holding off on making therapeutic interventions until later in the process while collaborative assessment makes therapeutic interventions throughout the entire assessment process. This difference will have more significance for us after we have reviewed the research on these approaches to assessment. I would like to point out that throughout this dissertation a distinction is made between collaboration that takes place during the “actual” assessment or the test administration portion of the assessment and collaboration that takes place in the closing intervention session, also referred to as the “feedback” session. However, it should be understood that the feedback session is still considered part of the assessment and this
distinction in no way forecloses on the possibilities for collaboration and continued discussion of what is brought to light during the assessment throughout the entire process or into psychotherapy.

I hope that we created a fairly clear picture of what individualized assessment is and how it works as we looked at its principles, how it differs from traditional forms of psychological assessment, and how it is put into practice. Now it is time to see if we can illuminate that picture by contributing to and furthering the existing research on this particular kind of assessment.

This Dissertation’s Research Question: **How Do Assessors and Clients Experience Collaborative Assessment?**

As part of their descriptive comparison between traditional assessment and individualized assessment, Finn and Tonsager (1997) discuss the importance of experiences for both assessor and client in assessment (p. 379). The three-fold focus of attention for individualized assessment is (1) the client’s subjective experience, (2) the assessor’s subjective experience, and (3) the dynamic interplay that occurs between assessor and client. However, the emerging research devoted to the study of individualized assessment has been concerned primarily with the experience of assessment from the perspective of either the client or the assessor, or both, leaving the third area of focus largely unstudied. This point will be elaborated momentarily. One obvious question is why has such a central aspect of this revolutionary approach to psychological assessment been largely ignored by current research on the topic? Another question would be what is there to gain from such research? It is much easier to find an answer to the latter question than it is to the former.
In our search for an answer to the second of these two questions, let us begin by formally posing some specific questions for research: How, or in what ways, do assessors and clients experience the process of individualized psychological assessment? What thematic experiences (as well as what commonalities and differences, correlations and divergences within those experiences) might arise out of the participants’ accounts of their assessment? What might others who are placed in these roles expect upon entering into this kind of assessment? The answers to these questions will serve to enhance the practice of this style of assessment in several ways. This information allows those learning how to conduct individualized assessment to gain some idea of what it is like to facilitate this particular process. It also will likely give them foresight as to what kinds of challenges and obstacles they might face. The same is also true for the clients’ perspectives because this information should furnish clients with some helpful ideas about the process they are about to participate in. It may also assist them in knowing what kinds of things they might expect and what is expected of them in the process. All of this will serve to increase the level of understanding and probably ease unnecessary tension. It should help each of the participants to get to know themselves and their roles in the assessment better, which could make the process itself become even more efficient, effective, and productive.

**Review of Research Literature**

Considering that those who practice individualized assessment have spent the last few decades working to establish it in the psychological community as a legitimate and beneficial aspect of treatment and advocating for its potential therapeutic value, it is not surprising that a large portion of the research devoted to it has been concerned with its
effectiveness. One of the most well crafted studies in this area was conducted by Finn and Tonsager (1992). This study looked at the effects of therapeutic assessment on clients at a university counseling center. Thirty-two clients underwent an initial interview, took an MMPI-2 (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory), and engaged in a one hour feedback session in accordance with a collaborative method devised by Finn. Twenty-nine other clients in a control group were interviewed and did not take an MMPI-2 but received an equal amount of “therapeutic attention” as the first group, consisting of supportive nondirective psychotherapy rather than a feedback session.

Compared to the control group, the clients who took part in the MMPI-2 feedback session showed a considerable decline in symptomatic distress and a significant increase in self-esteem. These changes were reported as occurring both immediately following the feedback session and at a two week follow-up interview. These clients also reported feeling more hopeful about their problems after the assessment was completed. Newman and Greenway (1997) later replicated this study in an Australian counseling center and found similar results.

Mark Hilsenroth and some of his graduate students at Adelphi University have contributed a considerable body of research on a Therapeutic Model of Assessment (TMA) which consists of a pretreatment assessment and feedback. TMA was developed by pulling aspects from both collaborative assessment (Fischer, 1985/1994) and Therapeutic Assessment (Finn, 1997). These studies look not only at the effects of TMA for clients by comparing it with an Information-Gathering (IG) model of assessment, as described by Finn and Tonsager (1997), but they also examine how the subsequent psychotherapy was influenced by TMA. The first of these studies (Ackerman,
Hilsenroth, Baity, & Blagys, 2000) looked at the therapeutic alliance developed in assessment as well as the likelihood that clients would terminate services between assessment and the beginning of psychotherapy sessions. A group of 90 clients (IG group) underwent assessment according to the information-gathering model, followed by regular psychotherapy sessions of behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, cognitive, or eclectic-oriented treatments over a 22 month period. Another group of 38 clients (TMA group) engaged in a Therapeutic Model of Assessment before continuing on into psychodynamic psychotherapy treatment sessions over a 22 month period at the same outpatient clinic. The research found that clients in the TMA group were significantly less likely to terminate before the initiation of formal treatment (13%) when compared to those in the IG group (33%). The study also found that the clients’ experience of the collaborative feedback session was significantly related to therapeutic alliance and that the clients valued the assessment more when they felt more involved in the process.

The next study from this group (Hilsenroth, Peters, & Ackerman, 2004) focused more directly on the development of therapeutic alliance during psychological assessment. In this study 42 clients and 18 therapists (doctoral students) participated in an assessment according to either a TMA model or an IG model before continuing into an average of 25 sessions of psychotherapy. In order to rate the therapeutic alliance from both the clients’ and therapists’ perspectives, the researchers administered the Combined Alliance Short Form – Patient Version (Hatcher & Barends, 1996) and the Combined Alliance Short Form – Therapist Version (Hatcher, 1999) to clients and therapists early in treatment (at the end of the assessment feedback session) and again later (after a substantial amount of psychotherapy). The researchers’ hypothesis that a working
alliance developed during a therapeutic psychological assessment would carry over into formal psychotherapy was supported by alliance ratings of both clients and therapists taken after the assessment and again later during psychotherapy. The results also showed a higher level of alliance rated by clients involved in TMA assessment when compared with those in IG assessment.

Some recent studies from this group examined the clients’ personality characteristics and alliance developed during TMA (Cromer & Hilsenroth, 2006) as well as clients’ experience of TMA (during a feedback session) and its impact across treatment (Weil & Hilsenroth 2006). Clients’ characteristics and relational attributes evaluated in this research were highly correlated to the therapeutic alliance, and the clients’ experiences of their feedback session had lasting effects on their psychotherapy treatments. Actually, clients’ experiences of the feedback session were shown to have more effects on their later psychotherapy sessions than it did on the early ones, which speaks to the lasting impact of TMA on clients and their treatment.

A more recent review from this group (Hilsenroth & Cromer, 2007) discussed the types of therapist interventions and characteristics during the psychological assessment or initial interviews that have shown to positively influence the therapeutic alliance. Aside from pointing out that they found no evidence suggesting that different practitioners should conduct the assessment and psychotherapy, the authors present a compelling list of characteristics and techniques that can be used by therapists while conducting the assessment and initial interview that could potentially improve their working relationships with their clients. The “clinical activities found to be significantly related to positive therapeutic alliance during the initial interview and psychological assessment”
(p. 214) are presented in terms of three general categories: frame, focus, and feedback. These suggested activities serve to guide therapists through the assessment and initial interview. They also provided me with some interesting data to which I compare the results of my research in the analysis chapter of this research presentation.

There are also studies dedicated to finding how effective this kind of assessment can be when applied to specific situations or populations. One such study was conducted by Caroline Purves (2002) to assess the value of collaborative assessment with involuntary populations, specifically foster children and their mothers, and found that the collaborative approach encourages a working alliance with initially resistant subjects. In an article in 2004, Denise Ben-Porath proposed a seven-step strategy for successfully engaging individuals diagnosed with borderline personality disorder in treatment. These individuals are widely considered some of the most difficult clients to engage in mental health treatment. The very first step of this seven-step process is collaborative assessment.

Another study was devised by Barry Katrichak (2004), at the Wright Institute in San Francisco, to observe the influence of Individualized Collaborative Assessment (ICA) on welfare recipients. This study assessed these individuals’ ability to adhere to their service plan, make vocational progress, and avoid sanctions for program noncompliance. In the first part of the study, 175 participants who had completed an ICA were compared with 175 who had not completed an ICA, in order to see which group had received the most negative sanctions during 2003. In the second part of this study, the progress of 65 participants who had completed an ICA and 65 who had not completed one was rated by their Employment and Training counselors. In the third part, 25
participants who had completed an ICA rated their assessment experience on a 48-question Assessment Questionnaire. The results were that participation in an Individualized Collaborative Assessment reduced sanctions, improved program compliance and performance, and was viewed positively by the participants.

The feedback session itself has also been a major area of focus for research pertaining to collaborative therapeutic assessment. Some of the studies we have already discussed place considerable attention on the feedback session, but others do so in a more specific way. In 1993, Finn and Bunner studied the effects of test feedback on hospitalized psychiatric patients. They found that those patients who received test feedback were substantially more satisfied with their assessments than those patients who did not. That same year, Schroeder, Hahn, Finn, and Swann (1993) tested Finn’s then unpublished assertion (1996) that test feedback is more beneficial if it is ordered more closely in accordance with the assesses’ initial self-understandings. The results of this study supported Finn’s assertion that assessors achieve the greatest therapeutic yield by ordering clients’ test feedback according to their existing self-concepts. In other words, clients should first be given feedback that closely matches their own preconceptions about themselves and then be presented with information that is more challenging to, or discrepant from, their self-concepts.

Within the past few years, some research in this area has shifted its focus to more specific types of feedback. Lance and Krishnamurthy (2003) conducted a study that looked at the difference in practice of providing clients with oral or written feedback. They compared three groups of 21 clients each who were assessed with the MMPI-2 and given feedback according to Finn’s therapeutic guidelines. One group was given only
oral feedback, another was provided only written feedback, and the third group received both oral and written feedback. Overall, the third group, which received combined feedback, showed the most positive results when compared with the other two groups. Specifically, the clients in this group reported that they learned more about themselves, had more positive feelings toward their assessor, and were more satisfied with the assessment than the clients in the other two groups.

The most recent research regarding assessment feedback was done by El-Shaieb (2005), Poston and Hanson (2008), and Ward (2005). The El-Shaieb study (2005) was a quantitative investigation of the effects of two different types of feedback in the context of an MMPI-2 personality assessment. Thirty-three participants were randomly assigned to an interactive feedback group, a delivered feedback group, and a control group. The participants who were given interactive feedback were provided MMPI-2 feedback in a manner that encouraged them to collaborate, while the participants who were given delivered feedback were provided feedback in a manner that involved minimal client participation. The participants in the control group completed the MMPI-2, had treatment delayed for three weeks, and then completed an intake session followed by a feedback session 1 week later. Participants who received interactive feedback reported higher ratings of depth, positivity, and overall satisfaction with their assessment when compared to participants who received delivered feedback. Interactive feedback participants also reported significantly higher ratings for counselor influence in later psychotherapy sessions when compared with the delivered feedback participants.

In 2010, Poston and Hanson conducted an analysis of 17 published studies on psychological assessment as a therapeutic intervention. They employed meta-analytic
techniques to calculate and analyze 18 independent and 52 nonindependent effect sizes from those 17 studies which involved a total of 1,496 participants. Poston and Hanson found a significant overall Cohen’s $d$ effect size of 0.423 whereby 66% of treatment group means fell above the control and comparison group means. Their results suggested that when psychological assessment procedures are combined with personalized, collaborative, and highly involved test feedback they tend to have positive, clinically meaningful effects of treatment, especially regarding treatment processes. The authors conclude by advocating for the increased implementation of therapeutic models in psychological assessment training programs and encouraging clinicians to familiarize themselves with these models.

Robin Ward (2005) conducted a qualitative analysis of the ways both assessors and assessees experienced key events during assessment feedback sessions. Twelve individuals (six assessors and six assessees) participated in audio-taped interviews regarding their feedback experiences. Half of the assessees’ participants were recruited from an academic counseling center and the other half were from a community clinic specializing in neuropsychological assessment, both affiliated with the same private east coast university. The assessors who participated were the clinicians who conducted assessments with each of these assessees. The results of his study and analysis produced three categories for the assessees’ themes and five categories for the assessors’ themes. The three categories for the assessees were (1) the importance of the assessor (or how well the assessees’ felt understood by the assessor), (2) themes concerning how the assessees dealt with undesirable or unwanted results of the testing, and (3) themes indicating ways in which the assessment assisted assessees in transitioning from a
subjective stance of global deficiency to one of increased autonomy. The five categories for the assessors were (1) the assessor’s concerns about getting the assessees involved in the feedback, (2) different approaches to feedback, (3) challenges assessors faced while providing feedback, (4) aspects of successful feedback, and (5) the assessors’ experiences of mutative elements in feedback. Ward then presented some suggestions for improvements in the practice of psychological assessment based on his findings.

There have been a couple of studies in the past few years that also focused primarily on gauging the assessment experience from clients’ perspectives. One such study (Holm-Denoma et al., 2008) sought to explore and dispel the notion that diagnostic labels may have a potentially stigmatizing and discouraging effect on clients and might in turn cause clinicians to withhold diagnostic information from their clients. This study used a Visual Analog Scale (VAS) at five different points during the intake and assessment process to measure the positive and negative mood of 53 adult outpatient clients at a community-based clinic to compare their changes in mood surrounding the experience of receiving feedback from a clinician regarding their diagnosis. The results of this study were that clients reported no change in negative emotions but significant increases in positive emotions after receiving diagnostic feedback. Data suggested that the empathetic manner in which the diagnostic feedback is presented by clinicians can also help to increase positive emotions within the clients and that these positive emotions can be relatively stable and enduring. Holm-Denoma et al. (2008) also challenged the assumption that the client’s being provided with difficult information about his or her psychological status will be received negatively. It turned out that the findings of this study provided some compelling comparisons to my own findings, particularly in relation
to the ways clients may deal with difficult or discordant feedback during a psychological assessment.

Another study that relied exclusively on clients’ evaluation of their experience of assessment was a factor analysis of survey data from 54 clients who sought treatment at a university psychology clinic (Goicoechea et al., 2009). Analysis of the formal survey data produced six factors. The first factor, called the “collaborative” factor, measured the degree to which the clients felt that their therapist valued and took into consideration their own input, that the assessment was a collaborative endeavor, and that they worked together as a team to create interpretations and avenues to explore further in therapeutic work. The next factor, named the “representational” or “nod” factor, considered the ways in which the clients’ experience of the assessment, which included receiving feedback, accurately reflected their concerns and life situation. The third “helpful” factor, also called the “aha” factor, measured the degree to which clients found the assessment helpful or useful, specifically in that it helped them gain new insights. The fourth, “relational,” factor covered the extent to which the clients believed what occurred between themselves and their clinician during the assessment was significant to the assessment experience, particularly how understood and respected they felt by their clinician. The fifth factor dealt with “negative impressions” and included aspects of the assessment that the clients deemed as unpleasant or as not going well. The sixth and final factor was known as the “testing” factor. This factor involved the emotional reactions the clients had toward the experience of testing as a fundamental aspect of the assessment. This study and the results of the Holm-Denoma et al. (2008) study afford me the
opportunity to make intriguing and relevant comparisons with the specific experiences of clients that I found through my research.

The vast majority of current research on individualized assessment focuses either on its overall effectiveness, on the feedback session specifically, or on some combination of the two (such as, studying the strength of therapeutic alliance developed in the feedback session). Earlier, we discussed how Finn and Tonsager (1997, p. 379) pointed out that the subjective experiences of assessors and clients are central to the practice of individualized assessment. However, very little of the current research has made this experience the primary. A few studies have given some attention to the subjective experience of assessor and client in assessment (Hilsenroth, Peters, & Ackerman, 2004; Holm-Denoma, 2008; Goicoechea, 2009; Ward, 2005), but even then client experience was mostly secondary to primary focuses of the research, such as therapeutic alliance and feedback. If the experience of assessors and clients is indeed such a fundamental aspect of Individualized assessment then there should be some research devoted directly to it.

Earlier we made a distinction between therapeutic and collaborative approaches to assessment, namely that Therapeutic Assessment places emphasis on a concluding interventional feedback session while the collaborative approach makes therapeutic interventions throughout the assessment process. Most of the research has addressed either Therapeutic Assessment or feedback exclusively, or some approach to assessment that has combined aspects of both Therapeutic and collaborative assessment. There has been very little research devoted explicitly to the practice of collaborative assessment as we have distinguished it. Therefore, it seems appropriate for some research to be devoted not only to the experiences of assessor and client, but also to the approach to
collaborative assessment that advocates collaborating and therapeutically intervening with the client throughout the assessment process.
Chapter Two:
Methods and Procedures
The obvious question to begin with is, “what is the best way gain access to and study the experiences of assessors and clients in collaborative assessment?” Because we are trying to study the participants’ experiences, it makes sense to use a qualitative method rather than a quantitative one. Quantitative natural science research has been the staple of psychological inquiry for good reason. That approach can be helpful when attempting to measure and explain behavior. However, that is not the goal of this dissertation study. Instead, we are looking for a way to describe and understand human experiences. This is exactly what a human-science approach to qualitative research does: it investigates the quality of human experience in order to understand and describe it in a genuine, appropriate, and authentic way (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003).

Human-science psychology is an approach to psychological matters that emphasizes that humans are more than objects of nature: we are beings who are conscious, reflexive, spiritual, and so on (Fischer, 2006, p. 433). Qualitative research is an empirical approach in that it relies on empirical observation to develop situated interpretations of complex human phenomena. It gives us access to human phenomena that we cannot access through the otherwise useful quantitative methods of the natural sciences. Many psychologists have argued that natural science methods are inadequate in dealing with human interaction, whereas qualitative research is designed specifically for this purpose (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Kopala & Suzuki, 1999; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). This is not to say that qualitative research is at odds with the natural sciences. Rather, they are complimentary to each other. Qualitative research asks different questions than natural science research, questions that allow us to examine phenomena from other
perspectives. The natural sciences ask, ‘why?’ while qualitative research is more concerned with what, when, and how? This is why I have chosen to adopt a qualitative research approach: because I am asking how, not why or how much, people experience collaborative assessment.

Qualitative research and natural science research are still similar in several ways. They are both methodologically rigorous. They are also both empirical in that their data are based on observable events. Another similarity is that they both involve the researchers’ subjectivity by the sheer fact that a researcher is the one who carries out the research. The researchers’ “situatedness” – their experiences, contexts, values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and expectations – is inescapably intertwined in the research they carry out. Natural science research encourages its investigators to take an objective stance toward their data in an attempt to get rid of or suspend their situatedness. Even though qualitative research does attempt to suspend or “bracket” our biases to an extent, it also discourages us from trying to completely ignore or do away with the our situatednesss. Rather, it tries to shine a light on it. Researchers are encouraged to reflexively pay attention to the ways their own subjectivity may influence or affect their observations and findings. This process accounts for and values the subjectivity of both its researchers and subjects. Fischer (2006) explains well the dual importance of subjectivity for qualitative research:

For qualitative research, however, subjectivity is, in a sense, both subject matter and its access to that subject matter. That is, qualitative research methods were devised to study those aspects of being human for which experimental and statistical methods are ill suited – namely, lived world actions and meanings. Our access to the lived world is through our
own subjectivity – our being subjects: beings who take action, reflect, experience, plan, hope, and so on. (p. xvi)

As qualitative researchers, we consider ourselves to be involved in our research as subjects, as participant-observers, as well as having the role of researcher. We value our own subjectivity because it is what allows us access to the subjectivity of our research participants. This is why my research method included reflexive considerations, such as a journal I kept throughout the entire process.

Because of its strong emphasis on human subjectivity, and the fact that qualitative research does not strictly adhere to experimentally scientific design and procedure, some theorists and scholars have questioned the validity of its methods. However, those who have questioned qualitative research’s ability to produce valid results mainly did so from a natural science perspective, and qualitative research does not strive for the same validity that natural science research does. For the natural sciences, validity is the demonstration that the research or testing has measured what it was designed to measure. As we have seen, qualitative research does not look to measure the same phenomena that the natural sciences do, and therefore should not be judged based on the same criteria.

Qualitative research has its own types of validity, such as witness validity, touchpoint validity, efficacy validity, resonance validity, and revisionary validity (Fischer, 2006, p. xvii). Qualitative research has witness validity if the readers of the data and findings come to the same conclusions and impressions. It has touchpoint validity if it connects with theory and other studies in a productive way. The research has efficacy validity if the findings are useful and make a difference in theory and practice. The research has resonance validity if the findings of the research resonate with the readers’ life and experience. Lastly, revisionary validity follows from efficacy validity
because it calls for change or revision of prior understandings of the literature. I judged the validity of my research based on these qualitative standards for validity and this will be covered further in the fourth chapter.

Due to the access to human experience provided by qualitative research methods, many psychologists have employed these methods, typically in interview form, to research psychotherapy process. Fessler (1978) applied these methods to research the experiential aspects of psychotherapeutic interpretation for both therapist and client in the process of psychotherapy. Several others later applied similar methods to study significant events (Elliot & Shapiro, 1992; Worthen & McNeill, 1996), values (Walsh, 1995), and good moments in psychotherapy (Maher & Nadler, 1986; Walsh, Perrucci, & Severns, 1999). These psychologists realized the value of applying qualitative methods of research to the experiential and therapeutic aspects of psychotherapy, and their research produced some very insightful and useful findings. The strategy I employed in conducting my research followed closely from this body of research on psychotherapy process in that I studied an experiential phenomenon based in a therapeutically oriented style of psychological assessment. Robin Ward’s method (2005) of studying the experience of feedback in assessment also followed from this research on psychotherapy process. My research method is somewhat similar to Ward’s, I was trying to access therapist and client experiences of collaborative assessment as it is applied throughout the assessment, rather than focusing primarily on experiences during an assessment feedback session.
**Research Method**

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<th>Table 2.1 – Flowchart of Method</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Steps</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Begin keeping a journal that explores my own assumptions about the project and keeps track of my experience of conducting the research, including any changes to my assumptions and new insights.</td>
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<td>o Obtain both IRB and HIPAA approvals for my research project.</td>
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<td>o Solicit participants by approaching therapists at Duquesne’s Psychology Clinic and asking an administrative assistant to provide clients of therapists interested in participating with a copy of my solicitation letter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Schedule initial meetings with participants (separate individual meetings with each therapist and client) to describe the project, obtain informed consent, and explain my expectations of them (including their written descriptions).</td>
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<td><strong>Data Collection</strong></td>
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<td>o Ask therapist participants to video record their collaborative assessments with their participating clients.</td>
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<td>o Obtain written descriptions from therapist and client participants.</td>
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<td>o Review written descriptions and video recorded assessments in order to select video segments to view with participants during research interviews.</td>
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<td>o Tailor interview questions according to information gathered from written descriptions and video segments that were selected to be viewed with participants.</td>
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<td>o Schedule interviews with participants.</td>
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<td>o Conduct interviews with participants at Duquesne’s Psychology Clinic.</td>
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<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong></td>
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<td>o Transcribe interviews.</td>
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<td>o Read transcribed data to gain a holistic perspective.</td>
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<td>o Re-read data in order to delineate client and therapist experiences.</td>
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<td>o Organize client and therapist experiences into general categories.</td>
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<td>o Create a textual documentation of identified experiences where client and therapist experiences are listed and followed by bullet-pointed excerpts from the transcribed data that provide support for each experience.</td>
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<td>o Compare and contrast client and therapist experiences with each other.</td>
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<td>o Compare and contrast findings with the findings of existing research.</td>
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<td>o Assess findings with considerations for reflexivity.</td>
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<td>o Assess findings according to qualitative forms of validity.</td>
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The first step I took before I began conducting my research was to create a flowchart for my method (Table 2.1) that outlined my methods of data collection and of analysis in a concise step-by-step form. I also started keeping a journal to log my own experiences of the research process. The first entry into this journal explored some of my assumptions about collaborative assessment, my research on it, some challenges and obstacles I anticipated encountering, and the kind of results I expected to come out of the research. I then added to this journal on a regular and consistent basis as new ideas and challenges to my assumptions arose and as I reached certain milestones in my research process, particularly during data collection and analysis. This journal has not only been helpful to me as I am looking back on my research in the final stages, but it also provides my research with solid examples of reflexivity.

Before I took any steps in actually conducting my research, I first had to obtain both IRB (Institutional Review Board) and HIPAA (Health Information Portability and Accountability Act) approval for my research project because the subjects of my research are human beings receiving health services and the data I collected from them about their experiences are sensitive and entail restrictions related to confidentiality policies. Once I obtained both of these approvals, I moved on to soliciting participants for my project – all the while remembering to renew my IRB approval on an annual basis. I solicited participation exclusively from therapists at the Duquesne University Psychology Clinic because the particular collaborative style of assessment I am studying is already taught and practiced there. I spoke with therapists at the Clinic mostly in a one-on-one and face-to-face manner (I occasionally attempted to encourage participation by...
presenting my research project at group meetings), and I provided therapists with a letter (Appendix A) that described my research project, explained what I was expecting from them as participants, and asked them to contact me if they might be interested in participating. This letter also explained that I would be using only intake assessments as data, rather than including information directly from intake interviews or ongoing therapy sessions, in order to bring consistency to the data for comparative purposes. I often placed copies of this letter in several therapists’ mailboxes at the Duquesne Psychology Clinic and asked them to contact me about it if I was unable to immediately meet with them in person.

**Participants**

I encountered considerable difficulties and delays in the procurement of participants for this research project. After obtaining IRB approval at the end of June, 2007 and despite consistent efforts to solicit participation for my study through the next two years, I was able to obtain only two assessor-client pairs who completed full participation. It is my impression and assumption that much of the difficulty I encountered had to do either with assessors’ discomfort with having their assessments videotaped and then analyzed for a research project, or reluctance and reticence on the part of the client for similar reasons despite their therapist’s willingness to participate. My out-of-state employment also impeded my efforts to encourage therapist to join my study.

Fortunately, a significant change in policy occurred in the Clinic that where I collected my data. In the middle of March, 2009 the Clinic Director made it mandatory for all clinicians to videotape their assessments for supervision and research purposes.
This was obviously of tremendous assistance in facilitating and expediting my data collection and I was able to gain complete participation from three more assessor-client pairs within the next eight months. Nevertheless, I ended up using five assessor-client pairs (nine overall participants) rather than six pairs due to practical considerations and time restrictions.

Each of the participants was assigned an identifying letter and number to replace names, and any information that could be used to identify them was changed or removed from the data and this text. Each of the assessors was assigned a “T” for “therapist” (because all of the assessors also worked with the clients they assessed in ongoing therapy) followed by a number. Similarly, each client was assigned a “C” followed by a number. The number after each of their letters reflects which therapist-client pair they belong to and follows in sequential order of when the interviews were conducted. For example, for the second therapist-client pair I interviewed, the therapist is referred to as “T2” and the client is referred to as “C2.” The only variation in this notation system is for the last therapist interviewed, T4, because he was interviewed twice – one time each for two clients (C4 and C5). Therefore, when referring to his interactions with C4, I referred to him as “T4a” and when referring to his interactions with C5 I referred to him as “T4b.” I had not planned on using a therapist twice. However, I allowed it figuring that it would provide interesting comparisons when I interviewed two clients about their experience of assessment with the same therapist.

Participant demographics appear in Table 2.2. T1 was a 31 year-old Caucasian male in his third year of doctoral training at the time he conducted the assessment with C1. He had conducted about 20 Clinic assessments prior to that one. C1 was a 31 year-
old Caucasian male who came seeking treatment to deal with an identity crisis, loneliness, and depression. Their assessment took place on 1/14/2008 and I conducted my interview with both T1 and C1 on 4/12/2008.

T2 was a 24 year-old Caucasian male who had just completed his second year of doctoral training at the time he conducted the assessment with C2. He had conducted about eight Clinic assessments prior to that one. C2 was a 20 year-old Caucasian female who came for treatment claiming she was “scared of everything” and requesting help in dealing with feelings of low self-esteem and insecurity. Their assessment took place on 7/11/2008 and I conducted interview with both T2 and C2 on 11/15/2008.

### Table 2.2 – Demographic information regarding client and therapist participants.

- **Client Participants**
  - C1 – 31 year-old Caucasian male seeking treatment for identity crisis, loneliness, and depression.
  - C2 – 20 year-old Caucasian female seeking treatment for feelings of low self-esteem, insecurity, and claiming she was “scared of everything.”
  - C3 – 34 year-old Caucasian male seeking treatment for lack of self-confidence, difficulty staying focused, and “fear of life.”
  - C4 – 20 year-old Caucasian male seeking treatment for anxiety.
  - C5 – 50 year-old Caucasian male seeking treatment for anger issues.

- **Therapist Participants**
  - T1 – 31 year-old Caucasian male, third year of doctoral training, conducted 20 prior assessments.
  - T2 – 24 year-old Caucasian male, second year of doctoral training, conducted eight prior assessments.
  - T3 – 36 year-old Caucasian female, third year of doctoral training, conducted 12 prior assessments.
  - T4a – 29 year-old Caucasian male, second year of doctoral training, conducted four prior assessments.
  - T4b – 29 year-old Caucasian male, second year of doctoral training, conducted three prior assessments.
T3 was a 36 year-old Caucasian female in her third year of doctoral training at the time she conducted the assessment with C3. She had conducted about 12 Clinic assessments prior to that one. C3 was a 34 year-old Caucasian male who came in seeking treatment to help him deal with a lack of self-confidence, “fear of life,” and difficulty staying focused. Their assessment took place on 3/18/2009. I conducted my interview with T3 on 8/18/2009 and with C3 on 8/26/2009.

T4a was a 29 year-old Caucasian male in his second year of doctoral training at the time he conducted his assessment with C4. He had conducted about four Clinic assessments prior to that one. C4 was a 20 year old Caucasian male and he had come in seeking treatment for dealing with symptoms of anxiety. Their assessment took place on 2/4/2009 and I interviewed both T4a and T4b on 10/23/2009. T4b was a 29 year-old Caucasian male in his second year of doctoral training at the time he conducted the assessment with C5. He had conducted about three assessments prior to that one. C5 was a 50 year old Caucasian male who came in seeking treatment to deal with anger problems. Their assessment took place on 9/23/2008 and I conducted interviews with both T4b and C5 on 11/13/2009.

**Data Collection**

I scheduled an initial meeting separately with each assessor and client in which I described my research, verified their willingness to participate, exchanged contact information, asked them to read and sign consent forms (The form is in Appendix A), obtained from the assessor a copy of their videotaped collaborative intake assessment, provided them with guidelines for writing their written descriptions, and discussed a reasonable time frame within which they could get their written descriptions to me. The
guiding questions I provided for their written descriptions were as follows: “What were some of your thoughts, feelings, and expectations going into the assessment? What parts of the assessment and feedback session stood out the most for you and what were these moments like for you? What were your impressions upon leaving the assessment and feedback session? What it is like for you thinking back on your assessment experience now?” I also allowed participants an opportunity to ask me questions during this initial meeting and provided answers to the best of my ability. With regard to the written descriptions, I asked the participants to write 2-3 pages (typed, single spaced) briefly describing their experiences leading up to, during, and upon leaving the assessment. The purpose of these written descriptions was to get the participants thinking about their assessment experience, to structure their ideas in written form, and to assist me in the subsequent research stage of selecting segments of videotape and questions for the interview portion of the research. These written descriptions also provided perspectives on what was going on with the client before and after the assessment, which was not evident in the videotapes of the assessments.

I encouraged the participants to return their written descriptions to me within a couple of weeks, but it often took longer than that, sometimes even months. In order to respect and protect the participants’ confidentiality I gave them the option either to meet me at the Duquesne Psychology Clinic so they could hand their written descriptions to me personally or to email them to me if they felt comfortable doing so. All of the participants ended up preferring to email me their written descriptions. I also kept the videotapes of their assessments and their written descriptions locked away in a file cabinet, to which only I had the key. I then began the process of reviewing the written
descriptions and videotaped assessments in order to select portions of the assessment to watch with each of the participants in our one-on-one interview. I selected video segments based on moments that stood out for them (from the written descriptions) and moments that I deemed to be examples of particular collaboration, interest, or relevance while reviewing the videos myself. I took notes as I conducted this process of selecting video segments, especially concerning segments only one of the therapist-client pair mentioned and collaborative segments neither of them mentioned but that I deemed relevant. I then contacted each participant to schedule a time for us to meet for the interview in a room of the Duquesne Psychology Clinic.

I had originally considered both audio-taping and videotaping the interviews in order to provide back-up against possible technical malfunctions that might have resulted in the loss of data and to retain the possibility of including the participants’ bodily gestures and comportment as part of the data. However, upon discussing this further with my dissertation director, we decided that this step would add to time intensity of the study probably with minimal outcomes beyond my attunement to participants’ body language during the interview. Therefore, the interviews were audio-taped only and this ended up working out fine. I showed the participants video segments from their assessment in order to bring them closer to their original experience. I asked them about their assessment experience and we discussed it. Fessler (1978) used this strategy with audio tapes during interviews with his psychotherapy participants for the same reason. It seems that not doing so would increase, or at least fail to compensate for, the experiential distance that already exists between the participants’ experience during the research interview and their experience at the time of assessment due to the time that passed
between their assessment and the research interview. In retrospect, I am very happy I made efforts (with the assistance of videotape) to put my participants back in the moment of their assessment because many of the participants had forgotten a considerable amount about their assessment experience, which was often due to the time that elapsed between their assessment and our interview.

During the interview, while we viewed video segments of the assessment, I asked each participant the same general guiding questions to keep in mind as they viewed the videotape: “What was going on here?” and “How was it for you?” I asked more specifically tailored questions about the video segments based on my own review of them and asked clients to elaborate on certain points that were brought up during the interview itself. As the interviews went on, I noticed myself guiding the participants increasingly toward focusing their attention to the actual process of the assessment, rather than focusing only on the content. I also asked each client at various points to try to distinguish between their experience as they reviewed the videotape and how they remembered their experience at the time of that moment during the assessment. The importance of this distinction was pointed out to me by Fessler’s (1978) work. If we are trying to grasp the participants’ experience at the time of assessment, it is imperative to help them distinguish between their experience at that moment of the assessment and their reflections on that experience so they do not confuse the two. This is not to say that their later reflections on their original experiences were not still valuable in the sense of having something to teach us about what it is like to experience collaborative assessment. I also allowed the participants to make comments that did not directly answer my questions, or even seemed off topic at the time, because I knew I would be able to review
them in order to assess their value to the research during my analysis of the data. Once
the interviews were completed, I then transcribed the interview recordings. I transcribed
the data myself because it has been suggested that by taking this task upon themselves,
researchers often “find that they are much more attuned to the nuances and flow of the
account” (Fischer, 2006, p. xxxii). Despite its laboriousness, I found this step to be rather
useful in that it brought me closer to the data by giving me an initial familiarity with it
and made the segue into the analysis portion of my project that much easier.

**Method of Analysis**

The overall method I utilized to analyze my research data was a combination of a
version of Giorgi’s (2003) Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method,
Marshall and Rossman’s (2006) procedural method, and Grounded Theory (as presented
by Charmaz, 2003). I chose these methods because of their phenomenological and
qualitative foundations and because they are specifically intended to deal with
subjectivity, interview data, and discourse in psychological research.

**Giorgi’s Method**

Giorgi’s (2003) method of analyzing transcriptions consists of five steps: reading
for a sense of the whole, determining parts (establishing ‘meaning units’), transforming
meaning units into psychologically sensitive expressions, determining the structure, and
poststructural analysis. According to this method, after transcribing the interview data
the researcher should read each interview in particular ways to familiarize him or herself
with it. “Reading for a sense of the whole” (p. 251) means reading the data with the
intention of not only comprehending it, but also gaining a holistic perspective on it. The
next step involves re-reading the data in order to distinguish what Giorgi calls “meaning
units.” The first part of this step involves the researcher adopting an attitude or perspective of the phenomenological reduction in order to remove subjective biases from his or her perceptions. Giorgi defines a meaning unit specifically as “a shift in meaning” (p. 252). The researcher is to recognize these meaning units and delineate, or mark, them in some way so they can be identified and referred back to. The third step is where the researcher transforms the language of the meaning units into terminology that expresses psychological meaning and captures the participant’s lived-world without changing the meaning carried in the unit itself. This step also makes use of “free imaginative variation” (pp. 246, 252) through which the researcher tries to determine the essence of an object or state of affairs by varying certain dimensions of the object in order to see what effects these variations might have on the object. The next step is to bring the meaning units back together in order to express a new meaningful structure. The last step involves the final thematization of the structural holistic data by laying the data out into identified constituents and empirical variations.

I stated that I followed a “version” of this method for several reasons. First, I did not devote my efforts primarily toward adopting the perspective of the phenomenological reduction because I would rather attempt to call attention to the biases in perspective that I have in order to consider the ways my research and results were influenced by them, rather than trying to suspend or do away with them. This is another reason that I acknowledge qualitative research’s placing high value on the researcher’s reflexivity, and why I sought to incorporate reflexive considerations into my research project. However, I do still consider my research to be phenomenological because my primary focus was on accessing my participants’ lived worlds. Second, my analysis sought to delineate
experiences from participants’ accounts without working through meaning units. By this I mean that I looked for common assessment experiences across the accounts and tried to stay as close to the participants’ use of descriptive language as possible when I identified specific thematic categories. In a moment I will further discuss how and why I did this. I pulled out experiences and considered them meaningful if they were recurrent, were used for comparative purposes to other experiences, or in some way were deemed to have meaning or relevance for this particular research project. Basically, I paid attention to and attempted to distinguish these common experiences as I read and re-read the data, and revised them throughout, rather than waiting until the final step of analysis to do so. I would also like to point out that I use the term “experience” here as a means of grouping the ways participants experienced the assessment process, in addition to the typical experiential way the word is used.

I began pulling out and describing these common experiences for both therapists and clients while first reading through my data. I created a textual documentation of identified experiences (Appendix B) in which I listed each of these experiences separately for assessors and clients and then reviewed the data again, pulled out segments of text from the different types of data, put them in bullet point form under each common experience, and referenced them with regard to where they could be found in the data. I then reviewed this document and removed a few experiences that I felt did not have enough examples to be considered relevant either because they simply did not have very many bullet point examples of text under the experiential heading (usually less than four or five) or because all of the examples came from only one of the participants. However, for comparative purposes to other experiences or because they were of particular
relevance I did retain a few experiences that might have had less than substantial
elements, but this occurred rarely. I called the experiences that were outlined in this
textual documentation of identified experiences “specific” experiences of both therapists
and clients. I then created separate “general” experiential categories that grouped their
assessment experiences for both therapists and for clients.

Another way my version of analysis differed from Giorgi’s is that even though I
sometimes chose to transform the language of the data, I did not necessarily do so in
order to put it into explicitly psychological terms. When I did transform the language of
the data, I did so in order to make the language representative of all the other kinds of
meanings I grouped with it – all the while trying to remain as close to the participants’
original language as I could. I believe that the closer I was able to stay to the
participants’ language, the more faithfully and authentically I describe and represent their
experiences. I found support for this strategy in both of the other methodologies I pulled
from. The last way I veered from Giorgi’s method was toward the end of my analysis
when I made comparisons between the assessment experiences I found in much more
explicit ways than Giorgi would have done. I devoted the last section of the results
chapter of this dissertation to comparing the therapist and client experiences with each
other and then comparing them to existing research on psychological assessment in the
final chapter. Thus, I drew heavily from Giorgi’s method, but moved away from his
method with regard to my focus as the researcher, which was to distinguish experiences
rather than themes or meaning units, trying to remain truer to the participants’ language,
and in making comparisons between specific experiences of the participants.
Marshall and Rossman’s Method

Another method I drew from in several specific ways and used as a general guide for my analysis was Marshall and Rossman’s (2006) seven-step method for managing, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data. The first step of their analytic method is to organize the data. This step basically involves consolidating the often huge piles of raw data into more manageable and easily accessible forms. I did this as I created written summaries of the videotaped assessments, transferred (re-typed) the participants’ written descriptions from emails into de-identified document form, and transcribed the audio-taped interviews. The next step is to immerse one’s self in the data, which essentially means reading and re-reading the data several times to gain familiarity with it. This step overlaps with the other two methods, is common among qualitative methodologies in general, and was certainly incorporated into my own method. The process of personally transcribing the interviews alone provided me with a unique familiarity with the data and afforded me certain perspectives that I do not believe I would have come to otherwise.

The third step consisted of generating categories and themes, which entails creating “buckets or baskets into which segments of text are placed” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 159). I took up this step in my own way by creating specific experiences separately for both therapists and clients and then grouping those specific experiences into larger general categories. I also created a textual documentation of identified experiences to show in a more clear-cut way how the specific therapist and client experiences that I developed were based in their accounts and in the other data (videotaped segments of their assessments). This document also allowed for better comparisons within and between participant experience with regard to “internal
convergence and external divergence,” as was suggested in this method (Marshall & Rossman, p. 159). Within this third step, Marshall and Rossman go on to encourage the use of “indigenous typologies,” which means staying as close to the participants’ language as possible, employing “analyst-constructed typologies” only when necessary. This is a heuristic that I perpetually worked to keep in mind during this phase of the analysis.

The fourth step involved coding the data. Marshall and Rossman suggest using abbreviations of words, colored dots or numbers for this phase. I used a combination of all three in that I used “T” or “C” to distinguish between therapist and client experiences, I used numbers to denote which specific experiences I was referring to with regard to how they sequentially appeared in the data, and I used different colored pens when writing these codes to differentiate between experiences that were unique to my research and ones that related back to previous research I had reviewed.

The fifth step encourages researchers to consistently write analytic, reflective memos to themselves throughout the process. I incorporated this step by keeping a personal journal of the entire process, adding entries to it on a frequent and regular basis. As I mentioned before, this journal also helped me to remain aware of reflexive considerations along the way. The sixth step, of offering interpretations, is also known as “telling the story” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 161). It is here that the researcher looks for coherence and connections among themes and develops a story line that makes sense and that is accessible to readers. This phase also involves evaluating the data for their usefulness. This step will be discussed further in the last section of the results chapter when therapist and client experiences are compared to each other. This step is covered in
the validity considerations portion of Chapter Four as well. The seventh and final step of this method is writing the report, which is embodied in the subsequent Chapters (Results, Discussion and Reflections) of this dissertation.

**Grounded Theory**

As I was developing my plan for analyzing my data, my dissertation director pointed out how much my method reminded her of grounded theory. I promptly familiarized myself with it, found that it resonated with me, and incorporated it into my method of analysis. Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2003) is aptly named because its primary impetus is directed toward helping the researcher keep his or her theoretical categories well “grounded” in the data and life-world of the participants. There are several defining characteristics of grounded theory; the first includes simultaneous involvement in the data collection and analysis phases of research. The fact that I transcribed my own data and kept continual reflective journal notes throughout the data collection process assisted in the overlap of these phases of my research. Grounded Theory method also entails developing analytic codes and categories from the data that are not from preconceived hypotheses. In my research, I first looked to delineate unique experiences of collaborative assessment from therapist and client accounts before comparing them with themes and results from previous research in the same area.

Other characteristics that Grounded Theory shares with similar research methods are memo-writing and making comparisons between data and concepts. By now, these are rather common steps and they were certainly represented in my research through journal-writing and other stages of my analysis, as is discussed at the end of the results chapter. Grounded Theory encourages the use of “theoretical sampling” (Charmaz, pp.
which is sampling for theory construction to check and refine conceptual categories rather than for representativeness of a population. Theoretical sampling was carried out in the process of creating a textual documentation of identified experiences to help refine and check for sufficient textual and experiential backing for each of the specific categories I pulled from the data. Some advocates of this method also recommend delaying the literature review until after the analysis, which I did not and could not do because I had conducted a literature review as part of the proposal for this research project.

A central trademark of Grounded Theory is that it develops analytic categories while in the process of conducting data collection rather than searching to either confirm or disconfirm preconceived concepts or hypotheses. This approach allows or invites the categories to emerge, rather than trying to fit the data into predetermined boxes, and effectively keeps the research grounded solidly within the experiential data. This was one of the most helpful aspects of incorporating this particular method into my research. This method specifically encourages researchers to ask participants, “What is happening here?” (Charmaz, p. 86) and to follow their responses up with expansive questions that encourage participants to elaborate. That exact question along with subsequent invitations for elucidation were the primary interviewing tools I used during the data collection process. Like some other methods, Grounded Theory explicitly advocates that researchers transcribe interview data themselves (Charmaz, p. 92). They discuss how this practice brings one closer to the data by putting one back in the place of the actual interview and keeps us attuned to the subtle nuances that were taking place at the time.
This description resonated with my experience during the transcribing phase of my analysis.

Grounded Theory offers several different types of coding to choose from. One of these is “line-by-line” (Charmaz, p. 94), which simply seemed impractical to me considering the amount of data I had compiled. It also proposes “axial coding” (Charmaz, p. 98) in which the researcher sorts, synthesizes, and organizes large amounts of data and reassembles them in new ways. This coding process more closely resembles what I did in the analysis process by creating the textual documentation of identified experiences. In staying true to this procedure, I drew all of the categories I delineated directly from participants’ accounts and I tried my best to remain true to the participants’ use of language at all times. This effort is encouraged within Grounded Theory by making use of “in vivo codes” (Charmaz, p. 100). This theory and method was invaluable to me by ensuring that my research remained as close to the experiences of my participants as possible.

When approaching the final stages of my analysis, I encountered a surprise that should be noted here. I originally intended this research to produce a variety of purely descriptive findings regarding the process of collaborative assessment. However, when searching for general categories into which the specific therapist and client experiences could be grouped, the most natural and fluid way to do so was to include categories that were more evaluative with regard to the helpfulness and enjoyableness of the assessment. In retrospect, this made sense to me given that I asked such open ended questions that might seem to invite appraisal responses. I also recall asking more specific questions
like, “Did you find that helpful?” on more occasions than I planned to, probably out of my own curiosity.

Once I had finalized the findings of my research, I then assessed the validity of those findings based on the qualitative types of validity we discussed earlier: witness, touchpoint, efficacy, resonance, and revisionary validity. I also assessed my findings reflexively by reviewing my research journal in order to see how my assumptions and biases may have influenced the findings. I later discuss how this effort helped me to obtain a clearer picture of the way my research evolved. My research findings, as well as considerations for validity, reflexivity, and suggestions for further research in this area of psychological assessment, are presented in Chapters Three (Results) and Four (Discussion and Reflections), respectively.
Chapter Three:
Results
Introduction to the Results

This study found 17 client experiences and 22 therapist experiences of collaborative assessment. These experiences were grouped into larger general categories – three for clients and four for therapists. Clients and therapists share three of these general experiential categories: finding assessment experiences to be helpful or enjoyable, finding assessment experiences to be difficult or unpleasant, and descriptions of the assessment process. The additional experiential category for therapists explores the effect that the extent of one’s practice conducting assessments can have on his or her experience of it. The analysis also found 11 experiences that were comparable for clients and therapists, primarily pointing out experiences they had in common.

The presentation of each specific therapist and client experience in this chapter points out the number of times each experience was mentioned in the data. These numerical values were not included as an attempt to make these experiences appear more valid or “true” because it is understood that an individual’s experience can be just as valid whether it occurs repeatedly or only once. These numerical values were included instead to show which experiences were more salient, readily recognizable, or “out front” for these participants. We could also say that that these values show which assessments experiences the participants were more “attuned” to. The presentation of each therapist and client experience in the next chapter also includes more discussion than I had initially intended. I originally wanted to save all discussion of these experiences for the final chapter, but as I was writing the next chapter some brief discussion of each experience seemed warranted in order to bring cohesion to the various examples that are presented as embodying each experience.
**Client Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It can be helpful to contextualize assessment findings by relating them to real-world experiences from one’s life. (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Difficulty hearing discordant feedback (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Okay receiving discordant feedback (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Even found it to be helpful and/or useful (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Desire to protect one’s self by not saying too much or being careful with responses in order to portray one’s self in a certain way – guardedness. (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feeling the desire to open up further to help the treatment process. (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Preferring “projective” tests to “objective” tests (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Collaborative assessment helps to create themes and/or metaphors that carry over into therapy in a helpful or useful way. (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Collaborative assessment is emotionally evocative. (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Liking the “humanness” of the therapist – helps build rapport. (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Collaborative assessment is exciting, energizing, a catalyst, and it brings hope and promise for therapy. (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Collaborative assessment helps the client feel more relaxed, comfortable, involved, and empowered. (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Comforted by the therapist’s explanation of the assessment and feedback process. (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Discomforted by the therapist’s explanation of the assessment and feedback process. (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Collaborative assessment process was fun and enjoyable. (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Was skeptical of collaborative assessment at first, but found it to be helpful and/or enjoyable in the end. (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Would rather have talked about problems than be assessed, feeling it would have been just as productive. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Not trusting the findings of the tests and questioning them, or the tests themselves. (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These experiences are numbered in the order in which they appeared in the data. The number in parentheses at the end of each experience represents the number of examples found in the data for each experience.*
The clients’ assessment experiences (see Table 3.1) are grouped together in three general categories: ones that are viewed as helpful or enjoyable (see Table 3.2), ones that are seen as difficult or unpleasant (see Table 3.3), and descriptions of the assessment process (see Table 3.4).

**Client Experiences as Helpful or Enjoyable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2 – Client Experiences as Helpful or Enjoyable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>These experiences are numbered in the order in which they appeared in the data. The number in parentheses at the end of each experience represents the number of examples found in the data for each experience.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – It can be helpful to contextualize assessment findings by relating them to real-world experiences from one’s life. (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15 – Was skeptical of collaborative assessment at first, but found it to be helpful and/or enjoyable in the end. (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

experiences under this general experiential category of clients finding certain aspects of their assessment experience to be particularly helpful or enjoyable, with one of these specific client experiences having a subcategory. Each of these experiences will be discussed in sequential order of when it first appeared in the data.
Contextualizing

The first of these specific client experiences that was pulled from the data states that it can be helpful to contextualize assessment findings by relating them to real-world experiences from one’s life. In the textual documentation of identified experiences I created to help ground these experiences in the data, 30 examples of this particular client experience were found making it the most frequently mentioned client experience. Many of these examples express an utter sense of surprise on the part of the client with how much of themselves they could see or that came out not only as a result of engaging with the assessment materials, but in discussing them. In his written description, C3 wrote, “I was surprised at how much of myself I saw in the pictures” (C3WD). Similar quotations can be found in data gathered from all of the other client participants. The same client later pointed out during our interview that he, “…ended up throwing out I think three more scenarios,” due to the collaboration that took place during the assessment, which speaks to how much more productive collaboration can help an assessment to become (TC3, p. 8).¹

Several of the clients said that the assessment materials and collaborative style of using them was helpful to them by making it easier to bring up topics, like difficult situations or emotions, that they had been struggling with and wanted to bring to work on in therapy but had trouble putting into words. C4 discussed with me in our interview how he drew himself in his DAP (Draw A Person) with a back pack walking off the page

¹Reference Guide: “WD” after a participant’s label refers to his or her written description. “T” before a participant’s label refers to his or her transcribed interview. “VS” refers to the summarized video segments taken from each therapist-client pair’s assessment and “seg.” following it refers to the specific video segment that was used. “R” refers to quotes from the researcher during interviews.
away from his family because he is in the process of finding his own path as a student and defining himself apart from his family. C2 pointed out the cathartic value of being able to relate the assessment materials to her life through collaboration, and then went on to highlight the ways that this was also evocative of meaningful content for her:

R:… How was that? C2: Um, well, feeling like I could relate to it. I don’t know exactly how to answer, “How was it?” except for it was a release…, I could put feelings onto this picture. So it was sort of like a release… Um, but I felt like talking about this card was this release for me to talk about my dad… But the fact that I had this card and [T2] was asking me if it did relate to me, it was helpful because I could bring it up. It was an easy way to bring it up. (TC2, pp. 9-10)

Similarly, other clients said how the assessment provided them with increased insight into their own style of dealing and coping with the world and also helped their therapist get to know them in a useful way by familiarizing him or her with their style.

When discussing his response to collaborative work on a TAT card with his therapist, C3 said, “I just feel that as a defense mechanism I use that to not achieve and to not get close to too many people and use it as an excuse to stay comfortable. I just feel like I’m moving away from that. Definitely made progress as far as that goes, which feels good” (TC3, p. 11). He not only talks about how the assessment helped him to understand himself better, but he also implies how that recognition facilitated positive change in his subsequent therapeutic work. At one point in our interview, C4 commented on how the collaboration of the assessment helped him, “[get] something out that I kept in,” and better understand a tendency that he had since he was a child toward constantly try to “…please people and get their approval for stuff” (TC4, p. 9). Before this, however, C4 provides a potent statement that really captures this specific client experience in response to a question I asked him earlier in our interview:
R: Yea, and how that was for you, like that process of talking about it with him and getting some feedback about it? C4: Well, all of this was very, I don’t want to say healing, but it was very insightful. [R: Okay] I guess because in that situation we were kind of bringing out something that I had never really acknowledged in my head before. Like, I knew it was there but I had never really brought it to the front. (TC4, p. 5)

This clearly speaks to the enlightening and possibly healing potential of the collaborative assessment process. These insights discussed by C2, C3, and C4 here also relate to a couple of other specific client experiences (7 and 10) that will be discussed momentarily regarding the way assessment collaboration carries over into therapeutic work.

**Okay Receiving Discordant Feedback**

The next specific client experience that falls under this general category is when clients were *okay receiving discordant feedback* regarding their assessment from their therapist. By “discordant” I am referring to feedback that clients may disagree with or that clients may perceive as being at variance with their own self-understandings. Six examples of this experience were provided by three of the five clients. In his written description, T2 discusses how he sensed that his client initially took a “fatalistic” view toward his feedback about her, but he later got the impression that through their “…discussion [C2] was able to accept some of the themes I mentioned without feeling determined by them” (C2WD, p. 2). Thus, their collaboration allowed the client to be more open to hearing and taking in some difficult feedback without feeling threatened by it. This was confirmed with C2 in my interview with her and relates to a couple of other specific client experiences (12 and 15) that we will discuss later. During my interview with C1, I pointed out to him how it seemed that he felt judged by his therapist, wondering if this might have upset him. He responded by saying, “Yea, which is why
I’m there, to kind of try to understand who I am and have some kind of judgment about my situation…” seeming to imply that he was not only okay with being or feeling judged, but even seeking that out (TC1, p. 8). Later in that same interview we watched a segment of his assessment in which he was told that the Rorschach profile showed he may have a preoccupation with the body or personal health. He said, “It’s just like, ‘I don’t know how they came up with that, but it rings true.’ And I was fine with that, I was okay… It’s like a conversation, you can agree or disagree…” Like C2, he appeared to be more open to accepting the feedback based on the fact that he knew he had the freedom to agree or disagree with it and that his consent or dissent would be considered valuable by his therapist.

An interesting moment occurred at the very beginning of the assessment between T4a and C4 (the fourth therapist I interviewed and the first of two clients he assessed). After entering the room and sitting down, T4a said to C4, “Am I reading you wrong or do you seem agitated?” quickly adding that it is “alright” if he is agitated. C4 said he was not agitated and appeared slightly taken aback. T4a explained how he got that impression and then said he wished he had simply asked him a more open-ended question instead of assuming. However, as I continued watching their assessment video, this moment did not seem to carry any negative impact into the rest of their interactions. When we watched and discussed this part of their assessment during my interview with him, I asked C4 what it was like to have been “misread” like that and he said:

With [T4a] and my other therapist I really don’t feel like they are pointing out that I am experiencing something negative like that. Like agitation is negative and means you are generally experiencing something that isn’t good. But I feel like when a therapist like [T4a] points that out I really feel like he is not attacking me,… there is something about this atmosphere and something about how I relate
to him as therapist to client that really makes it seem like he is looking out for my best interests and really trying to help me out. (TC4, p. 3)

From this, it seems clear that his relationship with his therapist, his trust that a therapist will have his best interests in mind, and the comforting space and “atmosphere” provided by the Psychology Clinic all contribute to his ability to get past or let go of this potentially awkward and difficult moment in order to continue on and do productive work with his therapist. So we have seen that not only discussion and collaboration during the assessment, but also the type of therapeutic relationship and space can make difficult feedback easier for clients to hear.

**Finding Discordant Feedback to be Helpful**

This experience of clients being okay receiving discordant feedback is unique in a sense because it is one of only four specific experiences for both clients and therapists to have a subcategory. Nine examples of this experience were provided by four of the five clients in which they were not only okay with receiving discordant feedback, they *even found it to be helpful or useful* in some way. One example of this came during my interview with C1 when we were watching a video segment where his therapist had just given him some difficult feedback about his possible aversion to affection from others. He said, “[T1] said I didn’t want a lot of affection in my life. I definitely want it, but I could see situations where I stayed away from it” (TC1, p. 13). I then asked him how it was for him to hear that and if he found it helpful or not and he said, “Well, yea. I haven’t been going to see [T1] for a while but I do feel better and I definitely attribute that to some of the things we talked about” (TC1, p. 13). Not wanting affection is feedback that would probably be difficult for anyone to hear, but C1 was still able to think of ways this
resonated with him and hold on to it in order to do some meaningful work toward changing that style in his therapy with T1.

There was a point in the assessment between T4a and C4 when C4 was talking about feeling bad after getting a few of his papers torn apart by some professors who teach classes in his major. T4a comforted him by reframing the situation and saying it might be like a kind of “hazing process” he has to go through to gain respect in their eyes, but prefaced this by emphasizing that he did not want to downplay C4’s struggles. When I asked C4 about this, he said, “I understood that he wasn’t trying to cast aside my concerns, but I think as a therapist he was trying to make me see it for what it really was, which is exactly what I think as a therapist he is meant to do” (TC4, p. 10). C4 was certainly welcoming of T4a’s differing perspective on his situation here.

Later in this same assessment, C4 was talking about how much he prides himself for being a “consistent thinker” and T4a said that is interesting because one of the tests said he was rather “inconsistent” with his responses. T4a premised this by telling C4 that this feedback could serve as a kind of “Buddhist Koan” for him serving to shake him up a bit, but also followed it up by suggesting that there may have been some “nuances” about him that the test did not pick up. This way of presenting the feedback appeared to open a space for C4 to feel more comfortable exploring this discrepancy. When I asked C4 about it during our interview, he said, “Yea, yea. I feel like what you just said, that he opened up a space for me,… because he could have opened up a can of worms. Like, he could have made it so I couldn’t have said that. He could have made it so I couldn’t go down that path or he could have said something that would totally turn me off and make me want to turn inward” (TC4, p. 12). Here, T4a presented some feedback that was in
sharp contrast to the way C4 typically views himself, but he was able to take it up because of the way his therapist also afforded him a sense of agency and freedom in the situation. This seemed to open a “path” they could explore together, rather than making him feel bound or restricted to be something that he is not.

Another cogent example of this specific client experience can be found in the assessment between T4b and C5. At one point, T4b made a comment that seemed particularly challenging to C5 and this was rather intriguing considering C5 presented with anger problems. When I first asked C5 how this was for him during our interview he simply said, “That was fine, I don’t mind it” (TC5, p. 4). But when I pressed him a bit more by asking him specifically if that brought out any feelings of anger he said, “Naw, but you know what it might do for me…, it is a good thing for me because it might make me be a little bit more clear in my explanations and stuff because I tend to assume that people understand exactly what I’m saying when I say things and sometimes it can be a little vague and people don’t realize it so it does help if somebody makes me clarify” (TC5, p. 4). So here, C5 provides a different perspective on being able to find value in being challenged by one’s therapist in that it can help the client to become better and more skilled at presenting his or her views and ideas. I would also assume in this process that the client might be able to gain a better understanding of his or her own perspective and situation. What C5 described here actually got played out later in the same assessment. He is talking about the physical abuse he endured as a child and T4b asks him if he ever wondered, “Why me?” C5 says, “No,” and explains that he did not wonder that until much later in his life because he was too young at the time to contemplate such things. We watched and discussed this part of their assessment in our
interview, especially how even though his therapist “missed the mark” it led to a deeper sense of clarity and understanding between them, primarily due to the fact that C5 was given an opportunity to share his own feedback regarding the situation. Each of these examples demonstrates ways these clients recognized that moments of difficulty, or even missteps on the part of their therapist, could actually be turned into fruitful and productive moments because of the collaborative framework and certain allowances provided by the assessment.

Creating Useful Themes and Metaphors

The third specific assessment experience that the client participants found to be helpful is that collaborative assessment helps to create themes and metaphors that carry over into therapeutic work in a useful way. This was the second most frequently mentioned client experience with 26 examples coming from all of the clients. This experience appears to be closely related to another client experience (10) we will discuss momentarily, which covers the way collaborative assessment helps to catalyze the therapeutic work because both speak to bridging the gap between clinical assessment and psychotherapy. The data showed that this experience resonated with every client except the first one interviewed. A portion of C2’s written description sums this experience up well: “…the fascinating part is how much the results played out in the rest of my sessions, particularly the results of the TAT… I’m not sure I could count how many times this card has come up during my sessions” (C2WD). When I asked her about this during our interview she talked about one of the TAT cards that stuck with her, what kind of meaning she got out of it, and how she and her therapist have referred back to that particular card several times throughout their work together (TC2, p. 8).
One of the most powerful moments of the assessment for another client, C3, was his response and discussion with his therapist regarding a different TAT card: the #16 “blank” or “white” card. He described it as a “fog” and related it to his current life situation and emotional state. This image carried over into his work with his therapist in several ways, but it was by no means a static image. They continued with this metaphor, both in the assessment and in their subsequent therapeutic work, and built upon it to come to an image of “dawning” or “awakening” that included the sun rising and shining its rays down to burn off the fog. In our interview he discussed with me how in this image, “I was alluding to me coming to therapy and alluding to a change of lifestyle, a change of relationship status, all of that. An awakening” (TC3, p. 9). This could be one of the most salient examples of how this experience relates to the other client experience of how the assessment catalyzes and brings hope for therapeutic work (10). As happened with many of the other participants, clients and therapists alike, C3 did not realize how much impact the assessment had on him and how much material was carried over into his therapeutic work until we reviewed the videotape of their assessment together for our interview. He commented on this at one point:

Yea, and you know after looking at the clips I realize that we have worked on that…. there’s a lot that was in those pictures and that we did talk about in the assessment that we did come back to. And I really didn’t realize it until seeing it. And even just now talking about the comfortability and the fog and moments of clarity and all that, I mean we really touch on that a lot. So, I guess maybe it helped her get insight into what was going on with me and open the door for me to start communicating about it. (TC3, p. 11)

The last part of this quotation highlights how invaluable the collaborative aspect of assessment can be in that it not only gives the therapist a unique understanding and sense
of the client, but it also shares this understanding with the client, draws him or her into discussing it, and enables therapeutic work continue in that direction.

In his written description, the fourth client I interviewed talked about how the “repetition in the subject matter” during his assessment made him notice things he was struggling with, certain emotions that might have been trying to make their way out, and that repetition helped him hone in on what kinds of things he wanted to use his time in therapy to work on (C4WD). Throughout our actual interview, he kept having these moments he described as very “weird.” When I asked him about this he gave explanations like, “What I just watched has just happened to me in the past few weeks, it is so crazy. Not this week but last Friday when I met with him, that was all I talked about… It was just so much more intensified in this one, so I feel like I am kind of continuing with it in a sense” (TC4, p. 5). Here he seems to think it was kind of spooky, but also appeared to be pleasantly surprised, that he has continued working on content brought out by his assessment this far into his therapeutic work. Yet, the fact that he described it as more intense during the assessment could imply that the work he has done with his therapist has effectively subdued the high emotional charge associated with his presenting problems. Later in our interview we went on to cover in a more explicit way how the material discussed in his assessment served as a foundation and provided “direction” to his subsequent therapy (TC4, p. 9).

As we reviewed his assessment videotape together, the last client I interviewed had a tendency to focus more on the content that was brought up than the process or what was happening between himself and his therapist. I found myself asking him more direct questions about what seemed to be couched in what he was saying. This turned out to be
the primary manner in which he gave me examples of this client experience. For instance, in my interview with C5 I explicitly asked him if he felt like any of the things brought out in his assessment carried over into his work with his therapist and he said, “Yea, well all of those thoughts. Just that the initial process always carries over” (TC5, p. 12). The first part of his statement indicates the tremendous amount of content that was taken with him from his assessment into therapy, but the second part could be seen as indexical of something much different. It seems to imply that the alliance and rapport, the working relationship he developed with his therapist through their collaborative interactions during the assessment, helps to set a tone for their ongoing work together. This could be seen as a rather significant product of collaborative assessment. These examples of this client experience help to show how collaborative assessment can produce useful material that can build a foundation for therapeutic work and could be used to advocate for an increased blurring of the line between the clinical assessment and psychotherapy. It could also be used as another argument for the potential benefit of having the same person work with the client as assessor and therapist.

**The “Humanness” of the Therapist**

The next specific client experience has the third fewest number of examples with only three examples from two clients, but it is included because of the relevance it has, particularly in relation to previous research on collaborative assessment. It is when the client expressed *liking the “humanness” of the therapist, as revealed through the therapist’s fallibility*. An interesting example of this was provided during an interaction between C4 and T4a. During their assessment T4a was listening to C4 describe his difficult situation and T4a’s cell phone started ringing. T4a apologized and quickly
rushed to turn it off, clearly embarrassed that he had forgotten to do so before entering
the session. C4 alluded to this moment during my interview with him. He said”…and
even when [T4a]’s cell phone went off it didn’t bother me because it feels like I am
relating to his humanness,… it kind of makes it more real for me. We went on to discuss
how what might commonly be viewed as a “mistake” on the part of his therapist actually
made it easier for C4 to relate to T4a as a “real” human being with flaws, increased his
sense of rapport with T4a, and made him feel more open to sharing his own shortcomings
(TC4, p. 10-11). Earlier in the same interview, C4 spent some time talking about his
previous experiences in psychotherapy and his preference for a “spiritual” therapist rather
than a “behaviorist,” describing the latter as “cold” and “robotic” while explaining that he
enjoyed the more “dynamic” approach of the former. As part of this discussion, he said
that the behaviorist-oriented therapists he had “didn’t make me feel like I was as
subjective as people should be considered” (TC4, p. 2). From this it seems clear that the
client not only values moments when his therapist’s humanness is revealed, but it is also
imperative that his own humanness be recognized and appreciated by his therapist.

The first client I interviewed also discussed a moment when his therapist’s
fallibility made him feel a closer bond to his therapist:

[T1] was fishing through his papers and he couldn’t find what he was looking for
and then he found something and he read it and it didn’t, he admitted to it, he
said, “Oh, that’s not what I was thinking either.” And so that was just a little
moment that created this trust because he was trying to make a point but then he
couldn’t make it and he couldn’t find it in his notes either, so… (TC1, p. 9)
So it appears that not only his therapist’s moment of disorganization and confusion, but
also his willingness to admit to it, created an increased sense of “trust” and rapport from
the client’s perspective. I would think that hearing about this client experience could
provide some relief to assessors and therapists by knowing that even when they make what they might consider mistakes, clients may take this up in a way that makes them feel a stronger sense of connection to them.

An Exciting and Promising Catalyst for Psychotherapy

Clients also expressed the notion that collaborative assessment energizes, brings hope and promise, is exciting, and serves as a catalyst for therapy. This client experience was the third most frequently mentioned with 22 examples provided by all five of the clients. C4 provided the most examples of this experience from both his written description and our interview. While talking about how helpful it was for him to notice recurring themes during his assessment, he explained, “my plight was never clearer to me than at that point… I knew then what [T4a] and I had to work on” (C4WD). What he got out of the assessment not only gave him more insight into his struggles, but also opened up paths to pursue and explore further in his ongoing therapeutic work. The way he phrased the last sentence also shows that the collaboration during the assessment gave him a sense that this was a joint endeavor for both him and his therapist to take on together, rather than just his journey alone. He spoke more to this later in his written description as well and provided a few statements that embody this client experience: “I left the assessments feeling hopeful. That if I, as the patient, am willing to put forth the effort to go through the fire (metaphorically speaking), and [T4a], as the therapist, is willing to help me through it, then there was an excellent chance that I could take something from the sessions out into the world with me. The coming weeks could not come fast enough” (C4WD)! It is very clear through this statement that C4 gained a strong sense of hope and optimism based on the strong alliance he formed with his
therapist during the assessment. The last sentence of this statement also expresses the sheer excitement and eagerness that the assessment gave him about his therapeutic work.

Toward the end of his written description, C4 said how a new “awareness” he gained from the assessment had reassured him that it was “well worth” the time it took and he was “glad” he did it because otherwise he and his therapist might not have had the “background” he needed in order to do the kind of work they have been doing together (C4WD). He commented on this further during our interview saying, “…on some level I think it is good because it kind of gives us a base from which to work from (TC4, p. 2).”

During discussion of some of his assessment results with T4a, they worked together to come to a fresh perspective on something he had been struggling with. When we watched this interaction during our interview, C4 said: “And that really was just like, oh my goodness, the light really went off. And it was just kind of like, ‘Wow!’ He took me out of the small box I was living in and kind of like put it in perspective I guess… and so I was like, ‘Oooh, if he can do this now I wonder in the coming weeks what else we can get done’” (TC4, p. 14). This quotation continues revealing the excitement he felt about the prospect of continuing to work with his therapist based on the collaboration they were doing during their assessment. In the last moments of our interview he concisely summed up this particular experience in the assessment for him: “…but the assessment kind of gets the ball rolling or puts it in perspective to help us cope with it, and that is what it did for me” (TC4, p. 14). He recognized how the assessment can be used well as a jumping off point for therapy and uses the term “us,” once again showing the working relationship he forged with his therapist through collaboration during their assessment.
This idea of the way collaborative assessment can help to “get the ball rolling” was also addressed in an earlier interview with the C2. From the way she was talking about her assessment experience I pointed out to her that, “…it seems like it kind of acted like a catalyst…” and she replied by saying, “Yea, that is a good word for it” (TC2, p. 9). Even though “catalyst” was not her word, it apparently resonated well with her experience. During our interview she presented an interesting metaphor for assessment: “It is just like depositing money in the bank. That assessment was like a trigger to let this out…” (TC2, p. 10). I then pointed out to her that if you put money in a bank it can gain interest rather than just letting it sit around. She went on to say how “relieving” it is to get certain things out of her head and compared that to organizing the money she put in the bank. It quickly became obvious how much she valued her assessment experience for bringing things out of her that she wanted to work on and providing her with a place to keep them.

The last client I interviewed echoed statements from C4 and C2 regarding this experience, specifically how the assessment can bring promise for the client by helping the therapist understand them much more quickly and in deeper ways: “You know, just going in and sitting down and talking to somebody, I mean, how long would it take you and I to get to know each other’s personalities? It could take years to get to know all of the nuances and quirks and everything that each of us have. And you have to have a tool like that to get you close” (TC5, p. 11). After discussing how this brought “direction” to their work, C5 added, “… as long as they are being open about it and telling the results of it and where it is taking them… it’s going to put whoever took the test more at ease” (TC5, p. 11). He clearly appreciated his therapist’s willingness to share and discuss his
assessment results with him and felt that it not only helped him and his therapist get to
know each other, but also provided them with possible avenues to pursue. The examples
of this client experience show how collaboration during the assessment made clients feel
inspired to engage in therapy and invest more in it.

**Increasing Comfort, Involvement, and Empowerment**

The next specific client experience follows rather closely from the previous one, that collaborative assessment can help clients feel more relaxed, comfortable, involved, and empowered. Fifteen examples of this experience were provided by all of the clients. In the last few minutes of our interview, C2 talked about what it was like to experience this in her own way. She began explaining how the questions her therapist asked her about the assessment results definitely helped her to “complete the thought.” She said they kept her focused and grounded, explaining how her thoughts might have been “all over the place and running wild” if she did not have those questions to serve as a “hook” for her. I reflected back to her how the collaboration with her therapist appeared to help her “follow through” and she said:

Yea, yea. Follow through definitely. It just helps me complete the thought. Even if it is not going to be completed that day, it just helps to move it along. So those questions definitely, questions like, “What would that mean to you?” and “What exactly were you thinking?” or “What were you exactly feeling?” or “How would it make you feel?” Those kind of things help to move it along… (TC2, p. 15)

What she said here harkens back to the first client experience we discussed under this general category because the therapist made her feel more comfortable and involved by asking questions that helped her relate the assessment material to her life world. This situation invited her to share more about herself and contribute to the process in a more meaningful way. It also seemed to afford her an opportunity to shape her experience
better by drawing her toward describing her experiences and emotions in a clearer, more specific, and “exact” manner. This opportunity is something other clients spoke to earlier in our discussion of the experience of receiving discordant feedback but still finding it helpful (3a).

The last client I interviewed spoke to this experience in several ways. During our interview, we had just watched a segment of his assessment where he and his therapist were discussing his DAP immediately after he drew it. During this portion of the assessment, C5 had provided his own interpretation of the drawing he just created. When I asked him about this he said, “Yea, I kind of analyzed myself quite a bit with that.” He seemed slightly surprised and impressed with himself for being able to do this. So it can be seen how the discussion of his drawing with his therapist during the actual assessment process made him feel empowered and gave him the freedom to see himself from a different perspective. He discussed how this new-found freedom and ability carried over into his ongoing work with this therapist. When I asked him how this was for him he simply said, “That’s why I am here,” (TC5, p. 6) which apparently alluded to the progress he is making in his ongoing work with this therapist.

Later in our interview, he talked more directly about the space provided by his therapist’s willingness to share the assessment findings with him and what he got out of that. He considered the hypothetical situation in which his therapist might not have shared the test results with him, and posited that he would have felt a degree of mistrust under such guidelines. He said, “Well, I like things to be up front. I like to know what your thought process is and if we’re…, basically I’m here to get help with my problems
and if you have something you are hiding from me, some judgment or whatever, or some feeling… Then it inhibits me from speaking freely” (TC5, p. 10). This statement implies that if he had the sense that his therapist was not being genuine with him or was holding back in certain ways, he would feel compelled to hold back from his side as well, which seems natural. He went on to say how the therapist’s willingness to share assessment findings would make him, or anyone who took the tests, feel “more at ease” (TC5, p. 11). He also talked here about how much he valued being given the opportunity to be able to challenge or correct the assessment findings, explaining how it helps his therapist get to know him not only in clearer ways, but also in a multitude of ways. C5 often offered his own unprompted “when not” moments in reaction to assessment feedback, showing that he felt he could both be and not be certain ways at different times. He also always backed up these alternate interpretations with examples from his life. This specific client experience represents one of the most fundamental functions collaborative assessment was designed to serve: to increase client participation and involvement in the assessment in order to set a collaborative tone early in the work together. This process immediately shows clients what is expected of them as well as what the potential benefits can be if they take a more active role in their own treatment.

**Comforting Explanations**

The next specific client experience follows from the two previous experiences and also relates to the last experience we will discuss under this general category. It gives voice to the different ways clients felt comforted by their therapists’ explanation of the assessment and feedback process. Fourteen examples of this experience were provided by three of the five clients. The second client I interviewed wrote in her written
description about her fear of being “limited” by the results of her assessment, but also described how it “eased [her] mind” when her therapist explained that the results would be used in a way that reveals what she thinks about herself (C2WD). We discussed this dynamic more during our interview and she spoke of how her therapist’s explanation of the tests eased her mind, specifically when he described them as taking a “snapshot” of where she was at the time. She had difficulty narrowing in on what it was about that explanation that eased her, but said “just thinking of that as a sentence” was helpful for her (TC2, p. 6). Although she did not discuss it explicitly, this perspective seemed to allay her fear of being limited because it left open possibilities for her to be other than the way the results situated her at that particular point in time. This client experience was prominent for her and she gave several more examples that were similar to these.

In my interview with C3, we watched a segment of his assessment where his therapist explained the purpose of the TAT. In our discussion, he talked about how his therapist’s explanation was helpful for him because it gave him some insight into how she would make use of the stories he created and how they would be able to refer back to the metaphors that came out of it later in their work together (TC3, p. 4). In our interview, he compared this explanation to another one she gave for other tests in which she emphasized that there are “no right or wrong” answers. I asked him how that was for him and he said, “That was good…, I know she had said that before, but the more she reiterated that it helped me ease up” (TC3, p. 8). He elaborated by saying how he could have easily leaned toward a more guarded approach “where I don’t hardly say anything,” but her repeated statements made him feel “a little bit more free with what I was saying”
He added that he did not want to head down the guarded path and seemed pleased that his therapist kept opening up another direction for him to take.

In his written description, C4 talked about how “excited” he was by his therapist’s explanation of the TAT because it was unlike anything he had done before with his previous therapists. “All of the previous assessments were through talking only (which is fine, but it becomes a bore after a while).” This sentiment contrasts with what some of the other clients expressed and what several of the therapists expressed concern about their clients feeling: that they would have rather just talked to their therapist about their problems rather than go through an assessment. When I asked him about this during our interview, he explained himself by saying, “there is something about this idea of having this seemingly objective standpoint on which to base yourself on. And I know that sounds kind of limiting, but on some level I think it is good because it kind of gives us a base from which to work from (TC4, pp. 1-2). Unlike C2, he embraced the limiting potential of the assessment because in return it provided a “base” or foundation upon which he and his therapist could build their work together. Yet, it still seemed to be the interactive nature of the activity he was about to engage in that he was initially enthralled with following his therapist’s explanation. Therefore, from these cases it appears that the therapists’ descriptions of the assessment as a snapshot, as having no right or wrong, as being interactive, and as providing a foundation to build upon provided their clients with a degree of comfort regarding the endeavor in which they were about to partake.

**Fun and Enjoyable Aspects**

The second to last client experience under this category is that clients found the collaborative assessment process to be fun and enjoyable. There were 10 examples of
this experience were provided by every client except the first one interviewed. Most of
the examples I will refer to here came from the clients’ written descriptions, which I think
speaks quite a bit in itself about what the clients took away with them, but they also did
not elaborate very much on their initial comments in this direction when I asked
them about it in the interview except to reiterate what they had already written. C2 said
she particularly enjoyed the TAT portion of her assessment (C2WD) while C3 said it was
“fun to pick my brain for answers to questions that I usually don’t get asked” (C3WD).
He added in our interview that being able to go back and watch parts of his assessment
with me and how he was able to build on it helped him to see how much he got out of and
enjoyed it (TC3, p. 12). We discussed before how C4 found the assessment helpful
because it provided him and his therapist with a “base” or foundation from which to
work. He echoed this point in his written description by saying he “liked being assessed”
because it gave him a “checkpoint… to see where I am (from a different perspective)”
(C4WD). C5 said he was “excited” about the assessment because he “had never done
anything like it in the past” (C5WD). So both C3 and C5 appeared to enjoy the
assessment experience more because of the novel quality if had for them. These
experiences are relevant because I think clients often do not think of assessments as a
potentially fun and enjoyable experience. The fact that clients may carry a negative
preconception into assessment and are often pleasantly surprised leads us into the next
client experience.

Skepticism Transforming into Appreciation

The last client experience that was categorized as helpful came from instances
when the client was skeptical of collaborative assessment at first, but found it to be
helpful or enjoyable in the end. Fifteen examples of this experience were provided by all of the clients. There was considerable overlap between this experience and the earlier one where clients were comforted by their therapists’ explanation of the assessment materials and process. This was especially the case for C2, given that she came in with substantial anxiety and fear about being “limited” by the assessment. Aside from being eased by her therapist’s remarks, toward the end of our interview she also talked about how “even though I was so anti-Meyers-Briggs, I think that just that fact brought up an aspect of my personality that needed to be discussed, or that I needed to get that out” (TC2, p. 15). They were able to discuss this issue right there in the assessment as it came up. C3 said his sense of ease increased as he developed more rapport with his therapist, as would be expected, but both he and C5 discussed in our interviews how being able to look back on moments in their assessment as part of this research project really helped them gain a deeper appreciation for what they got out of the assessment. As will be seen in the next category of client experiences, C3 came in feeling very guarded and worried that what he might say could have dire consequences for him, but he ended up saying of certain points in the assessment that “months down the road I’m able to see where I was and I guess a lot of answers were there for me. It just takes a while to process and see them. It’s interesting” (TC3, p. 8). Similarly, C5 came in feeling that he would have rather just talked about his problems than be assessed, but toward the end of our interview he ended up saying how “viewing it again you get a little more out of it than you realized at the time… it brought up at least the starting points for a lot of things” (TC5, p. 12). It is clear from these examples that each of these clients got out of the assessment experience more than they initially expected to.
As we come to the end of this general category of client experiences, we can see how clients found collaborative assessment helpful in relating test results to their everyday experience, brought up material that carried over into their therapeutic work, gave them a sense of hope and empowerment for their ongoing therapeutic work, and was surprisingly fun at times. Even though these helpful and enjoyable client experiences are not mutually exclusive, it is worth noting that there are considerably more of them compared to client experiences that can be considered difficult or unpleasant, which are the ones we will now talk about (see Table 3.3).

**Client Experiences as Difficult or Unpleasant**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3 – Client Experiences as Difficult or Unpleasant.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These experiences are numbered in the order in which they appeared in the data. The number in parentheses at the end of each experience represents the number of examples found in the data for each experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Difficulty hearing discordant feedback (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 – Discomforted by the therapist’s explanation of the assessment and feedback process. (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – Would rather have talked about problems than be assessed, feeling it would have been just as productive. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 – Not trusting the findings of the tests and questioning them, or the tests themselves. (9)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

When thinking about participating in a psychological assessment as a client, it is easy to imagine that some parts of it are going to be more challenging or complicated than others. These experiences draw our attention toward what some of those instances may be and what it might be like to deal with some of those situations.
**Difficulty with Discordant Feedback**

The first of these somewhat tougher experiences was when clients found difficulty receiving discordant feedback during the assessment. Eight examples of this experience were provided by three of the five clients. One of these examples was pulled from the videotaped assessment with C1. During this assessment his therapist gave him feedback that it appeared as though he had “no longing for affection,” and C1 responded rather abruptly with, “Oh no, I don’t know about that. I don’t want to die alone, I want to know that I’m capable of being loved” (VS1, seg. 7). C1 clearly disagreed with and was taken aback by this feedback. I would imagine most people would find difficulty taking in similar comments. He went on to offer an alternative explanation of how the feedback could relate instead to his difficulty with taking compliments and continued discussing that option.

During our interview, I asked C1 about a couple of times when it seemed that he had difficulty with some of the feedback given to him by his therapist and he started off by saying that is why he came for therapy, to “have some kind of judgment about my situation,” insinuating that he was okay with it. However, he quickly added that some of the feedback felt like it was more of a “rush to judgment” and that he had just explained how he had only had about four hours of interaction with his therapist up to that point (TC1, p. 8). So he seemed to be saying that he wanted feedback but felt it was given too early in his relationship with his therapist. There were several other times when C1 seemed to have difficulty with feedback because he flat out disagreed with it (VS1, seg. 2 and 5; TC1, p. 10) and gave examples to the contrary of what his therapist said.
Some of my exchanges with C4 during our interview reminded me of C1’s comments in this area. He similarly said he looks forward to receiving feedback but only if it is given to him in certain ways: “But I really enjoy seeing other people’s points of view about me. Not in a harsh critical sense necessarily…” (TC4, p. 1). So it appears that he is open to hearing feedback as long as he does not feel criticized by it or by the person. Toward the end of our interview he talked about how he did not like the idea of a computer “making a judgment against me” because it is not human and does not have “that special spark” (TC4, p. 15). I reflected back to him that is sounded like he was wondering, “How can a computer know me?” and he emphatically agreed with the sentiment. Here he is making a statement about his preference for human interaction, even if it involved judgment, over computer analysis.

We already discussed how C2’s fears about being limited by the test could make any of the feedback difficult to hear or accept. She explicitly said at one point during our interview that, “the results of the Meyers-Briggs test was just another way to feel limited and I just did not want to hear it” (TC2, p. 13). Yet it also became clear, as we discussed in the section on helpful client experiences, that her therapist’s explanations regarding how he views the assessment results and would be using them served to ease her anxiousness about this test. From these examples, it seems that the clients had difficulty hearing discordant feedback when they felt judged, criticized, or limited by it – but more specifically if they felt the judgment came too quickly or from a computer. I believe this client experience could help to normalize some of the common concerns that clients carry with them into a psychological assessment, but also provide suggestive strategies for
therapists of things to do, and avoid, regarding ways to be with their clients during the assessment.

**Discomforting Explanations**

The second specific client experience under this category is feeling *discomforted by the therapist’s explanation of the assessment and feedback process*. There was only one clear example of this experience, but there were several examples that were on the border of being considered for inclusion into this experience. I ultimately decided to consider this experience relevant for comparative purposes to earlier experiences in which clients felt comforted by their therapist’s explanations of the assessment process. C1 provided a cogent example of this experience during our interview. After we watched the sixth video segment that I pulled from his assessment he discussed his concerns about the validity of the Rorschach and talked about his therapist’s explanation of it:

> Like, “listen we are just going to go from, you know, we’ll just talk about these subjects because they are what came up from the test.” I really felt like because he didn’t really explain too much about his feelings on the test and the way he went about, you know, that there was a scoring and he had his notes and was relating it back to me, “This is what the test says.” Yada, yada, yada. I felt like, yea, like he was putting a lot of trust in it and I didn’t necessarily feel very comfortable with that. (TC1, p. 12)

From this example it appears as though C1 would have liked for his therapist to take more time to genuinely discuss his own feelings on the test itself and how he would make use of the results. From these two examples, one could say that taking extra time to discuss one’s ideas about the tests when it is warranted could help to reassure the client and help increase his or her comfort level and openness. It seems that if the client presents with a high level of anxiety regarding the tests themselves, the therapists’
explanations regarding the assessment materials could be limited in their effectiveness until a stronger alliance has been built.

Feeling that Talking is as Productive as Assessment

The next specific experience that clients may have found to be difficult or unpleasant is evident in statements indicating that they would have rather talked about their problems than be assessed, feeling that it would have been just as productive.

There were five examples of this experience provided by three of the five clients. During his assessment with T4b, C5 said, “Most of this stuff I could tell you anyway. I know the issues that come from my mother, I know the issues that come from my father” (VS3, seg. 6). He expresses here that he feels as though he already has a good grasp on the problems he is struggling with, what contributed to them, and that he would have preferred to simply talk with his therapist about them instead. However, as discussed in previous specific client experiences, during our interview he went on to talk about how the assessment provides “a guideline” for ensuing therapeutic work, how it “gets you in the ball park,” and even says “just going in and sitting down and talking to somebody, I mean, how long would it take you and I to get to know each others’ personalities? It could take years to get to know all of the nuances and quirks and everything that each of us have. And you have to have a tool like that to get you close” (TC5, p. 11). So even though his initial preference seemed to be toward simply talking rather than engaging in assessment, he appeared to have honed in on the purpose and usefulness of his assessment in the end, particularly that it helps the people who are working together get to know each other in deeper ways rather than simply giving his therapist a list of issues he wants to work on.
In contrast, C1 appeared to have held much more fervently to his preference for talking to his therapist rather than participating in assessment. After watching a segment of his assessment where he received feedback about his possible preoccupation with the body and discussing that he said, “I mean, it’s like, I could have told you that” (TC1, p. 9). Toward the end of our interview there was an exchange between us where he elaborated by saying, “I felt like I could explain things just as easily as taking the test… I would have been able to have been a little bit more relaxed and trusting about the process had it just been all conversation and we just got to the problems as they came up. I wouldn’t feel like the test was just like, bam, this is what it is and then not trusting the test…” (TC1, p. 15). C1 also explained during this exchange how he felt the tests “rushed” things for him too much and he would rather just let them surface in a more natural way. So even though the assessment can be used as a tool to catalyze and speed up the therapeutic process, some clients may feel as though it pushes them to go faster than the pace they are comfortable with.

From my experience while conducting interviews, clients questioning the assessment process in an “Is this worth it?” kind of a way also seemed to be a rather common concern for several of the therapists (T2, T3, and T4b), as will be discussed in the second part of this chapter and in the next chapter. Although these examples do appear to give founding to such concerns, many of these examples came from preconceptions the clients brought into the assessment experience, and there were many more examples of where upon reflecting on their assessment experience the clients changed their mind and were able to view the assessment as more worthwhile and productive. Thus, the clients’ initial questioning as to whether the assessment might be
worth the time and effort they put into it seemed to eventually conclude with positive responses.

**Questioning and Mistrusting Assessment**

The last client experience under this category is when clients felt they could *not trust the findings of the tests and questioned either the findings or the tests themselves*. Nine examples of this experience were provided by three of the five clients. The first client I interviewed had particular skepticism about the Rorschach. He said in his written description that even before his actual assessment he had gone home, researched the Rorschach online (having been told he would be taking it), and “didn’t find any [opinions] that were very complimentary” (C1 WD, p. 1). Yet, he also added that despite the less than positive opinions he found regarding the Rorschach, he was still curious and interested to hear the results of it. He elaborated on his attitude in the middle of our interview, saying how his skepticism was mainly due to the facts that he did not have much familiarity with how the results were formulated from his answers and he did not feel that his therapist explained the Rorschach to him as thoroughly as he would have liked, and this made it difficult for him to agree with the feedback it produced (TC1, p. 7). Later on in our interview he elaborated by saying how he heard opinions of lawyers saying the Rorschach does not hold up in court and should not be used in child custody battles. He acknowledged that he is in a different situation and his therapist was using the Rorschach in a different manner, but he still admitted that it did make him question it in the sense that if it does not hold up in one situation, what other situations does it not stand up in (TC1, p. 12)?
During my interview with the second client she questioned whether the testing materials, and questions asked about them, could “prompt” people to talk about things they would not normally talk about. In a way, this is exactly what the materials are designed to do, but she meant it more as coaxing clients into talking about things that would make them come across in ways that do not fit with their personality, style, and sense of being. She described this other possible representation of herself produced by tests as potentially “negative” and “counterproductive” (TC2, p. 4). So on one hand she was worried that the tests could be too limiting for her, but she also feared they might misrepresent her in some way. The fourth client I interviewed described an experience similar to C2’s initial fear of being limited by the assessment materials. Before explaining why he does not trust computers to analyze his test data (TC4, p. 15), as we already discussed, C2 talked about objective tests in general saying:

I like the idea of taking objective tests, but at the same rate I don’t like the idea that it is trying to place me on this kind of continuum or this plane that may not even really exist. I like it because it gives us a base to work from but I don’t like it when it tries to be super scientific to where something is the way it is. And some of those questions were on morality and I remember taking a minute or two to answer those questions, which was a long time for those questions, thinking, “What would I answer here?” because it is so technical and I remember thinking…., I don’t remember if I did or didn’t, but I really just wanted to expound on this notion that certain things just don’t fit inside this continuum of logic… I’m just saying that there is something else and I wanted to try to prove that in this discussion, I think. And looking at it now, I think it just made me realize how truly I feel for that. (TC4, p. 11)

This statement is loaded with ambivalence regarding the assessment materials, but it is clear that he does not want to be defined by them in a fixed or static way. He wants the intricacies and nuances of his being to be recognized and appreciated. His pointing to the
difficulty of providing cut and dry answers to difficult moral questions definitely resonated with me. But toward the end of the statement he also suggested that the opportunity to talk about the test data later afforded him the freedom to show that he is more than what the tests showed and he appeared to cherish that dearly.

Even though this client experience, along with the other ones in this general category of difficult or unpleasant experiences, could be seen as a method used by clients to defend or guard against any potentially difficult or unsavory feedback the tests might produce, it is worth recognizing that this is a legitimate experience for some clients during their assessment. This recognition can help clients be aware of this experience as a possibility going into an assessment and therapists can be better prepared to acknowledge and deal with it however seems appropriate. Protecting oneself from potentially unpleasant assessment results is one of the client experiences covered in the next general category so this discussion segues into it well.

**Client Descriptions of the Assessment Process**

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<tr>
<th>Table 3.4 – Client Descriptions of the Assessment Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These experiences are numbered in the order in which they appeared in the data. The number in parentheses at the end of each experience represents the number of examples found in the data for each experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – Desire to protect one’s self by not saying too much or being careful with responses in order to portray one’s self in a certain way – guardedness. (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Feeling the desire to open up further to help the treatment process. (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – Preferring “projective” tests to “objective” tests (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – Collaborative assessment is emotionally evocative. (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This category (see Table 3.4 above) includes specific client experiences that do not address the assessment as more or less helpful or pleasant. The only exception is the third experience discussed under this category because it compares different types of testing materials, showing a preference for one over the other. Nonetheless, each of these experiences individually captures a particular aspect of the clients’ assessment experiences in a way that describes what was occurring or what came up for them at the time. These experiences can be seen as providing answers to the first interview question I asked participants (What was going on here?) whereas the two previous categories lend themselves more to the second interview question (How was it for you?). Most of the experiences in this category had about the same amount of examples, eight or nine each, with the exception of the last one which had about twice as many as the others.

**Protective and Guarded Feelings**

The first specific client experience under this general category is when clients expressed a *desire to protect themselves by not saying too much or were careful with their responses in order to portray themselves in a certain way*. I also referred to this experience more succinctly as *guardedness*. Eight examples of this experience were provided by two of the five clients. C2’s fear of being limited by the assessment, particularly by the Meyers-Briggs, had a considerable impact on the way she responded to it. During the opening moments of our interview she said, “I got anxiety taking that test because I felt like I had to answer a certain way because I didn’t want to be a certain way, which made me feel even more confused” (TC2, p. 1). She explained how she tried to exert some control on the way the test characterized her and went on to say, “So, I don’t know whether I am answering them honestly or dishonestly…” (TC2, p. 6). She
points out how her attempts to control the way she would be portrayed increased her anxiety and confusion, which would lead one to think that she might have had a less stressful experience during her assessment if she had simply responded to the questions in a more candid and genuine manner. Even though she admitted to gaining some helpful insights from the assessment process (C2WD, pp. 1-2; TC2, pp. 8-11), she might have had even more to take away if T2 had helped her to adopt this different approach.

The third client I interviewed came in for his assessment with a different type of apprehension. He had a previous experience of being hospitalized following an assessment at a different mental health facility. When I asked him how he thought this affected the way he was in the assessment that we viewed together he said:

I mean I tried to be as honest as I could about certain questions or evaluations, but at the same time the whole time I’m thinking, [chuckles] “You’ve got to watch what you say. You have to watch the wording with how you say certain things and not..., I don’t want to say “not be emotional about how you answer,” but definitely don’t want to show extreme signs of anger or suicidal thoughts or anything like that.” Not that I had them but I went in with the preconceived notion that I wasn’t going to overreact… So yea, I was definitely guarded. (TC3, p. 2)

He speaks to his own ambivalence of wanting to be as sincere and forthcoming as possible, but at the same time carefully wording his responses. He was not only cautious with his language, but also with his display of emotion, vigilantly restraining expression of any extreme feelings. His fear was based on a very real and unpleasant past experience and he made it very apparent that he did not want to repeat that situation. He went on to discuss this further, recognizing how his fear of certain possible “consequences” made him uneasy and that he did not “want to be vulnerable and say too much in the first visit. You know, thinking, “Maybe over time some of this can creep
out,” [laughs] you know” (TC3, p. 7). He reveals here that he had a sense during the assessment that he would feel more comfortable about sharing different aspects of himself as time passed and he developed more of a relationship with his therapist, seeming to prefer a more gradual method of relating so as to not shock his therapist with too much at once and possibly provoke an unwanted reaction. Despite the ways this dynamic clearly affected C3’s assessment experience, it is interesting that his therapist was still rather impressed with the openness and honesty with which he approached the testing materials (T3WD, p. 2; TT3, pp. 4-5, 7). I would assume this guardedness is natural for clients to feel upon entering an assessment and also something therapists also expect.

The Desire to Open Up

The second specific client experience under this category could be viewed as somewhat in contrast to the previous one because it involves clients feeling the desire to open up to help and further the treatment process. Nine examples of this experience were provided by four of the five clients. The first two clients I interviewed talked about wanting to share more about themselves in order to fill the silent spaces of the assessment (TC1, p. 11; TC2, p. 14) and the last client I interviewed claimed that he was more “forthcoming” in order to make his therapist feel more “comfortable” (TC5, p. 6), which one might also assume had a byproduct of pleasing both him and his therapist through his taking on the role of “good client” by doing what he felt was expected of him. However, the other two clients appeared to be motivated more intrinsically in the direction of sharing more about themselves. During our interview, C3 talked about how “it is okay to have comfort in certain aspects, but I need to keep pushing to the uncomfortable too”
He explained how he knew that increasing the fruitfulness of his work in therapy would involve continuous efforts to expand his horizon of comfort and he would have to face difficult experiences for the sake of personal growth, which appeared to me as rather daring and insightful. At the very end of his assessment, C4 handed his therapist the results of some online tests he took on his own for people who are struggling with anxiety. When I asked him about this during our interview he explained how previous therapists had diagnosed him within that area and he wanted to provide his current therapist with information about him that was more specific in that direction. He also added that he could have been motivated by his sense that “an hour is not a lot of time to hear my life story” (TC4, p. 13). Thus from these examples it appears that the climate of the therapeutic space has a unique impact on the clients’ willingness to share sensitive information about themselves – whether it is silent or empty, large enough, safe enough, and so on. Viewing this client experience alongside the previous one speaks to the tremendous ambivalence clients may experience during an assessment. This ambivalence is between feeling compelled to share difficult aspects of themselves (knowing that this is a large part of what fuels their treatment) but simultaneously heeding the natural tendency to protect oneself due to the implicit vulnerability that opening oneself up to others entails.

Preferring “Projective” Tests to “Objective” Tests

The next client experience under this category is the only one that could be seen as having a quasi-evaluative aspect to it. It is when clients expressed a certain preference for “projective” tests over “objective” ones. There were eight examples of this experience provided by four of the five clients. In his written description, C1 talked
about how neither he nor his therapist were particularly in favor of any “written or bubble tests” and felt they should do more “improvisational work” (C1WD, p. 1). He gave the impression here that he relished the opportunity to have a conversation about which tests they would use, as well as the sheer fact that he was included in that decision rather than having the decision made for him by his therapist. He also added that he liked the “spontaneity” of the improvisational test more. I asked him about this during our interview and he said even though he did not have a very long conversation with his therapist about it, he preferred the improvisational test because he felt it would help him and his therapist get to know each other, and how they might work together, better than a bubble test would (TC1, p. 3). The MBTI was clearly anxiety-provoking for C2, but it was interesting to see how much more she preferred the TAT in contrast to it, as she wrote about in her written description (C2WD). She elaborated on this in our interview saying, “I really felt like the TAT cards were successful and I think it is because I just had a chance to explain myself” (TC2, p. 1). This reminds me of how her therapist explained the testing materials to her as points of departure for conversation (VS1, seg. 1). They seemed to be on the same page in terms of valuing the assessment for its ability to promote discourse between them.

When we discussed clients feeling skeptical about the testing materials we also talked about how, like C2, C4 did not like the idea of being limited or placed on an artificial continuum by the objective tests. Following from this, C4 also talked about how the objective tests he took reminded him of the SAT and other similar tests he took in high school. He expounded on how they were a “turn off” for him because of their “monotony.” On the other hand, in the same breath he said he preferred the TAT because
“I could engage it” (TC4, p. 2). He continued on about the TAT saying, “I really felt like my own subjective interpretation of those cards was actually being put to use somehow” (TC4, p. 3). Later in our interview he expressed his frustration with “bubble tests” by saying, “it’s like they are asking you for an objective answer to something that is subjective and you can’t do that” (TC4, p. 11). C5 mirrored some of what C4 expressed in saying he was “disappointed” by the “repetition” and redundancy of the questions on the objective tests, and even described them as “boring.” Conversely, he said he did appreciate the TAT for its ability to “bring up certain things in your life” that were important for him to talk about. He also explained that even though some of those things might be sad, “when you revisit the bad you think about the good that came before it and the reason why you were so sad” (TC5, pp. 1-2). This quote from C5 summons a dichotomous aspect of our existence and provides insight into one’s emotions. Hence, the examples of this experience indicate that the clients preferred projective over objective tests because they found them to be more fun, engaging, interactive, evocative of conversation and emotion, and that they helped them and their therapists to get to know each other better. This notion of the assessment having the ability to stir up one’s emotions leads us into the next and final client experience in this general descriptive category for client experiences.

**Emotionally Evocative**

The last specific client experience that can be categorized as primarily descriptive is when clients noticed how collaborative assessment can be emotionally evocative. This client experience was mentioned 16 times by all of the clients. During our interview the first client discussed how he wished he was able to take his time more in the assessment
to process the feedback, explaining how “it takes a little while for the emotional reaction to be verbalized appropriately” (TC1, p. 8). He went on to say that even watching it again during our interview he was realizing meaningful things he had difficulty noticing at the time. This comment would advocate for allowing more time during the assessment and feedback session in order to slow down and work more at the client’s pace, or even having another additional feedback session if warranted.

In her assessment, C2 wept after her therapist pointed out to her that she had come to a “key insight.” T2 then comforted and contained her while at the same time keeping an opening for them to be able to come back to her insight and do further work on it during their time together in therapy (VS1, seg. 6). When I watched this video segment with C2’s therapist, he pointed out that after working with her for some time now he has noticed that she becomes emotional whenever she talks about her mother. He said he has also been able to see how she tends to turn her anger toward her mother back on herself in the form of guilt and it became obvious how this emotional moment in the assessment provided fertile ground for work to be done for her in this area in their ongoing therapy (TT2, p. 9). It was clear that C2 also came to this same general realization when we discussed this video segment, which included her reaction to one of the TAT cards that was family-oriented. She said, “I think that I was kind of emotional during that card. My voice sounds like it because I maybe have a little lump in my throat or something because I remember during that card I felt pretty emotional, just because it had to do with the family and I always get kind of…, something makes me have some sort of feeling when talking about my family” (TC2, p. 3). So it appears as though the assessment helped both her and her therapist come to a better understanding of a touch point from her life that
carried considerable emotional weight. Her assessment experience also seems to have aided her in gaining an idea of what to do with this emotional weight. That observation takes us back to the client experience of seeing the assessment as a catalyst for therapy where we discussed the metaphor she came up with for viewing her cathartic moments during therapy as depositing money in a bank: “I come here and deposit my feelings. That assessment was like a trigger to let this out…” (TC2, p. 10).

After watching a video segment of C3’s assessment in which he related a TAT card to his relationship with his grandmother, we discussed how that was for him and he said, “the more and more I got into it, the more and more I was just saying how I felt” (TC3, p. 6). This card brought up considerable emotion for him, but it seemed that the further along he went in the assessment process the more his comfort level increased and allowed him to express his emotions more freely. His therapist also pointed out how open he was with his emotions during my interview with her, admiring his “bravery” as he so readily “returned to a place that was so emotionally charged…” and he did not shy away from difficult content on a particular TAT card (TT3, p. 5). T3 continued expressing this sentiment by naming his emotion more specifically as “sadness” and pointing out how “the images themselves evoked an emotional connection… the idea of sitting in a fog and not knowing what is coming and being confused. So all of that stuff was just kind of replete in it. So I was really aware of those feelings that I was having and that he was possibly having as well” (TT3, p. 5). She recognized that not only was this experience emotionally evocative for him, but for her as well through her empathizing with his situation. These emotions were viscerally present for them as they went further with this image to discuss how they both felt like they were “bracing”
against a possible metaphorical car accident that could unexpectedly occur as a result of trying to navigate their way through such a dense fog. Their ostensibly strong connection through his eagerness to share his feelings and her willingness to join him in this highly emotionally charged moment brought about by their discussion of assessment material was profound.

C5 talked about the assessment bringing out sadness for him, but he indicated how that action evokes a certain degree of happiness at the same time (TC5, p. 2). Apart from that, however, as we watched a video segment from his assessment during our interview he said, “I think I was a little bit angry” (TC5, p. 3). After I clarified with him that wanting to deal with his anger was what brought him in for treatment in the first place, he talked about how the assessment materials effectively brought out what was in his head and brought what he was struggling with in his current life situation into that moment of the assessment. This is precisely one of the goals that this style of assessment seeks to achieve through collaboration between therapist and client. Instead of having to wait for his anger to present itself, their discussion of the assessment materials brought it into the room for them to grasp and work on.

From these examples we can see how the emotionally evocative quality of collaborative assessment helps the therapist and client not only to understand each other better and to forge a deeper relationship, but also to get a feel for the pace at which the client is most comfortable working, to gauge his or her ability to tolerate emotionally laden content, to see the ways they typically deal with this content, and to possibly offer alternatives. It would also be helpful for clients to know and to be able to expect that a collaborative assessment will probably stir up certain emotions for them. This general
descriptive category not only showed us a preference the clients had regarding assessment materials and the emotionally evocative characteristic of collaborative assessment, but also spoke to an ambivalence clients may experience between wanting to open up in order to further the therapeutic process and simultaneously protect themselves through reticence. This point brings us to the end of our discussion of the client experiences of collaborative assessment. As we move on to illuminating the therapists’ experiences, we will begin to notice considerable overlap (see Tables 3.1, 3.5, and 4.1).
**Therapist Experiences**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.5 – Therapist Experiences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – The therapist’s lack of experience with and anxiety regarding assessment administration and providing feedback can make the assessment and feedback sessions difficult or unpleasant. (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Enjoying the flexibility allowed by collaborative assessment for incorporating more of one’s personal style or approach in the assessment. (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – It can be helpful to contextualize assessment findings by relating them to real-world experiences from the client’s life. (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – Difficulty giving discordant feedback. (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a – But it is still helpful, useful, and productive. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – Wanting to challenge or push the client with discordant feedback. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – Not enjoying or liking collaborative assessment because there is too much to manage and remember or the therapist is more “write-up” oriented. (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – Some testing materials (projective) are more conducive to collaboration than others (objective). (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – Collaborative assessment provides a good start to therapy, acts as a catalyst for it. (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a – Collaborative assessment prepares clients for therapy and shows them what to expect. (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b – Collaborative assessment gives insight into the relationship dynamics and builds rapport. (25)</td>
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<td>9 – Collaborative assessment creates themes and metaphors which carry over into therapy in a helpful or useful way – earlier than therapy (just talking) would. (35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – Experience (increased practice) with collaborative assessment can increase the therapist’s comfort and enjoyment with it and make it more effective. (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – Collaborative assessment gives a “snapshot” of the client (“what-it-is-like-now-ness”) in a helpful or useful way. (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – Allowing space for the client to respond to, challenge, or disagree with the findings of the assessment and that turned out helpful anyway, often more so. (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 – Collaboration can help clients feel more comfortable, relaxed, and involved. (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 – Offering alternative explanations or interpretations following the client’s correction or input. (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – Therapist sets the frame by explaining the tests, assessment, or feedback process. (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – Assessment or feedback session resembles therapy or becomes therapeutic; therapist expresses empathy toward the client. (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 – Therapist is impressed with their client’s response, feedback, or insight. (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These assessment experiences are grouped into four general categories: ones that compare how the therapist’s experience and comfort with conducting assessments (or lack thereof) affected the assessment, ones that were viewed as helpful or enjoyable, ones that were seen as difficult or unpleasant, and descriptions of the assessment process. The first general category is the only one that is dissimilar from the category headings used for the client experiences.

**Therapist Experiences as Having an Impact on the Assessment Based on the Therapist’s Experience and Comfort with Collaborative Assessment, or Lack Thereof**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.5 continued – Therapist Experiences continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 – Therapist collaborates during the administration of the tests. (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – Therapist was skeptical about the process at first but found it to go better or be more productive than expected in the end. (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – Tailoring the assessment to the client based on prior meetings by choosing certain assessment materials to use with them. (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – Concern that the assessment might be “artificial,” a negative distraction, or an interruption in therapeutic work. (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 – Enjoying collaborative, glad to be a part of it because it allows them to do the kind of therapeutic work they want to do. (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These assessment experiences are grouped into four general categories: ones that compare how the therapist’s experience and comfort with conducting assessments (or lack thereof) affected the assessment, ones that were viewed as helpful or enjoyable, ones that were seen as difficult or unpleasant, and descriptions of the assessment process. The first general category is the only one that is dissimilar from the category headings used for the client experiences.

**Therapist Experiences as Having an Impact of the Assessment Based on the Therapist’s Experience and Comfort with Collaborative Assessment, or Lack Thereof**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.6 – Therapist Experiences as Having an Impact of the Assessment Based on the Therapist’s Experience and Comfort with Collaborative Assessment, or Lack Thereof</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – The therapist’s lack of experience with and anxiety regarding assessment administration and providing feedback can make the assessment and feedback sessions difficult or unpleasant. (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – Experience (increased practice) with collaborative assessment can increase the therapist’s comfort and enjoyment with it and make it more effective. (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are only two therapist experiences under this category (see Table 3.6 above). Each of these specific experiences carries an evaluative component in designating this aspect of assessment as more or less helpful or pleasant, hence they could have theoretically been split up into the subsequently two general categories (helpful-enjoyable or difficult-unpleasant), but I deemed this comparison to warrant its own category.

**Lack of Experience may Increase Difficulty and Discomfort**

The first of these therapist experiences occurred when the therapist’s lack of experience or anxiety regarding the administration of assessments and providing feedback made the assessment and feedback sessions difficult or unpleasant. Six examples of this experience were found in the data. All of these examples, with the exception of one, came from the same therapist. Noticing this made me wonder if this experience could be considered somewhat of an aberration, but I decided that it was worth preserving and discussing. The exception came from the second therapist I interviewed. In his written description he talked about how he gained more confidence in conducting assessments with time (T2WD, p. 1). I asked him about this early on in our interview and he explained by saying, “I think of how nervous I used to be going into assessments. It always felt artificial, awkward when I was first trying it out during the first year” (TT2, p. 1). Even though he did not elaborate on what he meant by “artificial” or “awkward,” he implied that his nervousness with conducting assessments subsided with time and increased practice. However, the first therapist I interviewed attributed the presence of an awkward feeling during his assessment administration to something else: the fear of failure. At the beginning of his written description, T1 said:
I always feel wary that when we do the assessment the questions will not have been answered or even been illuminated by the time we are done. Proceeding this way is like making a promise which I do not know if I can keep and I guess it makes me more nervous about conducting the assessment. This general nervousness is a constant background feeling for me during a collaborative assessment. Since the assessment process is open-ended and relies very much on my own attunement to and thoughts about my interaction with the client or the client’s interaction with whatever test I am administering, there is always a chance that my own lack of ideas or failure to observe any patterns will create an embarrassing “lack of insight” or lack of knowledge about how to proceed. It is difficult to plan and remain in control throughout a collaborative assessment since one has to rely on the events of the moment to inspire a thought, invite an insight, show a pattern, and so forth, and there is thus always a sense in me that the assessment can be a failure. (T1WD, p. 1)

Given that the general length of the participants’ written descriptions was only about one to two pages, T1 devoted a significant amount of space to his fear of failure. Here T1 talks about the “general nervousness” that is looming over practically all of his assessment experiences, his concerns about “control” during administration due to its “open-ended” style, and the potential for “embarrassment.” In the very next sentence immediately following this quotation he points out how, “Looking back, however, I don’t know if I can say it really ever has been a failure, but the fear is always there” (T1WD). So it would appear that this fear is not based in past experience, but rather his worries are embedded in the notion that the success of an assessment rests squarely on him. When we discussed this in our interview, he began by saying how he feels like there is about “a 95% chance” that it will go well and only a “5% chance that maybe this will be the time when I go blank” (TT1, p. 2). Even though he admitted that it is a relatively small chance, it felt as though it had a much larger presence and impact on him in his lived experience. He went on to discuss the origin of this fear, saying how, “I can definitely
see how it would relate to my own personal history and my own struggles and it probably has a lot to do with my own counter-transferential issues” (TT1, pp. 3-4). It showed tremendous introspective insight and courage for him to acknowledge this possibility and made me think of the potential value there is for assessors to spend some time making such reflexive considerations in order to ponder the ways different things they are bringing into the assessment space might be influencing the experience for both themselves and their clients. My initial assumption was that, like T2, T1 simply had not conducted many assessments at the time and his nervousness would fade with increased practice, but I came to discover that he had conducted by far the most assessments compared to the other therapist participants. This fact served to increase the likelihood that what he brought into the assessment space from his personal history had a considerable impact on his experience of the assessment.

**Increased Experience may Increase Comfort and Effectiveness**

I placed the other client experience in this category primarily for its relationship to the previous one; specifically experience or increased practice with collaborative assessment can increase the enjoyment and comfort for the therapist and possibly make it be perceived as more useful. Four examples from the data substantiated this experience, all of them coming from the second and third therapists interviewed. In his written description, the second therapist said, “As a third year student, I have given enough assessments that I generally feel confident going into an assessment session” (T2WD, p. 1), showing a clear positive correlation between his confidence and increased practice with administering assessments. When I asked him about my impression he began with the statement I used as an example of the last therapist experience, that he initially felt
nervous and awkward when giving assessments, but he went on to say, “I have been giving more of them and I generally feel more relaxed when I’m in the assessment session and I know what to expect. I feel like I’ve worked out a system where I sort of have a way of doing things, that maybe I could say more about… I think if I’m not as self-conscious then I can be more open to what the other person is saying and to work with that” (TT2, p. 1). So with more experience giving assessments his sense of comfort in the session increased along with his confidence, while at the same time his self-consciousness decreased. This appears to have allowed him to take a more collaborative and engaging stance toward his clients. He mentioned how this freed him to create his own “system” of administering collaborative assessments. I will flesh this point out when we discuss another therapist experience (2) under the next general category. But suffice it to say that he probably did not feel this freedom to bring more of his own style into the assessment until he gradually became more comfortable and confident in his administration with increased practice. I also assume that T2’s ability to incorporate more of his own style probably made the assessment more enjoyable and helpful for both him and his clients.

In her written description, T3 said, “over the past three years, I have come to truly appreciate and respect the collaborative assessment process and the fruit it can bear” (T3WD, p. 1). Although she did not state it explicitly, this statement seems to imply that her appreciation for the assessment process increased as she became more familiar with it. She went on to comment more specifically on the ways her experience with collaborative assessment affected her initial thoughts about working with her client: “Having had several very positive experiences using collaborative assessment in the past,
I was prepared, upon meeting with [C3], to actively entertain that possibility of a good assessment experience with him” (T3WD, p. 1). So it appears that she was eventually able to use her past experiences administering collaborative assessments to help her get a sense of whether or not a client she would be seeing might be able to make good use of a particular style of assessment, and in this case she was optimistic. I would assume that having trustworthy intuition based on past assessment experiences could be useful for therapists when selecting which assessment materials (in this case specific TAT cards) to use during the assessment and could better prepare them for what they might encounter.

When looking at this general therapist category, it seems intuitive and obvious to think that a therapist’s sense of confidence and comfort would increase along with the number of assessments that he or she conducts, but T1 provided an example contrary to this. His case is not only interesting because it emphasizes the importance of reflecting on and considering what one is bringing into an assessment situation, but also because his discomfort with and utter dislike for conducting assessments seemed to increase with time. This will be discussed further under the third general category of therapist experiences, but for now let us move on to discussing the first category of therapist experiences that can be considered evaluative without being primarily comparative in nature, as the last category was.
Therapist Experiences as Helpful or Enjoyable

Table 3.7 – Therapist Experiences as Helpful or Enjoyable

2 – Enjoying the flexibility allowed by collaborative assessment for incorporating more of one’s personal style or approach in the assessment. (6)
3 – It can be helpful to contextualize assessment findings by relating them to real-world experiences from the client’s life. (23)
4a – (Difficulty giving discordant feedback…) But it is still helpful, useful, and productive. (4)
8 – Collaborative assessment provides a good start to therapy, acts as a catalyst for it. (21)
8a – Collaborative assessment prepares clients for therapy and shows them what to expect. (7)
8b – Collaborative assessment gives insight into the relationship dynamics and builds rapport. (25)
9 – Collaborative assessment creates themes and metaphors which carry over into therapy in a helpful or useful way – earlier than therapy (just talking) would. (35).
12 – Allowing space for the client to respond to, challenge, or disagree with the findings of the assessment and that turned out helpful anyway, often more so. (29)
13 – Collaboration can help clients feel more comfortable, relaxed, and involved. (12)
19 – Therapist was skeptical about the process at first but found it to go better or be more productive than expected in the end. (11)
22 – Enjoying collaborative assessment, glad to be a part of it because it allows them to do the kind of therapeutic work they want to do. (6)

Similar to the general category we already discussed in which clients found assessment experiences to be helpful or enjoyable, this category (see Table 3.7) consists of nine therapist experiences. However, the corresponding client category had only one specific experience with a subcategory, whereas this general therapist category has two specific experiences (4 and 8) with subcategories. As with the other general categories, each of the specific experiences will be discussed in the order in which it showed up in the data.
Enjoying the Flexibility

The first experience that therapists found helpful or enjoyable was when they expressed a certain *enjoyment for being allowed the flexibility to incorporate their own personal style into the collaborative approach to assessment and finding that it made the assessment more helpful or productive*. The first three therapists I interviewed provided six examples of this experience.

In the opening moments of our interview, T2 alluded to having developed his own “system” of conducting collaborative assessments (TT2, p. 1). As our interview continued he went on to further describe what he called “my own little quirky method of doing the TAT” and explained how he administers the TAT in the standard fashion and does not “intervene” during this portion. Next he gives clients a multiple choice personality test and while they are working on it he reads over the TAT responses and comes up with “possible themes.” He then meets with the client again and reads the TAT responses aloud, asks them to comment further on their responses, and asks questions about their responses (TT2, p. 4). This appears to be a kind of blending of the TAT and Rorschach administrations, but he discusses how it is more comfortable for him to do it this way and he has found it to be useful and productive. Toward the end of our interview he talked about another way he uses his own methods to provide feedback: by writing feedback letters to each of his clients regarding their assessment findings. He explained that he does not fully agree with the notion that assessors should share all of the results with their clients; therapists can have their own thoughts and interpretations about the client and keep them private if they wish to. I am unaware of any assessors who would advocate sharing all assessment results with clients anyway. He went on to
say that he views his feedback letter as “a good compromise” between his own values and the values of a collaborative approach to assessment and it gives him “a bit more control” over the entire process.

The third therapist I interviewed expressed notions similar to T2’s by saying how the flexibility of collaborative assessment increased her sense of ease as well. Early in our interview she specifically talked about how she found it freeing to be able to say, “I don’t know, I don’t have the answers. Which is a very comfortable place for me to be in” (TT3, p. 2). This is similar to T2 in that the openness of this assessment style provides a more comfortable place in which she can situate herself, but it is unlike T2 in that she cherishes the way this role allows her to let go of control rather than increase her sense of having it. However, this idea of finding comfort in letting go of control and responsibility in the assessment administration is more reminiscent of the kind of relief T1 expressed feeling. Toward the end of our assessment, I pointed out to T3 the ways that she incorporated her own style into her administration of the TAT and asked her how that was for her. She responded by saying, “I don’t know, I’ve never even thought about that. I just do it, you know” (TT3, p. 15). This shows how she experienced this freedom in a more intuitive and pre-reflective way. After explaining how she is not a “stickler” for rules to begin with, she discussed the importance of having the freedom to discuss things with her client in the moment when they come up and are still “fresh.” After I reflected this back to her she elaborated by saying she likes how this keeps “the living quality to it. That there is something about the assessment process that is now, it is right now. And it may not be generalizeable in everything else. Maybe it is this particular moment, but there is something that is descriptive in the now” (TT3, p. 15). It is clear
from this how she has an immense appreciation for the way collaborative assessment allows her, as a therapist, to access the client’s lived world as it presents itself, or harvest the fruit while it is ripe, so to speak, rather than waiting until later which may run the risk of allowing the fruit to spoil.

From the examples provided under this therapist experience we can see how allowing therapists the freedom to incorporate some of their own style into the assessment administration can serve to be more engaging and empowering for the client. We also see how it can make the therapist feel more comfortable and empowered as well by giving him or her the sense that it is not only acceptable to do things in one’s own way, but it can also increase the utility of the assessment process. Therapists’ willingness to share more of themselves through the assessment also helps the client get to know them better and gives the client more of a sense of what it will be like to work in ongoing therapy, which is something that the client participants said they wanted more of when they expressed their preference for projective tests over objective ones, described how collaborative assessment can be relaxing and comforting, and discussed valuing the moments of the assessment when their therapists’ humanness was revealed.

**Contextualizing**

The next specific therapist experience under this category is that therapists found it helpful to contextualize assessment findings by relating them to real-world experiences from the client’s life. Despite having 23 examples of this experience from all four therapists, there were still three other specific therapist experiences under this category with more examples. In his written description T1 offered a statement that epitomizes this experience. After talking about how during an assessment he is constantly working
to draw more “general principles” from the “little things” supplied by the client, he said, “From these little things, my mind then goes on overdrive to try to come up with how what I observe can be relevant in terms of “life,” that is, how I can abstract a “way of living” from them” (T1WD, p. 2). The task he describes here relates to the way one might wrestle with pieces of a puzzle in order to combine them in such a way that grants him a bigger picture of the client’s world and the ways he or she moves through it. T1 designates this as “the major cognitive struggle and effort for me during a collaborative assessment” (T1WD, p. 2) and points out how central this is to the therapists’ ability to make an assessment become collaborative and distinct from traditional forms of assessment. He also offers a failsafe of sorts by explaining how if he feels himself falling short of his goal in this endeavor, he “will simply ask the client to tell me about his strategies and then proceed from that instead of my own observations” (T1WD, p. 2).

This harkens back to the way this style of assessment can effectively ease a therapist’s tension about having a successful session through increased collaboration with the client. Later in his written description, T1 gives specific examples of the types of questions he asks his clients. He said he often employs his professor’s suggestion of asking “when and when not” in order to “root the abstract in the concrete” (T1WD, p. 2) and give his client not only the opportunity to confirm the test data, but also to disagree with them. This disagreement would naturally compel the client to defend his argument to the contrary and only help the therapist get to know and understand him better. In our interview, T1 went on to say how he gauges the success of an assessment by his client’s ability to resonate with the results or relate it to his or her life experience (TT1, pp. 7-8).
During his assessment with C2, T2 exemplified this therapist strategy on two separate occasions when asking his client to relate the testing materials to her life experience (VS2, seg. 5, 8). In my interview with T2 he discussed how helpful the question “did that remind you of anything?” was for him in that particular assessment, as well as in other assessments he has conducted (TT2, p. 12). In her written description, the third therapist I interviewed illustrated how she laid out this contextualizing goal of collaborative assessment for her client in an attempt to comfort and inform him about the process as they were arranging a time to conduct the assessment. She assured him that she would not be using the test results as a means to “figure him out” but rather they “would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context of his own experience” (T3WD, p. 1). She described how they put this into action following the TAT and noticed how “we both seemed to gather around these images and metaphors to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now” (T3WD, pp. 1-2). In our interview, we discussed how her client exclaimed that he could easily relate all of the TAT cards to his life, a moment she described as “rich,” (TT3, p. 7) and she later talked about how relating the testing materials to life situations helped her client unravel the “layers” of life by giving him insight into both the manifest and latent aspects of his presenting problems (TT3, p. 12).

The fourth therapist I interviewed provided examples of this experience with both of the clients he assessed, but we will only discuss his second client here. Like T2, T4 also supplied an example of this experience during his assessment with his second client in which he asked C5 if he could relate one of the TAT cards to his childhood (VS5, seg. 4). In our interview about his second client T4b talks about how the client’s ability to
relate the testing materials to his life would be severely limited if they did not discuss the findings, but instead “just a little stick figure on a piece of paper…ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there” (TT4b, p. 4). C5’s ability to relate something as simple as a stick figure that he drew to his life brought a whole new realm of meaning to that moment and to their assessment. T4b goes on to point out some of the specific content from C5’s life that he was able to relate to the testing materials and how “all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting… and just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process” (TT4b, p. 5). Later in our interview, T4b summed up these moments of the assessment when his client contextualized the results in his own life experience by saying “he moved me from abstractions and conceptions to just the fact of how he experienced his life…” (TT4b, p. 10). So his client’s ability to relate to the assessment results helped to keep T4b grounded in his client’s experience rather than getting too caught up in the theoretically abstract way some of the results are often presented.

This therapist experience is stated in a way that makes it appear rather obvious. Of course it will only help clients if they are able to relate the assessment results to their life world. But this notion is not currently as widely accepted as one might think. This therapist experience not only sheds some light on how helpful this step can be and how central it is to the practice of collaborative assessment, but it also lays out some particular ways this goal can be taken up and employed during the assessment and feedback sessions themselves. One could even base the decision of whether or not an assessment can be considered a success on this one aspect.
Discordant Feedback can be Helpful and Productive

The next therapist experience that could be viewed as helpful or enjoyable is actually the subset of another therapist experience that is considered difficult or unpleasant. Therefore, the therapist experience we will cover here focuses more on the latter part of the situation in which therapists had difficulty giving discordant feedback to their clients, but they were still able to find it helpful or useful anyway. This experience has the fewest reported instances of any of the experiences under this general category with only four examples. Even though these examples come from his work with two separate clients, all of the examples from this experience come from the same therapist. The idea of testing the waters to get a sense of how his client would respond surfaced in a situation where T4a offered his client a different perspective on some criticism he received from a professor regarding one of the papers he had turned in. T4a said, “I was wondering the same thing: how is he taking this?” and went on to explain how even though “it might have been the most challenging thing I ever said to him… I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that direction so I can get a sense of how things land” (TT4a, p. 7). He used the word “we,” insinuating that both he and his client would be able to learn something about C4’s coping style from that situation.

Another similar situation came up for this therapist-client pair during their assessment in which T4a pointed out to C4 that some of the test data described him as giving inconsistent responses right after C4 had just spoken about how much he prides himself on being a consistent thinker. T4a said he gave C4 this feedback with the intention of it being “destabilizing” for him, not only in order to see how C4 would
respond to it, but in order to create a situation where his client would feel “shaken up” a bit and then held by the therapist. He went on to explain how this “pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him” would better prepare him for therapy because that is what he tends to do with his clients in their work together. So giving the client discordant feedback not only helps the therapist get to know the client’s coping style better, but it can also help the client become familiar with the therapist’s style of therapy (and the therapist in general) better, as well as possibly increasing rapport by sending the message to the client that he can feel safe enough to allow himself to be vulnerable because if he falls he can trust that his therapist will be there to catch him.

The last example for this experience comes from T4b’s assessment with his second client. At one point, T4b told C5 that some of the test data said he could be “hypersensitive, hostile, and unforgiving.” T4b also qualified that feedback by pointing out how those are rather “strong words” and he wanted to run it by him to get his thoughts on them. In our interview, I asked T4b how it was for him to present such difficult feedback and he said he presumed he would have been the same way with any of his clients before admitting that using the word “hostile” was particularly bothersome for him. Yet, in my interview with C5 he responded to this moment of his assessment by saying he welcomed it because it gave him a chance to clarify himself more and help his therapist get to know him on a deeper level (TC5, p. 4), so it could certainly be considered helpful and useful in that sense. This specific therapist experience is important because the prospect of being put in a situation where one has to give difficult feedback to clients is probably one of the most anxiety provoking situations for therapists who conduct collaborative assessments. I would assume it is in some way reassuring to
be able to see the ways these potentially awkward and complicated moments of an assessment can ultimately turn out to be positive and productive by helping the therapist gauge the client’s coping style, give the clients an opportunity to clarify themselves more, and allow both therapist and client get a chance to know each other better.

**A Catalyst for Psychotherapy**

The next therapist experience under this general category is one that has two subcategories. We will discuss this therapist experience first before moving on to the two subcategories. This experience occurred when therapists pointed out how *collaborative assessment provides a good start to therapy* or acts as a *catalyst* for it. This experience was frequently mentioned, just behind the contextualizing therapist experience discussed above, with 21 examples. All of the therapists contributed examples of this specific experience. As with several of the previous therapist experiences we covered, T1 presented a quintessential statement that helps to capture the spirit of this particular experience:

> It almost never fails that due to all of these connections which we form in a given assessment, I leave the assessments with a sense of accomplishment and of having given my clients something to take with them. This is very gratifying. I tend to feel really good about what we have produced together, tend to think that the client has been surprised by all the new things he or she has learned about him/herself and tend to feel like the client now respects me and thinks he or she can get something out of therapy. I oftentimes think that the collaborative assessment is what first “hooks” the client on therapy and gives them hope that they can benefit from it. (T1WD, p. 2)

He talks about how giving the clients something they can take with them provides him with a sense of accomplishment, but he also feels that this instills a sense of respect for him from the client based on what they learned about themselves. This may also make
the client eager and hopeful about the upcoming work together, having already seen that they can work collaboratively in a productive way. It also draws the client into taking a more active role in their treatment in general. His notion that the assessment is what “hooks” the client into the therapeutic work and sets a collaborative tone for it is astute because that could be considered one, if not the primary, purpose for which assessment is intended besides helping the therapist get to know their client and vice versa.

Toward the end of our interview, T1 briefly veered away from discussing his assessment with C1 to talk about his assessment with the first client he ever worked with. He described how she presented with interpersonal problems and a general air of mistrust but his ability to conduct a good collaborative assessment helped her to “really commit to therapy” (TT1, p. 15). He went on to explain how in this way, the assessment experience can serve to answer the client’s common but often tacit questions “Should I be in therapy or shouldn’t I be in therapy?” and “Can I benefit from it or is it not something I can benefit from?” He also alludes back to a point he made in his written description by saying that “having gained insight right here and right now” in the assessment is more specifically what helps to answer those questions rather than making them wait until their psychotherapy sessions begin. At the end of this segment of our interview he added that he does “have faith that starting this way is a really good way to build a relationship” (TT1, p. 15). This idea of the assessment endowing the therapist with a sense of “faith” in the client and the work that can be done will come back into play later in the discussion of this experience.

During our interview, T2 said “I feel like maybe there was something that was put in motion by the assessment that maybe was unique in some way and it has continued to
influence the course of therapy…” (TT2, p. 13). So he portrays the assessment as generating a unique kind of energy or force that can carry positive momentum into the therapeutic work. T3 talked about assessment being a catalyst for therapy during our interview as she referred to the “out-there-ness” produced by the assessment process and how she felt “almost like I’m in the presence of a master story teller” as they shared a “moment of creative spontaneity” (TT3, p. 8). She then went back to describe the adventure or journey of assessment more in depth by saying how she had the sense that her client needed her support to get through where he was and go to places he wanted to go. In talking about this, one word in particular repeatedly presented itself for her: “The word “faith” kept coming up for me just even watching this, just faith, a total faith walk” (TT3, p. 10). This is the same word T1 used to describe parts of his assessment experience (TT1, p. 15) and it reminds me of the image of T3 and her client making their way through a fog and trusting in each other to know they will make it through. Later in our interview, T3 talks about how in the act of creating a metaphor during an assessment, “you are able to free it up because it is an invitation for more” (TT3, p. 12). She continues to elaborate on this idea by saying that specifically for the client it gives them “permission to create metaphors… it frees up the descriptive possibilities for therapy” (TT3, p. 14). So in this way, collaboration that takes place during the assessment process can spark clients’ creativity and not only invite them to exercise it more as their therapeutic work continues, but also have increased confidence in doing so.

So we can see from the examples under this therapist experience how collaboration during the assessment helps to “hook” the client into therapy, provides a direction for the shared journey by giving them something “out there” to work on,
enhances the client’s creative abilities, and brings a sense of “faith” that they can conquer the client’s struggles together. Nonetheless, we will continue to delve deeper into this therapist experience by taking a closer look at two more specific ways that these moments can be taken up.

**Preparing the Client for Therapy**

The first subcategory in this therapist experience of the assessment being a catalyst for therapy is the particular ways it prepares clients for therapy and shows them what to expect. There were seven examples of this experience provided by three of the four therapist participants. In both his written description (T1WD, p. 2) and during our interview (TT1, p. 8) T1 discussed the way collaboration during the assessment empowers clients by inviting them to take a more active role in their treatment. This effectively serves to provide a foundation for a working therapeutic alliance in therapy and tacitly but concretely sends the message to clients that they will be expected to remain in this active role while participating in ongoing therapy. T3 also speaks of the way this style of assessment “creates a culture of collaboration from the beginning where they don’t feel maybe so alone or under the microscope” (TT3, p. 2). Most clients usually arrive with feelings of isolation in some form, so rather than exacerbating this sense of alienation by making them feel like they are being observed from a distance or like pertinent information is being withheld from them, which could in effect hinder the development of a therapeutic alliance, collaboration works in the other direction to cultivate the alliance. T4a gives an example similar to these from his assessment with his first client (TT4a, pp. 3-4) but he also discusses another instance with this client that takes the experience in another direction. Under the therapist experience we discussed
earlier of having difficulty giving discordant feedback but still finding it useful, we touched upon a moment in which T4a intentionally gave C4 discordant feedback regarding his ability to think consistently for the purpose of shaking him up a bit:

I think what I see the effect of it being was kind of destabilizing him. Saying, “Here you see yourself as consistent but the report says the opposite.” So shaking him up a bit and then catching him by saying, “But it’s probably just because this machine doesn’t pick up the kind of nuances that you are attuned to.” I don’t know. Especially for such a short moment, it seems like it holds a lot. Kind of pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him. I think that is a good metaphor for it because both of those things are going to be going on in the therapy. (TT4a, p. 8)

T4 had a few of these “destabilizing” moments with each of his clients so we can see that it is a technique that he likes to employ. This example shows how a therapist was able to better prepare his client for therapy by bringing more of his own style into the process in order to give him more of an idea of what it will like to be work with him in particular.

From each of the examples under this subcategory we can see how collaborative assessment not only encourages clients to obtain and maintain an active role in their own treatment, but can also help them gain a better understanding of their therapist’s unique style and what to expect in the general process.

**Relationship Dynamics and Rapport Building**

The second subcategory of the therapist experience of viewing the assessment as a catalyst is when it provides insight into the relationship dynamics between therapist and client, builds rapport, and shows the therapist how to work with the client. So in the same sense that the last subcategory showed the client becoming acquainted with his therapist’s therapeutic style, this one works to help the therapist get a sense of how clients want their therapist to work with them. This subcategory has 25 examples coming from
all of the four therapists, making it the third most frequently mentioned experience in this entire general therapist category of being helpful or useful. During my interview with the second therapist we discussed a moment when he asked his client “a kind of throw away question” by wondering how it was for her to take one of the tests and was surprised at how extensive her response was. Due to the level of her expressed anxiety surrounding the test, T2 said he “made a calculated decision at a certain point that her reaction to this test is clearly significant clinically. So, I am going to run with this and like have a conversation with her about why this test is so threatening to her” (TT2, p. 7). His willingness to allow his client space to respond, veer away from the assessment agenda, and follow his client down an unexpected road turned out to be rewarding for him with regard to giving him a better understanding of the way his client experiences anxiety in her life. He made this point explicit shortly thereafter by pointing out how “this is really an example of something that has helped me diagnostically with her” (TT1, p. 7).

The third therapist that I interviewed made some statements in her written description that particularly help to capture the essence of this therapist experience. In discussing how the assessment served to “catalyze” their work, she said “it also strengthened the bonds of trust and alliance in our relationship as we find ways to communicate in this shared journey towards his understanding and healing” (T3WD, p. 2). She said that the assessment helped them find ways to communicate in more effective ways which in turn expedited their work toward his healing. Shortly thereafter she added that “I also developed an idea of what I could do to help him along the way” (T3WD, p. 2). She expounded on this notion during our interview when I asked her about it. She said, “I think it helped me in giving me the vehicle for kind of walking through this
process together. It showed me how…, he taught me how to work with him, in a way” (TT3, p. 14). T3 was able to glean from their collaborative interactions during the assessment not only his desires, but also how he wants her to be with him in a specific way in order to facilitate his own healing process. She also went on to briefly describe what one of these instances looked like for her and her client: “There’s times where I have been like “Well, here’s what’s happening.” There’s been other times when I have been like, “Well, can we keep going here?” But it really…, I think it helped us trust that process more, that it will be fruitful, that there is meaning to it” (TT3, p. 14). The assessment gave her not only a better sense of what C3 needs from her, but also helped her gauge where his threshold of tolerance was with certain issues so she could know whether or not it was okay to push him a bit more or back off and be more patient with him.

During their assessment T4b and C5 discussed C5’s DAP, particularly how he only used one small corner of the page to draw himself. He asked his client what he thought about that and C5 said it has to do with him not wanting to be noticed or wanting to disappear. T4a then asked him if that could relate to his often being quiet and reflects back to him that using the whole page to draw himself would be too loud and C5 agreed (VS5, seg. 2). This exchange reveals quite a bit about how C5 relates to the world and others, as well as how he would like others to relate to him. During my interview with T4b we talked about another part of C5’s DAP where he drew male and female stick figures and this began a conversation between them about gender. What came out of it was C5 talking about how he does not feel listened to, particularly by women, even though he often listens intently to others. As T4b and I discussed this he pointed out how
“he’s making these comments about just wanting to be listened to or he said for himself that he doesn’t give advice or interrupt people unless they ask for it directly so some of this was taken as tips on how to work with him” (TT4b, p. 3). This is a more concrete example of clients using the assessment to give therapists an idea of how they want to be handled. From this we can see that C5 wants someone who listens well, does not give advice, and will not interrupt him. I also pointed out to T4b how it could be seen in that segment that C5 may not respond as well to open-ended questions and he said, “Yea, for sure.” It is clear from the examples under this therapist experience that clients can explicitly or implicitly use the assessment to give their therapist a sense of how they feel they can be worked with most effectively. This indication also appears to be made possible or at least enhanced when clients are provided the space to be able to do so. This notion will be discussed further in another therapist experience that deals with allowing clients the space to respond to the assessment materials (12).

Creating Themes and Metaphors Early On

The next specific therapist experience under this general category is of therapists noticing the way collaborative assessment creates themes and metaphors, earlier than therapy or just talking would, which carry over into therapeutic work in a helpful or useful way. This therapist experience had the most examples (35) under this general category coming from all of the therapist participants. As we work our way through the examples, it will be easy to see how this experience relates back to the first therapist experience under this category dealing with collaborative assessment’s contextualizing ability (3) as well as to the previous one we covered regarding the way it can serve as a catalyst for ongoing therapeutic work (8). In the latter therapist experience, we took a
look at a portion of T1’s written description where he talked about the way giving clients the feeling that they can get something out of therapy is what first “hooks” them into it. What we did not emphasize as much in that statement is the part where he said it is “what we have produced together” that usually gives clients that feeling (T1WD, p. 2). Shortly thereafter, T1 commented briefly on how “fascinated” his clients often are with the “themes” that come out of their assessment. During our interview I asked T1 to elaborate on a part of his written description where he talked about making connections with his clients and he described how “amazed” he often is during assessments at how much useful material can come out of what might seem to others as small or “insignificant.” He summed up saying that “by starting at the little we can get at the big,” meaning that even small moments and connections that may seem irrelevant can often grant us access to larger meanings in the client’s life. This perspective helps to pave the way into this rich therapist experience of collaborative assessment creating helpful themes and metaphors.

The second therapist I interviewed supplied a good concise statement in his written description that embodies this experience: “There are several clients for whom their TAT responses have served as touchstones to which we return throughout the therapy” (T2WD, p. 1). After giving several examples of particular themes that arose out of collaboration during the assessment, T2 went on to say how “with other clients, we have often returned to the assessment throughout our work. For [C2], I feel that the assessment session mainly functioned as a way to elicit material at the beginning of our work that may not have come up otherwise” (T2WD, p. 2). He points out here that not only did the assessment help to bring up material that could be worked on in therapy and
possibly sooner than in therapy otherwise, but it also called attention to his client’s issues that may not have been brought up at all in therapy alone. Thus, the assessment could be seen as opening up the therapeutic work in a way that can make it more comprehensive in scope. During his assessment with his client, C2 became emotional at one point when discussing certain feedback and T2 not only comforted and contained her but at the same time reminded her that they did not have to work through that difficult material in the moment and assured her that they could take their time with it in their ongoing work together (VS2, seg. 6).

During my interview with T2, we discussed several of these themes that were brought up during the assessment with his client and that carried over into therapy in greater depth. At these various points during the interview he made several statements like, “I feel like what’s happening, it’s kind of interesting because I think this is something that has come up a lot later in therapy” (TT2, p. 5). After watching the portion of their assessment in which his client became emotional in response to some feedback about a TAT card, T2 noted that it is “a scene that we still talk about with the crying… We just talked about this in our last session…” which was about three months after their assessment (TT2, p. 9). Later in our interview T2 expressed how surprised he was at not realizing that a recent issue they had been working on regarding C2’s relationship with her boyfriend had come up earlier during their assessment: “It’s interesting that she already connected it to [her boyfriend] this early because that’s… and I hadn’t really thought about the whole thing with [her boyfriend] in terms of this card, but it makes a lot of sense looking back on it” (TT2, p. 10). This situation of having therapists notice that material they worked on with their clients later in therapy had roots in the assessment but
not realizing it until we went back and watched parts of the assessment in our interview occurred regularly.

The third therapist I interviewed appeared to get quite a bit out of her use of the TAT with her client as well. She explained that, “we were able to use this seemingly ambiguous card to specifically point to a metaphor that [C3] could work with in his life” (T3WD, p. 1). The metaphor she is referring to is the one produced by the blank #16 card which her client described as fog and they developed into the sun rising to burn off the fog to fit more with his coming to therapy. During our interview T3 talked further about this metaphor and how “that was like a dawning realization… he carried with it and had new ones and can refer back to that one to think about there he was when he came it” (TT3, p. 11). So not only could her client take this metaphor to continue to work with in therapy, but he could also use it later for comparative purposes to gauge the progress he has made during that work. T3 also talked in their assessment (VS3, seg. 5), in her written description (T3WD, p. 2) and several times in our interview about how the assessment supplied something tangible and “out there” for them to be able to grab hold of and work on together.

From the examples in this therapist experience we can see how the themes, metaphors, and areas of focus created by the assessment not only carry over into therapeutic work in useful ways, but also allow for further development and for comparisons to be made in order to measure progress. The assessment effectively generates and calls attention to these areas more quickly than therapy alone would. We could also see how therapists can use this aspect of the assessment to comfort their clients if they are feeling overwhelmed by the material presented to them by the assessment. We
will later see how this therapist experience relates to another one (16) in which the assessment or feedback session resembled psychotherapy.

**Allowing Space to Respond and Disagree**

The next therapist experience we will cover is when therapists *allowed space for the client to respond, disagree, and challenge the findings of the assessment and that turned out to be helpful or useful*. This was the second most frequent therapist experience under this category with 29 examples found in the data. These examples can be found in accounts provided by each of the therapists interviewed, but there is a good deal of overlap with other therapist experiences, especially the contextualizing one (3), so we will only focus on a few that capture this experience the best. We discussed how the first therapist always has the goal in an assessment to try to abstract a “way of living” for his client from the assessment materials. Yet, he said whenever this does not work for him the way he would like it to, “I will simply ask the client to tell me about his strategies and then proceed from that instead of my own observations” (T1 WD, p. 2). This shows tremendous trust in his client and the assessment process to allow the client to take the lead in such a way and point them in the right directions. This example serves to set the tone for this therapist experience in that we can see a clear shift in power being handed over to the clients. T1 provided an example of this early in his assessment with C1 when he asked his client if he had any questions about himself that he would like to try to answer or explore through the assessment and the client responded by touching upon several areas of his life that he would like to work on (VS1, seg. 1). This moment reveals how useful this shift can be and it also sends the message that the therapist is making
efforts to tailor the assessment to fit the client’s concerns rather than simply using it to serve whatever ends the therapist may deem to be important.

During our interview, T1 and I discussed a moment when he found it helpful to follow his client down a certain path rather than stick strictly to his own agenda. We watched a segment of their assessment in which his client pointed out that he had not given any sexual responses to the Rorschach and T1 said, “Why would he bring that up out of all the things he could bring up? So I thought that was probably something worth bringing up and exploring. It’s kind of an unprovoked denial…there are a lot of other responses that weren’t there” (TT1, p. 9). So not only allowing his client the space to respond in certain ways, particularly in denial of something, but also allowing both of them the freedom to pursue this avenue turned out to be potentially illuminating. The way in which T1 takes up this strategy as a more general approach to assessment was also expressed just a few moments before this in our interview. He said, “But here the results depend on them, you know. There is no result that ever really speaks on its own” (TT1, p. 8). The distinguishing point is made here that the collaborative assessor finds more value in the work done with the clients regarding the findings of their assessment rather than within the findings themselves. This idea is also expressed by the second therapist I interviewed. During our interview, we talked about how much he unexpectedly got out of the simple question “How did you find that?” regarding her experience of the Meyers-Briggs, not knowing how anxiety-provoking it had been for her. It appeared that discussing this moment in depth the way we did during our interview helped T2 come to an epiphany of sorts and make a statement that speaks to the essence of this therapist experience and collaborative assessment in general: “Maybe that’s some sort of snappy
way of summing up collaborative assessment: It’s what the client says about the test, not what the test says about the client.” (TT2, p. 7). Thus when an assessment is approached with a collaborative style its purpose evolves from extracting meaning from the test results alone to finding meaning that is co-created in the space where dialogue can take place between therapist and client about their understandings.

However, making room for this dialogical space during the assessment does not mean that it will only elicit agreeable responses from the clients. The fourth therapist I interviewed provided some examples of these instances from his assessments with both of his clients. When we talked about therapists having difficulty giving discordant feedback but still finding it useful (TE4a) we discussed a point at the beginning of his assessment with C4 where T4a inquisitively told his client that he seemed agitated and even though C4 denied this, making T4a feel that he had jumped the gun and misread his client, the interaction nevertheless turned out being productive (VS4, seg. 1; TT4a, p. 2). This example could surely be seen as falling under this therapist experience. During my interview with T4a, we watched and discussed a moment in his assessment with this same client that was reminiscent of T2’s example above in that a basic question turned out being evocative for his client. T4a said, “I noticed that he was on the edge of it and I said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot” (TT4a, p. 3). They were in the middle of discussing C4’s DAP and T4a could have easily breezed past this insightful moment in order to carry on with the assessment procedure. But instead T4a was attuned to his client in a way that enabled him to recognize that C4 was on the verge of finding something important for himself so he
incisively opened up an inviting space in which this could play out and it ended up being especially productive.

We can also see what this was like from the perspective of the client. While watching part of the assessment where T4a had given him some challenging feedback about possibly being “inconsistent” in his thinking, C4 was still willing to consider it because of the flexible way T4a presented it to him: “he opened up a space for me… he could have made it so I couldn’t have said that. He could have made it so I couldn’t go down that path or he could have said something that would totally turn me off and make me want to go inward” (TC4, p. 12). From this response it appears that clients may also appreciate when this type of space is made for them in the assessment.

There were a couple more examples in T4b’s work with his second client that show more concretely how this therapist experience can unfold even if the client is less agreeable. During their assessment, T4b asked C5 if a certain “approach” of his that came out in one of his DAP drawings related to other areas of his life. C5 responded by saying there are “a lot of contradictions in that” and gave several examples of how that approach both does and does not fit with him at various times (VS5, seg. 3), which helped T4b grasp his complexities in a better way. When we watched this part during our interview, T4b said, “just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process” (TT4b, p. 5). There was another point later in the assessment when C5 was talking about the physical abuse he endured as a child and T4b asked him if he ever wondered “Why me?” during that difficult time. C5 quickly corrected him, pointing out that he was too young to wonder such things and that those thoughts did not come until he was older (VS5, seg. 4). After watching this segment of
their assessment during our interview, T4b spoke about how this helped him relate to his client better: “I found it very, very helpful that…, just clarifying that developmentally you don’t ask a question like that. I thought what was really good” (TT4b, p. 6). We can see here how even when clients may disagree with the results, challenge them, or head off in another direction during the assessment, it can be beneficial for the therapist to allow them the space to do so.

It is not surprising that this therapist experience is mentioned so often because allowing space for clients to respond or disagree is a primary characteristic of collaborative assessment. These examples show how giving clients space in the assessment to have their own voice and a meaningful presence can often enhance the assessment experience for both therapist and client. Allowing room for this space in the assessment, even if it means introducing the possibility of encountering disagreeable or challenging responses from clients, is at the heart of collaborative assessment and this therapist experience helps to paint a more lively and accurate picture of it for us.

**Increasing Comfort and Involvement**

The next therapist experience that can be seen as helpful or useful is when therapists commented on the ways collaboration during the assessment or feedback session can help the client relax, feel more comfortable, involved, and empowered. There were 12 examples of this experience came from all of the therapists who participated. After saying in our interview how he thinks collaborative assessment “empowers the other person” (TT1, p. 8), T1 gives an example of the first client with whom he did an assessment and said that he got the sense that in general it was “very heartwarming for her” (TT1, p. 15). The examples of this experience from the second therapist I
interviewed relate more specifically to the way he felt his client found comfort from her anxiety about the tests through his explanations of them. During our interview he described how he was able to “put her mind at ease” by explaining “that there wouldn’t be any surprises and that she would be involved in the entire process… and that she would have some control over it” (TT2, p. 3). He was able to effectively help her relax by ensuring her of her involvement and restoring her sense of control over the situation. His client also attested to how T2’s explanations of the tests helped to ease and relax her (C2WD; TC2, p. 6).

While talking about the way in which collaborative assessment helps them work together to create something “out there” for her and her clients to work on, T3 said what allows this to occur is because there “is a mutual participation so that they can feel safe” (TT3, p. 2). She seems to imply here that there is something about the act of working collaboratively that helps clients not only feel comforted and empowered, but also secure and protected. The clients can feel cared for in the ways their therapist includes them in the process. The last example I will discuss under this therapist experience came from something T4b and I noticed together. As we were watching the last few segments of his assessment, we both noticed how much more relaxed and comfortable his client appeared later in the assessment compared to the earlier segments we watched. In the earlier segments he was noticeably quieter, sitting on the edge of his seat, and often looking out the window whereas in the later segments he was sitting back with his arms spread out on the couch, speaking louder, and even joking around a bit. In reaction to this, T4b said:

I guess I am just hoping that he was feeling understood and that made him feel a bit more relaxed, and also that he wasn’t having to perform. I think he got a taste that this was a dialogue, this was a conversation, this was a collaboration so he
didn’t... I’m just thinking that the tightness and the quietness is about doing something that someone else wants you to do – doing something for me. And I think that as he started to see that this was more open and collaborative that maybe he relaxed more. (TT4b, p. 8)

T4b speaks effectively to the way collaboration can not only help clients feel understood, but can also dissolve the notion that their participation will make them feel pressured to “perform” or produce things just to please their therapist. They can feel more relaxed and free to be themselves knowing that they are involved in the process, have some control over it, and that it is a joint venture. Even though this therapist experience can be seen as therapists making certain assumptions about the impact this kind of assessment can have on their clients, it does resonate with the clients’ experiences and speaks to how strongly these moments were felt by the clients.

**Skepticism Transforming into Appreciation**

The second to last therapist experience under this general category involves somewhat of a reversal in the sense that it occurred when therapists expressed feeling skeptical of the assessment process at first, but found it went better than they expected or was more productive in the end. There were 11 examples of this experience coming mostly from the first therapist I interviewed, but also from the third and fourth as well. In his written description, T1 discussed his concerns that the write up of his findings from the assessment might be “banal” and that the client would not get much out of them. But he also said, “I don’t think I have ever had the experience of a client who wasn’t somehow fascinated” by the conversation they had about the test results (T1WD, p. 2). During our interview he talked about how it gratifies and often surprises him when he and his client are able to get so much useful material out of what seems like so little. In regards to this he said, “That amazes me when we do succeed at getting at the big picture.
I even feel like they are a bit dazzled by it. They kind of feel like, “Wow, I never expected that.” And I feel that a lot, they are very impressed how we could get so much out of so little. And it’s cool to be the author of that, or the responsible party” (TT1, p. 14). So he frequently has the feeling that both he and his clients are pleasantly surprised by the end of their feedback session. Earlier in our interview he talked about a factor that tends to increase this sense of surprise for them: “I even think it enhances the enjoyment or the success feeling that it came out of the uncertainty. Because I go in there with the possible fear of failure, then when it’s a success it is kind of a pleasant surprise always” (TT1, p. 8). He posits here that the mere fact that they may have been feeling unsure, doubtful or skeptical about the assessment process going in increases their sense of fulfillment in the end. Thus it could be helpful or soothing for people entering the assessment with uncertainty or anxiety to know that it could possibly enhance their experience in the end. T1’s statement here also provides a nice summary of this therapist experience.

At the beginning of her written description, T3 talked about the reluctance she used to feel as a beginning clinician about having clients participate in an assessment as one of their first activities upon seeking treatment, but then how with time she came to “truly appreciate and respect the collaborative assessment process and the fruit it can bear” (T3WD, p. 1). Unlike T1, it appears that her sense of surprise regarding the assessment came in a more gradual sense with increased experience over time. Yet, during our interview she also talked about a specific moment during her assessment with C3 when she was hesitant about giving him one of the TAT cards out of fear that he might be “intimidated” by it or think she was trying to “trick” him, but she was ultimately
very pleased with the way he responded to the card and how they were able to work with it (TT3, p. 1). Their interactions surrounding this card ended up producing some of the most powerful and meaningful material of their entire assessment. This therapist experience is particularly helpful for assessors to be familiar with because it could serve to ease concerns they may have when preparing to conduct an assessment with clients they suspect might be difficult.

**Enjoyment and Appreciation of the Process**

The last specific therapist experience we will discuss as helpful or enjoyable is when therapists expressed different ways in which they enjoyed the collaborative assessment or were glad to be a part of it because it allowed them to do the kind of therapeutic work they want to do. Despite having only six examples and being tied for the second least number of examples with the first therapist experience under this category (2), examples of this experience were provided by all of the therapists. Being that this is the last therapist experience under this category, we have already discussed how several of these examples can also be used as examples of other therapist experiences in this same category. One such example comes from the first therapist I interviewed in the form of an extended version of the example he provided in his written description that was used for the previous therapist experience:

In general I also feel very proud to be part of a way of doing assessments which empowers and collaborates with the client rather than teaches, tells, and judges. It makes me feel good about myself since it gives me a way to live out humanistic values which I believe in and identify with. Through collaborative assessment I cement or reinforce an identity which I already have and which includes respect for the client as a fellow human being and not a “diagnosis” and discomfort with too much of a power distance between me as clinician and them as clients. This is
not a philosophical pride, but a very concrete sense throughout an assessment that I am one of the “good guys.” (T1WD, p. 2)

T1 identified himself here with a humanistic approach to psychotherapy so it makes sense that he would feel comfortable with this approach to assessment because it is more client-centered, but that is not to say others may not agree. He points out that this approach demands a certain respect for clients and levels the playing field of the assessment with regard to potential power differentials between therapist and client. At the end of this statement he emphasizes that his sense of pride is very concrete, which also fits well with the way collaborative assessment seeks to ground the client’s results in tangible experiences from their lived world. This example is one of the more cogent ones under this therapist experience. I asked T1 about this quotation from his written description during our interview and he talked more about how he likes the way this style of assessment helps him respect the dignity of the client and does not put him as much in a position of authority. He talked about working in a hospital and feeling uncomfortable being forced into a role of “teacher” or “master” who views clients as “lesser” or “screwed up” and having to “solve” their problems for them or “fix” them. He said during those moments he felt a certain “sense of distaste” for it and “like I’m not being true to what I believe in” (TT1, p. 15). It is easy to see here how he felt like this approach to assessment fit very well with his personal treatment style and how he also felt proud to be doing it.

Under the therapist experience we discussed earlier of allowing clients to respond in challenging ways (12), we discussed a “snappy” quote from T2 that embodies that experience when he said “It’s what the client says about the tests not what the test says about the clients.” Following immediately after that point in our interview, T2 went on to
say, “In that moment I was very grateful for the approach that we were trained in.” He explained this by pointing out that if he did not have the freedom to start a conversation about those particular test results they would not have had such a meaningful moment as they did. He also added that even looking back on it he doesn’t know what other options he would have had for approaching that potent moment of their assessment (TT2, p. 7). Even though we did not discuss it as such, I would assume that he would have simply moved right past it and missed a golden opportunity.

During my interview with T3 we discussed how “excited” and “invigorated” she was to be part of what she called “an innate creative process” and she went beyond that to say how “exciting doesn’t cover it. It’s really an honor.” She clearly felt privileged to be doing assessments this way. She added that it is like sitting in the presence of a master painter as they work, but clarified that it is “not in a distant, removed way” because they mutually participate in the process (TT3, pp. 8-9). We can see from these examples that therapists were not only able to recognize the usefulness of collaborative assessment, but that each of them in some way or another could also identify with this approach and were proud, honored or grateful to be conducting assessments in that manner.

This brings us to the end of this largest general category of therapist experiences. The mere fact that the majority of therapist experiences of collaborative assessment could be viewed as immediately helpful or enjoyable speaks powerfully in and of itself. But it is more in the particular ways they found this style of assessment to be helpful or useful that was captured in each specific therapist experience where we can gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of their experiences and fuller appreciation of the ways this approach can prevail in spite of inevitable moments of difficulty and struggle. We
will now move on to discussing the next general category of therapist experiences which give voice to some of the more difficult moments of collaborative assessment (see Table 3.8).

**Therapist Experiences as Difficult or Unpleasant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.8 – Therapist Experiences as Difficult or Unpleasant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 – Difficulty giving discordant feedback. (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – Not enjoying or liking collaborative assessment because there is too much to manage and remember or the therapist is more “write-up” oriented. (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – Concern that the assessment might be “artificial,” a negative distraction, or an interruption in therapeutic work. (6)</td>
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</table>

When choosing to pursue the clinical realm of psychology, one usually has some expectation that there will be a variety of challenges and struggles that he or she will face along the journey into the profession. This general category sheds light on what some of those areas could be when conducting collaborative assessments. However, it is worth noting that less than a third of the number of therapist experiences that fit into the previous category were found to fit into this one.

**Difficulty Giving Discordant Feedback**

The first specific experience that falls under this category is therapists discussing moments when they found difficulty giving discordant feedback to their clients. This therapist experience is in the middle with regard to the number of examples (8) found in the data – one therapist experience under this category has more two examples and the
other therapist experience has two fewer. This specific experience also leans more
toward the “difficult” rather than the “unpleasant” side of this category. Examples for
this experience came primarily from two of the four therapists. In his written description,
T1 talked about being “very nervous” during his assessment with this particular client
because some of the tests indicated that C1 had “certain narcissistic trends” and he felt
ambivalent about whether or not to share this feedback with his client. He described the
situation during the feedback session where, “As I was reading my themes to [C1] I
found myself skipping the more uncomfortable data from the Rorschach in order to not
make him feel hurt or defensive” (T1WD). Simply not sharing difficult feedback with
the client is certainly one route the therapist can take. T1 clearly did so in order to try to
protect and care for his client, but it is probably safe to assume that this move also served
to do away with the same anxiety most therapists feel when they are faced with the
challenge of delivering tough pieces of assessment feedback to their clients.

We saw earlier how T1 uses the client’s willingness to agree with his feedback as
a gauge for success so giving his client some feedback that he had a strong possibility of
disagreeing with would run the risk of making it feel like a failure to him. T1 spoke
about this during our interview after we watched a segment from his assessment in which
C1 disagreed with him: “It seemed like…, that he wasn’t really buying into it. You
know, I was putting out suggestions there and he was shooting down the first suggestion,
“I was not defensive,“ and to the second suggestion he was saying, “I cry more than most
guys.” So, in a sense it was kind of a failure, I guess I thought of it like that” (TT1, p. 6).
This made me wonder if the weight T1 placed on his client’s acceptance of feedback
increased his own anxiety about sharing feedback and may have him consider keeping it
to himself. It also made me wonder if things might have gone differently if T1 had seen these moments as opportunities to challenge his clients and give them an opportunity to better clarify themselves – as we saw in several interactions between T4 and each of his clients.

Later in our interview, a similar moment presented itself as T1 and I watched a different video segment from his assessment. He said he remembered “debating” for a while at this point because there was a difficult but also “extremely important point” he wanted to bring up regarding his client’s use of anthropological themes in his defensive style but he was struggling with how to phrase it. He rhetorically pondered, “How do you say to somebody, “You seem to be extremely defensive and to use cultural references in a way to impress the people that you are with and be distant from your emotions?” So, I remember, I took a chance” (TT1, p. 12). He goes on to say how he went against the “comfortable solution” of “ignoring” it and brought it up. We discussed how C1 did not appear to “take it in,” opting instead to remain on a more “intellectual plane.” Though we did not characterize it as such during our interview, I can imagine that despite his client’s reluctance to agree with T1’s feedback, it probably gave him a fair amount of insight into C1’s style and how entrenched in it he might be. Nonetheless, what T1 said here calls attention to one of the major predicaments therapists encounter when considering ways to give difficult feedback: how to word or phrase the feedback in a way that makes it more palatable or more likely to be received well by their clients.

The third therapist I interviewed encountered this same obstacle and in talking through it during our interview seemed to offer somewhat of a resolution. This moment came as T3 was in the midst of talking about the metaphor she developed with her client
of his being in a fog, “bracing against” the possibility of an impending car accident, and not wanting to be “plowed into.” After noticing this she described her ensuing approach: “So you are extra gentle and extra careful, but not like, you know, “Okay, forget it, we won’t do it.”… You just touch it and move on. Or you don’t touch it even, just kind of move around it…. you feel that viscerally when there is somebody that is like, “NnnNnn, No”’” (TT3, p. 13). From this it appears T3 favors a testing the waters kind of approach in which the therapist circles or gently brushes up against the delicate area and pays close attention, in a bodily sense, to the client in order to guide her as to whether it is okay to continue instead of avoiding it all together. This approach seems to offer a sort of compromise between simply laying it out there and avoiding it all together. Assessors can obviously situate their approach anywhere along this spectrum based on how comfortable they feel in any given assessment situation, but it seems that T3 would suggest trying it out and following your intuition based on the client’s reaction. Either way, this therapist experience speaks to a pivotal dilemma that most therapists encounter at some point when conducting assessments or psychotherapy in general.

**Much to Manage, Remember, and Tend to**

The next therapist experience under this general category leans more to the unpleasant rather than the difficult aspects of conducting assessments. It is when therapists claimed to *not enjoy or like collaborative assessment because there was too much to remember, manage and keep track of or because they were more “write up”-oriented and wanted to get it over with*. This therapist experience was the most frequently mentioned in this category with 10 examples from three of the four participating therapists. In the same way that the last therapist experience leaned more
toward the “difficult” side of this general category, this one tends to lean more toward the “unpleasant” side. In his written description, T1 talked about how, “In a typical assessment, I tend to feel stressed and a little overwhelmed by all the things I need to keep track of” (T1WD, p. 1). He subsequently explained what some of these things are: not only having to maintain a steady grasp on how to administer the tests in the appropriate manner, but also having to pay attention to the comportment, demeanor, and physical presentation of the client in order to fill out required sections of the written report. He elaborated on this during our interview saying that on one hand his attention is preoccupied by “a tedious concern with practicalities” and on the other hand “I also have to pay attention to the process” or what goes on between him and his client, knowing in the back of his mind that he will need enough information from both of these areas to write up the assessment (TT1, pp. 2-3). As our interview continued, he seemed to focus more on the former than the latter. He went on to examples of all the papers he has to take with him into the actual assessment and keep track of (TT1, p. 7).

The second therapist I interviewed also spoke to his own misgivings regarding these practical aspects of the assessment process, saying how “the assessment is such a nuisance just in terms of the amount of work it creates… It’s just a pain in the ass to write that report. For some reason the paperwork is what I have the hardest time doing” (TT2, p. 14). Going back to T1, however, he also gave a specific example of how a few interactions with his client were particularly trying because of his concern that they would not produce useful data for his assessment report. He discussed how his “frustration” surrounded his attempts to “get something down on paper” regarding C1’s presenting problem, but his client was continuously “stating [his] problems vaguely.”
Even when C1 did point to problem areas in more explicit and concrete ways, “he was kind of undoing the initial statements” by presenting them in ways that seemed to say, ‘I am this but I am also not it’ (TT1, p. 5). It is easy to see how this situation could be frustrating for T1, but it could also be viewed as informative of C1’s style in that he may not want to be limited or tied down in certain ways, thereby missing opportunities to transform these moments into something useful that he could include in his written report.

As we watched some more of these difficult moments during our interview, T1 said, “I’m actually thinking when I see this that I don’t enjoy doing assessments.” After saying more about how tedious and frustrating he often finds them to be he added, “I’m just not free, to just say, “Let’s explore,” because I know I’m going to have to write something up” (TT1, p. 11). He implies here that the assessment can be restrictive for him in that he feels he may not be able to pursue possible avenues of interest with his client because there are certain questions that he must answer in his write up and he must get those answers within a limited amount of time. After expressing similar concerns, the last therapist I interviewed offered a small suggestion that he felt might be able to alleviate some of these tensions: “I think it would be more interesting to have things spread out a little more… It allows you to follow a certain line of inquiry” (TT4b, p. 11). His thinking here seems to be that if assessors were allowed to give their clients tests across several sessions they would have more freedom to follow their clients in different, potentially productive, directions. The only rebuttals I would have to this suggestion would be that these directions can still be explored during the ensuing therapeutic work and spreading the assessment out might infringe on the client’s desire to simply talk.
about their problems. We already saw that this latter notion was a concern for clients and we will see with the next specific therapist experience that it is a concern for therapists as well.

**Concerns that the Assessment may be Distracting or an Interruption**

The last therapist experience that could be considered difficult or unpleasant is *concern that the assessment might be a negative distraction, an interruption of therapeutic work, seen as “artificial” in some way, and having the impression that clients would rather just talk about their problems*. This therapist experience has the least number of examples in this general category, but these examples were drawn from the accounts of three out of the four participating therapists. In his written description, the second therapist I interviewed said, “I also worried that it was a distraction from our work together, an interruption in the rhythm that our work had assumed. It felt artificial” (T2WD, p. 2). This statement is probably the best example of the ones that characterize this experience. Yet, when I asked him to elaborate on this notion later during our interview, particularly what he meant by “artificial,” he had difficulty doing so. However, he did go on to question whether he would actually make use of assessments in his private practice and wondered if he could obtain the same material just by doing therapy with his clients (TT2, p. 13). In another written description, T4b discussed his regrets for not having provided his client with more warning about the fact that their next session would involve an assessment because C5 “seemed disappointed when I let him know that was the plan,” appeared to reluctantly drudge his way through the tests, and eventually said, “most of that stuff I’ll tell you anyway” giving T4b the impression that his client felt it was unnecessary (T4bWD).
Following from what T4b observed with his client, the third therapist I interviewed said in her written description that as a first year student she “often felt apologetic about the amount of what seemed to me to be a great deal of ambiguous and, at times, irrelevant material that I was asking my clients to work through when they clearly had other things they wanted to talk about” (T3WD, p. 1). Like T4b, she also got the sense that her clients would rather just talk about their problems. This statement seems to echo what T2 said about feeling that it was a distraction or interruption. When I asked T3 about this during our interview she said that when she first started doing assessments she felt like “this goes against my natural tendency which is to get out of the way and allow them to expunge or allow them to release whatever has built up for that initial meeting… the idea of me having an agenda, which would usurp whatever they had, was uncomfortable for me at first.” She eventually goes on to talk about how with time she was able to find more value in conducting assessments with her clients, but before moving on she clarified a bit by saying she didn’t have an issue with the assessment process itself so much, but more with the timing of it. She said she often found herself wondering why she had to conduct the assessment right away when the client first came in and if it might not be better to wait a while. This appears as though it could be a plausible and practical suggestion, but I also wonder if doing so might take away from what the therapist can quickly gather about the client’s style in order to build a stronger working alliance, especially with the way clients can use the assessment to convey to their therapist certain ways they would like their therapist to work with them, as we saw in the therapist experiences from the last general category. I also wonder if delaying the assessment until later on in the therapy might only make it feel more like a distraction or
interruption in the work once it already has a certain degree of momentum. On the other hand, I have also heard of therapists using an assessment in the middle of therapy as a means to jump start or reenergize the work when it feels like the work is becoming somewhat stagnant or they feel like they are spinning their wheels. I have employed this strategy myself. Nonetheless, despite the apparent usefulness of collaborative assessment this still appears to be a legitimate concern for therapists about the assessment process.

This brings us to the end of this relatively short general category of difficult or unpleasant therapist experiences. In it we were able to take a closer look at an area of the assessment process that clients find challenging, another that is more unpleasant but rather necessary, and one that could be considered to be a bit of both. Because this category deals with some of the more challenging aspects of conducting assessments it also inherently draws our attention toward possible paths that could be taken in efforts to improve the process. This was evident in the way most of the therapist experiences discussed here also included suggestions for further development and refinement of assessment administration. This category also provides future therapists in training with a sense of what some of the challenges they could face when conducting assessments might be. It is now time to move on to the last general category of therapist experiences whose purpose, because of the fact that it’s experiences do not carry any value judgment with them, can primarily be seen as giving assessors a closer depiction of collaborative assessment that is purely experiential in nature (see Table 3.9).
Table 3.9 – Therapist Descriptions of the Assessment Process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wanting to challenge or push the client with discordant feedback. (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Some testing materials (projective) are more conducive to collaboration than others (objective). (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Collaborative assessment gives a “snapshot” of the client (“what-it-is-like-now-ness”) in a helpful or useful way. (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Offering alternative explanations or interpretations following the client’s correction or input. (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Therapist sets the frame by explaining the tests, assessment, or feedback process. (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Assessment or feedback session resembles therapy or becomes therapeutic; therapist expresses empathy toward the client. (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Therapist is impressed with their client’s response, feedback, or insight. (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Therapist collaborates during the administration of the tests. (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tailoring the assessment to the client based on prior meetings by choosing certain assessment materials to use with them. (6)</td>
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As with the descriptive general category for client experiences, this parallel general category for therapists differs from the previous ones in giving us a better idea of what it is like to experience a collaborative assessment from the perspective of a therapist or assessor without having inherent judgments about that experience. It should be noted that due to the descriptive quality of these experiences, they can often be viewed more as “practices” or actions taken by the therapists than experiences. Other similarities this therapist category shares with its comparable client category is that it too has an exception to its non-evaluative nature through an experience that shows a preference of one type of test over another and it can also be seen as providing an answer to the first interview question I asked (What was going on here?) rather than the second (How was it for you?), which was covered by the other more value-laden categories we just discussed.
However, this therapist category differs from the descriptive client category in that it has over twice as many specific experiences than the descriptive client category. Given that the other two general categories that can be seen as analogous to each other with regard to therapist and client experiences (helpful/enjoyable, difficult/unpleasant) each had about the same amount of specific examples as its counterpart, I wondered why in this category there would be so many more therapist experiences compared to client ones? I figured this could have to do with two factors. First, it seemed that the therapist participants were generally somewhat more open to discussing and elaborating on the descriptive aspects of the assessment process than the clients were. It also appeared as though they often felt compelled to explain or justify their reasoning and motives behind things they did during the assessment when we went back and watched segments of it during our interviews. Second, the fact that I am a therapist myself and have been trained in a collaborative approach to assessment may have been a factor. I feel that my background led me to be more attuned to the therapists’ perspectives, and I may have been more likely than I was with client accounts to notice subtle nuances in their experiences and deem them to be noteworthy. I will discuss this possibility further in my section on reflexivity in the last chapter. But, as would be expected, these two factors showed up in the specific therapist experiences under this general category in that some of them consist of the therapists explaining their own actions and motives, some involve the therapists’ observations of the assessment process itself, and others are my own observations regarding either the therapists’ actions during the assessment or the assessment process itself.
Using Discordant Feedback to Challenge Clients

The first therapist experience under this general category is when therapists wanted to challenge or push their clients with discordant feedback. This experience has the second fewest number of examples in this category, with only five examples coming from two of the four therapist participants. I included it because it seemed to be something that would resonate with many assessors when they are challenged to discuss difficult feedback with their clients. In his written description, T1 said, “I thought about whether or not to push him a bit more, but ultimately could not bring myself to do it” (T1WD, p. 2). Even though he ended up deciding not to go through with presenting his client with discordant feedback in this particular situation, here T1 speaks to a common moment of deliberation for many assessors and therapists. During our interview, however, T1 gave a contrasting example in which he did decide to give C1 some difficult feedback: “I had kind of been debating, I mean think it was an extremely important point to bring out… So I remember, I took a chance…” (TT1, p. 12). In the end T1 felt that his client was unable to “take in” the feedback, but it appears as though the deciding factor for T1 had more to do with how strongly he felt about that particular piece of feedback because of its potential relevance for C1 rather than necessarily wanting to challenge his client.

On the other hand, T4 reported situations with each of his clients in which he intentionally challenged them with difficult feedback for different reasons. In discussing one instance with his first client where he had just given him some feedback that “may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him,” T4a explained that he did so in order to “get a sense of how things land” (TT4a, p. 7). From this interaction, T4a
hoped to gain a better idea of how his client responds to adverse situations and what his tolerance for complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity might be. In another exchange with the same client, T4a talked about wanting to push C4 a bit and “destabilizing him” in order to give him a feeling for what their ensuing therapeutic work would be like. He said in effect it was like “pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him” (TT4a, p. 8). In a way this served the same purpose as the other challenge we just discussed because it helped T4a see the way his client dealt with things, but it also worked to prepare his client for his specific style of conducting therapy in which T4a would be perpetually thrown off balance or pushed to the edge of comfort and then be re-stabilized by their holding and containing relationship. So from these examples we can see the ways therapists may seek to challenge or push their clients in various ways with assessment feedback in order to convey crucial information to them, gauge their clients’ coping strategies in dealing with struggles, and foreshadow what their approaching therapeutic work will look like. This therapist experience helps us to see not only how therapists might grapple with this particular dilemma, but also highlights some of the reasons that therapists may choose to intentionally challenge their clients despite the precariousness it invokes.

**Some Tests can be more Collaborative than Others**

The next therapist experience under this general category occurred when therapists noticed that *some assessment or testing materials are more collaborative than others*. Even though this specific therapist experience seems rather obvious and has the fewest number of examples in this category, the examples came from three of the four therapist participants and it was ultimately kept as a therapist experience for comparative
purposes with some of the client experiences. During my interview with the first therapist it seemed that he was making comments in this direction so I asked him about it more directly and he said some tests “are less about taking knowledge and seeing if it fits and more about taking a very unstructured situation and then seeing how this particular person goes about posing some structure on it” (TT1, pp. 13-14). The way T1 talks here about learning more about clients by allowing them to arrange, make sense of, or bring order to some testing materials rather than imposing structure on them or fit them into predetermined spaces harkens back to what we discussed earlier with regard to the way a collaborative approach in itself shifts the balance of power in an assessment to include client. In his written description, T2 talked about using the TAT with his client because “she seemed especially open and articulate” so this led him to believe this test “might especially yield a lot of material” (T2WD, p. 1). This example will be explored further in the last experience under this category that is devoted exclusively to times when therapists chose certain tests to tailor the assessment more to their clients, but it is worth noting here that T2 believed his client could make more use of a projective test because she generally had a more interactive and engaging style.

T2 spoke more directly to this therapist experience during our interview. He started off by saying, “I think you can be collaborative with all forms of assessment,” making an important observation that collaborative efforts need not be relegated to use with only certain testing materials. However, he does go on to say “it’s easier to be collaborative in the discussion portion if the test is in some sense collaborative” and explains that it is somewhat more difficult to collaborate on objective tests because clients take it by themselves and he scores it by himself as well (TT2, p. 2). It would
seem natural that if the test itself calls for more interaction between therapist and client it
would set the stage for a more collaborative relationship in both the assessment and
therapy. This therapist experience mirrors some of the clients’ experiences from the first
part of this chapter, and these correlations will be developed further in the next chapter.

**Offering a “Snapshot”**

The next specific therapist experience under this general category is when
therapists described the way collaborative assessment gives a “snapshot” of the client,
allows access to “what-it-is-like-now-ness,” and how that can be helpful or useful.
Seven examples were found in two of the four therapist accounts. This experience could
in a sense be considered another exception to the descriptive quality of this category
because part carries a commentary on collaborative assessment’s value in the form of
utility, but I decided to include this experience here rather than in the second general
therapist category because it is primarily descriptive and has an evaluative aspect as a
secondary or ex post facto characteristic. The phrasing of this experience shows how
closely it stays to the exact language used by the participants and this aspect brings an
increased richness and groundedness to its presentation. During his assessment with his
client, the second therapist I interviewed described to her the way he views the
assessment as taking a “snapshot” of where she is in her life right now (VS2, seg. 4).
When we discussed this moment during our interview, T2 clarified that he described it as
an “incomplete snapshot,” emphasizing that he intentionally wanted to let her know that
he would be understanding the results that way in order to try to allay her anxiety about
being limited by the tests, and he observed that in response to this “she laughed and that
seemed to calm her down a bit” (TT2, p. 6). His client confirmed this during our
interview as well saying, “it eased my mind a bit about the tests, especially when he said that it is a snapshot of how you are right now” (TC2, p. 6).

In her written description, T3 said she explained to her client how they would be using the assessment to create images and metaphors that would help both of them have a better understanding of “what he was experiencing at the present time in his life” and “to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now” (T3WD, pp. 1-2). She reemphasized and elaborated a bit on this notion at one point during our interview (TT3, p. 4) but also went on to provide a more in depth version of this concept:

But there is a whole quality of what his life world was like. What it is like to be him and what he is experiencing right now, or when that was. This feeling of, “This is happening,” there is something very real and tangible, visceral. And in the moment you can feel it, you can feel all of that stuff sitting with the person. So that the assessment kind of creates this whole atmosphere of, what’s-it-like-now-ness. Because you are asking me what’s it like, and it’s this now-ness. So it’s cool. And all of that stuff is not something you can put your finger on, but it’s just atmospheric. (TT3, p. 7)

From this we can see the way T3 values the assessment process for its ability to put the therapist in touch with the client’s world at the particular point in time when they chose to seek treatment. In doing so, collaborative assessment also sets up a contextual atmosphere that puts both of them on the same page so that they can begin their journey from the same point together. These examples show that collaborative assessment can be used to not only comfort the client but also bring the therapist much closer to what the client is experiencing in the moment. This therapist experience could be seen as related to, or even a subset of, another therapist experience we will discuss shortly when assessors set the frame for the assessment session by explaining the assessment, tests, and
feedback (15). However, it seemed distinct, relevant, and special, qualifying it to be considered a specific therapist experience.

The therapist experiences we have covered under this general category thus far have dealt with the observations therapists had about their own motivations or the assessment process itself. We will now begin discussing a string of therapist experiences that come more from my own observations about actions taken by the therapists during the assessment and ones regarding the assessment process as well. During my analysis, it occurred to me that that I may have paid more attention to some of these experiences because of the comparisons that can be made between some of them and the material in my literature review. These comparisons will be explored in the next chapter.

**Offering Alternate Interpretations based on Collaboration**

The next therapist experience is that therapists *offered alternative explanations or interpretations following their clients’ input or corrections*. This experience is tied for the third most often mentioned under this category with 11 examples coming from each of the four therapist participants. In his assessment with C1, T1 gave his client some difficult feedback about being intellectual, guarded, and emotionally distant. C1 disagreed with this (VS1, seg. 2) and instead of obstinately sticking with those results, T1 followed where his client appeared to be going and reflected it back to him by saying how he is “in touch with his negative feelings” and “painful introspection.” His client seemed more willing to take up this perspective and work with it (VS1, seg. 3).

An example that is similar to this one comes from the second therapist’s interactions with his client during their assessment. At one point they are discussing C2’s conflicts between her “conservative side” and her “wild side” and T2 suggested that a
focus of their therapeutic work could be to help her explore her curiosities about these parts of herself without allowing her anxiety or “neurotic factors” to interfere. C2 appeared to have some difficulty taking this feedback in so T2 made a reference to characters from the popular TV show “The Simpsons,” comparing Bart Simpson to her wild side and Lisa Simpson to her conservative side. C2 seemed to not know how to take this up when T2 first started in this direction, but she eventually responded with emphatic accord by saying, “Exactly,” and applying it to other parts of her life like her relationship with her boyfriend (VS2, seg. 7). When we discussed this part of their assessment during our interview, T2 said he could tell that she had difficulty absorbing that first bit of feedback so he tried to rephrase it in a way to make it “a bit more accessible” for her. After discussing how earlier in the assessment she had mentioned being “saturated with the media” and this could have also contributed to his decision to employ this comparison, T2 pointed out how nonetheless, “it did seem to move the conversation along in some way” (TT2, p. 10-11). Like T1, T2 shifted his interpretation in order to make it more palatable for his client, thus enabling further work to be done in that direction.

The fourth therapist I interviewed provided examples of his willingness to follow both of his clients in different ways. In his assessment with his first client, T4a gave a couple of examples of this experience in the way he backed off of a couple of interpretations that C4 showed resistance toward and instead joined his client in his questioning of the results in order to maintain their exploration of those points (VS4, seg. 1, 6). With his second client, T4b had a few moments where C5 more directly challenged his interpretations, gave examples to the contrary, and because of T4b’s willingness to
follow his client down these alternate paths he was able to arrive at a deeper appreciation for where C5 was coming from. This occurred during moments we already covered when discussing if C5 ever asked “Why me?” regarding the abuse he experienced as a child (VS5, seg. 3) and when discussing the various ways he can be “inconspicuous” sometimes but also “show off” at other times (VS5, seg. 4). These examples show the different ways therapists were willing to meet their clients where they were during the assessment, rephrasing feedback to make it easier for their clients to hear, and follow the clients’ lead when feeling compelled to do so in order to conjure useful therapeutic material that was co-created rather than unilateral. It goes without saying but is worth noting that none of these moments would have been possible if these assessors had not taken a collaborative approach to their assessments. This therapist experience also relates to another therapist experience we will discuss shortly in which moments during the assessment resembled psychotherapeutic work (16).

Setting the Frame with Explanation

The next therapist experience is that therapists helped to set a frame for the assessment by providing explanation regarding the assessment process, tests and feedback. This experience is the second most frequent in this category with 13 examples. Even though examples were found in the accounts of each of the four participating therapists, we will focus primarily on three of the accounts by giving preference to the ones that best characterize this experience. It is easy to see how the example from T2 of the way collaborative assessment gives an “incomplete snapshot” of the clients also fits into this experience (VS2, seg. 4; TT2, p. 6). In another instance with his client T2 encouraged C2 to think of the tests as “points of departure for conversation” rather than
as a “crystal ball.” After going on to explain that the tests are “just tools for bringing up certain issues that we maybe wouldn’t get to otherwise,” he sought to assure her by adding, “You will be involved in the entire process” (VS2, seg. 1). From this we can see that he is encouraging collaboration, discussion, and interaction from her but at the same time trying to reduce her fear about being limited by the tests. During our interview T2 said he wanted to show his client what to expect so there wouldn’t be any surprises, give her a sense of control over the process, and let her know “that I wasn’t sort of somehow reading her mind or gaining some sort of control over her,” all in the hopes of making her feel more at ease (TT2, p. 3).

Similar to this example, T3 said in her written description that even as they were arranging a time to conduct the assessment she took time out to explain to her client that she would not be using the tests as a way to “figure him out from the test results, but rather that we would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context of his own experience” (T3WD, p. 1). During our interview, T3 discussed how it is expected for a person to feel anxious about being evaluated and so in turn she felt it was “important for me to sort of change the tone of it ahead of time so it feels different” (TT3, p. 3). Thus her explanation was intended to not only reduce C3’s anxiety, but also helped to put her and her client on the same page with regard to the expectations each of them would have about what they would get out of the assessment. During my interview with T4b, we discussed a moment during his assessment in which he pointed out to his client that the test results are not “set in stone” and explained that their discussion about the results is what matters more to him. T4b earnestly talked about how his explanation was not only intended to give his client a sense of freedom, but also
to gain some assurance that the tests were not as painstaking as C4 anticipated they might be. T4b said he ultimately sensed from this interaction that it provided an atmosphere that was “good enough” for both of them and allowed them to move ahead (TT4b, p. 9).

We can see from these examples how all of these therapists used their explanations to comfort or ease their client in some way by reducing their fears about being reduced, limited, judged or fixed by the test results or assessment process. The therapists also used their explanations to let their clients know that their participation would be expected as part of the process so they would not be surprised when these moments occurred.

**Assessment Resembling Therapy**

The next therapist experience under this general category occurred when parts of the assessment or feedback session resembled therapy or became therapeutic, specifically when it involved things like empathy, normalizing, comforting, and mirroring on the part of the therapist. This was the most often mentioned therapist experience under this category with 26 examples coming from three of the four therapists who participated. The strength of this experience points to one of the core characteristics of collaborative assessment in general being that it effectively blurs the line between assessment and psychotherapy. There are several therapeutic examples from T2’s assessment with his client in which he shows empathy toward his client, reflects back to her, and explores with her (VS2, seg. 4, 7, 9). There is one segment that is particularly therapeutic. During one part of their assessment C2 was discussing her family dynamics, specifically her relationship with her parents. At one point, T2 pointed out that she made a “key insight” and C2 began to cry. In response to this T2 comforted and contained her but at the same time was encouraging by reminding her that they could do further work in this area.
during their ongoing work (VS2, seg. 6). When we discussed this moment from their assessment during our interview, T2 said:

I saw that we had touched on something really powerful and I guess I wanted to tell her on the one hand I thought that this was something that was very important that I wanted to keep talking about. I didn’t want the tears to sort of foreclose the conversation about it. But I also wanted her to know that because it was distressing for her I was sensitive to that and we weren’t going to go too fast. You know, that we were going to take it one step at a time and I wasn’t going to push her if she wasn’t able to handle it. (TT2, p. 9)

T2 recognized that even though this moment of their assessment was emotionally charged, it was also pregnant with potential for insight and meaning as well. He wanted to contain her difficult emotions but also send the message that although he wants to protect her, make her feel safe, and not make her feel overwhelmed, they do not have to run away from or completely avoid those feelings when it could be beneficial to explore them. He showed her that he could meet her where she was and was willing to move at her pace, which in turn endowed her with a sense control over the situation. During my interview with C2, she spoke to how she was comforted by, and appreciated, being given the power to move at her own pace (TC2, p. 11). When I asked T2 how he thought this moment in their assessment turned out he said, “It seemed to work” and then went on to talk about their ongoing work together, saying, “But in general this is kind of how I am with her when she cries. At this point, I feel like we have a strong enough relationship that I can be there and contain it but then move pretty quickly into talking about what is happening” (TT2, p. 10). So through the collaborative aspects of the assessment he was able to bring his therapeutic style into the session and not only make the assessment itself therapeutic but also show his client what to expect in their ongoing work.
In her written description, the third therapist I interviewed talked about the way she noticed the “meanings” in her clients’ world come to life in his TAT responses in the form of his “longings, dreams, and struggles.” T3 said, “To me they seemed to jump from the stories and I felt an excitement, a sadness, and a deep emotional connection to him through these stories” (T3WD, p. 1). This could be one of the best examples of empathy during the assessment provided by any of the therapist participants. Another one came during our interview when we discussed C3’s response to the blank TAT card in which he described it as driving through fog and worrying about getting into a car accident. T3 said, “Even as he was talking about that I could feel my own body beginning to brace. Like you want eyes in the back of your head” (TT3, p. 10). Her putting herself in her client’s position here was so successful that she even felt it in a bodily sense. Later in their assessment, T3 shared some interpretations with C3 that allowed for a more optimistic perspective on his situation. C3 described this as “very, very encouraging. It made me want to come back, where somebody was actually listening to me… So it was real encouraging to have somebody saying that. That she is recognizing some positive out of all that negative. So it was real encouraging” (TC3, pp. 9-10). It is clear that C3 found these moments of his assessment when his therapist offered him interpretations to be very helpful.

There were a few examples of T4a empathizing with and normalizing for his client during their assessment, especially regarding C4’s ambivalence about his individuation process (VS4, seg. 2, 5). During our interview, T4 discussed some of these interactions and provided explanations for some of the thinking behind his normalizing, interpreting the content and even challenging his client (TT4a, pp. 3-4, 7). We already
discussed one of these challenging moments in which T4 intentionally destabilized C4 by “pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him again” in order to show him what to expect in their ongoing work together. However, I wanted to mention that again here because of how it resembled some of the interactions we just covered between T2 and C2 where the therapist pushed his client a bit but then contained and held him or her. There are several other examples of T4b doing therapeutic work with his second client where they shared interpretations back and forth regarding C5’s relational style (VS5, seg. 1-4), but there were different moments we discussed during our interview in which T4b “mirrored” the way his client was feeling “scattered” at times and would ground himself in contemplation again by “looking out the window” (TT4b, p. 11). This speaks to the kind of connection T4b attained with his client even in such a short time. Most of the examples we have seen here show how making therapeutic movements during the assessment can also help to prepare the client for what to expect in ongoing therapeutic work. It is easy to see how this therapist experience has a tremendous amount in common with a therapist experience we discussed earlier that was exclusively devoted to therapists preparing clients for what to expect in ongoing therapeutic work (8a). But in a more general sense, all of the examples under this therapist experience illustrate different ways that the assessment itself can be therapeutic. It makes the line between assessment and therapy less rigid and paints a portrait of a therapeutic characteristic that is at the heart of collaborative assessment’s strategy.

**Therapist Impressed by Client**

The next therapist experience that falls under this general descriptive category is that the *therapist was impressed with the client’s response, feedback, or insight* during
the assessment or feedback session. It is the other experience that is tied for the third most frequently mentioned with 11 examples coming from three of the therapist participants. An example from the second therapist coincides with one of the examples we used from the previous therapist experience when his client wept upon being told by T2 that she made a “key insight.” More specifically, she made a perceptive and well articulated connection regarding her relationship with her parents and after watching this portion of their assessment, T2 said, “I think I was surprised at how keen her insight was, and I said that. I didn’t have much to add to her response. I mean, she really nailed it. That was sort of how I felt” (TT2, p. 9). Referring to their discussion of one of her client’s responses to a TAT card the third therapist said in her written description, “I felt excited about the discovery he had made in the session. I felt impressed and awed by [C3]’s own unique capacity to gravitate towards and create meaning and healing in his life” (T3WD, p. 2). When we discussed this in our interview T3 said, “I was amazed that he had gone there and was taken aback that he wasn’t taken aback. I felt really amazed with him… that he was so open, but also that there was such a richness there. I felt a really deep appreciation for him, you know, that he had access to this and it was part of him” (TT3, p. 4-5).

These examples show the value of allowing clients the opportunity to do the work themselves and how productive it can prove to be. This experience also reminds me of how important the timing of interpretations generally is in psychotherapy, particularly how detrimental it can be for a therapist to preemptively provide an insight rather than allowing their clients space to find it on their own. It makes me wonder if traditional approaches to assessment might perpetuate this therapeutic blunder not only by
withholding assessment feedback from clients but also by denying clients the space to discuss their interpretations of content produced by the assessment materials, resigning themselves instead to be satisfied solely with the assessment results as they are. Although a collaborative approach to assessment may still run the risk of allowing such missteps, it appears that it greatly reduces the likelihood.

**Therapist Collaborates during Test Administration**

The next descriptive therapist experience takes us back to my own observations of the assessment process when I noticed moments of collaboration during the administration of the tests rather than just during the feedback session. This experience is important in order to distinguish between Fischer and Finn’s unique variations of this style of assessment. Ten examples were provided by three of the four therapist participants. Prior to administering the Rorschach, T1 asked his client if he had any questions about himself to which C1 replied with explanations of his struggles with anger, feelings of entitlement, and playing the victim. After T1 asked C1 for specific examples of these struggles they had a useful discussion that appeared to bring increased direction to their ensuing exchanges during the assessment (VS1, seg. 1). While administering the TAT, T2’s client gave him a story that seemed particularly relevant to her relationship with her parents. Wanting her to continue exploring and elaborating on this, T2 asked her a question about what emotions different people in the picture were feeling and her response helped to further illuminate the dynamics of the situation.

The last therapist I interviewed provided examples from exchanges with both of his clients. As his first client finished up his DAP, T4a noticed that C4 had originally begun drawing himself situated in the middle of his family but then erased it and instead
drew himself walking off the page. T4a immediately pointed this out to C4 and they had a useful conversation regarding C4’s ambivalence about individuation (VS4, seg. 2). When I asked T4a about this during our interview he said, “I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” and he kind of just went for it and said a lot” (TT4a, p. 3). The same therapist asked a similar question of his other client just as he finished up his DAP. T4b asked him, “What kind of psychological insights do you think we could pull from these drawings” (VS5, seg. 1)? After they discussed some of C5’s thoughts, T4b pointed out to him that he only used one corner of the page to draw in and then asked him, “What do you make out of that” (VS5, seg. 2)? This led to a discussion of C5’s desire to be inconspicuous, not wanting to be too loud or even be noticed at times, and other times wanting to “disappear.” During our interview, T4b discussed how his first more open-ended question about C5’s DAP led to interestingly fruitful discussions about gender and C5’s desire to be heard that carried over into their ongoing work (TT4b, p. 3). He also went on to elaborate that subsequent discussions regarding C5’s inconspicuousness developed a much more complex and richer picture of his client (TT4b, p. 5). These examples show how useful it can be to introduce collaboration during the test administration. It is difficult to say whether waiting to have these helpful discussions until later on in a feedback session would have produced the same amount or quality of collaboration, but it seems to make at least some sense intuitively to strike while the iron is hot, so to speak, by having a conversation with clients about what they have created while they are still in the moment of its inception and it remains fresh in their experience.
Tailoring the Assessment to the Client

The last therapist experience that falls under this general descriptive category is when therapists chose certain assessment tools or tests in order to tailor the assessment to the specific client based on impressions they obtained in prior meetings with the client. This experience is the third least mentioned in this category with only six examples. However, every one of the therapist participants provided at least one example of it. In his written description, the first client I interviewed talked about the way his therapist used the end of the intake interview prior to their assessment to discuss with him “the best way to proceed in the next session, which kind of assessments we should use.” They ended up opting for more “improvisational” tests over “bubble tests” and C1 appeared grateful for his therapist’s willingness to involve him in this decision (C1WD, p. 1). In his written description, the second therapist discussed the factors he considered when choosing which tests to use with his client such as her apparent anxiety, the clear absence of a personality disorder, and his desire to try out a test he had never used before. He also talked about choosing to use some projective tests because she seemed especially “open and articulate” which he figured would help her engage the materials and be able to get more out of them (T2WD, p. 1). During our interview he went on to further explain his reasoning behind each of these aspects of his decisions (TT2, pp. 1-2).

Similarly, the third therapist talked to me during our interview about the reasons why she chose to use particular TAT cards with her client, mainly because she felt certain ones would be more meaningful for him given the specific problems he presented with, but also because there were a few that she had a fondness for because of the success she had in using them with other clients (TT3, p. 4). It is interesting to note that the TAT
card she arguably had the most success with during the assessment we reviewed was one that she was initially skeptical of and worried that her clients would be intimidated by: the blank #16 card. These examples show how therapists can make the assessment more engaging, individualized, and productive for clients by either inviting the client to participate in selecting the testing materials or by using what they already know about their clients to choose which tests to use, thereby increasing the chances of fruitfulness.

This brings us to the end of this general category where the therapists’ experiences could be viewed primarily in a descriptive manner. It also concludes the portion of this chapter where the therapist experiences found in this research have been presented. During our exploration of the specific client and therapist experiences throughout the first part of this chapter we discussed the many similarities each of these experiences have with each other within the separate realms of client and therapist experiences. In next and final section of this chapter we will shift to looking at the comparisons that can be made across these realms, that is, between client and therapist experiences. From this point, each client experience will be denoted with the letters “CE” and therapist experiences with “TE” followed by a number corresponding to the order in which the experience appeared in the data.

**Comparable Experiences of Clients and Therapists**

In the last section of this chapter we will delve into the comparisons that can be made between the clients’ experiences and the therapists’ experiences (see Table 3.10). Some psychotherapy research has found clients and therapists to have mostly differing views on what constitutes meaningful or significant moments in psychotherapy (Yalom
In contrast, my research found that many of the assessment experiences were similar for both clients and therapists and that there were no client experiences standing in direct contrast to a therapist experience or vice versa. In fact, all but two of the client experiences were comparable.

Table 3.10 – Comparable Experiences for Clients and Therapists

“CE” refers to client experiences and “TE” refers to therapist experiences. The numbers following each of these letters refer to the order in which each experience appeared in the data. These numbered experiences correspond to the client and therapist experiences as they are presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.5 respectively. The numbers in parentheses at the end of each comparison refer to the number of examples found in the date for each experience.

*CE1 – TE3: Clients and therapists finding it helpful or useful for the clients to contextualize the testing material in terms of their own lives. (30 – 23)

*CE2, 3, 3a – TE4, 4a: Therapists giving and clients receiving difficult discordant feedback. (8, 6, 9 – 8, 4)

*CE4, 5, 17 – TE12: Clients feeling guarded, questioning the assessment tests, or wanting to share more to further the treatment process and therapists allowing clients the space to do whichever they choose. (8, 9, 9 – 29)

*CE6 – TE7: Clients preferring “projective” tests to “objective” ones and therapists noticing that “projective” tests are more conducive to collaboration than “objective” ones. (8 – 4)

*CE7 – TE9: Collaborative assessment serves to create themes and metaphors that carry over into ongoing therapeutic work in a helpful and useful way. (26 – 35)

*CE10 – TE8, 8a, 8b: Collaborative assessment provides a good start to therapy because it is exciting, brings hope, and acts as a catalyst for therapy. (22 – 21, 7, 25)

*CE11 – TE13: Collaborative assessment can make clients feel relaxed, comfortable, involved, and empowered. (15 – 12)

*CE12, 13 – TE15: Therapists setting the frame by explaining aspects of the assessment and clients are either comforted or discomforted by their therapists’ explanations. (14, 1 – 13)

*CE14 – TE22: Clients and therapists finding collaborative assessment to be fun and enjoyable and therapists were glad to be a part of it. (10 – 6)

*CE15 – TE19: Clients and therapists expressing initial skepticism toward the assessment process, but finding it to be enjoyable, helpful, and productive in the end. (15 – 11)

*CE16 – TE21: Clients feeling that simply talking to their therapist would have been preferable to and just as productive as an assessment and therapists expressing concern that the assessment could be a negative distraction or interruption in therapeutic work. (5 – 6)

& Elkin, 1974; Fessler, 1978; Kaschak, 1978; Caskey, Barker, & Elliot, 1984; Walsh, 1995).
experiences showed positive correlations to at least one of the therapist experiences in one way or another. Possible explanations for these divergent results will be discussed at the end of this section, but for now let us turn our attention to exploring the assessment experiences that were found to be similar for both clients and therapists. Earlier we discussed the client and therapist experiences in the order they appeared in the data and we will follow the same sequence in making these comparisons.

**Contextualizing**

The first experience that clients and therapists had in common was what we discussed as the contextualizing experience in which they both *found it to be helpful or useful for the clients to be able to contextualize the testing material in terms of their own lives* (CE1-TE3). There were 30 examples from clients and 23 examples from therapists of this experience, making it the most frequently mentioned experience for clients and the fourth most frequently mentioned experience for therapists. Even though there were more examples of this experience found within the clients’ accounts, it might be appropriate to view this shared experience as originating more from the therapists’ side because facilitating the contextualization of testing materials in terms of the client’s life world is one of the main goals of collaborative assessments. So if we put therapists in the position of taking the lead with regard to contextualization, it is worth noting that the clients’ willingness to join their therapist in this endeavor can be used as a possible means to gauge the success of the therapists’ efforts with regard to this goal. Both therapists and clients clearly found the contextualizing endeavor to be worthwhile, but the fact that there were considerably more examples for this experience found in the clients’ accounts speaks to the degree of its importance for clients.
Earlier in this chapter we discussed T4b saying that collaboration with one of his clients during the assessment helped to move him “from abstractions and conception to just the fact of how he was experiencing his life” (TT4b, p. 10). This statement captures the essence of this shared experience. Test data often can be presented in abstract and theoretical ways that may be of limited utility or application until they are grounded in client’s life world. The way collaborative assessment makes use of the materials invites clients to bring their life worlds into the assessment room. There was a moment in T4a’s assessment with his other client in which C4 explained that if his DAP figure could move it would walk off the page, which signified how central his individuation process was for him at that moment (VS4, seg. 3). We can see how interactions like these during an assessment help to bring the assessment to life. It is easy to see here why contextualization during an assessment would be a primary goal for therapists and was viewed by clients here as the most helpful aspect of their assessment experience.

**Dealing with Discordant Feedback**

The next comparable experience for clients and therapists is giving and receiving discordant feedback. There are several facets to this naturally complicated exchange between therapist and client. Similar to the previous comparable experience, it originates more with the therapist but ultimately depends on how it is taken up by the client. Presenting clients with discordant feedback is an inherently difficult task for therapists because of how potentially awkward and uncomfortable it can make the situation and the developing relationship. One comparison (CE2-TE4) illustrates that this is a very real concern for therapists because clients may often find difficulty with hearing and taking in such feedback. However, another comparison (CE3a-TE4a) reveals the other side of this
experience that even though this is a tense situation for both therapist and client, in the end they can still find it to be helpful, useful, and productive. About the same number of examples was found for each of these two client reactions to discordant feedback (8 examples of difficulty, 9 examples of helpfulness). But if we include examples from clients who were simply okay with receiving discordant feedback (6) on the latter side, then there were clearly more examples of the idea that clients can have manageable reactions to and positive experiences from being given discordant feedback. This comparison is particularly beneficial for therapists and clients to be aware of because the giving and receiving of discordant feedback during an assessment can introduce some of its most anxiety-provoking moments, and it can be comforting to both sides to look at the ways this typically difficult experience can often turn out to be helpful. This comparison also relates directly and interestingly to some other research (Holm-Denoma, 2008) and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Allowing Space for Guardedness and Opening Up

The third comparison relates three client experiences to one therapist experience. Specifically, this comparison shows how therapists tended to have one common reaction to three different client experiences. Rather than showing the way clients and therapists made the same observation about an aspect of the assessment process or agreed on its utility, this comparison shows that clients were guarded or felt the need to protect themselves by not saying too much (CE4), did not trust or questioned the tests and their results (CE17), or felt a desire to open up or share more in order to further the treatment process (CE5) and their therapists in turn accommodated them by allowing a space for clients to do whichever they choose (TE12). The last two comparisons originated more
from the side of the therapists. This one conversely begins more with the clients’ experiences. However, as we discussed in the clients’ results section earlier in this chapter, there was a tension during the assessments between feeling guarded against or questioning the assessment process on one side, and on the other wanting to bring more of themselves into the session. About the same number of examples were found for each of these client experiences (8 guarded, 9 challenging tests/results, 9 opening up). This could be seen as evidence of how evenly pulled in each of these directions some clients may feel. However, the first two experiences (CE4 and CE17) seem to move the client away from engagement while the last one pulls them toward it, which could lead us to believe that clients more often feel guarded and defended than compelled to share intimate parts of themselves. Nonetheless, all three of these client inclinations call for the therapist to provide the appropriate space so that their clients can feel safe protecting and defending themselves, or presenting and exploring different parts of themselves. It was pleasing to see that 29 examples were found of the therapist experience that allowed clients appropriate space because there are more examples of this therapist experience than there are for three client experiences combined, which may reflect these therapists’ attunement to their clients’ concerns during the assessment.

**Preferring “Projective” Tests to “Objective” Tests**

The fourth comparison is similar to the first one we discussed in that it involves direct accord between client and therapist experiences. It begins a string of comparisons we will be discussing that also similar reflect direct accord between therapist and client experiences. Therapists noticed that *some testing materials (projective) tend to be more conducive to collaboration than others (objective)* (TE7), and the clients showed a clear
preference for “projective” tests over “objective” ones (CE6). There were only four instances of the therapist experience, while there were eight instances of client experience. The therapists acknowledged that although any assessment tool can be used collaboratively, projective tools are inherently more engaging because they call for increased interaction between therapists and clients in their standard administration procedures. The clients’ expressed partiality toward projective tests because they find them to be more engaging, suggesting that clients may have their own desire to collaborate during assessment. Viewing this client experience alongside some of the other client experiences (CE1, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15) shows that clients may hold this preference because they view projective materials as more helpful, productive, and enjoyable. Therefore, this comparison gives voice to the idea that the desire for collaboration during an assessment comes not only from the therapist but from the client as well. This dual desire for collaboration suggests that fertile ground for collaboration may exist even before the assessment begins. Awareness of this common, shared desire for collaboration could be useful for both therapist and client as they enter the assessment. It could help them both to find a meeting point even earlier in their work, and assist them in choosing which tests to use.

Creating Themes and Metaphors

The fifth comparable experience for clients and therapists was the way collaborative assessment serves to create themes and metaphors that carry over into ongoing therapeutic work in a helpful and useful way (CE7-TE9). These experiences were two of the most frequently mentioned experiences with 26 examples for clients and 35 for therapists, making this the second most frequently mentioned experience for
clients and the overall most frequently mentioned experience for therapists. This comparison, along with the next couple of ones we will discuss, shows how a collaborative assessment can lead into or set a good foundation for ongoing treatment to build upon. From these comparative experiences, arguments could be made for increased blending of assessment and psychotherapy sessions. Arguments could also be made for the value of having the same therapist facilitate the assessment and ongoing therapy. This blurring of the lines between assessment and therapy allows for increased continuity in the way themes and metaphors that are co-created during the assessment can be developed throughout ongoing therapeutic work. It also provides a way to gauge the client’s progress based on the way the themes and metaphors evolve during the therapeutic work. For instance, C3 initially talked about feeling as though he was in a fog but then later described an image of the sun rising to burn off the fog. Both he and his therapist saw this development as hopeful and optimistic for their ongoing work together (TT3, pp. 10-11). Several examples of the therapist experience (TE9) used in the above comparison suggested that collaborative assessment not only serves to bring up and flesh out problematic areas of the client’s life sooner than therapy alone would, it also helps to touch on some problems that the therapists believe would not have been discussed at all. The sheer number of examples for this comparison from both the client and therapist accounts speaks to how central the process of creating themes and metaphors is to the process of collaborative assessment.

A Catalyst for Psychotherapy

The sixth comparison follows closely from the previous one in that it focuses on the ways collaborative assessment provides a good start to therapy because it is exciting,
brings hope, and acts as a catalyst for therapy (CE10-TE8). This was the third most frequently mentioned experience for clients with 22 examples. It is difficult to say where this experience ranks for therapists because there are 21 examples of the overall experience, but there are also two subcategories of this experience with seven and 25 examples each. From making a general comparison based on what we already uncovered about these specific experiences, we can see how collaborative assessment inspires clients to engage more fully in treatment, hooks them into treatment by encouraging them to make a stronger commitment to and investment in it, cultivates their creative abilities, and gives them faith that they can work with their therapist to manage the difficulties they are struggling with. The subcategories of the therapist experience showed more precisely how collaborative assessment not only prepares clients for ongoing treatment by setting certain expectations for their participation and gives them a sense of their therapists’ style, but it also gives therapists a sense of how their client prefers to be worked with in therapy. This was one of the most frequently mentioned experiences for both clients and therapists. The frequent mentioning of this experience again advocate for increased blurring of the line between assessment and psychotherapy because it describes how collaboration during the assessment enhances the transition into therapy. The examples discussed here and earlier in this chapter show the specific ways that this common experience can be prove to be beneficial for both therapists and clients. Another point we discussed with regard to these experiences is the way the assessment can generate a great deal of positive momentum which can help to drive the ongoing work. This comparison also provides yet another argument for having the same clinician conduct both assessment and therapy.
Increasing Comfort, Involvement, and Empowerment

The seventh comparison between therapist and client experiences focuses more on the side of the clients’ experiences because it looks at the way collaborative assessment can lead clients to feeling relaxed, comfortable, involved, and empowered (CE11-TE13). This experience was mentioned close to the same number of times by clients and therapists with 15 examples coming from client accounts and 12 examples coming from therapists. Even though the therapist side of this comparison could be viewed as speculation on the part of the therapists with regard to their clients’ feelings, the fact that examples were provided by all of the therapist participants reveals a relative comprehensiveness of this recognition. This comprehensiveness also speaks to the degree to which the clients must have felt these ways in order to make the emotions so easily recognizable for the therapists. It was when clients were asked to collaborate that they tended to feel relaxed, comforted, and empowered. As these feelings increased so did the clients’ ability to see the concrete benefits of taking a more active role in their own treatment than they normally would.

Setting the Frame with Explanations and Reactions to that Process

The eighth comparative experience for clients and therapists is similar to the first two comparisons we discussed because it originates more with the therapist than the client. This comparison involves two possible client responses to a typical therapist procedure during the assessment. This comparison occurred when therapists set the frame for the assessment session by explaining the tests, feedback, or the assessment itself (TE15) and clients were either comforted (CE12) or discomforted by their therapists’ explanations (CE13). The therapist side of this comparison was categorized
as descriptive and was mentioned 13 times. The clients’ side of this comparison consists of more subsequent reactionary responses to the therapists’ explanations. The clients’ reactions are weighted heavily in favor of feeling comforted rather than discomforted by their therapist’s explanations with 14 examples of the former and only one example for the latter. The client experience of feeling discomforted by his or her therapist’s explanations was primarily included so that this comparison could be made, showing that clients found their therapists’ explanations to be by far more comforting than discomforting. We saw that the therapists’ motivations behind their explanations were to reduce their clients’ fears about being limited, judged, or fixed by the test results and to let them know in advance that their active participation would be expected throughout the process so they would not be surprised. The therapists’ intentions came to fruition because when clients found comfort in their therapists’ explanations they reported that what helped to put them at ease were the ways their therapists’ explanations helped them understand the assessment as not limiting, as non-judgmental, as interactive, and as providing a foundation on which they could build their therapeutic work. The one moment in which a client (C1) found discomfort in his therapists’ explanation arose because he wanted his therapist to elaborate more on his own feelings about the tests and to do so in a more candid and genuine manner. Even though this client was somewhat dissatisfied with his therapists’ explanation, it appears as though the remedy would have simply been further explanation provided in a more authentic way. This comparison shows us how invaluable it can be for therapists to provide explanations of the assessment in specific ways, that a clear explanation can increase the client’s comfort.
level and make him or her more likely to engage, and that providing such explanations has a much stronger likelihood of producing positive outcomes.

**Fun and Enjoyable Aspects**

The ninth experience that both clients and therapists had in common was finding the assessment experience to be *fun and enjoyable* and they were *glad to be a part of it* (CE14-TE22). There were 10 client examples and six therapist examples of this comparative experience. The clients’ experience is important to call attention to because some clients may enter an assessment with preconceptions of it being arduous and unappealing or may just prefer to talk instead (CE16). It could be helpful for clients to see the ways this process can in fact be a pleasant and enjoyable experience. The therapists’ side not only shows how therapists can share in feelings of enjoyment during the assessment, but also how they gained a sense of fulfillment because it allowed them to do the kind of therapeutic work they wanted to do with their clients. These feelings of enjoyment for clients and therapists and the sense of fulfillment for therapists appeared to come out of the collaborative aspects of their assessments because most of the enjoyable moments they spoke about involved collaboration or increased interaction between therapist and client. The therapists were also pleased with the way these exchanges helped to engage their clients in the work and empower clients in their efforts. This comparison relates closely to the next one we will discuss and provides a good segue into it.

**Skepticism Transforming into Appreciation**

The second to last comparison we will make between client and therapist experiences was that both clients and therapists expressed an *initial skepticism toward the*
assessment process, but found it to be enjoyable, helpful, and productive in the end (CE15-TE19). Fifteen examples were found on the clients’ side of this experience and 11 on the therapists’ side. It was interesting to see that some of these shifts in perspective for both the clients and the therapists occurred during the assessment process while others did not occur until much later. For instance, some of these shifts in perspective did not occur until we watched segments of their assessment during our interview and they were able to recognize the progress made in areas that had been brought up by the assessment. A common factor for these experiences was that because the concrete therapeutic headway made during the assessment showed the participants that this endeavor was indeed worth the time and effort they put into it and these therapeutic moments of the assessment built momentum for their ongoing work together in therapy. Therefore, this reversal of attitude mainly had to do with the way the assessment was able to reveal to the participants the potential utility of their work together based on the therapeutic progress that could be made during the assessment. Both therapists and clients should be able to gain some comfort in knowing that even though they may enter an assessment with certain doubts and apprehensions, there is a strong likelihood that they will find the experience to be worthwhile in the end.

Concerns that Compare Assessment to Psychotherapy

The final comparison speaks directly to something we just discussed: concerns with which clients and therapists may approach an assessment situation. It was when clients felt that simply talking to their therapist would have been preferable to, and just as productive as, an assessment (CE16) which therapists expressed similarly: that the assessment could be a negative distraction or interruption in therapeutic work due to its
timing or the client’s preference for talking rather than taking test (TE21). There were few mentions of this experience by participants (five client examples and six therapist examples), but unlike the other comparisons that showed agreement primarily on the helpful and enjoyable aspects of collaborative assessment, this comparison gives voice to a potentially unpleasant aspect. When we discussed the therapist side of this experience earlier in this chapter we saw that even though the timing of the assessment could be questioned as to whether it might make the assessment more or less useful, we also saw that worrying if the assessment will be a distraction is a legitimate concern for therapists because it is also a concern for clients.

The implicit question on the clients’ side of this experience is whether the assessment will be worthwhile. This hesitation could possibly be exacerbated by the presumptive prospect of having to give up some control over the situation, allow their therapist to take the lead, and trust that their therapist will make adequate use of their time during the assessment. It is understandable that clients may believe they have the best grasp on their problems and may feel more in control if they are given space to talk about the areas of their life that they deem to be relevant and important. But this is where the collaborative aspect of the assessment can reaffirm clients’ sense of power by inviting them to talk and participate throughout the process, thus allaying these concerns. We have also seen how therapists’ explanations of collaborative aspects of the assessment beforehand can produce this same effect even earlier in the process. In a way it is appropriate that this last comparison follows from the previous one because the majority of client and therapist participants who expressed these initial misgivings about
assessment also ultimately ended up making the shift to realizing assessment’s usefulness at one point or another.

Looking back on all the comparisons presented in this chapter we can see that the vast majority indicate shared perspectives between clients and therapists regarding aspects of collaborative assessment that they found enjoyable or valuable. There appears to be two possible explanations of this uncharacteristically high degree of overlap between client and therapist perspectives. First, my own biased perceptions as a researcher. As I read through the data and began delineating relevant assessment experiences for clients and therapists, the fact that I noticed an experience in one of the groups of participants could have easily given me an increased tendency to look for a similar experience in the other group. However, the data is still present to support these perceptions. The other possibility has more to do with the unorthodox style in which these assessments were conducted. This approach to assessment seeks to explicitly increase the client’s and therapist’s level of attunement to one another through collaboration and this aspect also contribute to increased commonalities in their perspectives on the process.

This concludes the comparisons section of this chapter and brings us to the end of the results chapter in which client and therapist experiences were presented, discussed, and compared to each other. Let us now turn our attention to the final chapter of this dissertation which discusses the validity of this research project, its limitations, how it compares to other similar research, how it contributes to the practice of collaborative assessment, and what suggestions it poses for future research on collaborative assessment.
Chapter Four:
Discussion and Reflections on this Research Project
The Importance of Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the reflexive action of turning back upon one’s self. In regard to epistemology, reflexivity involves critically viewing one’s own subjective position in order to illuminate the ways it contributes to a particular understanding or action. In qualitative research it usually includes affective as well as cognitive or rational introspection. Through reflexivity one recognizes that although some might consider it ideal to suspend or eliminate one’s biases and presuppositions, these efforts are ultimately futile because our situated nature as human beings will inevitably influence our perceptions of the world in unique ways. Moreover, striving to uphold this ideal of objectivity increases the likelihood that we might cover over some beliefs or influences and underestimate their impact on our thoughts and actions. It is more genuine and potentially fruitful to acknowledge our presuppositions so as to reflect upon and explore these perceptions rather than devalue or attempt to do away with them. Reflexivity calls attention to the researcher’s own biases and preconceptions regarding the topic in order to consider the various ways they may have influenced the research process. This consideration is what the first section of this chapter is devoted to.

In order to help me pay attention to my own thoughts, feelings, and preconceptions and to how they might influence this research project, I kept a journal throughout the entire process. I wrote in it regularly with regard to whatever I noticed, felt, expected, and so on, at various points along the way. I read back through the journal several times in order to prepare this section. The journal I kept definitely was helpful to me, and I recommend keeping one to others who are developing methods for their own research projects. Two of the largest overarching factors that influenced my perspective
while conducting this research were the facts that I am a therapist in training and that I was trained to conduct psychological assessments in a collaborative manner. As a therapist in training, I noticed myself identifying more with the therapist participants than the clients during the interviews and the data analysis. During the interviews, I noticed how our time often began to resemble peer supervision in that the therapist participant and I easily slipped into discussing the ways their clients responded to feedback, how the therapists could have presented their impressions differently, and what this said about each of their styles. Our discussion of the spontaneous ideas that emerged for the therapists from these research interview conversations gave them directions which they seemed eager to try out with regard to working with their clients. I found myself having to repeatedly make efforts to redirect our attention back to the interview material and the focus of the research in order to cover all of the material and to keep the interview within a reasonable timeframe.

The ambivalence I felt about wanting to explore these areas further but also needing to adhere to the structure of the interview reminded me of therapist experience number six in which therapists expressed occasionally feeling overwhelmed during assessments because of the demands placed on them to pay attention to so many things at once. The examples of this experience also reflected the therapists wanting to explore certain areas further with their clients but feeling that there was not time to do so and still obtain information needed to write the report. These aspects of this therapist experience certainly resonated with me during my interviews with the therapists. During my data analysis, I also noticed that I distinguished five more experiences for therapists than I did for clients and I wondered if that might also have to do with my identifying with the
therapists more than with the clients. My relating to the therapists accounts could have increased the likelihood of my considering aspects of their experiences to be relevant and noteworthy. When comparing my findings to Ward’s (2005) I found that he also delineated more themes for his assessors than he did for his assesseses. This made me wonder if he, too, identified more with his assessor participants. I also pondered the possibility that the therapist participants could have simply been more interested, analytical, and open to discussion, exploration, and elaboration during the interviews than the client participants were.

We also should consider the fact that I was trained in a collaborative style of conducting assessments and this may have affected the manner in which I collected and analyzed the data. I have always taken a collaborative approach to assessments and my experience has shown me the numerous ways it can be useful and beneficial. A collaborative approach to assessment appears to me to be more fruitful than the traditional information-gathering approach, but I have never tried that approach so it is difficult for me to fully commit to such a statement. However, this preference I have for collaborative assessment could be based on seeing the value of what has come out of collaborative work with my clients and imagining how it might have gone differently if those moments had not occurred. I can acknowledge that through this research I hoped for collaborative assessment to be portrayed in a positive light. This predisposition is definitely worth making note of. One way it could have shown up was in the evaluative categories for client and therapist experiences. I had initially approached the data collection process hoping and expecting to obtain purely descriptive results in the form of participants’ experiences. I was surprised when I went to group these experiences into
larger categories and found that the most natural way to do so was to label some
categories as helpful or pleasant and others as difficult or unpleasant. When I reviewed
the transcriptions of the interviews I realized that I had asked participants whether or not
they found an aspect of the assessment they pointed out to be helpful much more often
than I had intended to. Each time I asked the question it seemed to be implicit in the
moment and simply spoke more directly and explicitly to what the participant was
already talking about. But in retrospect I wondered how much my own motivations
factored into the asking of the question. I also wondered if the manner in which I asked
questions in general during the interviews may have influenced participants’ responses.
Although it is difficult to say for sure or measure the extent of these potential factors,
they are certainly worth attention.

Another way I noticed my own experience with collaborative assessment showing
through was in regard to my own style of assessing. While noticing examples of the
therapist experience of expressing enjoyment that the flexible nature of collaborative
assessment allowed them to incorporate their own style into the administration, I also
noticed that the therapists tended either to seek to collaborate during the assessment itself
or to hold off until the feedback session. I had expected to find more examples of
collaboration occurring during the actual assessment because all of my therapist
participants were trained in Fischer’s collaborative assessment style. Although I did end
up finding that some of them preferred this style, others preferred to hold off on
collaboration until the feedback session, which was more in line with Finn’s style of
Therapeutic Assessment (Fischer & Finn, 2008). This finding showed me that even
though clinicians might have more training in one of these assessment styles, they may
still prefer the other style, possibly because it is more suitable to their own personal therapeutic style. Also, because I personally tend to prefer collaboration during the ongoing assessment over waiting until the feedback session, it struck me when there were moments during the assessment itself that seemed ripe for collaborative interaction and I felt a bit of frustration that the opportunity was not taken advantage of. The assessment that most readily comes to mind when I think of this is the one between T3 and C3. Even though my feelings did not appear to influence the data collection or analysis in obvious ways, recognizing them helped to make me increasingly aware of my own style and how I might try to look for it in what I was observing.

Another frustration was the general process of data collection. I was able to obtain full participation from only four participants, two therapist-client pairs, in nearly two years of attempts to acquire participants. Although there were a few participants who began to participate and dropped out, I assumed that the lack of participation had mostly to do with participants’ reluctance to be videotaped during an assessment session. Support for this assumption was found after the Clinic from which I collected my data changed policies and made it mandatory for therapists to videotape all of their assessments, and the rate of participation in my research increased considerably over a relatively short period. However, I ended up using five therapist-client pairs when I initially wanted six. This was primarily due to time restrictions and practical considerations with regard to my dissertation deadline. Even though I was satisfied that I had collected sufficient data, especially after conducting my analysis, I still wondered if I was willing to settle for five pairs instead of six because of the frustrations I experienced during the data-collection process.
On a somewhat similar note, I had another experience in which a task that had initially produced anxiety for me turned out well in the end. After I had conducted the interviews and was moving on with the data-analysis portion of my research I considered the option of having someone else transcribe the interviews in order to save time and effort. Even though it was considerably more laborious I decided to transcribe the interviews myself, and I was ultimately pleased that I had done so because it brought me closer to the data and helped me familiarize myself with it much earlier. It also made the subsequent steps of my analysis significantly less painstaking and more fruitful because while I was transcribing I had already begun to notice recurring experiences in the accounts which could have possibly been overlooked if I had decided to wait to search for recurring experiences.

The last point I would like to make with regard to reflexivity follows from the one above in that it involves my ability to recognize and distinguish common experiences for my participants. This point takes us back to my preferences for and biases toward a collaborative style of assessment. In looking back I wonder if my preferences may have led me to miss some relevant experiences in favor of others. This concern was compounded by the fact that while I was searching for specific therapist and client experiences, I was also looking for comparative occurrences that could be related to the findings of other studies. Trying to keep all of these things in mind and remain vigilant toward them as I reviewed the data also produced concerns that I had overlooked some pertinent experience or comparison. It also made the therapist experience of feeling overwhelmed by having so much to manage and be aware of during a collaborative
assessment (TE6) resonate with me even more because their anxiety seemed similar to the kind that I was experiencing during those moments of my analysis.

In the first section of this chapter we have called attention to a few of the ways my own context and presuppositions may have influenced the manner in which I took up my role as researcher in this study. Although this effort could be viewed as opening my research to criticism, I believe that it serves the purpose of making my research and my methods as transparent and realistic as possible. My appendixes do contain my data; other researchers are welcome to review them. Having spent some time in the realm of self-reflection, let us now turn our focus toward examining the potential relevance and significance of this study.

**Validity Considerations**

In the natural sciences and statistical research, validity is known as the ability of a test or research project to measure what it was designed to measure. In this sense validity also could be understood as a form of accuracy with regard to focus and application of the research efforts. Along with reliability, which is the consistency of research results across different trials, validity is one of the primary factors used to gauge the strength and value of research. However, as we discussed in the second chapter, the qualitative research methods that were employed here do not seek to understand what they study in the same way that quantitative methods do. Qualitative methods were used for this study because they address subjective experience and they provided us with better access to what we were studying. Quantitative research methods measure in order to predict certain behaviors and events whereas qualitative research seeks to understand the same things in different ways by striving to answer “what, when and how?” questions with
intricate observations and rich descriptions. Consequently, it would not be appropriate or fair to judge the findings of this research by the same standards used for quantitative research because they use different methods and produce a different kind of result. We must therefore use separate means to gauge the value of these research findings that are suitable to qualitative findings.

In her book on qualitative research methods, Constance Fischer (2006, p. xvii) presents five different kinds of validity that are applicable to qualitative findings and are what we will use to evaluate the results of this study. The first kind of validity she discusses is *witness validity* which asks if readers of the data and findings, following the research’s method, come to basically similar impressions. This type of validity most closely resembles the reliability factor in experimental research because it focuses on consistency in findings across different attempts to conduct the same research project. Finding witness validity with regard to this research is difficult at this point because this study has not yet been published or shared with colleagues. The closest comparison that can be made here is with the findings of Ward’s (2005) similar research. We saw in the last chapter how alike the findings of this research and Ward’s are, so that would suggest at least a fair amount of witness validity, but this comparison is more appropriately made in the next type of validity we will consider.

The second type of validity mentioned by Fischer is *touchpoint validity* which asks if the findings connect with theory and other studies in a productive way. The second section of the previous chapter was devoted entirely to making these connections, and we were able to see the ways the findings of this research primarily affirmed and expanded upon the results of other studies conducted on therapeutic or collaborative
psychological assessment. The findings of this research provided an answer to Holm-Denoma’s (2008) question of whether clients might be able to receive difficult feedback in a positive way and they also stood in contrast to the results of other studies (Yalom & Elkin, 1974; Fessler, 1978; Kaschak, 1978; Caskey, Barker, & Elliot, 1984; Walsh, 1995) that found clients and therapists to have mostly disparate perspectives on various aspects of psychotherapy. Touchpoint validity is one of these types of validity that can be easily found in the results of this study.

The third kind of validity is *efficacy validity* which addresses whether the findings are useful and if they make a difference in theory or practice. This kind of validity overlaps with the last kind because it looks at the way the findings connect with theory, so here we will emphasize how they affect practice. One of the primary purposes of this study was to understand and explore client and therapist experiences of collaborative assessment in order to give other clients and therapists a better idea of what to expect when they enter an assessment situation. This study was also intended to give therapists a sense of some things they can do to make the experience more pleasant and productive for their clients. Some of these findings that immediately stand out are the ways it can be helpful to contextualize the results and co-create themes and metaphors. It could be comforting to assessors and therapists to know that even though it may initially seem unpleasant to share impressions that might be different for clients, or for the therapist to make “mistakes,” it can often turn out to be useful. Therapists can see different ways that they can explain the tests in order to reduce their clients’ fears of being judged and to show clients what to expect during the assessment process. Therapists can also share their impressions in other ways to challenge their clients, and tailor the testing situation to
the client’s style in order to make it more engaging. It appears that the results of this study find their strongest value in terms of both touchpoint and efficacy validity.

The last two types of validity we will discuss are resonance validity and revisionary validity. Resonance validity asks if the findings resonate with the readers’ lives as familiar and as holding personal implication, while revisionary validity asks if the findings help to revise or re-vision prior understandings of an academic or personal issue. As with witness validity, these types of validity are difficult to gauge at this point because this study has not been made available to many readers yet, so it would be tough to tell whether it resonates with readers or leads them to revise their understandings of the topic. So for now it seems that I can only hope that this research will gain increased witness, resonance, and revisionary validity as time passes. Therefore, while we might have to wait to see if this research holds up to some of these types of validity, we can clearly see how it has relevance through the ways it relates to and can affect current theory and practice of collaborative assessment.

**Comparisons with Other Research**

This section will focus on the ways the client and therapist experiences found in this research relate to other research on collaborative and therapeutic models of psychological assessment. These studies were discussed toward the end of chapter one. The studies that we will use for comparison to this one were chosen because the form or their results were readily relatable to the findings of this research. The following studies were selected because their results were in the form of either therapeutic guidelines for psychological assessors to follow or descriptive themes and experiences for assessment participants in general.
Some of the results of the studies we will use here were presented in a descriptive manner while others were more prescriptive in that they provided suggestions or guidelines one should follow when conducting this type of assessment. When comparing the findings of this research with these two types of results from other research, I found it easier, more natural, and more provocative to make these comparisons with the descriptive results rather than the prescriptive ones. This could be because although some of the findings of this research could be expressed prescriptively, they are inherently descriptive. We will begin by relating the findings of this research to the other studies’ prescriptive results. Because the experiential findings of my research are not directly comparable to the results of the first few studies we will address here, I reviewed my data to determine the number of times each of these studies’ findings occurred within my data. However, as we progress through our comparisons of the findings of my research with the results of these studies, the comparisons themselves become increasingly more direct along with the increasingly descriptive nature of the findings in these studies.

**Hilsenroth and Cromer**

The first study is a review conducted by Hilsenroth and Cromer in 2007 that provided 16 guidelines for therapeutic assessment in the form of characteristics and techniques that assessors can adhere to in order to increase the therapeutic alliance with their clients. These 16 guidelines are divided into three distinct categories of frame, focus, and feedback (p. 214). This portion of their results is represented below in table 4.1. The first guideline is to *conduct longer, more involved, depth oriented interviews*. I found only one clear occurrence of the first guideline in
my data when the fourth therapist participant suggested spreading out the assessment across a few sessions in order to give therapists and clients more time to work through the material (TT4b, p. 11). The singular occurrence of this first guideline could be because I could not address this guideline in my data because there were no other styles of assessment used in this research. Because all of the assessments used in my research were collaborative, I assume they would tend to be longer in general but there was not a standard assessment length to which I could compare them. Hilsenroth and Cromer’s

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<tr>
<td>1 – Conduct longer, more involved, depth-oriented interviews (1)</td>
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<td>2 – Adopt a collaborative stance toward the client (112)</td>
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<td>3 – Speak with emotional and cognitive content (22)</td>
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<td>4 – Use clear, concrete, experience-near language (22)</td>
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<th>Focus</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 – Allow clients to initiate discussion of salient issues (96)</td>
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<td>6 – Actively explore these issues (62)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 – Clarify sources of distress (57)</td>
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<td>8 – Identify cyclical relational themes (81)</td>
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<td>9 – Facilitate client affect and experience (13)</td>
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<td>10 – Explore uncomfortable feelings (15)</td>
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<td>11 – Explore in-session process and affect (13)</td>
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<td>12 – Maintain active focus on these related topics (8)</td>
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<th>Feedback</th>
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<td>13 – Review and explore the meaning of assessment results (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 – Provide the client with new understanding and insight (68)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 – Offer psychoeducation on symptoms and the treatment process (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 – Collaboratively develop individual treatment goals and tasks (11)</td>
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Table 4.1 – Summary of Clinician Activities Found to be Significantly Related to Positive Therapeutic Alliance During the Initial Interview and Psychological Assessment. (Hilsenroth & Cromer, 2007, p. 214)

*The number in parentheses at the end of each guideline represents the number of times each guideline occurred in the data produced by my research.
(2007) second guideline had the highest number of occurrences of any of their guidelines in my data with 112 occurrences. This high occurrence rate is not surprising because the second guideline encourages therapists to take a collaborative stance toward the client and because all of the therapist participants in my study utilized a collaborative approach to assessment there was a plethora of these moments. It is worth noting that there was considerable overlap in the moments when this guideline was found in the data and occurrences of the fifth guideline. The overlap of this occurrence makes sense because the fifth guideline encourages therapists to make a collaborative gesture by giving client space to initiate discussion. The fifth guideline also had the second highest number of occurrences in the data.

The third and fourth guidelines of *speaking with emotional and cognitive content* and *using clear, concrete, experience-near language* had 22 occurrences each. The fourth guideline could be seen as relating to the specific contextualizing experiences for both clients (CE1) and therapists (TE3) in the way it helps them relate the testing materials to their life world with the use of concrete, experience-near language. The fifth guideline of *allowing client to initiate discussion of salient issues* moves us from the frame into the focus category of guidelines. It had the second highest amount of occurrences in the data with 96 and relates to the 12th therapist experience from my findings in the way that it allows space for the clients to initiate discussion or respond to feedback. I already mentioned that there was considerable overlap with the fifth guideline and the second guideline, but there was also a fair amount of common occurrences between this guideline and the other ones under the focus category, particularly guidelines six through eight which seem to serve as follow up steps to
allowing clients to initiate discussion. The sixth guideline follows closely from the previous one in that it involves the exploration of issues brought up by the client in the fifth guideline. Sixty-two occurrences of this guideline were found in the data. The sixth guideline relates to the 14th therapist experience from my findings in which therapists offered alternative interpretations in reaction to their clients’ corrections or input. The seventh guideline also follows from the fifth one because allowing clients to bring up problematic issues in their lives would help to clarify sources of distress for them. This guideline occurred 57 times in the data. The eighth guideline encourages therapists to identify cyclical relational themes and it had the third highest number of occurrences in the data with 81. It is easy to see how this guideline relates directly to the seventh client experience and ninth therapist experience from my findings which recognized the way themes and metaphors created in the assessment carried over into ongoing therapeutic work.

The remaining guidelines under the focus category are concerned with two specific aspects of the therapeutic situation and had relatively fewer occurrences in the data. The ninth and 10th guidelines of facilitating client affect, and experience and exploring uncomfortable feelings had 13 and 15 occurrences in the data respectively. These guidelines can be viewed in parallel with the eighth client experience from my findings where clients acknowledged the ways collaborative assessment can be emotionally evocative. The 11th and 12th guidelines are concerned with what takes place in the in-session process between therapist and client in order to explore and maintain focus on it. These guidelines, which occurred 13 and eight times in the data respectively, serve to keep therapists focused on what is unfolding in the present moment between the
therapists and their clients, such as transferential developments and so forth. The therapist experiences from my findings that this guideline is most closely related to are when therapists collaborated during the actual assessment (TE18) and when moments in the assessment resembled the kind of work that is done in therapy (TE16).

The next guidelines bring us to the feedback category, which is the final category for Hilsenroth and Cromer’s (2007) findings. The 13th guideline is to review and explore the meaning of assessment results and the 14th guideline is to provide the client with new understanding and insight. These guidelines had relatively high occurrences of 57 and 68 respectively. They resemble the the second and fifth guidelines due to their collaborative nature and the elevated degree of overlap in their moments of occurrence. These guidelines could also be related to the contextualizing (CE1, TE3) and theme/metaphor creating (CE7, TE9) experiences for clients and therapists because of their meaning-making and insight-producing qualities. However, they are more closely tied to the client and therapist experiences that recognized the way collaborative assessment worked as a catalyst for therapy or made the idea of therapy more promising (CE10, TE8) and made the client feel more relaxed, comfortable, and empowered (CE11, TE13) because it was as a result of new insights and understandings gained through collaborative work done during their assessment that clients felt excited, hopeful, relaxed, and empowered. Nonetheless, we can see an overall collaborative similarity that appears here between the second, fifth, 13th, and 14th guidelines of this study and several of the client and therapist experiences from my research (CE1, 7, 10, 11; TE3, 8, 9, 13), all of which speaks to the power of giving clients the space to participate in and find new insights through the assessment process.
The 15th guideline is more explanatory than the other guidelines in that it encourages therapists to *offer psychoeducation on symptoms and the treatment process*. This occurred 10 times in the data and relates directly to the client (CE12, 13) and therapist (TE15) experiences in which the therapists provided their clients with explanations pertaining to the assessment and treatment process. The 16th and final guideline recommends that therapists *collaboratively develop and explore treatment goals and tasks* with their clients. This guideline had the second lowest number of occurrences with eight and it was difficult to find any client or therapist experiences from my findings that related directly to it. This could be because I only used assessment accounts and did not include initial interviews as part of the data for my research. Occurrences of this guideline were more likely to have been part of the intake interview and my research did not include intake interviews. However, if we take a general look at the comparisons made between the guidelines presented in this study and the experiential findings of my research we can see a considerable degree of overlap and we also find increased support for several specific approaches and techniques that therapists can employ in order to make their assessments more collaborative and more successful. **Holm-Denoma**

The next study with which we will compare my research findings was conducted by Holm-Denoma and colleagues and reported in 2008. They hoped to debunk the notion that providing diagnostic feedback to clients is harmful. They gathered data from assessment clients and found that diagnostic feedback did not increase clients’ negative emotions but instead contributed to a considerable increase in their positive emotions. These positive emotions were found to be relatively stable and enduring. **Holm-Denoma**
et al. also found that mental health professionals have a greater likelihood of increasing their clients’ positive emotions if the feedback is provided in an empathetic manner. Although it is difficult to compare most of these findings to the results of my study because I did not directly ask my client participants to gauge their emotive responses to the feedback, the last finding presented by Holm-Denoma et al. does relate to one of my therapist experiences. In one of the descriptive therapist experiences I called attention to moments in the assessment and feedback sessions when the interactions resembled psychotherapy or appeared especially therapeutic, particularly through the use of empathy on the part of the therapist (TE16). Following from the findings in Holm-Denoma et al. (2008), it is likely that these moments also provided these clients with some enduring positive emotions that they could take away with them.

Even though it was not a concrete finding of their study, Holm-Denoma et al. (2008) went a step further to challenge the assumption that if clients are given difficult feedback it will be received negatively, and they called for further research in this direction. This is the point where the findings of my research relate to this study most directly. A few of the client experiences from my research speak directly to their experience of receiving difficult or discordant feedback from their therapist. Although eight examples were found of clients having difficulty receiving discordant results (CE2), there were six examples of clients feeling okay with receiving discordant feedback (CE3), and there were nine examples of clients feeling that their acquisition of discordant feedback was helpful or useful (CE3a). If we combine the two latter experiences we can say that more than twice as many examples were found of clients being either okay with or finding utility in receiving discordant feedback than those who had difficulty receiving
it. The clients who found this experience to be particularly helpful said that they liked being challenged by their therapist, that it opened up new paths for them to explore together, that it gave them an opportunity to explain themselves more fully, and that it helped their therapist get to know them better. These experiences also resonated with the therapists’ experience. Even though some therapists had difficulty giving discordant feedback (TE4), several of them still found it to be helpful and productive in the end (TE4a). So we see that this comparison between my findings and those of Holm-Denoma et al. (2008) provides increased support for their finding that providing diagnostic feedback to clients is not harmful. This comparison also shows that even though dealing with discordant feedback can be a potentially difficult and unpleasant prospect for clients and therapists, there is a considerable likelihood that it will turn out to be a helpful and productive endeavor.

Ward

Each of the first two studies with which we have compared the findings of my research emphasize the perspective of either the therapist or the client. Similar to my research, the study we will now turn to emphasized both therapist and client perspectives. The comparisons to this study are fairly direct because my research method was fashioned closely after it. In his qualitative study of significant events in psychological assessment feedback, Ward (2005) found three thematic categories for assessesees and five thematic categories for assessors that arose from his participants’ experiences of receiving or giving assessment feedback. From this point on I will simply refer to Ward’s (2005) thematic categories as themes for the purposes of our discussion. The comparisons made between Ward’s findings and the findings of this research are
presented in table 4.2 above. The first assessees theme occurred when they discussed the importance of the assessor to the client. There were 31 occurrences of this theme in my data. One of the client experiences I found that relates most directly to this theme is the clients’ expression of liking the humanness of their therapist and how it helped build rapport with them (CE9). This experience was where clients obtained glimpses into their therapists’ fallibility which made clients feel a closer connection to their therapists on a human level, increased the acceptance of their own imperfections, and made clients more willing to reveal these aspects of themselves. The next two client experiences that relate to Ward’s assessees theme of the importance of the assessor are when clients were either

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<th>Table 4.2 – Comparisons between Ward’s (2005) findings and the findings of this research.</th>
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<td>*The number in parentheses at the end of each theme represents the number of times it occurred in the data produced by my research. The notations at the very end of each theme indicate the client or therapist experience (CE or TE) from my research that relates to it.</td>
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- **Client Themes**
  - Importance of the assessor (31) – CE9, 12, 13
  - How assessees experience discordant or unwanted feedback (36) – CE2, 3, 3a
  - The assessment helped move clients from a subjective stance of global-deficiency to one of autonomy (14) – CE1, 7, 10, 11

- **Therapist Themes**
  - Importance of getting the assessees involved in feedback (93) – TE5, 8a, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20
  - Different approaches to providing feedback (18) – TE2, 4, 11, 13 14, 15, 16, 20
  - Challenges assessors face in the provision of feedback (58) – TE1, 4, 4a, 5, 6, 7, 21
  - Elements of a successful feedback session (47) – CE8; TE8, 9, 11, 13, 17
  - Assessors’ experiences of mutative elements during feedback (23) – TE 3, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19
comforted (CE12) or discomforted by their therapists’ explanations of feedback or of the assessment process (CE13). The overwhelming number of examples in favor of the “comforted” experience over the “discomforted” experience shows that this therapist-client interaction is not only important but also has a strong likelihood of having positive repercussions. Ward’s findings under this theme had more to do with assesses feeling understood or empathetically attended to by their assessor. Even though none of the client experiences I found relate directly to these feelings that Ward (2008) discussed, there are a few of my client experiences (CE3a, 10, 11, 14, 15) that these feelings could have contributed to and one therapist experience that specifically recognized moments when these feelings occurred (TE16).

The next assessee theme that Ward found dealt with how assesses experience discordant or unwanted results. There were 36 occurrences of this theme found in my data. The experiences I found where clients either had difficulty receiving discordant feedback (CE2) or were okay receiving it (CE3) and even found it to be helpful (CE3a) correspond directly to this theme. As we have seen, each of these client experiences had eight, six, and nine examples respectively but by combining the last two we can see that clients were much more likely to be receptive to the difficult feedback or find it useful in some way than to have difficulty with it. Although Ward’s findings spoke more to the difficult emotional responses his assessees had to this type of feedback, some of them also found it useful in the sense that it either confirmed certain aspects of themselves that they already knew or it opened their eyes to other aspects that they had previously been unaware of.
The last assessee theme that Ward recognized was *how they used the results to move from global self-blame to informed action*. Fourteen occurrences of this theme were found in my data. The client experiences from my research that relate to this theme are when clients found it helpful to contextualize the assessment results (CE1), created themes and metaphors during the assessment that carried over into ongoing therapeutic work (CE7), experienced collaborative assessment as a catalyst for therapy (CE10), and found that collaboration helped them feel more relaxed, involved, and empowered (CE11). Initially it appeared as though my 15th client experience of initially feeling skeptical about collaborative assessment but finding it helpful in the end also related to this theme. However, Ward’s theme is more about a reversal involving the way assessees feel about themselves rather than dealing with the assessment process as my client does. Contextualizing the assessment results corresponds to an aspect of this theme discussed by Ward where assessees recognized the specificity and personalized nature of the feedback. Contextualizing can also be seen as facilitating the movement of clients from self-blame to informed action in that it helps clients better understand their own style of dealing with and moving through the world. This increased understanding could enable clients to gain a different perspective on their coping style and decide whether or not to devote efforts toward making positive changes in that direction. Enhancing the clients’ creative abilities by helping them produce relevant, useful, and recurring themes and metaphors would also have an enabling effect toward constructive action. The last two client experiences (CE10 and CE11) are also relatable because helping clients feel more hopeful, excited, involved and empowered would certainly increase their sense of motivation and agency. This in turn would make clients feel more capable of taking
healthy and informed actions. This assessee theme and the corresponding client experiences could also be viewed in relation to Ward’s last two assessor themes regarding success and mutative factors in feedback because they all involve positive changes on the clients’ part. This commonality between Ward’s assessee and assessor themes provides a good transition from discussing his assessee themes to discussing his assessor themes.

Ward’s first assessor theme involves therapists focusing on or making efforts toward getting the assessee involved in the process of feedback. There were 93 occurrences of this theme in my data. We will see in the process of making these comparisons between assessor themes and therapist experiences that it effectively provides us with lists of methods therapists can employ in order to obtain certain results. They also show us different ways these themes could be manifested in the therapists’ experiences during assessment. The first method therapists can use to increase their clients’ involvement in the assessment process is challenging clients with discordant feedback (TE5) which not only drew clients into either questioning or further explaining their coping styles, but also gave the therapists insight into their client’s coping styles. The second comparison speaks to the way collaborative assessment serves as a catalyst for therapy by showing clients what to expect (TE8a) and that reducing clients’ feelings of being caught off guard can increase their willingness to participate. The therapist experience of setting an appropriate frame by explaining the assessment process (TE15) is similar in this respect of helping clients know what to expect during a collaborative assessment.
The therapist experience from my findings that most directly relates to Ward’s assessor theme of getting assesses involved is that therapists found it helpful to allow space during the assessment for clients to respond, question, and challenge the therapists’ impressions (TE12). It seems obvious that clients’ rates of participation will be significantly decreased if they are given no space to respond, but this comparison reminds us again of how productive it can be to take an overall collaborative stance towards clients during an assessment. This therapist experience of allowing clients space to respond also corresponds to a specific aspect of this theme in which Ward considers the assessor’s interest in the assessee’s interpretation of the results. One therapist experience that follows from the assessor’s interest in the assessee’s interpretation was when therapists were impressed with their clients’ responses or insights (TE17). Obviously, therapists cannot be impressed by their client’s insights if their clients are not allowed to respond in the first place (TE12). Under this experience, several therapists even shared their amazement with their clients. I would imagine this served to foster, reinforce, and encourage their clients’ participation and probably contributed to the client experience in which they expressed feeling relaxed, comfortable, involved, and empowered (CE11). Another way therapists can engage clients is to tailor the assessment to the specific client by choosing certain materials based on impressions gained from the client in the initial meeting or intake paperwork (TE20). Tailoring the assessment to the specific client could help clients to engage the materials by connecting them with tests that are more conducive to their relational styles and would possibly allow them to be more willing to discuss the results. Some of the therapists in my study went a step further by having a discussion with their clients about which tests to use in order to include clients in the
decision, which immediately set a collaborative tone for their interactions. The last comparison to Ward’s first assessor theme reveals how therapists recognized that all of these aspects or actions taken during an assessment can help clients feel more relaxed, comfortable, and involved (TE13). This therapist experience corresponds to an aspect Ward pointed out where assessors used different ways, like verbal expressions and physical cues, to gauge their assesses’ level of involvement. My therapist participants used similar indications to gauge similar feelings in their clients.

The second assessor theme that Ward delineated calls attention to the different ways assessors approach the process of feedback. Eighteen occurrences of this theme were found in my data. Ward discussed two aspects of this theme: assessors determining which results to include, and setting a framework for the feedback session. The therapist experience of enjoying the flexibility afforded by collaborative assessment to incorporate one’s personal style or approach (TE2) applies to both of these aspects. This therapist experience is the one that is most directly relatable to Ward’s second assessor theme. The therapist experience of choosing which assessment materials to use with each client in order to tailor it to the client (TE20) relates to the first aspect of this theme even though that aspect has more to do more with the presentation of assessment results to the client than tailoring the assessment to the client. In addition, the therapist experience of having difficulty giving discordant feedback (TE4) may correspond because several therapists debated with themselves whether or not to give their clients certain pieces of difficult feedback, with some therapists deciding to share the feedback and others deciding to withhold it. The experiences in which therapists set a frame for the assessment through their explanations of the assessment process (TE15) and then they
more specifically described assessment as taking a snapshot of where clients are in their lives right now (TE13) clearly relate to the second aspect Ward discussed of setting a framework for the feedback session. A few of my other therapist experiences related to this theme but not to these aspects of it were when therapists offered alternate interpretations following their clients’ corrections or input (TE14), when moments of the assessment resembled psychotherapy or became therapeutic (TE16), and when collaboration occurred during the actual assessment instead of in the feedback session (TE20). Most of these comparative therapist experiences show particular ways therapists brought in their own therapeutic style or approach into the assessment process.

Ward’s third assessor theme covers the *challenges assessors might face in the provision of feedback*, which was found 58 times in my data. Ward found that his assessors had particular difficulty sharing feedback with their clients when it dealt with the client’s emotional functioning or contradicted the client’s preexisting understandings of their problems. The therapist experience from my findings of having difficulty sharing discordant feedback with clients (TE4) had more examples of feedback contradicting the client’s pre-existing understandings of their problems than dealing with the client’s emotional functioning. However, these examples of contradicting feedback more often led to moments when these therapists found the experience to be helpful or useful anyway (TE4a). One therapist experience showed that a therapist’s lack of experience or increased anxiety regarding the administration of assessments in general (TE1) can increase the difficulty of providing feedback while another one showed how therapists can use feedback provision as an opportunity to challenge or push their clients in positive ways (TE5). The last two comparisons that can be made between Ward’s third assessor
theme and my findings have to do with challenges assessors may face in a general sense because they focus on the therapists’ concerns that the assessment might be a negative distraction from therapeutic work (TE21) and feeling overwhelmed by having too much to manage or pay attention to during an assessment (TE6).

There is considerable overlap between Ward’s last two assessor themes and my therapist experiences. This makes sense because these two themes deal with indications of a successful feedback session and mutative factors in feedback. Let us begin with making comparisons to the fourth assessor theme of indications of successful feedback. These indications involved collaborating, resonating with the assessee in an emotional way, and providing the assessee with an overarching meaning-structure, causal explanations, or concrete recommendations. Forty-seven occurrences of this theme were found in my data. Although the emotional resonance aspect of this theme could relate to the therapist experience that collaborative assessment can help clients feel more relaxed, comfortable and involved (TE13), it has a closer correlation to the client experience of recognizing times when the assessment was emotionally evocative for them (CE8).

The other therapist experiences we will compare to this theme relate to virtually all of the other aspects of this theme that Ward discussed. Some of the ways an assessment could be considered successful are when it serves as a catalyst for ongoing therapy (TE8), it prepares the client for what to expect (TE8a), or it builds rapport through its ability to give both therapist and client insight into how it is to work with the other person in a therapeutic setting (TE8b). Another way to view an assessment as successful is the extent to which the therapist and client are able to create and develop themes and metaphors that carry over productively into their therapeutic work (TE9).
This can be especially helpful in situations where the therapist or client have the sense that what was co-created during the assessment might not have arisen otherwise. If an assessment helps to give the therapist and client a better understanding of what is going on in the client’s life at the moment (TE11) it could also be considered successful. Lastly, the experience that gives us one of the clearest indications that the assessment was seen as a success from a therapists’ perspective is when therapists were impressed with their clients’ insight or responses to the feedback (TE17).

The last assessor theme that Ward presents is *experiencing mutative factors in feedback*. This theme came through explication of the assessee’s implicit knowledge or when the assessee was able to move from negative global self-image toward more nuanced appreciations of self. Eighteen occurrences of this theme were found in my data. The comparisons this theme shares with the previous assessor theme are therapists creating ongoing themes and metaphors (TE9), the assessment helping clients feel more relaxed and involved (TE13), and the therapists being impressed by their clients insight and responses (TE17). We can immediately see that clients must be allowed to explicate their own implicit knowledge (TE12) in order for their therapists to be impressed with such explications in TE17. We can also see how contextualizing clients’ experiences (TE3) could help them move from negative global self-images toward more nuanced appreciations of self by applying the assessment results to specific contexts from their everyday life experiences. One might assume that positive change could also occur for clients if the assessment becomes therapeutic in some way (TE16) or if their therapist uses the provision of discordant feedback in order to challenge or push clients (TE5). The last two comparisons that can be made for this theme involve reversals for the
therapists in the ways they offered different or alternative interpretations based on clients’ corrections or input (TE14) and the therapists being skeptical of the assessment process at first but finding it to be helpful or productive in the end (TE19). These modifications in the therapists’ perspectives were often linked to changes in their clients’ perspectives.

As we can see from the comparisons between Ward’s study and my research, the evidence I found mainly supports Ward’s conclusions. My findings illustrate some specific ways that the experiences both he and I found are manifested. This comparison with Ward’s study also points to some of my unique findings being related to some new and different ways the assessment process can be taken up by both therapists and clients.

Goicoechea

The last comparative study was a factor analysis conducted by Goicoechea et al. at the Duquesne University Psychology Clinic. This survey study obtained clients’ perspectives on collaborative assessment and produced six factors (see Table 4.3 below). Goicoechea et al. (2009) called the first factor the collaborative factor because it appeared to measure the degree to which clients felt that the clinician valued and took into account their input, that the assessment was a joint endeavor, and that they worked together to come up with interpretations and suggestions. Two client experiences from my findings that immediately come to mind as relating to this factor are that clients noticed how collaborative assessment helped them to create themes and metaphors that carried over into ongoing therapeutic work in a useful way (CE7) and that collaborative assessment made them feel involved and empowered (CE11) because these experiences were either co-created or joint endeavors for both clients and therapists. I did not ask clients directly if they felt their therapists valued their input during the assessment, but if
we turn to the therapists’ experiences we can see how comparisons can be made between their experiences and this factor. Therapist experiences from my research that relate to this collaborative factor were that the therapists allowed space for their clients to respond to and challenge feedback (TE12), offered alternative interpretations based on their clients’ input (TE14), were impressed by their clients’ insights and interpretations (TE17), and when collaboration occurred during the assessment (TE18). Goicochea et al. called the second factor the *representational* or *nod factor* because it reflected the extent to which clients felt the assessment results and feedback accurately represented their concerns and life situation. In response to this the clients “nodded” in recognition of the resonance between the results with their own life experience. The client experience that I found to be most closely related to this factor is clients finding it helpful to contextualize the assessment results in everyday experiences from their lives (CE1). This factor could also relate to their experience of creating ongoing themes and metaphors with their therapist during the assessment (TE7) because for these themes and metaphors to have meaning for the clients they have to resonate in the clients’ lived experience.

**Table 4.3** – Comparisons between Goicoechea’s (2009) factors and the findings of this research.

*The notations at the end of each factor indicate the client or therapist experience (CE or TE) from my research that relates to it.*

- **Collaborative Factor** – CE7, 11; TE12, 14, 17, 18
- **Representational or Nod Factor** – CE1, 7
- **Helpful or Aha Factor** – CE1, 3a, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15
- **Relational Factor** – CE9, 10, 11
- **Negative Impressions Factor** – CE2, 4, 13, 16, 17
- **Testing Factor** – CE8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17
The third factor measured the degree to which clients found the assessment to be helpful or useful. This factor could be known as the *helpful* or *Aha factor* because it helped clients gain new insights about themselves through collaborative assessment. Although there are many aspects of the assessment experience that my client participants found to be helpful or useful (CE1, 3a, 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15), the ones that seemed to correspond the most to this factor because of their ability to produce new insights for clients were the ones in which clients contextualized the results in their lived experience (CE1), created ongoing themes and metaphors (CE7), received discordant feedback in a useful way (CE3a), and found the assessment to be more helpful in the end than they initially anticipated (CE15).

The fourth factor was named the *relational factor* because it is concerned with the way each client’s relationship with the clinician was significant to the assessment endeavor. The clearest comparison with my client participants’ experience is clients appreciating the humanness of their therapist and feeling that it helped them build rapport (CE9). We can also see how collaborative assessment helping clients feel more excited, energized, hopeful (CE10), relaxed, involved, and empowered (CE11) also relates to this factor in that the client’s relationship with their therapist was usually a large factor in these experiences.

The fifth factor Goicoechea et al. distinguished was named the *negative impressions factor*. It recognizes aspects of the assessment that clients felt did not go well in that they felt defensive, less likely to explore pertinent issues, or that their therapist read too much into test results. The most direct comparison that can be made to this factor is the client experience of feeling guarded or feeling a desire to protect
themselves by not saying too much about themselves (CE4). The next clearest comparison to this factor is when clients had difficulty receiving discordant feedback (CE2) because they often felt that the feedback was a rush to judgment or assumed too much about them too quickly. A client experience that follows from this is when clients questioned or did not trust the assessment feedback (CE17) for similar reasons. A couple of client experiences that are loosely related to this factor are clients being discomforted by the therapists’ explanations of the assessment process (CE13) in that it usually involved a fear of being judged or limited by the tests, and clients feeling that talking would have been more productive than the assessment (CE16). The latter experience is a negative impression but is more about questioning the overall structure of the session than feeling defensive or judged. The last factor was admittedly the most difficult one for Goicoechea et al. to label. They ended up calling it the testing factor because it gauged how clients felt about the testing aspect of the assessment process. Goicoechea et al. pointed out that the responses they found for this factor had an inherent emotional quality which makes this factor relate to some of the emotionally evocative client experiences I found (CE8, 10-14). The majority of these client experiences were positive and only one was negative (CE13). However, the two client experiences that relate most directly to this factor were negative in that they involved the clients’ questioning of the assessment process or tests (CE17) and feeling that they would have rather talked to their therapist than have been assessed (CE16). While these negative experiences are worth making note of in relation to this factor, it is also worth noting again that overall the clients had far more positive experiences in relation to the assessment process and testing than negative ones.
From the comparisons of the results of these four studies to the findings of my research we can draw several conclusions. We see that collaboration can put therapists and clients on the same page regarding how they can use assessment tools and what they expect to get out of the process. We can see that providing feedback to clients is often much more helpful than harmful. We find increased support for different experiences clients may have during an assessment and might take with them, as well as different methods that therapists can employ in order to make their assessments more collaborative and successful. Because my findings are qualitative, we find not only increased support for other findings, we also gain a more intricate understanding of these experiences and methods that allows a deeper appreciation for the nuanced ways they play out and in lived experience. We are also presented with new insights and experiences that go beyond the results of these other studies. Therapists can find comfort in knowing that even though they may make mistakes or will inevitably encounter difficult moments during assessment administration and collaboration that usually these moments can turn out to be useful and productive. We will now discuss the contributions that my particular research findings can make toward the practice of collaborative assessment.

**Implications of this Study for the Practice of Collaborative Assessment**

From the findings of this research project we can extrapolate several methods and techniques that can be employed by therapists who chose to take a collaborative approach to psychological assessment (see Table 4.4 below). First, we can see that making collaborative efforts to engage clients and increase their level of active participation during an assessment can not only encourage them to feel more relaxed, involved, excited, and hopeful about their treatment, it can also make the overall experience more
fun and enjoyable. Their ability to see that fruitful therapeutic work can be done so early in their work with their assessor-therapist is promising, gives them concrete findings to take with them, and helps them become further invested in their treatment. Some specific ways this can be accomplished are by allowing clients the space to question and

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Table 4.4 – Implications of this Study for the Practice of Collaborative Assessment

- **Collaboration during assessment:**
  - Helps clients feel more relaxed, involved, excited and hopeful about treatment.
  - Helps to build rapport, strengthens the working alliance, and encourages active participation from clients.
  - Makes the assessment experience more fun and enjoyable.

- **Specific practices to increase collaboration and engagement during an assessment include:**
  - Having the same clinician as assessor and therapist in ongoing psychotherapy.
  - Providing clear, genuine explanations of the assessment tests and process that reduces the client’s fears of being judged or limited.
  - Allowing clients space to question the assessment findings and process.
  - Contextualizing the assessment findings in the client’s lived world.
  - Tailoring the assessment to the individual client.
  - Creating ongoing themes and metaphors.

- **Collaborative assessment gives assessors and therapists increased freedom to incorporate their own therapeutic style.**

- **Increased practice with collaborative assessment increases the assessor-therapist’s comfort with the process and the success of the assessment.**

- **Challenges for therapists during collaborative assessment include:**
  - Explaining the assessment process or tests.
  - Having several aspects to manage and pay attention to.
  - Providing clients with difficult or discordant feedback.

- **Practices to reduce challenging aspects of collaborative assessment include:**
  - Provide explanations that are genuine, thorough, and relieve the client’s fears of being judged, reduced, or limited.
  - Consider spreading the assessment out over several sessions.
  - Use discordant feedback to productively challenge clients.

- **Skepticism regarding collaborative assessment from both assessor-therapists and clients often transforms into optimism as the process unfolds.**
challenge the tests and feedback, helping clients relate to the assessment tools and results by contextualizing data in terms of the clients’ lived experience, tailoring the assessment to the specific client, and by making a joint effort to create themes and metaphors that can be referred back to and developed further in ongoing therapeutic work. Because these techniques appeared to be just as effective regardless of whether they were implemented during a separate feedback session or during the assessment itself, therapists should feel free to choose whichever approach suits the situation. These collaborative efforts can build rapport, strengthen the working alliance, and set a tone for the ensuing treatment that is mutual and shared.

As with most things in life, increased experience and practice with conducting collaborative assessments typically will enhance one’s success and comfort with conducting them in the future. Some of the challenges that therapists could typically expect to encounter involve explanations of the tests and the assessment process, having a variety of responsibilities to pay attention to and manage, and the potential difficulty that can be found in providing clients with discordant feedback. However, we found that explanations were more likely to be well received if they were genuine, thorough, and geared toward reducing the clients’ fears of being judged, reduced, or limited in some way. Some of these therapists suggested spreading out the assessment over several sessions thereby reducing their own feelings of being overwhelmed with things to manage, and freeing them to explore areas with their clients in the moment. We also saw ways therapists were able to use discordant feedback to challenge their clients in productive ways, and that even though discordant feedback can be unpleasant to deal with from both sides there is still a strong likelihood that working with it can ultimately
turn out to be valuable and worthwhile. Similarly, it should also be comforting to know that despite entering an assessment with a skeptical outlook or having missteps made by the therapist during the assessment there is still a good chance that both persons’ doubt can evolve into optimism, and that the allowance for human error can eventually bring collaborators closer.

This research also points us toward several experiences that clients can expect to have when participating in a collaborative assessment (see Table 4.5 below). First, clients are invited to take a role of active participant in the process of assessment, specifically by providing feedback in response to the test findings, contextualizing test findings in their own lived experience, and creating themes and metaphors that can carry over into ongoing therapy. Collaborative assessment may be experienced by clients as fun, enjoyable, and emotionally evocative. Clients may find that collaborative assessment can serve as a catalyst for ongoing therapy by bringing feelings of hope and excitement in anticipation of continued therapeutic work. Clients may often have a preference for “projective” tests to “bubble” tests because the former are more interactive and engaging. Clients may experience ambivalence with regard to feeling guarded or protective of themselves, but also feel a desire to share more about themselves in order to further the treatment process. Even though clients might be provided with feedback from their therapist that may initially be difficult or unpleasant to hear, many clients often find such feedback to eventually be helpful. Clients are generally comforted by their therapists’ explanations of the assessment if the explanations are genuine, thorough, and reduce the clients’ fears of being judged or limited. Lastly, even though clients may initially feel skeptical of collaborative assessment, they generally find it to be helpful or
Therefore, when we turn the findings of this research into practical application we can see that they not only provide us with a deeper understanding of what it is like to participate in a collaborative assessment as either a client or a therapist, but the findings also can help to prepare, guide, and comfort us with regard to various aspects of the assessment experience.

**Limitations and Considerations for Continued Research on Collaborative Assessment**

One limitation of this study is that I ended up with fewer participants than I had initially intended. Due to difficulty in gathering data and to practical restrictions I settled for five therapist-client pairs instead of six. Even though I was ultimately satisfied with the amount of data I collected, it would have been nice to reach my initial goal and it

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<td>• Clients are expected to take a role of active participant in collaborative assessment, particularly by providing feedback in response to test findings, contextualizing test findings in their own lived experience, and creating themes and metaphors</td>
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<td>• Clients may experience collaborative assessment as fun, enjoyable, emotionally evocative, exciting, and as a catalyst for ongoing therapy.</td>
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<td>• Clients may find that they initially have a preference for “projective” tests over “bubble” tests.</td>
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<td>• Clients may simultaneously want to guard or protect themselves, but also feel a desire to share more about themselves in order to further the treatment process.</td>
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<td>• Clients may initially experience feedback as difficult or unpleasant to hear, but then find such feedback to be helpful or useful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clients are often comforted by their therapists’ explanations of the tests and of the assessment process that are provided before assessment begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clients may initially feel skeptical of collaborative assessment, but usually find it to be helpful or enjoyable in the end.</td>
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could have possibly provided increased insight as well as more interesting comparisons. The other limitations that immediately come to mind have to do with the participants. All of the therapist participants I used in this study were still in training and they all came from the same Psychology Clinic. They are also all Caucasian, similar in age, mostly male, and share a similar orientation with regard to therapeutic style. All of the client participants were Caucasian and mostly male as well. However, unlike the therapists, the clients did vary in age from 20 to 50 years-old. Increased diversity among participants with regard to gender and race or ethnicity, as well as therapists’ age, experience, and orientation might have produced results that allowed for a more comprehensive range of comparisons and insights. Specifically, studies of experienced clinicians conducting collaborative assessments in private practice sessions would be helpful.

The findings of this study also indicate directions that future research projects can take in order to contribute to the understanding and practice of psychological assessment. Holm-Denoma’s (2008) study suggested that research be conducted to discover more about the possibility of clients receiving difficult or discordant feedback in positive ways. Although the findings of my research shed some light on this aspect of the assessment experience, there is still more that can be understood about it, specifically with regard to the various ways therapists can present difficult feedback to their clients in order to increase the likelihood of it being explored productively. The first (T1WD, p. 2) and second (TT2, p. 15) therapists I interviewed talked about their struggles and deliberations about what pieces of feedback to share with their clients and which ones to keep to themselves. Following from this I would agree with a suggestion from another study (Poston & Hanson, 2010) that more research be conducted on finding the appropriate
“dose” or amount of feedback that is shared with clients and whether spreading the feedback out over time might make it more palatable for clients in order to increase the amount of work they can do with it. The last suggestion I have for further research in this area follows from the increased degree of overlap found in the client and therapist experiences of this study when compared to the findings of other research on mental health treatment. Perhaps increased collaboration during therapeutic interaction could increase instances of overlap in perspective for therapists and clients when they are asked to evaluate their assessment experience later.

In the end, the findings of this research not only give us greater insight into what it is like to experience collaborative assessment as a client or therapist, it adds to the body of literature that offers guidance to therapists regarding techniques they can employ to make their assessments more effective and raises questions that can give direction to future research endeavors. This study also contributes to the literature that advocates for the usefulness and positive power of collaborative assessment.
References


Appendixes A: Forms and Paperwork
CONSENT FORM

Title: Assessor and Client Experiences of Collaborative Psychological Assessment: An empirical-phenomenological study.

Investigator: John Danna, M.A.
Psychology Department
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
[Email and phone number removed]

Dissertation Chair: Constance Fischer, Ph.D.
Psychology Department
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
[Email and phone number removed]

Purpose: I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctorate degree in psychology. The purpose of the study is to understand what it is like to experience collaborative psychological assessment from the perspectives of assessors and clients. These perspectives will be helpful in informing the conceptualization and practice of psychological assessment.

Your Involvement: I will ask your permission to review a videotape of a collaborative assessment you have already participated in. You will be asked to write a short description (2-3 pgs, typed, single spaced) about your assessment experience. You and I will then have a videotaped interview. I will select video segments from your assessment based on your written description for us to view and discuss during our interview. Our interview will take place in a room of the Duquesne Psychology Clinic.

Risks and Benefits: There are no risks involved in this research that are greater than minimal risks involved in everyday life. You will be contributing to the development of collaborative assessment, and you may recall material that you might want to revisit in your therapeutic work.

Compensation: There will be no monetary compensation for your participation in this research.
Confidentiality: Your name, the names of others you mention, and all other personal identifiers will be deleted or disguised in both the written description and in the written transcription of the recorded interview. Some portions of these written transcriptions may be used in my final research document. However, readers of my dissertation will see only the altered documents without identifiers. The tape that we make together during our interview will be stored in a locked place in my home and destroyed after the study is completed.

Right to Withdraw: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the study with no negative consequences for you. You may request that the data you have provided be destroyed.

Summary of Results: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. If you like, I will provide you with an envelope to write your name and permanent address on so that I can mail you an abstract of the research findings within about a year of having completed gathering the data.

Voluntary Consent:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may contact the researcher, Mr. Danna, or the dissertation director, Dr. Fischer, by the means provided above. I may also contact the Chair of Duquesne University’s Institutional Review Board, Dr. Paul Richer, at [phone number removed].

__________________________________________  ______________________
Participant’s Signature  Date

__________________________________________  ______________________
Researcher’s Signature  Date
Solicitation Letter

Assessor and Client Experience of Collaborative Psychological Assessment: An Empirical-Phenomenological Study

To potential participants in a research project,

My name is John Danna and I am a graduate student in Duquesne University’s doctoral program for Clinical Psychology. I am conducting research for my dissertation on the experience of therapists and clients in collaborative psychological assessment. I am seeking participants for my research from Duquesne University’s Psychology Clinic because the collaborative style of psychological assessment is taught and practiced there. I am providing you with this letter in order to briefly describe my research project to you, explain what will be expected of the participants, and see if you are interested in participating in this research.

The purpose of my research is to further psychology’s understanding of what it is like to engage in a collaborative psychological assessment. If you have received this letter, you have already participated in a videotaped assessment for the Duquesne Psychology Clinic which I am hoping to use as part of my research. With your permission, I will view the videotape of your collaborative assessment. I will ask both client and therapist to write out a description (about two-three typed single spaced pages) of what the assessment was like. Then, I will arrange for each person to meet with me individually for an audio taped interview, most likely in the Clinic, although I could arrange to meet elsewhere if that is more convenient for a participant.

Regarding the expectations of the participants during this research project, participants will first be expected to attend an initial meeting with me to discuss this project. I will meet separately with each participant in order to verify your willingness to participate in the research, answer any questions you might have, provide you with my contact information, ask you to read and sign a consent form, ask you to provide me with written descriptions of your experience during the collaborative assessment, and work out a time and manner in which you can return the written descriptions to me. The Duquesne Psychology Clinic will be the preferred place to meet in order to hand the written descriptions to me in person, or you could provide a copy of your written description to the Clinic receptionist/administrative assistant in a sealed envelope for me. However, an alternate location and manner of collection can be worked out if you prefer.

After I have collected your written descriptions, I will spend some time devising interview questions based on my review of the assessment and written descriptions. I will then schedule an interview in the Duquesne Psychology Clinic with each of the participants. In this interview, we will review selected segments of the assessment in which you participated and I will ask you questions about your experience before, during, and after the assessment. I will then transcribe these interviews and analyze the data myself before writing out and presenting my findings in my dissertation.
All data collected (written, video, and audio taped) will be treated as strictly confidential and will be locked away until it is destroyed once the research has been concluded. Any data presented as part of the final dissertation project will be free of any identifying information that could link the data to any of the participants. Participants will be provided with a copy of the abstract from my dissertation upon their request.

I would also like to make it clear to clients that your decision whether to participate in this study or not will have absolutely no bearing on your therapy or relationship with your therapist. The last thing I want is for you to feel pressured into participating in this study in any way. Feel free to ignore this letter if its content is of no interest to you and please know that neither your therapist nor I will think any differently of you for choosing to do so.

If you are interested in participating in this research project or have any further questions, please contact me via email or telephone. If you are a client and you prefer to confirm your interest in participating in my research with your therapist, this is fine. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may stop participating at any point during the study if you wish to do so. There is no compensation provided for participation in this research project. I appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and to consider its contents.

Sincerely,

John Danna, M.A.
Duquesne University
Psychology Clinic
Appendixes B:
Textual Documentation of Identified Experiences
Textual Documentation of Identified Experiences

*Reference guide: Each bullet point has a reference to the data it came from at the end. A “WD” refers to a participant’s written description, a “VS” refers to part of the video summaries of the actual videotaped assessments with each therapist-client pair, and “T” refers to a transcribed interview. Each of these (Except for “VS”) is paired with the participant’s code (Therapists are T1-T4b and Clients are C1-C5) with a “T” before the participants code for transcriptions and a “WD” after the participants code for written descriptions. There are also page references provided as they are appropriate. Page references were often unnecessary the written descriptions because many of them were not longer than one page.

Client Experiences:

1. It can be helpful to contextualize assessment results by relating them to real-world experiences from one’s life. (30)
   
   • “At the time, I’m not sure I realized exactly how much my stories of the pictures were reflecting my own perspective in life… Looking back on it, I can still remember a lot of the specific stories I created for the pictures.” (C2WD)
   
   • “For as much as I can say about my experience of actually taking the test, the fascinating part is how much the results played out in the rest of my sessions, particularly the results of the TAT. For example, there was one particular picture of two girls – one sitting quietly in a tree and one running down below the tree. The girl in the tree has an unhappy look on her face as she sees the other girl running by. Also, I should add that the girl in the tree is dressed neatly and the girl running below looks disheveled. For this card, I told a story of the quiet girl in the tree being unhappy because the girl below interrupted her; however, deep down inside she wishes she could be careless and wild like the girl running below. I’m not sure I could count how many times this card has come up during my sessions. As I began to see [T2] regularly, I noticed themes in my life that included being unhappy with myself, wishing I was something else, being scared of interruption, but yet welcoming it with all of the traveling I’ve done and still do. It’s like the interruption makes me feel careless in some way – the way the girl in the tree wanted to feel. And really, that’s just one example of how the themes in my life were played out through my TAT assessment – There are so many more examples where that came from.” (C2WD)
   
   • “I was surprised at how much of myself I saw in the pictures.” (C3WD)
   
   • “I noticed on at least one occasion that by simply talking about my life, I was seeing some recurring themes. The most notable of which, were the flash cards with pictures.” (C5WD)
   
   • “As I began to examine them, I saw some repetition in the subject matter, which I figured was a reflection of my own (inner) life. Multiple times I saw heartache,
confusion, and sadness and my plight was never clearer to me than at that point. My heartbrokenness had been steering every aspect of who I thought I was. I knew then what [T4a] and I had to work on.” (C4WD)

- C1: Um, well my family life has never been good and that’s been a lot of, uh... Well, I can’t, I should, it it’s not like it’s never been good, it’s been good. But you know, it’s always been a little troubling, stressful, and definitely at the time it was not in a good situation. You know and I agreed with that at the time, like it was taking up a lot of my thoughts and stuff, so. (TC1, pg. 8-9)

- C1: But, I thought that was an interesting point, that I had this preoccupation with the body was surprising to me, something I hadn’t heard. But I didn’t quite understand how he made the connection, how my preoccupation with the body kind of related to my interest in personal health, even though I definitely do have an interest in personal health. So, it was like, “Oh, well, okay. I don’t know how they came to that conclusion, but it is true.” So… (TC1, pg. 9)

- C1: I think I found a pretty good example of when, you know, [my therapist] said I didn’t want a lot of affection in my life. I definitely want it, but I could see situations where I stayed away from it. R: How did you feel about that, when you were able to do that, to be able to relate it to parts of your life? Did you find that helpful, or? C1: Well, yea. I haven’t been going to see [my therapist] for a while but I do feel better and I definitely attribute that to some of the things we talked about. (TC1, pg. 13)

- C1: Yea, I think the hardest thing for me to answer with that was that I didn’t understand how I used it to distance myself from people. I don’t think it is something I use to distance myself. I think it does distance myself, but I don’t use it as a tool to do that. I think it is just a natural [R: It just happens] it’s just because I apparently have all this other knowledge that people have never heard of or know how to reference or something and so it just creates this void. I don’t think it’s a tool I use to distance myself. But in the reverse aspect of that, obviously, if I stopped doing it, it might bring me closer to people. If I censored myself a little bit and didn’t talk about everything that I know, I’d probably be able to...people might be able to relate to me a bit better, but it would kind of be a false relationship, you know, because it wouldn’t be all of who I am. (TC1, pg. 14)

- C2: I mean, I think it was..., like I’m glad that he asked about it because it definitely brought up..., it was definitely a point of departure for our conversation. [R: Okay] So yea, I think all of those went pretty well. R: So you are glad because it kind of brought up some other stuff too. C2: Yea, yea, yea yea. I think those were really helpful and I thought when [T2] would ask me about it, it was helpful because he was asking me and I wasn’t the one having to start the conversation about it. So that was really helpful. I definitely needed that to walk me along through it. (TC2, pg. 4)
• R: I was wondering if it helped to kind of contextualize because you said it made you start thinking about your family. And then something grew, and then the two other figures made it more family like I guess, and asking about them made it more relational, I guess? C2: Maybe, I think that was my idea from the beginning, but I was just focusing more on the girl. I think that when he asked that it just made me talk about the other characters. But I don’t think he would have known that unless he asked it. I’m not sure where the line is of what to ask and what not to ask. (TC2, pg. 5)

• C2:… it was just really surprising how much came out of me during those cards and how much you relate everything back to yourself. And in a way, I did really enjoy taking the test… (TC2, pg. 8)

• R:… And then you related it back to yourself, like you were talking about your dad a little bit and then you said at the end, “I could really relate to that.” [C2: Yea] How was that? C2: Um, well, feeling like I could really relate to it. I don’t know exactly how to answer, “How was it?” except for it was a release of… I could put these feelings onto this picture. So it was sort of like a release… Um, but I felt like talking about this card was this release for me to talk about my dad. So I probably really did want to talk about that [laughs]. But the fact that I had this card and [T2] was asking me if it did relate to me, it was helpful because then I could bring it up. It was an easy way to bring it up. (TC2, pg. 9-10)

• And also him asking me questions like, I forget what he asked me, something about like, “so what would that mean for you?” Those type of questions really help me complete the thought. I feel like the thoughts would be just all over the place and running wild if there wasn’t this sort of like this hook for them, you know, like… R: It helps you stay with it a little bit and follow through. C2: Yea, yea. Follow through definitely. It just helps me complete the thought. Even if it is not going to be completed that day, it just helps to move it along. So those questions definitely, questions like, “What would that mean to you?” and “What exactly were you thinking?” or “What were you exactly feeling?” or “How would it make you feel?” Those kind of things help to move it along… (TC2, pg. 14-15)

• R: You feel like maybe that’s what the fog was referring to? C3: Uncertain about anything really. Pretty dead inside, and not sure what to do with that. I felt like if I hadn’t come and got help it would eventually go away and I could kind of get on with my life until the next fog hit me. But, um… R: How was it to look at that card? I could imagine that was pretty…, I mean a blank card is put in front of you, you know. C3: At that point, we had gone through like seven cards or so and I was loosened up to that. I wasn’t expecting that at all [both laugh]. But I knew pretty quickly what it meant to me, because it could have been a blank card or the table, that is kind of what was going on in my head anyway. So I guess I was just kind of talking off the top of my head about what, the way I was feeling. Whereas, with the pictures I was telling a story about the picture but with this it was just more or less this is where I am right now. (TC3, pg. 4)
• C3:… So, from what I remember, I think it had a lot to do with making sense of where I was at the time. I think it was helpful. (TC3, pg. 5)

• C3: I think as I was reading the pictures, I think the one…, I started telling more of my story. I feel like I did. There was one about a violin that I didn’t…, I feel like I was just trying to tell a story but it even ended up kind of being something that was in me anyway. But I definitely identified with that. I don’t know. When I was looking at the old lady, my grandmother died of Alzheimer’s [R: Sorry to hear that] so that just hit me and I felt like the cold with the birds and stuff was where I was sort of at that moment in time anyway. So I really identified with those two. (TC3, pg. 6)

• R: What do you think changed to make you feel more comfortable? C3: I think it was easier to talk about myself. Even though I was making up a story, it was still sort of based in reality in a lot of ways. It wasn’t something I had to think about really hard. Whereas, just making up a story I sort of had to use another part of my brain to get the creative stuff going and I wasn’t really in that spot at that time anyway. I think what was on my mind was me anyway. I think that’s why it was easier. [R: It just became easier] To talk about myself rather than make something up. R: It was easier to relate to yourself rather than try to just make something up. C3: I think was. (TC3, pg. 6)

• R: But how was that in particular, being able to talk about it and go back? Because as you were talking about it you didn’t know where they were. But then she put the card back in front of you and you looked back at it together and kind of pieced it together with her. How was it to go back with her like that? C3: Fine. I feel like I opened up more. And I got a lot more perspective into it. I ended up throwing out I think three more scenarios, you know. R: So you feel like you got more out when you went back to it. C3: I feel like I did. I think it was painful for me to mess with that card. But looking back on in now I do think it had a lot to do with the uncertainty of the whole situation. [R: Sure, sure] And then with the elder person looking out the window, I was pretty certain about that one being my grandmother… (TC3, pg. 8)

• R: And at the end there was talk about another metaphor that came out about a dawning and a realizing [C3: An awakening] and feelings that were there. [C3: Yea] How was that? C3: It was good. I think I was more alluding to the news, like this moment of surprise. Maybe awakening for the guy with the lady who just didn’t really fully understand until you see with your own eyes. So, it makes sense. It wasn’t tough, but at the same time I was reading a lot of myself into both situations. I was alluding to me coming to therapy and alluding to a change of lifestyle, a change of relationship status, all of that. An awakening. (TC3, pg 8-9)

• R: By that, but you constantly felt like that: bracing. C3: Constantly. Even the 10 years earlier. I feel like that has been a running metaphor for my life for a long time. R: And it really speaks to your experience, it sounds like. C3: Yea, in a lot of ways, and to a lot of people's. I just feel that as a defense mechanism I use that
to not achieve and to not get close to too many people and use it as an excuse to stay comfortable. I just feel like I’m moving away from that. Definitely made progress as far as that goes, which feels good. I think I feel better than I have felt in a long, long time. (TC3, pg. 11)

- R: Sounds like it opened up stuff for you too. C3: It did. But rather than going and saying, “Okay, remember about the photo and this,” and I’m like, “Naw.” You know, [R: It just kind of went with it] It just kind of goes with what we are talking about anyways. So, I guess since it has already been brought up at one point, you don’t really have to refer to… R: You don’t have to refer to the card specifically. C3: No, because it is really coming from something within you anyway, I guess. [R: Yea, yea] But I didn’t realize that until I just saw it. (TC3, pg. 11)

- R: Yea, and how that was for you, like that process of talking about it with him and getting some feedback about it? C4: Well, all of this was very, I don’t want to say healing, but it was very insightful. [R: Okay] I guess because in that situation we were kind of bringing out something that I had never really acknowledged in my head before. Like, I knew it was there but I had never really brought it to the front. Does that make sense? [R: Yea] Yea, okay. I’m telling you this has been so weird. What I just watched has just happened to me in the past few weeks, it is so crazy. [R: Really] Not this week but last Friday when I met with him, that was all I talked about was the graduate school, different ideas, splitting apart. It was just so much more intensified in this one, so I feel like I am kind of continuing with it in that sense. But, I drew myself with a back pack going off the page because I kind of look at myself as a student, but not just a student, like even in the real world I look at myself as a person who doesn’t want to stop learning, who is an academic. I mentioned I want to be a professor someday, maybe I will, I don’t know. But I really go back to that image of me drawing myself off the page because I really feel like…, and like I said this has really been intensified over the past few weeks, or maybe since I last met…, maybe since that video, this idea of me finding my own path, me going off away from them because he mentioned…, you both mentioned how I drew myself in the middle of the page. Well, that is because I was the center of my parents’ world and I think a lot of other kids might envy that when they don’t have siblings that are…, when other people have siblings that are close in age like their parents have to divide their attention. [R: Sure] I think a lot of people would be jealous of that and it’s like people might be saying, “You don’t know what you have.” And I’m like, “Well yea, but I’m the one who actually has it and I’m used to it so much that I don’t think anything of it.” So I think I kind of take it for granted but because that has been virtually my whole life. My siblings are way older than me, they were out of the house when I was growing up. Part of me has that…, like I have so much attention from my parents that it is almost like too much and I just want to break away from it and be on my own. And I talked about that with [T4a] going away to graduate school for the first time. And, um… R: So it seems like that drawing – that picture, that image, that representation – has really stuck with you because that was some time ago. That was several months ago and even now, even within the past few weeks you still have been talking about it and it has been opening things up for you, it
sounds like. C4: Yea, I don’t know if it is like that major shift in life, but I think I have been kind of readying myself for it for a long time because I know it was going to happen. [R: Okay] I think some part of me thinks that if I start dealing with it not it won’t be painful later. R: Okay. So it kind of sparked something for you to work on later and to continue working on, it seems like. [C4: Mhmhm] Yea, okay, alright. And how is it to do that? It seems like it was helpful. C4: Yea, I like the exercises and that one in particular. I mean, I just drew stick figures but it really caused me to put some thought into what I was doing. Not that I didn’t think about anything else before, but it almost seemed like just talking, okay that is one thing, anyone can just talk. And then it’s like, okay, looking at a piece of art and then giving your interpretation of it, well that is another thing. The similarities between those two exercises was me just kind of sort of being passive, like I was just taking it in in wasn’t necessarily being proactive in it, if that makes sense. [R: Mhmhm] But the drawing like forced me to like actually put something in my head. I don’t know if that makes sense. [R: Okay] There was something about this direct connection between me and the real world that like… R: The physical representation [C4: Yes] of what was in your head. [C4: Yea] Okay, there was something very helpful about that [C4: Yea] getting out and externalizing it. C4: Yea, because in the art there is that physical representation but it is not mine. So it’s almost like I’m kind of dependent on this other thing to tell me what I’m thinking. Whereas, if I just do it myself there is no miscommunication, there is no indirect communication. It’s all very…, like you are getting the genuine article, I guess. (TC4, pg. 5-6)

- C4: Well, it wasn’t with my dad. The explanation I gave with him was more to the point. It was sort of with my brother. Something about this dynamic…, anyway, sorry, I think I just figured it out but maybe I should talk it through. [R: Okay] Something about how I see my siblings as having what I want. The whole American dream – the spouse, the kid, the house, the car, all that, and the good job – and it’s like that is the center of their universe and even though it is complicated in other ways and other families work through their problems they have, which I kind of elaborated on there. Looking back I think that was just the details of what I was going through at the time. But in the big picture, I feel like…, not that I can’t have those things or that I can’t get those things, but I feel like my…, I don’t want to say my passion but that is what I am thinking of. Like my direction in life is just really…, I don’t want to say an exception to the rule because I don’t want to sound like I’m better than anyone else because I know I’m not, it’s just one of those things where certain people are called to do certain things. And I just feel like I’m so not the nine to five everyday person. I feel like I’m so not the kind of person that falls into place. And it’s so weird, I just talked to [T4a] about this today. It’s so strange how this is connecting. R: How it is paralleling – watching this tape to what you have been talking about in therapy. C4: Yea, It’s like I just feel like I’m on this border area between the youthful idealist who feels invincible and this person who is in the real world and understands the way things really work. Realism, you might say. I feel like I am at that border area now in my life and I kind of felt like looking at this…, like if you
think of it as a class then that is like an intro, like that is an intro to [my] life and this is [my] life now. Yea. (TC4, pg. 7)

- C4: Um, I think I felt like I was getting something out that I kept in. Because I remember as a child I was just always..., this reminds me of it, I was just always like trying to please people and get their approval for stuff... (TC4, pg. 9)

- C5: You know there are certain things..., looking at pictures certain things will strike you and bring up certain things in your life and some of them can be very sad and other things... And if I remember right there was something very sad. If I remember correctly there was something that brought up a very sad memory when we were talking about it. R: Okay, and how was that when you took that? C5: You know what, I didn’t really mind. I mean, it’s part of life. It makes you sad, another thing makes you happy. You know it just goes back and forth, that is just the way it is. [R: Okay, yea, that’s true.] It’s just part of who we are. Yea, so. You don’t like to revisit the bad but at the same time when you revisit the bad you think about the good that came before it and the reason why you were so sad. (TC5, pg. 1-2)

- R: But, it’s interesting how just a little..., just him noticing that it was in the corner of the page led to you talking about..., you know, you said, “Maybe I do want to not be noticed as much or disappear.” C5: Yea, I kind of analyzed myself quite a bit with that. R: Okay, and how was that to see the drawing to lead to revealing something about yourself like that? C5:... But it’s something..., not drawing something real large and outstanding, you know, you’re not going to take as much notice of something small so it’s going to be a little more insignificant. R: So it seemed to bring it up for you as something you and [T4b] could discuss. How was that? Were you okay with that? C5: Yea, that’s why I am here. R: Yea, and it kind of helped you with that. C5: Oh yea, absolutely. (TC5, pg. 6)

- R: I had noticed at the beginning..., how was it when he asked specifically, “Can you relate this to your life?” How was that? C5: Oh, it’s easy. It’s not a bad question for me. R: Do you feel like it is a helpful question, I mean, to help it relate to your life? C5: Yea, it’s not a foreign question for me either. You know, those are thing I explore with myself all the time or have in the past. R: So you like doing that? [C5: Yea] What do you like about it? C5: I like looking back. It’s like what we were talking about a little while ago. You know, my grandmother died when I was young and there are extremely painful periods in my life when they died and that changed my outlook on pretty much everything, those events. But, how could I not..., you feel that pain and think about it from time to time but everything beforehand was great. R: That’s interesting that you are talking about how it helps you see the good and the bad when looking back because that seemed to be there in that clip too where you were..., um, he was talking about, “Can you relate that to your life where you tend to not want to be noticed and want to disappear?” And you said, “Actually, I can be on the other side of that too. I can put things out there too.” C5: Yea, it’s always been that way. I’ve always been a contradiction that way. You know, in school I wanted to disappear
but at the same time I did things that got everybody’s attention. You know, it was really…, it makes you look at the extremes in your life. My mom was one extreme and my father the other and that’s what I grew up with. (TC5, pg. 7)

- R: What I was thinking about that interaction in particular that struck me was how it seemed like when [T4b] asked the question, I mean, he was kind of like, “I was wondering if you were thinking, why me?” and you were like, “No, actually I wasn’t. I didn’t think that until later, but this is why….‖ And it was interesting how even though what he said kind of missed the mark it led to a better understanding [C5: Yea] in the end. [C5: Mmhm] Is that what you feel like may have happened there? C5: Yea, you know, like you said even though it kind of missed the mark or whatever there but it basically ended up being a guide to where we were going anyway. R: Exactly, exactly. Like even though that happened the door was still open and you led him to a better understanding of you. C5: And that’s the point right there. R: Exactly. [Both laugh] C5: And you know it’s nice. You know, the asking questions and the figuring out process, for me it’s good for me to try to be, like I was saying before, to be a little bit more clear. Because whoever you talk to, it is good if they have a good basic understanding of you. R: Definitely, and that is what you are doing here. I mean, this is early on. I know you that you have known each other and worked together for some time now and this is where you are getting to know each other [C5: Mmhm] so it is still that figuring out process, like you said. C5: Yea, it’s good. (TC5, pg. 8-9)

- R:… And he says, “The test said others might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving.” And he said, “Those are strong words and I wanted to run them by you.” And you said, “Well, it depends.” You said, “I’m not sensitive but I can be hostile and unforgiving and if I’m angry I’m not good at hiding it.” Okay, so… [Watched fifth videotape segment] R: That’s just a short clip. How was that for you? C5: It was good. It was pretty accurate. R: So did you feel like it was helpful to talk about that? I mean, I know you said you know those things about yourself. [C5: Mmhm, yea] But did you feel like it was good, helpful to let [T4b] know those things? C5: Yea, but what I was saying there is more how other people would perceive me because I am sensitive as well. [R: Hm, okay] It’s really difficult because I don’t show all of who I am to everybody. [R: Yea] I kind of pick and choose who sees what. People who are close to me, they see more than others, you know. [R: I think that is very normal] Yea, I think so too. And like the sensitive part, for a man especially, you don’t allow other people to see it. Who knows why? You know, the stigmas that come attached to that through society. [R: Yea] But the hostile and things like that, that is easier for me to show others. [laughs] You know, really hostile and anger and things like that, it goes along with the sensitivity because it is all emotions. It is all feelings. R: Definitely. Did you feel like it was helpful to discuss that with [T4b] [C5: Yea] (TC5, pg. 9)

2 – Difficulty hearing discordant feedback (8)
“[T1] later told me during our review of the assessments that we had taken less than the average time to finish both. At the time, I didn’t feel as though I rushed through the Rorschach, I felt I was rather settled and engaged and moved ahead patiently. But perhaps that is not the case; I could very well have still been rushed from work.” (C1WD, pg. 1)

T1: “It seems like you have no longing for affection, like affection is lacking from your life, you have no conscious wish for it.” C1: “Oh no, I don’t know about that. I don’t want to die alone, want to know that I’m capable of being loved…Maybe that could mean, could relate to how I am not good at taking compliments…” (VS1, seg. 7)

R: It sounds like you are saying you felt judged or something. C1: Yea, I mean, yea. Which is why I’m there, to kind of try to understand who I am and have some kind of judgment about my situation. But, I felt like it was rushed, you know, a rush to judgment. (TC1, pg. 8)

C1: It’s so hard to…You want to have a long answer but you don’t really have time for a long answer. Because obviously I don’t think I just go through my life concentrating on the negative. I hope I am a little humble about my accomplishments. (TC1, pg 8)

C1:…. Yea, that I remember thinking, when you said earlier that I kept everything at a distance and objectified things and I didn’t agree with him because of how I’m passionate about the things I do and my friends and the girlfriends I have had. You know, I feel like I am a very passionate person. So, I remember I didn’t, that’s one of the reasons I didn’t really agree with him. (TC1, pg. 10)

C2: Yea, and like I said in the last clip with the two girls, I was afraid to be limited to one or the other so that test, the results of the Meyer-Briggs test was just another way to feel limited and I just did not want to hear it. (TC2, pg. 13)

C4:… But I really enjoy seeing other people’s points of view about me. Not in a harsh critical sense, necessarily… (TC4, pg. 1)

R: Okay, but was there anything you would change about it now looking back? C4: I guess, the computer stuff just bothered me. Maybe I am inconsistent but like... R: Oh, the bubble test that said you are inconsistent. C4: Yea, the bubble test itself didn’t bother me, but when it said like..., I felt like it was making a judgment against me. R: And you felt like it didn’t understand you. C4: Yea, it’s not a human. It doesn’t have that special spark. R: So you felt like it was unfair that it judged you without getting to know you first. C4: Yea, it sounds weird but... R: No, it makes sense. It made a very clear judgment about you and it’s like, “How can a computer know me?” [C4: Yes, you said it] (TC4, pg. 15)

3 – Okay receiving discordant feedback (6)

“Initially, [C2]'s reaction to my letter was fatalistic -- the fact that my interpretations of the tests corresponded in some way with our work together in
regular sessions made her feel doomed to repeat these patterns forever. Ultimately, I got the impression that through our discussion [C2] was able to accept some of the themes I mentioned without feeling determined by them.” (T2WD, pg. 2)

- R: It sounds like you are saying you felt judged or something. C1: Yea, I mean, yea. Which is why I’m there, to kind of try to understand who I am and have some kind of judgment about my situation. (TC1, pg. 8)

- C1: But, I thought that was an interesting point, that I had this preoccupation with the body was surprising to me, something I hadn’t heard. But I didn’t quite understand how he made the connection, how my preoccupation with the body kind of related to my interest in personal health, even though I definitely do have an interest in personal health. So, it was like, “Oh, well, okay. I don’t know how they came to that conclusion, but it is true.” So… (TC1, pg. 9)

- C1: …You know, but yea, it’s just like, “I don’t know how they came up with that, but it rings true.” And I was fine with that, I was okay. I was like, “Yea, I do have that.” If he said something that makes a point, and I agree with it, I don’t know. It’s like a conversation, you can agree or disagree… (TC1, pg. 9)

- C1: If I disagree, I’m not going to sit back and complain to other people. You know, not that I’m, maybe that’s confrontational but, if someone else sees it another way or disagrees with me I hope they say something. I just think it’s a natural way to have a conversation. People have different perspectives. (TC1, pg. 10)

- C4: Yea, I remember that day, like I was sitting on the couch out there and when he said I seemed agitated, I remember that. But, I remember him saying that…, I remember my reaction to him, but I honestly…, like I said in the video I don’t remember feeling agitated out in the waiting room. Yea, I think he had my assessment results that day and I remember being really…, whatever it was he asked me, I remember being really like anxious in a good way to find out about it and see what they said and where we could take this and get advice about it or whatever. Does that make sense? R: Yea. I was just wondering how it was because it seemed like maybe he might have misread you for a minute, like “You’re agitated,” “No, I’m really not.” And that may have thrown things off a little, but it seemed like toward the end and when we watch the rest maybe we can come back to it, but it didn’t seem to really affect the flow too much of how things were going. It seemed like somewhat of an awkward moment at the beginning but then after that it seemed alright. C4: Yea. I think with things with [T4a]…, I can’t really give you an example from my personal life, but with [T4a] and my other therapist I really don’t feel like they are pointing out that I am experiencing something negative like that. Like agitation is negative and means you are generally experiencing something that isn’t good. But I feel like when a therapist like [T4a] points that out I really feel like he is not attacking me, even though in a nice voice someone outside of the Clinic might say that to me and

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their intentions are the same as [T4a], there is something about this atmosphere and something about how I relate to him as therapist to client that really makes it seem like he is looking out for my best interests and really trying to help me out. I’m not trying to be cynical and say I don’t believe anyone else does that to me or is going that, but there is something about the dynamic between me and him in this setting that really is different… R:… But you kind of give him the benefit of the doubt when you are meeting with people in a therapeutic context that they have your best interests in mind when asking those kind of questions and stuff like that. [C4: Mhm] Yea, okay. I was just wondering because it seemed like there could have been a point of a disconnect there or something like that, but at the same time it didn’t seem to effect things overall. [C4: Nuhuh] And he seemed pretty genuine at the end, as far as saying, “I was just wondering how you are doing and maybe I should have just asked that instead of reading stuff in.” How was that? C4: That was fine, yea. I didn’t see any problem with him pointing that out… (TC4, pg. 3)

3a – Even found it to be helpful/useful. (9)

- “[T1] defined three major categories shaping my personality; as I understand it, they were concluded from the tests and his personal opinion based on our previous discussion. The two traits I do remember revolved around my liking to stir the pot or getting bored, and my habit of withdrawing and keeping things at a distance. That sounded okay to me.” (C1WD, pg. 2)

- C1: I think I found a pretty good example of when, you know, [my therapist] said I didn’t want a lot of affection in my life. I definitely want it, but I could see situations where I stayed away from it. R: How did you feel about that, when you were able to do that, to be able to relate it to parts of your life? Did you find that helpful, or? C1: Well, yea. I haven’t been going to see [my therapist] for a while but I do feel better and I definitely attribute that to some of the things we talked about. (TC1, pg. 13)

- C1: Yea, I think the hardest thing for me to answer with that was that I didn’t understand how I used it to distance myself from people. I don’t think it is something I use to distance myself. I think it does distance myself, but I don’t use it as a tool to do that. I think it is just a natural [R: It just happens] it’s just because I apparently have all this other knowledge that people have never heard of or know how to reference or something and so it just creates this void. I don’t think it’s a tool I use to distance myself. But in the reverse aspect of that, obviously, if I stopped doing it, it might bring me closer to people. If I censored myself a little bit and didn’t talk about everything that I know, I’d probably be able to…people might be able to relate to me a bit better, but it would kind of be a false relationship, you know, because it wouldn’t be all of who I am. (TC1, pg. 14)

- R: It is interesting because you were saying that it is tough and painful and it was a hard card, but it seems like you got a lot out of it too. C3: I did. Especially now, seeing it now. I remember seeing the card. I didn’t really remember what I said
about it other than the guy getting some news that he wasn’t expecting. Seeing it now there is a lot more clarity to it. It’s amazing honestly. But I guess, you know, hindsight is 20/20. But, months down the road I’m able to see where I was and I guess a lot of answers were there for me. It just takes a while to process and see them. It’s interesting. (TC3, pg. 8)

R: Okay, and how was that? I mean, he mentioned at one point, “I don’t want to downplay the struggle...” like he is empathizing, you know. He was saying he understands that it is hard but it is also saying may be kind of like a hazing process, just something you have to go through or something like that. And he also asked what it was like for you to hear that feedback. How was all of that for you? C4: It was fine. It felt like he was bridging the gap that I talked about earlier between client and therapist… But like with that instant I felt like..., when I said, “Yea, yea, it’s totally fine,” or whatever, and even when his cell phone went off it didn’t bother me because it feels like I am relating to his humanness. And when a therapist brings their humanness, for lack of a better word, into the conversation it kind of makes it more real for me… There is something about when he mentioned the struggles slash hazing process like that’s..., I understood that he wasn’t trying to cast aside my concerns but I think that he was trying to make me to see it for what it really was, which is exactly what I think as a therapist he is meant to do… R: So you feel like he was bringing his humanness into the room in that particular interaction. C4: Yea, well maybe it was by chance, but the cell phone really added to it because it was like he is not just this person who goes away..., like in cartoons you see robots just go into closets for the night. This person is real. R: So it adds this extra dimension to him when he brings in that genuine humanness. C4: Yea, and the thing with the hazing process would serve to underscore that because what about a person who has a therapist who never has their cell phone go off? Like how would you relate..., it would have to be something in the conversation I think, if that makes sense. R: So it made it easier to relate even though..., being able to see his..., you know like most times when a cell phone might go off or something like that we might see it as, like “Oh man, I shouldn’t have let that happen,” or something like that, but that helped you really to connect to him on the other hand. Yea, because it made him more human, he wasn’t like this perfect kind of like being or something like that. C4: Yea… (TC4, pg. 10-11)

R: Okay, and I was wondering how you might take that, watching it, because I could see..., because you had said, “I’m really into consistent thought,” and he showed you that the test said, “Well, there were some inconsistencies with it.” And I didn’t know if maybe you took that as reflecting more about the test or maybe how he read into it or something like that. But he seemed to say, “Well, maybe there is something that the test doesn’t pick up on, these nuances.” So he opened up a space for you to be able to talk about that, it seems like. C4: Yea, yea. I feel like what you just said, that he opened up a space for me, I feel like a therapist on some level can only do that if you know the person. Because he could have opened up can of worms. Like, he could have made it so I couldn’t have said that. He could have made it so I couldn’t go down that path or he could have said something that would totally turn me off and make me want to go inward. R: Yea,
he could have gone with the results and said, “Well, there is some inconsistency here and let’s see how you are inconsistent,” instead of saying, “Well, maybe there is something more that the test isn’t picking up on.” Right? It opened up an avenue rather than going with the strict interpretation. C4: Yea, I liked that. R: Okay. So you like that it provided an opening instead of kind of a closing off of interpretation, it seems like. C4: Mmhm. Wow. I’m just getting a glimpse into how I think through this conversation. Because I’m just thinking about the kind of papers I’ve written and the topics I have decided to cover and it’s like, “Wow, I really am that kind of a thinker.” (TC4, pg. 12)

- R: Yea, it seemed like he challenged you a little bit [C5: Mmhm] and I am wondering how that was for you? C5: That was fine, I don’t mind it. R: Okay, that was fine. But, did you feel like it was helpful or did it evoke maybe some anger or something like that? C5: Naw, but you know what it might do for me…, it is a good thing for me because it might make me be a little bit more clear in my explanations and stuff because I tend to assume that people understand exactly what I’m saying when I say things and sometimes it can be a little vague [R: Okay] and people don’t realize it so it does help if somebody makes me clarify. R: Okay, so it helps you think it out better and explain yourself better. [C5: Right] Okay. C5: Things that seem real simple in my head are not necessarily real simple to other people and vice versa, so that is helpful. (TC5, pg. 4)

- R: What I was thinking about that interaction in particular that struck me was how it seemed like when [T4b] asked the question, I mean, he was kind of like, “I was wondering if you were thinking, why me?” and you were like, “No, actually I wasn’t. I didn’t think that until later, but this is why….‖ And it was interesting how even though what he said kind of missed the mark it led to a better understanding [C5: Yea] in the end. [C5: Mmhm] Is that what you feel like may have happened there? C5: Yea, you know, like you said even though it kind of missed the mark or whatever there but it basically ended up being a guide to where we were going anyway. R: Exactly, exactly. Like even though that happened the door was still open and you led him to a better understanding of you. C5: And that’s the point right there. R: Exactly. [Both laugh] C5: And you know it’s nice. You know, the asking questions and the figuring out process, for me it’s good for me to try to be, like I was saying before, to be a little bit more clear. Because whoever you talk to, it is good if they have a good basic understanding of you. R: Definitely, and that is what you are doing here. I mean, this is early on. I know you that you have known each other and worked together for some time now and this is where you are getting to know each other [C5: Mmhm] so it is still that figuring out process, like you said. C5: Yea, it’s good. (TC5, pg. 8-9)

- R:… And he says, “The test said others might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving.” And he said, “Those are strong words and I wanted to run them by you.” And you said, “Well, it depends.” You said, “I’m not sensitive but I can be hostile and unforgiving and if I’m angry I’m not good at hiding it.” Okay, so… [Watched fifth videotape segment] R: That’s just a short clip. How
was that for you? C5: It was good. It was pretty accurate. R: So did you feel like it was helpful to talk about that? I mean, I know you said you know those things about yourself. [C5: Mmhm, yea] But did you feel like it was good, helpful to let [T4b] know those things? C5: Yea, but what I was saying there is more how other people would perceive me because I am sensitive as well. [R: Hm, okay] It’s really difficult because I don’t show all of who I am to everybody. [R: Yea] I kind of pick and choose who sees what. People who are close to me, they see more than others, you know. [R: I think that is very normal] Yea, I think so too. And like the sensitive part, for a man especially, you don’t allow other people to see it. Who knows why? You know, the stigmas that come attached to that through society. [R: Yea] But the hostile and things like that, that is easier for me to show others. [laughs] You know, really hostile and anger and things like that, it goes along with the sensitivity because it is all emotions. It is all feelings. R: Definitely. Did you feel like it was helpful to discuss that with [T4b] [C5: Yea] (TC5, pg. 9)

4 – Desire to protect self by not saying too much or careful with responses in order to portray self in a certain way – Guardedness. (8)

- “As much as I felt that I needed help, I was still apprehensive about going to therapy… I was also afraid the prescription drugs were going to be pushed upon my treatment…. I remember thinking to myself that the therapist was going to think that I was crazy… As much as I tried not to, I was relating to most of the illustrations.” (C3WD)

- C2:… But as far as the Meyers-Briggs, I just felt, I got anxiety taking that test [laughs] because I felt like I had to answer a certain way because I didn’t want to be a certain way, which made me feel even more confused. I was like, “Oh my gosh, what do I want this to turn out like and what kind of characteristics do I want to be out of this?” And I think that just made me, it was like a snowball effect from “How should I answer this?” to “What are the results going to be?” to “What do I want the results to be?” And then it was like, ooh, a bigger picture type of ordeal. (TC2, pg. 1)

- C2: I just, I just don’t, I can’t explain how strongly I don’t want to be some of those characteristics. So, taking a test that might possibly tell me that I am just makes me conscious during the whole test of how I’m answering questions. So, I don’t know whether I am answering them honestly or dishonestly… (TC2, pg. 6)

- C2: I feel like I was being impossible that day. R: What do you mean? C2: I don’t remember exactly that day, but I remember feeling like I was being an impossible patient. [laughs] R: How do you feel like you were being impossible? C2: Because [T2] wrote the letter in an honest effort to assess my time there and I feel like I was being impossible, like I just wasn’t accepting it or something. R: Kind of resistant to what he was saying? C2: Yea, [R: Okay] I felt kind of bad about that. (TC2, pg. 13)

- C3: About being apprehensive about it? [R: Yea] Yea, I’m trying to think. Just reluctant to come in mainly because I didn’t know whether how I was feeling or
the thoughts in my head warranted…, in past experiences we talked for a little while and then I would get prescribed an anti-depressant or something along those lines. And I didn’t know how much I was feeling was normal or I felt really alone. Now I do realize that I’m not the only person with these types of thoughts and problems. [R: Sure, sure.] But at that point I thought it would just be a red flag and I would be shuffled into some sort of system that…. like “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” [R chuckles and says: Okay] or something like that. And in the past experience I was in my teens, like 16. I had family counseling, did that for about a year and then [deep breath] worked a little bit as far as being able to get my opinions out and what I was feeling, but I felt like I was a little biased toward my family, like my parents and what not, and they ended up putting me on anti-depressants and they put me in a psych ward for about two months. So I was afraid of all that. [R: Okay] I didn’t know how the laws work. I know a friend of mine ended up in a psychiatric center for a little more than a week against her will and I was just scared of a lot of that. (TC3, pg. 1)

- R:… Do you feel like some of the negative past experiences and the apprehension affected the initial meeting with [T3] in any way? C3: Oh yea, I mean I tried to be as honest as I could about certain questions or evaluations, but at the same time the whole time I’m thinking, [chuckles] “You’ve got to watch what you say. You have to watch the wording with how you say certain things and not…, I don’t want to say “not be emotional about how you answer,” but definitely don’t want to show extreme signs of anger or suicidal thoughts or anything like that.” Not that I had them but I went in with the preconceived notion that I wasn’t going to overreact. R: So a little guarded and maybe careful about how you answered. C3: Very, and not really knowing what to expect anyway. You know, I kind of found out about this place through word of mouth so I didn’t really know what it was into at all. So yea, I was definitely guarded. [both laughed] R: And that’s understandable considering some of the past experiences. That follows from what you said, you also said, “My initial visit was a nervous one.” Is that what you meant by that? C3: Very, yea. Because I felt like getting evaluated…. I’m sure they went over with me why, but I wasn’t…. you could have probably told me a hundred times why I was getting evaluated but at the same time I’m thinking who knows…. you know, at the end you get this score and you go up to the nut house or something. So I didn’t know, that was my main thing. R: So you were really nervous about that. C3: Very much so. R: That’s understandable… (TC3, pg. 2)

- R: Yea, that makes sense. [C3: Yea] And then you mentioned…. you had a sentence in here that said, “An instant referral to a psych ward would ensue.” Was that referring to the past or you were afraid that would happen? C3: That is what I was afraid would happen. With the evaluation I thought at the end that…. um, yea, I mean it was from the past but at the same time I thought that that is kind of how a cookie cutter thing would go about. You know, if I’m taking this thing with two hundred questions, there has got to be some right and wrong way to answer to this somehow or another. You know, I was answering as honestly as I could. Some of the ones about…. just some of them would throw red flags at me, like, “I
don’t know what this is referring to or whatever, but I am going to make sure and say “no” to it.” Or something like that. (TC3, pg. 3)

- C3:… Well, part of it has to do with the consequences. I didn’t want to really be vulnerable and say too much in the first visit. You know, thinking, “Maybe over time some of this can creep out,” [laughs] you know. And then I think it is avoiding…, me just avoiding the hard things. The hard news or hard memories or whatever it is… R: Okay, so there is a little resistance in you. C3: Oh, definitely. Yea, I knew I wanted help and this is how I had to go about it so I did. R: It was for protection, to protect yourself. C3: Very much. Yea. (TC3, pg. 7)

5 – Feeling desire to open up to further/help the treatment process (9)
- “I left the assessments feeling hopeful. That if I, as the patient, am willing to put forth the effort to go through the fire (metaphorically speaking), and [T4a], as the therapist, is willing to help me through it, then there was an excellent chance that I could take something from the sessions out into the world with me. The coming weeks could not come fast enough!” (C4WD)

- C4: “One more thing…” then pulls out several self-help tests for anxiety he took online and gives them to T4a. (VS4, seg. 7)

- C1: …And then he sat there quietly, and it’s like, “Okay, is he looking for more, is it my responsibility to come up with more about how I really feel about this? Is ‘I don’t know’ an insufficient answer?” So there was a bit of silence and then I said something else. I didn’t hear what I said. But that’s part of it. It’s like, maybe I needed to…it reverts back to what I was saying earlier, like, should I have…is there something else I needed to… Sometimes people ask you if there is something more and sometimes there is a silence and it’s like, “do I need to fill this or can we just hang out and he’ll bring it up?” [R: Okay] That was always kind of an interesting thing for me. (TC1, pg. 11)

- R:… How was it to go back with her like that? C3: Fine. I feel like I opened up more. And I got a lot more perspective into it. I ended up throwing out I think three more scenarios, you know. (TC3, pg. 8)

- R:… And she actually said in that segment, “There is no right or wrong.” [C3: Right] And how was that? C3: That was good because…, and I know she had said that before, even before I did the bubble test, and um, but the more she reiterated that it helped me ease up. At this point I think I had gotten to the point where I was a lot easier. A little bit more free with what I was saying. (TC3, pg. 8)

- C3:… I mean, it is okay to have comfort in certain aspects, but I need to keep pushing to the uncomfortable too. (TC3, pg. 10)

- C4: Um, I found this website. I mentioned it, ADAA, Anxiety Disorders of America. I took these tests and it gave me results for three things I had previously been diagnosed with. I don’t remember if it was an evaluation of what I had said or if I was testing myself to see if I had it. I don’t remember what I did with it but
I found it online. It seemed real, it wasn’t some like…, you know, it seemed credible. So I just gave it to [T4a] I guess to maybe help him out with me in the future through things that I couldn’t necessarily talk about. R: So it was for anxiety in particular, I mean, was there something that you felt you had a hunch about maybe you might be in the anxiety realm or something like that. C4: Yea, in the past with my spiritual therapist,… And the areas she classified me as were OCD, Panic Disorder, and GAD. R: Okay, and that fit with the tests you brought in. [C4: Right, exactly] So that was from a previous experience [C4: Yes] and you were trying to bring something to help him out specifically… Yea, it seems like this is something from the past that you want to focus on [C4: Yea] and to give him some form of communicating of saying, “This is maybe something that I want to focus on and here is some stuff to help with that.” C4: Yea, definitely, because an hour is not a lot of time to hear my life story. Yea, so I just wanted to see if he could use it. (TC4, pg. 12-13)

• C5: Yea. And I was attempting to be a little more forthcoming with things so he would be more comfortable too… (TC5, pg. 6)

• C2: [T2] does that a lot where he always asks me if things remind me of other things. R: How was that? C2: It’s…, sometimes I mean I do have something that I am reminded of and so then that can lead to other parts of our session which is really helpful, but sometimes I don’t have anything to say. But, yea, I think that is really helpful. Except for, I get this like pressured feeling when it happens, like I feel like I have to be reminded of something. So that’s the only negative I see with it. R: Like there is this pressure, like “what if I don’t think of something to say?” C2: Yea, but aside from the negative pressure I think it helps move the session along. [R: Okay] But the pressure is negative. R: That’s understandable. What is negative about it? C2: Sometimes I’m wondering if I’m bringing up something because I am just pressured. R: Just to have something to say? C2: Yea, but I do try to answer [T2] as honestly as I can so if I don’t have anything to say usually I will just be like, “No, not really.” But then I just feel like a dull patient or something [laughs], I don’t know. (TC2, pg. 14)

6 – Preferring projective to objective tests. (8)

• “Neither of us preferred any written or “bubble test,” and we both felt we should do more “improvisational” work. I had already filled in one questionnaire and felt comfortable with the spontaneity.” (C1WD, pg. 1)

• “…with the MBTI, which I had much anxiety about – I will elaborate on that later in the essay. However, I felt perfectly comfortable taking the TAT, essentially I felt like that test was a successful experience.” (C2WD)

• C1: I think he gave me the two options very briefly and I said, you know, lets go with the kind of, I can’t remember the word he used for it, the improvisational test. R: So that was the preference…that’s more what I was asking about. C1: Yea it was pretty brief, I said I had already filled out the test, the bubble sheet already and he said he doesn’t really like them, and… R: So you were in agreement with
that? C1: Yea, it was a pretty simple agreement to go forward with that. (TC1, pg. 2-3)

• C2: I really felt that the TAT cards were successful and I think it is because I just had a chance to explain myself. I think that is just how I work in general. I would do much better on an essay test than a true or false type of question or something that is just really rigid. So I felt like that was successful… (TC2, pg. 1)

• C4:… And because I had never like encountered this…, like the test in and of itself is just talking, and the bubble test I took like the first or second day. I forget, it might have been after that. But whenever I looked at it I liked it because it was the same idea of the objective standpoint. But at the same rate it was kind of reminding me of high school and the SATs and I just was like, “Uh, this is kind of turning me off.” So the last parts were kind of like this break in what I perceived as this kind of monotony. It’s almost like we want to break the cycle sometimes, get out of the habit. That is what I saw it as because I was still being assessed, which is what I really liked – to find out about myself and all that jazz, but it was still different enough in that I could engage it. Does that make sense? R: Yea, it sounds like what you are saying is it was more interactive [C4: Yea] like the cards were versus the bubble test, [C4: Yes] which was more solitary, kind of like. C4: Yes, gotcha. [R laughs] Yea. That’s it. (TC4, pg. 2)

• R: Okay, so it seems like this was something you were looking forward to. This experience to learn about yourself in this type of way and be more engaged, it seems like, with the cards versus…, not only between the different style of therapist and the approaches you had but also within this you could notice a difference in the types of tests, it seems like, that were used and it seems like there was a preference for the cards. C4: I think it goes back to that subjectivity thing because there is no right or wrong answer. I mean know with the bubble test there was a right or wrong answer, but it was like somehow my psyche was connecting that with the past. Like you are basing your future on this test that you are taking right now. [R: Okay] And with the cards it is just like it is a piece of art. And it is like you go to a museum and you are looking at it and appreciating it and you are kind of contemplating it. That is kind of like what I was doing here, only it wasn’t for an assignment or just for the sake of contemplating art or however you want to say it. It was actually to benefit myself. [R: Yea] So I really felt like my own subjective interpretation of those cards was actually being put to use somehow. Not that if it didn’t get put to use it would be worthless or something. But I mean, it was helpful I guess. (TC4, pg. 3)

• C4: I felt kind of semi-shocked [R: Okay] because he asked me like what I thought my results would be or what I was into or how I was thinking and I mentioned that I’m into consistent thought because I am a philosopher and he said the results aren’t inconsistent. And right there I was like, “Oh my goodness, this is a flashback.” I cannot tell you how many times on those stupid bubble tests in high school - the SATs, the PSSAs, anything like that - how many times in the
verbal sections there were word comparisons, questions about articles and it’s like they are asking you for an objective answer to something that is subjective and you can’t do that. And he even mentioned the nuances and I remember thinking, “Oh, I’m getting ready to explain why this test is wrong.” I like the idea of taking objective tests, but at the same rate I don’t like the idea that it is trying to place me on this kind of continuum or this plane that may not even really exist. I like it because it gives us a base to work from but I don’t like it when it tries to be super scientific to where something is the way it is. And some of those questions were on morality and I remember taking a minute or two to answer those questions, which was a long time for those questions, thinking, “What would I answer here?” because it is so technical and I remember thinking…, I don’t remember if I did or didn’t, but I really just wanted to expound on this notion that certain things just don’t fit inside this continuum of logic that certain philosophers want us to have. I’m not against analytic, I’m not against logic, I’m not against any of that. I’m just saying that there is something else and I wanted to try to prove that in this discussion, I think. And looking at it now, I think it just made me realize how truly I feel for that. (TC4, pg. 11)

C5: I wasn’t disappointed in the taking of it, in the questions and the answers. I was disappointed in the content of it, the repetition of it. I probably said it before to you, but it was like a military test. [R: Hmm] It had like seven questions in the two hundred question test, but in those seven questions it asked them each in a variety of ways, different wording. But the concept is always the same. I think it is just to see if you are consistent, if you can understand the questions. It is similar to that. [R: Okay] And that disappoints me, [chuckles] it’s just not fun. I answered the same question over and over again. R: So it’s kind of redundant? C5: Yea, exactly… But, I mean, it did make that big of an impression on me that I was disappointed that I remember how long it was. It was just something to do. R: You had mentioned that it was kind of boring for you. I could see that [C5 chuckles], I mean, filling out all of those questions. Were there any that you liked more? Like there was the draw a person and the cards that he showed you. C5: I don’t like drawing because I can’t draw worth a crap. [Both laugh] It’s horrible, like a child. R: What about the picture one? The one where he showed you the cards and asked you to tell a story. I know it was a while ago. C5: You know there are certain things…, looking at pictures certain things will strike you and bring up certain things in your life and some of them can be very sad and other things... And if I remember right there was something very sad. If I remember correctly there was something that brought up a very sad memory when we were talking about it. R: Okay, and how was that when you took that? C5: You know what, I didn’t really mind. I mean, it’s part of life. It makes you sad, another thing makes you happy. You know it just goes back and forth, that is just the way it is. [R: Okay, yea, that’s true.] It’s just part of who we are. Yea, so. You don’t like to revisit the bad but at the same time when you revisit the bad you think about the good that came before it and the reason why you were so sad. (TC5, pg. 1-2)

7 – Collaborative assessment helps to create themes/metaphors that carry over into therapeutic work in a helpful/useful way. (26)
“For as much as I can say about my experience of actually taking the test, the fascinating part is how much the results played out in the rest of my sessions, particularly the results of the TAT. For example, there was one particular picture of two girls – one sitting quietly in a tree and one running down below the tree. The girl in the tree has an unhappy look on her face as she sees the other girl running by. Also, I should add that the girl in the tree is dressed neatly and the girl running below looks disheveled. For this card, I told a story of the quiet girl in the tree being unhappy because the girl below interrupted her; however, deep down inside she wishes she could be careless and wild like the girl running below. I’m not sure I could count how many times this card has come up during my sessions. As I began to see [T2] regularly, I noticed themes in my life that included being unhappy with myself, wishing I was something else, being scared of interruption, but yet welcoming it with all of the traveling I’ve done and still do. It’s like the interruption makes me feel careless in some way – the way the girl in the tree wanted to feel. And really, that’s just one example of how the themes in my life were played out through my TAT assessment – There are so many more examples where that came from.” (C2WD)

“I noticed on at least one occasion that by simply talking about my life, I was seeing some recurring themes. The most notable of which, were the flash cards with pictures.” (C5WD)

“As I began to examine them, I saw some repetition in the subject matter, which I figured was a reflection of my own (inner) life. Multiple times I saw heartache, confusion, and sadness and my plight was never clearer to me than at that point. My heartbrokenness had been steering every aspect of who I thought I was. I knew then what [T4a] and I had to work on.” (C4WD)

C1: I think I found a pretty good example of when, you know, [my therapist] said I didn’t want a lot of affection in my life. I definitely want it, but I could see situations where I stayed away from it. R: How did you feel about that, when you were able to do that, to be able to relate it to parts of your life? Did you find that helpful, or? C1: Well, yea. I haven’t been going to see [my therapist] for a while but I do feel better and I definitely attribute that to some of the things we talked about. (TC1, pg. 13)

C1: Yea, I think the hardest thing for me to answer with that was that I didn’t understand how I used it to distance myself from people. I don’t think it is something I use to distance myself. I think it does distance myself, but I don’t use it as a tool to do that. I think it is just a natural [R: It just happens] it’s just because I apparently have all this other knowledge that people have never heard of or know how to reference or something and so it just creates this void. I don’t think it’s a tool I use to distance myself. But in the reverse aspect of that, obviously, if I stopped doing it, it might bring me closer to people. If I censored myself a little bit and didn’t talk about everything that I know, I’d probably be able to... people might be able to relate to me a bit better, but it would kind of be a
false relationship, you know, because it wouldn’t be all of who I am. (TC1, pg. 14)

- R: Okay. You had said, relating to this, in your written description you said at one point, “When referring to some objects I saw, [your therapist] used the work anthropological. I was pleased to hear that word.” [C1: Yea, I remember writing about that.] What was pleasing about that? C1: Umm, it’s just a nice word. [Both laugh] R: What do you think about when you hear that word? C1: What do I think about anthropology? That it’s kind of a science or a philosophy, or equally as much a philosophy as it is a science these days. It is not just related to going and digging up bones of dinosaurs or ancient cultures and scientific facts about what they ate. I mean, it really relates to almost everything. It’s the study of who we’ve been, who we can afford to be, of evolution. Yea, so, it’s just a good word. It’s not a word that I hear a lot. You know, I definitely don’t hear it in the office, in an advertising office. “We should really take a more anthropological spin on this.” You know, that doesn’t happen, so. R: Sounds like an outside the box kind of thing. C1: Yea, you know. And it just made me feel like an artist. Which is something I told [my therapist] I wanted to talk about but we never really got around to it too much. (TC1, pg. 14)

- R: Okay. You also said, “I feel I learned more particularly about how I see rather than anything new concerning my personality.” What did you mean by that? C1: Yea, that kind of doesn’t fit together does it? [R: What do you mean?] Because obviously learning about how I see relates to personality. But, umm, yea. I think I did get some insight, a little more clarity on how I judge my surroundings or how I can, maybe just should chill out a little bit. Not be so judgmental. I’m definitely an idealist. I have expectations of others as well. It’s not that I should get used to disappointment from other people, but. Yea, it gave me a little bit of insight. (TC1, pg. 17)

- C2: I mean, I think it was…, like I’m glad that he asked about it because it definitely brought up…, it was definitely a point of departure for our conversation. [R: Okay] So yea, I think all of those went pretty well. R: So you are glad because it kind of brought up some other stuff too. C2: Yea, yea, yea yea. I think those were really helpful and I thought when [T2] would ask me about it, it was helpful because he was asking me and I wasn’t the one having to start the conversation about it. So that was really helpful. I definitely needed that to walk me along through it. (TC2, pg. 4)

- C2:… But, yea, those themes that came up really played throughout during the rest of my sessions. And that was surprising, I wasn’t realizing it, that we would talk about something that I had said during the TAT test. Then I would remember, and it was just really strange. R: It was strange? C2: Yea, it was strange how it worked. Um, I guess people don’t really get as familiar with their feelings as they think they are, maybe. And I thought that that made me really familiar with it when something would come up later on in the session and we
would be like, “Well, remember those girls in the tree.” And it was just so weird how much, how the stories I made up were these patterns in me. (TC2, pg. 8)

- C2: Well, yea, the themes come back later throughout the sessions. But like I said when I’m watching this now, I feel like there is perspective on it. I don’t feel exactly the same way as I did then, which is also relieving. (TC2, pg. 10)

- C2: Yea, but I think that, like as far as the whole assessment thing goes, I don’t know. I feel like that would have come up anyways. But I think the card definitely moved it along. I think that is the thing, is like the cards are just moving it along faster. R: Kind of facilitating things to come out. C2: Yea, I know that would have come up anyways, but I don’t know when. But those cards, it just quickens the process. R: Okay, and it seems like [T2]…, I mean you got emotional and then [T2] was kind of, you know, talked to you a little bit about it and said, “Well, this is something we can continue with in ongoing therapy.” How was that? C2: It’s good because I don’t feel like things have to come up now. Like it was like, “Is it okay that the card brought it up?” Maybe I cry a little bit. You know, “We’ll talk about it more later.” [laughs] It’s not like I have to bring it up all now, “Hurry, before our session is done.” Like you know, which is really, and I know this doesn’t have anything to do with the assessment, but it was just so helpful to me because I am a person who like in the past I’ve, where things have to be done now, and brought up now, and it’s just like this method of therapy just helps to be like, “Well, things don’t have to be right now.” So, I mean the cards brought up the issues quicker and I think it just helped for later. The fact that it was like, “Okay there is this issue, this issue and this issue. We’ll touch upon them when they come up again. R: Okay, so it seems like a balance there between, like it pulled it out but it wasn’t like you have to deal with it and work through it right now. [C2: Yea] Like we can kind of hold onto that and work through it gradually. C2: Yea, so it quickened the initial part of bringing it up. (TC2, pg. 11)

- R: So there you were thinking about the conservative versus the wild side of yourself. C2: Right, or just in general I was thinking about these structures, like choices or paths or something. But I’m not thinking, I don’t think it looks that way too much anymore. During the assessment, I think that I was thinking like…, I was so overwhelmed by…, like that was definitely something I wanted to talk about and I am glad that card brought it up, but I think during that moment I was so overwhelmed by this feeling that I didn’t know what to do with it or I felt like it was never going to get solved. [R: Okay. The paths?] But the fact that [T2] was saying, “Well, you know there is probably a middle road,” that was reassuring. And the fact that maybe I didn’t have to talk about it all right that second. R: So it was good to bring it up but also that um, he kind of pointed in the direction that there is a middle road but we can work on that at another time, and it sounds like you have. C2: Yea, and I think with that issue especially I needed reassurance because I was really overwhelmed by that feeling right then. R: Okay, so it was really helpful at the time, you would say. [C2: Yea, yea] Okay. (TC2, pg. 12)
• C3:… I use a lot of metaphors in my speech anyway and we’ve used quite a bit in counseling. So, I see now how it ties in,… And I didn’t understand that then until now. Well, until a few months ago. I do understand that metaphor could kind of give a basis to sort of see where I am, but at the time I don’t think I understood that. And I know she explained it but I don’t think I was there. (TC3, pg. 5)

• R: And at the end there was talk about another metaphor that came out about a dawning and a realizing [C3: An awakening] and feelings that were there. [C3: Yea] How was that? C3: It was good. I think I was more alluding to the news, like this moment of surprise. Maybe awakening for the guy with the lady who just didn’t really fully understand until you see with your own eyes. So, it makes sense. It wasn’t tough, but at the same time I was reading a lot of myself into both situations. I was alluding to me coming to therapy and alluding to a change of lifestyle, a change of relationship status, all of that. An awakening. (TC3, pg 8-9)

• R: Yea, because there was…, I’m wondering how that fit with the metaphor of the fog too. There was this fog and there is also this awakening. [C3: Right] That there is hope there. C3: Right, exactly. And you know when the fog comes back home you either keep your eyes on it or you pull over and wait for it to pass. There is no right or wrong in that, [both chuckle] each one has got its risks. (TC3, pg. 9)

• C3:… And then the three times it happened thing, [R: Yea] That stuck with me since that day. R: Yea, I remember her saying that (T3: in the video segment - “Something is a habit if it happens three times…”). C3: And it’s true… (TC3, pg. 10)

• R: By that, but you constantly felt like that: bracing. C3: Constantly. Even the 10 years earlier. I feel like that has been a running metaphor for my life for a long time. R: And it really speaks to your experience, it sounds like. C3: Yea, in a lot of ways, and to a lot of people’s. I just feel that as a defense mechanism I use that to not achieve and to not get close to too many people and use it as an excuse to stay comfortable. I just feel like I’m moving away from that. Definitely made progress as far as that goes, which feels good. I think I feel better than I have felt in a long, long time. (TC3, pg, 11)

• C3: Yea, and you know after looking at the clips I realize that we have worked on that. So when we first started, when I wrote that for you and she brought up the proposal of doing this, I was thinking, “Poor [T3] has sat here and listened to me for a month and a half and I don’t think she has gotten a word in edgewise because I have just been unloading.” Then when we finally had gotten to me slowing down and doing this back and forth, I realized that we had worked on a lot of this. And we might not have hardly ever referred back to those photos or the pictures…, there’s a lot that was in those pictures and that we did talk about in the assessment that we did come back to. And I really didn’t realize it until seeing it. And even just now talking about the comfortability and the fog and moments of clarity and all that, I mean we really touch on that a lot. So, I guess maybe it
helped her get insight into what was going on with me and open the door for me to start communicating about it. R: Sounds like it opened up stuff for you too. C3: It did. But rather than going and saying, “Okay, remember about the photo and this,” and I’m like, “Naw.” You know, [R: It just kind of went with it] It just kind of goes with what we are talking about anyways. So, I guess since it has already been brought up at one point, you don’t really have to refer to… R: You don’t have to refer to the card specifically. C3: No, because it is really coming from something within you anyway, I guess. [R: Yea, yea] But I didn’t realize that until I just saw it. (TC3, pg. 11)

- R: Yea, and how that was for you, like that process of talking about it with him and getting some feedback about it? C4: Well, all of this was very, I don’t want to say healing, but it was very insightful. [R: Okay] I guess because in that situation we were kind of bringing out something that I had never really acknowledged in my head before. Like, I knew it was there but I had never really brought it to the front. Does that make sense? [R: Yea] Yea, okay. I’m telling you this has been so weird. What I just watched has just happened to me in the past few weeks, it is so crazy. [R: Really] Not this week but last Friday when I met with him, that was all I talked about was the graduate school, different ideas, splitting apart. It was just so much more intensified in this one, so I feel like I am kind of continuing with it in that sense… R: So it seems like that drawing – that picture, that image, that representation – has really stuck with you because that was some time ago. That was several months ago and even now, even within the past few weeks you still have been talking about it and it has been opening things up for you, it sounds like. C4: Yea, I don’t know if it is like that major shift in life, but I think I have been kind of readying myself for it for a long time because I know it was going to happen. [R: Okay] I think some part of me thinks that if I start dealing with it not it won’t be painful later. R: Okay. So it kind of sparked something for you to work on later and to continue working on, it seems like. [C4: Mmhm] Yea, okay, alright. And how is it to do that? It seems like it was helpful. C4: Yea, I like the exercises and that one in particular. I mean, I just drew stick figures but it really caused me to put some thought into what I was doing. Not that I didn’t think about anything else before, but it almost seemed like just talking, okay that is one thing, anyone can just talk. And then it’s like, okay, looking at a piece of art and then giving your interpretation of it, well that is another thing. The similarities between those two exercises was me just kind of sort of being passive, like I was just taking it in I wasn’t necessarily being proactive in it, if that makes sense. [R: Mmhm] But the drawing like forced me to like actually put something in my head. I don’t know if that makes sense. [R: Okay] There was something about this direct connection between me and the real world that like… R: The physical representation [C4: Yes] of what was in your head. [C4: Yea] Okay, there was something very helpful about that [C4: Yea] getting out and externalizing it. C4: Yea, because in the art there is that physical representation but it is not mine. So it’s almost like I’m kind of dependent on this other think to tell me what I’m thinking. Whereas, if I just do it myself there is no miscommunication, there is no indirect communication. It’s all very…, like you are getting the genuine article, I guess. (TC4, pg. 5-6)
• C4:… And it’s so weird, I just talked to [T4a] about this today. It’s so strange how this is connecting. R: How it is paralleling – watching this tape to what you have been talking about in therapy. C4: Yea, it’s like I just feel like I’m on this border area between the youthful idealist who feels invincible and this person who is in the real world and understands the way things really work. Realism, you might say. I feel like I am at that border area now in my life and I kind of felt like looking at this…, like if you think of it as a class then that is like an intro, like that is an intro to [my] life and this is [my] life now. Yea. (TC4, pg. 7)

• C4: Yea, it was kind of funny, like those themes I think have stayed consistent but…, this is going to sound really weird, like the feelings they evoke are the same, but the word would be different. [R: Hmm] For example, I mentioned heartache, sadness and confusion. [R: Mmhm] Like…, this is weird. Okay, I think I would take out…, it’s like an advanced stage, like it’s kind of evolved. Like it’s no longer sadness and confusion, it has like an advanced aspect to it… I feel like it has evolved into alienation in a way. I feel like sadness and confusion here in the paper were two separate things, but as time has gone on, like I just mentioned before that things have become more intense, I feel like those two things have kind of combined into something bigger. Does that make sense? R: Yea. So it seems like not only here…, it might be kind of like what you were saying before with the intro class, where it was something to build on. Like you had something and now with the work on it…, like you said at the end, “Now I know what [T4a] and I have to work on.” It’s taken its direction now and you’ve changed it so it has a different meaning. The feeling is still there but it has a different word or the way we call it, so maybe it has changed because of the work you have done. [C4: Yea, exactly.] Now I feel like I am putting words in your mouth. [R laughs] C4: No, you are describing it perfectly. That’s what it is, that’s what it is. So, yea, it’s fine. R: Okay, so yea. So all of that stuff is still there, you are just calling it differently. The emotions are still kind of there but you have built on it so to speak. C4: Yea, I agree. (TC4, pg. 9)

• R: Okay. I found it interesting that it went from something that was just kind of basic, like these little drawings into something that was really meaningful to you. You know, you ended up talking about how you are a good listener to others but you don’t feel like people are that way to you. [C5: Right] That’s pretty important and it got brought out by this simple kind of thing. How was that for you? C5: Well, it’s always good to get it out. [C5: Mmhm] You know, to be able to tell somebody and have them actually listen. [R: Yea] It does help, it does help, and it has. (TC5, pg. 3)

• R: But, it’s interesting how just a little…, just him noticing that it was in the corner of the page led to you talking about…, you know, you said, “Maybe I do want to not be noticed as much or disappear.” C5: Yea, I kind of analyzed myself quite a bit with that. R: Okay, and how was that to see the drawing to lead to revealing something about yourself like that? C5:… But it’s something…, not drawing something real large and outstanding, you know, you’re not going to take as much notice of something small so it’s going to be a little more insignificant.
R: So it seemed to bring it up for you as something you and [T4b] could discuss. How was that? Were you okay with that? C5: Yea, that’s why I am here. R: Yea, and it kind of helped you with that. C5: Oh yea, absolutely. (TC5, pg. 6)

• R: I had noticed at the beginning…, how was it when he asked specifically, “Can you relate this to your life?” How was that? C5: Oh, it’s easy. It’s not a bad question for me. R: Do you feel like it is a helpful question, I mean, to help it relate to your life? C5: Yea, it’s not a foreign question for me either. You know, those are thing I explore with myself all the time or have in the past. R: So you like doing that? [C5: Yea] What do you like about it? C5: I like looking back. It’s like what we were talking about a little while ago. You know, my grandmother died when I was young and there are extremely painful periods in my life when they died and that changed my outlook on pretty much everything, those events. But, how could I not…, you feel that pain and think about it from time to time but everything beforehand was great. R: That’s interesting that you are talking about how it helps you see the good and the bad when looking back because that seemed to be there in that clip too where you were…, um, he was talking about, “Can you relate that to your life where you tend to not want to be noticed and want to disappear?” And you said, “Actually, I can be on the other side of that too. I can put things out there too.” C5: Yea, it’s always been that way. I’ve always been a contradiction that way. You know, in school I wanted to disappear but at the same time I did things that got everybody’s attention. You know, it was really…, it makes you look at the extremes in your life. My mom was one extreme and my father the other and that’s what I grew up with. (TC5, pg. 7)

• R:… And he says, “The test said others might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving.” And he said, “Those are strong words and I wanted to run them by you.” And you said, “Well, it depends.” You said, “I’m not sensitive but I can be hostile and unforgiving and if I’m angry I’m not good at hiding it.” Okay, so… [Watched fifth videotape segment] R: That’s just a short clip. How was that for you? C5: It was good. It was pretty accurate. R: So did you feel like it was helpful to talk about that? I mean, I know you said you know those things about yourself. [C5: Mmhm, yea] But did you feel like it was good, helpful to let [T4b] know those things? C5: Yea, but what I was saying there is more how other people would perceive me because I am sensitive as well. [R: Hm, okay] It’s really difficult because I don’t show all of who I am to everybody. [R: Yea] I kind of pick and choose who sees what. People who are close to me, they see more than others, you know. [R: I think that is very normal] Yea, I think so too. And like the sensitive part, for a man especially, you don’t allow other people to see it. Who knows why? You know, the stigmas that come attached to that through society. [R: Yea] But the hostile and things like that, that is easier for me to show others. [laughs] You know, really hostile and angry and things like that, it goes along with the sensitivity because it is all emotions. It is all feelings. R: Definitely. Did you feel like it was helpful to discuss that with [T4b] [C5: Yea] (TC5, pg. 9)
R:... Do you feel like any of the stuff that was brought up then kind of carried over into your work with [T4b]? C5: Yea, well all of those thoughts. Just that the initial process always carries over. R: Yea, and it seems to be something that you got something out of. C5: Yea, of course. (TC5, pg. 12)

8 – Collaborative assessment is emotionally evocative. (16)

- C2 continues discussing her family dynamics, her parents. T2: “Key insight.” C2 cries. T2 comforts and contains her but encourages further work in this area during their ongoing work together. (VS2, seg. 6)

- C1: And uh, it takes a little while for the emotional reaction to be verbalized appropriately. (TC1, pg. 8)

- C1: I remember, I was pleased to hear that. R: Which part? C1: That I was a smart thinker. [chuckled] That was reassuring… (TC1, pg. 10)

- R: And when you reflected it back too, to her, that it was good, she got pretty emotional. T2: Yea, and this is really the beginning of, you know, a scene that we still talk about with the crying. She always, the only time she ever cries… She cries periodically, not like all the time, but it is always when she is talking about her mom. We just talked about this in our last session because the more we kind of explore this crying… But that anger is so difficult for her to tolerate that it becomes..., she turns it back on herself and it becomes this guilt and crying. So I think that is probably the first time, maybe in the intake she cried too. (TT2, pg. 9)

- C2: Yea, okay, I remember that now. I think that I was kind of emotional during that card. [R: Okay] My voice sounds like it because I maybe have a little lump in my throat or something because I remember during that card I felt pretty emotional, just because it had to do with the family and I always get kind of..., something makes me have some sort of feeling when talking about my family. So I think that I was kind of like, not getting upset, but… (TC2, pg. 3)

- C2: The question about the other two people? [R: Yea] Um, just that it made me feel emotional. (TC2, pg. 5)

- C2:… I could put these feelings onto this picture… (TC2, pg. 9)

- C2: Yea. It is just like depositing money in the bank. Like I come here and deposit my feelings. That assessment was like a trigger to let this out… R: And that is interesting because when you put money in a bank a lot of times, like in a savings account, it actually can gain interest, rather than if you just had it sitting around. C2: Yea, maybe having my feeling deposited here, then it’s relieving because it is here and it’s out of my head and I think that would be like organizing money in the bank. (TC2, pg. 10)

- C2: I think, well, how was that during the assessment? [R: Mmhm] It was just really, really emotional… (TC2, pg. 11)

- T3:… So he returned to a place that was emotionally so charged… (TT3, pg. 4)
T3:… But also in these moments of going through the real sadness that was there. And the images themselves evoked an emotional connection, you know, the idea of sitting in a fog and not knowing what is coming and being confused. So all of that stuff was just kind of replete in it. So I was really aware of those feelings that I was having and that he was possibly having as well. (TT3, pg. 5)

C3:… But the more and more I got into it, the more and more I was just saying how I felt. (TC3, pg. 6)

C4:… Almost like I was angry at someone or something but I couldn’t pinpoint what it was so I just kind of kept it in [R: Okay] because I couldn’t find a way to express it because I kind of didn’t know what it was. Like two clips ago when I said I got really depressed when like I was starting to be my brother, that is kind of what I mean. Like I was kind of harboring some secret hatred of him the whole time and it didn’t really…, I didn’t know what it was so… (TC4, pg. 9)

C4:… For example, I mentioned heartache, sadness and confusion. [R: Mmhm] Like…, this is weird. Okay, I think I would take out…, it’s like an advanced stage, like it’s kind of evolved. Like it’s no longer sadness and confusion, it has like an advanced aspect to it… I feel like it has evolved into alienation in a way. I feel like sadness and confusion here in the paper were two separate things, but as time has gone on, like I just mentioned before that things have become more intense, I feel like those two things have kind of combined into something bigger… R: Okay, so yea. So all of that stuff is still there, you are just calling it differently. The emotions are still kind of there but you have built on it so to speak. C4: Yea, I agree. (TC4, pg. 9)

C5: You know there are certain things…, looking at pictures certain things will strike you and bring up certain things in your life and some of them can be very sad and other things… And if I remember right there was something very sad. If I remember correctly there was something that brought up a very sad memory when we were talking about it. R: Okay, and how was that when you took that? C5: You know what, I didn’t really mind. I mean, it’s part of life. It makes you sad, another thing makes you happy. You know it just goes back and forth, that is just the way it is. [R: Okay, yea, that’s true.] It’s just part of who we are. Yea, so. You don’t like to revisit the bad but at the same time when you revisit the bad you think about the good that came before it and the reason why you were so sad. (TC5, pg. 2)

C5: I got a little carried away there. I think I was a little bit angry. R: Okay, what do you mean? C5: I appear to be angry there. You know what, that was why I was here to begin with, you know. R: You came in because of anger? [C5: Yea] What do you think angered you in that situation? C5: Not actually in that situation, it was just the things that were going on at the time. R: What you were talking about? C5: Yea, and things just kind of flowed away from what the initial subject was into where my head was at the time. (TC5, pg. 3)

9 – Liking the “humanness” of the therapist, revealed through falability. (3)
C4: It’s almost like in that instant he was bringing a part of himself into the conversation. Not that like, you know, therapist and client are robotic. Not like it is a stimulus-response kind of thing. It is definitely kind of organic in a sense. But like with that instant I felt like…, when I said, “Yea, yea, it’s totally fine,” or whatever, and even when his cell phone went off it didn’t bother me because it feels like I am relating to his humanness. And when a therapist brings their humanness, for lack of a better word, into the conversation it kind of makes it more real for me. Like I mentioned that the first therapist I saw was a behaviorist who was really cold and kind of like a robot. I don’t like that. There is something about when he mentioned the struggles slash hazing process like that’s…, I understood that he wasn’t trying to cast aside my concerns but I think that he was trying to make me to see it for what it really was, which is exactly what I think as a therapist he is meant to do. So I in that kind of instance, compared to the other people… R: So you feel like he was bringing his humanness into the room in that particular interaction. C4: Yea, well maybe it was by chance, but the cell phone really added to it because it was like he is not just this person who goes away…, like in cartoons you see robots just go into closets for the night. This person is real. R: So it adds this extra dimension to him when he brings in that genuine humanness. C4: Yea, and the thing with the hazing process would serve to underscore that because what about a person who has a therapist who never has their cell phone go off? Like how would you relate…, it would have to be something in the conversation I think, if that makes sense. R: So it made it easier to relate even though…, being able to see his…. you know like most times when a cell phone might go off or something like that we might see it as, like “Oh man, I shouldn’t have let that happen,” or something like that, but that helped you really to connect to him on the other hand. Yea, because it made him more human, he wasn’t like this perfect kind of like being or something like that. C4: Yea… (TC4, pg. 10-11)

C1: … but [my therapist] was fishing through his papers and he couldn’t find what he was looking for and then he found something and he read it and it didn’t, he admitted to it, he said, ‘Oh, that’s not what I was thinking either.’ And so that was just a little moment that created this trust because he was trying to make a point but then he couldn’t make it and he couldn’t find it in his notes either, so. (TC1, pg. 9)

C4: Yea, I had been to two therapists before. The first therapist I met only once and my parents and I decided we were not a good fit. R: What was that about? C4: I think she was a behaviorist and I don’t want to put the woman down but she was kind of cold for me. I guess I am kind of attracted to the existential way Duquesne does stuff. [R: Okay] The next therapist I met she was really really spiritual and the idea of incorporating spirituality and existential themes into the therapy, I was really into that. So, there wasn’t necessarily just talking at that point. There was really like this other dynamic added to it. Does that answer your question? R: Yea, so there was something that appealed to you about the existential side of it. You are a philosophy major, right? C4: Yes I am. R: And so I can see why that would be the case. But it seems like the colder approach, I
guess, somewhat more distant, didn’t appeal to you as much. C4: It was more robotic. [R: Okay] It didn’t make me feel like I was as subjective as people should be considered. R: So they weren’t appreciating your subjectivity. C4: Yea, yea. [Both laugh] They weren’t appreciating my subjectivity. There you go. But everyone else was. R: You seem pretty emphatic about that. C4: Yea, I am. [Both laugh] That’s my thing I guess. (TC4, pg. 2-3)

10 – Collaborative assessment energizes, brings hope, promise, is exciting, and is a catalyst for therapy. (22)

- “As I began to examine them, I saw some repetition in the subject matter, which I figured was a reflection of my own (inner) life. Multiple times I saw heartache, confusion, and sadness and my plight was never clearer to me than at that point. My heartbrokenness had been steering every aspect of who I thought I was. I knew then what [T4a] and I had to work on.” (C4WD)

- “I left the assessments feeling hopeful. That if I, as the patient, am willing to put forth the effort to go through the fire (metaphorically speaking), and [T4a], as the therapist, is willing to help me through it, then there was an excellent chance that I could take something from the sessions out into the world with me. The coming weeks could not come fast enough!” (C4WD)

- “This awareness left me with a sense of reassurance that what I was participating in was well worth the time the assessments took. Looking back on the assessment process, I am glad I went through it, otherwise [T4a] might not have had the background he needed in order to help me.” (C4WD)

- R: Okay. You had said, relating to this, in your written description you said at one point, “When referring to some objects I saw, [your therapist] used the work anthropological. I was pleased to hear that word.” [C1: Yea, I remember writing about that.] What was pleasing about that? C1: Umm, it’s just a nice word. [Both laugh] R: What do you think about when you hear that word? C1: What do I think about anthropology? That it’s kind of a science or a philosophy, or equally as much a philosophy as it is a science these days. It is not just related to going and digging up bones of dinosaurs or ancient cultures and scientific facts about what they ate. I mean, it really relates to almost everything. It’s the study of who we’ve been, who we can afford to be, of evolution. Yea, so, it’s just a good word. It’s not a word that I hear a lot. You know, I definitely don’t hear it in the office, in an advertising office. “We should really take a more anthropological spin on this.” You know, that doesn’t happen, so. R: Sounds like an outside the box kind of thing. C1: Yea, you know. And it just made me feel like an artist. Which is something I told [my therapist] I wanted to talk about but we never really got around to it too much. (TC1, pg, 14)

- R: Did you find it helpful? Or was it more… C2: No, I found it very helpful. Yea. R: Okay, so it seems like it kind of acted like a catalyst. Like it got you thinking about this stuff and then looking back… C2: Yea, that is a good word for it. (TC2, pg. 9)
C2: Yea. It is just like depositing money in the bank. Like I come here and deposit my feelings. That assessment was like a trigger to let this out... R: And that is interesting because when you put money in a bank a lot of times, like in a savings account, it actually can gain interest, rather than if you just had it sitting around. C2: Yea, maybe having my feeling deposited here, then it’s relieving because it is here and it’s out of my head and I think that would be like organizing money in the bank. (TC2, pg. 10)

C2: Yea, but I think that, like as far as the whole assessment thing goes, I don’t know. I feel like that would have come up anyways. But I think the card definitely moved it along. I think that is the thing, is like the cards are just moving it along faster. R: Kind of facilitating things to come out. C2: Yea, I know that would have come up anyways, but I don’t know when. But those cards, it just quickens the process. R: Okay, and it seems like [T2]..., I mean you got emotional and then [T2] was kind of, you know, talked to you a little bit about it and said, “Well, this is something we can continue with in ongoing therapy.” How was that? C2: It’s good because I don’t feel like things have to come up now. Like it was like, “Is it okay that the card brought it up?” Maybe I cry a little bit. You know, “We’ll talk about it more later.” [laughs] It’s not like I have to bring it up all now, “Hurry, before our session is done.” Like you know, which is really, and I know this doesn’t have anything to do with the assessment, but it was just so helpful to me because I am a person who like in the past I’ve, where things have to be done now, and brought up now, and it’s just like this method of therapy just helps to be like, “Well, things don’t have to be right now.” So, I mean the cards brought up the issues quicker and I think it just helped for later. The fact that it was like, “Okay there is this issue, this issue and this issue. We’ll touch upon them when they come up again. R: Okay, so it seems like a balance there between, like it pulled it out but it wasn’t like you have to deal with it and work through it right now. [C2: Yea] Like we can kind of hold onto that and work through it gradually. C2: Yea, so it quickened the initial part of bringing it up. (TC2, pg. 11)

R: So there you were thinking about the conservative versus the wild side of yourself. C2: Right, or just in general I was thinking about these structures, like choices or paths or something. But I’m not thinking, I don’t think it looks that way too much anymore. During the assessment, I think that I was thinking like..., I was so overwhelmed by..., like that was definitely something I wanted to talk about and I am glad that card brought it up, but I think during that moment I was so overwhelmed by this feeling that I didn’t know what to do with it or I felt like it was never going to get solved. [R: Okay. The paths?] But the fact that [T2] was saying, “Well, you know there is probably a middle road,” that was reassuring. And the fact that maybe I didn’t have to talk about it all right that second. R: So it was good to bring it up but also that um, he kind of pointed in the direction that there is a middle road but we can work on that at another time, and it sounds like you have. C2: Yea, and I think with that issue especially I needed reassurance because I was really overwhelmed by that feeling right then. R: Okay,
so it was really helpful at the time, you would say. [C2: Yea, yea] Okay. (TC2, pg. 12)

- C2: And also him asking me questions like, I forget what he asked me, something about like, “so what would that mean for you?” Those type of questions really help me complete the thought. I feel like the thoughts would be just all over the place and running wild if there wasn’t this sort of like this hook for them, you know, like… R: It helps you stay with it a little bit and follow through. C2: Yea, yea. Follow through definitely. It just helps me complete the thought. Even if it is not going to be completed that day, it just helps to move it along. So those questions definitely, questions like, “What would that mean to you?” and “What exactly were you thinking?” or “What were you exactly feeling?” or “How would it make you feel?” Those kind of things help to move it along… (TC2, pg. 14-15)

- C2: Yea, and even though I was so anti-Meyers-Briggs, I think that just that fact brought up an aspect of my personality that needed to be discussed, or that I needed to get that out. [R: Okay] Because I was so fearful of being rigid and structured and having somebody tell me something about me instead of feeling like having the strength inside to tell the paper about myself, like that. So even though I don’t believe in it or whatever, I think it was productive in that way. (TC2, pg. 15-16)

- R: Yea, and you were really good about putting it back on him. He was really focusing on his difficulty with challenging himself, but there is this curiosity that is there. He was able to move to talking about his own… T3: He sounded excited didn’t he? [R: Yea] He was like, “Yea, I am.” (TT3, pg. 11)

- R: And at the end there was talk about another metaphor that came out about a dawning and a realizing [C3: An awakening] and feelings that were there. [C3: Yea] How was that? C3: It was good. I think I was more alluding to the news, like this moment of surprise. Maybe awakening for the guy with the lady who just didn’t really fully understand until you see with your own eyes. So, it makes sense. It wasn’t tough, but at the same time I was reading a lot of myself into both situations. I was alluding to me coming to therapy and alluding to a change of lifestyle, a change of relationship status, all of that. An awakening. (TC3, pg 8-9)

- R: Yea, it seemed like you were talking about the difficulty with just getting going and stuff like that, but [T3] was supportive. She was saying, “There is a curiosity there,” and she could see that motivation, that desire to want to get up and get going. How was that? C3: Very, very encouraging. It made me want to come back, where somebody was actually listening to me. Like I said, my biggest fear was that I was just going to get an anti-depressant prescription. I went to personal counseling in my junior college before this…, before coming here and it was more career oriented. I mean, you get into your personal problems and they are like, “Whoa. You need to go see somebody else,” and whatever. So it was real encouraging to have somebody saying that. That she is recognizing some positive out of all that negative. So, it was real encouraging. (TC3, pg. 9-10)
R: By that, but you constantly felt like that: bracing. C3: Constantly. Even the 10 years earlier. I feel like that has been a running metaphor for my life for a long time. R: And it really speaks to your experience, it sounds like. C3: Yea, in a lot of ways, and to a lot of people’s. I just feel that as a defense mechanism I use that to not achieve and to not get close to too many people and use it as an excuse to stay comfortable. I just feel like I’m moving away from that. Definitely made progress as far as that goes, which feels good. I think I feel better than I have felt in a long, long time. (TC3, pg. 11)

C3: Yea, and you know after looking at the clips I realize that we have worked on that. So when we first started, when I wrote that for you and she brought up the proposal of doing this, I was thinking, “Poor [T3] has sat here and listened to me for a month and a half and I don’t think she has gotten a word in edgewise because I have just been unloading.” Then when we finally had gotten to me slowing down and doing this back and forth, I realized that we had worked on a lot of this. And we might not have hardly ever referred back to those photos or the pictures…, there’s a lot that was in in those pictures and that we did talk about in the assessment that we did come back to. And I really didn’t realize it until seeing it. And even just now talking about the comfortability and the fog and moments of clarity and all that, I mean we really touch on that a lot. So, I guess maybe it helped her get insight into what was going on with me and open the door for me to start communicating about it. R: Sounds like it opened up stuff for you too. C3: It did. But rather than going and saying, “Okay, remember about the photo and this,” and I’m like, “Naw.” You know, [R: It just kind of went with it] It just kind of goes with what we are talking about anyways. So, I guess since it has already been brought up at one point, you don’t really have to refer to… R: You don’t have to refer to the card specifically. C3: No, because it is really coming from something within you anyway, I guess. [R: Yea, yea] But I didn’t realize that until I just saw it. (TC3, pg. 11)

C4: I don’t know if it is pop culture or what but you know, I also did the Rorschach thing, but there is something about this idea of having this seemingly objective standpoint of which to base yourself on. And I know that sounds kind of limiting, but on some level I think it is good because it kind of gives us a base from which to work from. (TC4, pg. 1-2)

R: Yea, and how was that for you, like that process of talking about it with him and getting some feedback about it? C4: Well, all of this was very, I don’t want to say healing, but it was very insightful. [R: Okay] I guess because in that situation we were kind of bringing out something that I had never really acknowledged in my head before. Like, I knew it was there but I had never really brought it to the front. Does that make sense? [R: Yea] Yea, okay. I’m telling you this has been so weird. What I just watched has just happened to me in the past few weeks, it is so crazy. [R: Really] Not this week but last Friday when I met with him, that was all I talked about was the graduate school, different ideas, splitting apart. It was just so much more intensified in this one, so I feel like I am kind of continuing with it in that sense… R: So it seems like that drawing – that picture, that image, that
representation – has really stuck with you because that was some time ago. That was several months ago and even now, even within the past few weeks you still have been talking about it and it has been opening things up for you, it sounds like. C4: Yea, I don’t know if it is like that major shift in life, but I think I have been kind of readying myself for it for a long time because I know it was going to happen. [R: Okay] I think some part of me thinks that if I start dealing with it not it won’t be painful later. R: Okay. So it kind of sparked something for you to work on later and to continue working on, it seems like. [C4: Mmhm] Yea, okay, alright. And how is it to do that? It seems like it was helpful. C4: Yea, I like the exercises and that one in particular. I mean, I just drew stick figures but it really caused me to put some thought into what I was doing. Not that I didn’t think about anything else before, but it almost seemed like just talking, okay that is one thing, anyone can just talk. And then it’s like, okay, looking at a piece of art and then giving your interpretation of it, well that is another thing. The similarities between those two exercises was me just kind of sort of being passive, like I was just taking it in I wasn’t necessarily being proactive in it, if that makes sense. [R: Mmhm] But the drawing like forced me to like actually put something in my head. I don’t know if that makes sense. [R: Okay] There was something about this direct connection between me and the real world that like… R: The physical representation [C4: Yes] of what was in your head. [C4: Yea] Okay, there was something very helpful about that [C4: Yea] getting out and externalizing it. C4: Yea, because in the art there is that physical representation but it is not mine. So it’s almost like I’m kind of dependent on this other thing to tell me what I’m thinking. Whereas, if I just do it myself there is no miscommunication, there is no indirect communication. It’s all very…, like you are getting the genuine article, I guess. (TC4, pg. 5-6)

- C4: Mmhm. I felt very hopeful about it because I felt like with [my spiritual therapist] I had kind of burned out. There was only so much she could help me with. Now I needed a new perspective and I didn’t know where to turn and then I found the Psychology Clinic here at Duquesne and it has this existential base. It seems to offer the kinds of things that I could really get into and I was kind of excited to finally get some of these things off my chest and hear a third person point of view. I don’t know if I mentioned this before or not, but [T4a] really acts as kind of like…, well I guess therapists in general for me act kind of like a mediator between how we see ourselves and how we actually are. Like I come into therapy with this perspective of my situation and this perspective of myself and the best example I can give you is that philosophy paper that I was freaking out about. So I said, you know, “Oh my goodness, I am a failure. I can’t do this. I just got blasted. I’m not going to do anything good.” And that is kind of a typical response for me. I just get into this panicked realm. And he just stood there and was like, “Well, you know this is how I see it and maybe this is the way it really is.” And that really was just like, oh my goodness, the light really went off. And it was just kind of like, “Wow!” He took me out of the small box I was living in and kind of like put it in perspective I guess. And he had done that before and so I was like, “Oooh, if he can do this now I wonder in the coming weeks what else we can get done.” Does that make sense? R: So he was facilitating and making
some connections and you were enticed by that it sounds like. Like you liked that, like, “Man, he really helped me make some connections. What else can we do?” [C4: Yea] (TC4, pg. 13-14)

- R:... Okay, and it seemed like the assessment process in general, looking back, you were saying you are glad that you went through it because it gave you this jumping off point to build on, like we have been talking about, it seems like. C4: Yea. It may have been difficult sometimes because I think as human beings we have this natural tendency to not want to face certain facts about ourselves, but the assessment kind of gets the ball rolling or puts it in perspective to help us cope with it, and that is what it did for me. R: Yea, okay. And it seems like it might have brought out stuff that maybe just through talking you may have walked right past it kind of a thing. I am thinking. [C4: Yea] Whereas the assessment kind of gets you to stop and look around at where we are starting, kind of a thing, and build a good foundation rather than just jumping into it. C4: Yea, you pretty much said it. That is how I feel. (TC4, pg. 14-15)

- R:... Did you feel like it was helpful to discuss that with [T4b] [C5: Yea] because sometimes, you know, in other situations maybe if you had gone somewhere else they might have had you just take that test and then keep that to themselves and know that test said that about you and never share it with you. Do you feel like it was helpful that he shared that? C5: Yes, I think so. I think so because I think when you take a test like that, or when anybody does, they’re a little curious about the results and what those results show you and kind of staying in the dark about it, you might wonder. Other people might wonder. It’s like, “What are you thinking about?” You know. R: So did it make you view [T4b] differently that he was willing to show that to you? C5: Well, I like things to be up front. I like to know what your thought process is and if we’re..., basically I’m here to get help with my problems and if you have something you are hiding from me, some judgment or whatever, or some feeling. I think you understand what I’m trying to say. R: Yea, but then what? Continue with that. C5: Then it inhibits me from speaking freely. R: It would stop you from doing that because you feel like, “If you are keeping stuff from me then I’m going to keep stuff from you.” C5: Right. Exactly. (TC5, pg. 9-10)

- C5:... it’s a guideline, I mean, it gets you in the ball park. [R: Exactly] You know, just going in and sitting down and talking to somebody, I mean, how long would it take you and I to get to know each other’s personalities? It could take years to get to know all of the nuances and quirks and everything that each of us have. And you have to have a tool like that to get you close. R: So it gives you direction. C5: Exactly. [R: Yea, Okay] And at the same time if the doctor has that it is good for me as well, or whoever the patient is, as long as they are being open about it and telling the results of it and where it is taking them, again like we just talked about, it’s going to put whoever took the test more at ease. [R: Definitiely] And those things were accurate for me, but there are things to expand on. R: Exactly, and it gives you a chance to correct it in certain ways. [C5: Yea] If it says, “You are this way,” you might say, “Well, sometimes I am that but I can
also be this way too.” I’m sure that would be pretty comforting too to have that.
[C5: Yea.] (TC5, pg. 11)

- R:… Do you feel like any of the stuff that was brought up then kind of carried over into your work with [T4b]? C5: Yea, well all of those thoughts. Just that the initial process always carries over. R: Yea, and it seems to be something that you got something out of. C5: Yea, of course. (TC5, pg. 12)

11 – Collaborative assessment helps clients feel more relaxed, comfortable, involved, and empowered. (15)

- C1: I remember, I was pleased to hear that. R: Which part? C1: That I was a smart thinker. [chuckled] That was reassuring… and that didn’t seem unusual to me, or didn’t seem concerned to me, that I wouldn’t have picked up the normal answers… (TC1, pg. 10)

- C2: I think I was less nervous there than I was at first. I know that. Because I think that was towards the middle of the test. R: It was. Do you have any idea why you might have been less nervous? C2: Um, maybe because I found that just kind of, not easy but not hard, you know? R: Not easy but not hard? C2: Yea, like it was just, I don’t know, just like a pattern of new cards, tell a story, and I had gotten emotional already… and I was starting to look at, I had just told [T2] that at one point I had taught a class I would… R: You had just done that a minute ago, before this [C2: Okay] So, you were getting more comfortable with it. [C2: Yea] Like it was kind of fun, it seems [C2: Yea, actually, maybe.] So, less nervous,… So I just wanted to see how that was. So you were just kind of getting more comfortable [C2: Yea]. (TC2, pg. 5)

- C2:… And also him asking me questions like, I forget what he asked me, something about like, “so what would that mean for you?” Those type of questions really help me complete the thought. I feel like the thoughts would be just all over the place and running wild if there wasn’t this sort of like this hook for them, you know, like… R: It helps you stay with it a little bit and follow through. C2: Yea, yea. Follow through definitely. It just helps me complete the thought. Even if it is not going to be completed that day, it just helps to move it along. So those questions definitely, questions like, “What would that mean to you?” and “What exactly were you thinking?” or “What were you exactly feeling?” or “How would it make you feel?” Those kind of things help to move it along… (TC2, pg. 14-15)

- R: Yea, and you were really good about putting it back on him. He was really focusing on his difficulty with challenging himself, but there is this curiosity that is there. He was able to move to talking about his own… T3: He sounded excited didn’t he? [R: Yea] He was like, “Yea, I am.” (TT3, pg. 11)

- C3: Um. After talking to [T3] for a little while, a lot of that eased away. But in the beginning, like I said, I think most of the things I thought were not normal. R: Okay. What do you think helped to ease that? C3: Developing a rapport with her and a relationship… (TC3, pg. 2)
C3:… You know, I mean it is sad to see myself in that shape but at the same time I think I’ve made tons of progress so it is good to see it too. (TC3, pg. 4)

R: What do you think changed to make you feel more comfortable? C3: I think it was easier to talk about myself. Even though I was making up a story, it was still sort of based in reality in a lot of ways. It wasn’t something I had to think about really hard. Whereas, just making up a story I sort of had to use another part of my brain to get the creative stuff going and I wasn’t really in that spot at that time anyway. I think what was on my mind was me anyway. I think that’s why it was easier. [R: It just became easier] To talk about myself rather than make something up. R: It was easier to relate to yourself rather than try to just make something up. C3: I think was. (TC3, pg. 6)

R: Okay, and she mentioned in there…, it brought me back to something you said earlier. You said when you first came in you were really worried that there was a right or wrong with some of the bubble test answers and stuff like that. [C3: Right, right] And she actually said in that segment, “There is no right or wrong.” [C3: Right] And how was that? C3: That was good because…, and I know she had said that before, even before I did the bubble test, and um, but the more she reiterated that it helped me ease up. At this point I think I had gotten to the point where I was a lot easier. A little bit more free with what I was saying. But, I’m glad she said that and I’m glad she said it more than once because, you know, I could have taken the approach to where I don’t hardly say anything and say, “That is as far as I can go with that,” and not be honest. You know, I didn’t want to do that at all. But yea, that was a hard card for me. (TC3, pg. 8)

C3: That’s exactly right. It’s becoming comfortable, which is what I have to watch. I feel like I have to watch the comfortability. I mean, it is okay to have comfort in certain aspects, but I need to keep pushing to the uncomfortable too. (TC3, pg. 10)

R: Yea, and how was that for you, like that process of talking about it with him and getting some feedback about it? C4: Well, all of this was very, I don’t want to say healing, but it was very insightful. [R: Okay] I guess because in that situation we were kind of bringing out something that I had never really acknowledged in my head before. Like, I knew it was there but I had never really brought it to the front. Does that make sense? [R: Yea] Yea, okay. I’m telling you this has been so weird. What I just watched has just happened to me in the past few weeks, it is so crazy. [R: Really] Not this week but last Friday when I met with him, that was all I talked about was the graduate school, different ideas, splitting apart. It was just so much more intensified in this one, so I feel like I am kind of continuing with it in that sense… R: So it seems like that drawing – that picture, that image, that representation – has really stuck with you because that was some time ago. That was several months ago and even now, even within the past few weeks you still have been talking about it and it has been opening things up for you, it sounds like. C4: Yea, I don’t know if it is like that major shift in life, but I think I have been kind of readying myself for it for a long time because I know it was going to
happen. [R: Okay] I think some part of me thinks that if I start dealing with it not it won’t be painful later. R: Okay. So it kind of sparked something for you to work on later and to continue working on, it seems like. [C4: Mhm] Yea, okay, alright. And how is it to do that? It seems like it was helpful. C4: Yea, I like the exercises and that one in particular. I mean, I just drew stick figures but it really caused me to put some thought into what I was doing. Not that I didn’t think about anything else before, but it almost seemed like just talking, okay that is one thing, anyone can just talk. And then it’s like, okay, looking at a piece of art and then giving your interpretation of it, well that is another thing. The similarities between those two exercises was me just kind of sort of being passive, like I was just taking it in I wasn’t necessarily being proactive in it, if that makes sense. [R: Mhm] But the drawing like forced me to like actually put something in my head. I don’t know if that makes sense. [R: Okay] There was something about this direct connection between me and the real world that like… R: The physical representation [C4: Yes] of what was in your head. [C4: Yea] Okay, there was something very helpful about that [C4: Yea] getting out and externalizing it. C4: Yea, because in the art there is that physical representation but it is not mine. So it’s almost like I’m kind of dependent on this other think to tell me what I’m thinking. Whereas, if I just do it myself there is no miscommunication, there is no indirect communication. It’s all very…, like you are getting the genuine article, I guess. (TC4, pg. 5-6)

• R: Okay. I found it interesting that it went from something that was just kind of basic, like these little drawings into something that was really meaningful to you. You know, you ended up talking about how you are a good listener to others but you don’t feel like people are that way to you. [C5: Right] That’s pretty important and it got brought out by this simple kind of thing. How was that for you? C5: Well, it’s always good to get it out. [C5: Mhm] You know, to be able to tell somebody and have them actually listen. [R: Yea] It does help, it does help, and it has. (TC5, pg. 3)

• R: But, it’s interesting how just a little…, just him noticing that it was in the corner of the page led to you talking about…. you know, you said, “Maybe I do want to not be noticed as much or disappear.” C5: Yea, I kind of analyzed myself quite a bit with that. R: Okay, and how was that to see the drawing to lead to revealing something about yourself like that? C5:… But it’s something…, not drawing something real large and outstanding, you know, you’re not going to take as much notice of something small so it’s going to be a little more insignificant. R: So it seemed to bring it up for you as something you and [T4b] could discuss. How was that? Were you okay with that? C5: Yea, that’s why I am here. R: Yea, and it kind of helped you with that. C5: Oh yea, absolutely. (TC5, pg. 6)

• R:… Did you feel like it was helpful to discuss that with [T4b] [C5: Yea] because sometimes, you know, in other situations maybe if you had gone somewhere else they might have had you just take that test and then keep that to themselves and know that test said that about you and never share it with you. Do you feel like it was helpful that he shared that? C5: Yes, I think so. I think so because I think
when you take a test like that, or when anybody does, they’re a little curious about the results and what those results show you and kind of staying in the dark about it, you might wonder. Other people might wonder. It’s like, “What are you thinking about?” You know. R: So did it make you view [T4b] differently that he was willing to show that to you? C5: Well, I like things to be up front. I like to know what your thought process is and if we’re…, basically I’m here to get help with my problems and if you have something you are hiding from me, some judgment or whatever, or some feeling. I think you understand what I’m trying to say. R: Yea, but then what? Continue with that. C5: Then it inhibits me from speaking freely. R: It would stop you from doing that because you feel like, “If you are keeping stuff from me then I’m going to keep stuff from you.” C5: Right. Exactly. (TC5, pg. 9-10)

- R: I can see that would definitely cause you to shift your posture. So I guess I will just ask, aside from your body posture, did you maybe you got more comfortable with the process as it went along? C5: Well, I think there is always a little discomfort when you are first just learning somebody, especially if you are exploring your own experiences, your own feelings and your own problems. I think there’s always a little discomfort in spilling all that to somebody that you don’t know, and even to someone that you do know. It is very hard to bear yourself to others. R: Do you think there was some comfort in after you do that maybe knowing that it hasn’t been taken up as…, if you don’t feel judged by it. C5: Yea, that helps with it. (TC5, pg. 10)

- C5: Exactly. [R: Yea, Okay] And at the same time if the doctor has that it is good for me as well, or whoever the patient is, as long as they are being open about it and telling the results of it and where it is taking them, again like we just talked about, it’s going to put whoever took the test more at ease. [R: Definitively] And those things were accurate for me, but there are things to expand on. R: Exactly, and it gives you a chance to correct it in certain ways. [C5: Yea] If it says, “You are this way,” you might say, “Well, sometimes I am that but I can also be this way too.” I’m sure that would be pretty comforting too to have that. [C5: Yea.] (TC5, pg. 11)

12 – Comforted by therapist’s explanation of assessment and feedback process. (14)
- “So basically, my fear was that I would be limited by my results. However, [T2] eased my mind by explaining that for the purposes of this type of therapy, the MBTI is used in a way that it reveals what you think about yourself.” (C2WD)
- “As we were arranging a time to do the assessment, I told him that the process was in no way a kind of “me figuring him out” from test results, but rather that we would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context of his own experience. I also told him that the assessment process offered the chance for both of us to hold and work with some representations, images, or metaphors for what he was experiencing at the present time in his life. [C3] seemed to me to be very agreeable to this and open to the process.” (T3WD, pg. 1)
“[T4a], my therapist, had told the week before that he would be showing me some flash cards with pictures: all I had to do was explain what I saw was happening in the picture. I was excited about taking part in this specific analysis because I had never done anything like it in the past. All of the previous assessments were through talking only (which is fine, but it becomes a bore after a while).” (C5WD)

C1: It’s like, [my therapist] also mentioned to me, it’s more like a stepping stone for conversation. It just brings up topics and I was fine with it in that aspect. (TC1, pg. 12)

C2: I think I was probably too nervous to really digest the information that he was giving to me. R: Okay, so you were nervous at the time. C2: Yea, I think that if, because what he said, like “they are points of departure for conversation.” So I think that had to be what like my first or second session?... R: Okay, but you said at the beginning, your first response was saying something like saying, “I wish I had taken that in more.” What did you mean by that? C2: I just think I wouldn’t have gone into the Meyers-Briggs test so upset about it [laughs]. I do have like preconceived notions against those kinds of tests [laughs] (TC2, pg. 2)

C2:… [T2] did explain that the results tell how you see yourself rather than some insight into our personality. So after he told me that, after I took the test, I thought that perhaps those made more sense… (TC2, pg. 6)

C2: Well, it eased my mind a bit about the tests, especially when he said that it is a snapshot of how you are right now. That sentence. R: What about that was… C2: I think I was just thinking of that as a sentence. So, yea it was helpful that he said that. I could feel myself, or see myself getting less nervous as the conversation went on… (TC2, pg. 6)

C2: Yea, I think I laughed when [T2] said, “It wasn’t a life sentence.” Just because I thought that was funny. R: Because you could relate to that. [C2: Yes, yes.] It seems like with that it was kind of a relief. C2: Yea. Like even though I hate watching myself it is a relief, I think maybe, to hear him say that again about the test… (TC2, pg. 7)

R: Okay. So it was good to have that feedback, instead of just like… C2: Yea. It was absolutely good to have that feedback. Yea. (TC2, pg. 8)

C3: It was fine. Actually, I think she was trying to explain to me what the meaning behind coming up with the stories for the picture is. Which I understood. R: How was that? C3: It was fine. I think my mind was on other things at that point. You know. R: Can you remember what you might have been thinking about at all? C3: I think I was thinking that…, I don’t know where this is leading, but I understood what she was telling me. With this being the initial meeting, I didn’t know if we were going to have a lot more of those to do because I feel like for a good while I really just came in and talked and I think [T3] and I got about five minutes in out of the hour because I was just letting loose and talking a lot and I think that is what I was ready to do. R: It seems like what you needed. C3: Right,
so I didn’t know how much more of this…, I understood what she was telling me about being able to refer back to these metaphors and everything... (TC3, pg. 4)

- R: Okay, and she mentioned in there..., it brought me back to something you said earlier. You said when you first came in you were really worried that there was a right or wrong with some of the bubble test answers and stuff like that. [C3: Right, right] And she actually said in that segment, “There is no right or wrong.” [C3: Right] And how was that? C3: That was good because..., and I know she had said that before, even before I did the bubble test, and um, but the more she reiterated that it helped me ease up. At this point I think I had gotten to the point where I was a lot easier. A little bit more free with what I was saying. But, I’m glad she said that and I’m glad she said it more than once because, you know, I could have taken the approach to where I don’t hardly say anything and say, “That is as far as I can go with that,” and not be honest. You know, I didn’t want to do that at all. But yea, that was a hard card for me. (TC3, pg. 8)

- R:… You also said, “[T4a], my therapist, had told me the week before that he would be showing me some flash cards with pictures: all I had to do was explain what I saw happening in the picture. I was excited about taking part in the specific analysis because I had never done anything like it in the past. All of the previous assessments were through talking only (which is fine, but it becomes a bore after a while).” [Both chuckle] C4: I don’t know if it is pop culture or what but you know, I also did the Rorschach thing, but there is something about this idea of having this seemingly objective standpoint of which to base yourself on. And I know that sounds kind of limiting, but on some level I think it is good because it kind of gives us a base from which to work from. (TC4, pg. 1-2)

- R: But I feel like there is a strategy behind it though. I mean, I feel like you are showing him and putting him at ease by saying, “You know, this stuff isn’t set in stone because this test says that.” [T4b: Yea] We can question it and it doesn’t necessarily always fit and we can talk about it and that is what matters more. T4b: Yea, and I think I did that throughout the assessment and maybe I’m asking in a way. You know what, I think your interpretation was actually the question I was trying to ask him with that statement. You know, “This wasn’t too bad was it?” [chuckles] Or maybe more along the lines of what I was rambling about was that, “It wasn’t as bad for you as I think it is.” And he’s saying, “Well, the test is accurate but we could have done it a different way.” So I just sort of get a sense of “good enough,” we are moving ahead. (TT4b, pg. 9)

- R: So it was pretty accurate but it seemed like he was putting out there the possibility that the stuff that it says is something that..., you know, it seems like he is saying that what is more important for you is what we make out of it rather than what it says. It isn’t like carved in stone or something like that. C5: Truthfully, I think things like that people make too much out of them, the test itself, because it’s not..., it’s a guideline, I mean, it gets you in the ball park. [R: Exactly] You know, just going in and sitting down and talking to somebody, I mean, how long would it take you and I to get to know each other’s personalities?
It could take years to get to know all of the nuances and quirks and everything that each of us have. And you have to have a tool like that to get you close. R: So it gives you direction. C5: Exactly. [R: Yea, Okay] And at the same time if the doctor has that it is good for me as well, or whoever the patient is, as long as they are being open about it and telling the results of it and where it is taking them, again like we just talked about, it’s going to put whoever took the test more at ease. [R: Definitely] And those things were accurate for me, but there are things to expand on. R: Exactly, and it gives you a chance to correct it in certain ways. [C5: Yea] If it says, “You are this way,” you might say, “Well, sometimes I am that but I can also be this way too.” I’m sure that would be pretty comforting too to have that. [C5: Yea.] (TC5, pg. 11)

13 – Discomforted by the therapist’s explanation of assessment and feedback process.
- C1:… Like, “listen we are just going to go from, you know, we’ll just talk about these subjects because they are what came up from the test.” I really felt like because he didn’t really explain too much about his feelings on the test and the way he went about, you know, that there was a scoring and he had his notes and was relating it back to me, “This is what the test says.” Yada, yada, yada. I felt like, yea, like he was putting a lot of trust in it and I didn’t necessarily feel very comfortable with that. (TC1, pg. 12)

14 – Collaborative assessment process was fun, enjoyable. (10)
- “As far as the TAT goes, I could honestly say that I enjoyed taking this part of the assessment.” (C2WD)
- “I tried to stay honest and found it fairly fun to pick my brain for answers to questions that I don’t usually get asked.” (C3WD)
- “I admit, I rather like being assessed. It provides a kind of checkpoint, if one will, for me to see where I am (from a different perspective).” (C4WD)
- “I was excited about taking part in this specific analysis because I had never done anything like it in the past.” (C5WD)
- R:… So, you were getting more comfortable with it. [C2: Yea] Like it was kind of fun, it seems [C2: Yea, actually, maybe.] (TC2, pg. 5)
- C2:… And in a way, I did really enjoy taking the test… (TC2, pg. 8)
- R: Okay. You had mentioned at one point too, you said, “I found it fairly fun to pick my brain for answers to questions that I don’t usually get asked.” [C3: Yea] So there was a fun part to it too. C3: Yea, like when you first fill in the blank thing it was almost like adlibs or whatever [laughs]. But, yea. It was…, They were hard questions too. It’s not like, “Who was the first president of the United States?” or anything like that. [laughs] I enjoyed it though. R: So there was a fun part to it too. C3: Yea, that was the funnest. R: The sentence completion? C3: Yea, and I don’t know why. I guess it is my personality or something. I enjoyed it, and it was short. [both laugh] (TC3, pg. 12)
• T4a:... To me, looking at it from here it seemed like he was enjoying it,… (TT4a, pg. 7)

• C4: Sure. I don’t know when it started, but I’ve always liked the idea of someone else looking at me from somewhat of a different view point. I mean, we kind of have our own limitations based on the body we live in and dealing with the only perspective we have. But I really enjoy seeing other people’s points of view about me. Not in a harsh critical sense, necessarily. But more or less in the, “I want to try to help you become a better person,” kind of deal. (TC4, pg. 1)

• C5: Yea, I like tests that make me find things that are in my head. [C5: Okay] I like to, you know, be challenged. (TC5, pg. 4)

15 – Was skeptical of collaborative assessment at first, but found it helpful and enjoyable anyway. (15)

• “Regardless of my skepticism concerning the legitimacy of the test, I don’t regret taking the Rorschach.” (C1WD, pg. 2)

• “Initially, [C2]’s reaction to my letter was fatalistic -- the fact that my interpretations of the tests corresponded in some way with our work together in regular sessions made her feel doomed to repeat these patterns forever. Ultimately, I got the impression that through our discussion [C2] was able to accept some of the themes I mentioned without feeling determined by them.” (T2WD, pg. 2)

• “So basically, my fear was that I would be limited by my results. However, [T2] eased my mind by explaining that for the purposes of this type of therapy, the MBTI is used in a way that it reveals what you think about yourself.” (C2WD)

• “Sometimes it was a little monotonous, but like most things in life, one needs to wade through some stuff so that one may travel farther down the road and onto to better things.” (C4WD)

• C2: And also, even though the TAT cards were really helpful and I felt that they were successful, I don’t think I realized how much information was going to come out of me just by describing those cards. [R: Okay] Because like when you learn about it in psychology class you just think, “Oh gosh, they are just prompting issues.” Or like [laughs], you know, but no offense to psychology. But it’s just sometimes what people think or what they say. But I mean, honestly, that is you describing the picture so, I was really surprised. (TC2, pg. 1-2)

• C2:… it was just really surprising how much came out of me during those cards and how much you relate everything back to yourself. And in a way, I did really enjoy taking the test. But, yea, those themes that came up really played throughout during the rest of my sessions. And that was surprising, I wasn’t realizing it, that we would talk about something that I had said during the TAT test… (TC2, pg. 8)
• C2: Yea, and even though I was so anti-Meyers-Briggs, I think that just that fact brought up an aspect of my personality that needed to be discussed, or that I needed to get that out. [R: Okay] Because I was so fearful of being rigid and structured and having somebody tell me something about me instead of feeling like having the strength inside to tell the paper about myself, like that. So even though I don’t believe in it or whatever, I think it was productive in that way. (TC2, pg. 15-16)

• C3: Um. After talking to [T3] for a little while, a lot of that eased away. But in the beginning, like I said, I think most of the things I thought were not normal. R: Okay. What do you think helped to ease that? C3: Developing a rapport with her and a relationship… (TC3, pg. 2)

• R: Okay. She did kind of explain it…. you said, “I wonder if that was stupid,” and she said, “No, no, these metaphors really help,” and you are saying you could hear it but it really took some time to really see how helpful it was. C3: Exactly. I mean, I was thinking, “Well, if it helps them, alright. I have faith that it will help me in the long run and I will do it every week if I have to.” (TC3, pg. 5)

• C3:… But I was surprised at how much I saw and I just went with it. (TC3, pg. 7)

• R: It is interesting because you were saying that it is tough and painful and it was a hard card, but it seems like you got a lot out of it too. C3: I did. Especially now, seeing it now. I remember seeing the card. I didn’t really remember what I said about it other than the guy getting some news that he wasn’t expecting. Seeing it now there is a lot more clarity to it. It’s amazing honestly. But I guess, you know, hindsight is 20/20. But, months down the road I’m able to see where I was and I guess a lot of answers were there for me. It just takes a while to process and see them. It’s interesting. (TC3, pg. 8)

• R: Yea, it seemed like you were talking about the difficulty with just getting going and stuff like that, but [T3] was supportive. She was saying, “There is a curiosity there,” and she could see that motivation, that desire to want to get up and get going. How was that? C3: Very, very encouraging. It made me want to come back, where somebody was actually listening to me. Like I said, my biggest fear was that I was just going to get an anti-depressant prescription. I went to personal counseling in my junior college before this…. before coming here and it was more career oriented. I mean, you get into your personal problems and they are like, “Whoa. You need to go see somebody else,” and whatever. So it was real encouraging to have somebody saying that. That she is recognizing some positive out of all that negative. So, it was real encouraging. (TC3, pg. 9-10)

• R:…. So, did you feel like the assessment helped ultimately with therapy and the stuff like that, the things you have been working on? C3: I mean, now I do. If you had asked me that before watching the clips I would have probably said, “I don’t know really what…. other than if it helped [T3], I don’t know if it helped me do anything.” But… R: But that changed, it seems, after watching the clips. C3: Yea, seeing this now. I knew we had brought up…, maybe some things were brought
up. But for the most part it looks like we pretty much..., I don’t want to say we are still talking about the same things we were when we started, but we built on a lot of that and it’s interesting to see that. [R: Okay] But yea, it was fairly painless. I’ve got more trust in the whole atmosphere now. I’m a lot more honest, which I guess is because we built upon it. But yea, it wasn’t a bad experience at all. (TC3, pg. 12)

• C3: Just the evaluation, building upon it. If I hadn’t seen that I would have probably said that I didn’t know what good it did for me. But now I see it. (TC3, pg. 12)

• C5: Yea, I feel like it was helpful. And actually viewing it again you get a little more out of it than you realized at the time… R: Yea, I was wondering if you felt like maybe it didn’t make that much of an impression because you didn’t get that much out of it. C5: Well, I don’t think I realized at the time how much came out of it. R: Okay, until you watched it now. C5: Yea, until I actually see it now, obviously in a better state of mind at this point in time. It is obvious that it was a good thing and it brought up at least the starting points for a lot of things. R: Yea, it did seem to bring up a lot of starting points and directions and paths to follow. C5: Yea, it really did. (TC5, pg. 12)

16 – Would have rather talked about problems than be assessed, it would have been just as productive. (5)

• C5: “Most of that stuff I could tell you anyway. I know that issues that come from my mother, I know the issues that come from my father.” (VS5, seg. 6)

• C1: I said, “What do you think you learned about it from the past that you hadn’t learned from talking with me…” (TC1, pg. 7)

• C1: I mean, it’s like, I could have told you that. (TC1, pg. 9)

• C1:….I knew what was bothering me at the time, but I didn’t know why they were bothering me and I felt like the assessment was still going over what was bothering me and not the cause of it. Which, it was the beginning and maybe that wasn’t necessary stuff. R: Maybe a stepping stone like you were talking about, to figuring things out. C1: Yea, but it was a little difficult, a little redundant. R: What was redundant about it? C1: That I felt like I could explain things just as easily as taking this test. R: Okay. You feel like you could get this much from a conversation? C1: Yea, yea, that maybe like I said before the test is a rush to judgment. I would have felt better being patient about our conversation and knowing we are not going to get to everything right away and I felt like the test rushed that so I had to be patient with myself as far as my feelings toward the test. Does that make sense? I would have been able to have been a little bit more relaxed and trusting about the process had it just been all conversation and we just got to problems as they came up, I wouldn’t feel like the test was just like, bam, this is what it is and then not trusting the test…. (TC1, pg. 15)
• C3: … But to me, I feel like I’m able to just start talking. [R: Okay] So I was glad it wasn’t an every week thing… (TC3, pg. 5)

17 – Not trusting the results/feedback of the tests, questioning them, or the tests themselves. (9)

• “I came home feeling skeptical and was curious to read some opinions of the Rorschach. I didn’t find any that were very complimentary; still, I was interested to hear the feedback.” (C1WD, pg. 1)

• C1: I didn’t know if I trusted the answers from the test and I really wanted to…I didn’t know,… (TC1, pg. 7)

• C1: Because, you know, I went home and I read about the test and there wasn’t a lot of, you know, good critique about the Rorschach. And personally I just didn’t know enough about the scoring, like how my answers or [my therapist’s] descriptions of me are formulated. Um, he didn’t explain how the test works as far as his standpoint, you know. So, it was hard for me to agree. (TC1, pg. 7)

• C1: Well, you know. Some of the stuff I read were lawyers giving there opinions about both about the validity of the Rorschach test as far as, you know, judging a person’s stability in the courtroom. Does it stand up in court? And it didn’t. They said if you are having a child custody battle do not ever agree to take a Rorschach test. R: How did that make you feel when you came to hear the feedback? C1: It was a different scenario. They were giving a specific example that I’m not involved in. I don’t have any children. So, I took that under consideration. But for me that it wouldn’t stand up in one situation, it made me think, “How many other situations does it not stand up in?” If it is a good test wouldn’t it stand up wherever it was introduced?… (TC1, pg. 12)

• C1:… So, I maybe felt like the approach to it was like, “This is how you are all the time. This is your personality and this is who you are. This is who you’ve been and this is who you’re going to be.” And I really felt it was just very situational. [R: Okay] So that was definitely one of the reasons why I was a little standoffish about the results. (TC1, pg. 13)

• C1:… I would have been able to have been a little bit more relaxed and trusting about the process had it just been all conversation and we just got to problems as they came up, I wouldn’t feel like the test was just like, bam, this is what it is and then not trusting the test. I felt like I was trying to be patient with the whole thing even though I didn’t trust it, you know what I mean? (TC1, pg. 15)

• C2:… I feel like that process could prompt people to talk about things I guess they normally wouldn’t talk about. But maybe, also it could become negative depending on the questions that were asked about the card. R: Okay. How could it become negative? C2: Um. I don’t know. I mean, I don’t know too much about psychology. But, maybe it could make people create a story that they wouldn’t normally create. I think there is such a fine line of when that could be productive and counterproductive. R: It sounds like you are saying it can facilitate on one
hand, like talking about a story and helping you kind of get it out. But at the same time it could also kind of steer it in another direction [C2: Yea] other than where it would normally go because of the type of question that is asked. C2: Yea, so it would really, really depend on the question. (TC2, pg. 4)

- C4: I felt kind of semi-shocked [R: Okay] because he asked me like what I thought my results would be or what I was into or how I was thinking and I mentioned that I’m into consistent thought because I am a philosopher and he said the results aren’t inconsistent. And right there I was like, “Oh my goodness, this is a flashback.” I cannot tell you how many times on those stupid bubble tests in high school - the SATs, the PSSAs, anything like that - how many times in the verbal sections there were word comparisons, questions about articles and it’s like they are asking you for an objective answer to something that is subjective and you can’t do that. And he even mentioned the nuances and I remember thinking, “Oh, I’m getting ready to explain why this test is wrong.” I like the idea of taking objective tests, but at the same rate I don’t like the idea that it is trying to place me on this kind of continuum or this plane that may not even really exist. I like it because it gives us a base to work from but I don’t like it when it tries to be super scientific to where something is the way it is. And some of those questions were on morality and I remember taking a minute or two to answer those questions, which was a long time for those questions, thinking, “What would I answer here?” because it is so technical and I remember thinking…, I don’t remember if I did or didn’t, but I really just wanted to expound on this notion that certain things just don’t fit inside this continuum of logic that certain philosophers want us to have. I’m not against analytic, I’m not against logic, I’m not against any of that. I’m just saying that there is something else and I wanted to try to prove that in this discussion, I think. And looking at it now, I think it just made me realize how truly I feel for that. (TC4, pg. 11)

- R: Okay, but was there anything you would change about it now looking back? C4: I guess, the computer stuff just bothered me. Maybe I am inconsistent but like… R: Oh, the bubble test that said you are inconsistent. C4: Yea, the bubble test itself didn’t bother me, but when it said like…, I felt like it was making a judgment against me. R: And you felt like it didn’t understand you. C4: Yea, it’s not a human. It doesn’t have that special spark. R: So you felt like it was unfair that it judged you without getting to know you first. C4: Yea, it sounds weird but… R: No, it makes sense. It made a very clear judgment about you and it’s like, “How can a computer know me?” [C4: Yes, you said it] (TC4, pg. 15)
Textual Documentation of Identified Experiences

*Reference guide: Each bullet point has a reference to the data it came from at the end. A “WD” refers to a participant’s written description, a “VS” refers to part of the video summaries of the actual videotaped assessments with each therapist-client pair, and “T” refers to a transcribed interview. Each of these (Except for “VS”) is paired with the participant’s code (Therapists are T1-T4b and Clients are C1-C5) with a “T” before the participants code for transcriptions and a “WD” after the participants code for written descriptions. There are also page references provided as they are appropriate. Page references were often unnecessary the written descriptions because many of them were not longer than one page.

Therapist Experiences:

1 – The therapist’s lack of experience with or anxiety regarding administration of assessments and providing feedback can make the assessment and feedback sessions difficult or unpleasant. (6)

- T2: I mean, I think of how nervous I used to be going into assessments. It always felt artificial, awkward when I was first trying it out during the first year. (TT2, pg. 1)

- “…but I always feel weary that when we do the assessment the questions will not have been answered or even been illuminated by the time we are done. Proceeding this way is like making a promise which I do not know if I can keep and I guess it makes me more nervous about conducting the assessment. This general nervousness is a constant background feeling for me during a collaborative assessment. Since the assessment process is open-ended and relies very much on my own attunement to and thoughts about my interaction with the client or the client’s interaction with whatever test I am administering, there is always a chance that my own lack of ideas or failure to observe any patterns will create an embarrassing “lack of insight” or lack of knowledge about how to proceed. It is difficult to plan and remain in control throughout a collaborative assessment since one has to rely on the events of the moment to inspire a thought, invite an insight, show a pattern, and so forth, and there is thus always a sense in me that the assessment can be a failure.” (T1WD, pg. 1)

- T1: Yea, I guess I always feel a little bit of anxiety I guess when I’m doing the assessment because even though my experience tells me that I typically find something to say or we typically manage to go through it without complete failure, it’s a little bit like it’s a 95% chance that… I mean, I don’t know, there is always the doubt, the 5% chance that maybe this will be the time when I go blank. (TT1, pg. 2)

- T1: Yea, actually I thought it was very interesting to write the description because I realized how nervous I am in terms of doing this. And I thought, “Shit, I had never noticed that I have this constant fear that things will fail and that in a sense I will be incompetent, I think also.” (TT1, pg. 3)
R: So do you feel like its part of the process and part of what you bring in? Maybe both? T1: See it’s interesting because I don’t really know, I haven’t really talked to other people about how they experience it. But I can definitely see how it would relate to my own personal history and my own struggles and it probably has a lot to do with my own countertransferential issues. I feel when I read through that I appear very obsessional and I think I am… (TT1, pg. 3-4)

T1: I actually think there is a lot of stuff going on inside me, but I don’t let it show and I almost feel like my face kind of freezes up in a sense. Or it’s like my face is my public side and it’s almost like it’s severed from my body or my feelings and all my concerns shift to, “how am I going to get the assessment done now?”… (TT1, pg. 6)

2 – Enjoying the flexibility for incorporating one’s personal style/approach allowed or afforded by collaborative assessment and finding it to be more helpful and productive.

T1: …But at the same time I don’t like it when things are too structured so it’s kind of, I don’t know. It’s kind of a tension within me because for lack of structure is feeling a little nervous like things could go any which way and maybe I will not know what to say. But, I don’t like CBT approaches and manualized treatments… (TT1, pg. 3)

T1: …Whereas, if I’m going through some kind of a routine thing where they are not allowed to respond or I just convey whatever the test says then you would never have that experience of success because it wouldn’t, you know, the results would just be whatever they are. But here the results depend on them, you know. There is no result ever really speaks on its own. It is only really a result for my assessment if they agree to it. [R: Okay] So, I guess that is one of the differences that I see. In a sense it empowers the other person and makes the other person the judge of the assessment, rather than, “I have all the answers and I’m going to tell you,” you know. (TT1, pg. 8)

T2: …I sort of have my own little quirky method of doing the TAT where I do the TAT first and the first time I just have them say whatever they are going to say about the cards. I don’t really intervene except to ask them to elaborate or like if I didn’t hear something. Then I give them the objective test and while they are doing the objective test I read over their responses, come up with questions about possible themes. And then I come back and actually read the responses back to them verbatim and then have them comment on that. Then at the end I ask them more questions and that sort of thing… (TT2, pg. 4)

T2: Um, I think I do have some of those issues and so I have modified it for my own purposes. [R: Like what?] That’s why I write letters. You know, I guess I’m not fully on board with the philosophy behind that we have to share so much with the client. I mean, I think it is important for therapists to have their own idea about a case and arrive at their own interpretations without sharing those. And I think Connie would agree with that. And I think that is why you don’t show a client, in the collaborative assessment, the computer printout from the MMPI and
just hand it to them because that’s just not a good idea. But I do feel like as a way of sort of managing what I am communicating to them, that the letter is a good compromise because I don’t necessarily go over the test itself. I write them basically something about the bottom line of…you know, I mean I may refer to specific elements of the test, but I feel like I give them a general sense of what I took away from the tests. But, I feel like it gives me a bit more control over what I share with them and what I don’t than if I just brought in a report and sort of went over it with them spontaneously. (TT2, pg. 15)

- T3: Maybe there is something really exciting about discovery and not knowing. So it’s, “I don’t know. I don’t have the answers.” Which is a very comfortable place for me to be in [both laugh]. (TT3, pg. 2)

- T3:… But with following up the cards, you were able to show him the cards with the feedback. I guess it just showed your own preference for style and stuff like that. [T3: Yea] How was it with being able to do that, with having the freedom to bring your own style in? T3: I don’t know, I’ve never even thought about that. I just do it, you know. I know there are probably rules [laughs] and I’m not really one for…, I’m not a stickler for it. But I know that the first part is that you are supposed to just do it a certain way. But then afterwards, like especially freeing that up, there is something here, work with it, let’s do this. And it seems really important, especially while that stuff seems so fresh, to kind of… [R: It’s right there] Yea, and not having to wait a month to get your scores back but like [laughs] [R: Being able to discuss it right there] to talk about it right there and therefore bring it in right away. R: And it seems like there is a preference, an advantage to being able to do that than rather than feeling like you have to stick to these rules and wait to give the feedback until sometime later. It seems like you appreciate the freedom to be able to do that. T3: Yea, and also like the living quality to it. That there is something about the assessment process that is now, it is right now. And it may not be generalizeable in everything else. Maybe it is in this particular moment, but there is something that is descriptive in the now. (TT3, pg. 15)

3 – It can be helpful to contextualize assessment results by relating them to real-world experiences from one’s life. (23)

- “…my mind is constantly proceeding inductively from the little things that are done or demonstrated by a client to more general principles… From these little things, my mind then goes on overdrive to try to come up with how what I observe can be relevant in terms of “life,” that is, how I can abstract a “way of living” from them. This, I think is the major cognitive struggle and effort for me during a collaborative assessment. When it fails, I will simply ask the client to tell me about his strategies and then proceed from that instead of my own observations.” (T1WD, pg. 1-2)

- “I tend to use Connie’s rule of always asking for examples of “a time when” and a time “when not” in order to root the abstract in the concrete. These cognitive
strategies tend to work very well, the former oftentimes to my own amazement.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- “In terms of specific cards, our discussion of 9GF (the "rivalry card") was especially striking for the way in which the two girls seemed to represent different parts of herself that were not integrated -- her conservative side and her wild side. The discussion of Card 2 was also especially fruitful in eliciting important material concerning her family dynamics and her guilt about leaving home.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

- “…the theme of interruption which I noticed during the assessment session (but which I had not yet shared) had taken on a certain significance in our work together independent of the assessment (particularly in the sense that [C2] felt like her birth had interrupted her parents' lives -- particularly her mom's life).” (T2WD, pg. 2)

- “As we were arranging a time to do the assessment, I told him that the process was in no way a kind of “me figuring him out” from test results, but rather that we would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context of his own experience.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “Immediately following the TAT, we discussed some of his and my impressions of the stories he came up with in the cards in relation to his own life.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “When we discussed his response to this card later, he related the card both literally to the kind of fog that comes in from the Gulf of Mexico in __________, the place where he met his ex-girlfriend and who has recently broken off their ten year relationship, and metaphorically to a kind of “mental fog” that he has been feeling in his life where he feels like he is “waiting to get rear ended.” He has found himself following familiar, routine paths that are comforting to try to stave off the feelings he has of impending disaster. We were able to use this seemingly ambiguous card to specifically point to a metaphor that [C3] could work with in his life. We discussed the idea of the sun coming out to burn off this fog so he could see more clearly what he wants for himself. We related his effort in coming to therapy and his process of self-reflection to the sun beginning to emerge for him in his understandings for his life. We both seemed to gather around these images and metaphors to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now.” (T3WD, pg. 1-2)

- T2 relates this to the usefulness of the TAT and how it works, asks her to relate the card to her life. (VS2, seg. 5)

- T2: “Remind you of anything?” C2: “I don’t know what to do with my life…” (VS2, seg. 8)
• T4b: “I want to ask you about the card with the boy sitting there by himself. Could you relate that to your own childhood?” C5: “I knew why I was alone. I didn’t want to go home, home wasn’t a safe place.” (VS5, seg. 4)

• R: What do you mean by “success?” like how would you, in this situation?...T1: I guess success for me is when he takes the bait, you know. When he says, “Yes, that is how I am feeling” or “Yes, I can see that” or he can give an example of it. [R: Which he did] Mmhm… (TT1, pg. 7-8)

• T1: … So what I really call collaborative assessment, in my own understanding, is when we do the Bender-Gestalt or when I can notice little things going on and then can try to generalize that, “is that a general process of doing things in your life?” you know. (TT1, pg. 13)

• T2: ...You know, and that’s kind of how, that’s similar to her relationship with her parents. R: So that question was trying to make it more contextual? Providing more of an ability to relate to her relationship with her parents rather than just to herself? T2: Yea. [R: And it seemed to work] Yea. (TT2, pg. 4)

• T2: I’m not sure about that segue (laughs). Like how I said, “Speaking of the way songs refer back to reality, you can see that these cards in some way tell us something about your real life.” R: You are unsure about that? T2: Well, I mean, it seemed to work. It was a little bit of a stretch, I think. That was sort of the thing that leapt out of that segment. But yea, I mean there’s not too much to add. I thought she was perceptive. She identified some meanings in the card that I had also noticed, but without sharing that with her. R: Yea, she seemed to be able to relate it to her life pretty well. [T2: Yea] She even said at the end, “I can relate this to myself.” (TT2, pg. 8)

• R: …You were like, “did that remind you of anything?” And it seemed to bring some stuff out. T2: But, yea. I think what was going on there is that, she associates commitment with feeling trapped and that is because of her parents’ marriage and what she has seen in things with her mom. It seemed like whatever that was in reference to, it seemed to elicit some insight about that. (TT2, pg. 12)

• T3: Um. He was…, I think I was just recognizing the places where he was connecting... T3: Yea, just given other stuff that he was going through and talking about sitting there staring out the window and looking at all the life out there and then all feelings of very removed from it, so I guess that is why I said that [laughs], you know. I’ve thought that too, you know. Like, how many times like when you are really, really depressed and you’re sad and you look out the window and see the birds and you are like envious of them. And you’re like, “They can fly away. They can just go and fly away.” (TT3, pg. 7)

• R: Yea and he was able to relate…, he related it to his grandmother who he mentioned has Alzheimer’s and stares out the window, but then also how he stares out the window too, so kind of relating to that. But then at one point he said, “I
T3: It’s layering, so he’s getting the manifest but he is also getting all of this latency. He is getting that there is some meaning to all of this. It is not arbitrary just flailing about. R: You mean in the assessment? T3: Both that and in life. That all of the stuff you go through maybe has something to it, you know. That there is layers, so… (TT3, pg. 7)

T4a:… I was just really taken aback that he said he identified himself so much in terms of his family, his brothers and sisters. And yet have very little relationship with them and they don’t give him much feedback, and so I was surprised about that. I think maybe I emphasized his mother and father because he still lives with them still so I was just wondering what was going on there. And I think that just gave him the opportunity to articulate for himself his own individuation process. R: Yea, that seems to be pretty big for him… Just with content at the end, differentiating between something he was trying to get away from, authoritarian parents… I don’t know how to say it, but the whole thing for him is he’s…, he still wants to be at home. It is so comfortable for him in that home that it’s…, he’s caught. R: He’s individuating but liking it there. T4a: Absolutely. So, I think in a subtle way I was highlighting that he actually wants to stay at home, but I don’t know if I was doing that. R: Yea, it seemed like the conflict is a natural thing. It seemed like it was… T4a: I was normalizing definitely in the sense of just to say, “Hey, you know, you’re in college.” Maybe that was probably the spirit of that moment mostly, to say that this was a natural process. (TT4a, pg. 3-4)

T4b: There were some really long pauses and I wasn’t writing, right? Did you notice that? [R: Yea] So, for me I think what was going on was…, I think he was taking the opportunity to emphasize the abuse, give me some background. So that just gave me some pause. I guess the seriousness of it required maybe more silence than thoughtful responses I guess, or careful responses maybe. R: I mean there seemed to be a decent amount of collaboration, even though there were pauses. I mean, “Why only this corner?” You know, and private versus public. [T4b: Yea], and how he wants to hold himself and present himself, I guess. There was a lot there.T4b: Well, there was the issue of safety and then later…, safety was the first thing he said and then later kind of not wanting to be embarrassed and not wanting to show his weaknesses. But what I’m…, I don’t know, I’m just guessing, but I may not have even had that in mind when I asked him that question. I don’t know. Yea, I probably did. That drawing himself small and in the corner was about being inconspicuous. I don’t know… But, yea. What I like about that one in terms of collaborative assessment is the way you have this picture…, the pictures speak volumes is what I’m getting at. And I started by saying, “I don’t know or didn’t think he would respond that way,” but it didn’t really matter because to talk about that little picture brought out a lot of stuff. R: Like you said, if you had just interpreted that on your own, I mean, who knows, “Okay, he drew himself in the corner and wants to be inconspicuous,” [T4b: Yea, that’s a good point, yea.] but then the ability to ask him actually about it and ask
him for feedback about it opened up so much more, it seems like. T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there. R: Yea, I think so. It seemed to be pretty useful. Even in that short clip and even with so many pauses, because of the discussion that came out of it. (TT4b, pg. 4)

- T4b:… It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so…But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he came to it in a pretty dialogical way…. T4b: The stuff he was talking about with the clothes and his grandmother being a seamstress and all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting. And I don’t know…, just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process. R: That’s interesting. Just from asking him to relate it to his life. [T4b: Yea] I mean, to add some context to it, [T4b: Mmhm] got some important stuff out of it, it seems. [T4b: Right] Okay. Is that any stuff you talk about now? Like do you feel like it is any stuff that relates to things? Those themes? T4b: Yea. I don’t know how to explain it now. Yea, it relates to the abuse, it’s kind of identification with his mother and his father. I mean he even goes to fluidly talking about how his father was hyper-critical and although he didn’t make it directly, just through the sequence of the discussion a lot of what his father was critical about was this kind of being too feminine or in some way tough enough. And when you meet him, he is quite tough. [R: Yea] But, yea as a kid they apparently dolled him up and put nice clothes on him and stuff and that pissed his father off. So those are pretty central issues of how he was situated. (TT4b, pg. 5)

- T4b:… And so again, he is giving me these really nice context pieces. Like, “No he’s not old enough to ask this kind of question,” or “No he’s not going ask this kind of question in this particular context. So, I just like the way he grounded the type of psychology with therapy. (TT4b, pg. 7)

- T4b: Yea, what I’m saying there is that he moved me from abstractions and conceptions to just the fact of how he experienced his life as a child and later on… The reason why I like it is just because I aspire to be very phenomenological in my therapy and so for him to have to force me to look that way was good because I wouldn’t have noticed that I was drifting off into abstraction. R: So you feel like he helped to put you more in his context and show you where he was coming from. [T4b: Absolutely] (TT4b, pg. 10)

4 – Difficulty giving discordant feedback. (8)

- “In this particular session, I remembered being very nervous about sharing certain parts of the supportive evidence, which in this case involved touching upon some scores from the Rorschach which indicated that he had certain narcissistic trends.
As I was reading my themes to [C1] I found myself skipping the more uncomfortable data from the Rorschach in order not to make him feel hurt or defensive.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- T4b: “It said that others might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving. Those are strong words and I wanted to run it by you.” (VS5, seg. 6)

- T1: Um, it seemed like, at least from the segment that you showed here, that he wasn’t really buying into it. You know, I was putting out suggestions there and he was shooting down the first suggestion, “I was not defensive,” and to the second suggestion he was saying, “I cry more than most guys.” So, in a sense it was kind of a failure, I guess I thought of it like that. It was, well I don’t know. It’s always a confusion to me… (TT1, pg. 6)

- T1: I think in general he disagreed with a number of things, so I had a sense that its, I’ve had other assessments where they agreed with a lot of things and have been able to come up with examples for a lot of things and it didn’t go as smoothly as I’ve had other things go… (TT1, pg. 11)

- T1: I remember that time in the assessment. I had kind of been debating, I mean I think it was an extremely important point to bring out because I did think that he, from previous experiences with him, had always used kind of, he always wanted to impress me with his knowledge about authors and culture and so on. So I knew that was probably a big part of his defensive way of being, you know, so I wanted to bring that up. But it was something that I was having a difficult time phrasing in a way that wasn’t critical. How do you say to somebody, “You seem to be extremely defensive and to use cultural references in a way to impress the people that you are with and be distant from your emotions?” So, I remember, I took a chance. I kind of went against what would have been the comfortable solution, kind of ignore the more critical aspects of the Rorschach, and so I brought it up and he… I think it was difficult for him, that was my experience, that it was difficult for him to take that in and he kind of stayed at that intellectual plane. (TT1, pg. 12)

- T1: So I know I’ve done that with other people and I know there are different ways of proceeding with that. Some people are very meticulous to get it right and he was not at all and there was kind of a cocky attitude to him like, “I don’t need to invest much of myself in it.” And so I noticed that and I write about how that is kind of a struggle for me because it is not a guarantee that I can notice anything. What if everything kind of seems normal and there is no deviation from kind of copying them. So it’s always a question, “Will I be able to find, inductively, certain things about their style?” you know. R: That is what it seems like, what you were saying as far as the connections is, “can I extract a way of living from them, am I making it more concrete to life?” T1: And so even if I notice the inductive principle, okay he’s nonchalant. The next step for me is to ask, “is there a way to use this to get at a general life principle or something?” you know. (TT1, pg. 14)
• T1: …and sometimes it is really difficult to take things that are in a test that are really negative or couched in really negative terms and to bring it up in a way that is helpful and kind of supports…I don’t know. Yea, so sometimes I struggle with the findings of the tests which are very negative or not nice to hear. R: As far as how to present them, it sounds like? T1: Yea, definitely. How can I present them or communicate in a way that doesn’t alienate the other person and make me a judge of them? I don’t like being a judge and a lot of the tests we give have a tendency to reach judgments that are not positive and empowering. So how do you rephrase that “you are a narcissist” into something that is more positive? And sometimes I don’t know how and time is always an issue with collaborative assessment. There is always too many things that we can focus on and so sometimes I just don’t do those things. It’s a struggle. (TT1, pg. 16-17)

• T3: There are definitely times when you feel you are with a client that there is some place that they are bracing against, like the car image. There is an organization around not feeling that. So as you approach it you feel the anticipation that there is something here that is not to be plowed into. [both laugh] And there is a reason for it and that is meaningful. So you are extra gentle and extra careful, but not like, you know, “Okay, forget it, we won’t do it.” [laughs] R: You are just mindful of it in a different way. You don’t push it, but it’s there. T3: You just touch it and move on. Or you don’t touch it even, just kind of move around it. [R: But it’s there] Yea, you feel that viscerally when there is somebody that is like, “NnnNnn, No.” [laughs] (TT3, pg. 13)

4a – But still finding it helpful/useful. (4)
• T4a:… Yea, my first sense was that I thought maybe he is pissed off, like, “Come on. I’m here waiting. What are you doing? Where are you?” So I just put that out there. Obviously, later I wished I would have asked a more open-ended question. Because I think in the moment, just intuitively, if he is pissed off I want to right away from the get go say…, invite it or open it up or whatever. But it is a misunderstanding and so he says…, He’s surprised like, “You read me like that because I don’t feel it,” so he says, “Maybe it’s something subconscious or something.” But he actually, if I am remembering correctly, that comment that I made stays with him even though I tried to undo it and say, “Sorry for misinterpreting.” He kind of kept it in the back of his mind and was trying to look for, “Am I angry and I don’t know it?” It was like we were both over-reaching each other. He was wanting to believe that I saw something and at the same time I was still trying to feel him out and see what was going on. R: Yea, somebody watching it might see it as maybe, like you were saying, a misinterpretation or a disconnect something like that. But if you keep watching, it didn’t seem to have that effect. You know, it had…, it didn’t…, you seemed to be able to build rapport from there and he takes it up, like you were saying, and he keeps looking for things with himself. I mean, you said, “Maybe I should have asked a more open-ended question.” But he went with it. How was that for you? T4a: How he responded? R: Yea, and the whole situation. How was it? T4a: Oh, the whole situation? [R: Yea] It was awkward. It was like, shit, you know. Just to jump the gun on what was going on for him. But I think what I learned from his response
was that there was nothing jeopardizing about it. It was sort of like, even though I was pretty clear that I had missed the mark, he was still kind of flexible with it and taking it to heart. So it was one of those things where it was okay. (TT4a, pg. 2)

- T4a: Yea, and with that it is because I am just getting to know him so I want to know, it may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him. I’m not sure, it could have been. So I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that direction so I can get a sense of how things land. (TT4a, pg. 7)

- T4a: I think what I see the effect of it being was kind of destabilizing him. [R: Yea] Saying here you see yourself as consistent but the report says the opposite. So shaking him up a bit and then catching him by saying, “But it’s probably just because this machine doesn’t pick up the kind of nuances that you are attuned to.” I don’t know. Especially for such a short moment, it seems like it holds a lot. Kind of pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him. I think that is a good metaphor for it because both of those things are going to be going on in the therapy. (TT4a, pg. 8)

- R: Mmhm. How was it to present that? Because it seemed like it was, you said, “These are pretty strong words.” Were you expecting, concerned about how he might respond to that? T4b: Um, I suppose I was, I was just aware that the…, I think I would have had a similar approach with anyone. It was the style I was using, I was just pulling things directly from the test. [R: Yea] I said “strong words” because hostile is not part of the things I might say. I mean the whole things were these general statements. (TT4b, pg. 8)

5 – Wanting to challenge/push the client with discordant feedback.

- “I thought about whether or not to push him a bit more, but ultimately could not bring myself to do it. There was plenty of material so share with him and I didn’t have time to share it all and still allow time for feedback/discussion, so I chose to omit the more uncomfortable parts.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- T1: I remember that time in the assessment. I had kind of been debating, I mean I think it was an extremely important point to bring out because I did think that he, from previous experiences with him, had always used kind of, he always wanted to impress me with his knowledge about authors and culture and so on. So I knew that was probably a big part of his defensive way of being, you know, so I wanted to bring that up. But it was something that I was having a difficult time phrasing in a way that wasn’t critical. How do you say to somebody, “You seem to be extremely defensive and to use cultural references in a way to impress the people that you are with and be distant from you emotions.”? So, I remember, I took a chance. I kind of went against what would have been the comfortable solution, kind of ignore the more critical aspects of the Rorschach, and so I brought it up and he… I think it was difficult for him, that was my experience, that it was
difficult for him to take that in and he kind of stayed at that intellectual plane. (TT1, pg. 12)

- T4a:… Yea, and with that it is because I am just getting to know him so I want to know…, it may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him. I’m not sure, it could have been. So I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that direction so I can get a sense of how things land. (TT4a, pg. 7)

- T4a:… I think what I see the effect of it being was kind of destabilizing him. [R: Yea] Saying here you see yourself as consistent but the report says the opposite. So shaking him up a bit and then catching him by saying, “But it’s probably just because this machine doesn’t pick up the kind of nuances that you are attuned to.” I don’t know. Especially for such a short moment, it seems like it holds a lot. Kind of pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him. I think that is a good metaphor for it because both of those things are going to be going on in the therapy. (TT4a, pg. 8)

- T4b: Yea, that’s right. So we had very little to work with so I just jumped on that. It was probably something I had heard at intake, stereotyping women and stuff like that, so I brought it back up when he said that. I kind of pushed it because he didn’t go anywhere with it originally and then I brought it back and said, “What are some of the specific differences?” So I don’t know about that. Basically, I was encouraging him to elaborate on something he had mentioned in the intake. But eventually it gets a little more organic and he starts going some other places with it. R: Yea, it’s interesting because you started with a very open ended question, “What do you get out of this?” You know, and he came back with something very basic so then you kind of pointed out, not only a paradox but a contradiction. Like, “What you said before doesn’t really go with what you just said.” But it was in a curious way, it seemed like, and it invited…, it opened up a lot more, it seemed like. [T4b: Okay] Yea, which seems to be collaborative in a sense. You know, it’s pointing out…, it was a curiosity but at the same time pointing out this paradox. It seemed pretty fruitful. I mean, it went all the way from talking about gender and the differences and the similarities there to not feeling listened to and wanting to be listened to. T4b: Yea, the little detour in him talking about how he likes to wear certain clothes. He also talked about being fired from some jobs for coming in late, but meanwhile like he said nobody was working anyway. (TT4b, pg. 3)

6 – Not enjoying/liking collaborative assessment because there is too much to manage/remember; more “write-up” oriented – wanting to get it over with. (10)

- “In a typical assessment, I tend to feel stressed and a little overwhelmed by all the things I need to keep track of. In this particular assessment, not only did I have to remember the procedure of how to administer the Rorschach, which I hadn’t done for quite a while, I also had to time the activity, pay attention to the process that was going on as the client did the Rorschach and even find time to jot down a
description of his clothes, facial features and posture, which I knew I would need in order to be able to complete the “client’s appearance and comportment” part of the intake.” (T1WD, pg. 1)

- T1: I think I have two trends in me. One is that I know I have to write up the assessment, and then I have the intake that I did before the assessment and I know I may have lacked some information for the intake so I will need to get that also in the assessment. So, with having to jot down appearance, I know I have to use that for the intake but since I forgot it when I did the intake I’m doing it now when I’m doing the assessment. So I have all these rules and practical things I need to comply with. So it is kind of tedious, I have to do this, I have to do that, I have to make sure I can accomplish the practical goals of writing up the assessment according to the rules and regulations. So that is always there, a tedious concern with practicalities. Will I have all the information I need?... R: You were talking about all of the other things you had to do, pay attention to. T1: So that’s one thing I’m paying attention to. It’s kind of, what do I need to kind of cover my own butt or whatever. And then there are so many other things to, which is paying attention to things that are going on between us as we are doing this assessment, and I think that is actually what I get the most information from: either paying attention to things I notice they are doing or asking them specifically, “how was it for you to do this?” So, the actual Rorschach and the results of the Rorschach…um, I don’t know. R: You were going to say, “the results of the Rorschach…” T1: The results of the Rorschach, like when you do a normal kind of testing you are just interested in getting the responses to the Rorschach and then going to score it. But in this instance I need to remember how to score it correctly and do all that, I also have to pay attention to the process and what it was like for you, you know. And I have practical stuff, you know, I don’t want to be in a situation where I am like, shit, I don’t remember to put under the suicide portion of the intake, or I didn’t pay attention to the clothes he was wearing so I can’t make my description of the…so I feel like there are so many things. (TT1, pg. 2-3)

- T1: … Another thing I noticed, that I recognize now was that I was feeling frustrated, actually, as I was doing this and the frustration was that I knew I had to come up with some kind of a presenting problem. I set a goal that was, “let’s try to get some problems down on paper so we can work through them, through the assessment and so on.” And he was frustrating my need to have it concretely written down on paper. I felt like he was stating problems vaguely, it was difficult to pinpoint the problem in what he was saying and he was kind of undoing the initial statements. For example, with the last thing he was doing here, he said, “maybe I have a sense of entitlement,” and by the time we had explored it through the assessment he was in a place where he said, “well, maybe people just give me compliments and I don’t know how to accept compliments.” And so, the initial idea disappeared and it had a kind of illusive quality to it, in my experience. I was so focused on what is the problem here and he was kind of debating and some things I had written down, all of the something it was something completely different and now with the thing he was saying I didn’t even feeling like it was a
problem anymore. Now it was kind of like, I felt like he was maybe in a sense fishing for compliments as he was doing this. He was turning it into something positive, “people think I’m such a great person and sometimes I have a difficult time dealing with that.” And I didn’t really buy it, I thought, that is kind of a narcissistic thing to say, you know. I mean who turns that into a problem? I was also having, making judgments about him actually, thinking, “this is kind of narcissistic” and I was frustrated that there wasn’t a problem, it seemed to me, in what he was saying. I don’t think I was noticing this. When I go in there, in the assessment room, I really think that, and I feel kind of ashamed saying this, but I really think that I’m not too concerned about them. I’m mostly concerned about getting the information I need to do my assessment. So, in this sense it was a frustration that he was making it difficult for me to do my assessment the way I wanted to do it. (TT1, pg. 5)

- T1: …or “why the hell can’t he just give me the information I need?” So, I think I said nervousness but when I see this I recognize that I was also feeling frustrated and slightly annoyed. But, I actually have a sense that a lot is going on in me when I do assessments. My brain is constantly trying to come up with, “what is the implication of what he is saying?” “What am I noticing at a process level?” So I am filled with thoughts… (TT1, pg. 6)

- T1: … I guess again I might have felt a little frustrated you know that, hum, he’s not giving me the examples that I need to do my assessment. This is not working so far. But, I don’t think I was excessively annoyed. I do think I have that slight annoyance that this is not something I can use for the assessment, in writing it up, you know. (TT1, pg 7)

- T1: … And I actually always feel like this in these assessments. I go in there with 10 different papers. I have the consent form, my own notes, the test, all of these papers and it can sometimes be a little difficult to keep track of where things are. That’s how I feel. (TT1, pg. 7)

- T1: … And I guess my concern was mostly, am I going to have enough material to write up the assessment? That is always my concern. I’m actually thinking when I see this that I don’t enjoy doing assessments, but I don’t know if that’s outside the scope of that you are doing. It is not an enjoyable thing for me. It is mostly a tedious thing about trying to get enough information to write things up. So, there is no, I don’t know. And I guess my frustration is always there as a sense that, “shit, is this going to be enough to write up the assessment?” R: Okay, so you think that is something you bring, kind of that this is a tedious task, something that you don’t really enjoy. T1: Yea, I think I always kind of, that is my attitude. I’m not just free, to just, “let’s explore,” because I know I’m going to have to write something up and have something to say, you know. So that is the framework in which the whole interaction, for me, takes place. (TT1, pg. 11)

- T1: … I mean, so we use tests sometimes that are not geared towards collaboration necessarily and sometimes it is really difficult. (TT1, pg. 16)
• T2: I think maybe that comment that I made, it is also just coming out of the feeling that the assessment is such a nuisance just in terms of the amount of work that it creates. You know [laughs]. It’s just such a pain in the ass to write that report. For some reason the paperwork is what I have the hardest time doing. R: Just because of how much, what it creates kind of logistically and practically, it seems. T2: Yea, I don’t know what it is. I have some sort of block against it, I don’t know. It just takes so much time and maybe it was just coming out of some frustration [laughs] about that. (TT2, pg. 14)

• T4b: Yea, I think what I like about it is sort of all the stimuli everywhere when you are doing the assessment, like through this statement or this sentence completion or this picture, there are so many kind of touchstones or spring boards. I don’t know how you want us to talk about them. The issue for me is there is a way that you can’t follow…., I feel in the assessment you have to be vigilant about bringing the discussion back to the materials. I mean, conversely then, I have God knows how many sessions later with no materials, whereas… So, for me, I don’t know. I think it would be more interesting to have things spread out a little more. Just an idea. R: Okay, so spreading out the materials rather than having to do them all in that one session? T4b: Yea, yea. It allows you to follow a certain line of inquiry and similarly to bring in materials later in the theory would give you more of a stimulus I guess. (TT4b, pg. 11)

7 – Some assessment/testing materials are more collaborative than others.
• “I thought the TAT might especially yield a lot of material from AM because based on our intake interview, she seemed especially open and articulate.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

• R: It sounds like you are saying you feel like certain materials that you use allow for more collaboration than others. T1: Yea, they are less about taking knowledge and seeing if it fits and more about taking a very unstructured situation and then seeing how this particular person goes about imposing some structure on it, you know. (TT1, pg. 13-14)

• T2: …Yea, I think you can be collaborative with all forms of assessment. But I think that, I guess one way of putting it would be that it’s easier to be collaborative in the discussion portion if the test is in some sense collaborative. I think the TAT is a test that is already in the process of doing it collaboratively. Whereas, an objective test is one that the client does by themselves, I analyze it by myself and then we talk about it after. (TT2, pg. 2)

• T4b: Yep, it was very useful, yea. So, my doubts weren’t about the assessment so much as…., or my struggles weren’t about the assessment as much as about standardized tests. That is where that heavy anxiety comes in. But… R: More the objective tests? T4b: Yea, yea. They are fine to work with. They are easy enough to work with collaboratively. The issue is just about what we talked about before. I am just saying that to say that I don’t know if I really had expectations either way, but I definitely found it to be very fruitful, the process. (TT4b, pg. 10)
Collaborative assessment provides a good start to therapy – catalyst. (21)

- “It almost never fails that due to all of these connections which we form in a given assessment, I leave the assessments with a sense of accomplishment and of having given my clients something to take with them. This is very gratifying. I tend to feel really good about what we have produced together, tend to think that the client has been surprised by all the new things he or she has learned about him/herself and tend to feel like the client now respects me and thinks he or she can get something out of therapy. I oftentimes think that the collaborative assessment is what first “hooks” the client on therapy and gives them hope that they can benefit from it.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- “In general, I felt engaged during the assessment session; I was pleased with how much material the session had elicited, and I felt confident based on [C2]’s level of engagement that she was an excellent candidate for psychotherapy.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

- “I see it more as a foundation for our ongoing work together, …” (T2WD, pg. 2)

- “It has become something of an adventure where I can embark on a journey with my clients to help find meaning and metaphor for their experience that can also help shape their process of healing.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “He was and is open to it. He really wants to understand himself. He wants to not hurt but he is not interested in sidestepping the work of going through his pain. The assessment process provided a vehicle to catalyze his effort. It provided an opportunity for there to be something “out there” that we could both see and work with. It also strengthened the bonds of trust and alliance in our relationship as we find ways to communicate in this shared journey towards his understanding and healing.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- “Thinking back over the process for me, I feel that the assessment experience provided the opportunity for us begin to underline a shared project. I developed a strong sense of faith in [C3] and his own unique process towards healing. I also developed an idea of what I could do to help him along the way. As we continue to move through our work together, it will become increasingly important for him to know that I believe in him and, in turn, this will help concretize his belief in himself. The assessment process, early on in the work, provided a great stage for this to begin.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- T2 comforts and contains her but encourages further work in this area during their ongoing work together. (VS2, seg. 6)

- T2 talks about how their work could focus on helping her with that decision without letting “neurotic factors” like anxiety get in the way. (VS2, seg. 7)

- T3 and C3 go on to discuss how this experience stirred up things for them to work on in their work together, which C3 admits needing. T3 emphasizes working
together and building on the things that were brought up, as well as the benefit of having something “out there” for them to work on together. (VS3, seg. 5)

- T1: I remember my first client ever had a lot of interpersonal issues and lack of trust and I think me doing a very good collaborative assessment and writing it up in a very kind, personal way and sharing it with her was what made her really commit to therapy. I think that was a new experience for her, that she was able to, that somebody could really see her and understand her and she has made comments to that effect, that that was very impressive and very heartwarming for her. And so I had that with me as a background and I sense that for me that most people the question they have is, “Should I be in therapy or shouldn’t I be in therapy? Can I benefit from it or is it not something I can benefit from?” And by starting this way you give something to them and they have the experience of having gained insight right here and right now. Whereas, if we didn’t do it and just proceeded through, “tell me whatever,” they would have more of a sense of, “Is anything really coming out of this?” So I do kind of have faith that starting this way is a really good way to build a relationship. (TT1, pg. 15)

- R: … And then at the end also you talked about, you know, “on the horizon,” like this possibility that is there, “let’s explore more,” maybe being able to be both. Like the integration that you were just talking about that she has really made big steps with. You put it out there and it’s like, “maybe that’s a place we can go explore more.” T2: Yea and I feel like there were other things too. There was the thing about how the other half lives… So, there is a lot there that I couldn’t see at the time because I didn’t know enough about it. R: But that was early and it seems to have come out more later. (TT2, pg. 11)

- T2: …I feel like maybe there was something that was put in motion by the assessment that maybe was unique in some way and it has continued to influence the course of therapy… (TT2, pg. 13)

- T3: Yea, “let’s work with this,” and it kind of continues to unfold, you know, that there is that first part that just comes, and then there is this like making sense part of it. Trying to fill in the details and like what else was going on. And then being able to look at all the parts and kind of piece, like draw the lines through them and see, like, “Oh wait, there we go, and then that led into this.” So that’s the out-there-ness though, you know, being able to look at each one... And I’m amazed every time because there is so much that I…, that never even occurred to me. So it’s almost like I’m in the presence of a master story teller, you know, like where you’re just like, “Okay, alright.” You have this free associative process, but there’s…, you’re almost in the moment of creative spontaneity. And so it’s kind of like, “Oh, wow, that’s where you went with that, and then you did this,” and it’s just cool. R: You seem really excited by that, invigorated by that. T3: Yea, it’s watching an innate creative process that is entirely unique, so it’s pretty cool. (TT3, pg. 8)

- T3: I felt like he needed the support to kind of go through where he was. There is a lot of meaning there for him and he knows that he has a lot that he is holding
onto. That there are places that he has already begun taking up this reflective process. But that he’s scared and that makes sense. [R: Sure] There’s a lot of stuff to look at. He’s aware of that but he also has a lot of courage. The word “faith” kept coming up for me just even watching this, just faith, a total faith walk. [R: Yea] Starting out that process, doing anything different, looking around you, keeping your…, not averting your eyes anymore. Looking to see where you have been and where you want to go. So, I was just really touched again by the courage. (TT3, pg. 10)

- T3:… But in naming something, that in some way catalyzes it and makes it shift, makes it change, and it leads to a freeing of it because it is always more than the name. So… R: Okay, yea, yea. So not only the metaphor but giving a name to these things and this image too is powerful. T3: Yea, it is an invitation, and invitation for it to change. You know, like Gendlin talks about this a lot, whenever you find the “it,” you know, like when somebody is searching for something like a name, like what is it that this is? And once you get the “it-ness,” you call it “it,” that is totally “it.” [R: It fits, yea.] Then it changes, it’s different. It changes the feeling of it so that it becomes something else. So that even working with a metaphor that is coming closer, an image or something, then you are able to free it up because it is an invitation for more. (TT3, pg. 12)

- T3: Yea, it was powerful. [R: Yea] You know, it was one of those times when you leave and you are just like…, you know, there’s all of that stuff that feels like it is coming through you and it’s happening but you are not doing anything you are just like…, well you are there and you are participating, but there is something that is more than both of you that wants to happen, that is just kind of being generated, like art that creates itself. I keep relating it to art, but it is creative. It is something deeply generative and I think the healing process is all about just giving the opportunities and possibilities. So you open doors a little bit and everything comes out, it floods because it wants to. We want to heal. We don’t want to be mired in petulance. We want to help ourselves, so even little things will become bigger all on their own accord. R: Yea, and it seems like the assessment process allowed for that. T3: I think it really did. You know, especially in this instance. (TT3, pg. 13-14)

- T3: Yea, I mean, I think more in the beginning. We are doing…, one of the things it has provided is permission to create metaphors. There is a living quality to it so that we can talk about neurological stuff and have that be a metaphor and not like a literal thing. But those descriptions have weight and meaning that are equal, if not more, to everyday stuff. So, it frees up the descriptive possibilities for therapy. R: Yea, it opens that up. Yea, definitely. So you found that, that he has continued creating his own metaphors. [T3: Yea] Not only coming back to use those same ones, particularly. [T3: Yea] (TT3, pg. 14)

- T4a: It was just really nice to have something sitting in front to have to point to or…, obviously when he made it come alive and talked about if it was moving. [R: Yea, yea] You know, because you wouldn’t say that if you were having a
conversation you wouldn’t have gone to that. Maybe he does talk about himself as going off on an edge, but this could have been the first time he talked about that and it then becomes a theme throughout the therapy about him going there or going off. R: So that has become something that you have stuck with. T4a: For sure, for sure, yea. It has been a pretty central theme. (TT4a, pg. 5)

- T4a:… but what I really meant to say was that what he brought me in the first session and this assessment and how I understood it was basically him working on his sense of individuation, his sense of social alienation and how both of those tie into this mother that is holding onto him. R: So there is all of these themes that came up earlier that you have continues with through all of this time. [T4a: Absolutely]… (T4a, pg. 10)

- T4b: There were some really long pauses and I wasn’t writing, right? Did you notice that? [R: Yea] So, for me I think what was going on was…, I think he was taking the opportunity to emphasize the abuse, give me some background. So that just gave me some pause. I guess the seriousness of it required maybe more silence than thoughtful responses I guess, or careful responses maybe. R: I mean there seemed to be a decent amount of collaboration, even though there were pauses. I mean, “Why only this corner?” You know, and private versus public. [T4b: Yea], and how he wants to hold himself and present himself, I guess. There was a lot there. T4b: Well, there was the issue of safety and then later…, safety was the first thing he said and then later kind of not wanting to be embarrassed and not wanting to show his weaknesses. But what I’m…, I don’t know, I’m just guessing, but I may not have even had that in mind when I asked him that question. I don’t know. Yea, I probably did. That drawing himself small and in the corner was about being inconspicuous. I don’t know… But, yea. What I like about that one in terms of collaborative assessment is the way you have this picture…, the pictures speak volumes is what I’m getting at. And I started by saying, “I don’t know or didn’t think he would respond that way,” but it didn’t really matter because to talk about that little picture brought out a lot of stuff. R: Like you said, if you had just interpreted that on your own, I mean, who knows, “Okay, he drew himself in the corner and wants to be inconspicuous,” [T4b: Yea, that’s a good point, yea.] but then the ability to ask him actually about it and ask him for feedback about it opened up so much more, it seems like. T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there. R: Yea, I think so. It seemed to be pretty useful. Even in that short clip and even with so many pauses, because of the discussion that came out of it. (TT4b, pg. 4)

- T4b:… It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so…But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he
came to it in a pretty dialogical way…. T4b: The stuff he was talking about with the clothes and his grandmother being a seamstress and all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting. And I don’t know…, just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process. R: That’s interesting. Just from asking him to relate it to his life. [T4b: Yea] I mean, to add some context to it, [T4b: Mmhmm] got some important stuff out of it, it seems. [T4b: Right] Okay. Is that any stuff you talk about now? Like do you feel like it is any stuff that relates to things? Those themes? T4b: Yea. I don’t know how to explain it now. Yea, it relates to the abuse, it’s kind of identification with his mother and his father. I mean he even goes to fluidly talking about how his father was hyper-critical and although he didn’t make it directly, just through the sequence of the discussion a lot of what his father was critical about was this kind of being too feminine or in some way tough enough. And when you him, he is quite tough. [R: Yea] But, yea as a kid they apparently dollyed him up and put nice clothes on him and stuff and that pissed his father off. So those are pretty central issues of how he was situated. (TT4b, pg. 5)

8a – Collaborative assessment prepares the client for therapy and shows them what to expect. (7)

- “In general I also feel very proud to be part of a way of doing assessments which empowers and collaborates with the client rather than teaches, tells, and judges.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- T3 and C3 go on to discuss how this experience stirred up things for them to work on in their work together, which C3 admits needing. T3 emphasizes working together and building on the things that were brought up, as well as the benefit of having something “out there” for them to work on together. (VS3, seg. 5)

- T1: …But here the results depend on them, you know. There is no result that ever really speaks on its own. It is only really a result for my assessment if they agree to it. [R: Okay] So, I guess that is one of the differences that I see. In a sense it empowers the other person and makes the other person the judge of the assessment, rather than, “I have all the answers and I’m going to tell you,” you know. (TT1, pg. 8)

- R: …But here I noticed it was interesting. She started crying, it was obviously very emotional for her, but you were really able to contain her and hold her. But at the same time say “we are going to discuss this in pieces, it’s all going to be gradually.” [T2: …a little bit at a time.] Yea. What were you trying to do there? What do you think that was like for her? T2: I mean, I think I saw that we had touched on something really powerful and I guess I wanted to tell her on the one hand I thought that this was something that was very important that I wanted to keep talking about. I didn’t want the tears to sort of foreclose the conversation about it. But I also wanted her to know that because it was distressing for her I was sensitive to that and we weren’t going to go too fast. You know, that we were going to take it one step at a time and I wasn’t going to push her if she wasn’t able to handle it. R: How do you think that was for her? T2: It seemed to work, yea.
She was able to stop crying, kind of. I think I actually could have this early on been a bit more consoling or something. But in general this is kind of how I am with her when she cries. At this point, I feel like we have a strong enough relationship that I can be there and contain it but then move pretty quickly into talking about what is happening. R: Well, in retrospect it is easier to see. T2: Yea, but I thought that worked. (TT2, pg. 9-10)

- T3: Yea, yea, especially, it creates a culture of kind of doing the collaborative piece of it, Connie’s piece of that, just that this is a co-constituted thing and I have found that it helps me and them not feel alone. Like maybe it balances out a little bit so it is not just them telling me stuff and me receiving it like a passive receptacle, but more something that we are kind of endeavoring together. And so, that creates a culture of collaboration from the beginning where they don’t feel maybe so alone or under the microscope. [R: Yea] Maybe there is something really exciting about discovery and not knowing. So it’s, “I don’t know. I don’t have the answers.” Which is a very comfortable place for me to be in [both laugh]. But they also know that I don’t know and they don’t necessarily need to know either. So that kind of helps create sort of an atmosphere of, “Let’s discover…” [R: together] Yea, yea, instead of “Give me the answers,” you know, “I’ll tell you what it’s about and you interpret it and give it back to me and I’ll process it.” R: So it helps to set a frame for the dynamics of the relationship as well. T3: Yea,… (TT3, pg. 2)

- T4a: I feel like it was kind of a decent hermeneutic process there. I like the way that I started right off the bat and just pointed to it. I didn’t say very much or really make any interpretations. I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot. [R: Yea] So I was taking notes and at the same time trying to understand what he was saying and then offered it back to him… I feel like the reason I say it was hermeneutic is that I was offering back what I was hearing but I was stretching it a little bit and then he would pick it up from there. So that is what I found there. There was something about the way…. I don’t remember why I got on this, maybe it was just the spatial configuration, but he was still situated in between his mother and his father in that way… I was just really taken aback that he said he identified himself so much in terms of his family, his brothers and sisters. And yet have very little relationship with them and they don’t give him much feedback, and so I was surprised about that. I think maybe I emphasized his mother and father because he still lives with them still so I was just wondering what was going on there. And I think just gave him the opportunity to articulate for himself his own individuation process. R: Yea, that seems to be pretty big for him. T4a: And kind of show him that I was getting it, but for the most part letting him speak to it. R: Yea, and that was good. It seems like it was providing an opening for him. Kind of just drawing him in and he went for it and he talked about some good stuff it seemed. And at the end you were normalizing it and reflecting it back to him. T4a: Right. Just with content at the end, differentiating between something he was trying to get away from, authoritarian parents… I don’t know how to say it, but the whole thing for him is he’s…, he still wants to
be at home. It is so comfortable for him in that home that it’s…, he’s caught. R: He’s individuating but liking it there. T4a: Absolutely. So, I think in a subtle way I was highlighting that he actually wants to stay at home, but I don’t know if I was doing that. R: Yea, it seemed like the conflict is a natural thing. It seemed like it was… T4a: I was normalizing definitely in the sense of just to say, “Hey, you know, you’re in college.” Maybe that was probably the spirit of that moment mostly, to say that this was a natural process. (TT4a, pg. 3-4)

- T4a:… I think what I see the effect of it being was kind of destabilizing him. [R: Yea] Saying here you see yourself as consistent but the report says the opposite. So shaking him up a bit and then catching him by saying, “But it’s probably just because this machine doesn’t pick up the kind of nuances that you are attuned to.” I don’t know. Especially for such a short moment, it seems like it holds a lot. Kind of pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him. I think that is a good metaphor for it because both of those things are going to be going on in the therapy. (TT4a, pg. 8)

8b – Collaborative assessment gives insight into the relationship dynamics, shows the therapist how to work with the client, and builds rapport. (25)

- “It also strengthened the bonds of trust and alliance in our relationship as we find ways to communicate in this shared journey towards his understanding and healing.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- “I also developed an idea of what I could do to help him along the way.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- “For TAT card 1, he said that knowing what playing well entails he’s inclined to sit around and contemplate rather than play. I found this hopeful in that at least he seemed to be aware of intellectualization as a defense and anticipate the difficulty of therapy.” (T4aWD)

- “At different points of the assessment we touched on him being a loner and seeing himself as deeper or more serious than most. I was tuning into how this was true as well as what this stance might cover over.” (T4aWD)

- “I felt in the process that we had good rapport… About TAT card 1 that if the kid sticks with it, he’ll get better. Because this card can reveal something about people’s impression of therapy I took it as a very hopeful sign.” (T4bWD)

- “Generally, I felt that we were deepening our relationship (building rapport) and that I was rapidly learning more about him. And I was grateful for his honesty. I had the impression that we were on a good track in exploring the relationship issues he brought with him.” (T4bWD)

- C1: “Yea, I agree with that. But on the flip side if someone were to take the lead, be passionate and push me to do things I would be right there. But that has never really happened…like if someone were an expert in their field I would listen to their opinion…in general I’m an iconoclast, rebel, hard ass.” (VS1, seg. 6)
• T3 and C3 discuss the car accident metaphor. T3 discusses how coming to therapy is like protecting himself from an accident. C3 discussed having difficulty doing things out of his routine, but forcing himself to try new things because it helps to facilitate change. (VS3, seg. 5)

• T4a sneezes and C4 gives him a Kleenex. (VS4, seg. 2)

• T4b: “You only used this corner. What do you make out of that?” C5: “Not wanting to be noticed, wanting to disappear.” T4b: “Do you think that ties back to being quiet?” C5: “Yes.” T4b: “To use the whole page would be too loud.” C5: “Yea” (VS5, seg. 2)

• T1: … You know, is he just being, and I think I probably thought this at the time – he seemed maybe a little guarded in there talking about it, and I already kind of a perception of him as slightly narcissistic? So, I could see why he would not want to agree to what I was suggesting. (TT1, pg. 6)

• T1: So I know I’ve done that with other people and I know there are different ways of proceeding with that. Some people are very meticulous to get it right and he was not at all and there was kind of a cocky attitude to him like, “I don’t need to invest much of myself in it.” And so I noticed that and I write about how that is kind of a struggle for me because it is not a guarantee that I can notice anything. What if everything kind of seems normal and there is no deviation from kind of copying them. So it’s always a question, “Will I be able to find, inductively, certain things about their style?” you know. (TT1, pg. 14)

• T2: … I was taken off guard because I just wanted to check in. I didn’t expect this to be an anxiety provoking task and I think I just asked a kind of throw away question, like “How did you find that?” – the test, you know. And thought she would just say, “Okay.” And she launched into this whole thing about how much she didn’t like the Meyers-Briggs and I wasn’t expecting that at all. I was a little bit concerned about managing the session, like staying on task, and I think when I, that’s why I sort of fumbled around at the beginning. I feel like I didn’t find my groove until about half way through or something like that. [R: Of that segment?] Yea, and was able to kind of articulate some sort of explanation that would put her mind at ease about this test. I think I also just made a calculated decision at a certain point that her reaction to this test is clearly significant clinically. So, I am going to run with this and like have a conversation with her about why this test was so threatening to her. You know, instead of try to convince her that it is not threatening. Just find out why it is so threatening. (TT2, pg. 7)

• T2: Yes, and this is something that has turned out to be important diagnostically from a Lacanian perspective, you know, to support a diagnosis of hysteria. The fact that, this sort of refusal to be pinned down, to be any one thing. This sort of constantly shifting, not allowing herself to be in any one position, wanting to keep things open ended, being really anxious about decisions. Yea, this is really an example of something that is helped me diagnostically with her. (TT2, pg. 7)
• T3: … But also in these moments of going through the real sadness that was there. And the images themselves evoked an emotional connection, you know, the idea of sitting in a fog and not knowing what is coming and being confused. So all of that stuff was just kind of replete in it. So I was really aware of those feelings that I was having and that he was possibly having as well. R: Okay. So it sounds like you were very tuned into what was going on with him and probably through those responses it helped to give you a better connection. [T3: Yea] (TT3, pg. 5)

• T3: Yea, I think it helped me in giving me the vehicle for kind of walking through this process together. It showed me how..., he taught me how to be with him, in a way. R: He gave you..., he showed you how he needs you to be. [T3: Right.] Yea, that’s really what you got out of it, how to be with him. And there was the collaboration there, you said it is a shared thing that we are going to work on together. It’s not something where I am going to give you the answers. It’s something that we are going to find and discover together. T3: We don’t know, but let’s go, let’s do this. R: So it really set a tone, it seems like, for the therapy, in a sense. T3: Yea, and it has felt like that. There has definitely been times where I have..., and he even said that, where I have pressed more than other times. There’s times where he has been like, “Well, here’s what’s happening.” There’s other times where I have been like, “Well, can we keep going here?” But it really..., I think it helped us trust that process more, that it will be fruitful, that there is meaning to it. It is a faith walk. It really is. (TT3, pg. 14)

• R: I forgot to ask you in the last clip too. We both kind of laughed when you sneezed and he handed you a Kleenex and I was just wondering what that was like for you. T4a: It just shows me how attentive he is to me, so it is pretty intense I guess. [laughs] I think it makes me feel self-conscious to think if he is that attentive..., but he’ll do that, I mean even today in our session he walked in..., because a lot of times I will sit with a pillow behind my back and he walked in and grabbed a pillow and gave it to me. So, but I think that was probably one of the first gestures like that that I had with him. (TT4a, pg. 4)

• T4a: What it might cover over is just what I was just talking about. When he says, “I don’t want to be around people.” That to me that’s..., what’s that about? And for me it is about the over-protectiveness. Feeling that he is so fragile that he can’t handle people’s judgments and those kinds of things. But at the same time, he is a unique person and I think it is not just about psychodynamics for me. So now since I’ve been..., I want to do a lot..., so when I empathize it is not just strategic or something to ultimately get to his dynamics, but it’s that he is really that, I do think that he is, in a lot of ways, really honestly describing his life. That he lives as a loner and he that is how he feels. And the kinds of things that he likes in philosophy – courage and taking a leap and those sorts of things that have to do with solitude – I’m hoping to give him a space to really be able to embrace that part of himself too. To find a space for all of it here. R: Yea, that sounds like a big part of it, giving him the space to show you what he wants to show you is relevant. [T4a: Yea, absolutely] (TT4a, pg. 6)
T4a: It is interesting that I asked that question because as I was watching that I was wondering the same thing: how is he taking this? To me, looking at it from here it seemed like he was enjoying it…. But what I was trying to do there was…, I feel like I was entering into that moment to give him a broader understanding of what was going on because he was caught up in feeling devastated by being critiqued and I thought I was just offering a pretty logical perspective that especially in philosophy you have to go through this process of… R: Like that hazing or being worked over is a part of the process. T4a: Yea, it’s a good thing that it helps him hone his arguments… Yea, and with that it is because I am just getting to know him so I want to know…., it may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him. I’m not sure, it could have been. So I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that direction so I can get a sense of how things land. (TT4a, pg. 7)

T4a: Yea, he is saying that rather than playing he would rather sit back and contemplate the possibilities. R: Did that give you an idea of how he might approach your work together? Maybe him sitting back and trying to think about things rather than doing things? T4a: Yea, all I know that I made out of that was from my perspective that this hyper intellectual thing was going to be an issue for him and find a kind of more holistic…[Audiotape ended and had to be flipped] …even unconsciously through the card gave me a sense that we were in alliance in some way, working against, to some degree, the intellectualization so that it is not just my agenda or it is not something for him that he is going to defend wholeheartedly. That he may actually want himself to let go of some of that, even as, in any given moment, he is so completely identified with it. R: So you took it as something, it seems like, that was promising, [T4a: Yea] the fact that he could see that and be hopeful about it, like you said. If it was something that you saw but he didn’t see it would be more difficult to approach. [T4a: Right, precisely] (TT4a, pg. 8)

T4a: It’s interesting to know that that was the very last thing that happened… So it is funny that he comes in with these things to give me and he makes sure, right as we leave, he’s like, “Here you go.” But he did it kind of casually too, which is kind of funny because as relaxed as he seemed to be toward the end of the session he still made sure to give me those. These have to be important…. But what else about that? What did I make out of him at the time? It just clued me into him because later on he would…, when he has a dream to share with me, inevitably right after he shares the dream he says, “Then I went online and found that this means this and this means this.” He always interprets all the symbolism of his dream through some website. (TT4a, pg. 9-10)

T4b: Yea, yea. So, even my impression of him today is that he does what he needs to do. He has said a lot of times that he does things to help people out. So, I think in that moment that is what was going on. Like, “This is not what I want to do but okay, I’ll do it.” And I thought it showed itself in the slow way in which he filled it out. (TT4b, pg. 2)
T4b:… But yea, you are right, ultimately the thing that came out of that was him saying that he is a good listener and he doesn’t find it reciprocated. And as I was listening to this again I imagine, at least the way I take it now and I imagine I did at the time was, he’s making these comments about just wanting to be listened to or he said for himself that he doesn’t give advice or interrupt people unless they ask for it directly so some of this I was taking as tips on how to work with him. R: Yea, definitely, definitely. So he is giving you tips right there on how he wants the work to go and the relationship to look. [T4b: Yea] And it was interesting there, you could see too, maybe you could look from an outsider’s perspective and see that maybe he doesn’t respond well to open-ended questions [T4b: Mmhm] and maybe more direct specific stuff he might respond better to. [T4b: Yea, for sure] (TT4b, pg. 3)

R:… But you had said (in your written description), “About TAT card 1 that if the kid sticks with it, he’ll get better. Because this card can reveal something about people’s impression of therapy I took it as a very hopeful sign.” [T4b: Yea] So there was this thing during the actual administration, there was this positive… T4b: Yea, interesting, so it comes out in the symbol of the story of card 1 but it is also very much showing itself in the process between us too, the exchange. R: Yea, exactly. In the card response and the discussion part… (TT4b, pg. 7)

T4b: Just a really great, concise description or self-description about how he deals socially with his emotions. Angry at other people and whatever is meant by sensitivity, he is careful and private about that [R: Mmhm] but he doesn’t seem to have any issue with confrontation and stuff like that. R: Yea, kind of letting you know, “If I’m angry you’ll know it,” kind of a thing. T4b: Yea, well that’s interesting because I don’t know if that is the case. But potentially at that point, yea that is probably what he…, if you take what he is saying at face value then that would be relevant to our interactions as well. R: Yea, he did kind of seem to agree and disagree at the same time. Like the sensitive part he didn’t like, but the hostile and unforgiving he was like, “Yea.” T4b: Yea, it’s not that he is saying that he is not sensitive, he’s saying from the way he is perceived he says he doesn’t think he is perceived as sensitive. (TT4b, pg. 8)

R: Yea. But it did seem to bring up, like we talked about in some earlier clips, about some transference stuff and I don’t know how long that might have taken to get to. You know, like him saying, “You can treat me this way.” Or, “I don’t want to be treated that way.” It seemed to bring it up earlier. T4b: Yea, for sure, for sure. (TT4b, pg. 9)

9 – It provides/creates/brings up themes and metaphors (earlier than therapy, just talking, would) that carry over into therapeutic work in a helpful/useful way. (35)

“It almost never fails that due to all of these connections which we form in a given assessment, I leave the assessments with a sense of accomplishment and of having given my clients something to take with them. This is very gratifying. I tend to feel really good about what we have produced together, tend to think that the client has been surprised by all the new things he or she has learned about
him/herself and tend to feel like the client now respects me and thinks he or she can get something out of therapy. I oftentimes think that the collaborative assessment is what first “hooks” the client on therapy and gives them hope that they can benefit from it.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- “I don’t think I have ever had the experience of a client who wasn’t somehow fascinated by hearing me read my themes to them full of little details from the assessment cited as supporting evidence.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- “There are several clients for whom their TAT responses have served as touchstones to which we return throughout the therapy.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

- “During the assessment session, I remember being struck by [C2]'s comment toward the end of our session that she did not want to know her personality type based on the MBTI. At the time, I wasn't sure what exactly to make of this comment, but suspected that it had something to do with not wanting to be fixed, not wanting to be anything in particular (this has turned out to be an important theme for [C2], who fears that inertia would set in if she settled down). “ (T2WD, pg. 1)

- “Additionally, two themes stuck out the most for me from her TAT responses: 1) interruption of peacefulness and 2) her tendency to create pairs even where there were none in the cards… the theme of interruption which I noticed during the assessment session (but which I had not yet shared) had taken on a certain significance in our work together independent of the assessment (particularly in the sense that [C2] felt like her birth had interrupted her parents' lives -- particularly her mom's life).” (T2WD, pg. 1-2)

- “With other clients, we have often returned to the assessment throughout the therapy. For [C2], I feel that the assessment session mainly functioned as a way to elicit material at the beginning of our work that may not have come up otherwise.” (T2WD, pg. 2)

- “It has become something of an adventure where I can embark on a journey with my clients to help find meaning and metaphor for their experience that can also help shape their process of healing.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “I also told him that the assessment process offered the chance for both of us to hold and work with some representations, images, or metaphors for what he was experiencing at the present time in his life. [C3] seemed to me to be very agreeable to this and open to the process.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “We were able to use this seemingly ambiguous card to specifically point to a metaphor that [C3] could work with in his life. We discussed the idea of the sun coming out to burn off this fog so he could see more clearly what he wants for himself. We related his effort in coming to therapy and his process of self-reflection to the sun beginning to emerge for him in his understandings for his
life. We both seemed to gather around these images and metaphors to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now.” (T3WD, pg. 1-2)

- “It provided an opportunity for there to be something “out there” that we could both see and work with.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- “In talking about his DAF, I was surprised by how much (as a young man) his identity seemed to be based in his family. Later when discussing the TAT, he mentioned that his “mother was [his] playmate as a child.” I was getting the impression from other statements he made that his parents didn’t want to let him go and that he didn’t want to leave, or rather that they were all ambivalent about his growing up… At different points of the assessment we touched on him being a loner and seeing himself as deeper or more serious than most.” (T4aWD)

- “I’m struck by how consistent my initial impressions of his issues are eight months later.” (T4aWD)

- “He shared a lot about himself in talking about his DAP: anger at women, work ethic, that his violent father caused him to become very attentive to others, including being a good listener… His response to TAT card 13MF was to give four options for what had happened. I wondered how this spoke to his relation to women.” (T4bWD)

- T2 comforts and contains her but encourages further work in this area during their ongoing work together. (VS2, seg. 6)

- T3 and C3 go on to discuss how this experience stirred up things for them to work on in their work together, which C3 admits needing. T3 emphasizes working together and building on the things that were brought up, as well as the benefit of having something “out there” for them to work on together. (VS3, seg. 5)

- T1: Yea, I think I always feel like it’s an accomplishment. It’s quite impressive when it works. It always amazed me that a little thing that to most people is completely insignificant, and they really don’t pay much attention to it themselves when they are doing it. So many things can come out of that, by starting at the little we can get at the big. That always amazes me then when we do succeed at getting at the big picture. [R: Okay] I even feel like they are a bit dazzled by it. They kind of feel like, “Wow, I never expected that.” And I feel that a lot, they are very impressed how we could get so much out of so little. And it’s cool to be the author of that, or the responsible party. (TT1, pg. 14)

- T2: … Well, first of all, I’m struck, [laughs] I don’t know if I ever commented on this to her in the report, but I’m pretty sure those girls in the card are wearing the exact same thing [laughs]. I could be wrong, but that is a pretty striking projection if that’s the case. But another thing I notice now,… In retrospect it is sort of interesting that she described the way they were dressed because these two sides of herself have been kind of represented in other ways since then. So, like she actually thought, this was a few months ago, she talked about buying two jackets.
One was for more professional and practical and the other was for more kind of fun and youthful, and she said that she couldn’t really afford both of them and she was debating which one she was going to have to take back. She ended up just keeping both of them, but I feel like that sort of split has manifest itself in other ways throughout the therapy and that is a recent example. R: So you could see that kind of projection that was there play out later. T2: And even having to do with the same, with the clothes, in the same sort of way. R: Yea, that’s interesting. It seems to speak to the way it brings stuff out and you see it later. (TT2, pg. 4)

- T2: …. This is one of the general themes I talked to her about actually in the letter, I think even recently, was interruption. And that is something that has come up throughout our work in various different ways. I mean, on a lot of different levels I think she is someone who is very, likes to be in control and resents interruption and that affects her relationships. But probably the deepest meaning that has come out of that word is the way she feels she has interrupted her parents’ life by being born. So that particular signifier has been something that has been something that we have come back to a lot throughout the… R: I remember you mentioning that in the feedback section. I didn’t actually select that video clip for us to watch, but I remember you talking about that, giving her that feedback. So that is something that you guys continued with? T2: Yea. (TT2, pg. 5)

- T2: … I mean, I feel like what’s happening, it’s kind of interesting because I think this is something that has come up a lot later in therapy… (TT2, pg. 5)

- T2: Yea, and this is really the beginning of, you know, a scene that we still talk about with the crying… We just talked about this in our last session because the more we kind of explore this crying…, So I think that is probably the first time, maybe in the intake she cried too. R: But you saw it there and the process continued up until your most recent session. T2: And this is the…, her issues are so completely related to her relationship with her mom in the sense that, I mean here you saw the guilt. But, I mean, it is so overdetermined. If her mom were living a more independent life then it would release [C2] from the guilt of having to be with her in this life… (TT2, pg. 9)

- T2: … I mean, I think I saw that we had touched on something really powerful and I guess I wanted to tell her on the one hand I thought that this was something that was very important that I wanted to keep talking about… (TT2, pg. 9)

- T2: … It’s interesting that she already connected it to [her boyfriend] this early because that’s…and I hadn’t really thought about the whole thing with [her boyfriend] in terms of this card, but it makes a lot of sense looking back on it. She had a dream once, she was describing a dream and she slipped. She meant to say, “I want [my boyfriend]’s attention,” but instead she said, “I want [my boyfriend]’s personality.” That’s something we’ve come back to a lot… R: So you could see that stuff pretty early here it seems like. T2: I was surprised that she already connected it to [her boyfriend]. But yea, that is something that has come up. (TT2, pg. 10)
• R: And he mentions that, that exact thing, about kind having jealous feelings about those birds. It’s funny, yea. I don’t know if you remember that. [T3: I don’t] He mentions that exact thing. I don’t know if he uses the word jealous but he mentions that about, feeling like, “Oh man, those birds they are so free and can do anything.” T3: That’s right. And they must have come up for us again later because I think I wrote about that in the assessment report. (TT3, pg. 7)

• T3: We were both relating to the cards a lot more so this is where we…, it just seemed like we were weaving together, you know, my ideas, pulling themes that he had just told me. Then he was elaborating on…, we were, it seemed like we were really doing this together, reflecting on this together and creating something. There was really something happening there. (TT3, pg. 8)

• T3: Yea, “let’s work with this,” and it kind of continues to unfold, you know, that there is that first part that just comes, and then there is this like making sense part of it. Trying to fill in the details and like what else was going on. And then being able to look at all the parts and kind of piece, like draw the lines through them and see, like, “Oh wait, there we go, and then that led into this.” So that’s the out-there-ness though, you know, being able to look at each one… And I’m amazed every time because there is so much that I…, that never even occurred to me. So it’s almost like I’m in the presence of a master story teller, you know, like where you’re just like, “Okay, alright.” You have this free associative process, but there’s…, you’re almost in the moment of creative spontaneity. And so it’s kind of like, “Oh, wow, that’s where you went with that, and then you did this,” and it’s just cool. R: You seem really excited by that, invigorated by that. T3: Yea, it’s watching an innate creative process that is entirely unique, so it’s pretty cool. (TT3, pg. 8)

• But yea, he gave you such a great metaphor to work with and you seem to really appreciate that, the metaphors. T3: Yea, and I don’t know if it was on any of the tape, but what he kind of was able to do in extending the metaphor in our session, we refer back to it. The session, I wish it was on there after where he talked about, he said, “I feel like the sun is coming out and starting burning off the fog.” [R: Oh, wow.] You know, and so that was like dawning realization. [R: So he carried with it and stuck with it] He carried with it and had new ones and can refer back to that one to think about where he was when he came in. (TT3, pg. 10-11)

• T3:… But in naming something, that in some way catalyzes it and makes it shift, makes it change, and it leads to a freeing of it because it is always more than the name. So… R: Okay, yea, yea. So not only the metaphor but giving a name to these things and this image too is powerful. T3: Yea, it is an invitation, and invitation for it to change. You know, like Gendlin talks about this a lot, whenever you find the “it,” you know, like when somebody is searching for something like a name, like what is it that this is? And once you get the “it-ness,” you call it “it,” that is totally “it.” [R: It fits, yea.] Then it changes, it’s different. It changes the feeling of it so that it becomes something else. So that even working
with a metaphor that is coming closer, an image or something, then you are able to free it up because it is an invitation for more. (TT3, pg. 12)

- T4a:… I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot. [R: Yea]… There was something about the way..., I don’t remember why I got on this, maybe it was just the spatial configuration, but he was still situated in between his mother and his father in that way… I was just really taken aback that he said he identified himself so much in terms of his family, his brothers and sisters. And yet have very little relationship with them and they don’t give him much feedback, and so I was surprised about that. I think maybe I emphasized his mother and father because he still lives with them still so I was just wondering what was going on there. And I think just gave him the opportunity to articulate for himself his own individuation process. R: Yea, that seems to be pretty big for him. T4a: And kind of show him that I was getting it, but for the most part letting him speak to it… T4a: Right. Just with content at the end, differentiating between something he was trying to get away from, authoritarian parents… I don’t know how to say it, but the whole thing for him is he’s…, he still wants to be at home. It is so comfortable for him in that home that it’s…, he’s caught. R: He’s individuating but liking it there. T4a: Absolutely. So, I think in a subtle way I was highlighting that he actually wants to stay at home, but I don’t know if I was doing that. R: Yea, it seemed like the conflict is a natural thing. It seemed like it was… T4a: I was normalizing definitely in the sense of just to say, “Hey, you know, you’re in college.” Maybe that was probably the spirit of that moment mostly, to say that this was a natural process. (TT4a, pg. 3-4)

- T4a: It was just really nice to have something sitting in front to have to point to or..., obviously when he made it come alive and talked about it if it was moving. [R: Yea, yea] You know, because you wouldn’t say that if you were having a conversation you wouldn’t have gone to that. Maybe he does talk about himself as going off on an edge, but this could have been the first time he talked about that and it then becomes a theme throughout the therapy about him going there or going off. R: So that has become something that you have stuck with. T4a: For sure, for sure, yea. It has been a pretty central theme. (TT4a, pg. 5)

- T4a: What it might cover over is just what I was just talking about. When he says, “I don’t want to be around people.” That to me that’s…, what’s that about? And for me it is about the over-protectiveness. Feeling that he is so fragile that he can’t handle people’s judgments and those kinds of things. But at the same time, he is a unique person and I think it is not just about psychodynamics for me. So now since I’ve been…, I want to do a lot…, so when I empathize it is not just strategic or something to ultimately get to his dynamics, but it’s that he is really that, I do think that he is, in a lot of ways, really honestly describing his life. That he lives as a loner and he that is how he feels. And the kinds of things that he likes in philosophy – courage and taking a leap and those sorts of things that have to do with solitude – I’m hoping to give him a space to really be able to embrace that part of himself too. To find a space for all of it here. R: Yea, that sounds like a big
part of it, giving him the space to show you what he wants to show you is relevant. [T4a: Yea, absolutely] (TT4a, pg. 6)

- T4a:… but what I really meant to say was that what he brought me in the first session and this assessment and how I understood it was basically him working on his sense of individuation, his sense of social alienation and how both of those tie into this mother that is holding onto him. R: So there is all of these themes that came up earlier that you have continues with through all of this time. [T4a: Absolutely]… (T4a, pg. 10)

- R:… You know, it’s pointing out…. it was a curiosity but at the same time pointing out this paradox. It seemed pretty fruitful. I mean, it went all the way from talking about gender and the differences and the similarities there to not feeling listened to and wanting to be listened to. T4b: Yea, the little detour in him talking about how he likes to wear certain clothes. He also talked about being fired from some jobs for coming in late, but meanwhile like he said nobody was working anyway. But yea, you are right, ultimately the thing that came out of that was him saying that he is a good listener and he doesn’t find it reciprocated. And as I was listening to this again I imagine, at least the way I take it now and I imagine I did at the time was, he’s making these comments about just wanting to be listened to or he said for himself that he doesn’t give advice or interrupt people unless they ask for it directly so some of this I was taking as tips on how to work with him. R: Yea, definitely, definitely. So he is giving you tips right there on how he wants the work to go and the relationship to look. [T4b: Yea] And it was interesting there, you could see too, maybe you could look from an outsider’s perspective and see that maybe he doesn’t respond well to open-ended questions [T4b: Mmhm] and maybe more direct specific stuff he might respond better to. [T4b: Yea, for sure] (TT4b, pg. 3)

- T4b: There were some really long pauses and I wasn’t writing, right? Did you notice that? [R: Yea] So, for me I think what was going on was…, I think he was taking the opportunity to emphasize the abuse, give me some background. So that just gave me some pause. I guess the seriousness of it required maybe more silence than thoughtful responses I guess, or careful responses maybe. R: I mean there seemed to be a decent amount of collaboration, even though there were pauses. I mean, “Why only this corner?” You know, and private versus public. [T4b: Yea], and how he wants to hold himself and present himself, I guess. There was a lot there.T4b: Well, there was the issue of safety and then later…. safety was the first thing he said and then later kind of not wanting to be embarrassed and not wanting to show his weaknesses. But what I’m…. I don’t know, I’m just guessing, but I may not have even had that in mind when I asked him that question. I don’t know. Yea, I probably did. That drawing himself small and in the corner was about being inconspicuous. I don’t know… But, yea. What I like about that one in terms of collaborative assessment is the way you have this picture…. the pictures speak volumes is what I’m getting at. And I started by saying, “I don’t know or didn’t think he would respond that way,” but it didn’t really matter because to talk about that little picture brought out a lot of stuff. R:
Like you said, if you had just interpreted that on your own, I mean, who knows, “Okay, he drew himself in the corner and wants to be inconspicuous,” [T4b: Yea, that’s a good point, yea.] but then the ability to ask him actually about it and ask him for feedback about it opened up so much more, it seems like. T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there. R: Yea, I think so. It seemed to be pretty useful. Even in that short clip and even with so many pauses, because of the discussion that came out of it. (TT4b, pg. 4)

• T4b:… It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so…But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he came to it in a pretty dialogical way…. T4b: The stuff he was talking about with the clothes and his grandmother being a seamstress and all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting. And I don’t know…. just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process. R: That’s interesting. Just from asking him to relate it to his life. [T4b: Yea] I mean, to add some context to it, [T4b: Mmhm] got some important stuff out of it, it seems. [T4b: Right] Okay. Is that any stuff you talk about now? Like do you feel like it is any stuff that relates to things? Those themes? T4b: Yea. I don’t know how to explain it now. Yea, it relates to the abuse, it’s kind of identification with his mother and his father. I mean he even goes to fluidly talking about how his father was hyper-critical and although he didn’t make it directly, just through the sequence of the discussion a lot of what his father was critical about was this kind of being too feminine or in some way tough enough. And when you him, he is quite tough. [R: Yea] But, yea as a kid they apparently dolled him up and put nice clothes on him and stuff and that pissed his father off. So those are pretty central issues of how he was situated. (TT4b, pg. 5)

• T4b: Just a really great, concise description or self-description about how he deals socially with his emotions. Angry at other people and whatever is meant by sensitivity, he is careful and private about that [R: Mmhm] but he doesn’t seem to have any issue with confrontation and stuff like that. R: Yea, kind of letting you know, “If I’m angry you’ll know it,” kind of a thing. T4b: Yea, well that’s interesting because I don’t know if that is the case. But potentially at that point, yea that is probably what he…, if you take what he is saying at face value then that would be relevant to our interactions as well. R: Yea, he did kind of seem to agree and disagree at the same time. Like the sensitive part he didn’t like, but the hostile and unforgiving he was like, “Yea.” T4b: Yea, it’s not that he is saying that he is not sensitive, he’s saying from the way he is perceived he says he doesn’t think he is perceived as sensitive. (TT4b, pg. 8)
10 – Experience (increased practice) with collaborative assessment can increase the enjoyment and comfort of the therapist and possibly make it be perceived as more useful. (4)

- “As a third year student, I have given enough assessments that I generally feel confident going into an assessment session.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

- “…However, over the past three years, I have come to truly appreciate and respect the collaborative assessment process and the fruit it can bear.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “Having had several very positive experiences using collaborative assessment in the past, I was prepared, upon meeting with [C3], to actively entertain that possibility of a good assessment experience with him.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- T2: I mean,… I think of how nervous I used to be going into assessments. It always felt artificial, awkward when I was first trying it out during the first year. But I have been giving more of them and I generally feel more relaxed when I’m in the assessment session and I know what to expect. I feel like I’ve worked out a system where I sort of have a way of doing things, that maybe I could say more about. R: That’s good. Do you feel like it allows you to be more collaborative, intuitive and present in the room with the client? T2: Yes. I mean I think if I’m not as self-conscious then I can be more open to what the other person is saying and to work with that. (TT2, pg. 1)

11 – Collaborative assessment gives a “snapshot” of the client, “what-it-is-like-now-ness,” and how that is useful/helpful. (7)

- “I also told him that the assessment process offered the chance for both of us to hold and work with some representations, images, or metaphors for what he was experiencing at the present time in his life.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “We both seemed to gather around these images and metaphors to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now.” (T3WD, pg. 1-2)

- T2 explains the uses of the tests, validates that people are different in different situations, a “snap shot” of where you are right now. (VS2, seg. 4)

- T2: Yea, I feel like the one thing that seemed to get through was when I said, “This was an incomplete snapshot.” And I said, “and we understand that.” And she laughed and that seemed to calm her down a bit. (TT2, pg. 6)

- C2: Well, it eased my mind a bit about the tests, especially when he said that it is a snapshot of how you are right now… (TC2, pg. 6)

- T3: Right, right. And not who he is as a person across the board, forever, in the past and will become, but who he is right now. Who he is right now and what he is dealing with right now. (TT3, pg. 4)

- T3:… But there is a whole quality of what his life world was like. What it is like to be him and what he is experiencing right now, or when that was. This feeling
of, “This is happening,” there is something very real and tangible, visceral. And in the moment you can feel it, you can feel all of that stuff sitting with the person. So that the assessment kind of creates this whole atmosphere of, what’s-it-like-now-ness. [laughs] Because you are asking me what’s it like, [both laugh] and this now-ness. So it’s cool. And all of that stuff is not something you can put your finger on, but it’s just atmospheric. (TT3, pg. 7)

12 – Allowing space for the client to respond, disagree, and challenge the results of the assessment and it turns out to be helpful (often more so) anyway. (29)

• “When it fails, I will simply ask the client to tell me about his strategies and then proceed from that instead of my own observations.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

• “I tend to use Connie’s rule of always asking for examples of “a time when” and a time “when not” in order to root the abstract in the concrete.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

• “When I asked what questions he had as a child in response to his home being unsafe. He said that questions like “why me?” come later on in life. I liked that he was pulling me out of psychodynamic thinking into his experience of childhood.” (T4bWD)

• T1: “Questions about yourself…?” C1: Discusses anger issues, feelings of entitlement, playing the victim a bit. (VS1, seg. 1)

• T1: “Examples of being angry?” C1: Discusses lack of energy of other people at a concert recently, cultural aspects of [the city], misdirected anger, not liking the city. (VS1, seg. 1)

• T2: “Remind you of anything?” C2: “I don’t know what to do with my life…and the dull routine of my mother. I wish I had a female role model, mom never blossomed, I feel stifled, like I’m not going to become what I should become.” (VS2, seg. 8)

• T3: “First impressions? Connections?” C3 relates the card with the woman staring out the window to his own thinking and worrying about his grandmother who has Alzheimer’s. T3 and C3 discuss this. (VS3, seg. 3)

• T3 pulls out that card and they look at it again together. C3 elaborates a bit about what the woman in the card might be comforting the man about, possibly her admitting cheating. (VS3, seg. 4)

• T4a: “Am I reading you wrong or do you seem agitated?” Then quickly points out that it is “alright” if he is. (VS4, seg. 1)

• T4a gives his interpretation (similar to C4’s) and asks for more elaboration. (VS4, seg. 4)

• T4a asks about this. C4 explains, discusses having older siblings, how his birth was not planned and how “my mother was my playmate.” He goes on to discuss being in a group versus being by himself…” (VS4, seg. 4)
T4b: “What kind of psychological insights do you think we could pull from these drawings?” (VS5, seg. 1)

T4b: “You only used this corner. What do you make out of that?” C5: “Not wanting to be noticed, wanting to disappear.” T4b: “Do you think that ties back to being quiet?” C5: “Yes.” T4b: “To use the whole page would be too loud.” C5: “Yea” (VS5, seg. 2)

T4b: “Do you have any other examples in your life where you take that approach?” C5: “Interesting, there are a lot of contradictions in that. I love to drive this [certain car] and everyone notices, it’s not inconspicuous. I love shoes too. Grandma was stylish, a dress maker.” T4b: “The things you are bad at you want to hide and you want to show off what you are good at.” C5: “Yea, I’m good at a lot, but bad at drawing and suck at singing.” (VS5, seg. 3)

T4b interprets, asking if he wondered, “Why me?” regarding his abuse. C5 responds by saying, “No, that comes later. My dad was a jerk and when your dad is a jerk you think every guy is a jerk, but that isn’t so.” (VS5, seg. 4)

T1: … But here the results depend on them, you know. There is no result ever really speaks on its own. It is only really a result for my assessment if they agree to it. [R: Okay] So, I guess that is one of the differences that I see. In a sense it empowers the other person and makes the other person the judge of the assessment, rather than, “I have all the answers and I’m going to tell you,” you know. (TT1, pg. 8)

T1: So that seemed significant to me in the sense that, [R: Yea, he just threw that out there] why would he bring that up out of all the things that he could bring up. So I thought that was probably something that was worthwhile exploring. It’s kind of an unprovoked denial. “There weren’t any sexual responses.” Well, there are a lot of other responses that weren’t there. So, I went with that possibly having some significance. Probably also with an understanding that sex is one of the things that often times is kind of repressed or uncomfortable and so that is precisely what we want to get at. (TT1, pg. 9)

T2: …I was taken off guard because I just wanted to check in. I didn’t expect this to be an anxiety provoking task and I think I just asked a kind of throw away question, like “How did you find that?” – the test, you know. And thought she would just say, “Okay.” And she launched into this whole thing about how much she didn’t like the Meyers-Briggs and I wasn’t expecting that at all. I was a little bit concerned about managing the session, like staying on task, and I think when I, that’s why I sort of fumbled around at the beginning. I feel like I didn’t find my groove until about half way through or something like that. [R: Of that segment?] Yea, and was able to kind of articulate some sort of explanation that would put her mind at ease about this test. I think I also just made a calculated decision at a certain point that her reaction to this test is clearly significant clinically. So, I am going to run with this and like have a conversation with her about why this test
was so threatening to her. You know, instead of try to convince her that it is not threatening. Just find out why it is so threatening. (TT2, pg. 7)

- T2: … Maybe that’s some sort of snappy way of summing up collaborative assessment: “It’s what the client says about the test not what the test says about the client.” Or something like that. I don’t know, that seemed to work… (TT2, pg. 7)

- R: …You were like, “did that remind you of anything?” And it seemed to bring some stuff out. T2: But, yea. I think what was going on there is that, she associates commitment with feeling trapped and that is because of her parents’ marriage and what she has seen in things with her mom. It seemed like whatever that was in reference to, it seemed to elicit some insight about that. (TT2, pg. 12)

- T4a:… Yea, my first sense was that I thought maybe he is pissed off, like, “Come on. I’m here waiting. What are you doing? Where are you?” So I just put that out there. Obviously, later I wished I would have asked a more open-ended question. Because I think in the moment, just intuitively, if he is pissed off I want to right away from the get go say…, invite it or open it up or whatever. But it is a misunderstanding and so he says…, He’s surprised like, “You read me like that because I don’t feel it,” so he says, “Maybe it’s something subconscious or something.” But he actually, if I am remembering correctly, that comment that I made stays with him even though I tried to undo it and say, “Sorry for misinterpreting.” He kind of kept it in the back of his mind and was trying to look for, “Am I angry and I don’t know it?” It was like we were both over-reaching each other. He was wanting to believe that I saw something and at the same time I was still trying to feel him out and see what was going on. R: Yea, somebody watching it might see it as maybe, like you were saying, a misinterpretation or a disconnect something like that. But if you keep watching, it didn’t seem to have that effect. You know, it had…, it didn’t…, you seemed to be able to build rapport from there and he takes it up, like you were saying, and he keeps looking for things with himself. I mean, you said, “Maybe I should have asked a more open-ended question.” But he went with it. How was that for you? T4a: How he responded? R: Yea, and the whole situation. How was it? T4a: Oh, the whole situation? [R: Yea] It was awkward. It was like, shit, you know. Just to jump the gun on what was going on for him. But I think what I learned from his response was that there was nothing jeopardizing about it. It was sort of like, even though I was pretty clear that I had missed the mark, he was still kind of flexible with it and taking it to heart. So it was one of those things where it was okay. (TT4a, pg. 2)

- T4a:… I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot… (TT4a, pg. 3)

- R:… At the beginning, it was interesting, because you asked about the back injury [T4a: Yea, yea, yea] And he just took it and said, “Well I was the accident,” and went in this totally different direction with it but you just followed it. T4a: And I
was just looking at you to see if I heard that right because it was strange to watch this now and thinking, “Wait, what just happened.” It’s such a huge leap. So I don’t know how his associations went. Maybe, just accident…, a back injury is an accident, my parents didn’t have back problems but for my parents I was an accident. Just one of the things that he thinks of as part of the psychology of the story and he really wanted to share with me, so I guess that was a good enough moment to put it out there. R: And how was that, such a leap like that? T4a: I felt like I adapted pretty…, I mean to me, that is the thing with me with the assessment stuff, I am much more interested in the dialogue than doing anything in particular. That picture can be thrown off the table if he says something that is really important like that and just move with it. It might lead to this conversation of his sense of being an accident and what it means to him. (TT4a, pg. 6)

- R: Okay, and I was wondering how you might take that, watching it, because I could see…, because you had said, “I’m really into consistent thought,” and he showed you that the test said, “Well, there were some inconsistencies with it.” And I didn’t know if maybe you took that as reflecting more about the test or maybe how he read into it or something like that. But he seemed to say, “Well, maybe there is something that the test doesn’t pick up on, these nuances.” So he opened up a space for you to be able to talk about that, it seems like. C4: Yea, yea. I feel like what you just said, that he opened up a space for me, I feel like a therapist on some level can only do that if you know the person. Because he could have opened up can of worms. Like, he could have made it so I couldn’t have said that. He could have made it so I couldn’t go down that path or he could have said something that would totally turn me off and make me want to go inward. R: Yea, he could have gone with the results and said, “Well, there is some inconsistency here and let’s see how you are inconsistent,” instead of saying, “Well, maybe there is something more that the test isn’t picking up on.” Right? It opened up an avenue rather than going with the strict interpretation. C4: Yea, I liked that. R: Okay. So you like that it provided an opening instead of kind of a closing off of interpretation, it seems like. C4: Mmhm. Wow. I’m just getting a glimpse into how I think through this conversation. Because I’m just thinking about the kind of papers I’ve written and the topics I have decided to cover and it’s like, “Wow, I really am that kind of a thinker.” (TC4, pg. 12)

- T4b: There were some really long pauses and I wasn’t writing, right? Did you notice that? [R: Yea] So, for me I think what was going on was…, I think he was taking the opportunity to emphasize the abuse, give me some background. So that just gave me some pause. I guess the seriousness of it required maybe more silence than thoughtful responses I guess, or careful responses maybe. R: I mean there seemed to be a decent amount of collaboration, even though there were pauses. I mean, “Why only this corner?” You know, and private versus public. [T4b: Yea], and how he wants to hold himself and present himself, I guess. There was a lot there. T4b: Well, there was the issue of safety and then later…, safety was the first thing he said and then later kind of not wanting to be embarrassed and not wanting to show his weaknesses. But what I’m…, I don’t know, I’m just guessing, but I may not have even had that in mind when I asked him that
question. I don’t know. Yea, I probably did. That drawing himself small and in the corner was about being inconspicuous. I don’t know… But, yea. What I like about that one in terms of collaborative assessment is the way you have this picture…. the pictures speak volumes is what I’m getting at. And I started by saying, “I don’t know or didn’t think he would respond that way,” but it didn’t really matter because to talk about that little picture brought out a lot of stuff. R: Like you said, if you had just interpreted that on your own, I mean, who knows, “Okay, he drew himself in the corner and wants to be inconspicuous,” [T4b: Yea, that’s a good point, yea.] but then the ability to ask him actually about it and ask him for feedback about it opened up so much more, it seems like. T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there. R: Yea, I think so. It seemed to be pretty useful. Even in that short clip and even with so many pauses, because of the discussion that came out of it. (TT4b, pg. 4)

- T4b:… It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so… But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he came to it in a pretty dialogical way…. T4b: The stuff he was talking about with the clothes and his grandmother being a seamstress and all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting. And I don’t know…. just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process. R: That’s interesting. Just from asking him to relate it to his life. [T4b: Yea] I mean, to add some context to it, [T4b: Mmhm] got some important stuff out of it, it seems. [T4b: Right] Okay. Is that any stuff you talk about now? Like do you feel like it is any stuff that relates to things? Those themes? T4b: Yea. I don’t know how to explain it now. Yea, it relates to the abuse, it’s kind of identification with his mother and his father. I mean he even goes to fluidly talking about how his father was hyper-critical and although he didn’t make it directly, just through the sequence of the discussion a lot of what his father was critical about was this kind of being too feminine or in some way tough enough. And when you him, he is quite tough. [R: Yea] But, yea as a kid they apparently dolled him up and put nice clothes on him and stuff and that pissed his father off. So those are pretty central issues of how he was situated. (TT4b, pg. 5)

- T4b: Yea, the interpretation where he was wondering, “why me?” type of thing. I found it very, very helpful that…. just clarifying that developmentally you don’t ask a question like that. I thought that was really good. R: Yea, because you said, “I could see that little boy wondering, why me?” and he said, “No, I didn’t wonder that until later.” So it showed you the difference from where he was to where he is, right? T4b: Yea, it was similar to…, now I’m remembering what the thing was. I gave a similar interpretation to a question about why his…, if he wished his mother would have stopped in and stopped the abuse because some of
this was coming out of a class I was in and getting some consultation and this idea that maybe he has this anger at his mother because she didn’t step in. Intuitively it’s funny, now this is really helpful to me because intuitively I didn’t feel that was the case but everyone else was like, “Of course he is angry at her because she didn’t step in.” So I ask him and he goes, “No, at the time women didn’t leave their husbands. It wasn’t heard of. There was no infrastructure for it and in the culture it just didn’t happen.” And so again, he is giving me these really nice context pieces. Like, “No he’s not old enough to ask this kind of question” or “No he’s not going ask this kind of question in this particular context.” So, I just like the way he grounded the type of psychology with therapy. R: Yea, and it’s interesting to see how even though he didn’t…, like even though he disagreed with the interpretation it still produced a lot. T4b: Yea, yea, yea. So I guess it’s a good…., like you said I guess you know you have a good working relationship or alliance when you can be off the mark and it is still productive. R: Exactly. It kind of makes us feel secure in what we are doing. [T4b: For sure, yea.] That even when you are not on it can still be productive and helpful. (TT4b, pg. 6-7)

- T4b: Just a really great, concise description or self-description about how he deals socially with his emotions. Angry at other people and whatever is meant by sensitivity, he is careful and private about that [R: Mmhm] but he doesn’t seem to have any issue with confrontation and stuff like that. R: Yea, kind of letting you know, “If I’m angry you’ll know it,” kind of a thing. T4b: Yea, well that’s interesting because I don’t know if that is the case. But potentially at that point, yea that is probably what he…. if you take what he is saying at face value then that would be relevant to our interactions as well. R: Yea, he did kind of seem to agree and disagree at the same time. Like the sensitive part he didn’t like, but the hostile and unforgiving he was like, “Yea.” T4b: Yea, it’s not that he is saying that he is not sensitive, he’s saying from the way he is perceived he says he doesn’t think he is perceived as sensitive. (TT4b, pg. 8)

- T4b: Yea, what I’m saying there is that he moved me from abstractions and conceptions to just the fact of how he experienced his life as a child and later on… The reason why I like it is just because I aspire to be very phenomenological in my therapy and so for him to have to force me to look that way was good because I wouldn’t have noticed that I was drifting off into abstraction. R: So you feel like he helped to put you more in his context and show you where he was coming from. [T4b: Absolutely] (TT4b, pg. 10)

13 – Collaboration during the assessment/feedback session can help the client relax, feel more comfortable, involved, and empowered. (12)

- “In general I also feel very proud to be part of a way of doing assessments which empowers and collaborates with the client rather than teaches, tells, and judges.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

- “Initially, [C2]'s reaction to my letter was fatalistic -- the fact that my interpretations of the tests corresponded in some way with our work together in regular sessions made her feel doomed to repeat these patterns forever.
Ultimately, I got the impression that through our discussion[C2] was able to accept some of the themes I mentioned without feeling determined by them.” (T2WD, pg. 2)

- “[C3] seemed to me to be very agreeable to this and open to the process.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- T1: …But here the results depend on them, you know. There is no result ever really speaks on its own. It is only really a result for my assessment if they agree to it. [R: Okay] So, I guess that is one of the differences that I see. In a sense it empowers the other person and makes the other person the judge of the assessment, rather than, “I have all the answers and I’m going to tell you,” you know. (TT1, pg. 8)

- T1: I remember my first client ever had a lot of interpersonal issues and lack of trust and I think me doing a very good collaborative assessment and writing it up in a very kind, personal way and sharing it with her was what made her really commit to therapy. I think that was a new experience for her, that she was able to, that somebody could really see her and understand her and she has made comments to that effect, that that was very impressive and very heartwarming for her. And so I had that with me as a background and I sense that for me that most people the question they have is, “Should I be in therapy or shouldn’t I be in therapy? Can I benefit from it or is it not something I can benefit from?” And by starting this way you give something to them and they have the experience of having gained insight right here and right now. Whereas, if we didn’t do it and just proceeded through, “tell me whatever,” they would have more of a sense of, “Is anything really coming out of this?” So I do kind of have faith that starting this way is a really good way to build a relationship. (TT1, pg. 15)

- T2: … Maybe I was just trying to put her mind at ease that there wouldn’t be any surprises and that she would be involved in the process. R: Yea, because she seemed to be involved in the entire process, so here you were kind of setting it up as collaborative from the very beginning. T2: And that she would have some control over it. And that I was thinking of these tests as points of departure for conversation. That I wasn’t sort of somehow reading her mind or gaining some sort of control over her. R: Yea, trying to let her know that she had some control over the process and making her feel more at ease. T2: Mmhm, yep. (TT2, pg. 3)

- T2: Yea, I feel like the one thing that seemed to get through was when I said, “This was an incomplete snapshot.” And I said, “and we understand that.” And she laughed and that seemed to calm her down a bit. (TT2, pg. 6)

- T2: …But I also wanted her to know that because it was distressing for her I was sensitive to that and we weren’t going to go too fast. You know, that we were going to take it one step at a time and I wasn’t going to push her if she wasn’t able to handle it. R: How do you think that was for her? T2: It seemed to work, yea. She was able to stop crying, kind of… (TT2, pg. 9)
• T3: It’s like creating an out-there-ness to something that is a mutual participation so that they can feel safe. They are able to move away from the idea that they are being reduced or that the materials know something about them independent of what they know about themselves, or that I do. They are more able to start to create kind of a tapestry of image and metaphor that is like a collective participation in something, involved in something that is there, that we can both work with. (TT3, pg. 2)

• T3: We were both relating to the cards a lot more so this is where we…, it just seemed like we were weaving together, you know, my ideas, pulling themes that he had just told me. Then he was elaborating on…, we were, it seemed like we were really doing this together, reflecting on this together and creating something. There was really something happening there. (TT3, pg. 8)

• R: Yea, and you were really good about putting it back on him. He was really focusing on his difficulty with challenging himself, but there is this curiosity that is there. He was able to move to talking about his own… T3: He sounded excited didn’t he? [R: Yea] He was like, “Yea, I am.” (TT3, pg. 11)

• R: Mmhm. I just noticed now as we were watching it, he seemed more laid back and kind of relaxed. He was even talking louder, you could hear him better. He seemed more kind of like… [T4b: Yea, yea] Like at the beginning he was really kind of quiet and looking out the window more [T4b: Yea] and I’m noticing in this clip he has got his arms back on the couch [T4b laughs] his legs are out, he is speaking louder and is kind of joking a little bit. [T4b: Okay] Do you have any thoughts about that? T4b: Um, I guess I am just hoping that he was feeling understood and that made him feel a bit more relaxed, and also that he wasn’t having to perform. I think he got a taste that this was a dialogue, this was a conversation, this was a collaboration so he didn’t…, I’m just thinking that the tightness and the quietness is about doing something that someone else wants you to do. [R: Yea] Doing something for me. And I think that as he started to see that this was more open and collaborative that maybe he relaxed more. R: So, he let his guard down a little bit [T4b: Right] and started feeling more comfortable, like this isn’t as bad or as painful as he anticipated… (TT4b, pg. 8)

14 – Offering alternative explanations/interpretations following client’s correction or input. (11)

• T1 offers an alternative explanation/interpretation: “You are in touch with your negative feelings” and “painful introspection.” [more complimentary in style] (VS1, seg. 3)

• T2 relates to this using a Simpson’s TV show metaphor comparing two of the characters: Bart and Lisa. C2 seems unsure at first, but then says, “Exactly.” She contemplates if she was dating her boyfriend because wild is attractive to her. She says being too conservative makes her feel like a “loser.” T2 discusses the possibility of having both on the horizon. (VS2, seg. 7)
• T3 empathizes and encourages and says, “if you do something three times it is a habit.” (VS3, seg. 5)

• T4a points out how he could be both agitated and not agitated and explains how he got the impression. He then says that he should have just asked instead of assuming. (VS4, seg. 1)

• T4a gives his interpretation (similar to C4’s) and asks for more elaboration. (VS4, seg. 4)

• T4a responds, empathizes and normalizes by discussing his experiencing as “hazing,” and a necessary step in his growing process. He then asks C4 how that was for him to hear. C4 said it was “great,” and that he appreciates the feedback. (VS4, seg. 5)

• T4a and C4 discuss this and T4a normalizes it by pointing out that it could be due to the “nuances” that the test had difficulty picking up or distinguishing. (VS4, seg. 6)

• T4b: “Do you have any other examples in your life where you take that approach?” C5: “Interesting, there are a lot of contradictions in that. I love to drive this [certain car] and everyone notices, it’s not inconspicuous. I love shoes too. Grandma was stylish, a dress maker.” T4b: “The things you are bad at you want to hide and you want to show off what you are good at.” C5: “Yea, I’m good at a lot, but bad at drawing and suck at singing.” (VS5, seg. 3)

• T4b interprets, asking if he wondered, “Why me?” regarding his abuse. C5 responds by saying, “No, that comes later. My dad was a jerk and when your dad is a jerk you think every guy is a jerk, but that isn’t so.” (VS5, seg. 4)

• R: … and I noticed you kind of laughed when we were watching it, but with The Simpsons metaphor because she was kind of like at first, “I don’t know too much about The Simpsons,” but then it really ended up seeming to work out. In the end she was kind of like, “Yea,” and really seemed to take it on. T2: Yea, that was a bit of, um [laughs]. I don’t really know what I was thinking at the time. But I think I made that comment that was really awkward and technical about wanting her to be able to make her own decisions and being a bit neurotic and that didn’t really go anywhere. And maybe I was thinking I was trying to say something a bit more accessible or whatever and maybe that is where that came from, I don’t know. I really don’t know what motivated me to do that. It just kind of popped into my head. Yea, it did seem to move the conversation in some way. I think I just thought the way she presented and the way she talked about herself just reminded me of Lisa Simpson. R: And that does seem like it would be more accessible because I remember you saying, her talking earlier about being saturated with the media, stuff like that. T2: Yea, and I think maybe that was on my mind too. R: So there was that and so maybe that was what was more accessible since the other part that you tried to mention, it seemed like maybe she
didn’t take it up as well, or something like that. So offering something more that she could hear. (TT2, pg. 10-11)

- T4a: It is interesting that I asked that question because as I was watching that I was wondering the same thing: how is he taking this? To me, looking at it from here it seemed like he was enjoying it,… But what I was trying to do there was..., I feel like I was entering into that moment to give him a broader understanding of what was going on because he was caught up in feeling devastated by being critiqued and I thought I was just offering a pretty logical perspective that especially in philosophy you have to go through this process of... R: Like that hazing or being worked over is a part of the process. T4a: Yea, it’s a good thing that it helps him hone his arguments… Yea, and with that it is because I am just getting to know him so I want to know…, it may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him. I’m not sure, it could have been. So I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that direction so I can get a sense of how things land. (TT4a, pg. 7)

15 – Explains tests, assessment, feedback – sets frame. (13)

- “As we were arranging a time to do the assessment, I told him that the process was in no way a kind of “me figuring him out” from test results, but rather that we would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context of his own experience. I also told him that the assessment process offered the chance for both of us to hold and work with some representations, images, or metaphors for what he was experiencing at the present time in his life. [C3] seemed to me to be very agreeable to this and open to the process.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- T1: “That’s always a question…I’ll summarize, give us things to talk about, try to come up with recommendations…” (VS1, seg. 9)

- T2 provides explanation of the tests and assessment: “Think of them as points of departure for conversation, not a crystal ball. They don’t give us any special insight into your personality. They are just tools for bringing up certain issues that we maybe wouldn’t get to otherwise… I will write up the results in a letter, have you sign it. You will be involved in the entire process.” (VS2, seg. 1)

- T2 explains the uses of the tests, validates that people are different in different situations, a “snap shot” of where you are right now. (VS2, seg. 4)

- T2: “We use it for different purposes…not for placing,” more explanation, “No label being stamped…” He goes on to explain collaborative assessment. (VS2, seg. 4)

- T2 relates this to the usefulness of the TAT and how it works, asks her to relate the card to her life. (VS2, seg. 5)
T3 explains the assessment again and how it helps their work together. (VS3, seg. 2)

T3 explains how the TAT works again and how it is helpful. (VS3, seg. 4)

T3 and C3 go on to discuss how this experience stirred up things for them to work on in their work together, which C3 admits needing. T3 emphasizes working together and building on the things that were brought up, as well as the benefit of having something “out there” for them to work on together. (VS3, seg. 5)

T2: [laughs] I don’t know. Umm. I mean, I was basically just trying to give her a sense of what to expect from the tests. I wanted to, you know, I think when some people hear “tests” and “assessments” they maybe don’t think of something like the TAT as what is going to happen. So, I guess I just felt like saying, “one of these is going to be on pencil and paper and one is going to be more conversational.”… Maybe I was just trying to put her mind at ease that there wouldn’t be any surprises and that she would be involved in the process. R: Yea, because she seemed to be involved in the entire process, so here you were kind of setting it up as collaborative from the very beginning. T2: And that she would have some control over it. And that I was thinking of these tests as points of departure for conversation. That I wasn’t sort of somehow reading her mind or gaining some sort of control over her. R: Yea, trying to let her know that she had some control over the process and making her feel more at ease. T2: Mmhm, yep. (TT2, pg. 3)

T2: …And then towards the beginning where we picked up, I thought that was another example of me not successfully allaying her concerns. I thought that was going to be easier for her to handle but she was still freaked out by the idea of being given a personality type. R: Yea, I think that seemed to get through when I said, “This was an incomplete snapshot.” And I said, “and we understand that.” And she laughed and that seemed to calm her down a bit. (TT2, pg. 6)

T3: Yea, I usually…, I know even for myself that any time there is an assessment or a test, even with words, cause anxiety because it implies evaluation, it is evaluation. We grew up with standardized testing our entire lives [R: That’s true] But it’s like we are always being evaluated. R: Under the microscope, like you said. T3: Yea, so it is important for me to sort of change the tone of it ahead of time so it feels different. So I try to do that. It doesn’t always work, but I think that is something that I like to do… R: So it doesn’t always work but it is definitely worth an attempt. T3: Yea, it is an attempt to make it a little bit different. (TT3, pg. 3)

R: But I feel like there is a strategy behind it though. I mean, I feel like you are showing him and putting him at ease by saying, “You know, this stuff isn’t set in
stone because this test says that.” [T4b: Yea] We can question it and it doesn’t necessarily always fit and we can talk about it and that is what matters more. T4b: Yea, and I think I did that throughout the assessment and maybe I’m asking in a way. You know what, I think your interpretation was actually the question I was trying to ask him with that statement. You know, “This wasn’t too bad was it?” [chuckles] Or maybe more along the lines of what I was rambling about was that, “It wasn’t as bad for you as I think it is.” And he’s saying, “Well, the test is accurate but we could have done it a different way.” So I just sort of get a sense of “good enough,” we are moving ahead. (TT4b, pg. 9)

16 – Feedback/Assessment resembles therapy or becomes therapeutic – involves empathy, normalizing, comforting, mirroring, etc. (26)

- “To me they seemed to jump from the stories and I felt an excitement, a sadness, and a deep emotional connection to him through these stories.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “I developed a strong sense of faith in [C3] and his own unique process towards healing. As we continue to move through our work together, it will become increasingly important for him to know that I believe in him and, in turn, this will help concretize his belief in himself.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- “When I asked what questions he had as a child in response to his home being unsafe. He said that questions like “why me?” come later on in life. I liked that he was pulling me out of psychodynamic thinking into his experience of childhood.” (T4bWD)

- T2 provides an empathetic statement about her feeling self-conscious. (VS2, seg. 4)

- C2 continues discussing her family dynamics, her parents. T2: “Key insight.” C2 cries. T2 comforts and contains her but encourages further work in this area during their ongoing work together. (VS2, seg. 6)

- T2 reflects this back to her and interprets it. C2 discusses how her conservative side works well and is effective. T2 reflects her fear and curiosity back to her. C2 discusses her curiosity about her wild side. (VS2, seg. 7)

- C2: “The whole start of this conversation was the fact that I start something, I love it, then I hate it.” She relates it to her mom and her own lack of self-confidence. T2 gives examples of a “quitter” and a “little girl.” C2: “I’m afraid that I’m not going to blossom, that that is going to happen to me.” T2: “Your mom hasn’t quit her marriage. You are trying to avoid that situation.” C2: “I don’t want her to quit it. I just want to see her do something.” T2: “What would it mean for you if she could do something?” C2: I would be more “at ease, lighter, secure. I wouldn’t have to worry about her.” (VS2, seg. 9)

- T3 normalizes and comforts him. (VS3, seg. 2)
• T3 empathizes with how scary that is and discusses it as a metaphor for his life. C3 agrees and elaborates about how it gets overwhelming. (VS3, seg. 5)

• T3 empathizes and encourages and says, “if you do something three times it is a habit.” (VS3, seg. 5)

• T4a points out that he started drawing himself in the middle of his family then changed his mind and drew himself on the outside. He then asks, “What do you make out of that?” C4: “That I kind of perceive myself as an outsider…” and explains. (VS4, seg. 2)

• T4a writes in his notebook, then reflects content back to C4 and normalizes by saying it’s “a natural thing.” (VS4, seg. 2)

• T4a responds, empathizes and normalizes by discussing his experiencing as “hazing,” and a necessary step in his growing process. He then asks C4 how that was for him to hear. C4 said it was “great,” and that he appreciates the feedback. (VS4, seg. 5)

• T4b: “Do you have any other examples in your life where you take that approach?” C5: “Interesting, there are a lot of contradictions in that. I love to drive this [certain car] and everyone notices, it’s not inconspicuous. I love shoes too. Grandma was stylish, a dress maker.” T4b: “The things you are bad at you want to hide and you want to show off what you are good at.” C5: “Yea, I’m good at a lot, but bad at drawing and suck at singing.” (VS5, seg. 3)

• R: …But here I noticed it was interesting. She started crying, it was obviously very emotional for her, but you were really able to contain her and hold her. But at the same time say “we are going to discuss this in pieces, it’s all going to be gradually.” [T2: …a little bit at a time.] Yea. What were you trying to do there? What do you think that was like for her? T2: I mean, I think I saw that we had touched on something really powerful and I guess I wanted to tell her on the one hand I thought that this was something that was very important that I wanted to keep talking about. I didn’t want the tears to sort of foreclose the conversation about it. But I also wanted her to know that because it was distressing for her I was sensitive to that and we weren’t going to go too fast. You know, that we were going to take it one step at a time and I wasn’t going to push her if she wasn’t able to handle it. R: How do you think that was for her? T2: It seemed to work, yea. She was able to stop crying, kind of. I think I actually could have this early on been a bit more consoling or something. But in general this is kind of how I am with her when she cries. At this point, I feel like we have a strong enough relationship that I can be there and contain it but then move pretty quickly into talking about what is happening. R: Well, in retrospect it is easier to see. T2: Yea, but I thought that worked. (TT2, pg. 9-10)

• R: … and I noticed you kind of laughed when we were watching it, but with The Simpsons metaphor because she was kind of like at first, “I don’t know too much about The Simpsons,” but then it really ended up seeming to work out. In the end
she was kind of like, “Yea,” and really seemed to take it on. T2: Yea, that was a bit of, um [laughs]. I don’t really know what I was thinking at the time. But I think I made that comment that was really awkward and technical about wanting her to be able to make her own decisions and being a bit neurotic and that didn’t really go anywhere. And maybe I was thinking I was trying to say something a bit more accessible or whatever and maybe that is where that came from, I don’t know. I really don’t know what motivated me to do that. It just kind of popped into my head. Yea, it did seem to move the conversation in some way. I think I just thought the way she presented and the way she talked about herself just reminded me of Lisa Simpson. R: And that does seem like it would be more accessible because I remember you saying, her talking earlier about being saturated with the media, stuff like that. T2: Yea, and I think maybe that was on my mind too. R: So there was that and so maybe that was what was more accessible since the other part that you tried to mention, it seemed like maybe she didn’t take it up as well, or something like that. So offering something more that she could hear. (TT2, pg. 10-11)

- T2: And that’s what I was getting at when I asked, “What would it mean for you if her mom did something with her life?”... I mean she said it would make her feel more relaxed, more at ease, you know, she would worry about her less. But I think that was really crucial at the end,... basically that if her mom got out of this marriage then her mom would be an adult and it would release [C2] from having to be the mother. (TT2, pg. 13)

- R: So there you were thinking about the conservative versus the wild side of yourself. C2: Right, or just in general I was thinking about these structures, like choices or paths or something. But I’m not thinking, I don’t think it looks that way too much anymore. During the assessment, I think that I was thinking like…, I was so overwhelmed by…, like that was definitely something I wanted to talk about and I am glad that card brought it up, but I think during that moment I was so overwhelmed by this feeling that I didn’t know what to do with it or I felt like it was never going to get solved. [R: Okay. The paths?] But the fact that [T2] was saying, “Well, you know there is probably a middle road,” that was reassuring. And the fact that maybe I didn’t have to talk about it all right that second. R: So it was good to bring it up but also that um, he kind of pointed in the direction that there is a middle road but we can work on that at another time, and it sounds like you have. C2: Yea, and I think with that issue especially I needed reassurance because I was really overwhelmed by that feeling right then. R: Okay, so it was really helpful at the time, you would say. [C2: Yea, yea] Okay. (TC2, pg. 12)

- T3:… But also in these moments of going through the real sadness that was there. And the images themselves evoked an emotional connection, you know, the idea of sitting in a fog and not knowing what is coming and being confused. So all of that stuff was just kind of replete in it. So I was really aware of those feelings that I was having and that he was possibly having as well. R: Okay. So it sounds like
you were very tuned into what was going on with him and probably through those responses it helped to give you a better connection. [T3: Yea] (TT3, pg. 5)

- T3: I guess now that I see it, you know, I’m like reflecting on it now and kind of moving away from it. But feeling like…, I think he was really honest about it and he felt embarrassed about that. He felt kind of exposed and I was trying to assure him that this was really important stuff. I know the feeling of wanting to apologize, I do it a lot. So, it felt like, “Is that okay? Is that okay?” You know. But still that anxiety, no matter what, there is always that evaluative state, even our self-evaluative critic that we keep really close to us. [R: Sure, sure] That was…, he had been there and done that, he was honest, and then he was like, “Holy crap.” R: Yea, exactly. He did have his own…, it seemed like maybe he was…, he said, “Oh man, some of my responses may have been stupid.” I’m wondering if maybe he was fishing for some comfort. T3: Probably, that he was really kind of exposed out there and needing to know that he wasn’t alone. (TT3, pg. 6)

- R: Yea, because it seemed like a great…. I mean, at the beginning talking about the fog that he could relate to, how that is kind of a metaphor for his life that he goes through in and out of periods. And then talking about the car accident, like how it makes it hard to see an accident coming and feeling the need to protect himself because of this fog. That was a really rich metaphor. T3: Even when he was talking about that I could feel my own body beginning to brace. [R: Yea] Like you want the eyes in the back of your head. R: Yea, it was very clear that you were there with him. I mean, you were very present. (TT3, pg 10)

- R: Yea, it seemed like you were talking about the difficulty with just getting going and stuff like that, but [T3] was supportive. She was saying, “There is a curiosity there,” and she could see that motivation, that desire to want to get up and get going. How was that? C3: Very, very encouraging. It made me want to come back, where somebody was actually listening to me. Like I said, my biggest fear was that I was just going to get an anti-depressant prescription. I went to personal counseling in my junior college before this…. before coming here and it was more career oriented. I mean, you get into your personal problems and they are like, “Whoa. You need to go see somebody else,” and whatever. So it was real encouraging to have somebody saying that. That she is recognizing some positive out of all that negative. So, it was real encouraging. (TC3, pg. 9-10)

- T4a:… I didn’t say very much or really make any interpretations. I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot… I was normalizing definitely in the sense of just to say, “Hey, you know, you’re in college.” Maybe that was probably the spirit of that moment mostly, to say that this was a natural process. (TT4a, pg. 3-4)

- T4a: It is interesting that I asked that question because as I was watching that I was wondering the same thing: how is he taking this? To me, looking at it from here it seemed like he was enjoying it,… But what I was trying to do there was…,
I feel like I was entering into that moment to give him a broader understanding of what was going on because he was caught up in feeling devastated by being critiqued and I thought I was just offering a pretty logical perspective that especially in philosophy you have to go through this process of... R: Like that hazing or being worked over is a part of the process. T4a: Yea, it’s a good thing that it helps him hone his arguments... Yea, and with that it is because I am just getting to know him so I want to know..., it may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him. I’m not sure, it could have been. So I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that direction so I can get a sense of how things land. (TT4a, pg. 7)

- T4a:... I think what I see the effect of it being was kind of destabilizing him. [R: Yea] Saying here you see yourself as consistent but the report says the opposite. So shaking him up a bit and then catching him by saying, “But it’s probably just because this machine doesn’t pick up the kind of nuances that you are attuned to.” I don’t know. Especially for such a short moment, it seems like it holds a lot. Kind of pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him. I think that is a good metaphor for it because both of those things are going to be going on in the therapy. (TT4a, pg. 8)

- T4b: What I found interesting is that I felt like I was taking up..., my comportment was similar to the way he was dealing with the assessment, which is when there was time to pause I was looking out the window. [R: Hmm] So there was something about it that was kind of scattering for him and I was maybe taking on some of that. R: So mirroring him a bit as you were watching him. [T4b: Right] (TT4b, pg. 11)

17 – Therapist is impressed with client’s response, feedback, insight. (11)
- “I felt excited about the discovery he had made in this session. I felt impressed and awed by [C3]’s own unique capacity to gravitate towards and create meaning and healing in his life.” (T3WD, pg. 2)

- “I was impressed as he described (responding to card 14) that he likes to open the window and gaze at the stars or clouds...described doing so from a house on the ocean. I was glad that he could appreciate such experiences.” (T4bWD)

- “I was impressed by how important being listened to is for him, that he provides it for others but doesn’t find people are interested in really listening to him. I thought that our therapy would be good for him.” (T4bWD)

- T3: I think I was surprised by how not taken aback he was [R: Okay] He was so comfortable with it and he... He’s looking at a white card and he’s seeing it, he’s really seeing it. And he didn’t hesitate, you know, there is no mediation. He saw fog and then he went back to a place that he’d know, and I’ve been to [that location] so I know what he’s talking about. TT3, pg. 4)
- T3: I felt, when I was with him, I was amazed that he had gone there and was taken aback that he wasn’t taken aback. I felt really amazed with him. R: Okay. Really amazed that he could just jump in and be so open like that. T3: That he was so open, but also that there was such richness there. I felt a really deep appreciation for him, you know, that he had access to this and it was part of him. (TT3, pg. 4-5)

- T3: but also my own just real excitement about what he had given me and appreciation for what he had given me, which is really profound. It felt like a gift, a real gift. R: And you have a strong appreciation for that. T3: Oh my god, yea. (TT3, pg. 7)

- T4b: It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so…But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he came to it in a pretty dialogical way (TT4b, pg. 5)

- T3 points out his ability to find meaning in the cards and stories. (VS3, seg. 3)

- T3 congratulates C3 for giving a good response and doing well with the #16 all white card. (VS3, seg. 5)

- T3 points out his curiosity as an asset as well. (VS3, seg. 5)

- T2: Yea, I think I was surprised at how keen her insight was, and I said that. I didn’t have much to add to her response. I mean, she really nailed it. That was sort of how I felt. (TT2, pg. 9)

18 – Collaboration during the actual assessment. (10)

- Segment 1… while administering the Rorschach…T1: “Questions about yourself…?” C1: Discusses anger issues, feelings of entitlement, playing the victim a bit. T1: “Examples of being angry?” C1: Discusses lack of energy of other people at a concert recently, cultural aspects of [the city], misdirected anger, not liking the city. (VS1, seg. 1)

- Segment 1…during administration of the TAT…T2: “How do you suppose the two on the right would feel about her leaving?” C2: “They are busy with their own things. They would care but not too much.” (VS2, seg. 2)

- T4a points out that he started drawing himself in the middle of his family then changed his mind and drew himself on the outside. He then asks, “What do you make out of that?” C4: “That I kind of perceive myself as an outsider…” and explains. (VS4, seg. 2)
• Segment 1…during administration of the Draw a Person… T4b: “What kind of psychological insights do you think we could pull from these drawings?” (VS5, seg. 1)

• Segment 2…during administration of the Draw a Person… T4b: “You only used this corner. What do you make out of that?” C5: “Not wanting to be noticed, wanting to disappear.” T4b: “Do you think that ties back to being quiet?” C5: “Yes.” T4b: “To use the whole page would be too loud.” C5: “Yea” (VS5, seg. 2)

• Segment 3…during administration of the Draw a Person… T4b: “Do you have any other examples in your life where you take that approach?” (VS5, seg. 3)

• T4a: I feel like it was kind of a decent hermeneutic process there. I like the way that I started right off the bat and just pointed to it. I didn’t say very much or really make any interpretations. I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot… (TT4a, pg. 3)

• T4b: Yea, that’s right. So we had very little to work with so I just jumped on that. It was probably something I had heard at intake, stereotyping women and stuff like that, so I brought it back up when he said that. I kind of pushed it because he didn’t go anywhere with it originally and then I brought it back and said, “What are some of the specific differences?” So I don’t know about that. Basically, I was encouraging him to elaborate on something he had mentioned in the intake. But eventually it gets a little more organic and he starts going some other places with it. R: Yea, it’s interesting because you started with a very open ended question, “What do you get out of this?” You know, and he came back with something very basic so then you kind of pointed out, not only a paradox but a contradiction. Like, “What you said before doesn’t really go with what you just said.” But it was in a curious way, it seemed like, and it invited…, it opened up a lot more, it seemed like. [T4b: Okay] Yea, which seems to be collaborative in a sense. You know, it’s pointing out…, it was a curiosity but at the same time pointing out this paradox. It seemed pretty fruitful. I mean, it went all the way from talking about gender and the differences and the similarities there to not feeling listened to and wanting to be listened to. T4b: Yea, the little detour in him talking about how he likes to wear certain clothes. He also talked about being fired from some jobs for coming in late, but meanwhile like he said nobody was working anyway. (TT4b, pg. 3)

• T4b: There were some really long pauses and I wasn’t writing, right? Did you notice that? [R: Yea] So, for me I think what was going on was…, I think he was taking the opportunity to emphasize the abuse, give me some background. So that just gave me some pause. I guess the seriousness of it required maybe more silence than thoughtful responses I guess, or careful responses maybe. R: I mean there seemed to be a decent amount of collaboration, even though there were pauses. I mean, “Why only this corner?” You know, and private versus public. [T4b: Yea], and how he wants to hold himself and present himself, I guess. There
was a lot there. T4b: Well, there was the issue of safety and then later... safety was the first thing he said and then later kind of not wanting to be embarrassed and not wanting to show his weaknesses. But what I’m... I don’t know, I’m just guessing, but I may not have even had that in mind when I asked him that question. I don’t know. Yea, I probably did. That drawing himself small and in the corner was about being inconspicuous. I don’t know... But, yea. What I like about that one in terms of collaborative assessment is the way you have this picture... the pictures speak volumes is what I’m getting at. And I started by saying, “I don’t know or didn’t think he would respond that way,” but it didn’t really matter because to talk about that little picture brought out a lot of stuff. R: Like you said, if you had just interpreted that on your own, I mean, who knows, “Okay, he drew himself in the corner and wants to be inconspicuous,” [T4b: Yea, that’s a good point, yea.] but then the ability to ask him actually about it and ask him for feedback about it opened up so much more, it seems like. T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there. R: Yea, I think so. It seemed to be pretty useful. Even in that short clip and even with so many pauses, because of the discussion that came out of it. (TT4b, pg. 4)

- T4b: ... It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so... But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he came to it in a pretty dialogical way.... T4b: The stuff he was talking about with the clothes and his grandmother being a seamstress and all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting. And I don’t know... just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process. R: That’s interesting. Just from asking him to relate it to his life. [T4b: Yea] I mean, to add some context to it, [T4b: Mmhm] got some important stuff out of it, it seems. [T4b: Right] Okay. Is that any stuff you talk about now? Like do you feel like it is any stuff that relates to things? Those themes? T4b: Yea. I don’t know how to explain it now. Yea, it relates to the abuse, it’s kind of identification with his mother and his father. I mean he even goes to fluidly talking about how his father was hyper-critical and although he didn’t make it directly, just through the sequence of the discussion a lot of what his father was critical about was this kind of being too feminine or in some way tough enough. And when you him, he is quite tough. [R: Yea] But, yea as a kid they apparently dolled him up and put nice clothes on him and stuff and that pissed his father off. So those are pretty central issues of how he was situated. (TT4b, pg. 5)

19 – Therapist was skeptical about the process at first, but found it to go better (productive) in the end. (11)

- “Looking back, however, I don’t know if I can say it really ever has been a failure, but the fear is always there.” (T1WD, pg. 1)
• “When questions do occur to me that lead us somewhere or when in fact I do perceive a pattern in the client’s method of copying the bender-gestalt designs which open up new connections for him and for me, I feel relief, but also competent for having seen “it” or suggested “it,” akin perhaps to the Magician who succeeds at pulling out a rabbit from a hat which nobody suspected had a rabbit in it.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

• “After the assessment, I write up my scattered notes around themes which sometimes seem almost “banal.” I sometimes worry that they will be too banal and that they won’t really tell the client much new. However, it seems to be that what is the closest to us is often the farthest away and I don’t think I have ever had the experience of a client who wasn’t somehow fascinated by hearing me read my themes to them full of little details from the assessment cited as supporting evidence.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

• “…However, over the past three years, I have come to truly appreciate and respect the collaborative assessment process and the fruit it can bear.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

• “I often feel a bit sheepish about presenting this card to clients after a series of picture cards because I imagine that they might think I am trying to trick them. When I first saw this card in my intro to assessment class, I felt both excited and a bit intimidated by the card’s possibilities. However, [C3] did not seem to be taken aback at all when I presented this card.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

• T1: … But I don’t think I have ever really felt that it was a failure. I don’t think my experience has been that I’ve gone completely blank and haven’t been unable to write up an assessment. (TT1, pg. 2)

• T1: … and I kind of like the experience of surviving an assessment and feeling like I did manage to come up with things to say and it did kind of work out and it’s kind of cool that we managed to produce this together… (TT1, pg. 3)

• T1: Yea, I think it makes me feel competent when that happened, you know. Every time we are succeeding, it makes me feel competent. I think earlier on, I’m not like. “Oh, shit, nothing came out of these interpretations.” I have confidence that we will have so many other opportunities and ways of phrasing things that something is probably going to come out. (TT1, pg. 7)

• T1: …I even think it enhances the enjoyment or the success feeling that it came out of the uncertainty. Because I go in there with the possible fear of failure, then when it’s a success it is kind of a pleasant surprise always. It’s kind of cool, it worked… (TT1, pg. 8)

• T1: Yea, I think I always feel like it’s an accomplishment. It’s quite impressive when it works. It always amazed me that a little thing that to most people is completely insignificant, and they really don’t pay much attention to it themselves when they are doing it. So many things can come out of that, by starting at the
little we can get at the big. That always amazes me then when we do succeed at getting at the big picture. [R: Okay] I even feel like they are a bit dazzled by it. They kind of feel like, “Wow, I never expected that.” And I feel that a lot, they are very impressed how we could get so much out of so little. And it’s cool to be the author of that, or the responsible party. (TT1, pg. 14)

- T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there. (TT4b, pg. 4)

20 – Choosing certain assessment tests/tools, tailoring it to the client, based on impressions from prior meetings. (6)

- “Near the end of our time we discussed the best way to proceed with the next session, which kind of assessments we should use.” (C1WD, pg. 1)

- “With [C2], however, I had already written the intake report, so I already had a relatively clear sense that her DSM diagnosis would mainly involve anxiety -- nothing on Axis II. As a result, I felt free to consider using paper and pencil tests other than the MMPI-2 and the PAI. I would usually choose the 16PF in this situation, but I chose instead to use the Myers-Briggs mainly because I had never given it to a client before and was interested in trying it out. I also thought it might be helpful for both me and [C2] in giving us a sense of how her symptoms of anxiety might be related to broader personality structures. I chose the TAT as my projective test because it's a test that I have found to be incredibly helpful with past clients… I thought the TAT might especially yield a lot of material from AM because based on our intake interview, she seemed especially open and articulate.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

- T2: … I tend to use the MMPI or PAI for clients who I am less certain of diagnostically, specifically where I’m trying to use the assessment to make a diagnosis, or if they are more severe, if their pathology is more severe, I feel those tests help me diagnostically. Whereas, I was certain enough with [C2] very early on that I could tell that she was relatively high functioning, her distress was not that acute, relatively. And so I felt like because I had a sense that she was primarily anxious, that was probably going to give her a diagnosis of GAD or something like that, I didn’t feel like I needed to use the MMPI or the PAI or something like that. I could use the Meyers-Briggs that is generally more personality focused. (TT2, pg. 1)

- T2: Yea, I’ve had a couple of bad experiences with the TAT with clients who were very defensive and/or not psychologically minded, who weren’t sort of willing to acknowledge that there is something more than what was right before their eyes. So, the fact that I could tell that she was very open, she didn’t seem as defensive as some of my other clients and the fact that she was sort of psychologically minded, I thought the TAT could be useful in working with her for that reason. [R: Alright] You know I had one client in particular I’m thinking of who was very resistant about me giving the TAT to her. You know, I would show her a picture and she would say, “It’s a man.” And that’s it, you know. So, I
didn’t think that would happen with [C2], she would be able to elaborate. R: How was that for you? Feeling kind of…? T2: Frustrating. I mean, it I think it tells you something, about the resistance. But it doesn’t do what it’s supposed to do. (TT2, pg. 2)

- R: Did it effect, I was wondering, the cards you chose or things like that, to try to bring some of those things out? T3: Yea, it definitely did. Thinking about, you know, a relationship card, or like… and also I love the card where he is standing in a darkened room with the window, that is such a great idea. I like to put that at the end so it can be like the future will kind of…, it’s kind of imagining or projecting yourself into what could be out there. And then there is the ambiguous white card, which is…, if there is someone who is really anxious I wouldn’t necessarily use the white card or would be wondering about whether to use that. [R: Yea] But that is all based on having met him and the material. R: You thought he could handle that and it would be productive. T3: Yea, that he was really open to checking out stuff and doing this. (TT3, pg. 4)

- T4a:… I think maybe I emphasized his mother and father because he still lives with them still so I was just wondering what was going on there. And I think just gave him the opportunity to articulate for himself his own individuation process. (TT4a, pg. 3)

21 – Concern that the assessment might be a negative distraction, interruption of therapeutic work, “artificial,” and having the impression that the client would rather just talk. (6)

- “I also worried that it was a distraction from our work together, an interruption in the rhythm that our work had assumed. It felt artificial.” (T2WD, pg. 1)

- “When I first started doing psychological assessment as a first year student, I often felt apologetic about the amount of what seemed to me to be a great deal of ambiguous and, at times, irrelevant material that I was asking my clients to work through when they clearly had other things they wanted to talk about.” (T3WD, pg. 1)

- “I felt bad for not having better informing him in the intake that the next time he came in that he would be taking a multiple choice test (PAI) and that we wouldn’t have much time to talk. He seemed disappointed when I let him know that was the plan. He started filling out the form at a slow pace, which I took as not really wanting to do it. He sped up after a little while. When I asked him how it was taking the test he said “most of that stuff I’ll tell you anyway” (in other words, it was unnecessary)…” (T4bWD)

- T2: Yea, I mean. I think this is something I am still sorting out for myself in general. You know, “How do I feel about assessment in general?” Do I see myself, if I am in private practice someday, even using assessments? I mean, I think most people don’t, at least in my experience. I guess, I know that [my supervisor] doesn’t take them too seriously. I know my therapist has never used assessments with me. I feel like, part of me thinks there is something
unnecessarily artificial about them. You could get at this material just by doing therapy with the person. You know, “Is it necessary to do that at all?” So there is that question… (TT2, pg. 13)

- T2: …Maybe this is just a prejudice, but for some reason I feel like assessment is maybe more helpful with more severe clients… But, I feel like with a client like this she already has so much to say and she’s already sort of doing the work from the start. I feel like with the TAT cards, for instance, she anticipated so many of my comments. I feel like she sort of just got it so quickly that maybe it wasn’t even necessary to do. In other words, if the assessment is valuable in large part because it elicits material that wouldn’t have been elicited otherwise, then it is less valuable with clients who would have, of their own accord, bring that stuff up. Whereas, with clients who aren’t as reflective or something, maybe it would bring things up. (TT2, pg. 14)

- T3: Yea, when people come to therapy typically it’s because there is some urgency and there’s something that has motivated them to overcome the inertia of actually calling somebody for help. It is just a huge act of faith, and often really deep despair when people are motivated to reach out because there is a lot of…, regardless of how things have changed, there are still a lot of stereotypes about coming to therapy and what it means to talk to another person. Usually it is an acknowledgement of some sort of weakness. And so, being able to call and find someone to talk to is an extremely nerve racking and often terrifying experience. So, the first few sessions that I have had with clients typically have been with them just really wanting to get it over with or just be able to get out what they have been holding onto, what’s been building up. And so, at first when you start an assessment I was like, “This goes against my natural tendency which is to get out of the way and allow them to expunge or allow them to release whatever has been built up for that initial meeting.” So, the idea of me having an agenda, which would usurp whatever they had, was uncomfortable for me at first. R: So there is this tension between wanting to kind of get out of their way and not having your own agenda, just letting them have it out… T3: Allowing them to kind of release some of that stuff that has been built up initially. [R: Sure, yea, okay.] And that is not necessarily a problem with assessment itself, but maybe with the timing. R: The timing, okay. Like with maybe just letting them have that out and then coming back and doing the assessment. T3: That was my initial feelings about doing this the first…, right away. R: Like, “Why am I doing this right away? Could it wait?” or something. [T3: Yea, totally.] (TT3, pg. 1-2)

22 – Enjoying collaborative assessment, glad to be a part of it and doing it because it allows them to do the kind of therapeutic work they want to do. (6)

- “When questions do occur to me that lead us somewhere or when in fact I do perceive a pattern in the client’s method of copying the bender-gestalt designs which open up new connections for him and for me, I feel relief, but also competent for having seen “it” or suggested “it,” akin perhaps to the Magician who succeeds at pulling out a rabbit from a hat which nobody suspected had a rabbit in it.” (T1WD, pg. 2)
• “In general I also feel very proud to be part of a way of doing assessments which empowers and collaborates with the client rather than teaches, tells, and judges. It makes me feel good about myself since it gives me a way to live out humanistic values which I believe in and identify with. Through collaborative assessment I cement or reinforce an identity which I already have and which includes respect for the client as a fellow human being and not a “diagnosis” and discomfort with too much of a power distance between me as clinician and them as clients. This is not a philosophical pride, but a very concrete sense throughout an assessment that I am one of the “good guys.” (T1WD, pg. 2)

• T1: Yea, I feel like that. I mean I often position myself opposite psychiatry, hospitals, doctors who want to prescribe pills. So it feels good that I am doing therapy in a way where the dignity of the person is respected throughout and I don’t have to be a school teacher or an authority or somebody who knows better and undermines their own view of things. I really think I am doing something good when I do these kinds of assessments and I feel like I’ve been in other situations where I have doubted whether or not what I have been forced to do is really good. Good in a way that is also in line with what I believe in as a person and as a human being. Like I’ve been at ________ Hospital where I have been put in a place where I have to be a teacher and a master and have felt like I have been part of a culture of separating yourself from the client and looking at them as a lesser or screwed up kind of being that we are here to solve and fix. That leaves me feeling a sense of distaste, you know and like I’m not being true to what I believe in. (TT1, pg. 15)

• T2: … Maybe that’s some sort of snappy way of summing up collaborative assessment: “It’s what the client says about the test not what the test says about the client.” Or something like that. I don’t know, that seemed to work. In that moment I was very grateful for the approach that we are trained in. [both laughed] I mean, maybe this conversation never would have happened if I hadn’t asked something about the test. It seems like if you were trained in just traditional assessment, I don’t know how you would respond to a client like this. I don’t know. I feel like if I really believe that these tests did give this label and that was sort of all there was to it I don’t know what I would have said to her. (TT2, pg. 7)

• R: You seem really excited by that, invigorated by that. T3: Yea, it’s watching an innate creative process that is entirely unique, so it’s pretty cool. R: How is it for you to be a part of that? T3: It’s exciting, it really is. I have to say, not just…, exciting doesn’t cover it. It’s really an honor, you know. It’s like if you were able to sit with Da Vinci as he’s…, you know, you’re with an artist almost. But not in a distant, removed way. You are watching something come to fruition before your eyes. (TT3, pg. 8-9)

• T4b: Yea, what I’m saying there is that he moved me from abstractions and conceptions to just the fact of how he experienced his life as a child and later on… The reason why I like it is just because I aspire to be very phenomenological in my therapy and so for him to have to force me to look that way was good
because I wouldn’t have noticed that I was drifting off into abstraction. (TT4b, pg. 10)
Appendixes C:
Participants’ Written Descriptions
**C1’s Written Description**

I couldn’t know what or who was waiting for me, though I suppose I had a rough idea of the context. I tried to foresee things. I never foresaw being asked to participate outside studies. Or write detailed descriptions of any of my sessions. That’s not a bad thing – it’s like homework.

I learned of and was recommended Duquesne’s program through the Employment Assistance Program, a service for which my employer agrees to cover the first three sessions. I was dissatisfied and feeling unfulfilled with work and hadn’t been playing well with others in the office. I thought I should look into it, so something about it. My first session at Duquesne was a relief, I was glad to get my troubles off my chest. We touched on several subjects, family, work, education, loneliness, and my sense of feeling out of place. I did most of the talking, but [T1] directed the subjects in a timely manner and I felt I was able to go into some depth without lingering too long on one issue. Near the end of our time we discussed the best way to proceed with the next session, which kind of assessments we should use. Neither of us preferred any written or “bubble test,” and we both felt we should do more “improvisational” work. I had already filled in one questionnaire and felt comfortable with the spontaneity. Too, I felt comfortable going with [T1]’s recommendation. I wanted to trust him and felt I could gain some insight of him based on what he brought to the table. I hadn’t asked many questions of him and was curious to know who I would be working with.

I was twenty minutes late for the assessment. I had difficulty getting out of the office, trying to finish up work. I called to say I was running late, and when I arrived, apologized. I remember [T1] was rather flush, his face was red, and his eyes were
bloodshot. I couldn’t tell if he was angry or maybe feeling unwell. It was something I noticed right off and it took me off-guard a bit. I made no mention of it, I was already late and disappointed to be, and felt perhaps he would explain the matter himself, which he never did. I thought this was curious and it made me a bit uneasy. (Later, he would cancel our third meeting because of illness.) Still, I felt alert and present, and we proceeded first with the Rorschach, and then a test whose name I would recognize if I heard, but cannot remember, which consisted of copying basic geometric lines, points, and shapes, it was a timed event.

I felt I appropriately described the pictures within the inkblots as they occurred to me in the moment. [T1] later told me during our review of the assessments that we had taken less than the average time to finish both. At the time, I didn’t feel as though I rushed through the Rorschach, I felt I was rather settled and engaged and moved ahead patiently. But perhaps that is not the case; I could very well have still been rushed from work. However, the geometric recreations I did speed through; I didn’t want to take the time to copy them exactly and diligently – I drew the gist of them, a bit childish, yet recognizable. I came home feeling skeptical and was curious to read some opinions of the Rorschach. I didn’t find any that were very complimentary; still, I was interested to hear the feedback.

The results generally ran parallel with the topics I had hit upon in our previous discussion. I remember I asked [T1] if he had learned anything new about me from the test, something we hadn’t discussed before? He didn’t answer that question. He did however give specifics of how what I saw and described within the images. It’s difficult to remember in great length of detail; I saw a coyote, Whirling Dervishes, people sitting
at a table, their hearts floating between them, I saw a city high in canyon walls
overlooking and across a river below, a Mardi gras costume, a Georgia O’Keefe
painting… At one point, when referring to some of the objects I saw, [T1] used the word
“anthropological.” I was pleased to hear that word. He said the scores showed someone
concerned with health, is intelligent, tends to remain withdrawn physically and
emotionally, and tries to reason objectively. In conclusion, [T1] defined three major
categories shaping my personality; as I understand it, they were concluded from the tests
and his personal opinion based on our previous discussion. Unfortunately, I can never
remember the third category, even after having already asked once to be reminded. The
two traits I do remember revolved around my liking to stir the pot or getting bored, and
my habit of withdrawing and keeping things at a distance. That sounded okay to me.
Regardless of my skepticism concerning the legitimacy of the test, I don’t regret taking
the Rorschach. I do feel my results would have varied had I been in a different mood that
day; I feel I learned more particularly about “how” I see, rather than anything new
concerning my personality. Most peculiar for me more than anything in the particular
university atmosphere in which everything has taken place, it feels institutional rather
than personal.
**C2’s Written Description**

In regard to my assessment experience, I felt that it was both successful and confusing at the same time. During the actual assessment, I’m not quite sure I understood what exactly was going to be the outcome, particularly with the MBTI, which I had much anxiety about – I will elaborate on that later in the essay. However, I felt perfectly comfortable taking the TAT, essentially I felt like that test was a successful experience. I suppose how I want to approach this is separate the tests and explain how I felt while taking them and how they related throughout my sessions.

First of all, I’ll explain my experience with the MBTI. I had negative feelings about this test from the start. I’ve had preconceived notions that this test was meant to take somebody’s answers and categorize that person as if they were a piece of paper going into a file. In fact, after I completed the test, I told [T2] very honestly that I did not want the results because if I did get an “I” for Introvert (If I’m remembering correctly, that is one of the possible results), then I didn’t want to feel like that was all I ever could be – introverted. So basically, my fear was that I would be limited by my results. However, [T2] eased my mind by explaining that for the purposes of this type of therapy, the MBTI is used in a way that it reveals what you think about yourself. Even with that information though, I still asked him to keep the results from me until a later date.

As far as the TAT goes, I could honestly say that I enjoyed taking this part of the assessment. At the time, I’m not sure I realized exactly how much my stories of the pictures were reflecting my own perspective in life. I think at that point I was enjoying the exercise of using my imagination and the control that I had over the stories of the characters in the pictures. In fact, at one point during the assessment I remember telling
[T2] how if I were a creative writing instructor I would use this method to help my students produce new ideas. Looking back on it, I can still remember a lot of the specific stories I created for the pictures.

For as much as I can say about my experience of actually taking the test, the fascinating part is how much the results played out in the rest of my sessions, particularly the results of the TAT. For example, there was one particular picture of two girls – one sitting quietly in a tree and one running down below the tree. The girl in the tree has an unhappy look on her face as she sees the other girl running by. Also, I should add that the girl in the tree is dressed neatly and the girl running below looks disheveled. For this card, I told a story of the quiet girl in the tree being unhappy because the girl below interrupted her; however, deep down inside she wishes she could be careless and wild like the girl running below. I’m not sure I could count how many times this card has come up during my sessions. As I began to see [T2] regularly, I noticed themes in my life that included being unhappy with myself, wishing I was something else, being scared of interruption, but yet welcoming it with all of the traveling I’ve done and still do. It’s like the interruption makes me feel careless in some way – the way the girl in the tree wanted to feel. And really, that’s just one example of how the themes in my life were played out through my TAT assessment – There are so many more examples where that came from.

I hope that this description has helped. I feel better about explaining the process now that I have written this. Honestly, I was feeling a bit nervous about writing it at first. I wasn’t sure what to write or what format you wanted it in or how to write it – those types of concerns. Once I started, it got easier, and I feel like I was pretty honest in my
writing. Now that I have some of it out on paper, if you need more description or more examples, let me know. Also, when we do the interview in person, I feel like talking about it will be less pressure than writing it.
C3’s Written Description

My name is [C3], and I have been going to counseling at Duquesne University since the middle of March 2009. My partner of ten years and I terminated our relationship, and as a result I had grown increasingly down and withdrawn. I was referred to Duquesne University by a friend and was happy to have found affordable help.

As much as I felt that I needed help, I was still apprehensive about going to therapy. I had not been to professional therapy in twenty years and have had less than helpful results from those visits. I was also afraid the prescription drugs were going to be pushed upon my treatment. I did not know what to expect, yet tried to keep an open mind in my search for help.

My initial visit was a nervous one. As I waited for the therapist to see me, I worked on a fill in the blank form that would be part of my assessment. I tried to stay honest and found it fairly fun to pick my brain for answers to questions that I don’t usually get asked. I remember thinking to myself that the therapist was going to think that I was crazy. An instant referral to a psych ward would ensue.

After the questionnaire, I was given a multiple choice scan tron test of maybe two hundred questions. It was tedious as I was having a hard time concentrating on much of anything at the moment. The third phase of the assessment consisted of the therapist showing me illustrations, and me constructing a story based upon the picture that I saw. I remember a man receiving bad news, a man contemplating a woman getting older, and someone looking out of the window at birds. I was surprised at how much of myself I saw in the pictures. As much as I tried not to, I was relating to most of the illustrations.
In conclusion, the assessment was fairly painless. I often look forward to my continuous visits and am grateful to be learning to use the tools that I need to carry on with my growth.
C4’s Written Description

I first came to the Psychology Clinic looking for an inexpensive (and local) way to vent my frustrations and stress throughout the school week. For a long time up to and including my assessment, I had mainly been tackling the heartache of a lost love, whose presence in my life had anything but depleted. Having been in therapy more than once before the Clinic, I knew that some sort of evaluation was in order.

I was not anxious about being assessed, since I not only had experience with it, but also do not mind wearing my heart on my sleeve. I admit, I rather like being assessed. It provides a kind of checkpoint, if one will, for me to see where I am (from a different perspective). I was not thinking too much about where therapy was headed, since I just wanted to have someone to talk to. Being a commuter student, it is hard enough to make friends, let alone ones I can talk to on a regular basis. I do not recall having any expectations, with perhaps the exception of feeling some relief in talking about my obstacle. I noticed on at least one occasion that by simply talking about my life, I was seeing some recurring themes. The most notable of which, were the flash cards with pictures.

[T4a], my therapist, had told the week before that he would be showing me some flash cards with pictures: all I had to do was explain what I saw was happening in the picture. I was excited about taking part in this specific analysis because I had never done anything like it in the past. All of the previous assessments were through talking only (which is fine, but it becomes a bore after a while). As I began to examine them, I saw some repetition in the subject matter, which I figured was a reflection of my own (inner) life. Multiple times I saw heartache, confusion, and sadness and my plight was never
clearer to me than at that point. My heartbrokenness had been steering every aspect of who I thought I was. I knew then what [T4a] and I had to work on.

I left the assessments feeling hopeful. That if I, as the patient, am willing to put forth the effort to go through the fire (metaphorically speaking), and [T4a], as the therapist, is willing to help me through it, then there was an excellent chance that I could take something from the sessions out into the world with me. The coming weeks could not come fast enough!

Thus we began meeting on a regular basis. I remember that well after the assessment was finished, in the sessions that would follow, [T4a] would always say “What I’m hearing is…” in reference to whatever topic we were discussing. The situation worked itself out to the point where, as I talked out my problems, he was something of an objective state that saw my circumstances for what they really were—on some level—regardless of whatever positions I had on the matters. This awareness left me with a sense of reassurance that what I was participating in was well worth the time the assessments took.

Looking back on the assessment process, I am glad I went through it, otherwise [T4a] might not have had the background he needed in order to help me. Sometimes it was a little monotonous, but like most things in life, one needs to wade through some stuff so that one may travel farther down the road and onto to better things. Ultimately, I cannot say that I would change anything about the process at all, but would prefer to keep it the same.
C5’s Written Description

I do think I was informed that the assessment was going to take place in the previous weeks’ session. I really didn't give it much thought through my week nor on my way to that particular appointment. I like tests and was hoping to have some fun, unfortunately it proved to be very much the standard kind of ask several questions in many different ways type test. I was a bit disappointed in that.

The answering of the questions got to be a bit boring as it was quite lengthy. I don't recall how long it took or if there was any conversation about it when I had finished.

Unfortunately I don't recall in my next appointment discussions of it or the results of it. I am sorry to be so vague about that, but it really didn't make that much of an impression on me.
T1’s Written Description

During the intake with [C1] I had asked him to think of questions about himself that could guide us in the assessment. Theoretically, I like this idea, but I always feel weary that when we do the assessment the questions will not have been answered or even been illuminated by the time we are done. Proceeding this way is like making a promise which I do not know if I can keep and I guess it makes me more nervous about conducting the assessment. This general nervousness is a constant background feeling for me during a collaborative assessment. Since the assessment process is open-ended and relies very much on my own attunement to and thoughts about my interaction with the client or the client’s interaction with whatever test I am administering, there is always a chance that my own lack of ideas or failure to observe any patterns will create an embarrassing “lack of insight” or lack of knowledge about how to proceed. It is difficult to plan and remain in control throughout a collaborative assessment since one has to rely on the events of the moment to inspire a thought, invite an insight, show a pattern, and so forth, and there is thus always a sense in me that the assessment can be a failure. Looking back, however, I don’t know if I can say it really ever has been a failure, but the fear is always there.

When I asked [C1] to share his questions about himself with me, I remember having a really difficult time pinpointing what his problem really was. I felt a slight nervousness, as I struggled in my own mind to formulate what he was really saying in a poignant way that could serve as a focus for the assessment, not knowing if I could really pull it off. In such situations when I don’t quite have the control and don’t know if my mind will be able to come up with something to say, I think I start to feel slightly
nervous, which I then become very conscious of concealing to the client. A lot of the times when such uncertainties arise in an assessment I experience a gap between my public and my private self. I am aware of presenting a calm front yet I feel stressed and slightly panicked inside.

In a typical assessment, I tend to feel stressed and a little overwhelmed by all the things I need to keep track of. In this particular assessment, not only did I have to remember the procedure of how to administer the Rorschach, which I hadn’t done for quite a while, I also had to time the activity, pay attention to the process that was going on as the client did the Rorschach and even find time to jot down a description of his clothes, facial features and posture, which I knew I would need in order to be able to complete the “client’s appearance and comportment” part of the intake.

Sometimes, as was the case in this particular assessment, my lack of certainty about how to proceed in a particular instance procedures in me a somewhat frantic need to latch onto any thought or question that emerges and which I therefore welcome as relief from the anxiety that I would not have anything to ask at all. In most assessments, I have a constant battle with the possibility of silence or vacuity in my mind. Fortunately most of the time, thoughts do occur that I can share and use as a way to further my information gathering about the person.

In my assessment I do have certain principles in mind that tends to structure the uncertainty of not knowing if we can make the assessment work. These serve as my comfort throughout.

First of all, my mind is constantly proceeding inductively from the little things that are done or demonstrated by a client to more general principles. I try to latch onto
any inductive datum that strikes me. With [C1] I noticed that he was very quickly done with the assignment, that he seemed non-chalant about it as he didn’t really bother to count the dots or make things accurate on the Bender-Gestalt, and that he seemed to use different strategies with different figures (sometimes counting and sometimes not, for example). From these little things, my mind then goes on overdrive to try to come up with how what I observe can be relevant in terms of “life,” that is, how I can abstract a “way of living” from them. This, I think is the major cognitive struggle and effort for me during a collaborative assessment. When it fails, I will simply ask the client to tell me about his strategies and then proceed from that instead of my own observations.

Secondly, I tend to use Connie’s rule of always asking for examples of “a time when” and a time “when not” in order to root the abstract in the concrete.

These cognitive strategies tend to work very well, the former oftentimes to my own amazement.

When questions do occur to me that lead us somewhere or when in fact I do perceive a pattern in the client’s method of copying the bender-gestalt designs which open up new connections for him and for me, I feel relief, but also competent for having seen “it” or suggested “it,” akin perhaps to the Magician who succeeds at pulling out a rabbit from a hat which nobody suspected had a rabbit in it. It almost never fails that due to all of these connections which we form in a given assessment, I leave the assessments with a sense of accomplishment and of having given my clients something to take with them. This is very gratifying. I tend to feel really good about what we have produced together, tend to think that the client has been surprised by all the new things he or she has learned about him/herself and tend to feel like the client now respects me and thinks
he or she can get something out of therapy. I oftentimes think that the collaborative assessment is what first “hooks” the client on therapy and gives them hope that they can benefit from it.

In general I also feel very proud to be part of a way of doing assessments which empowers and collaborates with the client rather than teaches, tells, and judges. It makes me feel good about myself since it gives me a way to live out humanistic values which I believe in and identify with. Through collaborative assessment I cement or reinforce an identity which I already have and which includes respect for the client as a fellow human being and not a “diagnosis” and discomfort with too much of a power distance between me as clinician and them as clients. This is not a philosophical pride, but a very concrete sense throughout an assessment that I am one of the “good guys.”

After the assessment, I write up my scattered notes around themes which sometimes seem almost “banal.” I sometimes worry that they will be too banal and that they won’t really tell the client much new. However, it seems to be that what is the closest to us is often the farthest away and I don’t think I have ever had the experience of a client who wasn’t somehow fascinated by hearing me read my themes to them full of little details from the assessment cited as supporting evidence. In this particular session, I remembered being very nervous about sharing certain parts of the supportive evidence, which in this case involved touching upon some scores from the Rorschach which indicated that he had certain narcissistic trends. As I was reading my themes to [C1] I found myself skipping the more uncomfortable data from the Rorschach in order not to make him feel hurt or defensive. I thought about whether or not to push him a bit more, but ultimately could not bring myself to do it. There was plenty of material so share with
him and I didn’t have time to share it all and still allow time for feedback/discussion, so I chose to omit the more uncomfortable parts.
**T2’s Written Description**

What were some of your thoughts, feelings and expectations going into the assessment?

As a third year student, I have given enough assessments that I generally feel confident going into an assessment session. I think I set aside about 30-45 minutes before the assessment session to think about what instruments I wanted to use. Usually I give one paper and pencil test and one projective test. I usually give the MMPI-2 or the PAI to patients who I suspect might have severe psychopathology (or if I think their diagnostic picture is especially confusing or complex). With [C2], however, I had already written the intake report, so I already had a relatively clear sense that her DSM diagnosis would mainly involve anxiety -- nothing on Axis II. As a result, I felt free to consider using paper and pencil tests other than the MMPI-2 and the PAI. I would usually choose the 16PF in this situation, but I chose instead to use the Myers-Briggs mainly because I had never given it to a client before and was interested in trying it out. I also thought it might be helpful for both me and [C2] in giving us a sense of how her symptoms of anxiety might be related to broader personality structures. I chose the TAT as my projective test because it's a test that I have found to be incredibly helpful with past clients. There are several clients for whom their TAT responses have served as touchstones to which we return throughout the therapy. I thought the TAT might especially yield a lot of material from AM because based on our intake interview, she seemed especially open and articulate.
What parts of the assessment and feedback session stood out the most for you and what were these moments like for you?

During the assessment session, I remember being struck by [C2]'s comment toward the end of our session that she did not want to know her personality type based on the MBTI. At the time, I wasn't sure what exactly to make of this comment, but suspected that it had something to do with not wanting to be fixed, not wanting to be anything in particular (this has turned out to be an important theme for [C2], who fears that inertia would set in if she settled down).

Additionally, two themes stuck out the most for me from her TAT responses: 1) interruption of peacefulness and 2) her tendency to create pairs even where there were none in the cards.

In terms of specific cards, our discussion of 9GF (the "rivalry card") was especially striking for the way in which the two girls seemed to represent different parts of herself that were not integrated -- her conservative side and her wild side. The discussion of Card 2 was also especially fruitful in eliciting important material concerning her family dynamics and her guilt about leaving home.

In general, I felt engaged during the assessment session; I was pleased with how much material the session had elicited, and I felt confident based on [C2]'s level of
engagement that she was an excellent candidate for psychotherapy.

What were your impressions upon leaving the assessment and feedback session?

During the feedback session, I felt somewhat embarrassed for having taken so long to write her a letter sharing my impressions. I worried that the assessment session was so long ago that it wouldn't make much of a difference. I also worried that it was a distraction from our work together, an interruption in the rhythm that our work had assumed. It felt artificial.

I felt like it was productive, however, because the theme of interruption which I noticed during the assessment session (but which I had not yet shared) had taken on a certain significance in our work together independent of the assessment (particularly in the sense that [C2] felt like her birth had interrupted her parents' lives -- particularly her mom's life). Initially, [C2]'s reaction to my letter was fatalistic -- the fact that my interpretations of the tests corresponded in some way with our work together in regular sessions made her feel doomed to repeat these patterns forever. Ultimately, I got the impression that through our discussion [C2] was able to accept some of the themes I mentioned without feeling determined by them.

What it is like for you thinking back on your assessment experience now?

I feel like our assessment session was so long ago that it's difficult to remember many of the details. I feel like it's helpful to be reminded of the session; for example, I
hadn't thought recently about the theme of interruption. However, I also wonder in retrospect how important the assessment was with this particular client (and in general). With other clients, we have often returned to the assessment throughout the therapy. For [C2], I feel that the assessment session mainly functioned as a way to elicit material at the beginning of our work that may not have come up otherwise. I see it more as a foundation for our ongoing work together, but not as an integral part of it in the present.
T3’s Written Description

When I first started doing psychological assessment as a first year student, I often felt apologetic about the amount of what seemed to me to be a great deal of ambiguous and, at times, irrelevant material that I was asking my clients to work though when they clearly had other things they wanted to talk about. Many had come to the Clinic, as people often do when they have reached the point of wanting to talk to someone, in a state of felt crisis and were anxious to begin the difficult process of talking about their pain to a complete stranger. However, over the past three years, I have come to truly appreciate and respect the collaborative assessment process and the fruit it can bear. It has become something of an adventure where I can embark on a journey with my clients to help find meaning and metaphor for their experience that can also help shape their process of healing.

Having had several very positive experiences using collaborative assessment in the past, I was prepared, upon meeting with [C3], to actively entertain that possibility of a good assessment experience with him. I invited and facilitated this in our discussion at the end of our initial intake session. As we were arranging a time to do the assessment, I told him that the process was in no way a kind of “me figuring him out” from test results, but rather that we would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context of his own experience. I also told him that the assessment process offered the chance for both of us to hold and work with some representations, images, or metaphors for what he was experiencing at the present time in his life. [C3] seemed to me to be very agreeable to this and open to the process.
On the day of the assessment, [C3] was a bit early, so Linda gave him the Sentence Completion II to fill out while he was waiting. When I arrived, I gave him the P.A.I. and waited for him to finish before working with him on the TAT. While he was working on the P.A.I., I used the time to review my notes from the intake session, his initial paperwork, his SCLR-90, his phone screening, and his responses to the Sentence Completion. Immediately following the TAT, we discussed some of his and my impressions of the stories he came up with in the cards in relation to his own life. It would be fair to say that I had begun to form my own impressions of [C3]’s life history and the immediate surface layers of his suffering when I met with him to go through the TAT. As he worked through each of the cards, he offered descriptions that were both similar to those that I had heard before and also entirely unique to him. Many of them seemed to highlight his own longings, dreams, and struggles but these meanings seemed to be elusive or opaque to him. To me they seemed to jump from the stories and I felt an excitement, a sadness, and a deep emotional connection to him through these stories.

One particularly poignant story that came to have particular significance him was #16 or “the white card.” I often feel a bit sheepish about presenting this card to clients after a series of picture cards because I imagine that they might think I am trying to trick them. When I first saw this card in my intro to assessment class, I felt both excited and a bit intimidated by the card’s possibilities. However, [C3] did not seem to be taken aback at all when I presented this card. He paused for a few moments and then said with conviction, “This is snow or fog, probably fog. It’s over the road and you can’t see in front of you. Your not sure whether to turn on the wind shield wipers. You can’t see in front of you, hopefully you don’t get hit in the back.” When we discussed his response to
this card later, he related the card both literally to the kind of fog that comes in from the Gulf of Mexico in ___________, the place where he met his ex-girlfriend and who has recently broken off their ten year relationship, and metaphorically to a kind of “mental fog” that he has been feeling in his life where he feels like he is “waiting to get rear ended.” He has found himself following familiar, routine paths that are comforting to try to stave off the feelings he has of impending disaster. We were able to use this seemingly ambiguous card to specifically point to a metaphor that [C3] could work with in his life. We discussed the idea of the sun coming out to burn off this fog so he could see more clearly what he wants for himself. We related his effort in coming to therapy and his process of self-reflection to the sun beginning to emerge for him in his understandings for his life. We both seemed to gather around these images and metaphors to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now. Somehow, even the act of naming this metaphor of fog seemed to draw in the image of the sun shining.

I felt excited about the discovery he had made in this session. I felt impressed and awed by [C3]’s own unique capacity to gravitate towards and create meaning and healing in his life. I had the sense that I was there to facilitate and witness an organic process that [C3] was reaching for in the very act of coming to therapy and the attitude through which he approached the assessment materials. He was and is open to it. He really wants to understand himself. He wants to not hurt but he is not interested in sidestepping the work of going through his pain. The assessment process provided a vehicle to catalyze his effort. It provided an opportunity for there to be something “out there” that we could both see and work with. It also strengthened the bonds of trust and alliance in our
relationship as we find ways to communicate in this shared journey towards his understanding and healing.

I imagine that [C3] and I will continue to explore and learn from the assessment work and we may decide to return to these tools again in our work to examine what changes might be coming up for him. Thinking back over the process for me, I feel that the assessment experience provided the opportunity for us begin to underline a shared project. I developed a strong sense of faith in [C3] and his own unique process towards healing. I also developed an idea of what I could do to help him along the way. As we continue to move through our work together, it will become increasingly important for him to know that I believe in him and, in turn, this will help concretize his belief in himself. The assessment process, early on in the work, provided a great stage for this to begin.
**T4a’s Written Description**

What were some of your thoughts, feelings, and expectations going into the assessment?

I don’t recall.

What parts of the assessment and feedback session stood out the most for you and what were these moments like for you? What were your impressions upon leaving the assessment and feedback session?

He was bouncing his leg as he talked, fast-paced and heady, very little eye contact: who is he talking to? Discussion of MMPI: Talks first of sleep problems. Hard to sit still: can’t sit through most movies; paces about when he writes a paper. I was becoming aware of his energy, getting a feel for how he is/exists “on edge”. He distinguishes between fear and anxiety, the latter which he suffers from involves not knowing what he is afraid of. I may have wondered what place philosophical discussion would have in the therapy (he’s a philosophy major).

In talking about his DAF, I was surprised by how much (as a young man) his identity seemed to be based in his family. Later when discussing the TAT, he mentioned that his “mother was [his] playmate as a child.” I was getting the impression from other statements he made that his parents didn’t want to let him go and that he didn’t want to leave, or rather that they were all ambivalent about his growing up.

For TAT card 1, he said that knowing what playing well entails he’s inclined to sit around and contemplate rather than play. I found this hopeful in that at least he seemed to be aware of intellectualization as a defense and anticipate the difficulty of therapy.
At different points of the assessment we touched on him being a loner and seeing himself as deeper or more serious than most. I was tuning into how this was true as well as what this stance might cover over.

**What it is like for you thinking back on your assessment experience now?**

I’m struck by how consistent my initial impressions of his issues are eight months later. It’s also nice to reflect back and see how far he’s come.
**T4b’s Written Description**

What were some of your thoughts, feelings, and expectations going into the assessment?

What parts of the assessment and feedback session stood out the most for you and what were these moments like for you?

*Because this is retrospective I’m emphasizing content over process--that’s what I have more of in my notes.*

I felt bad for not having better informing him in the intake that the next time he came in that he would be taking a multiple choice test (PAI) and that we wouldn’t have much time to talk. He seemed disappointed when I let him know that was the plan. He started filling out the form at a slow pace, which I took as not really wanting to do it. He sped up after a little while. When I asked him how it was taking the test he said “most of that stuff I’ll tell you anyway” (in other words, it was unnecessary)…“I know the issues that came from my father…”

He shared a lot about himself in talking about his DAP: anger at women, work ethic, that his violent father caused him to become very attentive to others, including being a good listener. I felt in the process that we had good rapport.

A paradox that in some ways he tries to be inconspicuous (like drawing himself small in the corner of the page) but at the same time has a passion for wearing nice clothes and driving nice cars. I felt intrigued.

His response to TAT card 13MF was to give four options for what had happened. I wondered how this spoke to his relation to women.
About TAT card 1 that if the kid sticks with it, he’ll get better. Because this card can reveal something about people’s impression of therapy I took it as a very hopeful sign.

I was impressed as he described (responding to card 14) that he likes to open the window and gaze at the stars or clouds…described doing so from a house on the ocean. I was glad that he could appreciate such experiences. And I found it interesting the way the conversation went to dogs looking out the window, how he has good intuition into what dogs want at a given time, how people don’t seem to read/hear his wants even when he speaks up. I was impressed by how important being listened to is for him, that he provides it for others but doesn’t find people are interested in really listening to him. I thought that our therapy would be good for him.

When I asked what questions he had as a child in response to his home being unsafe. He said that questions like “why me?” come later on in life. I liked that he was pulling me out of psychodynamic thinking into his experience of childhood.

What were your impressions upon leaving the assessment and feedback session?

Generally, I felt that we were deepening our relationship (building rapport) and that I was rapidly learning more about him. And I was grateful for his honesty. I had the impression that we were on a good track in exploring the relationship issues he brought with him.
What it is like for you thinking back on your assessment experience now?

It’s nice to return to some of the stories and imagery of that assessment over a year later when I feel that I know him pretty well…a feeling of open-heartedness.
Appendixes D:
Video Summaries of Assessment Segments used in Interviews
Summary of Videotape Segments viewed with T1 and C1

Segment 1 – (9 minutes, 11 seconds) while administering the Rorschach. There wasn’t much collaboration in the rest of the administration.
T1: “Questions about yourself…?”
C1: Discusses anger issues, feelings of entitlement, playing the victim a bit.
T1: “Examples of being angry?”
C1: Discusses lack of energy of other people at a concert recently, cultural aspects of [the city], misdirected anger, not liking the city.
T1: “Entitlement…”
C1: “Younger co-workers…one girl in particular, had fooled around a bit.”
T1: “Playing the victim…”
C1: Discusses coming here, not liking the city, fishing for compliments but don’t know how to take them, don’t give too many compliments either.
T1: “Use this as a guide to try to find some concrete answers, not sure if we will.”

Segment 2 – (1 minute, 56 seconds) during the feedback session.
T1 gives C1 feedback about being “guarded,” “emotionally distant,” “intellectual,” and provides some interpretations based on “form” responses.
C1: “I think I cry more than most guys.” [Laughs, then a few moments of silence]
T1 takes notes.

Segment 3 – (3 minutes, 39 seconds) during the feedback session, begins 10 seconds following from videotape segment 2.
T1 offers an alternative explanation/interpretation: “You are in touch with your negative feelings” and “painful introspection.” [more complimentary in style]
C1: “Said before, I don’t know how to take compliments.”
T1: “Mmhm” then gives a specific example of a response: “valley or canyon with a town at the top…ability to see yourself perspectivally…typically negative feelings about one’s self.”
C1 relates content to his life, makes comparisons to his family.
T1: “What painful things do you tend to ruminate about?”
C1: “Loneliness…family…mother…how that permeates through the whole family…”

Segment 4 – (3 minutes, 40 seconds) during the feedback session, about 14 minutes after segment 3.
T1: “Possible preoccupation with health: body, bones, x-ray…feeling frail or unsafe?”
C1 says he is pretty physically healthy, but has some dental concerns about an overbite.
T1 asks if he is concerned about the health of people around him, like his family.
C1 discusses concern about his mom’s mental health and wanting to get help for her or have her get help for herself.

Segment 5 – (1 minute, 40 seconds) during the feedback session, 45 seconds after segment 4.
T1: “Not a lot of popular responses.”
C1: “Went home and researched the test…didn’t give any sexual responses.”
T1 asks if he has any thoughts or feelings about sex
C1: “Repressing?... I like it, haven’t had too many partners, last girlfriend wasn’t very passionate.”
T1: “Consider yourself to be passionate?”
C1: “Yea, I’ve gone skinny dipping.”

Segment 6 – (1 minute, 23 seconds) during the feedback session, directly following from segment 5.
T1 gives feedback about him thinking outside the box, being anti-authoritarian, wanting to do things his own way
C1: “Yea, I agree with that. But on the flip side if someone were to take the lead, be passionate and push me to do things I would be right there. But that has never really happened…like if someone were an expert in their field I would listen to their opinion…in general I’m an iconoclast, rebel, hard ass.”

Segment 7 – (1 minute, 52 seconds) during the feedback session, about 9 minutes after segment 6.
T1: “It seems like you have no longing for affection, like affection is lacking from your life, you have no conscious wish for it.”
C1: “Oh no, I don’t know about that. I don’t want to die alone, want to know that I’m capable of being loved…Maybe that could mean, could relate to how I am not good at taking compliments. I never let others or myself enjoy my accomplishments, particularly rites of passage, like graduation, didn’t walk at it either. I’m not into all the pomp and circumstance. Professors tell me, “let your parents have this one,” but I didn’t want to.”

Segment 8 – (2 minutes, 18 seconds) during the feedback session, directly following from segment 7.
T1: “Using anthropological or art references suggesting you use intellectualization quite a bit to distance yourself from your feelings or interpersonal intimacy.”
C1: “Yea” [sits up and looks down] begins “referencing,” then notices himself doing this and points it out… “Don’t know if I could wrap my head around that.”

Segment 9 – (2 minutes) during the feedback session, directly following from segment 8.
T1: “Did you find it helpful?”
C1: [Does not answer T1’s question] “My question would be did you find it helpful? Did you find out things that you didn’t get from talking to me?”
T1: “That’s always a question…I’ll summarize, give us things to talk about, try to come up with recommendations…”
T1 and C1 finish up by discussing the cost of therapy (session fee) v. frequency of sessions and came to a compromise by reducing the session fee.
Summary of Videotape Segments viewed with T2 and C2

Segment 1 – (50 seconds) during the administration of the assessment, about 1 minute after entering the room.
T2 provides explanation of the tests and assessment: “Think of them as points of departure for conversation, not a crystal ball. They don’t give us any special insight into your personality. They are just tools for bringing up certain issues that we maybe wouldn’t get to otherwise… I will write up the results in a letter, have you sign it. You will be involved in the entire process.”

Segment 2 – (1 minute, 13 seconds) during the administration of the TAT, about 7 minutes after segment 1.
T2: “How do you think it will end?”
C2: “She will leave…”
T2: “How do you suppose the two on the right would feel about her leaving?”
C2: “They are busy with their own things. They would care but not too much.”

Segment 3 – (4 minutes, 22 seconds) during the administration of the TAT, about 4 minutes after segment 2.
C2: “I’ve had initial reactions to all of them… not sure where they are, a canyon. Oh, she’s in a tree… Peacefulness… Frustration… One is dressed conservatively and the other less conservatively… She had her day interrupted, but is wondering what the other girl’s life is like. She is a crazy girl, running around interrupting other people’s days.”

Segment 4 – (9 minutes, 50 seconds) conversation following administration of the assessment, about 23 minutes after segment 4.
C2 discusses her anxiety about taking tests
T2 explains the uses of the tests, validates that people are different in different situations, a “snap shot” of where you are right now.
C2: “I don’t want to know my personality type.”
T2 provides an empathetic statement about her feeling self-conscious.
C2: “I don’t want to hear that I’m introverted or rigid.”
T2: “We don’t have to, but if I was to…” provides more explanation and comforting, “We don’t have to.”
C2 explains how a career counselor at school said employers use it to place you.
T2: “We use it for different purposes… not for placing,” more explanation, “No label being stamped…” He goes on to explain collaborative assessment.

Segment 5 – (4 minutes, 41 seconds) during TAT read back portion – unique technique
T2 incorporates where he reads back the assesses’ TAT responses to them and then has them respond to each one. T2 had just read back her response to card 2 to her.
C2 talks about movies imitating life and vice versa
T2 relates this to the usefulness of the TAT and how it works, asks her to relate the card to her life.
C2 complies an discusses her family dynamics, “I can relate this to myself.”
Segment 6 – (3 minutes, 10 seconds) during TAT read back portion, about 3 minutes after segment 5.
C2 continues discussing her family dynamics, her parents.
T2: “Key insight.”
C2 cries
T2 comforts and contains her but encourages further work in this area during their ongoing work together.

Segment 7 – (9 minutes, 42 seconds) during TAT read back portion, about two minutes after segment 6. T2 just read her from card 9GF (rivalry card) back to her.
C2 discusses the conservative versus the wild sides of herself and how she saw them in the girls in the picture. She talks about dating her ex-boyfriend, who was wild, and how she got disorganized and began dating school.
T2 reflects this back to her and interprets it.
C2 discusses how her conservative side works well and is effective.
T2 reflects her fear and curiosity back to her.
C2 discusses her curiosity about her wild side.
T2 talks about how their work could focus on helping her with that decision without letting “neurotic factors” like anxiety get in the way.
C2 discusses how people are more attracted to wild people.
T2 relates to this using a Simpson’s TV show metaphor comparing two of the characters: Bart and Lisa.
C2 seems unsure at first, but then says, “Exactly.” She contemplates if she was dating her boyfriend because wild is attractive to her. She says being too conservative makes her feel like a “loser.”
T2 discusses the possibility of having both on the horizon.

Segment 8 – (1 minute, 32 seconds) during the feedback session, about 16 minutes after entering the room.
T2: “There seems to be something about committing to one thing that makes you feel dull.”
C2: “Yea”
T2: “Remind you of anything?”
C2: “I don’t know what to do with my life…and the dull routine of my mother. I wish I had a female role model, mom never blossomed, I feel stifled, like I’m not going to become what I should become.”

Segment 9 – (3 minutes, 27 seconds) during the feedback session, about 15 minutes after segment 8.
C2: “The whole start of this conversation was the fact that I start something, I love it, then I hate it.” She relates it to her mom and her own lack of self-confidence.
T2 gives examples of a “quitter” and a “little girl.”
C2: “I’m afraid that I’m not going to blossom, that that is going to happen to me.”
T2: “Your mom hasn’t quit her marriage. You are trying to avoid that situation.”
C2: “I don’t want her to quit it. I just want to see her do something.”
T2: “What would it mean for you if she could do something?”
C2: I would be more “at ease, lighter, secure. I wouldn’t have to worry about her.”
Summary of Videotape Segments viewed with T3 and C3

Segment 1 – (1 minute, 20 seconds) during the administration of the TAT, about 12 minutes after entering the room. Client was just shown the #16 white card.
C3: “It’s either snow or fog…” He goes on to elaborate a bit and both laugh afterward.

Segment 2 – (55 seconds) administration of the TAT ends at the beginning of this clip, about 6 minutes after segment 1.
T3 explains the assessment again and how it helps their work together.
C3 downplays his responses and interpretations as “stupid.”
T3 normalizes and comforts him.

Segment 3 – (1 minute, 20 seconds) during discussion following administration of the TAT, about 5 seconds after segment 2.
T3: “First impressions? Connections?”
C3 relates the card with the woman staring out the window to his own thinking and worrying about his grandmother who has Alzheimer’s. T3 and C3 discuss this.
C3 said he also noticed himself staring out the window and daydreaming a lot lately and relates this to another card. After explaining how those two cards stood out for him he said, “I saw myself in all of them though.”
T3 points out his ability to find meaning in the cards and stories.

Segment 4 – (4 minutes, 40 seconds) during discussion following administration of the TAT, directly following segment 3.
T3: “I’m just wondering about the card with the girl and the guy.”
C3: “I could relate to it but not sure if I thought I completely thought it was us (ex-girlfriend or T3?), but connected to it. I couldn’t tell where [the people in the card] were, place the context, it bothers me.”
T3 pulls out that card and they look at it again together.
C3 elaborates a bit about what the woman in the card might be comforting the man about, possibly her admitting cheating.
T3 explains how the TAT works again and how it is helpful.
C3 continues to elaborate.
T3 ties in an emotional “feeling” theme.
C3 and T3 both discuss a “dawning” or “an awakening point”
C3 makes a connection and leads to discussion of the next card.

Segment 5 – (9 minutes) during discussion following administration of the TAT, directly following after segment 4.
T3 congratulates C3 for giving a good response and doing well with the #16 all white card.
C3 laughs and discusses growing up around a lot of fog in the place he grew up on a bay. He talks about how hard the fog makes it to see and the problems it causes, like car accidents.
T3 empathizes with how scary that is and discusses it as a metaphor for his life.
C3 agrees and elaborates about how it gets overwhelming.
T3 and C3 discuss the car accident metaphor.  
T3 discusses how coming to therapy is like protecting himself from an accident.  
C3 discussed having difficulty doing things out of his routine, but forcing himself to try new things because it helps to facilitate change.  
T3 points out his curiosity as an asset as well.  
C3 talks about how trying new things usually works out well, but also how it is easy to stay comfortable with routine. He also discusses how it is tough to deal with feelings that were stuffed away for years.  
T3 empathizes and encourages and says, “if you do something three times it is a habit.”  
C3 talks about being more aware of his surroundings coming in that day than he was before because the last time he was more caught up with figuring out where he was going and didn’t take time to look around and notice things.  
T3 and C3 go on to discuss how this experience stirred up things for them to work on in their work together, which C3 admits needing.  
T3 emphasizes working together and building on the things that were brought up, as well as the benefit of having something “out there” for them to work on together.
Summary of Videotape Segments viewed with T4a and C4

Segment 1 – (1 minute, 5 seconds) begins as they enter the room to begin a portion of the assessment (Draw a Family).
T4a: “Am I reading you wrong or do you seem agitated?” Then quickly points out that it is “alright” if he is.
C4 denies this.
T4a points out how he could be both agitated and not agitated and explains how he got the impression. He then says that he should have just asked instead of assuming.

Segment 2 – (6 minutes, 10 seconds) just after C4 finishes his drawing and T4a reviews it for a few moments, about 8 minutes after segment 1.
T4a: “I forgot to tell you to draw yourself.”
C4 draws himself in the picture and says, “That was easy.”
T4a points out that he started drawing himself in the middle of his family then changed his mind and drew himself on the outside. He then asks, “What do you make out of that?”
C4: “That I kind of perceive myself as an outsider…” and explains.
T4a sneezes and C4 gives him a Kleenex.
T4a gives his interpretation (similar to C4’s) and asks for more elaboration.
C4 complies, loses his train of thought as one point, and then discusses individuating from his parents before ending with, “That’s the best way I can explain it.” There is a long pause during which he cracks his knuckles.
T4a writes in his notebook, then reflects content back to C4 and normalizes by saying it’s “a natural thing.”

Segment 3 – (1 minute) toward the end of discussion of C4’s drawing, about 6 minutes after segment 2.
C4 talks about if he could make the figures in the drawing move, “I would be walking off the page, searching for something they [my family] can’t give me.”

Segment 4 – (3 minutes, 50 seconds) during discussion of TAT responses, about 3 or 4 minutes after segment 3.
T4a points out C4’s response to one of the cards and asks him if he has had a back injury (based on the content of the response).
C4: “No, but I was the accident.”
T4a asks about this.
C4 explains, discusses having older siblings, how his birth was not planned and how “my mother was my playmate.” He goes on to discuss being in a group versus being by himself and ends with, “I forgot what I wanted to say.”

Segment 5 – (1 minute, 25 seconds) during discussion of TAT responses, about 10 minutes after segment 4. C4 had just finished discussing his struggles with philosophy class, feeling picked apart after getting papers back.
T4a responds, empathizes and normalizes by discussing his experiencing as “hazing,” and a necessary step in his growing process. He then asks C4 how that was for him to hear. C4 said it was “great,” and that he appreciates the feedback.

**Segment 6** – (1 minute, 20 seconds) while discussing MMPI results, about 2 minutes after segment 5. T4a points out how the results go along with what C4 already said about himself. C4 says he likes to think of himself as a “consistent thinker.” T4a then points out as a “Buddhist Koan” how the results say he was “inconsistent” in his responses. T4a and C4 discuss this and T4a normalizes it by pointing out that it could be due to the “nuances” that the test had difficulty picking up or distinguishing.

**Segment 7** – (35 seconds) at the very end of their session as they are getting up to leave the room, directly following after segment 6. C4: “One more thing…” then pulls out several self-help tests for anxiety he took online and gives them to T4a.
Summary of Videotape Segments viewed with T4b and C5

**Segment 1** – (5 minutes) during administration of the Draw a Person, about 6 minutes after entering the room.

T4b: “What kind of psychological insights do you think we could pull from these drawings?”
C5: “The only thing differentiating between male and female is the hair…I don’t know, it is kind of non-descript.”
T4b: “That is kind of paradoxical because you told me before that you don’t see men and women as too similar.”
C5: “Chemicals inside make us different.”
T4b: “Some differences?”
C5: “Men think logically, women react emotionally. Women create problems, men solve them. Women like to talk but they don’t want to listen. I had to be a good listener growing up. People don’t listen to me, they talk over me.”

**Segment 2** – (2 minutes, 15 seconds) during administration of the Draw a Person, following directly from segment 1.

T4b: “You only used this corner. What do you make out of that?”
C5: “Not wanting to be noticed, wanting to disappear.”
T4b: “Do you think that ties back to being quiet?”
C5: “Yes”
T4b: “To use the whole page would be too loud.”
C5: “Yea”
T4b: “You did it quickly.”
C5: “I can’t draw, was embarrassed.”

**Segment 3** – (2 minutes, 55 seconds) during administration of the Draw a Person, following directly from segment 2.

T4b: “Do you have any other examples in your life where you take that approach?”

C5: “Interesting, there are a lot of contradictions in that. I love to drive this [certain car] and everyone notices, it’s not inconspicuous. I love shoes too. Grandma was stylish, a dress maker.”
T4b: “The things you are bad at you want to hide and you want to show off what you are good at.”
C5: “Yea, I’m good at a lot, but bad at drawing and suck at singing.”

**Segment 4** – (2 minutes, 15 seconds) while discussing C5’s responses to the TAT, about 8 minutes after segment 3.

T4b: “I want to ask you about the card with the boy sitting there by himself. Could you relate that to your own childhood?”
C5: “I knew why I was alone. I didn’t want to go home, home wasn’t a safe place.”
T4b interprets, asking if he wondered, “Why me?” regarding his abuse.
C5 responds by saying, “No, that comes later. My dad was a jerk and when your dad is a jerk you think every guy is a jerk, but that isn’t so.”
Segment 5 – (55 seconds) while discussing the PAI results, about 3 minutes after segment 4.
T4b: “It said that others might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving. Those are strong words and I wanted to run it by you.”
C5: “It depends. I’m not sensitive, but I can be hostile and unforgiving. If I’m angry I’m not good at hiding it.”

Segment 6 – (1 minute) while discussing the PAI results, about 4 minutes after segment 5.
T4b: “It said you don’t have any close relationships but that is obviously inaccurate. You would think after asking over 300 questions it would be able to come up with something accurate.”
C5: “Most of that stuff I could tell you anyway. I know that issues that come from my mother, I know the issues that come from my father.”
Appendixes E: Transcribed Interviews
Transcription C1

R: So what I’m basically going to do is I have some segments of the video tape that we are going to watch and I also have the written description that you had given me. And what I’m basically going to do is mix it up, go back and forth between, I’ll read you some of the things you had written and ask you to elaborate or tell me more about that. And then with the tape segments we are going to watch them and what I basically want you to think about is what was going on there and what it was like for you [C1: Okay] – just descriptive kind of stuff basically [C1: Okay], what the process was more like for, what it was like experiencing that in that moment, that kind of stuff. Let me know if you have any questions or anything like that.

So we’ll just get started and what I’m going to show you first is going to be, at the end of the tape was the first part of the assessment itself, I think, yes. When…let’s see what was going on (looking through notebook)…Um, when you were discussing the questions that you were going look for in the assessment, like what questions you would want me to help you with [C1: Okay] So we are going to watch that first and then I am going to rewind the tape and we are going to look at particular parts from the feedback session, segments from the feedback session. So that is mainly what we are going to do with the tapes and stuff like that.

(Looking through notebook). Let’s see, it looks like I was going to read to you first some of the sections of this (written description). Semi-structured here. Alright, so, in the beginning you said, you started off the written description saying “I couldn’t know what or who was waiting for me though I suppose I had a rough idea of the context.” What did you mean by that?

C1: Uh, well I didn’t know who my counselor was going to be or what his process was like, but I had a general idea of what happens in a therapist’s office.

R: That you had gotten from, you know like…

C1: I don’t know, TV, books, you know (laughed) other friends who have been in therapy. You know, I have been in therapy twice with my parents when I was younger. [R: Okay] It was mainly a marriage counseling thing for them and they brought me in a couple of times.

R: How was that?

C1: I was 13 and I didn’t know why I was there, so.

R: Pleasant experience, kind of?

C1: Naw, I don’t look back at it. [R: Okay] I mean it wasn’t like, you know, I don’t know, the general scale of unpleasantness of it on a scale of one to 10 was a 4.
R: Four being unpleasant and 10 being pleasant?

C1: Yea, but I didn’t come home crying because of it or anything.

R: Okay, alright. How was it like going in, like was there an expectation? [C1: here?]
Yea, as you were going in did you have certain expectations, or anxiety, or anticipation, excitement, I don’t know, do you recall?

C1: Sure, I mean I was a little nervous going in, into therapy. I am a little nervous here (today). [R: Sure] But, uh, I was looking forward to it. It was something new that I had never done before. I had been in counseling before at the employee assistance program and they recommended Duquesne and I trusted that person, so. The paperwork and everything I had to fill out, I got a good impression of the program here, so.

R: What about an assessment, have you ever done an assessment or heard anything about an assessment?

C1: Just SATs and stuff like that. [R: Okay] You know, just tests.

R: Just those kinds of tests?

C1: Yea, no personality tests or tests like this. Well, it’s not a test, but.

R: Okay, so I’m just going to read you another little section if you could tell me more about that. “Near the end of our time we discussed the best way to proceed with the next session which kind of assessed what we should use.” You were trying to decide. “Neither of us preferred any written or bubble tests and we both felt we should do more improvisational work. I had already filled in one questionnaire and felt comfortable with the spontaneity. Two, I felt comfortable going with [my therapist’s] recommendation, I wanted to trust him and felt like I could gain some insight from him based on what he brought to the table. I hadn’t asked many questions of him and was curious to know who I would be working with.” Uh, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

C1: Uh, in what aspect? I mean what do you want? [laughed]. I feel like that’s a pretty good… We didn’t spend a lot of time really discussing it. I think he gave me the two options very briefly and I said, you know, lets go with the kind of, I can’t remember the word he used for it, the improvisational test.

R: So that was the preference…that’s more what I was asking about.

C1: Yea it was pretty brief, I said I had already filled out the test, the bubble sheet already and he said he doesn’t really like them, and…

R: So you were in agreement with that?
C1: Yea, it was a pretty simple agreement to go forward with that. [R: Okay, Um] And like I said I had been talking I guess, the other part was like wanting to know more about [my therapist]. [R: Yea] I had talked the whole session you know and I know, I think the general stance is of the, well I can’t really say for sure but, my opinion of the general stance of the therapist is to kind of give me a mirror and to reflect, you know, what is happening within the patient and just ask the same kind of questions, you know, along the lines of what I have already been describing, like, “can you say more about that?” [R: Yea] and so I felt I would get a good judge of his character by what he brought to the table, allowing him to make that decision, and I was satisfied with it.

R: Learning more about who you are working with, I think you were saying [C1: Yea]

R: Okay, they you said, “I was 20 minutes late for the assessment. I had difficulty trying to get out of the office, trying finish up work. I called to say I was running late and when I arrived I apologized.” How was that? Like was that…

C1: Well, I didn’t like being late. [R: Okay] I mean, [my therapist] didn’t say anything and he just said you had a problem getting out of the office and I said, “Yea” but like I said, he did look, he didn’t, he was really red.

R: Yea that was the next part I was going to ask you…

C1: And I’ve noticed that from him before, like later on, you know he would get flush or something.

R: Okay, how was, um, you said, “I remember [his therapist] was rather flush, his face was red, his eyes were bloodshot. [C1 laughs] I couldn’t tell if he was angry or maybe feeling unwell. It was something I noticed right off and it took me off guard a bit. I made no mention of it. I was late and disappointed to be. I felt perhaps he would explain the matter, which he never did. I thought this was curious and it made me a bit uneasy. Later, he would cancel on Thursday because of illness. Still I felt alert and present.” You were saying. So, what, how did you, how was that for you that he was like that?

C1: Well, you know, it was there and I definitely took notice of it, and it made me ask those questions, but um. You know, I don’t think it made me mistrust him or anything like that or like it wasn’t a distraction while we were doing the Rorschach or anything like that.

R: Okay. Yea, I was wondering if it changed your perception or…

C1: I don’t think so, no.

R: Okay. Alright, so let’s start watching some of the tape here. And this first segment is a little bit, it’s the longest one, it’s about 9 or 10 minutes. And actually the sound on this section is better than the other ones. It’s when I go back to the beginning of the tape for
the feedback session is when the audio seems to get… You may need to be a little bit
closer to the TV to hear it at some points. But, okay so let’s…

R fumbles with the TV, C1 provides some directions regarding what buttons to try.

R: Just keep in mind what was going on and how it was for you during this section.

[Watched first video tape segment] – R apologizes for the low volume. R: can you hear?
C1: Not really. R: let me rewind it. C1: I know what I’m talking about…(pause) I can
hear it…(pause) I can’t really hear what [my therapist] is saying. R: sorry. C1: That’s
(pause) That’s what’s funny. (Volume noticeably gets louder on the TV) R: somehow we
can hear it better. R eventually turns the volume down.

R: Okay, how was that?

C1: Um, you know. It was okay, it wasn’t as bad as I though it was going to be.

R: [laughs] How was that… you were talking about looking back on it now?

C1: Mmm, hmm. [R: Yea, okay.] Is that what you were asking, how was it to watch it?

R: Yea, I wanted to know what it is like watching it and what you feel like it was… what
you feel like the process is like. That is mainly what I am trying to get at with this is
mainly what the experience was like for you when you were going through it at the time,
as well.

C1: Well, you know. I always feel that, it’s… you can’t ever hit on everything and I’m
trying to understand my situation and then you or [my therapist] are trying to understand
my situation as well. And then, you know, like, there is our situation.

R: Yours and mine?

C1: Yea. And then mine and [my therapist’s]. And it’s a little tricky, and I’ll try to be as
specific as possible and as true as possible, but I know that work is such a complicated
issue, that, didn’t really… Watching that I think I hit on a lot of the things that were
troubling me, but I think too that I didn’t really get to the heart of the matter with
everything either, like the central, you know… [R: Okay] you know like the central truth
that really rings out and says, “Oh yea, that’s what it is all about.”

R: What do you think made you hold back?

C1: Well, I don’t think I’m holding back. [R: Okay] I just think it’s…It’s not like a
struggle, necessarily…but, you know you are trying to…it’s not something that just
happens all the time.
R: Sure, What happens?

C1: Hitting upon the truth. [R: Okay, yea] to where it is the higher truth, I guess is what I am talking about, not the truth that I’m holding in this bottle or that we are here talking or something. So it’s kind of like reaffirming truth about – “oh yes, this is how the situation is,” or… Am I making any sense? [R: Somewhat.] It’s like the philosophical, aesthetic truth, or something.

R: I feel like I have an idea of what you are saying, but I was wondering specifically with that situation, how was the question, like when he was asking questions to guide and providing those questions, how was that for you in that particular situation between you and [your therapist].

C1: It was a while ago so…

R: That’s why I had us watch the tape to see if it could refresh something.

C1: Well, I tried to answer his questions and, [R: Okay] I mean,…, and I don’t know, I mean it was fine, it was fine. You know, looking at the…I don’t know, can’t really remember too much about how I was feeling in that moment, it was a few months ago, a couple months ago. So, but I was comfortable. I don’t think I looked any more ill at ease than I normally do. [R: Oh, yea, no, I was just…] I don’t know about my mannerisms or whatever.

R: I’m just going to rewind the tape while we are talking to an earlier part of the tape….Yea, I mean I’m not trying to get at like,…I’m just doing research on the process of the assessment, you know, and what it was like. I’m trying to see what it was like to experience it from the perspective of the therapist and from the perspective of the client. You know, just to kind of get an idea of that is it like?

C1: Yea, so have you been in, have you ever gone to therapy? Well I guess that’s kind of a personal question, but…

R: Um, yea, I mean I’m just…

C1: I guess I’m just trying to figure out what it, you know, I want to answer your question…

R: Yea, I mean I have my own perspectives on it, but I’m trying to get some other peoples’ perspectives.

C1: I mean, I don’t know if [my therapist] told you but I haven’t, I quit going, I’m not seeing him anymore.

R: Oh, okay.
C1: So, you know initially it was fine and I was curious to know and to be there and I felt like it was a good situation for me to go to but after 8 sessions I think we had together I [R: That’s okay] You know I came in at about the 6th or 7th session and said I don’t know about this. Well, you know what, even earlier than that I told him I think I need to cut back and go maybe every other week because money was part of it. And he said, “We could reduce your rate because I really think you should come at least once a week.” He said he would prefer if I came in twice a week and I knew I couldn’t handle that. Like I remember talking to him during the sessions and saying my fear is that it was just too intense for me. I can’t keep coming in here and, I feel like I’m getting lost, like I could just talk about anything, but I’m not sure where it is going, what we are working towards. I came in here because I am having a lot of anxiety about my place in life. But, you know, what I was talking about playing the victim. It was really hard to just come in and like talk about my troubles. It was really stressful and keep bringing them back up to the surface. [R: Okay] So he reduced my rate and I agreed to keep coming in once a week but then another month or so later I said I am still having doubts about this, I’m don’t know if this is the right place for me or if we are a good fit. And he seemed a little surprised [R: Okay] I think he wanted to keep working together. He said, “Can you make a decision today?” and I said, “No, I want to say I don’t want to come in but I want to say I want to come in.” I feel equal weight going either way. He said, “Well can you come in next week?” and I said, “Yea.” And basically during that week I made up my mind that I wouldn’t go any further with the next one. [R: Okay] I came in and we came in talked like kind of a normal session, a little more about why I didn’t want to come in and that was it, so…Yea, in the long run it really didn’t work out.

R: Yea, that’s fine. I mean, I’m not… it happened the way it did I guess…

C1: So how did I feel about it? I feel like it didn’t, you know… it wasn’t working for me. [Laughs] That’s kind of how I feel about it.

R: I mean, I’m not asking about the course of your therapy, you know what I mean. That is for you guys. I’m just really interested in this assessment piece, is really what I would just like to focus primarily on. [C1: Okay] If we could just do that for today.

C1: Alright, well I just feel like it all relates.

R: I’m sure it does. Maybe we could talk a bit at the end about that. How you think that influences you watching it today? Does that sound good? [C1: Sure]. But I’m sure it has, after having known that that has happen and then watching it again has influenced it. But, I’d like to ask you to try to just focus on putting yourself back in that moment if you can while we are watching these.

C1: Alright, okay. [R: Does that sound okay?] Yea. [R: Alright]…It’s the feeling of, am I explaining myself well enough? [R: Sure] Am I satisfied with my audience or… [R: Are you talking about now or then?] Yea, both, it’s the same situation [R: Okay] and then… Too, I felt like when you asked to elaborate on that one thing I tried not to catch myself, or one thing that I tried to catch myself doing, you know, really hoped that I wouldn’t do
is that if you give people a chance to complain about things they’ll find something to complain about. You know like, “How are you doing?” “Oh, I’m fine everything’s good.” “Work is going okay for you?” “Sure, yea, no, everything’s fine.” “There’s no problems, were just here to talk.” “No, I mean I feel like I’m doing okay and getting along alright.” “Okay, because if there’s a problem you could talk to me about it.” And then eventually you go, “Well, there is something.” You know like the initial feeling is okay. Everything’s good and there are no complaints, but … [R: But then when you…] It’s, I don’t know, are you second guessing yourself or…?[R: Okay] And I feel kind of like that is why I was here in the first place, I was maybe second guessing myself. I didn’t know where I fit into the whole corporate world.

R: Okay, well let’s watch another clip and see what comes out of it…I may have to adjust it here.

[Watch second video tape segment] - R: I can hear it better, I think you can here it more on this side now if you want to switch back… This is where I want you to start paying attention….

R: Okay, how was that for you?

C1: Being there or watching it?

R: Being there.

C1: I didn’t know if I trusted the answers from the test and I really wanted to…I didn’t know, and I even think I asked [my therapist] this, I can’t remember, but…and I think I wrote about it. I said, “What do you think you learned about it from the past that you hadn’t learned from talking with me…”

R: Yea, I was going to ask you about that.

C1: Because, you know, I went home and I read about the test and there wasn’t a lot of, you know, good critique about the Rorschach. And personally I just didn’t know enough about the scoring, like how my answers or [my therapist’s] descriptions of me are formulated. Um, he didn’t explain how the test works as far as his standpoint, you know. So, it was hard for me to agree.

R: There seemed to be some of that. [C1: Yea] A little bit of disagreement in the segment right there.

C1: Yea, partly because some of the things he was saying like, I’m objective, and it’s very true but I think I’m very invested in my emotional life and who I am in the world and all that. But there is a point where I agree, but I don’t let it run who I am. But you know, I like to think that I am sort of a dependable person, but not not in control of who he is.
R: Okay how was it for you when he was saying that stuff to you, for you to hear those kind of things in that segment that we just watched?

C1: [Pause] Well, I just didn’t know how he could, you know, you know somebody for two, well you know, that would have been four hours of interaction that we’ve had together and then to have a test like that tell you about yourself. Although, I read my horoscope. But not like I take any real influence from it or anything.

R: It sounds like you are saying you felt judged or something.

C1: Yea, I mean, yea. Which is why I’m there, to kind of try to understand who I am and have some kind of judgment about my situation. But, I felt like it was rushed, you know, a rush to judgment.

R: Okay, well let’s continue watching a little bit.

[Watched third video segment]

R: Okay, how was that?

C1: Well, that part was fine. I don’t, uh. It’s so hard to…You want to have a long answer but you don’t really have time for a long answer. Because obviously I don’t think I just go through my life concentrating on the negative. I hope I am a little humble about my accomplishments.

R: What did you mean by, ‘you wish you had a longer answer but you didn’t have the time?’

C1: Well you moved on to the, um…

R: You mean you wanted to say more you feel like, about that?

C1: Maybe I do now, but. [R: Okay] I don’t know it’s hard because you are hearing these things for the first time and you are asked, ‘how do you feel about it?’ And uh, it takes a little while for the emotional reaction to be verbalized appropriately. [R: Sure] You are really just kind of running on instinct with the answers.

R: There seems to be a difference, like in the last one it seemed like you didn’t agree with what he said as much but in this one it seemed like there was a bit more of an agreement and then kind of, you know, applying it to your life a little bit and finding how it resonated with your life. [C1: Yea] What did you think about that?

C1: Um, well my family life has never been good and that’s been a lot of, uh... Well, I can’t, I should, it it’s not like it’s never been good, it’s been good. But you know, it’s always been a little troubling, stressful, and definitely at the time it was not in a good
situation. You know and I agreed with that at the time, like it was taking up a lot of my thoughts and stuff, so.

R: So but then you felt like that maybe that was an area you wanted to talk about more but you felt like you had to move on with discussing the results of the test or the assessment stuff?

C1: I can’t tell you, I don’t really remember what I was thinking at the time.

R: Okay.

C1: I don’t know if it was before that or it was coming up later, but [my therapist] was fishing through his papers and he couldn’t find what he was looking for and then he found something and he read it and it didn’t, he admitted to it, he said, ‘Oh, that’s not what I was thinking either.’ And so that was just a little moment that created this trust because he was trying to make a point but then he couldn’t make it and he couldn’t find it in his notes either, so. But that happens, but at the time I was like wondering exactly how much time he had put into making the assessment, you know, cause he had been sick and, you know… [R: Okay] You guys never really say how you are feeling or anything or you know, it’s just weird. “How’d you feel about the test [therapist]?” “Uh, we’re here for you.” You know it’s just a tricky, tricky situation.

R: Alright we are going to go to another video clip…this one is going to be a little bit longer.

[Watch fourth video segment] – R: I had a time using this VCR [trying to figure out where the segment exactly is on the tape] because it doesn’t show the seconds of the tape…this is where I wanted to start. C1: Like that! I don’t know if we can pause it and talk about things. That might be a little easier for me. R: Sure, absolutely. [Pause video tape]

C1: But, I thought that was an interesting point, that I had this preoccupation with the body was surprising to me, something I hadn’t heard. But I didn’t quite understand how he made the connection, how my preoccupation with the body kind of related to my interest in personal health, even though I definitely do have an interest in personal health. So, it was like, “Oh, well, okay. I don’t know how they came to that conclusion, but it is true.” So...

R: So how was that when that happened?

C1: It was just curious. I mean, it’s like, I could have told you that. You know, but yea, it’s just like, “I don’t know how they came up with that, but it rings true.” And I was fine with that, I was okay. I was like, “Yea, I do have that.” If he said some thing that makes a point, and I agree with it, I don’t know. It’s like a conversation, you can agree or disagree. [R: Yea, sure] And that just was one that the conclusion, although the
argument in a logical progression I didn’t understand, but the conclusion…[R: It made sense] Yea, it made sense. I was like, “okay.” [R: Okay]

R: Let’s get back to watching the tape

[Continue watching fourth video segment]

R: How was that?

C1: I don’t know if I even answered [my therapist’s] question in that. Did he ask about my concerns for other people’s health? [R: Mmm, Hmm] Yea, I think I just mentioned my mom and didn’t talk about anything else. But, I think I’m definitely concerned with other people’s health. I mean, I’m a pretty strong environmentalist. So, either I didn’t hear him or, yea, I didn’t realize that I didn’t answer that question.

R: How was it for you watching it right now? You were saying you feel like you didn’t answer it, but…

C1: Yea, I mean I feel like I should have, uh…

[Had to flip the audio tape]

[Watched fifth video clip] – C1: I remember, I was pleased to hear that. R: Which part? C1: That I was a smart thinker. [chuckled] That was reassuring… and that didn’t seem unusual to me, or didn’t seem concerned to me, that I wouldn’t have picked up the normal answers…Yea, that I remember thinking, when you said earlier that I kept everything at a distance and objectified things and I didn’t agree with him because of how I’m passionate about the things I do and my friends and the girlfriends I have had. You know, I feel like I am a very passionate person. So, I remember I didn’t, that’s one of the reasons I didn’t really agree with him.

R: Okay, about being passionate?

C1: Yea, about being more objective than emotionally involved in things.

R: Okay, and how was that, the agreeing and disagreeing? Did you feel like it was tougher to disagree?

C1: No, I don’t have a hard time disagreeing.

R: [laughs] Did you mean that sarcastically?

C1: No, that is the truth. If I disagree, I’m not going to sit back and complain to other people. You know, not that I’m, maybe that’s confrontational but, if someone else sees it another way or disagrees with me I hope they say something. I just think it’s a natural way to have a conversation. People have different perspectives.
R: How was it with this particular perspective, in this situation?

C1: Well, like right there I gave an answer. I said, “I don’t know,” and he said, “Why do you think you didn’t have as many regular answers or why didn’t you see as many sexual images in the pictures?” and I said, “I don’t know.” And then he sat there quietly, and it’s like, “Okay, is he looking for more, is it my responsibility to come up with more about how I really feel about this? Is ‘I don’t know’ an insufficient answer?” So there was a bit of silence and then I said something else. I didn’t hear what I said. But that’s part of it. It’s like, maybe I needed to…it reverts back to what I was saying earlier, like, should I have…is there something else I needed to… Sometimes people ask you if there is something more and sometimes there is a silence and it’s like, “do I need to fill this or can we just hang out and he’ll bring it up?” [R: Okay] That was always kind of an interesting thing for me.

[Watched the sixth video segment]

R: Okay, how was that?

C1: Sure, yea. I agree with everything I said there. I think my…you know like at work is mainly where people tell me what to do. It is the main situation where I have to deal with authority and when they need help with something, that’s fine. It’s like, “Can you help me with this?” “Yes, I will help you.” But then when they want something done, they don’t really have like particularly, like construction in the office or something like that where it is really my responsibility to see that through. They don’t have, I feel like they don’t really know how the process works and they have unreasonable expectations. So, I’m in this situation where I have to explain to them, the authority figure who wants it done now like [slaps his hands together], “We need these lights done yesterday.” Which is really how it is sometimes, and I’m in this situation where I have to say, “Sorry, yesterday was yesterday. I can maybe get them up for you tomorrow. I can’t get them up today.” You know, and if that’s contrary, it’s contrary, but it’s the truth. You know so, it borders on being authoritative and then my perception that people have a lack of trust in me to do things, or something.

R: Did you feel like there was a demand put on you in this situation, like that?

C1: With [my therapist]? [R: Yea, in that segment] No, no. I mean I feel like definitely coming to therapy you have to be present. You can’t show up blitz or anything. You have a responsibility to come in and do the work and be present and listen. But, there was no undue pressure outside of just the nature of being there.

R: There was something I had meant to ask you a minute ago about…You mentioned before about how [your therapist] said you were talking about the sexual stuff, and you had said at the beginning as well, about how you had gone home and read some stuff about the Rorschach and things like that. You said in your written description, “I came home feeling skeptical. I was curious to read some opinions of the Rorschach. I didn’t
find any that were very complimentary. Still, I was interested to hear the feedback.”
What kind of stuff did you hear about it? Did it influence the way you saw it, when you heard the feedback?

C1: Well, you know. Some of the stuff I read were lawyers giving there opinions about both about the validity of the Rorschach test as far as, you know, judging a person’s stability in the courtroom. Does it stand up in court? And it didn’t. They said if you are having a child custody battle do not ever agree to take a Rorschach test.

R: How did that make you feel when you came to hear the feedback?

C1: It was a different scenario. They were giving a specific example that I’m not involved in. I don’t have any children. So, I took that under consideration. But for me that it wouldn’t stand up in one situation, it made me think, “How many other situations does it not stand up in?” If it is a good test wouldn’t it stand up wherever it was introduced? So, and then people compared it to Taro readings and stuff like that, which I’ve done, goofing around. They are fun. It’s like, [my therapist] also mentioned to me, it’s more like a stepping stone for conversation. It just brings up topics and I was fine with it in that aspect. But I didn’t feel like that was the overwhelming approach to it. Like, “listen we are just going to go from you know, we’ll just talk about these subjects because they are what came up from the test.” I really felt like because he didn’t really explain too much about his feelings on the test and the way he went about, you know, that there was a scoring and he had his notes and was relating it back to me, “This is what the test says.” Yada, yada, yada. I felt like, yea, like he was putting a lot of trust in it and I didn’t necessarily feel very comfortable with that.

R: So you felt like there was a disagreement as far a s he trusted the test more than you did?

C1: Yea, even though he didn’t say that, he didn’t say either way how he felt about the test, other than in our first meeting when we agreed to take it.

R: Okay. I also noticed that you had…to go back to this example we had talked about, that you think outside the box and stuff like that [C1: Mmm Hmm] You kind of took it in a different direction. You were saying [flipping through notebook] you have a tendency to think outside the box and be anti-authoritarian and do it your way. And you said, “Yea, I agree with that. But on the flip side if someone takes the lead and is passionate I will be right there with them.” And then you went back and said, “But I am also an iconoclast, a rebel and a hard ass.” So, it’s like, ‘I am this but I am also this.’

C1: Which is contrary in a sense, but…

R: Did you feel compelled to like show this other side?

C1: Yea, because I don’t think you are one or the other all the time. You’re one or the other and you can be either one at any time and it really just depends on the situation and
your environment. And that’s kind of how I felt about the Rorschach too, because had I been in a different mood or had I taken it at a different time in my life, which makes sense, it would have been a completely different thing. So, I maybe felt like the approach to it was like, “This is how you are all the time. This is your personality and this is who you are. This is who you’ve been and this is who you’re going to be.” And I really felt it was just very situational. [R: Okay] So that was definitely one of the reasons why I was a little standoffish about the results.

R: Okay, we’ll watch the next segment here.

[Watched the seventh video segment] – C1: I always felt too like maybe I should have been taking notes. You know, so I could remember things when I got home. But, I didn’t know how [my therapist] would feel about that. I didn’t bring it up to him. I didn’t know if you thought it would have been ironic because I would have thought that at least a little bit. [R: You would have thought what?] That it’s ironic for the patient to go in and take notes too. [R: Why would it be ironic?] I don’t know, maybe because I’m not being present enough for him. [R: Why would you want to you said, so you would have stuff to take home with you?] Yea, just so I could remember because you talk about so much over such a long period of time. Like this instance, it’s hard to remember everything. [R: Okay] I just saw him taking notes and you’re taking notes. [R: Okay]

[Go back to watching the video segment]

R: How was that?

C1: Yea, that’s pretty much how I remember it.

R: What was it like? It seems like there was a disagreement there at the beginning.

C1: Well, there was and I think part of my position was that I really did try to find a way to relate the results of the test to my situation.

R: How was that, doing that?

C1: I think I found a pretty good example of when, you know, [my therapist] said I didn’t want a lot of affection in my life. I definitely want it, but I could see situations where I stayed away from it.

R: How did you feel about that, when you were able to do that, to be able to relate it to parts of your life? Did you find that helpful, or?

C1: Well, yea. I haven’t been going to see [my therapist] for a while but I do feel better and I definitely attribute that to some of the things we talked about. That wasn’t something, I think I had that stuff, that’s a story that has stuck with me, my professor telling me that, so that wasn’t a new insight for me either. I think that’s why it was a readily available answer.
R: Okay, moving right along here. I think we only have a couple segments left to watch. Let’s see…

[Watched the eighth video segment]

R: Okay, how was that?

C1: Yea, I think the hardest thing for me to answer with that was that I didn’t understand how I used it to distance myself from people. I don’t think it is something I use to distance myself. I think it does distance myself, but I don’t use it as a tool to do that. I think it is just a natural [R: It just happens] it’s just because I apparently have all this other knowledge that people have never heard of or know how to reference or something and so it just creates this void. I don’t think it’s a tool I use to distance myself. But in the reverse aspect of that, obviously, if I stopped doing it, it might bring me closer to people. If I censored myself a little bit and didn’t talk about everything that I know, I’d probably be able to…people might be able to relate to me a bit better, but it would kind of be a false relationship, you know, because it wouldn’t be all of who I am.

R: Okay. You had said, relating to this, in your written description you said at one point, “When referring to some objects I saw, [your therapist] used the work anthropological. I was pleased to hear that word.” [C1: Yea, I remember writing about that.] What was pleasing about that?

C1: Umm, it’s just a nice word. [Both laugh]

R: What do you think about when you hear that word?

C1: What do I think about anthropology? That it’s kind of a science or a philosophy, or equally as much a philosophy as it is a science these days. It is not just related to going and digging up bones of dinosaurs or ancient cultures and scientific facts about what they ate. I mean, it really relates to almost everything. It’s the study of who we’ve been, who we can afford to be, of evolution. Yea, so, it’s just a good word. It’s not a word that I hear a lot. You know, I definitely don’t hear it in the office, in an advertising office. “We should really take a more anthropological spin on this.” You know, that doesn’t happen, so.

R: Sounds like an outside the box kind of thing.

C1: Yea, you know. And it just made me feel like an artist. Which is something I told [my therapist] I wanted to talk about but we never really got around to it too much. [R: Okay] And I also understood because I’ve referred to Georgia O’Keeffe in one of the inkblots and she definitely has an anthropological bend to her art work. [R: Okay] There was something else that was a little troublesome to me that this distancing myself was happening between [my therapist] and I because I would bring things up and he wouldn’t know who I was talking about. [R: Okay, like Georgia O’Keeffe?] Yea, and whirling
dervishes was another thing that he didn’t know what that was [laughed], and just kind of pop culture references that were missed by him. That’s reasonable, you know, I don’t know everything that happens to me sometimes. But I think one of the things that made me feel distance between me and [my therapist] and people was that, whereas they’ll say something that I don’t know and I’m curious to learn about it and I don’t put them in a position like I feel like they are higher than I am. I feel like I’m talking more like I’m in therapy again aren’t I? [R laughs] Anyway, but you know I feel like that’s the thing, I will talk about something and then people will feel like they are not at the same level I am and that makes it hard for me to relate to them, you know, in reverse.

R: Okay, let’s watch this next video segment. This is going to be the last video segment we are going to watch. This is a bit of the wrap up from the feedback session.

[Watched the ninth video segment] – C1: Yea, can you rewind it to see what he asked me? R: Sure.

R: Okay, how was that?

C1: Well, he told me what he was going to do but he didn’t answer my question and I think part of my difficulty was that I knew what my problems were going in, generally speaking, I knew what was bothering me at the time, but I didn’t know why they were bothering me and I felt like the assessment was still going over what was bothering me and not the cause of it. Which, it was the beginning and maybe that wasn’t necessary stuff.

R: Maybe a stepping stone like you were talking about, to figuring things out.

C1: Yea, but it was a little difficult, a little redundant.

R: What was redundant about it?

C1: That I felt like I could explain things just as easily as taking this test.

R: Okay. You feel like you could get this much from a conversation?

C1: Yea, yea, that maybe like I said before the test is a rush to judgment. I would have felt better being patient about our conversation and knowing we are not going to get to everything right away and I felt like the test rushed that so I had to be patient with myself as far as my feelings toward the test. Does that make sense? I would have been able to have been a little bit more relaxed and trusting about the process had it just been all conversation and we just got to problems as they came up, I wouldn’t feel like the test was just like, bam, this is what it is and then not trusting the test. I felt like I was trying to be patient with the whole thing even though I didn’t trust it, you know what I mean?

R: Were you saying it made you uncomfortable by rushing you into it a little bit, it sounds like?
C1: Yea, that it just, yea. I don’t know what else to say except that it was a rush to judgment, I felt like the test was.

R: Okay, well I’m just going to read you a few things you said at the end here, like three more statements and that will be it. You said, and this is something you touched on earlier too. You said, “I do feel my results would have varied had I been in a different mood that day.” Can you say a little bit more about that? [C1 laughs] I know you said some earlier, but what do you feel like your mood was that day?

C1: The day of the test? That day I was worried about being late to work, or late coming to the test from work. You know, so I was rushed, just felt rushed. So maybe I wasn’t slowing down enough with the test. [R: and you feel like that maybe that influenced…] Not that I wasn’t slowing down like I should have been slowing down, but I might have gone a little slower maybe if we had done it on a weekend.

R: Okay, it reminded me of what you were saying earlier. It also reminded me of what you were saying about the Bender-Gestalt. We didn’t get that on tape but you were saying you felt like you may have rushed through that.

C1: Yea, I’m pretty sure I rushed through that. [My therapist] said I didn’t take a very long time to do it.

R: How was that different from say the Rorschach, because we haven’t really talked about that?

C1: Well, I didn’t want to sit there and recreate those drawings, exactly.

R: What, you didn’t want to? Was there something you didn’t like about it?

C1: Yea, how long are we going to sit here while I draw these things? I think I just knew I had a choice of how I am going to do this test and however I choose to do it is how they are going to judge me on it. And clearly I could to do it anyway I wanted and you are going to judge me on, I could have made the choice to sit down there and draw it all specifically and then what is he going to say about me? I just felt like it was rigged in a way. There was going to be an answer no matter what I did and I could have done it in any way.

R: There was going to be a judgment. [C1: Yea] and you felt like it was rigged.

C1: “He drew everything exact and he measured it with his finger and got the line the right length,” you know, there were like predetermined personalities based on that and I was just like, I don’t know, I was a little tired too. I had, it was a little more fun to just draw at he speed we went.
R: Okay. You also said, “I feel I learned more particularly about how I see rather than anything new concerning my personality.” What did you mean by that?

C1: Yea, that kind of doesn’t fit together does it? [R: What do you mean?] Because obviously learning about how I see relates to personality. But, umm, yea. I think I did get some insight, a little more clarity on how I judge my surroundings or how I can, maybe just should chill out a little bit. Not be so judgmental. I’m definitely an idealist. I have expectations of others as well. It’s not that I should get used to disappointment from other people, but. Yea, it gave me a little bit of insight. I don’t know if I can really explain it.

R: Okay. Yea, and the last thing you said was, “Most peculiar for me more than anything is the particular university atmosphere in which everything has taken place, it feels institutionalized and impersonal.” What did you mean by that?

C1: You know, it’s not really a doctor’s office or like going to therapy at someone’s home.

R: And you feel like that would be more personal?

C1: Well I don’t know, I can’t judge on that because it very well could not be. But just too that you guys are in school and learning…

R: How does that influence it for you, that we are students? That we’re not as experienced?

C1: Yea, and I think age has to do with it. I didn’t know how much experience, how long [my therapist] had been doing this. He told me where he was in school progress and stuff like that but I didn’t, obviously he hasn’t had too many patients. So, yea, I had doubts about what it was that he was going to be able to bring to the table. Not that I felt like he wasn’t doing hard work and wasn’t interested in helping me. I didn’t feel like he was fucking off or something. He took it seriously. But initially I thought it would be a good thing because I would get some help with myself and it would be a reciprocal relationship, you guys would be getting experience. But in the long run I just think I didn’t like coming to the school. I felt like I was definitely outside the demographic of people who come into the office and maybe had issues that [my therapist] wasn’t used to dealing with. And I just felt like, you never get any answers from you guys. [Laughs]

R: You mentioned a little bit during, how do you feel like the fact that you have already stopped working with him influenced going back and looking at this stuff today?

C1: Well, no. I don’t regret my time with [my therapist] at all. It was definitely worth my time and my money. So, no I don’t have any resentment built up about it at all. I was more nervous about coming in and watching myself and potentially being embarrassed by what I saw. And it had been a while since so I didn’t know how well I would be able to answer your questions about the situation.
R: So how was that today?

C1: I think it started out a little rough. [R: Rough as far as what?] just, I didn’t know, and I still think you asked some questions that I didn’t know how to answer.

R: It’s okay. It’s more experiential, there is no right or wrong. Overall it was...?

C1: No, it was okay [R: Okay] I’m not scarred. [R: Okay] [Both laugh]

R: Alright, Do you have any questions for me?

C1: No, just good luck with everything.

R: Thanks a lot.

C1: If you publish the paper let me know.

R: I will. If you like I will at least send you an abstract.

C1: I had asked [my therapist] about maybe keeping a copy of the tape but I changed my mind about that.

R: Okay, well, you have my email, let me know if you have any further questions.

C1: Okay, great.
Transcription C2

R: What we are going to do is, I have your written description…

C2: Was that okay?

R: Yea, sure. It was okay. So I have that and I am going to read back some of it to you and ask you what was going on there and then we will watch some segments from the assessment itself. I also have a few picked out from the feedback session. We will watch that stuff and the main questions that I am going to ask, mainly about the video clips we watch, are like “What was going on here?” and “How was that for you?” kind of a thing. And then when I read you back some of the things, just to elaborate on that, like tell me a little bit more maybe.

C2: So you are going to walk me through it with some questions then?

R: Yea, sure. Do you have any questions before we get started or anything?

C2: Nope, as long as you are going to ask questions I’ll be fine. That might be the most helpful. Let me turn my phone off. [R: Okay] My brother keeps texting me about his new girlfriend so I know I will get interrupted.

R: Okay, alright. So in the first one I am going to ask about the…, in one part of the written description you said, “In regard to my assessment experience, I felt that it was both successful and confusing at the same time.” What did you mean by that?

C2: I really felt that the TAT cards were successful and I think it is because I just had a chance to explain myself. I think that is just how I work in general. I would do much better on an essay test than a true or false type of question or something that is just really rigid. So I felt like that was successful. But as far as the Meyers-Briggs, I just felt, I got anxiety taking that test [laughs] because I felt like I had to answer a certain way because I didn’t want to be a certain way, which made me feel even more confused. I was like, “Oh my gosh, what do I want this to turn out like and what kind of characteristics do I want to be out of this?” And I think that just made me, it was like a snowball effect from “How should I answer this?” to “What are the results going to be?” to “What do I want the results to be?” And then it was like, ooh, a bigger picture type of ordeal.

R: Okay, so you were more comfortable with the TAT, it sounds like [C2: Yea] and the Meyers-Briggs was more kind of anxiety provoking because you were concerned about how the results would come out.

C2: Yea. Um, is that what you are asking me explain?

R: Yea. I mean, whatever you meant by that. You said “successful and confusing,” so that was mainly between the two tests. [C2: Yea] And you said a bit about that in the written description, I remember that pretty well, the distinction between those two.
C2: And also, even though the TAT cards were really helpful and I felt that they were successful, I don’t think I realized how much information was going to come out of me just by describing those cards. [R: Okay] Because like when you learn about it in psychology class you just think, “Oh gosh, they are just prompting issues.” Or like [laughs], you know, but no offense to psychology. But it’s just sometimes what people think or what they say. But I mean, honestly, that is you describing the picture so, I was really surprised.

R: Okay, alright. So then now, we are going to watch the first video clip. This one is short. It is about 50 seconds or a minute. So we are going to watch this and when you are done just let me know what was going on here and how it was for you. What kind of things it evokes. You may have to lean in to listen, I am not sure.

[Watch first videotape segment]

C2: Okay, well maybe if I would have remembered that he said that…

R: That’s okay. How was it?

C2: I think I was probably too nervous to really digest the information that he was giving to me.

R: Okay, so you were nervous at the time.

C2: Yea, I think that if, because what he said, like “they are points of departure for conversation.” So I think that had to be what like my first or second session?

R: That was the beginning of the assessment, yea.

C2: Okay, so I was probably too nervous.

R: I think it was the second session you guys had, yes. So what was…, you feel like you didn’t take that in?

C2: Probably not. I think maybe even by the way I was sitting, I was like, I don’t know. Looking at myself I look kind of timid or like I was probably thinking other things inside of my head besides what [T2] was saying.

R: Do you have any idea of what you might have been thinking about?

C2: I’m not sure what I might have been thinking about, except for, just whenever I get nervous in general I can’t process information that people are saying to me. I find that talking to people just generally, I do feel anxious in any situation or something.

R: Okay, so how is it watching it now?
C2: I just don’t like the way I look sitting there.

R: So it’s tough watching yourself, kind of?

C2: If I would have been talking it would have been much, much, much harder to watch. [R: Okay] But since it was [T2] talking then no because I watch him talk all the time.

R: Okay, but you said at the beginning, your first response was saying something like saying, “I wish I had taken that in more.” What did you mean by that?

C2: I just think I wouldn’t have gone into the Meyers-Briggs test so upset about it [laughs]. I do have like preconceived notions against those kinds of tests [laughs].

R: Yea, I was going to ask you a little bit more about that. You were saying because you were anxious it was kind of hard to take that in at the time, right? [C2: Yea] But you were saying if you might have been able to take that in it might have eased some of your anxiety. [C2: Yea] So watching it now was kind of like...

C2: Like when you do something and then you are down and you are like, “Gosh, if I could do that again...” Like if you do a speech or something and you wish that you could..., because now that you’ve done it and you feel okay about so you wish you could do it again. So, maybe if I took the test again maybe I wouldn’t feel as, you know...

R: As nervous? [C2: Yea] Okay. And hearing that, was it helpful?

C2: Yea, hearing that. I don’t remember it [laughs], I don’t remember it at all. That’s why I’m saying, I think that was just like...

R: But looking at it now, you are saying like, it was just like it could have been.

C2: Yea, I mean, he could have been telling me, like, “Well, I live on Mars.” [both laugh] and maybe I wouldn’t have ever remembered that he said that.

R: Okay [both laughing] So, now we are going to go to another segment that is a little bit further along. How are you feeling now, are you kind of nervous?

C2: Not too, too much. I’m alright.

R: There is going to be some of you talking, just to give you a heads up [laughs]. Okay, this is about a minute or a minute and a half.

[Watched second videotape segment]

R: Could you hear it okay?
C2: A little bit, yea. I don’t remember exactly what was on that card. I think it was a family maybe.

R: It was the girl leaving…, growing up on a farm [C2: Okay] and he asked you how it went.

C2: Yea, okay, I remember that now. I think that I was kind of emotional during that card. [R: Okay] My voice sounds like it because I maybe have a little lump in my throat or something because I remember during that card I felt pretty emotional, just because it had to do with the family and I always get kind of…, something makes me have some sort of feeling when talking about my family. So I think that I was kind of like, not getting upset, but…

R: That’s okay, it brought up some emotions for you [C2: Yea] I noticed in there [T2] had asked about the other two people in the picture and he kind of brought it back to that for you to that [C2: Yea] and then you had a response to that. How was that?

C2: Was that the “the care” part? [R: Yea] I think I was thinking about…, am I supposed to bring up like what…, I don’t know…

R: It’s up to you. I don’t want you to feel uncomfortable.

C2: Okay. I just don’t want to babble on. [R: It’s okay] I think that I was thinking about how now that I moved out and stuff I don’t have the same relationship with my family as I did and it bothers me, so. Whenever I was talking about that card and I was like, “Well, I think they will probably care,” but, it was the same feeling that I am getting now.

R: Okay, because there was a mention of, “they may be busy but they will care.”

C2: Yea, because my parents are very busy, they are sort of …[speaks too silently to hear]

R: Okay. How was it…, I guess what I would like to ask is how was it with you and [T2] too. [C2: Okay, yea] How was it for him to kind of, I mean you were talking about the card and he asked about the other two people in the card. How was it for you when he asked about that?

C2: I mean, I think it was…, like I’m glad that he asked about it because it definitely brought up…., it was definitely a point of departure for our conversation. [R: Okay] So yea, I think all of those went pretty well.

R: So you are glad because it kind of brought up some other stuff too.

C2: Yea, yea, yea yea. I think those were really helpful and I thought when [T2] would ask me about it, it was helpful because he was asking me and I wasn’t the one having to start the conversation about it. So that was really helpful. I definitely needed that to
walk me along through it. And it got me started talking, so once I did start talking about it..., I don’t know if that could be, I mean I don’t think he was trying to prompt anything by asking me those questions, but I think maybe in a way it could be taken that way.

R: Taken like how?

C2: I think he did it in a very objective, you know, in a very objective fashion. But I think if somebody would have taken it a little bit..., I don’t know. I feel like that process could prompt people to talk about things I guess they normally wouldn’t talk about. But maybe, also it could become negative depending on the questions that were asked about the card.

R: Okay. How could it become negative?

C2: Um. I don’t know. I mean, I don’t know too much about psychology. But, maybe it could make people create a story that they wouldn’t normally create. I think there is such a fine line of when that could be productive and counterproductive.

R: It sounds like you are saying it can facilitate on one hand, like talking about a story and helping you kind of get it out. But at the same time it could also kind of steer it in another direction [C2: Yea] other than where it would normally go because of the type of question that is asked.

C2: Yea, so it would really, really depend on the question.

R: Okay, and I think he asked what was going on with the other two people in the picture, right, because it seemed like you were focusing more on the girl. [C2: Yes] So how was that question? Was that okay for you or did you have any reactions to it?

C2: The question about the other two people? [R: Yea] Um, just that it made me feel emotional. I was probably identifying more with the girl. [R: Okay] That’s probably why I focused on her more. [R: Yea, sure.] Maybe I was avoiding it so when [T2] asked me about it I guess it did..., you know my reaction was like when this conversation started.

R: I was wondering if it helped to kind of contextualize because you said it made you start thinking about your family. And then something grew, and then the two other figures made it more family like I guess, and asking about them made it more relational, I guess?

C2: Maybe, I think that was my idea from the beginning, but I was just focusing more on the girl. I think that when he asked that it just made me talk about the other characters. But I don’t think he would have known that unless he asked it. I’m not sure where the line is of what to ask and what not to ask.

R: Okay. So the next segment is another one that is about, actually we are going to go forward a little bit more on the tape. Sorry for how hard it is to hear.
C2: That’s okay. They should make a microphone plant. [Both laugh]

[Watched third videotape segment] – R: This is the one with the two girls I think. [C2: Mmhm]

R: Okay, what was going on there?

C2: I think I was less nervous there than I was at first. I know that. Because I think that was towards the middle of the test.

R: It was. Do you have any idea why you might have been less nervous?

C2: Um, maybe because I found that just kind of, not easy but not hard, you know?

R: Not easy but not hard?

C2: Yea, like it was just, I don’t know, just like a pattern of new cards, tell a story, and I had gotten emotional already… and I was starting to look at, I had just told [T2] that at one point I had taught a class I would…

R: You had just done that a minute ago, before this [C2: Okay] So, you were getting more comfortable with it. [C2: Yea] Like it was kind of fun, it seems [C2: Yea, actually, maybe.] So, less nervous, and I’m going to show that one too because with the card with the two girls. We’ll come back to that later. So I just wanted to see how that was. So you were just kind of getting more comfortable [C2: Yea].

R: Alright, in this next one is the longest clip, it is about 10 minutes. [C2: Okay.] Okay. This is where you guys had just taken a break, both taken a break to go to the bathroom. So you came back and this is where you are discussing just your kind of anxiety about taking tests and stuff like that, and you had a discussion about that. [C2: Okay] Yea, It’s just going to be about 10 minutes, it’s a longer one, so…

[Watched beginning of the fourth videotape segment] – R stops the tape after a few minutes.

R: Actually, I was going to read you something first. I’m sorry. [C2: Sure] Um, okay. I’ll just rewind it back to the beginning of that segment. I was going to read you, because this kind of relates to it too. You said, “First of all, I’ll explain my experience with the MBTI. I had negative feelings about this test from the start. I had preconceived notions that this test was meant to take somebody’s answers and categorize that person as if they were a piece of paper going to file. In fact, after I completed the test, I told [T2] very honestly that I did not want to the results because if I did get an “I” for Introvert (If I’m remembering correctly, that is one of the possible results), then I didn’t want to feel like that was all I ever could be – introverted. So basically my fear was that I would be limited my by results.” Can you say a little bit more about that?
C2: I just, I just don’t, I can’t explain how strongly I don’t want to be some of those characteristics. So, taking a test that might possibly tell me that I am just makes me conscious during the whole test of how I’m answering questions. So, I don’t know whether I am answering them honestly or dishonestly. [T2] did explain that the results tell how you see yourself rather than some insight into our personality. So after he told me that, after I took the test, I thought that perhaps those made more sense. But, I just think it is really limiting if it is used, you know, to categorize someone’s personality.

R: So those are the preconceptions you had about it going in. [C2: Yea.] That is could be used that way.

C2: Yea, definitely, that it could be used that way.

R: Okay, and I wanted to ask that because it seems to speak to this clip. You discuss that with [T2] right here.

[Watched the fourth video segment]

R: Okay. How was that?

C2: Well, it eased my mind a bit about the tests, especially when he said that it is a snapshot of how you are right now. That sentence.

R: What about that was…

C2: I think I was just thinking of that as a sentence. So, yea it was helpful that he said that. I could feel myself, or see myself getting less nervous as the conversation went on. I still hate watching.

R: It’s hard for you to watch yourself?

C2: Yea, yea.

R: Okay so the snapshot part was helpful. I wanted to ask about…, I noticed you kind of laughing, chuckling at some stuff as we were watching. [C2: Mmhm] Do you remember what that was about, why you were laughing?

C2: Oh, right, chuckling. I don’t know why, it was just funny. I think that generally while I am in the therapy session or like during that assessment, it helps when there is laughing or, not making fun of something, but something light [R: Okay]. I don’t know why I’m laughing right now though, it’s just funny. [laughs] I don’t know, ask me that question again [both laugh].
R: I can’t remember what parts it was at, but it was…, I was wondering if it was more, you know, like nervousness with seeing yourself or because you saw something funny on the tape, or…

C2: Yea, I think I laughed when [T2] said, “It wasn’t a life sentence.” Just because I thought that was funny.

R: Because you could relate to that. [C2: Yes, yes.] It seems like with that it was kind of a relief.

C2: Yea. Like even though I hate watching myself it is a relief, I think maybe, to hear him say that again about the test. And because I do feel different now than I felt, you know, that was in July. So, maybe it is easy to laugh if I am seeing that. Yea.

R: Okay. And then at the end I was wondering too, there is a little piece about…, he was saying too, you know, that there are some places that do it so you don’t even hear about the results of the testing, and you don’t even hear back from it and they just use it the way they use it. But then here we try to do it more collaboratively, give you feedback and discuss it and things like that. How was that?

C2: [Yawns] It was, um…It was, you know, easing. But I still didn’t want to hear the results, like. I think he could have told me anything, and it was a relief that he was telling me this, but I still didn’t want to hear the exact results. Like in his letter to me about the results of the test, he didn’t put the letters that came out [R: of the Meyers-Briggs] Yea, he touched on the patters that came out of that test and also that he has used as we go on, but I’m glad that he didn’t put the letters in.

R: So he was respectful of that, your desire not to have that. And you were glad that he didn’t do that.

C2: Yes, yes. So, but I like that he was very reassuring during and after the test. But I don’t think it would have mattered what he said [laughs].

R: Okay, and then there is one…, a few more sentences that kind of follow from this, what we are talking about. This follows right after you said before, “So basically, my fear was that I would be limited by my results.” And then you said, “However, [T2] eased my mind by explaining that for the purposes of this type of therapy, the MBTI is used in a way that it reveals what you think of yourself. Even with that information though, I still asked him to keep the results from me until a later date.” So, that is kind of what you were talking about.

C2: Yea, I kind of forget exactly what I wrote so it’s really weird that I am saying exactly what I wrote.

R: Yea, did you want to say anything more about that?
C2: That, about [T2] easing my mind and then not...

R: Yea, it eased your mind because he described it, that it is used in a way that it reveals what you think about yourself.

C2: Yea, I think that, like it’s not telling you about yourself maybe something that you didn’t know. You are telling it what you think of yourself. So, it is kind of like you have more control of that. Although, if I would have known that before I took the test, I wonder how the results might have differed. I don’t know, because I might have just gone crazy and been like, “I want to be this way, and I think I’m this way.” I don’t know how that would have...

R: So when you were taking the test you were really concerned with the way you were presenting yourself. [C2: Yea] But it seems like it was helpful to hear that back from him, that it is used more in that way.

C2: Just because he was the one who gave me the test. If I would have heard that from a different source I probably would have been like, “Well, that is what you think but you know, some guy at Duquesne gave me this test and I don’t know what he thinks about the results.” So...

R: Okay. So it was good to have that feedback, instead of just like...

C2: Yea. It was absolutely good to have that feedback. Yea.

R: Okay, I am going to read another segment here that is going to lead into another video part. Alright, you said, “As far as the TAT goes, I could honestly say that I enjoyed taking this part of the assessment. At the time, I’m not sure I realized exactly how much my stories of the pictures were reflecting my own perspective in life. I think at that point I was enjoying the exercise of using my imagination and the control that I had over the stories of the characters in the pictures… For as much as I can say about my experience of actually taking the test, the fascinating part is how much of these results played out in the rest of my sessions, particularly the results of the TAT.” So it seems like you enjoyed it and you saw it play out in later sessions.

C2: Yea, like I said to you before, it was just really surprising how much came out of me during those cards and how much you relate everything back to yourself. And in a way, I did really enjoy taking the test. But, yea, those themes that came up really played throughout during the rest of my sessions. And that was surprising, I wasn’t realizing it, that we would talk about something that I had said during the TAT test. Then I would remember, and it was just really strange.

R: It was strange?

C2: Yea, it was strange how it worked. Um, I guess people don’t really get as familiar with their feelings as they think they are, maybe. And I thought that that made me really
familiar with it when something would come up later on in the session and we would be like, “Well, remember those girls in the tree.” And it was just so weird how much, how the stories I made up were these patterns in me.

R: So weird in like a good way, bad way, awkward way?

C2: Maybe like a surprising way. It was just surprising. Yea

R: Did you find it helpful? Or was it more…

C2: No, I found it very helpful. Yea.

R: Okay, so it seems like it kind of acted like a catalyst. Like it got you thinking about this stuff and then looking back…

C2: Yea, that is a good word for it.

R: Good word, okay. Alright, now we are going to fast forward…How are you doing, do you need a break or anything? [C2: No, I’m good.] Now this is where [T2] is just reading you back your response from card #2, the one with the girl on the farm with the two people. [C2: Okay] This is the part where he is reading you back the things and getting your response. He went back and read back your responses from those cards to you and then you talked about them again.

C2: When was this? Was this still the same day?

R: Yes, it was the same day. It was right after you got done giving your responses, then he just went back with a few of them and read your responses to you and gave you a chance to respond to that. This is about five minutes.

[Watched the fifth videotape segment]
[Flipped the audiotape]

R: Okay, how was that?

C2: Um. Beforehand I was thinking about being saturated with the media and feeling like, I don’t know like this test, and maybe like I said going away and coming back, that those things really do reflect background to real life. So taking that test made me think about that, I think. And I forgot that I said that and I was thinking it before during this interview. So I guess I really do feel that way. [laughs]

R: That it reflects back on…

C2: Yea, I think that taking those tests made me realize that.
R: Okay. Yea it seemed interesting because in the beginning you were talking about how the media kind of imitates life and vice versa. [C2: Yea] And then you related it back to yourself, like you were talking about your dad a little bit and then you said at the end, “I could really relate to that.” [C2: Yea] How was that?

C2: Um, well, feeling like I could really relate to it. I don’t know exactly how to answer, “How was it?” except for it was a release of…, I could put these feelings onto this picture. So it was sort of like a release. Which maybe could even go back to the media thing of why there is this, you know, this release, like people are releasing things, which sounds ridiculous that I am just realizing this now…

R: What do you mean? Ridiculous that you are just realizing this now?

C2: Like, obviously I should have realized that [laughs] you know a sad song or a political painting is a release for somebody. But I just feel like that there was so much that I just was blocking it out. There was just so much coming at me that I just blocked it. [R: That’s okay] Um, but I felt like talking about this card was this release for me to talk about my dad. So I probably really did want to talk about that [laughs]. But the fact that I had this card and [T2] was asking me if it did relate to me, it was helpful because then I could bring it up. It was an easy way to bring it up.

R: That kind of makes me wonder, did you find it different…, more or less helpful bringing it up in that way with [T2] rather than just watching a movie or something like that.

C2: Yea. It is just like depositing money in the bank. Like I come here and deposit my feelings. That assessment was like a trigger to let this out.

R: And that is interesting because when you put money in a bank a lot of times, like in a savings account, it actually can gain interest, rather than if you just had it sitting around.

C2: Yea, maybe having my feeling deposited here, then it’s relieving because it is here and it’s out of my head and I think that would be like organizing money in the bank.

R: Yea, like putting money in a bank.

C2: Yea, and not having to worry about it.
R: But then when it comes back later too like in helpful ways.

C2: Well, yea, the themes come back later throughout the sessions. But like I said when I’m watching this now, I feel like there is perspective on it. I don’t feel exactly the same way as I did then, which is also relieving.

R: Okay. You feel different now because of the work you have done.

C2: Yea, yea.

R: Okay, let’s move on. I’ll try to not make this take too much longer.

C2: It’s okay.

R: Okay, right here is the one where he just got done reading you back the card response from the card with the two girls.

[Watched the sixth videotape segment] – R: Sorry, he hadn’t read back the response yet. Yea, this is still the other one.

R: How was that?

C2: I think, well, how was that during the assessment? [R: Mmhm] It was just really, really emotional. But…

R: You were talking about some family stuff going on.

C2: Yea, but I think that, like as far as the whole assessment thing goes, I don’t know. I feel like that would have come up anyways. But I think the card definitely moved it along. I think that is the thing, is like the cards are just moving it along faster.

R: Kind of facilitating things to come out.

C2: Yea, I know that would have come up anyways, but I don’t know when. But those cards, it just quickens the process.

R: Okay, and it seems like [T2]…, I mean you got emotional and then [T2] was kind of, you know, talked to you a little bit about it and said, “Well, this is something we can continue with in ongoing therapy.” How was that?

C2: It’s good because I don’t feel like things have to come up now. Like it was like, “Is it okay that the card brought it up?” Maybe I cry a little bit. You know, “We’ll talk about it more later.” [laughs] It’s not like I have to bring it up all now, “Hurry, before our session is done.” Like you know, which is really, and I know this doesn’t have anything to do with the assessment, but it was just so helpful to me because I am a person who like in the past I’ve, where things have to be done now, and brought up now, and it’s just like
this method of therapy just helps to be like, “Well, things don’t have to be right now.” So, I mean the cards brought up the issues quicker and I think it just helped for later. The fact that it was like, “Okay there is this issue, this issue and this issue. We’ll touch upon them when they come up again.

R: Okay, so it seems like a balance there between, like it pulled it out but it wasn’t like you have to deal with it and work through it right now. [C2: Yea] Like we can kind of hold onto that and work through it gradually.

C2: Yea, so it quickened the initial part of bringing it up. So…

R: Alright, well this next part…

C2: Like even right now, I’m sorry [laughs] [R: It’s okay] I just want to get this out before I forget because I want myself to remember it. But, even right now I know that I’m not being that well spoken, [R: Oh, that’s okay] but I know that perhaps in the future I will be more well spoken, and that’s okay. It just feels relieving.

R: Yea, sure, okay. So it’s bringing up stuff now and you may not be that well spoken right now, you are saying[R: Yea] but you will have chances, it will come back up, to think about it and reformulate it and rearticulate it later.

C2: Yea, or, I mean in general, in the future I don’t have to be a well spoken person right this second. Like it will be okay.

R: Okay, that is a good example. I don’t want us to run out of tape here. This is a longer segment so I am going to pause the audiotape while we watch this.

[Paused audiotape and watched seventh videotape segment]

R: Okay how was that?

C2: That was a long one. [R: I know.] I was thinking so many things.

R: Like what kind of stuff?

C2: Just how I feel like I’m not thinking in that pattern too much anymore, very different now.

R: So there you were thinking about the conservative versus the wild side of yourself.

C2: Right, or just in general I was thinking about these structures, like choices or paths or something. But I’m not thinking, I don’t think it looks that way too much anymore. During the assessment, I think that I was thinking like…, I was so overwhelmed by…, like that was definitely something I wanted to talk about and I am glad that card brought it up, but I think during that moment I was so overwhelmed by this feeling that I didn’t
know what to do with it or I felt like it was never going to get solved. [R: Okay. The paths?] But the fact that [T2] was saying, “Well, you know there is probably a middle road,” that was reassuring. And the fact that maybe I didn’t have to talk about it all right that second.

R: So it was good to bring it up but also that um, he kind of pointed in the direction that there is a middle road but we can work on that at another time, and it sounds like you have.

C2: Yea, and I think with that issue especially I needed reassurance because I was really overwhelmed by that feeling right then.

R: Okay, so it was really helpful at the time, you would say. [C2: Yea, yea] Okay. Yea and you said…, I was going to read what you said here because you commented on it in here. You said, “There was one particular picture of two girls – one was sitting quietly in a tree and one running down below the tree. The girl in the tree has an unhappy look on her face and she sees the other girl running by. Also, I should add that the girl in the tree is dressed neatly and the girl running below looks disheveled. For this card, I told a story of the quiet girl in the tree being unhappy because the girl below interrupted her; however, deep down inside she wishes she could be careless and wild like the girl running below. I’m not sure I could count how many times this card has come up during my sessions. As I began to see [T2] regularly, I noticed themes in my life that included being unhappy with myself, wishing I was something else, being scared of interruption, but yet welcoming it with all of the traveling I’ve done and still do. It’s like the interruption makes me feel careless in some way – the way the girl in the tree wanted to feel.”

C2: Yea, yea, absolutely. We’ve talked about how before I travel I feel more confident because of this interruption of me leaving is just going to happen so I can be more myself and more of who I feel like I am deep inside, that kind of thing. So, yea we have talked about that a lot, which is just one example of how that card has come up.

R: So all of these themes, you were saying, come up later, you said, “can’t count how many times this has come up in session,” you said, [C2: Yea, absolutely] so a lot of different themes came up. And you said looking back on it now is different because...

C2: Yea, it is different because I don’t feel the urgency [laughs] that I felt then. It was just a lot.

R: Because you’ve kind of processed it a little bit it seems like. [C2: Yea] Okay. So we are just going to watch a couple clips from…, this next one is from the feedback session you did, more recently, after he had given you the letter.

C2: I feel like I was being impossible that day.

R: What do you mean?
C2: I don’t remember exactly that day, but I remember feeling like I was being an impossible patient. [laughs]

R: How do you feel like you were being impossible?

C2: Because [T2] wrote the letter in an honest effort to assess my time there and I feel like I was being impossible, like I just wasn’t accepting it or something.

R: Kind of resistant to what he was saying?

C2: Yea, [R: Okay] I felt kind of bad about that.

R: It’s not bad. It seems to go back to what you were saying about the anxiety that you feel about not wanting to be limited in a certain sense and stuff like that. [C2: Yea] It seems understandable, because that really comes out there in the feedback session when you were hearing those results. Feeling really kind of wary and cautious.

C2: Yea, and like I said in the last clip with the two girls, I was afraid to be limited to one or the other so that test, the results of the Meyer-Briggs test was just another way to feel limited and I just did not want to hear it.

R: Okay, and that’s interesting because at the beginning of this clip you are talking about how committing to one thing makes you feel dull, I think it is a theme.

[Started watching eighth videotape segment] – the volume was noticeably much louder [both commented and laughed, paused the tape, R trying to find the right place to start watching the segment]. C2: I think I felt less comfortable there, I miss the old room. R: [laugh] You seemed to feel more uncomfortable in general during this session. [both laugh] C2: When [T2] said, “This is our new room,” I was like, “Aw man.” [both laugh] R: We just have two more clips and then one more thing I am going to read you and then we will be done, so we just have a few more minutes. This clip is only about a minute and a half. C2: I am just looking at how different my hair looks. R: Oh, yea.

[Continued watching eighth videotape segment]

R: Okay, how was that?

C2: I’m not sure except for…

R: It’s hard to do without much context there I guess.

C2: Yea, there wasn’t much context to the session there. But, I mean, I can remember feeling that overwhelmed feeling of being stifled. It’s getting better.
R: Okay. Staying with the relationship and what was going on with you and [T2], how…, it seemed like you were talking about a theme of committing to one thing makes you feel dull and then [T2] said, “Does that remind you of anything?” and that it kind of brought up some stuff with your mom. How was that?

C2: [T2] does that a lot where he always asks me if things remind me of other things.

R: How was that?

C2: It’s…, sometimes I mean I do have something that I am reminded of and so then that can lead to other parts of our session which is really helpful, but sometimes I don’t have anything to say. But, yea, I think that is really helpful. Except for, I get this like pressured feeling when it happens, like I feel like I have to be reminded of something. So that’s the only negative I see with it.

R: Like there is this pressure, like “what if I don’t think of something to say?”

C2: Yea, but aside from the negative pressure I think it helps move the session along. [R: Okay] But the pressure is negative.

R: That’s understandable. What is negative about it?

C2: Sometimes I’m wondering if I’m bringing up something because I am just pressured.

R: Just to have something to say?

C2: Yea, but I do try to answer [T2] as honestly as I can so if I don’t have anything to say usually I will just be like, “No, not really.” But then I just feel like a dull patient or something [laughs], I don’t know.

R: Okay. It reminds me of what you were saying before too with the TAT test about how sometimes the other person’s questions could guide it in a certain direction [C2: Yea] and make you feel like you have to come up with something. Okay, this is the last clip of the tape we are going to watch.

[Watched the ninth videotape segment]

R: Okay, what do you think?

C2: [T2] is definitely all about language [laughs] so when I say “little girl,” which is sometimes the language I use to describe myself, I think that he really does point out the language that I use [yawns, apologizes] [R: That’s okay] and I think it points out things that I think were trivial and he explained that it is a lot of times about the trivial that can be so telling about the situation. So, yea so bringing up the language thing, yes. And also him asking me questions like, I forget what he asked me, something about like, “so what would that mean for you?” Those type of questions really help me complete the
thought. I feel like the thoughts would be just all over the place and running wild if there wasn’t this sort of like this hook for them, you know, like…

R: It helps you stay with it a little bit and follow through.

C2: Yea, yea. Follow through definitely. It just helps me complete the thought. Even if it is not going to be completed that day, it just helps to move it along. So those questions definitely, questions like, “What would that mean to you?” and “What exactly were you thinking?” or “What were you exactly feeling?” or “How would it make you feel?” Those kinds of things help to move it along and also pointing out the language.

R: Okay. So the last part here, you were talking about the example of the girl in the tree and that card and you said, “And really, that’s just one example of how the themes in my life were played out through my TAT assessment – There are so many more examples where that came from.” So it seems like there was a lot…, it seemed very kind of rich with…

C2: Yea, yea. It really was. I can remember probably about four cards really clearly. So, I mean it has stuck with me and it just keeps bringing up the themes I talked about with the other cards.

R: Okay, so we’ve talked a lot about how helpful it was. Were there any parts that..., I mean already you talked about the anxiety provoking and worrying about being limited and stuff like that. Were there any things that you wish were different?

C2: About the assessment session? [R: Yea] I don’t know. I haven’t really thought about doing it in a different way. I don’t know if I felt anything negative about it, but I just think it could have been a very different experience had I known what was coming out of it like before I took the tests.

R: Like how so?

C2: Like if I would have known the Meyers-Briggs was going to represent how I felt about myself rather than telling me something about myself. I don’t know if I would have taken it differently. The TAT cards, if [T2] would have said, “Now, these cards are going to relate to you.” I think that I would have been way more conscious during the whole thing. I feel like I went into it blindly, which is probably a good thing.

R: Okay, not knowing that. [C2: Yea] So you weren’t as..., yea, because it seems like then you might have approached it the same way as the Meyers-Briggs, like trying to control how they perceive me. [C2: Yea] So it was kind of better that you didn’t think of it that way.

C2: Yea, it was way better. I mean it could have been a very bad experience had I known all that beforehand. [R: Yea] But I mean, I think it was productive.
R: It seems like you got a good amount out of it.

C2: Yea, and even though I was so anti-Meyers-Briggs, I think that just that fact brought up an aspect of my personality that needed to be discussed, or that I needed to get that out. [R: Okay] Because I was so fearful of being rigid and structured and having somebody tell me something about me instead of feeling like having the strength inside to tell the paper about myself, like that. So even though I don’t believe in it or whatever, I think it was productive in that way.

R: Okay. Yea, and I noticed even here today too it seems like..., you were mentioning during the tape that it seemed you kind of got more kind of calm throughout. You were feeling kind of anxious at first but then kind of came to feel more relaxed. [C2: Yea] It seemed like the same thing here today as we were sitting here a little bit. You know, like you were kind of more anxious watching the tapes at first but then as we went along through the interview you seemed more relaxed.

C2: Yea, I feel more, um…

R: Okay, do you have any questions for me?

C2: No, I hoped that I helped you.

R: Yea, sure. It was great. I really appreciate it. I do, it has been very helpful. So, again, I keep everything anonymous and stuff like and then all the tapes and everything are going to be destroyed afterwards.

C2: Like after today?

R: No, after I am done with them. So like this tape and the other stuff stays confidential. I mean eventually I will do that, just for confidentiality purposes we do that, just to assure you of that. When I do write up results and stuff like that I keep everything very…, I remove anything that could identify you or something like that [C2: Okay] just to make it like I am talking about a very general person. If you have any questions or anything like that in the mean time just let me know. You have my phone number and my email. If you want me to give you an abstract at the end I can do that for you too. [C2: Okay]
Transcription C3

C3: I think we did this in March or April or something.

R: That’s why I wanted the written description that you had given me because that’s what I’m going to do today is read some of those segments that you wrote back to you and maybe ask you to elaborate on those. And then we are going to watch some video segments and that is why we are watching the video segments is to bring that stuff back so you can look at it and see what was going on and refresh your memory about that. Then, what I’m basically going to ask you about that, about the video clips is, “What was going on here and how was it for you?” [C3: Okay] are the two kind of guiding questions. So if you could just try to put yourself in the moment and try to talk about what it was like then and talk a little bit about what it is like to look back on it now, what it is like to see that. The only thing is we are having some technical difficulties, the tape may be hard to hear some times. What I have done in the past is sometimes we may have to stand up and get close to the TV in order to hear it, so just to give you a heads up about that. [C3: Okay] Do you have any questions or anything before we get started? [C3: No] Okay. Well, I’m going to keep an eye on the audio tape recorder here because I am going to have to flip the tape part of the way through. So no questions or anything before we get started?

C3: No, not before. No.

R: Okay, Alright. So, what I’m going to do is I’m going to ask you about the written description and then we are going to watch some of the tape and then I’m going to go back to the written description, is going to kind of be the format of it. [C3: Okay] So as part of the written description you said, “As much as I felt that I needed help, I was still apprehensive about going to therapy. I had not been to professional therapy in twenty years and have had less than helpful results from those visits.” Can you tell me a little bit about that?

C3: About being apprehensive about it? [R: Yea] Yea, I’m trying to think. Just reluctant to come in mainly because I didn’t know whether how I was feeling or the thoughts in my head warranted…, in past experiences we talked for a little while and then I would get prescribed an anti-depressant or something along those lines. And I didn’t know how much I was feeling was normal or I felt really alone. Now I do realize that I’m not the only person with these types of thoughts and problems. [R: Sure, sure.] But at that point I thought it would just be a red flag and I would be shuffled into some sort of system that…, like “One Flew Over the Cukoo’s Nest” [R chuckles and says: Okay] or something like that. And in the past experience I was in my teens, like 16. I had family counseling, did that for about a year and then [deep breath] worked a little bit as far as being able to get my opinions out and what I was feeling, but I felt like I was a little biased toward my family, like my parents and what not, and they ended up putting me on anti-depressants and they put me in a psych ward for about two months. So I was afraid of all that. [R: Okay] I didn’t know how the laws work. I know a friend of mine ended up
in a psychiatric center for a little more than a week against her will and I was just scared of a lot of that.

R: Sure, sure. There was a mention of that later. Did that happen here?

C3: For me? [R: Yea] No, that happened in (another state).

R: Okay, in (another state). [C3: Yea] So that was…, because you had mentioned in here that that had happened and I didn’t know if that was from this time or from a past time.

C3: No, this is…, everything has been fine. This time I’ve had some behavioral, depression and self-confidence problems for years, but I had a long term relationship break up and that was kind of the straw that broke the camel’s back [R: Okay] and I was glad to find out about this place and it has been a real help.

R: Great, great. Do you feel like some of the negative past experiences and the apprehension affected the initial meeting with [T3] in any way?

C3: Oh yea, I mean I tried to be as honest as I could about certain questions or evaluations, but at the same time the whole time I’m thinking, [chuckles] “You’ve got to watch what you say. You have to watch the wording with how you say certain things and not... I don’t want to say “not be emotional about how you answer,” but definitely don’t want to show extreme signs of anger or suicidal thoughts or anything like that.” Not that I had them but I went in with the preconceived notion that I wasn’t going to overreact.

R: So a little guarded and maybe careful about how you answered.

C3: Very, and not really knowing what to expect anyway. You know, I kind of found out about this place through word of mouth so I didn’t really know what it was into at all. So yea, I was definitely guarded. [both laughed]

R: And that’s understandable considering some of the past experiences. That follows from what you said, you also said, “My initial visit was a nervous one.” Is that what you meant by that?

C3: Very, yea. Because I felt like getting evaluated..., I’m sure they went over with me why, but I wasn’t..., you could have probably told me a hundred times why I was getting evaluated but at the same time I’m thinking who knows..., you know, at the end you get this score and you go up to the nut house or something. So I didn’t know, that was my main thing.

R: So you were really nervous about that.

C3: Very much so.
R: That’s understandable. Okay, okay. You also said, “I remember thinking to myself that he therapist was going to think I was crazy.” So it sounds like you were a little self-conscious maybe [C3: Very], how do you think that affected the experience?

C3: Um. After talking to [T3] for a little while, a lot of that eased away. But in the beginning, like I said, I think most of the things I thought were not normal.

R: Okay. What do you think helped to ease that?

C3: Developing a rapport with her and a relationship. I guess over a month I was able to start opening up. I mean I have been pretty honest about how I felt, but I don’t know that I’ve…, I don’t trust people right off the bat [R: That’s okay] so it took probably a good month to feel her out and then be able to open up and be receptive to what she had to say too. I’m not sure that I was fully ready for all of that.

R: Okay. For what she had to say? Giving you feedback?

C3: Yea, you know, how much I could tell her and then how much feedback. I think it took a good month before I was able to really trust her and say what was on my mind fully.

R: Yea, that makes sense. [C3: Yea] And then you mentioned…, you had a sentence in here that said, “An instant referral to a psych ward would ensue.” Was that referring to the past or you were afraid that would happen?

C3: That is what I was afraid would happen. With the evaluation I thought at the end that…, um, yea, I mean it was from the past but at the same time I thought that that is kind of how a cookie cutter thing would go about. You know, if I’m taking this thing with two hundred questions, there has got to be some right and wrong way to answer to this somehow or another. You know, I was answering as honestly as I could. Some of the ones about…, just some of them would throw red flags at me, like, “I don’t know what this is referring to or whatever, but I am going to make sure and say “no” to it.” Or something like that.

R: Okay, some of the questions on the bubble test?

C3: Yea, and not many of them but I do feel like I had the preconceived notion that there were some right and wrong answers to them.

R: Okay, some things that could have some consequences as far as maybe [C3: how I answered, exactly.] and maybe have you get sent somewhere if you said something wrong or something like that [C3: Right, right] Okay. I can see how would definitely be a concern, a big concern coming in [C3: It was] That’s understandable. Okay. Well, at this point I would like to take a break from the written description and go to the video. [C3: Okay] So this clip…, let’s see, is only about a minute long. So we are going to watch this
and then I’m going to ask you what was going on here. This is the one with the white card [C3: Okay]

[Watched first videotape segment] – C3: I didn’t even remember that.

R: Okay, so what was going on there and how was it for you?

C3: As far as me watching it now? [R: Yea] Well, I can see what I was saying about the blank sheet of paper being fog and not knowing whether to pull over or to keep going. It was just a real rough time. You know, just looking at me then too. I could tell just from my body language.

R: Looking back now you feel like you can see how rough of a time it was then?

C3: Yea, from the body language I can tell, and plus I know what I was going through at the time. I was pretty down, confused. Real unsure of that I was doing, my purpose here in Pittsburgh.

R: You feel like maybe that’s what the fog was referring to?

C3: Uncertain about anything really. Pretty dead inside, and not sure what to do with that. I felt like if I hadn’t come and got help it would eventually go away and I could kind of get on with my life until the next fog hit me. But, um…

R: How was it to look at that card? I could imagine that was pretty…, I mean a blank card is put in front of you, you know.

C3: At that point, we had gone through like seven cards or so and I was loosened up to that. I wasn’t expecting that at all [both laugh]. But I knew pretty quickly what it meant to me, because it could have been a blank card or the table, that is kind of what was going on in my head anyway. So I guess I was just kind of talking off the top of my head about what, the way I was feeling. Whereas, with the pictures I was telling a story about the picture but with this it was just more or less this is where I am right now.

R: Okay, how was it watching it now?

C3: It’s strange to see yourself on TV. I’m not used to that at all. [R: Yea] You know, I mean it is sad to see myself in that shape but at the same time I think I’ve made tons of progress so it is good to see it too.

R: Yea, I was going to say, to be able to see that and see how you were then and see the comparative progress that you have made.

C3: Yea, I think so. It’s different. [both laugh]
R: Okay, so we are going to watch the next clip. I think it is about a minute or so too. And this is right at the very end when she stopped with the cards and started talking about what it was like.

C3: What the evaluation was like?

R: Yea, so we are going to watch about a minute of this and then…

[Watched second videotape segment]

R: That was just a quick one. What was going on there and how was that?

C3: It was fine. Actually, I think she was trying to explain to me what the meaning behind coming up with the stories for the picture is. Which I understood.

R: How was that?

C3: It was fine. I think my mind was on other things at that point. You know.

R: Can you remember what you might have been thinking about at all?

C3: I think I was thinking that…, I don’t know where this is leading, but I understood what she was telling me. With this being the initial meeting, I didn’t know if we were going to have a lot more of those to do because I feel like for a good while I really just came in and talked and I think [T3] and I got about five minutes in out of the hour because I was just letting loose and talking a lot and I think that is what I was ready to do.

R: It seems like what you needed.

C3: Right, so I didn’t know how much more of this…, I understood what she was telling me about being able to refer back to these metaphors and everything and I felt like a lot of the stuff I was saying was stupid at the time.

R: And you mentioned that in there.

C3: Yea, and I remember saying that. Now looking back on it I don’t think that so much because, like I said, it had been a long time since counseling and I use a lot of metaphors in my speech anyway and we’ve used quite a bit in counseling. So, I see now how it ties in, but I was also thinking there might be some of these every time I show up and if this is some new way to have counseling if it helps that’s fine, but I just didn’t quite understand. If it was an initial thing that is one thing, but I didn’t know if we were going to have to end up taking some more tests [laughs] or whatever, so...

R: What would it have been like if there had been more stuff?
C3: If it…., at that point I was so willing to try anything to learn just learn new tools to deal with life in general, I would have gone with it. I don’t think I would have understood it. [R: Okay] And I didn’t understand that then until now. Well, until a few months ago. I do understand that metaphor could kind of give a basis to sort of see where I am, but at the time I don’t think I understood that. And I know she explained it but I don’t think I was there.

R: Okay. She did kind of explain it…, you said, “I wonder if that was stupid,” and she said, “No, no, these metaphors really help,” and you are saying you could hear it but it really took some time to really see how helpful it was.

C3: Exactly. I mean, I was thinking, “Well, if it helps them, alright. I have faith that it will help me in the long run and I will do it every week if I have to.” But to me, I feel like I’m able to just start talking. [R: Okay] So I was glad it wasn’t an every week thing. [laughs] But that was the part…

R: That you would have gone with it if you had to. [C3: Sure, sure] So looking back now how was it? Like it seems like it was hard…, like knowing that you didn’t have to do that every week but knowing it was just a onetime thing. You were saying at the time it was hard to see the benefit of it but now it seems like you have seen it more.

C3: Sure, sure. You know, if I watched the whole tape I guess I would probably have a lot insight into what I had said. Being that it was six months ago, I know a few things we talked about, I know a few of the pictures. But I do know where my head was at that point. So, from what I remember, I think it had a lot to do with making sense of where I was at the time. I think it was helpful.

R: Sure, okay, alright. So we are going to watch about three more clips or so. This next one is about a minute or so as well, so we are going to watch that.

[Watched third videotape segment]

R: So what was going on there and how was it for you?

C3: It was fine. She was asking me what I saw, if I saw myself in some of them. And I did, I remember the picture of the guy and the old lady staring out the window and that reminded me of my grandmother. I identified with that a lot and the other guy looking out the window at the birds. It was winter time at the time and I remember just staring out the window a lot waiting on spring. There were some birds and all. For some reason thinking when spring came things would change. It would be in a new light. So, I definitely saw myself in those two pictures.

R: Yea, and you said you felt like you could see yourself in all of the picture, but particularly those two.
C3: I think as I was reading the pictures, I think the one…, I started telling more of my story. I feel like I did. There was one about a violin that I didn’t…, I feel like I was just trying to tell a story but it even ended up kind of being something that was in me anyway. But I definitely identified with that. I don’t know. When I was looking at the old lady, my grandmother died of Alzheimer’s [R: Sorry to hear that] so that just hit me and I felt like the cold with the birds and stuff was where I was sort of at that moment in time anyway. So I really identified with those two.

R: Okay. So you really identified with those. And you were saying, I think the violin one was one of the earlier ones.

C3: It was. At first, I was just trying to…[R: tell a story] about the picture and not really put a lot of myself into it. But the more and more I got into it, the more and more I was just saying how I felt.

R: What do you think changed to make you feel more comfortable?

C3: I think it was easier to talk about myself. Even though I was making up a story, it was still sort of based in reality in a lot of ways. It wasn’t something I had to think about really hard. Whereas, just making up a story I sort of had to use another part of my brain to get the creative stuff going and I wasn’t really in that spot at that time anyway. I think what was on my mind was me anyway. I think that’s why it was easier. [R: It just became easier] To talk about myself rather than make something up.

R: It was easier to relate to yourself rather than try to just make something up.

C3: I think was.

R: Okay. Alright, so now we are going to watch another one and I think this is about three minutes or so. [C3: Okay] And then I will read you something that relates to this. Actually, I was going to read you this segment first. You said, “I remember a man receiving bad news, a man contemplating a woman getting older, and someone looking out of the window at birds. I was surprised at how much of myself I saw in these pictures.” It seems like that was the same thing you were just kind of saying.

C3: And I was, and even, you know, when we were talking about me being nervous and how much I talked about myself and all that. Me thinking there might be some consequences for how I answered things, there was a part of me that didn’t want to read any of myself into it. But I was surprised at how much I saw and I just went with it. At that point I think we were through with the bubble test so, yea.

R: Yea, and that’s interesting because you said that right after and I was going to ask you about that later, but I might as well ask you now. You said, “As much as I tried not to, I was relating to most of the illustrations.” So there was a part of you that didn’t want to.
C3: No, I didn’t. I didn’t [R: What was that about?] Well, part of it has to do with the consequences. I didn’t want to really be vulnerable and say too much in the first visit. You know, thinking, “Maybe over time some of this can creep out,” [laughs] you know. And then I think it is avoiding…, me just avoiding the hard things. The hard news or hard memories or whatever it is.

R: Which is what we all do.

C3: Sure, as a defense mechanism. And so rather talk about somebody else than myself. So I think that is what I’m alluding to.

R: Okay, so there is a little resistance in you.

C3: Oh, definitely. Yea, I knew I wanted help and this is how I had to go about it so I did.

R: It was for protection, to protect yourself.


R: Okay, alright. But it was interesting there because it seems like there was this protection…, there was this balance of this tension there between wanting to protect yourself but then also you simply found it easier to talk about yourself and tell stories.

C3: I did. It was taking way too much energy to try come up with something…[R: to avoid it] Yea, exactly. [both laughed]

R: Okay. So we are going to watch another segment now. This one is about three or four minutes. So we are going to watch this and then the same thing.

[Watched fourth videotape segment]

R: How was that for you?

C3: That was the couple and the old lady and the guy.

R: Yea, you were looking at those cards together there for a little bit, how was that?

C3: Yea, then we went back to see…, it was..., I forgot that the…, the couple – I couldn’t tell where they were and that tended to pry on me for some reason, I couldn’t figure that out. I guess with every one of them I knew where they were, I knew the place. But with this one I didn’t know where the place was.

R: I mean, my initial thought was that it made sense because there may have been some confusion as to where you were at in the relationship at the time.

C3: True, and I see that. I really see that.
R: But how was that in particular, being able to talk about it and go back? Because as you were talking about it you didn’t know where they were. But then she put the card back in front of you and you looked back at it together and kind of pieced it together with her. How was it to go back with her like that?

C3: Fine. I feel like I opened up more. And I got a lot more perspective into it. I ended up throwing out I think three more scenarios, you know.

R: So you feel like you got more out that when you went back to it.

C3: I feel like I did. I think it was painful for me to mess with that card. But looking back on in now I do think it had a lot to do with the uncertainty of the whole situation. [R: Sure, sure] And then with the elder person looking out the window, I was pretty certain about that one being my grandmother. I didn’t know who the guy was. I didn’t know if it was me or a lot of the males in my family. You know, when you get that kind of news over the phone you think you know what the situation is until you come back home and actually see it for yourself. And that was that.

R: Okay, and she mentioned in there…, it brought me back to something you said earlier. You said when you first came in you were really worried that there was a right or wrong with some of the bubble test answers and stuff like that. [C3: Right, right] And she actually said in that segment, “There is no right or wrong.” [C3: Right] And how was that?

C3: That was good because…, and I know she had said that before, even before I did the bubble test, and um, but the more she reiterated that it helped me ease up. At this point I think I had gotten to the point where I was a lot easier. A little bit more free with what I was saying. But, I’m glad she said that and I’m glad she said it more than once because, you know, I could have taken the approach to where I don’t hardly say anything and say, “That is as far as I can go with that,” and not be honest. You know, I didn’t want to do that at all. But yea, that was a hard card for me.

R: It is interesting because you were saying that it is tough and painful and it was a hard card, but it seems like you got a lot out of it too.

C3: I did. Especially now, seeing it now. I remember seeing the card. I didn’t really remember what I said about it other than the guy getting some news that he wasn’t expecting. Seeing it now there is a lot more clarity to it. It’s amazing honestly. But I guess, you know, hindsight is 20/20. But, months down the road I’m able to see where I was and I guess a lot of answers were there for me. It just takes a while to process and see them. It’s interesting.

R: And at the end there was talk about another metaphor that came out about a dawning and a realizing [C3: An awakening] and feelings that were there. [C3: Yea] How was that?
C3: It was good. I think I was more alluding to the news, like this moment of surprise. Maybe awakening for the guy with the lady who just didn’t really fully understand until you see with your own eyes. So, it makes sense. It wasn’t tough, but at the same time I was reading a lot of myself into both situations. I was alluding to me coming to therapy and alluding to a change of lifestyle, a change of relationship status, all of that. An awakening.

R: A lot of changes for you going on at the time.

C3: An awakening. Just waking up, I guess, part of my life that hadn’t been there in a while, if ever.

R: Yea, because there was…, I’m wondering how that fit with the metaphor of the fog too. There was this fog and there is also this awakening. [C3: Right] That there is hope there.

C3: Right, exactly. And you know when the fog comes back home you either keep your eyes on it or you pull over and wait for it to pass. There is no right or wrong in that, [both chuckle] each one has got its risks.

R: That’s a good point. Okay. So we have one more clip. This one is a longer one, it is about nine minutes or so. So we are going to watch that and there is a lot in that but we will go through it. And then I will only have a few more questions from the written description after that so we are in the home stretch, so to speak.

[Watched fifth videotape segment] – [Flipped the audiotape]

R: So how was that for you?

C3: That was good. I forgot all about that.

R: [laughs] What stood out for you about it?

C3: Talking about the self-defeat and being able to get out of bed and, I guess, talking myself into not thinking negatively and being productive. I forget how long I had been doing that. If I could do that then I could usually have a pretty good day, but if I couldn’t do it my day was pretty much shot. I’m not so much doing that anymore. I don’t have so many bad days. I guess I have some moments, but I usually get my stuff together and stay busy. And then falling back into the comfortable and not challenging myself. Paying attention to what my body’s telling me, which is to move or do something. I didn’t realize that I had said that big of a mouthful during the first part of it. But, um…

R: Yea, it seemed like you were talking about the difficulty with just getting going and stuff like that, but [T3] was supportive. She was saying, “There is a curiosity there,” and she could see that motivation, that desire to want to get up and get going. How was that?
C3: Very, very encouraging. It made me want to come back, where somebody was actually listening to me. Like I said, my biggest fear was that I was just going to get an anti-depressant prescription. I went to personal counseling in my junior college before this…, before coming here and it was more career oriented. I mean, you get into your personal problems and they are like, “Whoa. You need to go see somebody else,” and whatever. So it was real encouraging to have somebody saying that. That she is recognizing some positive out of all that negative. So, it was real encouraging. And then the three times it happened thing, [R: Yea] That stuck with me since that day.

R: Yea, I remember her saying that (T3: in the video segment - “Something is a habit if it happens three times…”)

C3: And it’s true. I guess that was my second visit maybe. The first time I couldn’t…, I was focused on where I needed to go and try to figure out where I am, but the second time it got a little bit better and now it’s down pat, it’s not a big deal. I was thinking that my school started this past week and I remember the first couple weeks of doing that. Not knowing the campus, and you know, it’s the same thing now, I wear it like an old pair of shoes or something.

R: Yea, that was really interesting. You said, “At first I didn’t even see the buildings,” because you were so focused…

C3: No, and I usually don’t. I get this tunnel vision and it’s the truth. But, you know, I’m getting out of that.

R: It also seems like with the time too. Like with the repetition, it frees up…, you don’t have to focus on the task so much anymore. You can look around a little more.

C3: That’s exactly right. It’s becoming comfortable, which is what I have to watch. I feel like I have to watch the comfortability. I mean, it is okay to have comfort in certain aspects, but I need to keep pushing to the uncomfortable too.

R: Yea, you talked about that. So there is that balance of feeling comfortable but pushing yourself and challenging and being curious.

C3: Because sometimes the comfortable is not what you want, it’s just comfortable. Even then, I’m learning to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations, I guess, where the tunnel vision lays off and I’m able to enjoy the present and even if I am in a new spot that is not familiar to me I still enjoy it. I don’t have to go there three times as a habit or whatever before I am comfortable in the place.

R: Yea. You also mentioned…, there was a metaphor of…, you were talking about the fog. That was the first thing that started off this clip was the white card and you talked about the fog and how it reminded you of back home and having to drive through it. But then there was this car accident metaphor, of having to brace for it or you know, not
knowing, and it fit with the protection theme that we have been talking about. [C3: Right] How was that? It seemed to play right in. It was right there with how you were feeling that day, it seems. [C3: Yea] I don’t know whether to brace for what is going to happen next or something like that.

C3: Yea, and I think it was ultra heightened by the relationship status. But, I think I have felt like that for a good part of my life.

R: Okay, you mean the relationship with your girlfriend?

C3: No, just in life in general. Just waiting for the other shoe to drop or bracing for the impact of..., you know, “if things are good they can’t last so when is this going to crash down?” type of situation.

R: Okay. You said, “It was heightened by the relationship stuff.” By your girlfriend?

C3: I think at that point it was definitely heightened.

R: By that, but you constantly felt like that: bracing.

C3: Constantly. Even the 10 years earlier. I feel like that has been a running metaphor for my life for a long time.

R: And it really speaks to your experience, it sounds like.

C3: Yea, in a lot of ways, and to a lot of people’s. I just feel that as a defense mechanism I use that to not achieve and to not get close to too many people and use it as an excuse to stay comfortable. I just feel like I’m moving away from that. Definitely made progress as far as that goes, which feels good. I think I feel better than I have felt in a long, long time.

R: Great, great. Okay, and there was a portion from that segment that we didn’t watch where both of you go onto talk about how this assessment how has stirred up things for your work together that you can work on. She emphasizes working..., being able to work on it together and build on it and the benefit of having something out there, out there for you to kind of work on. How do you think…., do you have any thoughts about that?

C3: Yea, and you know after looking at the clips I realize that we have worked on that. So when we first started, when I wrote that for you and she brought up the proposal of doing this, I was thinking, “Poor [T3] has sat here and listened to me for a month and a half and I don’t think she has gotten a word in edgewise because I have just been unloading.” Then when we finally had gotten to me slowing down and doing this back and forth, I realized that we had worked on a lot of this. And we might not have hardly ever referred back to those photos or the pictures..., there’s a lot that was in in those pictures and that we did talk about in the assessment that we did come back to. And I really didn’t realize it until seeing it. And even just now talking about the comfortability and the fog and moments of clarity and all that, I mean we really touch on that a lot. So, I
guess maybe it helped her get insight into what was going on with me and open the door for me to start communicating about it.

R: Sounds like it opened up stuff for you too.

C3: It did. But rather than going and saying, “Okay, remember about the photo and this,” and I’m like, “Naw.” You know, [R: It just kind of went with it] It just kind of goes with what we are talking about anyways. So, I guess since it has already been brought up at one point, you don’t really have to refer to…

R: You don’t have to refer to the card specifically.

C3: No, because it is really coming from something within you anyway, I guess. [R: Yea, yea] But I didn’t realize that until I just saw it.

R: Okay. You had mentioned at one point too, you said, “I found it fairly fun to pick my brain for answers to questions that I don’t usually get asked.” [C3: Yea] So there was a fun part to it too.

C3: Yea, like when you first fill in the blank thing it was almost like adlibs or whatever [laughs]. But, yea. It was..., They were hard questions too. It’s not like, “Who was the first president of the United States?” or anything like that. [laughs] I enjoyed it though.

R: So there was a fun part to it too.

C3: Yea, that was the funnest.

R: The sentence completion?

C3: Yea, and I don’t know why. I guess it is my personality or something. I enjoyed it, and it was short. [both laugh]

R: Unlike this, so I appreciate it.

C3: No, no, no. I was just saying…

R: Okay, and then at one point you said, “In conclusion, the assessment was fairly painless. I often look forward to my continuous visits and am grateful to be learning to use the tools that I need to carry on with my growth.” So, did you feel like the assessment helped ultimately with therapy and the stuff like that, the things you have been working on?

C3: I mean, now I do. If you had asked me that before watching the clips I would have probably said, “I don’t know really what…, other than if it helped [T3], I don’t know if it helped me do anything.” But…
R: But that changed, it seems, after watching the clips.

C3: Yea, seeing this now. I knew we had brought up…, maybe some things were brought up. But for the most part it looks like we pretty much…, I don’t want to say we are still talking about the same things we were when we started, but we built on a lot of that and it’s interesting to see that. [R: Okay] But yea, it was fairly painless. I’ve got more trust in the whole atmosphere now. I’m a lot more honest, which I guess is because we built upon it. But yea, it wasn’t a bad experience at all.

R: Okay. Great. Is there anything else that you had thoughts or comments on or anything like that?

C3: Naw, I remembered when she said, “We are going to film you,” and I thought, “Aw crap.” [laughs] Anyway, I think this did good. That is another piece of the puzzle that fits in there and maybe I just never even thought to look at that.

R: Which part?

C3: Just the evaluation, building upon it. If I hadn’t seen that I would have probably said that I didn’t know what good it did for me. But now I see it.

R: Well, great. That’s it, that’s all as far as the information gathering from my end. Just let you know I’m going to write stuff up and I will make that available to you at some point if you would like to review it, the findings and stuff in there. [C3: Sure] All of this stuff stays completely confidential, nobody else sees it, just to let you know that. [C3: Sure] And then at the end it will be destroyed. And then if you have any questions in the mean time, you have my email and my phone number.

C3: Same here. If you need me again for something we didn’t get here or whatever.

R: I really appreciate you help with this.

C3: I’m sorry for the whole difficulty with having to reschedule the interview last time.

R: Don’t worry about that at all.

C3: Good luck with everything.

R: Thanks a lot, you too.
Transcription C4

R: And have you ever seen yourself on tape before? Okay, so just to let you know it might be a little jarring at first or something like that. But let me know how that goes, if you have any reactions to that as we go along. But what we are basically going to do today is I’m going to ask you some prepared questions I have today that I created based on the written description you gave me and some video clips that we are going to watch together. I will ask you as we go along, but with the written descriptions I will read segments of that and then ask you to elaborate on that or specific questions regarding them that I had about some of the stuff you said or ask you to just tell me more. And then with the video clips, just keep in mind the main questions I will ask are, “What was going on here?” and “How was it for you?” Just those kind of two things. [C4: Sure] And then we will just kind of have a conversation about it and see how it goes. Do you have any questions before we get started? [C4: I’m good] Okay, I really appreciate you doing this again. Thank you. [C4: No problem.] Okay. Do you want to get any water or anything like that? [C4: I’m cool] Okay, And I may need to stop and flip the audiotape here in a little bit, so. Alright, so let’s get started. The first question I was going to ask was about one of the first sentences you had in the written description. You said, “I was not anxious about being assessed, since I not only had experience with it, but also do not mind wearing my heart on my sleeve.” Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

C4: I’ve always been kind of a sensitive person. I’ve never been the kind to kind of like enter my shell, so to speak. I know many people are kind of anxious about sharing what is on their minds, if that makes sense. [R: Okay] I’ve never been one to be afraid to just bare myself, bare my all, let people know who I am and let people see into me. And I know sometimes when people are trying to get to know a psychologist or something they are kind of holding back, but I am not that kind of person so I was just completely relaxed. [R: Okay] At least on the inside anyway.

R: Okay, and you also said, “I admit, I rather like being assessed.” [C4: Mmhm] “It provides a kind of checkpoint, if one will, for me to see where I am (from a different perspective).” Can you say a little bit more about that?

C4: Sure. I don’t know when it started, but I’ve always liked the idea of someone else looking at me from somewhat of a different view point. I mean, we kind of have our own limitations based on the body we live in and dealing with the only perspective we have. But I really enjoy seeing other people’s points of view about me. Not in a harsh critical sense, necessarily. But more or less in the, “I want to try to help you become a better person,” kind of deal. [R: Okay] Does that make sense? [R: Yea] Okay, that is kind of where I was coming from.

R: Okay. So it is helpful for you to get another perspective on what is going on with you. [C4: Yea] And you were looking forward to that, it sounds like. [C4: Yea] Okay. You also said, “[T4a], my therapist, had told me the week before that he would be showing me some flash cards with pictures: all I had to do was explain what I saw happening in the picture. I was excited about taking part in the specific analysis because I had never done
anything like it in the past. All of the previous assessments were through talking only (which is fine, but it becomes a bore after a while).” [Both chuckle]

C4: I don’t know if it is pop culture or what but you know, I also did the Rorschach thing, but there is something about this idea of having this seemingly objective standpoint of which to base yourself on. And I know that sounds kind of limiting, but on some level I think it is good because it kind of gives us a base from which to work from. And because I had never like encountered this…, like the test in and of itself is just talking, and the bubble test I took like the first or second day. I forget, it might have been after that. But whenever I looked at it I liked it because it was the same idea of the objective standpoint. But at the same rate it was kind of reminding me of high school and the SATs and I just was like, “Uh, this is kind of turning me off.” So the last parts were kind of like this break in what I perceived as this kind of monotony. It’s almost like we want to break the cycle sometimes, get out of the habit. That is what I saw it as because I was still being assessed, which is what I really liked – to find out about myself and all that jazz, but it was still different enough in that I could engage it. Does that make sense?

R: Yea, it sounds like what you are saying is it was more interactive [C4: Yea] like the cards were versus the bubble test, [C4: Yes] which was more solitary, kind of like.


R: Okay, okay, and can you compare it to…, you mentioned in there some previous assessment experiences. How did it compare to that? You started to compare it a little bit in there saying it was mainly talking in some previous assessments.

C4: Yea, I had been to two therapists before. The first therapist I met only once and my parents and I decided we were not a good fit.

R: What was that about?

C4: I think she was a behaviorist and I don’t want to put the woman down but she was kind of cold for me. I guess I am kind of attracted to the existential way Duquesne does stuff. [R: Okay] The next therapist I met she was really really spiritual and the idea of incorporating spirituality and existential themes into the therapy, I was really into that. So, there wasn’t necessarily just talking at that point. There was really like this other dynamic added to it. Does that answer your question?

R: Yea, so there was something that appealed to you about the existential side of it. You are a philosophy major, right?

C4: Yes I am.

R: And so I can see why that would be the case. But it seems like the colder approach, I guess, somewhat more distant, didn’t appeal to you as much.
C4: It was more robotic. [R: Okay] It didn’t make me feel like I was as subjective as people should be considered.

R: So they weren’t appreciating your subjectivity.

C4: Yea, yea. [Both laugh] They weren’t appreciating my subjectivity. There you go. But everyone else was.

R: You seem pretty emphatic about that.

C4: Yea, I am. [Both laugh] That’s my thing I guess.

R: Okay, so it seems like this was something you were looking forward to. This experience to learn about yourself in this type of way and be more engaged, it seems like, with the cards versus…, not only between the different style of therapist and the approaches you had but also within this you could notice a difference in the types of tests, it seems like, that were used and it seems like there was a preference for the cards.

C4: I think it goes back to that subjectivity thing because there is no right or wrong answer. I mean know with the bubble test there was a right or wrong answer, but it was like somehow my psyche was connecting that with the past. Like you are basing your future on this test that you are taking right now. [R: Okay] And with the cards it is just like it is a piece of art. And it is like you go to a museum and you are looking at it and appreciating it and you are kind of contemplating it. That is kind of like what I was doing here, only it wasn’t for an assignment or just for the sake of contemplating art or however you want to say it. It was actually to benefit myself. [R: Yea] So I really felt like my own subjective interpretation of those cards was actually being put to use somehow. Not that if it didn’t get put to use it would be worthless or something. But I mean, it was helpful I guess. So there you go.

R: Great, thanks. [C4: No problem] Alright, so let’s transition into looking at some video and see what is going on. Usually the clips are just a few minutes long and I will try to keep it to that. So we will just watch a few of them and then I will ask “What was going on there?” and “How was it for you?” and maybe ask some follow up questions besides that. Okay? [C4: Yea, sure] Okay, so let me know how it is, your first time seeing yourself on video and let me make sure you can hear everything okay. This one is a somewhat shorter one. Yea it is about a minute long.

[Watched first videotape segment]

R: Okay, what was going on there and how was it for you?

C4: That was just one of our regular meetings. I remember that.

R: That was the very beginning, right when you sat down.
C4: Yea. What I was doing was with my folder was he gives me my receipt, I put it away, get it out of the way so I can focus on the session. Yea, I remember that day, like I was sitting on the couch out there and when he said I seemed agitated, I remember that. But, I remember him saying that..., I remember my reaction to him, but I honestly..., like I said in the video I don’t remember feeling agitated out in the waiting room. Yea, I think he had my assessment results that day and I remember being really..., whatever it was he asked me, I remember being really like anxious in a good way to find out about it and see what they said and where we could take this and get advice about it or whatever. Does that make sense?

R: Yea. I was just wondering how it was because it seemed like maybe he might have misread you for a minute, like “You’re agitated,” “No, I’m really not.” And that may have thrown things off a little, but it seemed like toward the end and when we watch the rest maybe we can come back to it, but it didn’t seem to really affect the flow too much of how things were going. It seemed like somewhat of an awkward moment at the beginning but then after that it seemed alright.

C4: Yea. I think with things with [T4a]..., I can’t really give you an example from my personal life, but with [T4a] and my other therapist I really don’t feel like they are pointing out that I am experiencing something negative like that. Like agitation is negative and means you are generally experiencing something that isn’t good. But I feel like when a therapist like [T4a] points that out I really feel like he is not attacking me, even though in a nice voice someone outside of the Clinic might say that to me and their intentions are the same as [T4a], there is something about this atmosphere and something about how I relate to him as therapist to client that really makes it seem like he is looking out for my best interests and really trying to help me out. I’m not trying to be cynical and say I don’t believe anyone else does that to me or is going that, but there is something about the dynamic between me and him in this setting that really is different. He teaches a class before mine in _______ Hall and when I see him I feel really like awed. I mean, we never talk, we never see each other. I just see him in the hall way, and it’s just really weird it’s like he is another person. He has his own life and I know that he does, but I just feel like it’s weird, like there is something going on here. Did I get that...

R: No, that’s good. It’s interesting. So it’s weird and strange to see him outside of this context. [C4: Yea] But you kind of of give him the benefit of the doubt when you are meeting with people in a therapeutic context that they have your best interests in mind when asking those kind of questions and stuff like that. [C4: Mmhm] Yea, okay. I was just wondering because it seemed like there could have been a point of a disconnect there or something like that, but at the same time it didn’t seem to effect things overall. [C4: Nuhuh] And he seemed pretty genuine at the end, as far as saying, “I was just wondering how you are doing and maybe I should have just asked that instead of reading stuff in.” How was that?

C4: That was fine, yea. I didn’t see any problem with him pointing that out. I guess it’s just the way I think of [T4a]. I don’t know what else to say...
R: Okay. How was it seeing yourself on tape?

C4: It was funny. I didn’t know I sound like that.

R: Were you worried about how you might...

C4: Not that I felt distorted but like hearing my voice... like how I hear my voice and how other people say they hear it is different. Because I know I have a deep voice but it doesn’t sound deep to me because I am so used to it. And like someone else might say, “You have a deep voice,” and I might be like, “Okay, whatever.” But when I hear it on TV, it’s almost like the camera represents that objective standpoint that I was talking about earlier. [R: Huh] It’s almost like the camera tells it the way it is, so to speak. And I can’t regulate it because I am in my body, know what I mean? [R: Yea] But it was funny because I didn’t know I sound like that.

R: So the way you sound kind of stood out for you. I think that is a common thing usually when people hear themselves on tape, like an answering machine or something like that you sound different. So it takes you back to that objective side and it gives us back something sometimes that is not what we expected. So, this is the next clip. This is right after you were doing the drawing of your family. [C4: Oh yea. I remember that] And this is right after he asked you to draw yourself. He looked at your picture and realized that you hadn’t drawn yourself in there. So this is right after that and it is probably about five minutes.

[Watched second videotape segment]

R: Okay, so what was going on there and how was it for you?

C4: Um, I forget if it was the week before or that very same day. [T4a] asked me to draw on a piece of paper my mom, my dad, my siblings, and me. And I was supposed to just draw them doing something. I forget why, but I don’t think [T4a] was so much interested in what they were doing as where I placed them. I placed my parents and my two siblings in a box shape and I placed myself off to the side walking off the page and I think he was asking me about that.

R: Yea, because he was saying..., right at the very beginning he was pointing out how you initially started drawing yourself in the middle but then changed your mind and drew yourself on the side walking away.

C4: So you want me to talk about that?

R: Yea, and how was that for you, like that process of talking about it with him and getting some feedback about it?

C4: Well, all of this was very, I don’t want to say healing, but it was very insightful. [R: Okay] I guess because in that situation we were kind of bringing out something that I had
never really acknowledged in my head before. Like, I knew it was there but I had never really brought it to the front. Does that make sense? [R: Yea] Yea, okay. I’m telling you this has been so weird. What I just watched has just happened to me in the past few weeks, it is so crazy. [R: Really] Not this week but last Friday when I met with him, that was all I talked about was the graduate school, different ideas, splitting apart. It was just so much more intensified in this one, so I feel like I am kind of continuing with it in that sense. But, I drew myself with a backpack going off the page because I kind of look at myself as a student, but not just a student, like even in the real world I look at myself as a person who doesn’t want to stop learning, who is an academic. I mentioned I want to be a professor someday, maybe I will, I don’t know. But I really go back to that image of me drawing myself off the page because I really feel like…, and like I said this has really been intensified over the past few weeks, or maybe since I last met…, maybe since that video, this idea of me finding my own path, me going off away from them because he mentioned…, you both mentioned how I drew myself in the middle of the page. Well, that is because I was the center of my parents’ world and I think a lot of other kids might envy that when they don’t have siblings that are…, when other people have siblings that are close in age like their parents have to divide their attention. [R: Sure] I think a lot of people would be jealous of that and it’s like people might be saying, “You don’t know what you have.” And I’m like, “Well yea, but I’m the one who actually has it and I’m used to it so much that I don’t think anything of it.” So I think I kind of take it for granted but because that has been virtually my whole life. My siblings are way older than me, they were out of the house when I was growing up. Part of me has that…, like I have so much attention from my parents that it is almost like too much and I just want to break away from it and be on my own. And I talked about that with [T4a] going away to graduate school for the first time. And, um...

R: So it seems like that drawing – that picture, that image, that representation – has really stuck with you because that was some time ago. That was several months ago and even now, even within the past few weeks you still have been talking about it and it has been opening things up for you, it sounds like.

C4: Yea, I don’t know if it is like that major shift in life, but I think I have been kind of readying myself for it for a long time because I know it was going to happen. [R: Okay] I think some part of me thinks that if I start dealing with it not it won’t be painful later.

R: Okay. So it kind of sparked something for you to work on later and to continue working on, it seems like. [C4: Mmhm] Yea, okay, alright. And how is it to do that? It seems like it was helpful.

C4: Yea, I like the exercises and that one in particular. I mean, I just drew stick figures but it really caused me to put some thought into what I was doing. Not that I didn’t think about anything else before, but it almost seemed like just talking, okay that is one thing, anyone can just talk. And then it’s like, okay, looking at a piece of art and then giving your interpretation of it, well that is another thing. The similarities between those two exercises was me just kind of sort of being passive, like I was just taking it in I wasn’t necessarily being proactive in it, if that makes sense. [R: Mmhm] But the drawing like
forced me to like actually put something in my head. I don’t know if that makes sense. [R: Okay] There was something about this direct connection between me and the real world that like…

R: The physical representation [C4: Yes] of what was in your head. [C4: Yea] Okay, there was something very helpful about that [C4: Yea] getting out and externalizing it.

C4: Yea, because in the art there is that physical representation but it is not mine. So it’s almost like I’m kind of dependent on this other think to tell me what I’m thinking. Whereas, if I just do it myself there is no miscommunication, there is no indirect communication. It’s all very…, like you are getting the genuine article, I guess.

R: And very much different from the bubble test too, it seems like, because with the bubble test it is just given to you just fill it in. Whereas, with this it is your own, you make it your own, you own expression.

C4: Yea, I like that. Yea, so…

R: Okay, with this next one he asks you…, this is about another five minute clip and he asks you what you see in it. I think he was telling you…, he asks you to look at what you have drawn and see what you see and have you talk about that.

[Watched third video segment]

R: So, how was that?

C4: Watching it I felt…, the first one I was really into and this one I felt really…, I almost felt like I just kind of depressed myself. It’s kind of weird.

R: Like as you watched it? [C4: Yea] Or you felt like you may have been depressed when you were talking about it?

C4: Oh, when I was actually doing it? [R: Mmhm] Oh, I don’t remember what it was like.

R: Okay, but now as you were watching it…

C4: I became really depressed just now.

R: Okay, what do you think was going on with that?

C4: Well, it wasn’t with my dad. The explanation I gave with him was more to the point. It was sort of with my brother. Something about this dynamic…, anyway, sorry, I think I just figured it out but maybe I should talk it through. [R: Okay] Something about how I see my siblings as having what I want. The whole American dream – the spouse, the kid, the house, the car, all that, and the good job – and it’s like that is the center of their universe and even though it is complicated in other ways and other families work through
their problems they have, which I kind of elaborated on there. Looking back I think that was just the details of what I was going through at the time. But in the big picture, I feel like…, not that I can’t have those things or that I can’t get those things, but I feel like my…, I don’t want to say my passion but that is what I am thinking of. Like my direction in life is just really…, I don’t want to say an exception to the rule because I don’t want to sound like I’m better than anyone else because I know I’m not, it’s just one of those things where certain people are called to do certain things. And I just feel like I’m so not the nine to five everyday person. I feel like I’m so not the kind of person that falls into place. And it’s so weird, I just talked to [T4a] about this today. It’s so strange how this is connecting.

R: How it is paralleling – watching this tape to what you have been talking about in therapy.

C4: Yea, It’s like I just feel like I’m on this border area between the youthful idealist who feels invincible and this person who is in the real world and understands the way things really work. Realism, you might say. I feel like I am at that border area now in my life and I kind of felt like looking at this…, like if you think of it as a class then that is like an intro, like that is an intro to [my] life and this is [my] life now. Yea.

R: It’s interesting. Yea. And again, like we were saying with the last clip it seems like there is a lot of stuff that was there that is still coming out now and still very relevant for you, it seems like, even to the point where it is paralleling things going on now. You were saying that was like an intro class and now it is like you are in the upper level classes.

C4: I am in a Kierkegaard class and we are reading his philosophical fragments and one of the images he uses is walking backwards into the future and as best as I can make sense of it is…, I’m not sure he is referring to Christians or human beings in general but we’ll just say human beings. Human beings like…, we all go through phases in our lives and we kind of shed the old skin – like I shed my high school skin, I shed my college freshman skin and all of that stuff. So, I’m moving forward in my life, but I kind of reflect on what is happening. I can’t predict the future and that is what I feel like is going on here. I feel like I am looking at my old self. I feel like I’m looking at a part of me that is like dead, or at least has been transformed in some way. And just now watching myself now with the hand motions, that is how I talk sometimes, I felt like I wanted to yell at myself like I would yell at a sports player on TV. [R chuckles] Like, “Just do it,” you know. Just tell them. It’s like when my dad would yell at the Steelers to just put the ball in the end zone. [R chuckles] I feel like I was yelling at myself just now saying, “[C4], just get it out!” because looking back on this video I know what I was trying to say but at the time I didn’t and I am just frustrated with myself. [R: Okay] If that makes any sense.

R: Yea, yea. Okay. That’s interesting, yea. The walking backwards and then drawing yourself walking off the page. That is interesting imagery, how it relates. We will watch one more clip and then we will go back to the written description a bit more. So in this one you are discussing the responses where you are talking about the cards and stuff like
that. And he is discussing your responses to the cards with the pictures on them with you. Okay, and this one is about four minutes long.

[Watched fourth videotape segment]

R: So how was that for you, to talk about that?

C4: Um, I think I felt like I was getting something out that I kept in. Because I remember as a child I was just always…, this reminds me of it, I was just always like trying to please people and get their approval for stuff. And I knew that certain things were unacceptable and not, but I felt like if I…, and I know I just mentioned it, we just read it, that I wear my heart on my sleeve, well that didn’t really happen until about middle school. In elementary school I kind of felt like I had to obey these rules, like you are supposed to want to hang out with people, you are supposed to want to do certain things and really I just didn’t want to. One thing I just said…, I can’t believe I’m saying this, but I feel like I actually disagree with myself on something I just said which was about…, maybe I misheard it, but I felt like I just said…, I heard myself say that I dislike people. I would disagree with that. I do like people, but it’s almost like it has that aspect of like…, I hate to bring this up, but it is like with the free choice. Like the family, I mentioned family gatherings. It’s like I was forced into it and part of me didn’t like that because my free choice was taken away from me. Whereas, if I was given a choice to go I would be really happy [R: Okay] because I would be responsible for my actions. I know that scares a lot of people but it doesn’t scare me, I guess, I don’t know. I was just going to mention that in reference to the video it makes me feel, oh man, what’s the word…., I don’t know, I’m sorry, I lost my train of thought.

R: That’s okay. If it comes back to you just let me know. But it did seem to relate to what we were talking about with comparing yourself to your siblings and things like that. Your mom as your playmate and stuff like that. I just keep seeing these parallels with what you were talking about as far as these comparisons that you are coming up with now, like comparing yourself to your brother and sister and then in the last clip you were talking about that as well. [C4: Yea] Yea, so it seemed to bring up some stuff for you, because it started off talking about the um…, I think he asked you about a back injury or something like that, an accident or something like that, and that shifted into thinking that maybe you were the accident in some way or something like that. That got brought up and it was just interesting to see that shift like that.

C4: Mmhm. Yea. I don’t know what to say about that.

R: Okay. How was that? I mean, you were saying the other clip made you feel a little bit more depressed looking at it. Was there a response to this one?

C4: Oh, yea. I guess I kind of felt…., I know what the feeling is I just can’t put the word to it. Um, what was it? Maybe if I describe it that will help. I felt like I was looking at part of me that was…., how would I say this? Almost like I was angry at someone or something but I couldn’t pinpoint what it was so I just kind of kept it in [R: Okay]
because I couldn’t find a way to express it because I kind of didn’t know what it was. Like two clips ago when I said I got really depressed when like I was starting to be my brother, that is kind of what I mean. Like I was kind of harboring some secret hatred of him the whole time and it didn’t really…, I didn’t know what it was so…

R: So even watching it now is bringing stuff up for you. I mean it seems like in the moment it was bringing out some connections, but even now it seems to be bringing up some emotional stuff for you. [C4: Yea] Okay. So, I am going to read you some more of the things you had written and then we can to back to some more clips. [C4: Sure] You said…, it seems to relate to some of these pictures, you said, “I noticed on at least one occasion that by simply talking about my life, I was seeing some recurring themes. The most notable of which, were the flash cards with the pictures.” So it seems like just in general, you were saying, that just helped to bring stuff out for you. I don’t know if there is anything…

[Flipped the audiotape]

C4: Yea, it was kind of funny, like those themes I think have stayed consistent but…, this is going to sound really weird, like the feelings they evoke are the same, but the word would be different. [R: Hmm] For example, I mentioned heartache, sadness and confusion. [R: Mmhm] Like…, this is weird. Okay, I think I would take out…, it’s like an advanced stage, like it’s kind of evolved. Like it’s no longer sadness and confusion, it has like an advanced aspect to it. Man, I’m sounding like Kierkegaard today. [R chuckles] I feel like it has evolved into alienation in a way. I feel like sadness and confusion here in the paper were two separate things, but as time has gone on, like I just mentioned before that things have become more intense, I feel like those two things have kind of combined into something bigger. Does that make sense?

R: Yea. So it seems like not only here…, it might be kind of like what you were saying before with the intro class, where it was something to build on. Like you had something and now with the work on it…, like you said at the end, “Now I know what [T4a] and I have to work on.” It’s taken its direction now and you’ve changed it so it has a different meaning. The feeling is still there but it has a different word or the way we call it, so maybe it has changed because of the work you have done. [C4: Yea, exactly.] Now I feel like I am putting words in your mouth. [R laughs]

C4: No, you are describing it perfectly. That’s what it is, that’s what it is. So, yea, it’s fine.

R: Okay, so yea. So all of that stuff is still there, you are just calling it differently. The emotions are still kind of there but you have built on it so to speak.

C4: Yea, I agree.

R: Okay, let’s go to the next clip here, and this one is only about a minute long. You doing okay?
C4: Oh, I’m fine. Just taking it in.

R: You had just discussed your struggles with philosophy, feeling picked apart after getting some papers back.

C4: Oh goodness, oh man.

R: It’s about a minute and a half and then we will talk about it.
[Watched fifth videotape segment]

R: Okay. What was going on there and how was it for you?

C4: In that situation? [R: Mmhm] I was taking ancient philosophy with my philosophy core for Dr. _______ and I had just written something about one philosopher or another and he handed it back with marks all over the place and I was just like, “Oh, I’m a failure. I can’t do this.” And I’m like, “Well, I’ve heard people get their ideas picked apart worse than I have so what am I really complaining about?” It was a new experience for me, I was like, “What should I do? Should I be concerned? Should I panic? Should I work on it? Should I just let it take its course?” [T4a] mentioned the struggle, “Should I just struggle through it?” That’s what was going on.

R: Okay, and how was that? I mean, he mentioned at one point, “I don’t want to downplay the struggle…” like he is empathizing, you know. He was saying he understands that it is hard but it is also saying be kind of like a hazing process, just something you have to go through or something like that. And he also asked what it was like for you to hear that feedback. How was all of that for you?

C4: It was fine. It felt like he was bridging the gap that I talked about earlier between client and therapist. The way I see him in public is different than the way I see him here. It’s almost like in that instant he was bringing a part of himself into the conversation. Not that like, you know, therapist and client are robotic. Not like it is a stimulus-response kind of thing. It is definitely kind of organic in a sense. But like with that instant I felt like…, when I said, “Yea, yea, it’s totally fine,” or whatever, and even when his cell phone went off it didn’t bother me because it feels like I am relating to his humanness. And when a therapist brings their humanness, for lack of a better word, into the conversation it kind of makes it more real for me. Like I mentioned that the first therapist I saw was a behaviorist who was really cold and kind of like a robot. I don’t like that. There is something about when he mentioned the struggles slash hazing process like that’s…, I understood that he wasn’t trying to cast aside my concerns but I think that he was trying to make me to see it for what it really was, which is exactly what I think as a therapist he is meant to do. So I in that kind of instance, compared to the other people…

R: So you feel like he was bringing his humanness into the room in that particular interaction.
C4: Yea, well maybe it was by chance, but the cell phone really added to it because it was like he is not just this person who goes away…, like in cartoons you see robots just go into closets for the night. This person is real.

R: So it adds this extra dimension to him when he brings in that genuine humanness.

C4: Yea, and the thing with the hazing process would serve to underscore that because what about a person who has a therapist who never has their cell phone go off? Like how would you relate…, it would have to be something in the conversation I think, if that makes sense.

R: So it made it easier to relate even though…, being able to see his…, you know like most times when a cell phone might go off or something like that we might see it as, like “Oh man, I shouldn’t have let that happen,” or something like that, but that helped you really to connect to him on the other hand. Yea, because it made him more human, he wasn’t like this perfect kind of like being or something like that.

C4: Yea. So, does that answer your question?

R: Yea, Thank you. [C4: No problem] Well, we have two more video clips here and then I’m going to ask you a little bit more about the written description and then we will be done. [C4: Alright] This next one is about another minute so these last ones are not very long, about a minute each. Okay, so in this one you are discussing…, these last two are right at the end and you are discussing the MMPI results, the bubble test, and so we will just watch about a minute of it.

[Watched sixth videotape segment]

R: Okay. What was going on there and how was it for you?

C4: I felt kind of semi-shocked [R: Okay] because he asked me like what I thought my results would be or what I was into or how I was thinking and I mentioned that I’m into consistent thought because I am a philosopher and he said the results aren’t inconsistent. And right there I was like, “Oh my goodness, this is a flashback.” I cannot tell you how many times on those stupid bubble tests in high school - the SATs, the PSSAs, anything like that - how many times in the verbal sections there were word comparisons, questions about articles and it’s like they are asking you for an objective answer to something that is subjective and you can’t do that. And he even mentioned the nuances and I remember thinking, “Oh, I’m getting ready to explain why this test is wrong.” I like the idea of taking objective tests, but at the same rate I don’t like the idea that it is trying to place me on this kind of continuum or this plane that may not even really exist. I like it because it gives us a base to work from but I don’t like it when it tries to be super scientific to where something is the way it is. And some of those questions were on morality and I remember taking a minute or two to answer those questions, which was a long time for those questions, thinking, “What would I answer here?” because it is so technical and I remember thinking…, I don’t remember if I did or didn’t, but I really just wanted to
expound on this notion that certain things just don’t fit inside this continuum of logic that certain philosophers want us to have. I’m not against analytic, I’m not against logic, I’m not against any of that. I’m just saying that there is something else and I wanted to try to prove that in this discussion, I think. And looking at it now, I think it just made me realize how truly I feel for that.

R: Okay, and I was wondering how you might take that, watching it, because I could see..., because you had said, “I’m really into consistent thought,” and he showed you that the test said, “Well, there were some inconsistencies with it.” And I didn’t know if maybe you took that as reflecting more about the test or maybe how he read into it or something like that. But he seemed to say, “Well, maybe there is something that the test doesn’t pick up on, these nuances.” So he opened up a space for you to be able to talk about that, it seems like.

C4: Yea, yea. I feel like what you just said, that he opened up a space for me, I feel like a therapist on some level can only do that if you know the person. Because he could have opened up can of worms. Like, he could have made it so I couldn’t have said that. He could have made it so I couldn’t go down that path or he could have said something that would totally turn me off and make me want to go inward.

R: Yea, he could have gone with the results and said, “Well, there is some inconsistency here and let’s see how you are inconsistent,” instead of saying, “Well, maybe there is something more that the test isn’t picking up on.” Right? It opened up an avenue rather than going with the strict interpretation.

C4: Yea, I liked that.

R: Okay. So you like that it provided an opening instead of kind of a closing off of interpretation, it seems like.

C4: Mmhm. Wow. I’m just getting a glimpse into how I think through this conversation. Because I’m just thinking about the kind of papers I’ve written and the topics I have decided to cover and it’s like, “Wow, I really am that kind of a thinker.”

R: What kind of a thinker? What do you mean?

C4: I’m really into the existentialists and how they are so subjective and so…

R: And you want that to be appreciated about you.

C4: Yea, Oh, wow. Yea, yea. [both laugh]

R: Okay, so this is the last clip, about another minute or so and then I am going to ask you some more about the written descriptions, about three or four and then we are done.

C4: Okay
[Watched seventh videotape segment]

R: Alright, so I was just wondering what was going on there and…?

C4: Um, I found this website. I mentioned it, ADAA, Anxiety Disorders of America. I took these tests and it gave me results for three things I had previously been diagnosed with. I don’t remember if it was an evaluation of what I had said or if I was testing myself to see if I had it. I don’t remember what I did with it but I found it online. It seemed real, it wasn’t some like…, you know, it seemed credible. So I just gave it to [T4a] I guess to maybe help him out with me in the future through things that I couldn’t necessarily talk about.

R: So it was for anxiety in particular, I mean, was there something that you felt you had a hunch about maybe you might be in the anxiety realm or something like that.

C4: Yea, in the past with my spiritual therapist, as I call her, her name is ______. With [her], she said I’m not a Doctor, I don’t have a PhD so I am not technically allowed to diagnose you with the DSM-IV, [R: Okay] but I can give you suggestions. And she said, “The reason why I want to diagnose you is just so we have something to work on. I’m not actually saying you are this kind of person. I’m not saying you have this. But I’m just saying maybe we can work on these areas.” And the areas she classified me as were OCD, Panic Disorder, and GAD.

R: Okay, and that fit with the tests you brought in. [C4: Right, exactly] So that was from a previous experience [C4: Yes] and you were trying to bring something to help him out specifically.

C4: Yea, and we got rid of the Panic Disorder, we got rid of the OCD, but the only thing that stayed was the anxiety. That’s the only thing that has been consistent.

R: With [your spiritual therapist] or with [T4a]?

C4: Both. [R: Okay] From entire time I have been in therapy I have been seeking help somehow, the entire thing that has been consistent has been the anxiety. And so I kind of thought in the video, “Well, up until this point in my life if anxiety has been consistent well then we mine as well just stay with it since if I have to deal with it I mine as well learn how to deal with it accordingly.” Does that make sense?

R: Yea, it seems like this is something from the past that you want to focus on [C4: Yea] and to give him some form of communicating of saying, “This is maybe something that I want to focus on and here is some stuff to help with that.”

C4: Yea, definitely, because an hour is not a lot of time to hear my life story. Yea, so I just wanted to see if he could use it.
R: Alright, so that is it for the tapes and I was just going to read you a few of things you wrote hear and ask you about that. [C4: Sure] You said, “I left the assessment feeling hopeful. That if I, as the patient, am willing to put forth the effort to go through the fire (metaphorically speaking), and [T4a], as the therapist, is willing to help me through it, then there was an excellent chance that I could take something from the sessions out in to the world with me. The coming weeks could not come fast enough!” You seem energized, it sounds like, leaving the assessment. Like, “I can’t wait to get to work,” kind of a thing, on some of the stuff.

C4: Mmhm. I felt very hopeful about it because I felt like with [my spiritual therapist] I had kind of burned out. There was only so much she could help me with. Now I needed a new perspective and I didn’t know where to turn and then I found the Psychology Clinic here at Duquesne and it has this existential base. It seems to offer the kinds of things that I could really get into and I was kind of excited to finally get some of these things off my chest and hear a third person point of view. I don’t know if I mentioned this before or not, but [T4a] really acts as kind of like…, well I guess therapists in general for me act kind of like a mediator between how we see ourselves and how we actually are. Like I come into therapy with this perspective of my situation and this perspective of myself and the best example I can give you is that philosophy paper that I was freaking out about. So I said, you know, “Oh my goodness, I am a failure. I can’t do this. I just got blasted. I’m not going to do anything good.” And that is kind of a typical response for me. I just get into this panicked realm. And he just stood there and was like, “Well, you know this is how I see it and maybe this is the way it really is.” And that really was just like, oh my goodness, the light really went off. And it was just kind of like, “Wow!” He took me out of the small box I was living in and kind of like put it in perspective I guess. And he had done that before and so I was like, “Oooh, if he can do this now I wonder in the coming weeks what else we can get done.” Does that make sense?

R: So he was facilitating and making some connections and you were enticed by that it sounds like. Like you liked that, like, “Man, he really helped me make some connections. What else can we do?” [C4: Yea] Okay, you also said, “The situation worked itself out to the point where, as I talked out my problems, he was something of an objective state that saw my circumstances for what they really were – on some level – regardless of whatever positions I had on the matters. This awareness left me with a sense of reassurance that what I was participating in was well worth the time the assessment took. Looking back on the assessment process, I am glad I went through it, otherwise [T4a] might not have had the background he needed in order to help me.”


R: So that follows right from what you were just saying, it seems like.

C4: Exactly. In that last part…, could you repeat the last sentence?

R: Sure, “Looking back on the assessment process, I am glad I went through it, otherwise [T4a] might not have had the background he needed in order to help me.”
C4: Thank you, yes. And that is exactly why I think gave him those test results, because that is something that the tests didn’t ask about. That was something that we had never talked about but it was still an important aspect of my life because it was psychologically related and he is the psychologist here so I think he needed to know about it. Does that make sense? [R: Yea] So there you go.

R: So it was just giving him further background to be able to help you, is what it seemed like you were doing. [C4: Yea] Okay, and it seemed like the assessment process in general, looking back, you were saying you are glad that you went through it because it gave you this jumping off point to build on, like we have been talking about, it seems like.

C4: Yea. It may have been difficult sometimes because I think as human beings we have this natural tendency to not want to face certain facts about ourselves, but the assessment kind of gets the ball rolling or puts it in perspective to help us cope with it, and that is what it did for me.

R: Yea, okay. And it seems like it might have brought out stuff that maybe just through talking you may have walked right past it kind of a thing, I am thinking. [C4: Yea] Whereas the assessment kind of gets you to stop and look around at where we are starting, kind of a thing, and build a good foundation rather than just jumping into it.

C4: Yea, you pretty much said it. That is how I feel.

R: Okay, just two more little snippets. You said, “Sometimes it was a little monotonous, but like most things in life, one needs to wade through some stuff so that one may travel farther down the road and on to better things.” So, I am wondering what parts of it you may have found monotonous?

C4: Well, it may be necessary, but it’s always the, “How do you feel?” Like with the bubble test, “How do you feel about this?” And [T4a] would ask me, “How do you feel about this picture?” “How do you feel about the picture you drew?” And so on and so on. And it’s like, “Really, I feel this…” So that was monotonous, but that is just the wading through part. I had to go through with it. I had to go through with it. There was just no way around it to get on to the bigger and better stuff.

R: So sometimes being asked those same questions like about emotions could become monotonous after a while but you felt like that was a still a necessary part of it.

C4: Yes, definitely.

R: Okay, and the last thing you said, “Ultimately I cannot say that I would change anything about the process at all, but would prefer to keep it the same.” [C4: Yea] So, you liked it?
C4: If it’s not broken, I say don’t fix it.

R: Okay, but was there anything you would change about it now looking back?

C4: I guess, the computer stuff just bothered me. Maybe I am inconsistent but like...

R: Oh, the bubble test that said you are inconsistent.

C4: Yea, the bubble test itself didn’t bother me, but when it said like…, I felt like it was making a judgment against me.

R: And you felt like it didn’t understand you.

C4: Yea, it’s not a human. It doesn’t have that special spark.

R: So you felt like it was unfair that it judged you without getting to know you first.

C4: Yea, it sounds weird but…

R: No, it makes sense. It made a very clear judgment about you and it’s like, “How can a computer know me?” [C4: Yes, you said it] Okay. Is there anything else you wanted to add? Like, how was this experience for you?

C4: This was fine. This was good. Gave me a chance to reflect. Gave me a chance to think about things from a new light. It’s fine. I hope it helped.

R: Great. I really appreciate it.

C4: No problem. You got it.
Transcription C5

R: What I’m going to do is I’m going to read you a little bit from what you wrote me and ask you a little bit more about that, ask you to elaborate. But mainly I have six video clips for us to watch and I think the longest one is about five minutes long, so we will watch those. The other thing with the tape is it is a little bit hard to hear so I put it so all of the sound is on your side of the TV. The speaker is right here, so it seems like the best way to watch it may be for you to stand right here so you can see it and watch it at the same time. You can sit down over here while we are talking but probably stand up while we are watching. Okay. What I’m mainly interested in…, I’m doing research on assessment. I know it was a little while ago that you guys did that and that is why I am showing you the video is so it can kind of put you back in the moment, you know, [C5: Yea] and you can remember what it was like. [C5: Yea] And I’m more focused on what the process was like. Like the interaction, how was that interaction for you? You know what I mean? Do you feel like it was helpful? [C5: Yea] Do you feel like it was useful? Do you feel like maybe you would have liked things differently or something like that? Just things like that about the process itself. We don’t really need to get too much into content and things like that, we don’t really need it. [C5: Okay] And again just to assure you that it is, all of this stuff is completely confidential. I change all of the…

C5: I don’t care. Truthfully. It doesn’t matter to me. [Chuckles]

R: Okay. So do you have any questions before we get started?

C5: Basically, I understand the idea.

R: Okay, so stop me if you need to take a break or have any questions along the way. But yea, this shouldn’t take more than an hour or so to watch this stuff and I’ll ask you some stuff about it. [C5: That’s cool] Alright. So the first thing I wanted to start with was something that [T4b] had pointed out actually. He pointed out in his written description.., he said that he felt kind of bad. He felt guilty about…, he said he didn’t think he gave you enough warning about going in….., I know it was a while ago but he said… He said when you came in for the intake interview he wasn’t sure how much warning he had given you that the next time you were going to be doing some tests. He said, “He may have just come in thinking that we were going to be able to talk” [C5: Yea] “and he may have been disappointed by that.” Do you remember that? Do you recall that at all?

C5: Yea, I remember he was almost apologetic about having to give me the questions.

R: How was that? Were you disappointed?

C5: I don’t really think I was disappointed. You know, I like to take tests.

R: Yea, I remember you saying that. [C5: I always have] Yea, I’ll ask you more about that later.
C5: I wasn’t disappointed in the taking of it, in the questions and the answers. I was disappointed in the content of it, the repetition of it. I probably said it before to you, but it was like a military test. [R: Hmm] It had like seven questions in the two hundred question test, but in those seven questions it asked them each in a variety of ways, different wording. But the concept is always the same. I think it is just to see if you are consistent, if you can understand the questions. It is similar to that. [R: Okay] And that disappoints me, [chuckles] it’s just not fun. I answered the same question over and over again.

R: So it’s kind of redundant?

C5: Yea, exactly. [R: Okay, okay.] Yea, but like I said he was almost apologetic for it. I don’t recall how many questions it was but he said it was like 200 or something like that. [R: Mmhm. Like 300 or something] But, I mean, it did make that big of an impression on me that I was disappointed that I remember how long it was. It was just something to do.

R: You had mentioned that it was kind of boring for you. I could see that [C5 chuckles], I mean, filling out all of those questions. Were there any that you liked more? Like there was the draw a person and the cards that he showed you.

C5: I don’t like drawing because I can’t draw worth a crap. [Both laugh] It’s horrible, like a child.

R: What about the picture one? The one where he showed you the cards and asked you to tell a story. I know it was a while ago.

C5: You know there are certain things…, looking at pictures certain things will strike you and bring up certain things in your life and some of them can be very sad and other things... And if I remember right there was something very sad. Honestly it’s jogging my memory more talking about it because it is not something that I remember real clearly, all those different things about it. If I remember correctly there was something that brought up a very sad memory when we were talking about it.

R: Okay, and how was that when you took that?

C5: You know what, I didn’t really mind. I mean, it’s part of life. It makes you sad, another thing makes you happy. You know it just goes back and forth, that is just the way it is. [R: Okay, yea, that’s true.] It’s just part of who we are. Yea, so. You don’t like to revisit the bad but at the same time when you revisit the bad you think about the good that came before it and the reason why you were so sad.

R: That is a good way to look at it. Okay. So let’s get into watching some of this tape.

C5: I’m going to hate this. [both laugh] The only time I’ve seen myself on tape is on those surveillance cameras, you know, when you can look at yourself walking into the store. I saw myself on the news once from the back going down the street, but that was it. That was it for the camera for me. [both laugh]
R: Okay, I was going to tell you a bit about what is going on in these clips because it is a little bit hard to hear [C5: Okay] so just in case and the tracking has been kind of screwy, but it has been alright. When I was first trying it, it was kind of messing up but it has been working out better than I thought based on how it was going initially. So, this first one, in this first clip you had just done a Draw A Person and you show it to [T4b] and he says, “What kind of psychological insights do you think we could pull out of this?” Okay, and you said, “The only thing differentiating between male and female is the hair.” And you were talking about how it is kind of nondescript. He points out, he says, “That is kind of paradoxical because,” he said, “you were telling me before that you don’t see men and women as too similar.” And then you started talking about how the chemicals inside of us make us different and how men think logically and women more emotionally and women create problems and men solve them. Women like to talk. And then you started talking about how you don’t feel listened to sometimes but you were a good listener growing up. Okay, so we will watch that and then we’ll talk about how the process was for you. You might want to stand up to watch it because it is kind of hard to hear, I apologize for that. It is about five minutes or so and then we’ll talk about it.

[Watched first videotape segment]

R: Okay, that’s it for that clip. [C5 laughs] So the questions I have for you are “What was going on there?” and “How was it for you?” How was the process?

C5: I got a little carried away there. I think I was a little bit angry.

R: Okay, what do you mean?

C5: I appear to be angry there. You know what, that was why I was here to begin with, you know.

R: You came in because of anger? [C5: Yea] What do you think angered you in that situation?

C5: Not actually in that situation, it was just the things that were going on at the time.

R: What you were talking about?

C5: Yea, and things just kind of flowed away from what the initial subject was into where my head was at the time.

R: Okay. I found it interesting that it went from something that was just kind of basic, like these little drawings into something that was really meaningful to you. You know, you ended up talking about how you are a good listener to others but you don’t feel like people are that way to you. [C5: Right] That’s pretty important and it got brought out by this simple kind of thing. How was that for you?
C5: Well, it’s always good to get it out. [C5: Mmhm] You know, to be able to tell somebody and have them actually listen. [R: Yea] It does help, it does help, and it has.

R: Okay, to get it out, yea.

C5: And in that particular instance I don’t know…, because there were so many things going on at that time that I was angry about. [R: Okay] It’s even hard to explain. It’s complicating. Where I was living was making me sick. I was unable to work for like 18 months. I was having problems with my girlfriend at the time. [R: Okay] She had been sick and was drinking too much and things like that. And I have a problem with drinking, I’m not a drinker myself but my dad was a drinker and abusive. And it was like all of these different things combined at the time to stretch me to the limit of my patience. I had a violent outburst and stuff like that.

R: Yea, it would be hard to see how you would not be like that given your situation. Yea.

C5: Yea, because I can see just from my behavior and the conversation there that there was a lot of turmoil going on in my head.

R: So some of that was coming out in that situation. [C5: Yea] Okay, how was it…, I was curious about that situation. You talked about the drawing and said the only thing that separates them is the hair and [T4b] said, “That’s interesting because it seemed like from what you told me before that women and men are very similar.” So he was kind of like…, how was it to hear that?

C5: Probably, sometimes my views are misunderstood because I wouldn’t treat them any differently, although I kind of like women better. But as far as thought process and stuff, everybody knows that we think a little bit differently. [R: Sure] I have always preferred women’s company to men’s company but I treat everybody the same.

R: Yea, it seemed like he challenged you a little bit [C5: Mmhm] and I am wondering how that was for you?

C5: That was fine, I don’t mind it.

R: Okay, that was fine. But, did you feel like it was helpful or did it evoke maybe some anger or something like that?

C5: Naw, but you know what it might do for me…, it is a good thing for me because it might make me be a little bit more clear in my explanations and stuff because I tend to assume that people understand exactly what I’m saying when I say things and sometimes it can be a little vague [R: Okay] and people don’t realize it so it does help if somebody makes me clarify.

R: Okay, so it helps you think it out better and explain yourself better. [C5: Right] Okay.
C5: Things that seem real simple in my head are not necessarily real simple to other people and vice versa, so that is helpful.

R: Okay. And one thing you said, you mentioned at the very beginning when I asked you how it was coming in, you said in your written description and I was just going to read it to you and ask if you could tell me more about it. You said, “I like tests and was hoping to have some fun, unfortunately it proved to be very much the standard kind of ask several questions in many different ways type of test. I was a bit disappointed in that.” I guess, I should have asked that right when we were talking about that to see…, because it seemed to follow from what you were saying before about the military tests. [C5: Right] And so that was with the bubble test, so it was just really disappointing to you and things like that.

C5: Yea, I like tests that make me find things that are in my head. [C5: Okay] I like to, you know, be challenged.

R: Okay, kind of like what happened in that clip, but more so it seems.

C5: Yea, I’m not a dumb guy. I’m not the smartest guy in the world. But I’ve always…, like through school I could always skate by. I was a lazy kid for whatever reason. I would take tests and I could always pass the tests. The information was in there but I never really worked at it. The work I did through the majority of my life was all physical. There was some thought to it, I did flooring for most of my life. I never really worked with my brain and I like it to be challenged sometimes. It’s always fun for me.

R: Okay. So this clip we are going to watch follows right from the last one. We are not even going to fast forward the tape. Actually, we are. [chuckles] I’ll read you what was going on there. But how was it seeing yourself on tape? In that first clip?

C5: [chuckles] Well, it wasn’t as bad as I thought. I could really see…, because the problems I was having…, I got very sick, I couldn’t work for a period of 18 months and initially I didn’t know what was wrong with me. I went to the doctor and he just told me I was dying. [R: Oh wow] And one of the problems I had was that I was swelling. I gained 40 pounds in like a month and I was eating less than I had ever eaten in my life.

R: Eating less and gaining weight?

C5: Yea, it was very, very odd. In the film there I could see that I was very fat.

R: Okay. So in this one he pointed out that when you had done the drawing that you only used one corner of the page. [C5: Yea] And you said, “That’s my not wanting to be noticed and wanting to disappear.” He talks about how that may tie back to being quiet and you said, “Yea” and there was some dialogue about that. So we’ll watch a little bit about that and this is about a couple of minutes long.

[Watched second videotape segment]
R: Could you hear it okay?

C5: I could hear it fine.

R: So, how was that for you? In the moment, like how do you think that interaction was between you and [T4b]?

C5: Sometimes I think he doesn’t know what to ask me. [chuckles]

R: Okay, could you say a little bit more about that? [C5: Um] Because there were some silent pauses there for a minute.

C5: Yea. I mean, I think that’s it. I think sometimes he just doesn’t know what to ask. [R: Okay] I don’t know how many times we had met before that.

R: I think it was just once.

C5: Just one time?

R: Yea, just one time. So it seems like you were still building…, feeling out the relationship, I’m sure.

C5: Yea. And I was attempting to be a little more forthcoming with things so he would be more comfortable too. [R: Okay] And drawing, I just hate drawing [R chuckles], I just can’t do it. I stink at it, you know. And I know a lot of people that are good at it so for me it is really difficult [R: Comparatively] Yea, and if I can’t do something well I don’t like to do it. You know, or else I will do it until I can do it well. And drawing I just don’t have the talent for [R: Okay], I just don’t have the gift [R: That’s alright] so it has always been uncomfortable for me.

R: But, it’s interesting how just a little…, just him noticing that it was in the corner of the page led to you talking about…, you know, you said, “Maybe I do want to not be noticed as much or disappear.”

C5: Yea, I kind of analyzed myself quite a bit with that.

R: Okay, and how was that to see the drawing to lead to revealing something about yourself like that?

C5: It’s something I know. [R: Okay] There are a lot of times I do want to disappear, a lot of times I did want to disappear, a lot of times I did disappear. You know, and whether drawing something small on a piece of paper like that is reflective of that feeling, I don’t really know. [R: Okay] But it’s something…, not drawing something real large and outstanding, you know, you’re not going to take as much notice of something small so it’s going to be a little more insignificant.
R: So it seemed to bring it up for you as something you and [T4b] could discuss. How was that? Were you okay with that?

C5: Yea, that’s why I am here.

R: Yea, and it kind of helped you with that.

C5: Oh yea, absolutely.

R: Okay. How is it talking to me right now, is that okay?

C5: Oh yea, I’m fine. Yea, I’m not uncomfortable at all.

R: Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Okay, this last one is the one I was thinking of where we are not going to fast forward at all, we are just going to keep watching. And he actually asks you here to relate that, what we were just talking about, to experiences from your life. [C5: Mm] And he says, “Are there any examples in your life you can think about where you have taken that approach?” And you said, “It’s interesting and kind of contradictory…” and you started talking about a [certain car] that you like to drive, and you were saying, “I like to drive that and people notice and it’s not very inconspicuous.” And you were talking about how you like shoes and how your mom was stylish and a dress maker. And you were talking about how you…, and [T4b] says, “It seems like you want to hide things that you are not so good at and show off things that you are good at.” And you said, “Yea,” and sort of talked about that. So, we’ll watch that.

C5: Yea, I remember that.

[Watched third videotape segment]

R: Okay, that’s the end of that clip. How was that interaction for you?

C5: That was good. I always like talking about my grandmother and my mother.

R: I had noticed at the beginning…, how was it when he asked specifically, “Can you relate this to your life?” How was that?

C5: Oh, it’s easy. It’s not a bad question for me.

R: Do you feel like it is a helpful question, I mean, to help it relate to your life?

C5: Yea, it’s not a foreign question for me either. You know, those are thing I explore with myself all the time or have in the past.

R: So you like doing that? [C5: Yea] What do you like about it?
C5: I like looking back. It’s like what we were talking about a little while ago. You know, my grandmother died when I was young and there are extremely painful periods in my life when they died and that changed my outlook on pretty much everything, those events. But, how could I not…, you feel that pain and think about it from time to time but everything beforehand was great.

R: That’s interesting that you are talking about how it helps you see the good and the bad when looking back because that seemed to be there in that clip too where you were…, um, he was talking about, “Can you relate that to your life where you tend to not want to be noticed and want to disappear?” And you said, “Actually, I can be on the other side of that too. I can put things out there too.”

C5: Yea, it’s always been that way. I’ve always been a contradiction that way. You know, in school I wanted to disappear but at the same time I did things that got everybody’s attention. You know, it was really…, it makes you look at the extremes in your life. My mom was one extreme and my father the other and that’s what I grew up with.

R: So it seems that you are a complex individual, right?

C5: I think I’m simple, everybody tells me that. My wife always did. Everything seems simple to me. Yea, but I like looking back, I always have. I like looking forward too. You know, it’s not that I want to live my life back there because it is what is. It has become what it has become. But the goods and the bads, it’s all part of it.

R: How is it looking back, so to speak, right there?

C5: Oh, that was good. It’s always good. I don’t like seeing myself so fat, [both laugh] that’s disturbing to me. The bald spots I’ve always seen. My wife pointed that out to me, the one in the back of my head.

R: Okay. So then this next clip is about…, and this is at a different point in the assessment. This is after, he had gone through and shown you those cards [C5: Mmhm] and asked you to talk about them and tell stories and stuff and then he discussed them with you, his impressions. Do you remember that part? [C5: Yea] He had shown you and this is the part after that. So he had just got done showing you the cards and he is asking you about them specifically. Okay, and in this part he said, “I want to ask you about the card with the boy sitting there by himself.” And he said, “Could you relate that to your own childhood?” And you said, “I knew why I was alone. I didn’t want to be at home, it wasn’t a safe place.” And then he talks about if you were maybe wondering, “Why me?” And you said, “No, I didn’t ask that until later,” you were saying “in my life.” And so it goes from there. It is about a three, two and a half minute clip. So we will watch that.

[Watched fourth videotape segment]

R: That’s the end of that clip. How was that interaction for you?
C5: It was good.

R: Yea, I mean, there seemed to be..., what I kind of saw happening there.... Well, first I would like to hear it in your words. You said you feel like it was good? Like what?

C5: It was just kind of relating to my point of view really. And you know, like asking a kid, “Were you thinking, why me?” I was just trying to explain. When I was a kid I really didn’t ask that and never really did and I never really have throughout my entire life. I mean, everybody has burdens and things they have to bear through life. I know that. Like I was saying there, when you are a kid you think everybody’s life is the same as yours. You know, you’re not really..., because that’s your world [R: Yea, exactly] and you just assume that it is all the same. You know, my dad’s a drunk so your dad’s a drunk. I don’t like my dad so I don’t like your dad. You know, so that’s the way that goes. And it’s only when you get older that you realize that that is not true, that everybody’s different.

R: What I was thinking about that interaction in particular that struck me was how it seemed like when [T4b] asked the question, I mean, he was kind of like, “I was wondering if you were thinking, why me?” and you were like, “No, actually I wasn’t. I didn’t think that until later, but this is why....” And it was interesting how even though what he said kind of missed the mark it led to a better understanding [C5: Yea] in the end. [C5: Mmhm] Is that what you feel like may have happened there?

C5: Yea, you know, like you said even though it kind of missed the mark or whatever there but it basically ended up being a guide to where we were going anyway.

R: Exactly, exactly. Like even though that happened the door was still open and you led him to a better understanding of you.

C5: And that’s the point right there.

R: Exactly. [Both laugh]

C5: And you know it’s nice. You know, the asking questions and the figuring out process, for me it’s good for me to try to be, like I was saying before, to be a little bit more clear. Because whoever you talk to, it is good if they have a good basic understanding of you.

R: Definitely, and that is what you are doing here. I mean, this is early on. I know you that you have known each other and worked together for some time now and this is where you are getting to know each other [C5: Mmhm] so it is still that figuring out process, like you said.

C5: Yea, it’s good.
R: Okay. Alright, now we are going to go to…, we just have a couple of clips left actually. We are going to go to a segment…, and this is after, I wanted you to see the comparison because this is after he had given you the bubble test [C5: Right] the one with all those questions. He had given you that at the beginning but then this is where you are discussing that and he is giving you feedback about what that said and you guys are talking about it. This clip is about a minute long. These last two clips are only about a minute. And he says, “The test said others might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving.” And he said, “Those are strong words and I wanted to run them by you.” And you said, “Well, it depends.” You said, “I’m not sensitive but I can be hostile and unforgiving and if I’m angry I’m not good at hiding it.” Okay, so…

[Watched fifth videotape segment]

R: That’s just a short clip. How was that for you?

C5: It was good. It was pretty accurate.

R: So did you feel like it was helpful to talk about that? I mean, I know you said you know those things about yourself. [C5: Mmhm, yea] But did you feel like it was good, helpful to let [T4b] know those things?

C5: Yea, but what I was saying there is more how other people would perceive me because I am sensitive as well. [R: Hm, okay] It’s really difficult because I don’t show all of who I am to everybody. [R: Yea] I kind of pick and choose who sees what. People who are close to me, they see more than others, you know. [R: I think that is very normal] Yea, I think so too. And like the sensitive part, for a man especially, you don’t allow other people to see it. Who knows why? You know, the stigmas that come attached to that through society. [R: Yea] But the hostile and things like that, that is easier for me to show others. [laughs] You know, really hostile and anger and things like that, it goes along with the sensitivity because it is all emotions. It is all feelings.

R: Definitely. Did you feel like it was helpful to discuss that with [T4b] [C5: Yea] because sometimes, you know, in other situations maybe if you had gone somewhere else they might have had you just take that test and then keep that to themselves and know that test said that about you and never share it with you. Do you feel like it was helpful that he shared that?

C5: Yes, I think so. I think so because I think when you take a test like that, or when anybody does, they’re a little curious about the results and what those results show you and kind of staying in the dark about it, you might wonder. Other people might wonder. It’s like, “What are you thinking about?” You know.

R: So did it make you view [T4b] differently that he was willing to show that to you?

C5: Well, I like things to be up front. I like to know what your thought process is and if we’re…, basically I’m here to get help with my problems and if you have something you
are hiding from me, some judgment or whatever, or some feeling. I think you understand what I’m trying to say.

R: Yea, but then what? Continue with that.

C5: Then it inhibits me from speaking freely.

R: It would stop you from doing that because you feel like, “If you are keeping stuff from me then I’m going to keep stuff from you.”

C5: Right. Exactly.

R: And I also noticed, I don’t know if you noticed that your body posture shifted too. Like in the first few clips we watched, you were kind of sitting up and looking out the window and seemed a little bit more uncomfortable maybe, but there you were sitting back with your arms back. And I’m wondering if maybe you got more comfortable with the situation as it went on?

C5: Well, the thing about me changing positions and stuff like that, it’s not necessarily psychologically uncomfortable and what have you or uncomfortable in the situation. It’s more my body being uncomfortable and especially back then because I was having a lot of problems…, just briefly the problems I was having with being sick in my house started off with severe joint pain, skin blemishes, swelling and severe abdominal pain and stuff like that. And the work I have done has been real stressful on my back and my legs and stuff and I was having severe pain in my hips and knees and things like that so it was very difficult to sit in any one position for any length of time.

R: I can see that would definitely cause you to shift your posture. So I guess I will just ask, aside from your body posture, did you maybe you got more comfortable with the process as it went along?

C5: Well, I think there is always a little discomfort when you are first just learning somebody, especially if you are exploring your own experiences, your own feelings and your own problems. I think there’s always a little discomfort in spilling all that to somebody that you don’t know, and even to someone that you do know. It is very hard to bear yourself to others.

R: Do you think there was some comfort in after you do that maybe knowing that it hasn’t been taken up as…, if you don’t feel judged by it.

C5: Yea, that helps with it.

R: Okay, so we just have one more clip and then I was going to read you some. But what I do want to do is to stop this audiotape and flip it.

[Flipped the audiotape]
R: So, this is right at the very end. Right when you guys are getting ready to get up and walk out. And this is where you both kind of…, he helps you to question the test a little bit and the results. He says, “The test said you don’t have any close relationships but that is obviously inaccurate. You would think after asking over two hundred questions it would be able to come up with something accurate.” [C5 laughs] And you said, “It was mostly accurate but most of that stuff I could tell you anyway. I know the issues I have coming from my mother and father.” So this is about a minute too.

[Watched sixth videotape segment]

R: Okay, so how was that little bit at the end?

C5: It was fine. [R: Yea? Okay] Um… [pause]

R: Are you thinking of something?

C5: I’m thinking of the test and my view of the test. You know, the repetition thing. [R: Yea] Things like that. I have kind of gotten the feeling from [T4b] that he was kind of almost apologetic about giving it with all those questions on it and then at the end, it seemed like he expected a little more from it. [R: Okay] Truthfully, it was pretty accurate.

R: So it was pretty accurate but it seemed like he was putting out there the possibility that the stuff that it says is something that…, you know, it seems like he is saying that what is more important for you is what we make out of it rather than what it says. It isn’t like carved in stone or something like that.

C5: Truthfully, I think things like that people make too much out of them, the test itself, because it’s not…, it’s a guideline, I mean, it gets you in the ball park. [R: Exactly] You know, just going in and sitting down and talking to somebody, I mean, how long would it take you and I to get to know each other’s personalities? It could take years to get to know all of the nuances and quirks and everything that each of us have. And you have to have a tool like that to get you close.

R: Yea, so you feel like…, it sounds like what you are saying is that the test helps to get you there but then being able to talk about it gets you even closer.

C5: Mmhm, yea. You know, it gives whoever is giving the test, the analyst or doctor or whatever, they are not really in the dark. They have a foothold on how to get started with you.

R: So it gives you direction.

C5: Exactly. [R: Yea, Okay] And at the same time if the doctor has that it is good for me as well, or whoever the patient is, as long as they are being open about it and telling the results of it and where it is taking them, again like we just talked about, it’s going to put
whoever took the test more at ease. [R: Definitely] And those things were accurate for me, but there are things to expand on.

R: Exactly, and it gives you a chance to correct it in certain ways. [C5: Yea] If it says, “You are this way,” you might say, “Well, sometimes I am that but I can also be this way too.” I’m sure that would be pretty comforting too to have that. [C5: Yea.] So how did you find the experience over all? I know it seemed like maybe going in I got the impression you might have rather just talked rather than do this stuff, but do you feel like it was helpful?

C5: Yea, I feel like it was helpful. And actually viewing it again you get a little more out of it than you realized at the time.

R: You mean looking back on it now? [C5: Yea] Do you feel like any of the stuff that was brought up then kind of carried over into your work with [T4b]?

C5: Yea, well all of those thoughts. Just that the initial process always carries over.

R: Yea, and it seems to be something that you got something out of.

C5: Yea, of course.

R: The last part is something you had said at the beginning too. I know it was a long time ago but you said, “Unfortunately I don’t recall in my next appointment discussions of it or the results of it. I am sorry to be so vague about that, but it really didn’t make that much of an impression on me.” You said that at the beginning when you walked in that it didn’t make that much of an impression on you. What did you mean by that?

C5: I just didn’t remember [Both laugh]

R: Yea, that was because it was so long ago?

C5: Most likely, yea. And I was probably caught up in the events of my life, the turmoil at the time and everything. With all of that mixed together it kind of went away.

R: Yea. That’s understandable.

C5: Not that it was a bad experience, [R: Yea] you know, something I would want to block out or something.

R: Yea, I was wondering if you felt like maybe it didn’t make that much of an impression because you didn’t get that much out of it.

C5: Well, I don’t think I realized at the time how much came out of it.

R: Okay, until you watched it now.
C5: Yea, until I actually see it now, obviously in a better state of mind at this point in time. It is obvious that it was a good thing and it brought up at least the starting points for a lot of things.

R: Yea, it did seem to bring up a lot of starting points and directions and paths to follow.

C5: Yea, it really did.

R: Great. Was there anything else that you wanted to say about the process or anything like that? Anything that you would have liked differently maybe?

C5: No, not really.

R: Well, I appreciate your time, again. [C5: No problem] It has been very helpful, definitely.

C5: It has been really helpful to me so anything I can do to help anybody out here, I am more than willing.

R: Okay, I really appreciate it. If you have any questions you know how to contact me.
Transcription T1

R: Alright, so what we’re basically going to do today is I’m going to… I have the written description and I have the video I reviewed and I have some segments of the video that we are going to watch and I have parts of your written description that I’m going to read, probably most of it just in sections, and ask you about it. With the written descriptions I’d just like you to basically, I’ll read you some and then just tell me more about it, maybe I’ll ask you more as it goes along, like “what you meant here” at certain points. But, it’s mainly for you to elaborate on what you meant by that [T1: Okay], what you were saying there with the written part. With the tapes, the main questions I will ask are, “What was going on here?” and “How was that for you?” [T1: Okay] so those are questions just to keep in mind with the video, and I’ll remind you of those as we go along. So for the written part it is mainly just elaborating on what you meant. I mean there are some specific questions I have with some parts. But for the video it is mainly just, “what was going on for you and how was that for you?” Okay? [T1: Mmhm]

So there’s a few of them so let’s go ahead and get started. I’m going to go back and forth between reading some and watching the video.

T1: Are you going to start the [audio] tape? Is it on?

R: Yes it is. It is on. So, the first one is your first paragraph. I’m going to read that and just ask you a little bit about that. You said, “During the intake with [C1], I asked him to think about questions about himself that could guide us in the assessment. Theoretically, I like this idea but I always feel weary that when I do the assessment the questions will not have been answered or even been illuminated by the time we are done. Proceeding this way is like making a promise which I do not know if I can keep and I guess it makes me more nervous about conducting the assessment. This general nervousness is a constant background feeling for me during a collaborative assessment. Since the assessment process is open ended and relies very much on my own attunement to and thoughts about my interaction with the client or the client’s interactions with whatever tests I’m administering, there is always a chance that my own lack of ideas or failure to observe any patterns will create an embarrassing lack of insight or lack of knowledge about how to proceed. It is difficult to plan and remain in control throughout the collaborative assessment since one has to rely on the events of the moment to inspire a thought, invite an insight, show a pattern and so forth, and there is always the sense in me that the assessment can be a failure. Looking back, however, I know if I can say that it has ever really been a failure, but the fear is always there.” Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

T1: Um, yea I feel like there is a lot of uncertainty, basically, when you go into a situation and you rely on things that are generated right then and there to guide your insights about things or to guide the assessment. You could compare it maybe to giving an objective test and scoring it and then giving the results to someone – you are always in control throughout, you know, there is never a moment where it can fail. There is never a moment when you don’t have a manual you can refer to. So I guess that is what I mean.
I always feel if I’m certain about the outcome of the assessment, there is always the possibility that I can’t think of a pattern or I can’t make sense of what’s going on there, you know.

R: So there seemed to be kind of a reversal there at the end, like “Looking back, however, I don’t know if I can say that it has ever really been a failure, but the fear is always there.” So, it seems like it’s there but it doesn’t seem to be based very much in experience?

T1: Yea, I guess I always feel a little bit of anxiety I guess when I’m doing the assessment because even though my experience tells me that I typically find something to say or we typically manage to go through it without complete failure, it’s a little bit like it’s a 95% chance that…I mean, I don’t know, there is always the doubt, the 5% chance that maybe this will be the time when I go blank. But I don’t think I have ever really felt that it was a failure. I don’t think my experience has been that I’ve gone completely blank and haven’t been unable to write up an assessment. You know, so.

R: There was another part I wanted to read real quick. You were saying, “In a typical assessment I tend to feel stressed and a little overwhelmed by all the things I need to keep track of. In this particular assessment not only did I have to remember the procedure of how to administer the Rorschach, which I hadn’t done for quite a while, I also had to time the activity, pay attention to the process that was going on as the client did the Rorschach, and even find time to jot down a description of his clothes, facial features and posture, which I knew I would need in order to be able complete the client’s appearance and comportment part of the intake.” Can you tell me some more about that?

T1: I think I have two trends in me. One is that I know I have to write up the assessment, and then I have the intake that I did before the assessment and I know I may have lacked some information for the intake so I will need to get that also in the assessment. So, with having to jot down appearance, I know I have to use that for the intake but since I forgot it when I did the intake I’m doing it now when I’m doing the assessment. So I have all these rules and practical things I need to comply with. So it is kind of tedious, I have to do this, I have to do that, I have to make sure I can accomplish the practical goals of writing up the assessment according to the rules and regulations. So that is always there, a tedious concern with practicalities. Will I have all the information I need? And then, what was the other part I said?

R: You were talking about all of the other things you had to do, pay attention to.

T1: So that’s one thing I’m paying attention to. It’s kind of, what do I need to kind of cover my own butt or whatever. And then there are so many other things to, which is paying attention to things that are going on between us as we are doing this assessment, and I think that is actually what I get the most information from: either paying attention to things I notice they are doing or asking them specifically, “how was it for you to do this?” So, the actual Rorschach and the results of the Rorschach...um, I don’t know.
R: You were going to say, “the results of the Rorschach…”

T1: The results of the Rorschach, like when you do a normal kind of testing you are just interested in getting the responses to the Rorschach and then going to score it. But in this instance I need to remember how to score it correctly and do all that, I also have to pay attention to the process and what it was like for you, you know. And I have practical stuff, you know, I don’t want to be in a situation where I am like, shit, I don’t remember to put under the suicide portion of the intake, or I didn’t pay attention to the clothes he was wearing so I can’t make my description of the…so I feel like there are so many things.

R: And that’s what I was picking up on: It seems in the first part that I read do you, you were saying that there is always that chance and it seems it is more the stuff that was brought into the room, like the nervousness that is there about failure, it might draw a blank, things like that. But the second part was talking more directly about the process. So it seemed like this nervousness, and I guess that is my main question, do you feel like this nervousness comes from maybe what you bring into the room, about the process itself, maybe about both? What do you think?

T1: Yea, actually I thought it was very interesting to write the description because I realized how nervous I am in terms of doing this. And I thought, “Shit, I had never noticed that I have this constant fear that things will fail and that in a sense I will be incompetent, I think also.” I often have this sense that there is a little bit of nakedness in the assessment in the sense that if I don’t have some clear guidelines to adhere to, there is always the chance that I won’t have anything to say or that the kind of pretention that I am somebody who is supposed to know and be competent and appear confident is going to be exposed as incompetent or something like that.

R: So the lack of structure too you are saying?

T1: Yea, I guess the lack of structure, that always creates nervousness in me. But at the same time I don’t like it when things are too structured so it’s kind of, I don’t know. It’s kind of a tension within me because for lack of structure is feeling a little nervous like things could go any which way and maybe I will not know what to say. But, I don’t like CBT approaches and manualized treatments and I kind of like the experience of surviving an assessment and feeling like I did manage to come up with things to say and it did kind of work out and it’s kind of cool that we managed to produce this together. So I wouldn’t say that it is a purely negative anxiety, but I thought it was curious that I am so anxious in the face of no structure.

R: So do you feel like its part of the process and part of what you bring in? Maybe both?

T1: See it’s interesting because I don’t really know, I haven’t really talked to other people about how they experience it. But I can definitely see how it would relate to my own personal history and my own struggles and it probably has a lot to do with my own
countertransferrential issues. I feel when I read through that I appear very obsessional and I think I am. I have all these things that I have to keep track of and…

R: But that seems like a regular part of the process too.

T1: Ummhmm

R: Now, I’d like to get into a bit more of what was going on in the actual assessment part and what I’m going to do is we’re going to watch a bit of the beginning of the actual assessment, then we are going to watch some from the feedback session. But one thing I wanted to ask about first is something he had mentioned, which is that he was 20 minutes late for the assessment. How was that for you?

T1: Hmm, I can’t even remember that, when you are asking me.

R: Because I noticed that you didn’t mention it in here so I didn’t know, kind of figured it wasn’t…

T1: Strangely enough, I don’t even know if I thought much about it.

R: Okay, I was just curious. He also mentioned that, I don’t know if you remember this either, but he said he remembered noticing that you were flush, red faced, eyes were bloodshot, and then you cancelled the next session because of illness. Were you feeling sick around the time?

T1: He told me that?

R: He said that, in his description he said that is what happened.

T1: Huh, that is interesting. [Laughs]

R: I didn’t know if you were feeling sick or if that might have affected things, how you were feeling at the time.

T1: I can’t exactly remember it, but it has been a fact that for a long time I’ve had problems with allergies and my eyes. So that was during a period when I was having a lot of eye problems and they were very itchy. I don’t think I was feeling sick at the time, but it may have appeared that way.

R: Yea, I was just asking to see if the way were you feeling affected things.

T1: I can’t remember. I know I had a cold, but I can’t remember if that was the time.

R: That’s fine, I just thought I would ask. Okay, so now let’s watch a segment of video here. I think I have the volume working a little bit better. This one is a little bit longer.
It is actually the longest segment, about nine minutes. So, let’s watch this and then let me know what was going on here for you.

[Watched first videotape segment] – (try to correct problems with the audio/volume)

R: This is where you were asking him if he had any questions.

R: Okay, so what was going on there and how was that for you?

T1: It’s fine. The first thing I want to say is that I found myself having a difficult time getting into my own experience of what I was feeling at the time. It’s almost like I got drawn toward him and what he was saying and evaluating what he was saying and making judgments about it.

R: Maybe that is kind of what you were doing at the time. [Laughs]

T1: Actually I think so, you know. Yea, I actually think that is the funny thing about the assessment, you have to be very other oriented. You have to be so focused on him and what he is saying that there isn’t much room for paying much attention to what is going on with you. So, that was one thing I noticed. Another thing I noticed, that I recognize now was that I was feeling frustrated, actually, as I was doing this and the frustration was that I knew I had to come up with some kind of a presenting problem. I set a goal that was, “let’s try to get some problems down on paper so we can work through them, through the assessment and so on.” And he was frustrating my need to have it concretely written down on paper. I felt like he was stating problems vaguely, it was difficult to pinpoint the problem in what he was saying and he was kind of undoing the initial statements. For example, with the last thing he was doing here, he said, “maybe I have a sense of entitlement,” and by the time we had explored it through the assessment he was in a place where he said, “well, maybe people just give me compliments and I don’t know how to accept compliments.” And so, the initial idea disappeared and it had a kind of illusive quality to it, in my experience. I was so focused on what is the problem here and he was kind of debating and some things I had written down, all of the something it was something completely different and now with the thing he was saying I didn’t even feeling like it was a problem anymore. Now it was kind of like, I felt like he was maybe in a sense fishing for compliments as he was doing this. He was turning it into something positive, “people think I’m such a great person and sometimes I have a difficult time dealing with that.” And I didn’t really buy it, I thought, that is kind of a narcissistic thing to say, you know. I mean who turns that into a problem? I was also having, making judgments about him actually, thinking, “this is kind of narcissistic” and I was frustrated that there wasn’t a problem, it seemed to me, in what he was saying. I don’t think I was noticing this. When I go in there, in the assessment room, I really think that, and I feel kind of ashamed saying this, but I really think that I’m not too concerned about them. I’m mostly concerned about getting the information I need to do my assessment. So, in this sense it was a frustration that he was making it difficult for me to do my assessment the way I wanted to do it.
R: Okay. I was going to read a section here too that really spoke to that point that you were making. “When I asked [C1] to share his questions about himself with me I remember having a really difficult time pinpointing what his problem really was. I felt a slight nervousness as I struggled in my own mind to formulate what he was really saying in a poignant way that could serve as a focus for our assessment, not knowing if I could really pull it off. In such situations, when I don’t quite have the control and don’t know if my mind will be able to come up with something to say, I think I start to feel slightly nervous and which I then become very conscious of concealing to the client. A lot of times when such uncertainties arise in an assessment I experience a gap between by public and private self. I’m aware of presenting a calm front, yet I feel stressed and slightly panicked inside.”

T1: I actually think there is a lot of stuff going on inside me, but I don’t let it show and I almost feel like my face kind of freezes up in a sense. Or it’s like my face is my public side and it’s almost like it’s severed from my body or my feelings and all my concerns shift to, “how am I going to get the assessment done now?” or “why the hell can’t he just give me the information I need?” So, I think I said nervousness but when I see this I recognize that I was also feeling frustrated and slightly annoyed. But, I actually have a sense that a lot is going on in me when I do assessments. My brain is constantly trying to come up with, “what is the implication of what he is saying?” “What am I noticing at a process level?” So I am filled with thoughts but I have a sense that my face remains the same, that I don’t show it, do not show any difference to him.

R: Okay, alright. Now we’re going to go back to, do you want to take a little break? Are you okay?... This segment is basically the beginning basically of the feedback, there was a little segment before that where you were kind of going over some other stuff and explaining how the interpretations work and stuff. But this was the first actual interpretation, okay, so let’s watch.

[Watched second video segment]

R: What did you think about that? How was that?

T1: Um, it seemed like, at least from the segment that you showed here, that he wasn’t really buying into it. You know, I was putting out suggestions there and he was shooting down the first suggestion, “I was not defensive,” and to the second suggestion he was saying, “I cry more than most guys.” So, in a sense it was kind of a failure, I guess I thought of it like that. It was, well I don’t know. It’s always a confusion to me. You know, is he just being, and I think I probably thought this at the time – he seemed maybe a little guarded in there talking about it, and I already kind of a perception of him as slightly narcissistic? So, I could see why he would not want to agree to what I was suggesting.

R: How was that for you? Do you remember how it was?
T1: I’m trying to remember. I guess again I might have felt a little frustrated you know that, hum, he’s not giving me the examples that I need to do my assessment. This is not working so far. But, I don’t think I was excessively annoyed. I do think I have that slight annoyance that this is not something I can use for the assessment, in writing it up, you know. So, hopefully, I was optimistic that other things would come up, they usually do.

R: How is it for you watching it now?

T1: Looking at myself I thought, “It’s a little abstract, what I am saying.” That’s what I was thinking, it might be a little difficult to understand. I mean I was talking about form rather than vision. Say, if you saw a table you could just look at and identify it as a table because it had the shape of a table. But, I do seem a little at the intellectual level here. [R: Okay] So, that is kind of what I observed of myself.

R: So, let’s watch this next little segment here.

[Watched third video segment]

R: Okay, how was that for you?

T1: One thing I noticed is, I could get back into the looking through the papers and trying to figure out what, like oh shit. I was looking for something and I guess I felt a slight sense of, I think frantic would be too strong of a word, but kind a lesser form of that kind of fumbling around and being very self aware of my self in that moment. You know, turning the pages and fumbling. [R: at the beginning?] Yea, I was looking, I was trying to support one of the conclusions of the Rorschach report by finding an example from his responses and I couldn’t find the actual response. And I actually always feel like this in these assessments. I go in there with 10 different papers. I have the consent form, my own notes, the test, all of these papers and it can sometimes be a little difficult to keep track of where things are. That’s how I feel.

R: But with that moment, that followed the last segment where there was kind of a disagreement it seemed like. [T1: Mmmh] But then with this one, from what I had seen, it seemed like you offered an alternate explanation and then he seemed to pick it up and go with it. [T1: Mmmh] What did you think about that?

T1: Yea, I think it makes me feel competent when that happened, you know. Every time we are succeeding, it makes me feel competent. I think earlier on, I’m not like. “Oh, shit, nothing came out of these interpretations.” I have confidence that we will have so many other opportunities and ways of phrasing things that something is probably going to come out. So, it’s always kind of an experience of success when…

R: What do you mean by “success?” like how would you, in this situation?...

T1: I guess success for me is when he takes the bait, you know. When he says, “Yes, that is how I am feeling” or “Yes, I can see that” or he can give an example of it. [R: Which
he did] Mmhm. I even think it enhances the enjoyment or the success feeling that it came out of the uncertainty. Because I go in there with the possible fear of failure, then when it’s a success it is kind of a pleasant surprise always. It’s kind of cool, it worked. Whereas, if I’m going through some kind of a routine thing where they are not allowed to respond or I just convey whatever the test says then you would never have that experience of success because it wouldn’t, you know, the results would just be whatever they are. But here the results depend on them, you know. There is no result that ever really speaks on its own. It is only really a result for my assessment if they agree to it. [R: Okay] So, I guess that is one of the differences that I see. In a sense it empowers the other person and makes the other person the judge of the assessment, rather than, “I have all the answers and I’m going to tell you,” you know.

R: Okay, alright. Now we are going to fast forward to another little segment here.

[Watched fourth video segment]

R: Okay, what was going on there and how was that?

T1: One thing that I’m recognizing now that I see this is that one of the things that really guides me in this assessment and every assessment is a kind of hunt for the big fish or for the big prize. That is kind of how I experience it. You know, I’m going for the big stuff, the important stuff, the really significant, the big insight.

R: What was it in this case?

T1: In this case it seemed very insignificant. You know, so I feel almost like I’m a deep sea fisher, I’m going for the big one, I’m pulling it in and it’s all of these little things like sand and whatever from the ocean that I can’t really use. That made me think of how, in an assessment, I think I only take 10% of what they actually tell me. Only 10% is really significant in terms of the assessment I am doing. So, what he was giving me here was, I was laying out something, maybe it could lead to a great discussion or some insight about health, but he was not giving me anything that I could really use. He talked about a dentist and this and that. And so,…

[Had to flip the audiotape]

[Watching the fifth video segment]

R: Before that last part, with the sex stuff, what was going on with that?

T1: I don’t see why, every time. I mean, so why did I pursue that line of…?

R: What was going on there in general, it doesn’t…

T1: Well, I was actually thinking when I was watching it. I wasn’t sure when I was listening to it again whether I would go down that road again or if I wouldn’t. So, its
always an adjustment that I would make in the session and sometimes there could be things that could be significant that I’ll let go because I know it might take us 10 minutes into a far field from where I want to be. So, I always have a sense of having to make a selection in the moment and that’s always weighing how useful is it going to be? Is he then going to give me 10 minutes of something that is not really going to be that significant and will make it impossible to go through all of the other things? There is a kind of time limit to what I’m doing here. But in this case he mentions sex. I can’t remember, how was the interaction again? I forgot exactly how we got onto the topic.

R: (flipping through notebook) He was…you said there is not a lot of popular responses…

T1: And he actually said something.

R: He said, “I went home and researched…” and he said, “No, I didn’t give many sexual responses, I didn’t give any sexual responses,” he said.

T1: So that seemed significant to me in the sense that, [R: Yea, he just threw that out there] why would he bring that up out of all the things that he could bring up. So I thought that was probably something that was worthwhile exploring. It’s kind of an unprovoked denial. “There weren’t any sexual responses.” Well, there are a lot of other responses that weren’t there. So, I went with that possibly having some significance. Probably also with an understanding that sex is one of the things that often times is kind of repressed or uncomfortable and so that is precisely what we want to get at. With my kind of psychoanalytic perspective on things, so I asked about it and I’m not sure it really went anywhere in particular. I think when I wrote up the assessment that wasn’t something that actually turned out to be part of the themes I developed. But it could have been, you know. It could have been a significant moment.

R: Okay. So how do you think it went? [T1: The what?] How do you feel like it went when we were watching that segment?

T1: Um. I guess I chalked it down as not going anywhere that was significant enough, you know, so I don’t think I took much from that. But, you have to throw out some bait or you have to just, sometimes you will collaborate on things that turn out there is not much substance to it or they are too defensive or…

R: Okay. So, lets go onto the next segment. This segment I wanted to start is where you where giving the interpretation that he was thinking outside the box.

[Watched the sixth video segment]

R: How was that?

T1: I guess what I’m thinking in this moment is, a kind of, yes… I think I have kind of a duality going on there. I feel like I’m fishing for a particular kind of response, you know,
an agreement. I actually feel like I am favoring agreement always and discarding disagreements. You know, like they don’t get into the assessment, or my assessments anyways. So, when I do find agreements, that is what I am looking for and that is probably what is going to make it into the assessment. At the end of the day I’m going to look at my list and say, “How may things did he agree on and could elaborate on?” So it was a little moment of success. Nothing significant really came out of it, but it may have made it into the assessment.

R: He did seem to agree there with thinking outside the box, antiauthoritarian. He said, “Yea, I would agree with that.” But then he also said, “On the flip side, if someone wants to take the lead and be passionate and pressure me to do things I would be right there, but that has never really happened.” And that seemed to offer a “when not” kind of moment, you know, a kind of unprovoked “when not” moment. What did you think about that?

T1: I guess I didn’t really pay much attention to that. I guess my frame of mind is to typically search for agreements, you know, and discard non-agreements. And I typically really don’t do much “when not” because time just, it seems like several things are against that, like the time of things, we don’t have much time, so to focus on the “when not” I feel like might take up too much time compared to what I really need for the assessment. But, I know that sometimes you can include “when nots” but it just, I guess that introduces more confusion and complexity into the assessment, into the write up. And I guess, for whatever reason, I am always looking for a more clear cut picture. So I tend to kind of ignore those things and not really go far with that.

R: Okay. Let me read you a section that you said from your written description. You said, “I tend to use Connie’s rule of always asking for examples of a time when and a time when not in order to root the abstract in the concrete. These cognitive strategies tend to work very well. The former often times to my own amazement.”

T1: I guess the rule has been “when” and “when not,” but technically I most often ask for the “when,” you know.

R: You said here that typically the latter, oh no, you actually said the former often works to your amazement. So, alright, you focus more on the when, you are saying.

T1: Yea, I am noticing now that I really have a need, I hate the frustration of things not being clear cut. I hate…, “Oh, can’t he just agree to something and then we can get it done,” you know. [R: Okay]

R: Okay, so let’s go on to another segment here

[Watched the seventh video segment] – T1 asks about problems with the sound again, saying he is having difficulty hearing how his client is responding. R apologizes.

R: How was that? What was it like for you?
T1: Well, what I was thinking is…I lost my train of thought. Can you repeat what was going on there?

R: He was, you said “it seems like there is no longing for affection, like you are lacking something from you life, no conscious with for it.” He said, “No, no I don’t know about that. I don’t want to die alone. I want to know I’m capable of being loved. Maybe that could relate to how I’m not good at taking compliments. I never let others and myself enjoy my accomplishments, particularly rights of passage, graduation and things like that.”

T1: I don’t know what was going on there. I’m having a difficult time really getting into what was going with me. I remember when I looked at his Rorschach, there were positive things I could say and negative things I could say and I paid most attention to the negative things but threw in a few of the positive things as well. Um, I don’t know.

R: He seemed do say, “I don’t know about that,” it was kind of a disagreement and I was wondering how that was for you, if you could recall.

T1: I think in general he disagreed with a number of things, so I had a sense that its, I’ve had other assessments where they agreed with a lot of things and have been able to come up with examples for a lot of things and it didn’t go as smoothly as I’ve had other things go. And I guess my concern was mostly, am I going to have enough material to write up the assessment? That is always my concern. I’m actually thinking when I see this that I don’t enjoy doing assessments, but I don’t know if that’s outside the scope of that you are doing. It is not an enjoyable thing for me. It is mostly a tedious thing about trying to get enough information to write things up. So, there is no, I don’t know. And I guess my frustration is always there as a sense that, “shit, is this going to be enough to write up the assessment?”

R: Okay, so you think that is something you bring, kind of that this is a tedious task, something that you don’t really enjoy.

T1: Yea, I think I always kind of, that is my attitude. I’m not just free, to just, “let’s explore,” because I know I’m going to have to write something up and have something to say, you know. So that is the framework in which the whole interaction, for me, takes place.

R: Okay, let’s watch another segment, it should just take a couple of minutes.

[Watched the eighth video segment]

R: Okay, what did you think about that segment?

T1: I remember that time in the assessment. I had kind of been debating, I mean I think it was an extremely important point to bring out because I did think that he, from previous experiences with him, had always used kind of, he always wanted to impress me with his
knowledge about authors and culture and so on. So I knew that was probably a big part of his defensive way of being, you know, so I wanted to bring that up. But it was something that I was having a difficult time phrasing in a way that wasn’t critical. How do you say to somebody, “You seem to be extremely defensive and to use cultural references in a way to impress the people that you are with and be distant from you emotions?” So, I remember, I took a chance. I kind of went against what would have been the comfortable solution, kind of ignore the more critical aspects of the Rorschach, and so I brought it up and he... I think it was difficult for him, that was my experience, that it was difficult for him to take that in and he kind of stayed at that intellectual plane.

R: He seemed to do what you were talking about, but he recognized it though and said, “I’m referencing right now.” [T1: MmmHmm] So, it was interesting that what you were talking about just appeared.

T1: And that is actually interesting. That is something that I missed. I didn’t, I guess because I have so many things that I need to pay attention to that I don’t always have the surplus to be able to then [R: go back and...] No, write down like, “he’s actually doing now what the Rorschach is saying that he might be doing.” So I might have actually missed that, you know, in terms of writing it up and stuff.

R: Alright, so this is the last video segment.

[Watched the ninth video segment]

R: Okay, so how was that?

T1: Um, well I always wonder when clients ask me questions how to respond. There’s always a moment of having to figure out what would be therapeutic way to respond, you know. And I guess I didn’t really have a clear sense of whether I found it helpful. It was kind of, I didn’t really know what to say to that. It’s not really so much about whether I find it helpful, so, I didn’t really know what to say. So I just made a call on the spot to just say, “I’m going to write things up and then we’ll talk about it.” Because frankly at the time I was probably a little bit tired. Assessments kind of tend to make me tired because I have to stay focused on so many things. I always need a break at the end of the assessment to kind of let things sit and then I come back to it and then I have a clearer sense of what was accomplished. So it is difficult for me to just do it on the spot, you know, “This is what I can tell you about what happened...”

R: Okay, sure. So that is it for the video portion. Now I’m just going to ask you some more questions about the written description. Okay, you said, “Sometimes, as was the case in this particular assessment, my lack of certainty about how to proceed in a particular instance produces in me a somewhat frantic need to latch onto any thought or question that emerges, which I therefore welcome as relief from the anxiety that I would not have anything to ask at all. In most assessments, I have a constant battle with the possibility of silence or vacuity in my mind. Fortunately, most of the time thoughts do
occur that I can share and use as a way to further my information gathering about the person.”

T1: That is the thing my mind is constantly raising, you know, “where is the connections, where is the connections?” In the process of not having found that connection, I don’t have anything to offer, I feel like, I don’t have anything to say. So, typically I do find connections but it is not a guarantee.

R: So it is kind of a concern. That’s the main thing is making connections.

T1: Yea, Mmhmm.

R: Okay. Another portion, and some of this wasn’t on the tape because like you said the Bender-Gestalt didn’t make it on there. And this is when you were talking about certain principles that you have, like the other we read was about Connie’s “when” and “when not” principle, you said that was the second principle and this is the first principle that you said tends to structure your uncertainty. “First of all, my mind is constantly proceeding inductively from the little things that are done or demonstrated by the client to more general principles. I try to latch onto any inductive data that strikes me. With [C1] I noticed that he was very quickly done with the assignment, that he seemed nonchalant about it, that he didn’t really bother to count the dots or make things accurate on the Bender-Gestalt and he seemed to use different strategies with different figures, sometimes counting and sometimes not, for example. From these little things my mind then goes on overdrive to try to come up with how what I observe can be relevant in terms of life. That is, how I can abstract a way of living from them. This, I think is the major cognitive struggle and effort for me during a collaborative assessment. When it fails I will simply ask the client to tell me about this strategy and we will proceed from that instead of my observations.”

T1: Yea, and I would actually add to that that the assessment is, consists of many parts. Here in the clips I was doing the Rorschach where of course I need to proceed more deductively because I have a sense that, “you are hiding something because you have more clothing responses.” So that would be an example of more deductive. But actually to just say something about that, I feel like I wasn’t really doing much collaborative assessment. That was my experience of it when I was giving feedback on the Rorschach because it didn’t proceed inductively, it didn’t proceed form a process of doing something. So what I really call collaborative assessment, in my own understanding, is when we do the Bender-Gestalt or when I can notice little things going on and then can try to generalize that, “is that a general process of doing things in your life?” you know.

R: It sounds like you are saying you feel like certain materials that you use allow for more collaboration than others.

T1: Yea, they are less about taking knowledge and seeing if it fits and more about taking a very unstructured situation and then seeing how this particular person goes about
imposing some structure on it, you know. So, in the Bender-Gestalt, is that what I was talking about?

R: Yea, you were saying, “he went through rather nonchalantly and was rather quickly done with it.” So what…?

T1: So I know I’ve done that with other people and I know there are different ways of proceeding with that. Some people are very meticulous to get it right and he was not at all and there was kind of a cocky attitude to him like, “I don’t need to invest much of myself in it.” And so I noticed that and I write about how that is kind of a struggle for me because it is not a guarantee that I can notice anything. What if everything kind of seems normal and there is no deviation from kind of copying them. So it’s always a question, “Will I be able to find, inductively, certain things about their style?” you know.

R: That is what it seems like, what you were saying as far as the connections is, “can I extract a way of living from them, am I making it more concrete to life?”

T1: And so even if I notice the inductive principle, okay he’s nonchalant. The next step for me is to ask, “is there a way to use this to get at a general life principle or something?” you know. I don’t always know if what I’m served can be used that way. I have to think it in my mind to know if it is even something that is worth bringing up. If I can’t anticipate it being useful then…

R: I think this ties really well into the next part I was going to read here. You said, “When questions do occur to me that lead us somewhere or when I do in fact perceive a pattern in the clients method of copying the Bender-Gestalt designs, which open up new connections for him and for me I feel relief but also competent for having seen it or suggested it, akin perhaps to the magician who succeeds at pulling out a rabbit from a hat which nobody expected had a rabbit in it.”

T1: Yea, I think I always feel like it’s an accomplishment. It’s quite impressive when it works. It always amazed me that a little thing that to most people is completely insignificant, and they really don’t pay much attention to it themselves when they are doing it. So many things can come out of that, by starting at the little we can get at the big. That always amazes me then when we do succeed at getting at the big picture. [R: Okay] I even feel like they are a bit dazzled by it. They kind of feel like, “Wow, I never expected that.” And I feel that a lot, they are very impressed how we could get so much out of so little. And it’s cool to be the author of that, or the responsible party.

R: Okay, Let me continue with that, “It almost never fails that due to all of these connections which we come to in a given assessment, I leave the assessments with a sense of accomplishment and of having given my clients something to take with them. This is very gratifying. I tend to feel very good about what we have produced together, tend to think that the client has been surprised by all the new things he or she has learned about him or herself and tend to feel like the client now respects me and thinks he or she can get something out of therapy. I oftentimes think that the collaborative assessment is
what first hooks the client on therapy and gives them hope that they can benefit from it.”
Do you want to say anything more about that?

T1: I remember my first client ever had a lot of interpersonal issues and lack of trust and I think me doing a very good collaborative assessment and writing it up in a very kind, personal way and sharing it with her was what made her really commit to therapy. I think that was a new experience for her, that she was able to, that somebody could really see her and understand her and she has made comments to that effect, that that was very impressive and very heartwarming for her. And so I had that with me as a background and I sense that for me that most people the question they have is, “Should I be in therapy or shouldn’t I be in therapy? Can I benefit from it or is it not something I can benefit from?” And by starting this way you give something to them and they have the experience of having gained insight right here and right now. Whereas, if we didn’t do it and just proceeded through, “tell me whatever,” they would have more of a sense of, “Is anything really coming out of this?” So I do kind of have faith that starting this way is a really good way to build a relationship.

R: Just a few more passages I was going to read and get your feedback on. You said, “In general I also feel very proud to be part of a way of doing assessments which empowers and collaborates with the client rather than teaches, tells, and judges. It makes me feel good about myself since it gives me a way to live out humanistic values which I believe in and identify with. Through collaborative assessments, I cement or reinforce an identity which I already have and which includes respect for the client as a fellow human being and not a diagnosis and discomfort with too much of a power distance between me as clinician and them as clients. This is not a philosophical pride, but a very concrete sense throughout an assessment that I am one of the good guys.”

T1: Yea, I feel like that. I mean I often position myself opposite psychiatry, hospitals, doctors who want to prescribe pills. So it feels good that I am doing therapy in a way where the dignity of the person is respected throughout and I don’t have to be a school teacher or an authority or somebody who knows better and undermines their own view of things. I really think I am doing something good when I do these kinds of assessments and I feel like I’ve been in other situations where I have doubted whether or not what I have been forced to do is really good. Good in a way that is also in line with what I believe in as a person and as a human being. Like I’ve been at ________ Hospital where I have been put in a place where I have to be a teacher and a master and have felt like I have been part of a culture of separating yourself from the client and looking at them as a lesser or screwed up kind of being that we are here to solve and fix. That leaves me feeling a sense of distaste, you know and like I’m not being true to what I believe in.

R: Okay, alright. You said, “After the assessment, I write up my scattered notes around themes which sometimes seem almost banal. I sometimes worry that they will be too banal and that they won’t really tell the client much new. However, it seems to be that what is closest to us is often the farthest away and I don’t think I have ever had the experience of a client who wasn’t somehow fascinated by hearing me read my themes to them full of little details from the assessment cited as supporting evidence.”
T1: Yea, one of the things about this assessment to me is that the notes that I have on my papers are about everyday ways of going about doing things. And I often wonder, even if I can see a theme run through some of the notes, that’s how I usually do it, I kind of read through some of the notes and there is immediately three or four big clusters of, ways of clustering the notes. I’m trying to then get to what is the common element here and sometimes it seems very down to earth like not having a set approach to life could be a theme for example, which is both kind of very abstract in a sense, so I wonder if they are going to think that it really tells them much. Are they going to be wowed by it? Because it almost seems like it is too insignificant, but I think there is something powerful when I share it in that I am meeting them in their life, you know. I’m not meeting them from up high where I have all these fancy terms, but I’ve seen something about them that is them, you know. And maybe they haven’t noticed it or they haven’t paid attention to it. Maybe when I say it they will say, “Yea, that is me. It’s very obvious that it’s me.” So maybe it is banal, so banal that maybe they didn’t even pay attention to it.

R: You also said in there that “it seems to be that what is closest to us is often the farthest away.” What did you mean by that?

T1: Well, I mean that a lot of the most, the things we are the most steeped in, the ways we go about doing things seem to often not be what is really in the focus when we talk about ourselves because it is so taken for granted, you know. It’s so common sensical that…

R: Because we are doing it, so we don’t reflect on it.

T1: Yea, it is not reflected on, it’s just what we do. And so in a sense I feel like through the assessment that we do here we make what was so close to us that we didn’t even notice it, we make that the focus.

R: Okay, I see what you are saying. Okay, here is the last part. “In this particular session, I remembered being very nervous about sharing certain parts of the supportive evidence, which in this case involved touching upon some scores from the Rorschach which indicated that he had certain narcissistic trends. As I was reading my themes to [C1] I found myself skipping the more uncomfortable data from the Rorschach in order not to make him feel hurt or defensive. I thought about whether or not to push him a little bit more, but ultimately couldn’t bring myself to do it. There was plenty of material to share with him and I didn’t have time to share it all and still allow time for feedback and discussion, so I chose to omit the more uncomfortable parts.”

T1: Yea, that’s always a problem for me. I mean, so we use tests sometimes that are not geared towards collaboration necessarily and sometimes it is really difficult to take things that are in a test that are really negative or couched in really negative terms and to bring it up in a way that is helpful and kind of supports…I don’t know. Yea, so sometimes I struggle with the findings of the tests which are very negative or not nice to hear.
R: As far as how to present them, it sounds like?

T1: Yea, definitely. How can I present them or communicate in a way that doesn’t alienate the other person and make me a judge of them? I don’t like being a judge and a lot of the tests we give have a tendency to reach judgments that are not positive and empowering. So how do you rephrase that “you are a narcissist” into something that is more positive? And sometimes I don’t know how and time is always an issue with collaborative assessment. There is always too many things that we can focus on and so sometimes I just don’t do those things. It’s a struggle.

R: Okay, alright. Well did you have anything else for me or anything else to add?

T1: No, I thought it was interesting to do it.

R: Okay…
R: What we are going to do today is, I have read your written description and I’ve reviewed the tape and I have pulled out some selections from the tape that we are going to watch, but I have interspersed some kind other things here as far as questions like…I’m going to start off and read you a few selections from your written description and then we will watch some selections from the tape and I will kind of go back and forth between asking some questions about the written description and the tape. The questions about the tape that I would like you to keep in mind are, “What was going on here?” and “How was that for you?” Just kind of keep that in mind. Then with the written descriptions it will just be, “Can you elaborate on this a little bit more?” Primarily. Okay? [T2: Okay] Do you have any questions? [T2: Nope] Alright, okay.

R: So, in the first part of the written description you said, “As a third year student, I have given enough assessments that I generally feel confident going into an assessment session.” Can you tell me a little bit about that?

T2: I mean,… I think of how nervous I used to be going into assessments. It always felt artificial, awkward when I was first trying it out during the first year. But I have been giving more of them and I generally feel more relaxed when I’m in the assessment session and I know what to expect. I feel like I’ve worked out a system where I sort of have a way of doing things, that maybe I could say more about.

R: That’s good. Do you feel like it allows you to be more collaborative, intuitive and present in the room with the client?

T2: Yes. I mean I think if I’m not as self-conscious then I can be more open to what the other person is saying and to work with that.

R: Okay, sounds good. And then there was a part here where you also said, “With [C2], however, I had already written the intake report, so I already had a relatively clear sense that her DSM diagnosis would mainly involve anxiety. I also thought it would be helpful to use the Meyers-Briggs for both me and her,” you said, “in giving us a sense of how her symptoms of anxiety might be related to broader personality structures.” From that is seems like you kind of had a preconception going in about her being anxious. How do you think that affected the way you approached the assessment or your thoughts going in?

T2: Yea, I mean I think part of what I was trying to get at with what I wrote there was why I chose these particular assessments, you know. I tend to use the MMPI or PAI for clients who I am less certain of diagnostically, specifically where I’m trying to use the assessment to make a diagnosis, or if they are more severe, if their pathology is more severe, I feel those tests help me diagnostically. Whereas, I was certain enough with [C2] very early on that I could tell that she was relatively high functioning, her distress was not that acute, relatively. And so I felt like because I had a sense that she was primarily anxious, that was probably going to give her a diagnosis of GAD or something like that, I
didn’t feel like I needed to use the MMPI or the PAI or something like that. I could use the Meyers-Briggs that is generally more personality focused.

R: Yea, and I was also wondering if going in you thought that because of this kind of conceptualization as anxious, or on the anxious side of the spectrum, that it made you tuned into that or paying more attention to that during the assessment.

T2: Yea, I mean I did kind of have a conceptualization coming in because this was one of the only intake reports that I wrote immediately following the intake session. I actually wrote the intake within two days. So I had already filled out the diagnosis and had written a mini case formulation and impressions section of the report. I felt like there was still a lot I didn’t know, but I had a sense going in…

R: Did you have a sense that that was something you would want to focus on, like with the TAT responses or something like that, like focusing on her anxiety?

T2: I think I was more interested in…, I mean the anxiety seemed to be pretty obvious from the very beginning. So I didn’t think there was much more to know about her particular symptoms of anxiety. I was interested in her relationship with her mom. That seemed very important so that was one of the things I used in selecting the TAT cards.

R: The next part really follows from what we were talking about. You said, “There are several clients for whom their TAT responses have served as touchstones to which we return throughout therapy. I thought the TAT might especially yield a lot of material from [C2] because based on our intake interview, she seemed especially open and articulate.” So it seemed like using that worked particularly well for her, seemed like a good fit. And I was also kind of wondering if you feel like certain assessment tools allow for more collaborative work?

T2: Hmm. Is that a two part question? [R: [laughs] Yea.] I’ll start with the second part I guess. Yea, I think you can be collaborative with all forms of assessment. But I think that, I guess one way of putting it would be that it’s easier to be collaborative in the discussion portion if the test is in some sense collaborative. I think the TAT is a test that is already in the process of doing it collaboratively. Whereas, an objective test is one that the client does by themselves, I analyze it by myself and then we talk about it after. And so I guess that is that.

R: Okay, and then you were saying particularly with [C2] because she seemed more open and articulate.

T2: Yea, I’ve had a couple of bad experiences with the TAT with clients who were very defensive and/or not psychologically minded, who weren’t sort of willing to acknowledge that there is something more than what was right before their eyes. So, the fact that I could tell that she was very open, she didn’t seem as defensive as some of my other clients and the fact that she was sort of psychologically minded, I thought the TAT could be useful in working with her for that reason. [R: Alright] You know I had one client in
particular I’m thinking of who was very resistant about me giving the TAT to her. You know, I would show her a picture and she would say, “It’s a man.” And that’s it, you know. So, I didn’t think that would happen with [C2], she would be able to elaborate.

R: How was that for you? Feeling kind of…?

T2: Frustrating. I mean, it I think it tells you something, about the resistance. But it doesn’t do what it’s supposed to do.

R: That’s a good example. So, now I think we can look at, check out some of the tape. Now this is from the first part of the assessment. Let’s see, in this one, it’s a short one, maybe about a minute long. You are just kind of talking about the usefulness of the test.

T2: So this is from the original?

R: This is from the original assessment session. It’s kind of hard to hear, I apologize for that

[Watched first videotape segment]

R: Okay, so what was going on there and how was it for you?

T2: [laughs] I don’t know. Umm. I mean, I was basically just trying to give her a sense of what to expect from the tests. I wanted to, you know, I think when some people hear “tests” and “assessments” they maybe don’t think of something like the TAT as what is going to happen. So, I guess I just felt like saying, “one of these is going to be on pencil and paper and one is going to be more conversational.” And maybe there was, it’s hard for me to remember but it is possible that knowing that she was presenting with symptoms of anxiety. Maybe I was just trying to put her mind at ease that there wouldn’t be any surprises and that she would be involved in the process.

R: Yea, because she seemed to be involved in the entire process, so here you were kind of setting it up as collaborative from the very beginning.

T2: And that she would have some control over it. And that I was thinking of these tests as points of departure for conversation. That I wasn’t sort of somehow reading her mind or gaining some sort of control over her.

R: Yea, trying to let her know that she had some control over the process and making her feel more at ease. [T2: Mmhmm, yep] R: Okay, we’re going to go ahead. In this next section, it was in the middle of card 2, kind of toward the end. Like, you begin by saying, “How does it end?” is where we are going start with card 2.

[Watched second videotape segment] – R: Sorry, I know it’s kind of hard to hear.

R: So, what do you feel like was going on there and how was it?
T2: Um, well. I mean part of it at the most basic level it would be me just saying that the structure of the TAT which asks for a narrative that has a beginning, middle and end. But, I can tell you what was going on, like why I asked some of those questions. Is that what you are looking for?

R: Yea, like you asked that specific question in the middle, “what’s going on with the two people on the right there?” What were you trying to…?

T2: It’s possible with that, I just… it seemed like up until that point she had focused mainly on just the one character. I’m pretty sure I asked at the end there how those two feel about her leaving. I was definitely interested in that as it possibly giving some insight into her relationship with her parents because, I mean the reason I chose this card in the first place is because she grew up in a rural town with very little opportunity. Her parents were fairly traditional. Her mom was a stay at home mom, her dad works in landscaping and is very conservative, and I know she had a lot of conflicted feelings about leaving home and coming to the city. She really wanted to get away but she also felt guilty about leaving. I know that growing up in general she felt neglected and she felt like her parents didn’t call as much as she would like. So that was a real interesting response. What I kind of expected was thinking that in some ways she identified with this bookish girl leaving a small town and going to college and when I asked how they feel about her leaving she said, “Of course they would care, but they wouldn’t care too much. They have a lot of stuff going on, she’s having a baby.” You know, and that’s kind of how, that’s similar to her relationship with her parents.

R: So that question was trying to make it more contextual? Providing more of an ability to relate to her relationship with her parents rather than just to herself?

T2: Yea. [R: And it seemed to work] Yea.

R: Okay. This next segment is about four and a half minutes.

[Watched the third videotape segment]

R: So what was going on there and how was it for you?

T2: Well, I mean I guess. Just to put this in context, I don’t know if I’ve mentioned this before or if I wrote about it, but I sort of have my own little quirky method of doing the TAT where I do the TAT first and the first time I just have them say whatever they are going to say about the cards. I don’t really intervene except to ask them to elaborate or like if I didn’t hear something. Then I give them the objective test and while they are doing the objective test I read over their responses, come up with questions about possible themes. And then I come back and actually read the responses back to them verbatim and then have them comment on that. Then at the end I ask them more questions and that sort of thing. So this is the portion where I’m really just hanging back and looking at other things. But as far as what’s going on for her, what I sort of noticed.
Well, first of all, I’m struck, [laughs] I don’t know if I ever commented on this to her in the report, but I’m pretty sure those girls in the card are wearing the exact same thing [laughs]. I could be wrong, but that is a pretty striking projection if that’s the case. But another thing I notice now, and just tell me if this is not the sort of thing you are looking for. In retrospect it is sort of interesting that she described the way they were dressed because these two sides of herself have been kind of represented in other ways since then. So, like she actually thought, this was a few months ago, she talked about buying two jackets. One was for more professional and practical and the other was for more kind of fun and youthful, and she said that she couldn’t really afford both of them and she was debating which one she was going to have to take back. She ended up just keeping both of them, but I feel like that sort of split has manifest itself in other ways throughout the therapy and that is a recent example.

R: So you could see that kind of projection that was there play out later.

T2: And even having to do with the same, with the clothes, in the same sort of way.

R: Yea, that’s interesting. It seems to speak to the way it brings stuff out and you see it later.

T2: Do you want me to say more? [R: Sure, go ahead] I don’t know if there is anything in particular you are looking for.

R: Not really. If there is something more about this you would like to add, please feel free.

T2: I think one of the things I noticed right away was that she thought the book that the girl in the tree was holding was possibly a journal. And that led me to think she probably identified more with the character in the tree because I know that journaling is something that she does herself and that was something that I knew at the time.

R: Yea, and that comes out later. She seemed to identify more with that character and only want a short, to try out that kind of interrupting girl.

T2: That was actually, I’m glad you said that because that was one of the other things I noticed too. This is one of the general themes I talked to her about actually in the letter, I think even recently, was interruption. And that is something that has come up throughout our work in various different ways. I mean, on a lot of different levels I think she is someone who is very, likes to be in control and resents interruption and that affects her relationships. But probably the deepest meaning that has come out of that word is the way she feels she has interrupted her parents’ life by being born. So that particular signifier has been something that has been something that we have come back to a lot throughout the…

R: I remember you mentioning that in the feedback section. I didn’t actually select that video clip for us to watch, but I remember you talking about that, giving her that
feedback. So that is something that you guys continued with? [T2: Yea] Okay. So this next segment, I have two longer segments that are about nine or ten minutes each. This is one of them and then I am going to read a portion of your written description after that.

T2: Since these are longer is there anything I should be looking for?

R: Not in particular, same kind of thing. It just may be more of a challenge to keep focused a little bit longer I guess. [Both laugh] So this is where you guys take a bathroom break. Both of you take a bathroom break and come right back. [T2: This is still the…] It is still the assessment though.

[Begin watching fourth videotape segment]

T2: It is the assessment, but…This is after she took the Meyer-Briggs so we are about to, we are talking about the Meyers-Briggs, how she experienced that and then I am about to go talk about the other stuff.

R: Oh, I thought you guys had taken a bathroom break or something, but that is when she went and took another test. That makes more sense. And then she comes back talking about it. Okay, well let’s rewind it to the beginning of this segment.

[Watched part of the fourth videotape segment]

T2: Can I comment on this as we go? [R: Sure.] T2: I mean I’m just sort of, I feel like this particular response on that part is… She doesn’t really need to know like what I’m required to do for assessments. I feel like this is kind of unnecessary and probably not addressing her concerns yet. [R: How so?] T2: I mean, comparing this objective test to other objective tests that she has never heard of or taken probably, talking about like what we are required to do at the Clinic. I feel like I’m more talking shop, like I feel like I’m not sort of talking to her level.

R: What do you feel like you were trying to accomplish with that explanation?

T2: I don’t know what I was trying to do. I think I was a little taken off guard actually by her reaction to the Meyers-Briggs because I guess, maybe that’s why I’m saying what I’m saying. I mean from my perspective the Meyers-Briggs, I was thinking, “If you think this is bad you should have taken the MMPI.” [both laugh] But obviously that is not something that would make any sense to her if she hasn’t taken the MMPI. But I think the Meyers-Briggs was a kinder, gentler test and I was surprised that she was still freaked out by it.

R: Okay, but it seemed like you were kind of trying to soothe her with the explanation, right?

T2: Yea, yea.
R: And we’ll see how that played out…

[Continued watching more of the fourth videotape segment]

T2: Can I say something…[R: Yea, sure] I mean, I feel like what’s happening, it’s kind of interesting because I think this is something that has come up a lot later in therapy. She’ll have this sense of not knowing who she is or what she wants, but it is really more like a not wanting to know because she already has kind of a sense. Like, she doesn’t like this theory. Like she said, “I already know my personality.” I hear, you could finish that by saying, “I already know what kind of a person I am and I don’t like it and I don’t want it to be confirmed objectively.” [R: Okay] So that’s what I’m getting. And then towards the beginning where we picked up, I thought that was another example of me not successfully allaying her concerns. I was like, “Other objective tests you get a diagnosis, this one you just get a personality type.” I thought that was going to be easier for her to handle but she was still freaked out by the idea of being given a personality type. I thought that would be less threatening but it wasn’t.

R: So you feel like some of those explanations didn’t come across the way you wanted them to?

T2: Yea, I feel like the one thing that seemed to get through was when I said, “This was an incomplete snapshot.” And I said, “and we understand that.” And she laughed and that seemed to calm her down a bit. Like that I knew that this wasn’t going to somehow tell me some comprehensive thing about her personality.

R: So you feel like that helped?

T2: That was the one thing that I feel like seemed to have an effect, yea. [R: Okay]

[Continued watching fourth videotape segment]

R: Okay, so…

T2: Yea, I feel like this whole segment is something that I was totally unprepared for. I was expecting to come back and get into talking about the TAT cards, which I actually think we had to postpone until another session possibly because of this whole conversation. Or maybe we didn’t get as far with it as I thought…, we didn’t finish. I was taken off guard because I just wanted to check in. I didn’t expect this to be an anxiety provoking task and I think I just asked a kind of throw away question, like “How did you find that?” – the test, you know. And thought she would just say, “Okay.” And she launched into this whole thing about how much she didn’t like the Meyers-Briggs and I wasn’t expecting that at all. I was a little bit concerned about managing the session, like staying on task, and I think when I, that’s why I sort of fumbled around at the beginning. I feel like I didn’t find my groove until about half way through or something like that. [R: Of that segment?] Yea, and was able to kind of articulate some sort of explanation that would put her mind at ease about this test. I think I also just made a calculated decision
at a certain point that her reaction to this test is clearly significant clinically. So, I am
going to run with this and like have a conversation with her about why this test was so
threatening to her. You know, instead of try to convince her that it is not threatening.
Just find out why it is so threatening.

R: So first it kind of threw you off guard it sounds like, [T2: Yea] but then you king of
said “let’s look at what’s going on here.” And kind of accepted it and went with it to see
what you could get out of it. And you gave a good explanation at the end, it seems.

T2: Yea, I was finally able to kind of spit it out. You know just telling her that I was
more interested in the ideas she has about the test than what the test itself said about her.
Maybe that’s some sort of snappy way of summing up collaborative assessment: “It’s
what the client says about the test not what the test says about the client.” Or something
like that. I don’t know, that seemed to work. In that moment I was very grateful for the
approach that we are trained in. [both laughed] I mean, maybe this conversation never
would have happened if I hadn’t asked something about the test. It seems like if you
were trained in just traditional assessment, I don’t know how you would respond to a
client like this. I don’t know. I feel like if I really believe that these tests did give this
label and that was sort of all there was to it I don’t know what I would have said to her.
[laughs]

R: Okay. What you said kind of follows from this. You said, “During the assessment
session, I remember being struck by [C2]’s comment toward the end of our session that
she did not want to know her personality type based on the MBTI. At the time, I wasn’t
sure what exactly to make of this comment, but suspected that it had something to do
with not wanting to be fixed, not wanting to be anything in particular (this has turned out
to be an important theme for [C2], who fears that inertia would set in if she settled
down).”

T2: Yes, and this is something that has turned out to be important diagnostically from a
Lacanian perspective, you know, to support a diagnosis of hysteria. The fact that, this
sort of refusal to be pinned down, to be any one thing. This sort of constantly shifting,
not allowing herself to be in any one position, wanting to keep things open ended, being
really anxious about decisions. Yea, this is really an example of something that has
helped me diagnostically with her.

R: Okay, and you had said something else that followed from this too. You said,
“Initially, [C2]’s reaction to my letter was fatalistic – the fact that my interpretations of
the tests corresponded in some way with our work together in regular sessions made her
feel doomed to repeat these patterns forever.” That seemed to be what you were speaking
to right there, pretty concretely.

T2: Yea, I guess that did come up again in the discussion section with her concerns about
the letter in general rather than just about the MBTI. Yea, it’s very interesting actually. I
hadn’t thought as much about this, at least not related to the assessment. She’s very
conflicted about, on one hand she is very anxious and wants everything to be sort of set.
She wants closure. She wants things to be established and certain. She says that, but then she also wants things to be open ended and we talked about this a few sessions ago in the context of her, well I forget now what the context was. But we talked about this, and I remember actually ending the session at the point when she said, “Maybe I want to keep things things messy.” And that seemed like that was a releasing of something for her. So it is interesting how that is sort of manifesting itself here, [R: Yea, this early] that she wants to keep things messy. She doesn’t want a clean category, she doesn’t want to be pigeon-holed.

R: Okay, and you said also, right after that, “Ultimately I got the impression that through our discussion [C2] was able to accept some of the themes I mentioned without feeling determined by them.” This was talking about the feedback session.

[Had to flip the audiotape]

T2: Sorry, I’ll try not to have too many incomplete sentences.

R: That’s okay. That’s part of it. [both laugh] I just felt like it showed here as well as in the feedback that she brought some stuff with the anxiety of this that there might be some things that were hard for her to take in, but the explanation sort of make it easier for her to take in. [T2: Yea] Okay, so let’s watch another segment. And this is when you are reading back the..., when you start the read back portion of the TAT that you were doing. So right here is where you are reading back to her the response from card two. So we are going to start watching it is when she is giving her response to you reading her response. It is about a four or five minute clip.

[Watched the fifth videotape segment]

R: Okay, so…

T2: I’m not sure about that segue (laughs). Like how I said, “Speaking of the way songs refer back to reality, you can see that these cards in some way tell us something about your real life.”

R: You are unsure about that?

T2: Well, I mean, it seemed to work. It was a little bit of a stretch, I think. That was sort of the thing that leapt out of that segment. But yea, I mean there’s not too much to add. I thought she was perceptive. She identified some meanings in the card that I had also noticed, but without sharing that with her.

R: Yea, she seemed to be able to relate it to her life pretty well. [T2: Yea] She even said at the end, “I can relate this to myself.”
T2: And I mean that is exactly why I gave her the TATs. I thought she would be okay with accepting that as a possibility. Whereas, I think a lot other people would bristle at the suggestion, you know, “I’m just telling a story.” (laughs)

R: Okay. In this next segment, it is about three minutes long. Here it is continuing with this, she continues talking about the same card and responds to family dynamic stuff.

[Watched the sixth videotape segment]

T2: Yea, I think I was surprised at how keen her insight was, and I said that. I didn’t have much to add to her response. I mean, she really nailed it. That was sort of how I felt.

R: And when you reflected it back too, to her, that it was good, she got pretty emotional.

T2: Yea, and this is really the beginning of, you know, a scene that we still talk about with the crying. She always, the only time she ever cries… She cries periodically, not like all the time, but it is always when she is talking about her mom. We just talked about this in our last session because the more we kind of explore this crying…, I have noticed from pretty early on that it’s when she expresses some anger towards her mom. Like here the anger is like not even really there, you know, I can only infer it retrospectively. But she’s saying she would like her mom to have a different life. Then, I think, the more she realizes these things that her mom is responsible for the way she is, the more angry she is at her. But that anger is so difficult for her to tolerate that it becomes…, she turns it back on herself and it becomes this guilt and crying. So I think that is probably the first time, maybe in the intake she cried too.

R: But you saw it there and the process continued up until your most recent session.

T2: And this is the…, her issues are so completely related to her relationship with her mom in the sense that, I mean here you saw the guilt. But, I mean, it is so overdetermined. If her mom were living a more independent life then it would release [C2] from the guilt of having to be with her in this life…

R: We are going to come back to that. There is a clip that we are going to watch that talks specifically about that.

T2: Did I bring that up?

R: In the feedback session. But here I noticed it was interesting. She started crying, it was obviously very emotional for her, but you were really able to contain her and hold her. But at the same time say “we are going to discuss this in pieces, it’s all going to be gradually.” [T2: …a little bit at a time.] Yea. What were you trying to do there? What do you think that was like for her?
T2: I mean, I think I saw that we had touched on something really powerful and I guess I wanted to tell her on the one hand I thought that this was something that was very important that I wanted to keep talking about. I didn’t want the tears to sort of foreclose the conversation about it. But I also wanted her to know that because it was distressing for her I was sensitive to that and we weren’t going to go too fast. You know, that we were going to take it one step at a time and I wasn’t going to push her if she wasn’t able to handle it.

R: How do you think that was for her?

T2: It seemed to work, yea. She was able to stop crying, kind of. I think I actually could have this early on been a bit more consoling or something. But in general this is kind of how I am with her when she cries. At this point, I feel like we have a strong enough relationship that I can be there and contain it but then move pretty quickly into talking about what is happening.

R: Well, in retrospect it is easier to see.

T2: Yea, but I thought that worked.

R: Yea, okay, and then this other segment is the other long one that we have, it is about ten minutes as well. And this is right after you get done reading back to her the…, her response to the 9GF rivalry card.

[Watched the seventh videotape segment]

R: There’s a lot there.

T2: It’s hard to remember everything I was thinking about it.

R: Sorry, I guess we should have taken some pauses during that clip.

T2: Um. Where to start…It’s interesting that she already connected it to [her boyfriend] this early because that’s…and I hadn’t really thought about the whole thing with [her boyfriend] in terms of this card, but it makes a lot of sense looking back on it. She had a dream once, she was describing a dream and she slipped. She meant to say, “I want [my boyfriend]’s attention,” but instead she said, “I want [my boyfriend]’s personality.” That’s something we’ve come back to a lot. They are no longer together. But it seemed like a big part of the draw with it. She sort of admired him and wanted to become more like him. He was this sort of wild guy. Like they met when he lit the pipe for her at a party when it was her first time smoking pot. So, it’s interesting that already in some sense going out with [her boyfriend] is a gesture in the direction of that girl who is running. And it’s interesting, this is where I think she really has come a long ways. She started talking recently about how she feels more like a 21 year-old and not like an old lady. Now that the relationship with [her boyfriend] is over, she seems to have integrated that part of herself a bit more. She has talked about wanting to take time off from school
after she graduates. She’s sort of taken on some of the things she admired in [her boyfriend] and that girl who is running by.

R: So you could see that stuff pretty early here it seems like.

T2: I was surprised that she already connected it to [her boyfriend]. But yea, that is something that has come up.

R: And that was interesting with the, and I noticed you kind of laughed when we were watching it, but with The Simpsons metaphor because she was kind of like at first, “I don’t know too much about The Simpsons,” but then it really ended up seeming to work out. In the end she was kind of like, “Yea,” and really seemed to take it on.

T2: Yea, that was a bit of, um [laughs]. I don’t really know what I was thinking at the time. But I think I made that comment that was really awkward and technical about wanting her to be able to make her own decisions and being a bit neurotic and that didn’t really go anywhere. And maybe I was thinking I was trying to say something a bit more accessible or whatever and maybe that is where that came from, I don’t know. I really don’t know what motivated me to do that. It just kind of popped into my head. Yea, it did seem to move the conversation in some way. I think I just thought the way she presented and the way she talked about herself just reminded me of Lisa Simpson.

R: And that does seem like it would be more accessible because I remember you saying, her talking earlier about being saturated with the media, stuff like that.

T2: Yea, and I think maybe that was on my mind too.

R: So there was that and so maybe that was what was more accessible since the other part that you tried to mention, it seemed like maybe she didn’t take it up as well, or something like that. So offering something more that she could hear. And then at the end also you talked about, you know, “on the horizon,” like this possibility that is there, “let’s explore more,” maybe being able to be both. Like the integration that you were just talking about that she has really made big steps with. You put it out there and it’s like, “maybe that’s a place we can go explore more.”

T2: Yea and I feel like there were other things too. There was the thing about how the other half lives. I don’t think I heard at the time because I don’t think I knew the extent of the class issues at this point. That was an interesting ambiguity. She was talking about how the other half lives, she meant it in terms of this care free, wild girl, but there was also in that same expression, it usually has some financial connotation.

R: Yea, I didn’t think about that.

T2: Yea, “how the other half lives.” How the “rich” live. A lot of her self-consciousness has to do with her family. Their financial security is not the best. She talks about being ashamed of their house growing up. Having friends’ parents drop her off out of sight of
the house so they wouldn’t see it, stuff like that. So, that was…, but maybe there was something about if she had growing up with more money maybe she could be more carefree. [R: Oh, okay] And that is something she is intensely envious of her friends who have money, whose have parents who give them money to pay for college expenses and that sort of thing. So, there is a lot there that I couldn’t see at the time because I didn’t know enough about it.

R: But that was early and it seems to have come out more later.

T2: I feel like there was something else too that I wanted to mention, but I can’t really remember it right now.

R: But it seems like looking back at it, watching it you are getting a lot out of it from seeing that. [T2: Yea] and how it has played out later.

T2: Yea, and I mean now. This was before I started having ______ as a supervisor over the summer and I think now if I had an assessment session where someone said something like “how the other half lived,” I would have just asked about it and maybe it would have gotten me there right away.

R: It’s funny when we watch things again we can always look back and say, “I could have done this,” or “I should have done that.” It’s easy to say now, later, you know. Okay, so let’s see. This segment we are going to watch is from the feedback session. There is more from this session that I wanted to put in but there is already so much that we are watching. I don’t want to keep you here all night watching this tape. So in this part it is kind of hard because in the middle without a whole lot of context. But in this part you are talking about, “committing to one thing that makes you feel dull,” is a line you give to her. And then you ask her if that reminds her of anything. [Watched eighth videotape segment] – T2: I made sure the audio was better with this one because I knew you were going to use it. With the first one I didn’t know.

R: Okay, that was a pretty short little one. I guess my question with that one was that it seemed like there was something that was pointed out. You were like, “did that remind you of anything?” And it seemed to bring some stuff out.

T2: Yea, I don’t know what I was talking about with the feeling dull. I don’t know what that was in reference to.

R: I know, it’s hard without more context, I guess.

T2: But, yea. I think what was going on there is that, she associates commitment with feeling trapped and that is because of her parents’ marriage and what she has seen in things with her mom. It seemed like whatever that was in reference to, it seemed to elicit some insight about that.
R: There was that, but then you also asked, “Did that remind you of anything?” There was that too, because it seemed like it was applying to her, her own relationships. You know, like the commitment to anything dull, like her own being trapped. And then, “Does that remind you of anything?” seems to take her back to her mom.

T2: Yea, and I mean I guess that is sort of the influence of working with [my supervisor] and also I have been paying more attention to my own therapy. Like, you know, being more open-ended and sort of just asking “what comes to mind?” in response to something. That is kind of what I am trying to do more this semester.

R: Yea, and it seemed to work there. It seemed to give it a good context because it took her from herself back to things with mom, which you were saying is a pretty central thing for her and she had a pretty strong emotional reactions too…Okay, now this one (video segment), here she starts talking about the fact that she… you started talking about something else and she said, “I wanted to go back to talking about how I start something and I love it and I hate it.” This is about a three and a half minute clip and it will be the last one that we watch.

[Watched the ninth video segment]

R: Okay, what did you think about that?

T2: Well, what I think I was trying to do there was to…I mean, the two phrases I kind of latched on to were “quitter” and “little girl.” I think it was interesting that she talked about her mom quitting her job and how she feels like a quitter in doing some things that she mentioned in a previous session. So she seemed to be identifying with her mother. You know, there was this sense of doom about, her mom is a quitter, she is going to be a quitter, she’s going to remain a little girl like her mom has because she quits everything. But what I tried to do, and I think this worked, was to suggest that there was actually something about her mom remaining a little girl that has been the result of not quitting. You know, that it is actually because her mom has not quit the marriage that has kept her in this infantile state. And so, maybe there is something about [C2]’s quitting that is about avoiding being in a situation like that. I don’t know if that makes sense.

R: But it came back to what you were saying before too about…, you were talking earlier about her mom and if her mom did something it would be…

T2: And that’s what I was getting at when I asked, “What would it mean for you if her mom did something with her life?” basically, and she didn’t quite articulate it here. I mean she said it would make her feel more relaxed, more at ease, you know, she would worry about her less. But I think that was really crucial at the end, and I don’t know if I picked that up at the time, but saying you know, basically that if her mom got out of this marriage then her mom would be an adult and it would release [C2] from having to be the mother.
R: Like she said earlier, “I know I sound like a parent.” Okay, this is the last part of the written description that I want to read and discuss it. You said, and this is the end of it, you said, “However, I also wonder in retrospect how important the assessment was with this particular client (and in general). With other clients, we have often returned to the assessment throughout therapy. For [C2], I feel that the assessment session mainly functioned as a way to elicit material at the beginning for our work that may not have come up otherwise. I see it more as a foundation for our ongoing work together, but not as an integral part of it in the present.” Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

T2: Yea, I mean. I think this is something I am still sorting out for myself in general. You know, “How do I feel about assessment in general?” Do I see myself, if I am in private practice someday, even using assessments? I mean, I think most people don’t, at least in my experience. I guess, I know that [my supervisor] doesn’t take them too seriously. I know my therapist has never used assessments with me. I feel like, part of me thinks there is something unnecessarily artificial about them. You could get at this material just by doing therapy with the person. You know, “Is it necessary to do that at all?” So there is that question. But then, I also see the other side and I think it has actually been interesting to go back and look at this because I think...I feel like maybe there was something that was put in motion by the assessment that maybe was unique in some way and it has continued to influence the course of therapy. I really think a lot of that comment was motivated by the fact the report was written so late. Because I didn’t have the feedback session until months later, I feel like we didn’t really have a chance to...

R: To go back it as much, like you were saying with other clients. [T2: Yea, yea, yea] Like you said, with other clients it has come up more right there.

T2: I feel like the only way it can come up later on is if there has been a discussion between the two of us about the possible meeting of these tests, and since that didn’t happen for so long I feel like the therapy sort of took on its own life and found its own direction without that.

R: But it seems like in looking back today, especially watching it, you see how those things still continue even though you didn’t have that discussion until later. It seems like they still, they were there.

T2: Yea, yea. And I mean I think maybe it’s just the... it recognized that it can be helpful to do the feedback session earlier because it could have had more of an influence, I think. Maybe this is just a prejudice, but for some reason I feel like assessment is maybe more helpful with more severe clients. I don’t know, I haven’t thought this through. But, I feel like with a client like this she already has so much to say and she’s already sort of doing the work from the start. I feel like with the TAT cards, for instance, she anticipated so many of my comments. I feel like she sort of just got it so quickly that maybe it wasn’t even necessary to do. In other words, if the assessment is valuable in large part because it elicits material that wouldn’t have been elicited otherwise, then it is less valuable with
clients who would have, of their own accord, bring that stuff up. Whereas, with clients who aren’t as reflective or something, maybe it would bring things up.

R: Yea, well one thing I was noticing is that it seems more like it just does it sooner with her because she does seem to be pretty insightful and forthcoming, things like that. But, it seems like it just brought it up sooner.

T2: I think maybe that comment that I made, it is also just coming out of the feeling that the assessment is such a nuisance just in terms of the amount of work that it creates. You know [laughs]. It’s just such a pain in the ass to write that report. For some reason the paperwork is what I have the hardest time doing.

R: Just because of how much, what it creates kind of logistically and practically, it seems.

T2: Yea, I don’t know what it is. I have some sort of block against it, I don’t know. It just takes so much time and maybe it was just coming out of some frustration [laughs] about that.

R: Okay, I didn’t show a clip about this, but at the beginning she had talked about feeling kind of frustrated and deflated while she was reading the intake report, she said in particular thinking about how she is going to deal with these patterns that the report seemed to present. She talked about her desire for predictability as something she knows she has but she doesn’t want to do that and it seemed to frustrate her.

T2: This is what she said when you talked to her earlier today?

R: No, this is what she said, I didn’t show the clip, but this is what she said at the beginning of the feedback session… So it seemed to speak to her, again, to her anxiety about not wanting to be limited by that kind of feedback, but you seem to have brought that in. But how was that, do you feel, initially? I guess it might have been helpful to watch the clip. But can you recall like how that might have been when she came in?

T2: Yea, I mean I guess, again, I was surprised by, it was very similar to what happened in the assessment session where she talked the anxiety about the test – the Meyers-Briggs. I wrote this letter to her knowing in advance that, and this was after working with her for some time. I was very sensitive in writing this letter to avoid that sort of a reaction on her part. I tried to really keep it open-ended. So I was surprised… [R: and it still…]

T2: Yea, and so part the beginning of that feedback session was trying to put her at ease with the letter and communicating clearly what my intention was and that I wasn’t trying to pigeon hole her or something.

R: And it seemed to open her up more because obviously in the later parts, in the clips we watched, she seemed to be going with it and taking it in. [T2: Mmmhmm] Were there any parts that you, you know. We have been talking about the constructed parts of it, of
the assessment, and you have been talking about how the paperwork is kind of a pain and
a nuisance part of it. Are there any other parts that you feel like are about collaborative
assessment or in general that you feel like could use some more tweaking or changing
things you don’t like about it?

T2: Um, I think I do have some of those issues and so I have modified it for my own
purposes. [R: Like what?] That’s why I write letters. You know, I guess I’m not fully on
board with the philosophy behind that we have to share so much with the client. I mean,
I think it is important for therapists to have their own idea about a case and arrive at their
own interpretations without sharing those. And I think Connie would agree with that.
And I think that is why you don’t show a client, in the collaborative assessment, the
computer printout from the MMPI and just hand it to them because that’s just not a good
idea. But I do feel like as a way of sort of managing what I am communicating to them,
that the letter is a good compromise because I don’t necessarily go over the test itself. I
write them basically something about the bottom line of…you know, I mean I may refer
to specific elements of the test, but I feel like I give them a general sense of what I took
away from the tests. But, I feel like it gives me a bit more control over what I share with
them and what I don’t than if I just brought in a report and sort of went over it with them
spontaneously.

R: It seemed to be particularly helpful in this case too, to be able to do that, because who
knows if you just brought in the test and just threw these kind of terms out there, how she
would have taken it.

T2: Right, and that is part of the thing that I struggle with is sort of translating the
technical aspects of these tests into something that clients can make sense of and take up
in their own way. And I feel like I don’t do that very well spontaneously. I feel like
early on with assessments I would do that, you know. I wouldn’t really prepare that much
for a feedback session. If I gave them an MMPI I might highlight some stuff and take
some notes on it and I would bring the report in, the computer print out…

[Audio tape ran out]
R: Okay, yea so today what we are going to do is, I have your written description, which was very rich by the way so I actually have more questions than I have had for other people, because it was good, I mean, that was a good thing. What I am going to do is I am going to go back and forth between…, I’ll start off reading some of the written description things and ask you to elaborate on what you meant by some of that stuff, and then I have some specific questions about that. And then we will watch some pieces of tape and then I’ll ask you…, the main questions I will ask are, “What was going on here?” and “How was it for you?” and then I may have some specific questions about that too. And then I will go back again to the written descriptions, is how we are going to do it today. Do you have any questions about that?

T3: No, that sounds good.

R: Okay, and there may be some stuff, you know, that may get kind of redundant I guess, that maybe we’ve covered because I noticed as I was preparing the questions that some of it may seem that way so if you feel the need to say, “That is kind of like I was talking about before with this,” so you don’t have to continue with repeating yourself and can just refer back to stuff. [T3: Okay] Do you need to go to the bathroom or anything like that? [T3: No] Okay, so we can go ahead and get started. Alright, so I am going to begin my reading.., there is a few of these, about four of these little segments that you said I am going to read and ask you about them. You started off the written description by saying, “When I first started doing psychological assessment as a first year student, I often felt apologetic about the amount of what seemed to me to be a great deal of ambiguous and, at times, irrelevant material that I was asking my clients to work through when they clearly had other things they wanted to talk about.” Can you say a little bit more about that?

T3: Yea, when people come to therapy typically it’s because there is some urgency and there’s something that has motivated them to overcome the inertia of actually calling somebody for help. It is just a huge act of faith, and often really deep despair when people are motivated to reach out because there is a lot of…, regardless of how things have changed, there are still a lot of stereotypes about coming to therapy and what it means to talk to another person. Usually it is an acknowledgement of some sort of weakness. And so, being able to call and find someone to talk to is an extremely nerve racking and often terrifying experience. So, the first few sessions that I have had with clients typically have been with them just really wanting to get it over with or just be able to get out what they have been holding onto, what’s been building up. And so, at first when you start an assessment I was like, “This goes against my natural tendency which is to get out of the way and allow them to expunge or allow them to release whatever has been built up for that initial meeting.” So, the idea of me having an agenda, which would usurp whatever they had, was uncomfortable for me at first.
R: So there is this tension between wanting to kind of get out of their way and not having your own agenda, just letting them have it out...

T3: Allowing them to kind of release some of that stuff that has been built up initially. [R: Sure, yea, okay.] And that is not necessarily a problem with assessment itself, but maybe with the timing.

R: The timing, okay. Like with maybe just letting them have that out and then coming back and doing the assessment.

T3: That was my initial feelings about doing this the first..., right away.

R: Like, “Why am I doing this right away? Could it wait?” or something. [T3: Yea, totally.] Okay, that makes sense. But then there seems to be an interesting shift that may have come with some experience. Let me read you this second part. You said, “However, over the past three years I have come to truly appreciate and respect the collaborative assessment process and the fruit it can bear. It has become something of an adventure where I can embark on a journey with my clients to help find meaning and metaphor for their experience that can also help shape their process of healing.” So it seems like…, I mean I’m wondering if that desire to have them let it out or explain or let these things out that they need, this cathartic kind of thing it seems like [T3: Mmhm] It seems like you have found that maybe that is possible in assessment too?

T3: Yea, yea, especially, it creates a culture of kind of doing the collaborative piece of it, Connie’s piece of that, just that this is a co-constituted thing and I have found that it helps me and them not feel alone. Like maybe it balances out a little bit so it is not just them telling me stuff and me receiving it like a passive receptacle, but more something that we are kind of endeavoring together. And so, that creates a culture of collaboration from the beginning where they don’t feel maybe so alone or under the microscope. [R: Yea] Maybe there is something really exciting about discovery and not knowing. So it’s, “I don’t know. I don’t have the answers.” Which is a very comfortable place for me to be in [both laugh]. But they also know that I don’t know and they don’t necessarily need to know either. So that kind of helps create sort of an atmosphere of, “Let’s discover…” [R: together] Yea, yea, instead of “Give me the answers,” you know, “I’ll tell you what it’s about and you interpret it and give it back to me and I’ll process it.”

R: So it helps to set a frame for the dynamics of the relationship as well.

T3: Yea, and one of the biggest things that it is helpful for is those metaphors.

R: Yea, I was going to ask you about that.

T3: It’s like creating an out-there-ness to something that is a mutual participation so that they can feel safe. They are able to move away from the idea that they are being reduced or that the materials know something about them independent of what they know about
themselves, or that I do. They are more able to start to create kind of a tapestry of image and metaphor that is like a collective participation in something, involved in something that is there, that we can both work with.

R: Yea, great. Yea, I was going to ask you more about that, the out-there-ness. That was a great way to put it. But, we will come back to that later. Okay, just a couple more questions I was going to read you about, from the written description and then we can watch some of the tape. You said at one point, “As we were arranging a time to do the assessment, I told him that the process was in no way a kind of “me figuring him out” from test results, but rather that we would integrate and use each tool together to try to see what meanings fit for him in the context for his own experience. I also told him that the assessment process offered the chance for both of us to hold and work with some representations, images, or metaphors for what he was experiencing at the present time in his life. [C3] seemed to me to be very agreeable to this and open to the process.” So it sounds like you were explaining the process and preparing him for it. Is that typical for you? [T3: Yea] Do you think it helped?

T3: Yea, I usually…. I know even for myself that any time there is an assessment or a test, even with words, cause anxiety because it implies evaluation, it is evaluation. We grew up with standardized testing our entire lives [R: That’s true] But it’s like we are always being evaluated.

R: Under the microscope, like you said.

T3: Yea, so it is important for me to sort of change the tone of it ahead of time so it feels different. So I try to do that. It doesn’t always work, but I think that is something that I like to do.

R: It doesn’t always work. What do you mean?

T3: I think that it maybe doesn’t always assuage the anxiety because it’s still like, “Don’t be nervous.” “Okay” (skeptical, doubtful tone). [both laugh]

R: So it doesn’t always work but it is definitely worth an attempt.

T3: Yea, it is an attempt to make it a little bit different.

R: Okay. And then another part you said specifically with [C3] you said, “While he was working on the P.A.I., I used the time to review my notes from the intake session, his initial paperwork, his SCLR-90, his phone screening, and his responses to the Sentence Completion.” You said, “It would be fair to say that I had begun to form my own impressions of [C3]’s life history and the immediate surface layers of his suffering when I met with him to go through the TAT.” So it sounds like you had some initial impressions that you gathered from the data you already had. How do you think this affected the process for you? I don’t know, maybe it gave you some preconceptions or something like that. So if you could speak a little bit to that…
T3: Well, I had met him and had spoken with him so I had his face, and you know…

R: You had met with him in person already.

T3: Yea, so I had already felt him, like what it was like to be with him, what his demeanor was like, the whole worlding, I guess, of who he was, what his eyes say, does he make eye contact, what was going on for him. And then I went back and looked at what he has told other people over the phone and what he has said about himself when he has been by himself. So, then the biggest thing there was he had just…, there was a break up of a 10 year relationship. So, the preconceptions I would have from that would be like, how devastating would it be to have your world sort of taken over and basically your legs being pulled out from underneath you from that. So, that was part of me going back and the things that I was discovering in the process, which was marrying it to his person, what my impressions were as a human being from having met him and talked to him.

R: So going in knowing some themes that would emerge helped you empathize with where he probably was.

T3: Right, right. And not who he is as a person across the board, forever, in the past and will become, but who he is right now. Who he is right now and what he is dealing with right now.

R: Did it effect, I was wondering, the cards you chose or things like that, to try to bring some of those things out?

T3: Yea, it definitely did. Thinking about, you know, a relationship card, or like… and also I love the card where he is standing in a darkened room with the window, that is such a great idea. I like to put that at the end so it can be like the future will kind of…, it’s kind of imagining or projecting yourself into what could be out there. And then there is the ambiguous white card, which is…, if there is someone who is really anxious I wouldn’t necessarily use the white card or would be wondering about whether to use that. [R: Yea] But that is all based on having met him and the material.

R: You thought he could handle that and it would be productive.

T3: Yea, that he was really open to checking out stuff and doing this.

R: Yea, and it turned out to be really productive. [T3: Yea, yea] That’s interesting that you should say that because it gives us a good segue to our first video clip [both laugh] [T3: Who wrote this script?] [both laugh] Okay, so we are going to watch this little clip and just keep in mind, “what was going on here and how it was for you?” This one is about a minute and a half and let me know if you have difficulty hearing it.

[Watched first videotape segment] – Discuss her having difficulty hearing the tape.
R: So do you remember what was going on there?

T3: I think I was surprised by how not taken aback he was [R: Okay] He was so comfortable with it and he... He’s looking at a white card and he’s seeing it, he’s really seeing it. And he didn’t hesitate, you know, there is no mediation. He saw fog and then he went back to a place that he’d know, and I’ve been to [that location] so I know what he’s talking about.

R: So you can relate to that.

T3: Yea. When [my husband] was working in [that location] for a job we used to go down and visit him a bunch and that fog that used to come in off the Gulf of Mexico is thick. But, it’s interesting that he chose that place to really kind of go into because that is the place where he met his girlfriend. [R: Hmm] So he returned to a place that was emotionally so charged. But also really the place where his life…, I found this out later but…, that veered off for 10 years into this relationship and had a very different path. So the first place that he basically moved away from home from, so that he returned to that place was significant. I felt, when I was with him, I was amazed that he had gone there and was taken aback that he wasn’t taken aback. I felt really amazed with him.

R: Okay. Really amazed that he could just jump in and be so open like that.

T3: That he was so open, but also that there was such richness there. I felt a really deep appreciation for him, you know, that he had access to this and it was part of him.

R: Okay, great. So it seems like you got a lot out of that one.

T3: Yea, that card was good [laughs].

R: And you said in here at one point, “Many of them…” I think you are referring to the cards, or his responses to the cards, “Many of them seemed to highlight his own longings, dreams, and struggles but these meanings seemed to be elusive or opaque to him.” What gave you that impression that maybe they were maybe elusive or opaque to him?

T3: Um. That it was not in the reflective mode yet. It was something that was like an immediate involvement, that he was directly responding and that he hadn’t gone back to gather up all the other meanings in this reflective mode. He was there so, he was engaged. We’re not able to dissect our experience until we are removed from it. So he was there. [R: Okay] But it was sort of that it was swimming in there. When you are involved in something you are vaguely aware that something is happening but you haven’t had a chance to gather it up yet.

R: Yea, okay. So following from that, what was the prospect of maybe facilitating or helping him get to a reflective place or allowing him to move there? It seems like that
would follow. What did the idea of that shift or facilitating that seem like to you? Would that be coming on the horizon?

T3: Right, right. I’m swimming in my own meanings, you know. Like, “There is a lot there.” Like, “Well, you know, maybe that relates to this.” Your brain is working because you are not in it, necessarily. You are both in it but not in it. You are facilitating it, but also really aware that he is working on something but I am not sure exactly what. I have all these ideas about what it could be, but…

R: So you are swimming in it too but then it’s also just the idea of following him to where he is trying to go. [T3: Yea] Okay. And just one more before we go back to the tape. You said, “To me they seemed to jump from the stories and I felt an excitement, a sadness, and a deep emotional connection to him through these stories.” Can you say a little bit more about that?

T3: Yea. The depth and the, I guess, the longevity of his personhood was being extended in those moments. You know, where you have this filing in of a whole terrain of his life history and life story. But also in these moments of going through the real sadness that was there. And the images themselves evoked an emotional connection, you know, the idea of sitting in a fog and not knowing what is coming and being confused. So all of that stuff was just kind of replete in it. So I was really aware of those feelings that I was having and that he was possibly having as well.

R: Okay. So it sounds like you were very tuned into what was going on with him and probably through those responses it helped to give you a better connection. [T3: Yea] Okay, so now we are going to go back to the tape. Let me fast forward it a little bit.

[Both discussed a difficulty with going too far forward on the tape and not being able to view the feedback session because it just became static and stopped keeping track of the time on the tape at the end of the assessment, which was needed to select and view segments of tape later] – R: But, I feel like there was so much…. you kind of did your own feedback session at the end [of the assessment] anyway, which we will talk about later. I had so many questions about that in itself that if I had extra questions about another feedback session we would probably be in here all night [both laughed]. T3: Okay, cool. [She discussed having technical difficulties with the equipment on occasion]

R: Okay, so right here is right when you finished up the last part. So right here where we are going to start, this is the very end of the assessment. You explain the assessment and the TAT again and how it helps you to work together. He downplays his interpretations as stupid and it seems like you try to comfort him a little bit. This segment is just about a minute or so.

[Watch the second videotape segment]

R: Could you hear it okay?

T3: Yea, I was just noticing how I can be repetitive. I was like, “I just said that.” [laughs]
R: So you had a reaction to it?

T3: Yea, it feels weird seeing yourself on tape.

R: Yea, of course. So what did you feel like was going on there and how was it?

T3: I guess now that I see it, you know, I’m like reflecting on it now and kind of moving away from it. But feeling like…, I think he was really honest about it and he felt embarrassed about that. He felt kind of exposed and I was trying to assure him that this was really important stuff. I know the feeling of wanting to apologize, I do it a lot. So, it felt like, “Is that okay? Is that okay?” You know. But still that anxiety, no matter what, there is always that evaluative state, even our self-evaluative critic that we keep really close to us. [R: Sure, sure] That was…, he had been there and done that, he was honest, and then he was like, “Holy crap.”

R: Yea, exactly. He did have his own…, it seemed like maybe he was…, he said, “Oh man, some of my responses may have been stupid.” I’m wondering if maybe he was fishing for some comfort.

T3: Probably, that he was really kind of exposed out there and needing to know that he wasn’t alone.

R: Yea. So how was that? I mean, did that…, to even see that. You said you felt removed, it was difficult to see it on tape.

T3: It was, again, it’s kind of moving into reflective modes from pre-reflective modes where you are…, and then to really super engaged mode. So you are backing away from it but also connected to the experience. I felt, even now, viscerally connected to the apology that he was giving, the need for comfort, but also my own just real excitement about what he had given me and appreciation for what he had given me, which is really profound. It felt like a gift, a real gift.

R: And you have a strong appreciation for that.

T3: Oh my god, yea.

R: Okay, so now we are going to watch another couple of segments and stop in between. This next one is about a minute and a half and you start discussing some of the impressions relating to some of the cards.

[Watched third videotape segment]

R: Okay, so what was going on there? How was it for you?
T3: Um. He was..., I think I was just recognizing the places where he was connecting. I said, “Stupid birds” [laughed].

R: [laughed] What did you think about that? You seem kind of self-conscious about that but at the same time it seemed like a kind of funny, humorous moment.

T3: Yea, just given other stuff that he was going through and talking about sitting there staring out the window and looking at all the life out there and then all feelings of very removed from it, so I guess that is why I said that [laughs], you know. I’ve thought that too, you know. Like, how many times like when you are really, really depressed and you’re sad and you look out the window and see the birds and you are like envious of them. And you’re like, “They can fly away. They can just go and fly away.”

R: And he mentions that, that exact thing, about kind having jealous feelings about those birds. It’s funny, yea. I don’t know if you remember that. [T3: I don’t] He mentions that exact thing. I don’t know if he uses the word jealous but he mentions that about, feeling like, “Oh man, those birds they are so free and can do anything.”

T3: That’s right. And they must have come up for us again later because I think I wrote about that in the assessment report. But there is a whole quality of what his life world was like. What it is like to be him and what he is experiencing right now, or when that was. This feeling of, “This is happening,” there is something very real and tangible, visceral. And in the moment you can feel it, you can feel all of that stuff sitting with the person. So that the assessment kind of creates this whole atmosphere of, what’s-it-like-now-ness. [laughs] Because you are asking me what’s it like, [both laugh] and this now-ness. So it’s cool. And all of that stuff is not something you can put your finger on, but it’s just atmospheric.

R: Yea and he was able to relate…, he related it to his grandmother who he mentioned has Alzheimer’s and stares out the window, but then also how he stares out the window too, so kind of relating to that. But then at one point he said, “I feel like I can relate to all of them.” So it seems like he got a lot out of it right off the bat. [T3: I think so. Yea, it was rich.] And then there was that shift from like that in the moment to being able to step back. This is where that shift kind of occurs.

T3: Yea, that’s true. I think that was it. [R: Yea, and his ability to do that.] Which is amazing. [R: Yea, definitely]

R: Okay, so there is one more clip and then we have another thing from your written description to read to you. So this next clip is a little bit longer. These last two are a little bit longer. This one is about four and a half or five minutes. The last one is a little bit long, it is about nine minutes. Those are going to be the last two we are going to watch and then it will just be written descriptions. So here is this one, it will go about four and a half minutes.

[Watched fourth videotape segment]
R: Okay [laughs]. That was a little bit longer one. So, what was going on there and how was that?

T3: We were both relating to the cards a lot more so this is where we..., it just seemed like we were weaving together, you know, my ideas, pulling themes that he had just told me. Then he was elaborating on..., we were, it seemed like we were really doing this together, reflecting on this together and creating something. There was really something happening there.

R: And I noticed at the beginning, it was interesting, I was confused watching as a third party as he said, “I’m not sure if this is us.” And I wasn’t sure if he was relating..., if he meant that as like he and his girlfriend who had just broke up, because it was the relationship card. He said, “Well, I’m not sure if it is us,” or he could be referring to you and his relationship [T3: Right, right.] or..., I just thought it was just ambiguous, you know. [T3: That’s true. Yea, yea] I was just kind of curious about that. But it is showing how this connection was building and you gave him the card back when he said, “I’m not sure what context they are in. I still don’t understand.” Which carries over from the fog, kind of a thing too, right? [T3: Mhm] Like not sure where they are. But, then you gave him the card and he looked back at it again and was able to come up with some more stuff. Is that another kind of common thing you do? You were saying you like weave together and give them the card back.

T3: Yea, “let’s work with this,” and it kind of continues to unfold, you know, that there is that first part that just comes, and then there is this like making sense part of it. Trying to fill in the details and like what else was going on. And then being able to look at all the parts and kind of piece, like draw the lines through them and see, like, “Oh wait, there we go, and then that led into this.” So that’s the out-there-ness though, you know, being able to look at each one... And I’m amazed every time because there is so much that I..., that never even occurred to me. So it’s almost like I’m in the presence of a master story teller, you know, like where you’re just like, “Okay, alright.” You have this free associative process, but there’s..., you’re almost in the moment of creative spontaneity. And so it’s kind of like, “Oh, wow, that’s where you went with that, and then you did this,” and it’s just cool.

R: You seem really excited by that, invigorated by that.

T3: Yea, it’s watching an innate creative process that is entirely unique, so it’s pretty cool.

R: How is it for you to be a part of that?

T3: It’s exciting, it really is. I have to say, not just..., exciting doesn’t cover it. It’s really an honor, you know. It’s like if you were able to sit with Da Vinci as he’s..., you know, you’re with an artist almost. But not in a distant, removed way. You are watching something come to fruition before your eyes.
R: That’s a good way to put it. Just at the end, you had mentioned…, you discussed an emotional feeling theme at the end and discussed it as a dawning or an awakening point. Can you say a little bit more about that, what it was like to come up with that?

T3: It seemed that there was…, that he, in each of the cards he was the…, the person he identified himself with the most, which was the male figure, was realizing something and there was a suddenness to it so I was drawing on that. There was this, “Oh, this is happening. Oh, this is happening.” So that was really striking. It really created the feeling that all of this is new. This is a new realization.

R: Yea, because it seemed that you put it out there, this feeling theme, this dawning, and he really took it up and picked it up. How was that?

T3: It was gratifying to have him say, “Yea.” [R: Yea, to have it resonate with him] Yea, that is what was happening. It was really nice. [laughs] Not like, “I have no idea what you are talking about.” [laughs]

R: True, okay. Well, I’m going to read you a bit…I’m just looking at the tape, I might need to flip it soon. Okay, so I wanted to read you a little segment here. You said, “I often feel a bit sheepish about presenting this card…” the #16, the white card, “…to clients after a series of picture cards because I imagine that they might think I am trying to trick them. When I first saw this card in my intro to assessment class, I felt both excitement and a bit intimidated by the card’s possibilities.” So, you were worried they might think you are going to trick them, but then you were also excited and intimidated by it too. Can you say a little bit more about that part in particular?

T3: [both laugh] Yea, so it’s…, you’re vulnerable, you know, especially in your assessment class when you are among all of these people, you know, and you are already in that analytical mode. “What on earth is someone going to say?” You know. It’s pretty daunting. But to have a card like that and with clients, they could just say, “There’s nothing there. It’s nothing. It’s just nothing.”

R: So you were worried the response it could evoke as far as if they were more maybe not as open, like you were saying, you could give them that card and they would be like, “What are you doing?”

T3: Yea, like trying to trick them. Trying to like, “Ha ha ha. There you go.” [both laugh]

R: So you were worried it might maybe make some mistrust instead of trust in a way, possibly? [T3: I think it could be…] but with certain clients, so you have to be mindful of who you give it to.

T3: Definitely, and in what context. If you had the feeling that it was something that could be taken up.
R: And then I’m wondering like you said, “exciting and intimidating” too. Like I can see the exciting side because it is so open for them. [T3: Right] Is that what you meant by that? Like it’s just so…, there is any way they can go with it. There are all these possibilities. [T3: Yea, yea] But the intimidating side is maybe that, that is also the difficulty because is that it is not very structured [T3: Both] for people who prefer structure it might be difficult for them to…

T3: Right. It’s the unconscious. [R: Yea, that’s true] It’s intimidating. [both laugh]

R: Good point. [both laugh] Okay. So this is going to be the last clip we are going to watch and it is a little bit longer, it goes for about nine minutes. So just try to stick with…, there is a lot going on here. You talk about…, I asked about the #16 card because you start reviewing that response here. And then talking about the fog and he starts relating to that. This car accident metaphor comes up, which is interesting. And um, you start talking about his difficulty breaking out of routine. You point out his curiosity and then get into some other stuff. So there is a lot of stuff going on, and then you talk about the out-there-ness at the end. [T3: Okay] So this is going to go for about nine minutes. [T3: Okay]

[Watched fifth videotape segment] – [Flipped the audiotape]

R: Okay, so what was going on there and how was it for you?

T3: I felt like he needed the support to kind of go through where he was. There is a lot of meaning there for him and he knows that he has a lot that he is holding onto. That there are places that he has already begun taking up this reflective process. But that he’s scared and that makes sense. [R: Sure] There’s a lot of stuff to look at. He’s aware of that but he also has a lot of courage. The word “faith” kept coming up for me just even watching this, just faith, a total faith walk. [R: Yea] Starting out that process, doing anything different, looking around you, keeping your…, not averting your eyes anymore. Looking to see where you have been and where you want to go. So, I was just really touched again by the courage.

R: Yea, because it seemed like a great…, I mean, at the beginning talking about the fog that he could relate to, how that is kind of a metaphor for his life that he goes through in and out of periods. And then talking about the car accident, like how it makes it hard to see an accident coming and feeling the need to protect himself because of this fog. That was a really rich metaphor.

T3: Even when he was talking about that I could feel my own body beginning to brace. [R: Yea] Like you want the eyes in the back of your head.

R: Yea, it was very clear that you were there with him. I mean, you were very present. You said at one point, “That’s really scary. I can see how scary it is to be in the middle of that.” But yea, he gave you such a great metaphor to work with and you seem to really appreciate that, the metaphors.
T3: Yea, and I don’t know if it was on any of the tape, but what he kind of was able to do in extending the metaphor in our session, we refer back to it. The session, I wish it was on there after where he talked about, he said, “I feel like the sun is coming out and starting burning off the fog.” [R: Oh, wow.] You know, and so that was like dawning realization. [R: So he carried with it and stuck with it] He carried with it and had new ones and can refer back to that one to think about where he was when he came in.

R: That’s great [T3: Yea] and I remember you mentioned…, you said, “that’s really amazing,” at one point when we were watching the tape he was talking about his own habit of repressing emotions and avoiding things, but he said he wants to push himself to try new things and he said especially with emotions and that was pretty… [T3: That was huge] Yea, like you said, just the courage that he has.

T3: Yea, and loosening up all of those really familiar, comfortable places that are familiar and therefore comfortable. Anytime you move out of the rift design, you know, you’ve got the unknown, the fog, the possibility of destruction.

R: Yea, and you were really good about putting it back on him. He was really focusing on his difficulty with challenging himself, but there is this curiosity that is there. He was able to move to talking about his own…

T3: He sounded excited didn’t he? [R: Yea] He was like, “Yea, I am.”

R: So really staying with it. He seemed to be focusing more on the part of him being reluctant to explore those kinds of things or break routine. But then you were like, “But there is this curiosity too,” and he was like “Yea there is that too,” and he started focusing on that too and was able to see that side of the possibility too.

T3: Yea, a very different way of looking at it.

R: And how was it with giving the feedback? Because it seemed like you were referring back to some of the, like saying, “three times is a habit” and the neurological changes that may happen like when he started seeing the buildings differently and stuff like that.

T3: I sometimes just say stuff.

R: Yea [both laugh] How was it seeing yourself, um…

T3: …I think I say that a lot. That is part of the repertoire [both laugh]

R: How is it watching it now, that whole interaction?

T3: I still kind of feel, I guess awed, in awe about it. I almost feel like in this therapeutic mode I go into in an altered state of consciousness.
R: Can you say a little bit more about that?

T3: You know when you are not present because you are thinking about what you need to get at the store? [R: Yea] You know, that is like the opposite of being present. [R: So like very present is what you are saying.] So, when you are present there is nothing else in the world. It is just right now what is happening.

R: So you felt like that is how you were when you were there in the feedback?

T3: Yea, and that was a gift from him. That wasn’t something I was doing.

R: He really drew you in. [T3: Yea] Okay. Alright, so now I have a few more of these things from the written description and then we’ll be done. [T3: Okay] So here is a little bit longer selection. You said, talking about the #16 card, “However, [C3] did not seem taken aback at all when I presented this card. He paused for a few moments and then said with conviction, “This is snow or fog, probably fog. It’s over the road and you can’t see in front of you. You’re not sure whether to turn on the wind shield wipers. You can see in front of you, hopefully you don’t get hit in the back.” When we discussed his response to this card later, he related the card both literally to the kind of fog that comes in from the Gulf of Mexico in __________, the place where he met his ex-girlfriend and who has recently broken off their ten year relationship, and metaphorically to a kind of “mental fog” that he has been feeling in his life where he feels like he is “waiting to get rear ended.” He has also found himself following familiar, routine paths that are comforting to try to stave off the feelings he has of impending disaster. We were able to use this seemingly ambiguous card to specifically point to a metaphor that [C3] could work with in his life. We discussed the idea of the sun coming out to burn off this fog so he could see more clearly what he wants for himself. We related this effort in coming to therapy and his process of self-reflection to the sun beginning to emerge for him in his understandings for his life.” That is very powerful. [T3: It is.] Yea, and it is one of those things that we have been discussing but I think you’ve have discussed a lot of that stuff.

T3: It’s layering, so he’s getting the manifest but he is also getting all of this latency. He is getting that there is some meaning to all of this. It is not arbitrary just flailing about.

R: You mean in the assessment?

T3: Both that and in life. That all of the stuff you go through maybe has something to it, you know. That there is layers, so…

R: So it is really helping him see that. You also said, “We both seemed to gather around these images and metaphors to help get a sense of the feeling of [C3] in his life right now. Somehow, even the act of naming this metaphor of fog seemed to draw in the image of the sun shining.” So it seems like one thing leads into the next. It drew in…

T3: Well, there is a power to naming something. [R: Sure] There is a real…, It is almost like sorcery in some ways. God coming in and saying…. a person’s name literally has,
you know, a real power. That is why you are not supposed to name God. You know, “Yaweh,” just take out the vowel. But in naming something, that in some way catalyzes it and makes it shift, makes it change, and it leads to a freeing of it because it is always more than the name. So…

R: Okay, yea, yea. So not only the metaphor but giving a name to these things and this image too is powerful.

T3: Yea, it is an invitation, and invitation for it to change. You know, like Gendlin talks about this a lot, whenever you find the “it,” you know, like when somebody is searching for something like a name, like what is it that this is? And once you get the “it-ness,” you call it “it,” that is totally “it.” [R: It fits, yea.] Then it changes, it’s different. It changes the feeling of it so that it becomes something else. So that even working with a metaphor that is coming closer, an image or something, then you are able to free it up because it is an invitation for more.

R: Yea, it is an invitation. That is a good way to put it. Um, okay, so just a few more then. You said, “I felt excited about the discovery he had made in this session. I felt impressed and awed by [C3]’s own unique capacity to gravitate towards and create meaning and healing in his life. I had the sense that I was there to facilitate and witness an organic process that [C3] was reaching for in the very act of coming to therapy and the attitude through which he approached the assessment materials. He was and is open to it. He really wants to understand himself. He wants to not hurt but he is not interested in sidestepping the work of going through his pain.” It seems to be…, you are speaking to how his openness to the process really catalyzed it.

T3: Yea, his courage.

R: Yea, definitely. Have you encountered any other times when people are not as open and it makes it difficult? Not specifically, but…

T3: There are definitely times when you feel you are with a client that there is some place that they are bracing against, like the car image. There is an organization around not feeling that. So as you approach it you feel the anticipation that there is something here that is not to be plowed into. [both laugh] And there is a reason for it and that is meaningful. So you are extra gentle and extra careful, but not like, you know, “Okay, forget it, we won’t do it.” [laughs]

R: You are just mindful of it in a different way. You don’t push it, but it’s there.

T3: You just touch it and move on. Or you don’t touch it even, just kind of move around it. [R: But it’s there] Yea, you feel that viscerally when there is somebody that is like, “NnnNnn, No.” [laughs]

R: Okay. You said, “The assessment process provided a vehicle to catalyze his effort. It provided an opportunity for there to be something “out there” that we could both see and
work with. It also strengthened the bonds of trust and alliance in our relationship as we find ways to communicate in this shared journey towards his understanding and healing.” So it sounds like the assessment process, you got a lot out of it, particularly with him.

T3: Yea, it was powerful. [R: Yea] You know, it was one of those times when you leave and you are just like…, you know, there’s all of that stuff that feels like it is coming through you and it’s happening but you are not doing anything you are just like…, well you are there and you are participating, but there is something that is more than both of you that wants to happen, that is just kind of being generated, like art that creates itself. I keep relating it to art, but it is creative. It is something deeply generative and I think the healing process is all about just giving the opportunities and possibilities. So you open doors a little bit and everything comes out, it floods because it wants to. We want to heal. We don’t want to be mired in petulance. We want to help ourselves, so even little things will become bigger all on their own accord.

R: Yea, and it seems like the assessment process allowed for that.

T3: I think it really did. You know, especially in this instance.

R: You said, “We may decide to return to these tools again in or work to examine what changes might be coming up for him.” And you mentioned how that has happened, how things have come up, he has come back to these metaphors and things like that. I want to ask now that…, have you found that you’ve returned to these things quite a bit?

T3: Yea, I mean, I think more in the beginning. We are doing…, one of the things it has provided is permission to create metaphors. There is a living quality to it so that we can talk about neurological stuff and have that be a metaphor and not like a literal thing. But those descriptions have weight and meaning that are equal, if not more, to everyday stuff. So, it frees up the descriptive possibilities for therapy.

R: Yea, it opens that up. Yea, definitely. So you found that, that he has continued creating his own metaphors. [T3: Yea] Not only coming back to use those same ones, particularly. [T3: Yea] Great. I have the last one I want to read to you here then I will have one more question after that and that will be it. You said, “Thinking back over the process for me, I feel that the assessment experience provided the opportunity for us to underlie a shared project. I developed a strong sense of faith in [C3] and his own unique process toward healing. I also developed an idea of what I could do to help him along the way.” Can you say a little bit more about that? It was really a shared project and it gave you a sense of how you could help him along the way?

T3: Yea, I think it helped me in giving me the vehicle for kind of walking through this process together. It showed me how…., he taught me how to be with him, in a way.

R: He gave you…., he showed you how he needs you to be. [T3: Right.] Yea, that’s really what you got out of it, how to be with him. And there was the collaboration there, you said it is a shared thing that we are going to work on together. It’s not something where I
am going to give you the answers. It’s something that we are going to find and discover
together.

T3: We don’t know, but let’s go, let’s do this.

R: So it really set a tone, it seems like, for the therapy, in a sense.

T3: Yea, and it has felt like that. There has definitely been times where I have…, and he
even said that, where I have pressed more than other times. There’s times where he has
been like, “Well, here’s what’s happening.” There’s other times where I have been like,
“Well, can we keep going here?” But it really…, I think it helped us trust that process
more, that it will be fruitful, that there is meaning to it. It is a faith walk. It really is.

R: Definitely, okay. The last question I have for you is more just about the process itself
and your style with that. In watching the tape, I noticed that you seemed to prefer waiting
until the end, right, like there were some times during the process of the card, like when
he was talking about the relationship card or something like that where you…, I guess,
with this style it can allow you to bring in more of your own style and preferences as far
as like some people might jump in and say something while he is saying something with
the card, like, “Can you relate to that?” or something like that, or “This seems to relate to
some of the stuff that you brought in.” But it worked out well for you. You waited until
the end and then brought it up there. And some people might even not give any feedback
there and may wait for a separate feedback session. But with following up the cards, you
were able to show him the cards with the feedback. I guess it just showed your own
preference for style and stuff like that. [T3: Yea] How was it with being able to do that,
with having the freedom to bring your own style in?

T3: I don’t know, I’ve never even thought about that. I just do it, you know. I know there
are probably rules [laughs] and I’m not really one for…, I’m not a stickler for it. But I
know that the first part is that you are supposed to just do it a certain way. But then
afterwards, like especially freeing that up, there is something here, work with it, let’s do
this. And it seems really important, especially while that stuff seems so fresh, to kind
of… [R: It’s right there] Yea, and not having to wait a month to get your scores back but
like [laughs] [R: Being able to discuss it right there] to talk about it right there and
therefore bring it in right away.

R: And it seems like there is a preference, an advantage to being able to do that than
rather than feeling like you have to stick to these rules and wait to give the feedback until
sometime later. It seems like you appreciate the freedom to be able to do that.

T3: Yea, and also like the living quality to it. That there is something about the
assessment process that is now, it is right now. And it may not be generalizeable in
everything else. Maybe it is in this particular moment, but there is something that is
descriptive in the now.
R: Do you feel like maybe some of that might be lost or fade if you waited say a month or a week or…?

T3: I think it would change. I don’t know if it would…. it wouldn’t be the same thing because you would be a different person than you were in that moment. So…, and maybe you were changed from the process but maybe you were, you know…. but there is no way of knowing or whatever, but there is something of an opportunity there. Also, someone goes through the process and is just spent and just cannot do one more thing, then it’s time to go.

R: And you have to be tuned into that as well. [T3: Yea] Kind of like with the white card if you feel like it is too much for them, you have to be like, “Okay, that’s fine, let’s move on.”

T3: Yea, but this is good. A lot of fingertip kind of stuff.

R: So it was really in the moment of making a decision. You felt like he could really handle that and he was making great use of it there so stay with it if he is willing to do that.

T3: Yea, it was. And I didn’t know, you know, I had no idea. Just try it out. It could have gone very differently.

R: So it involved more trusting your own senses and intuition in the moment, it seemed like. How was that, are you okay with doing that?

T3: Yea, that’s all I got really, you know. I don’t know what I’m doing most of the time. I really don’t have a plan. [laughs]

R: But it’s obviously going well.

T3: Right, and that is what is so weird with the program. I just did my clinical position paper and my entire paper was about not knowing. [both laugh] 30 pages of not knowing. Yea, I don’t know what I’m doing.

R: Wasn’t it Socrates and the Oracle that said to him, “You are the smartest person in the world because you know that you know nothing.”?

T3: Right [laughs] Thank you. [both laugh]

R: Well, thank you for doing this. I really appreciate it. [T3: Sure. No problem. It was cool.] How as this whole process for you of doing this?

T3: It was fun, it was neat. I never look at myself and go through it. And you were really gentle and a really awesome facilitator with taking me through it.
R: Great. Thank you, I really appreciate it. It is a huge help to me and I know it is a time commitment.

T3: No worries. It was cool. It was a good particular happening. A gift.

R: Yes, definitely.
Transcription T4a

T4a: Does it make a clicking sound?

R: No it doesn’t, I have to watch the audiotape to know when to flip it so I will be doing that. So what we are basically going to do is watch some video clips. Some are just a few minutes long, the longest ones are about five or six minutes. The main things I am going to ask you…, what I want you to keep in mind with that are, “What was going on there?” and “ How was it for you?” are the main questions. And then I will read you some segments from your written description and ask you to elaborate on that and maybe ask some follow up questions and stuff like that. Let me know also what you feel like was going on in the moment and how it is like watching it now. Sometimes if you can make that distinction at points or something like that. [T4a: Sure] But also just about the assessment process is mainly what I’m focusing on and trying to understand. [T4: Okay] Do you have any questions before we get started? [T4a: Nope] Okay. So I will try to mix it up a little bit just to vary things up. So I’ll start by asking you a few things about the written description first. You said…, one of the first things you said was, “He was bouncing his leg as he talked, fast-paced and heady, very little eye contact: who is he talking to?” Was a question you had asked in here. You said, “Hard to sit still: can’t sit through most of movies; paces about when he writes a paper. I was becoming aware of his energy, getting a feel for how he is.Exists “on edge” What did you mean by that?

T4a: He is just really intense. He talks about how he gets feedback from people every now and then that he is intense and serious. But I was getting it in the comportment there as well. Just really seeing it. So before he even gets into telling a story about it, I was seeing this kind of…, what I would call nervousness. But not…, but more as a character style, not really like he was nervous with me. He was just fast, you know, talks fast. Like I said he was sort of in his own world with it. It kind of varied between actually sometimes very much feeling like he was trying to convey something to me and at other times just spinning in his own world.

R: And you picked up on that from the comportment and the nonverbal kind of stuff that you were noticing.

T4a: The pace of his speech as well.

R: Yea, okay. And then you said, “I may have wondered what place philosophical discussion would have in the therapy (he’s a philosophy major).” And did you have a sense for how that might affect things or how anticipate ways that might influence ways that…?

T4a: Yea I thought it was…, I’m pretty sure he brought up right away that he is an existentialist philosopher and stuff. So given that our program has that tradition I thought it would be pretty interesting to see…, you know, the fact that I’m familiar with his passion in school and that I might be able to make it more real for him, more personal.
[R: Yea, okay] Move it from just ideas to actually helping him integrate some of the exploration.

R: So you thought it would be a way…, a grounds to be able to kind of connect.

T4a: That is what I was wondering in that moment, you know. But I mean, in the intake itself I’m not really trying to apply an agenda as much as just thinking that is interesting.

R: Just kind of going with it. Yea.

T4a: Just thinking that there is some kind of potential there.

R: Okay, okay. Alright, so now we can watch some of the clips and then I will go back to some of the segments from the written description. So this one is right at the beginning, maybe about a minute after you walked in the room and it is maybe about a minute long.

[Watched first videotape segment]

T4a: That’s a really good piece right there because…, I think I was running like five minutes late. He seemed to be very punctual, so. I walk into the room, and I never had a client do this before, he just jumps right up and is like ready to go and walks right in.

R: From the waiting room.

T4a: Yea, from the waiting room. Yea, my first sense was that I thought maybe he is pissed off, like, “Come on. I’m here waiting. What are you doing? Where are you?” So I just put that out there. Obviously, later I wished I would have asked a more open-ended question. Because I think in the moment, just intuitively, if he is pissed off I want to right away from the get go say…, invite it or open it up or whatever. But it is a misunderstanding and so he says…. He’s surprised like, “You read me like that because I don’t feel it,” so he says, “Maybe it’s something subconscious or something.” But he actually, if I am remembering correctly, that comment that I made stays with him even though I tried to undo it and say, “Sorry for misinterpreting,” He kind of kept it in the back of his mind and was trying to look for, “Am I angry and I don’t know it?” It was like we were both over-reaching each other. He was wanting to believe that I saw something and at the same time I was still trying to feel him out and see what was going on.

R: Yea, somebody watching it might see it as maybe, like you were saying, a misinterpretation or a disconnect something like that. But if you keep watching, it didn’t seem to have that effect. You know, it had…, it didn’t…, you seemed to be able to build rapport from there and he takes it up, like you were saying, and he keeps looking for things with himself. I mean, you said, “Maybe I should have asked a more open-ended question.” But he went with it. How was that for you?

T4a: How he responded?
R: Yea, and the whole situation. How was it?

T4a: Oh, the whole situation? [R: Yea] It was awkward. It was like, shit, you know. Just to jump the gun on what was going on for him. But I think what I learned from his response was that there was nothing jeopardizing about it. It was sort of like, even though I was pretty clear that I had missed the mark, he was still kind of flexible with it and taking it to heart. So it was one of those things where it was okay.

R: Yea, that was the sense I got from it as well, that even though there was something that could maybe be perceived that way it didn’t have that effect. It was interesting. Yea, and it was just such a small moment too, you know. Okay, so let’s go to another…

T4a: Oh, well the other thing I would say about that is because now, especially with the more time I have had with him, it’s totally not anger. That is just how he is. He is just totally ready to go.

R: Yea. It’s interesting to look back at it now, right?

T4a: So, he probably does that everyday now and I don’t even notice it. He just jumps up. That’s his…

R: That is just how he is. [T4a: Yea] But that is interesting feedback for him because he probably doesn’t know that people may see it that way, right?

T4a: Yea, yea, yea. Huh. I don’t know if he took it that way. He was more self-conscious, but I think that would have been the most useful way for him to take it. But it is hard for people to know what to make out of that.

R: Yea, sure. Okay, this next clip is after you had…, he was doing the drawing the family and you realize that he had forgotten to draw himself. And it’s interesting, you point out that he had started to draw himself in the middle of his family but then stopped and drew himself on the outside and so you ask him about that and then there is a little back and forth about that. This is probably about six minutes. [Watched second videotape segment]

R: Okay, so what was going on there and how was it for you?

T4a: I feel like it was kind of a decent hermeneutic process there. I like the way that I started right off the bat and just pointed to it. I didn’t say very much or really make any interpretations. I noticed that he was on the edge of it and said something like, “What do you make out of that?” And he kind of just went for it and said a lot. [R: Yea] So I was taking notes and at the same time trying to understand what he was saying and then offered it back to him. There was a part here, I would have to watch it a bit more closely to understand what I was thinking or wondering at the time, but I was offering back what I was understanding but at the same time…, I feel like the reason I say it was hermeneutic
is that I was offering back what I was hearing but I was stretching it a little bit and then he would pick it up from there. So that is what I found there. There was something about the way..., I don’t remember why I got on this, maybe it was just the spatial configuration, but he was still situated in between his mother and his father in that way. And it may have just been the analysis class that I was taking at the time. I don’t know if I highlighted that, I don’t know. Because I think I was a bit confused as to..., I was just really taken aback that he said he identified himself so much in terms of his family, his brothers and sisters. And yet have very little relationship with them and they don’t give him much feedback, and so I was surprised about that. I think maybe I emphasized his mother and father because he still lives with them still so I was just wondering what was going on there. And I think that just gave him the opportunity to articulate for himself his own individuation process.

R: Yea, that seems to be pretty big for him.

T4a: And kind of show him that I was getting it, but for the most part letting him speak to it.

R: Yea, and that was good. It seems like it was providing an opening for him. Kind of just drawing him in and he went for it and he talked about some good stuff it seemed. And at the end you were normalizing it and reflecting it back to him.

T4a: Right. Just with content at the end, differentiating between something he was trying to get away from, authoritarian parents. I think in that moment I was just..., I don’t know how to say it, but the whole thing for him is he’s..., he still wants to be at home. It is so comfortable for him in that home that it’s..., he’s caught.

R: He’s individuating but liking it there.

T4a: Absolutely. So, I think in a subtle way I was highlighting that he actually wants to stay at home, but I don’t know if I was doing that.

R: Yea, it seemed like the conflict is a natural thing. It seemed like it was...

T4a: I was normalizing definitely in the sense of just to say, “Hey, you know, you’re in college.” Maybe that was probably the spirit of that moment mostly, to say that this was a natural process.

R: I forgot to ask you in the last clip too. We both kind of laughed when you sneezed and he handed you a Kleenex and I was just wondering what that was like for you.

T4a: It just shows me how attentive he is to me, so it is pretty intense I guess. [laughs] I think it makes me feel self-conscious to think if he is that attentive..., but he’ll do that, I mean even today in our session he walked in..., because a lot of times I will sit with a pillow behind my back and he walked in and grabbed a pillow and gave it to me. So, but I
think that was probably one of the first gestures like that that I had with him. Kind of taken aback by it and not knowing what to do with it.

R: Okay, yea. So, following from what you were saying when we watched that last clip, he was talking about his involvement with his family, you had mentioned, “In talking about his DAF, I was surprised by how much (as a young man) his identity seemed to be based in his family.”

T4a: Okay, that is what I was just saying.

R: Yea, that follows pretty closely from what you were just saying. Alright, in this one he just elaborates a little bit more. This is about a five minute clip and he talks more about his family dynamics. So it seems to follow from what you were saying as far as..., what seems to relate to this clip is how much he identifies with his family but doesn’t feel close to them at the same time or feels disconnected, I guess. So that is what stood out. We can just watch it from here.

[Watched third videotape segment] – R: He is talking about his dad right there.

R: So what do you feel like was going on there and how was it?

T4a: There are a couple of things that I am trying to keep track of. One was that he talked about the mother first and the sister, then we will get to that last part. But with his mom, I was just struck by how identified he was with her to say..., the way he actually worded that, it’s not just..., he said, “When we don’t get enough sleep we have a bad day.” Which is different than saying, you know, “similar,” because the sense it evokes for me is that they both at the very same time had a bad night’s sleep and on the same day feel bad. It just seems really hyper identified with her. So, then the sister, we haven’t talked about her much actually since that time. Again, the way he talks about her shows how closely associated with his mother he is. Again, it’s like he is in the loop or listening in on a conversation they are having.

R: Was there anything you noticed about the how the assessment, the drawing kind of drew that out?

T4a: It was just really nice to have something sitting in front to have to point to or..., obviously when he made it come alive and talked about if it was moving. [R: Yea, yea] You know, because you wouldn’t say that if you were having a conversation you wouldn’t have gone to that. Maybe he does talk about himself as going off on an edge, but this could have been the first time he talked about that and it then becomes a theme throughout the therapy about him going there or going off.

R: So that has become something that you have stuck with.

T4a: For sure, for sure, yea. It has been a pretty central theme.
R: It seems like his individuation process and his own journey. [T4a: Yea, right.] It’s interesting, like you said it really came to life, he made it just come to life, like, “If this could move, this is what I would do…” That was really interesting…Were you going to say something? [T4a: No] Okay, another clip. This part is when you shifted to talking about the TAT responses. You begin asking him about a response that implies a back injury and he kind of goes his own way with it. This one is about four minutes.

[Watch fourth videotape segment]

R: How was that for you? What did you see going on there?

T4a: Now I remember when I wrote up the assessment that I ended up interpreting a certain TAT card as this monster, I interpreted it as the mother and stuff. An apparently really nice mother but that is devouring him, a really stereotypical kind of thing. But I see why I did that now when I’m watching this again. I think she is kind of haunting the whole thing, this whole notion of I don’t like people. So I guess as I am watching this I am just kind of thinking about him and his issues. But it does strike me, this mother who is so overprotective. He can’t go anywhere without feeling terribly vulnerable and scared and everything else. I mean, he says in that clip, “She was my playmate.” Not only that, he says after that with a slightly different context, he said that he didn’t actually like playing with other kids and that could have easily slipped into saying, “I would rather be with my mom,” but he said, “I would rather be alone.” Which I think that is what I’m saying about her ghost kind of haunting and making him feel like it is not safe to be with other kids, other people.

R: Yea, you said in the written description, “Later when discussing the TAT, he mentioned that his “mother was [his] playmate as a child.” I was getting that impression from other statements he made that his parents didn’t want to let him go and that he didn’t want to leave, or rather that they were all ambivalent about is growing up.” So that seems to follow from what you were saying, what you saw right there. [T4a: Yea] At the beginning, it was interesting, because you asked about the back injury [T4a: Yea, yea, yea] And he just took it and said, “Well I was the accident,” and went in this totally different direction with it but you just followed it.

T4a: And I was just looking at you to see if I heard that right because it was strange to watch this now and thinking, “Wait, what just happened.” It’s such a huge leap. So I don’t know how his associations went. Maybe, just accident…, a back injury is an accident, my parents didn’t have back problems but for my parents I was an accident. Just one of the things that he thinks of as part of the psychology of the story and he really wanted to share with me, so I guess that was a good enough moment to put it out there.

R: And how was that, such a leap like that?

T4a: I felt like I adapted pretty…, I mean to me, that is the thing with me with the assessment stuff, I am much more interested in the dialogue than doing anything in particular. That picture can be thrown off the table if he says something that is really
important like that and just move with it. It might lead to this conversation of his sense of being an accident and what it means to him.

R: And it was shown. That is exactly what happened, right. [T4a: Yea] I was wondering, like you were asking about the back injury and the stuff with the pillow. Do you have back stuff?

T4a: Do, I? No, I don’t.

R: I have back stuff so I just wondering if it was…

T4: No, I usually use the pillows because I don’t find the furniture in these rooms to be very comfortable or good for anybody’s back.

R: Okay, just kind of taking preventative measures rather than having to deal with it later. I can definitely attest to that. Okay. You had also said, “At different points in the assessment we touched on him being a loner and seeing himself as deeper or more serious than most. I was tuning into how this was true as well as what this stance might cover over.” What did you mean by that?

T4a: What it might cover over is just what I was just talking about. When he says, “I don’t want to be around people.” That to me that’s…, what’s that about? And for me it is about the over-protectiveness. Feeling that he is so fragile that he can’t handle people’s judgments and those kinds of things. But at the same time, he is a unique person and I think it is not just about psychodynamics for me. So now since I’ve been…, I want to do a lot…, so when I empathize it is not just strategic or something to ultimately get to his dynamics, but it’s that he is really that, I do think that he is, in a lot of ways, really honestly describing his life. That he lives as a loner and he that is how he feels. And the kinds of things that he likes in philosophy – courage and taking a leap and those sorts of things that have to do with solitude – I’m hoping to give him a space to really be able to embrace that part of himself too. To find a space for all of it here.

R: Yea, that sounds like a big part of it, giving him the space to show you what he wants to show you is relevant. [T4a: Yea, absolutely] And genuinely kind of appreciating that. Yea. Alright, so we can go to the next clip. This next one is about four minutes. This one is right…, he had just gotten done talking about a paper he got back in philosophy and how it got picked apart and having some difficulty about that and you responded to that.

[Watched fifth videotape segment]

R: That was actually a shorter one.

T4a: It is interesting that I asked that question because as I was watching that I was wondering the same thing: how is he taking this? To me, looking at it from here it seemed like he was enjoying it, but there was something…, and I don’t know if that is right or not, it is hard to say. But what I was trying to do there was…, I feel like I was entering
into that moment to give him a broader understanding of what was going on because he
was caught up in feeling devastated by being critiqued and I thought I was just offering a
pretty logical perspective that especially in philosophy you have to go through this
process of..., for all I know I had heard that recently from a philosophy student, grad
student or something. But...

R: Like that hazing or being worked over is a part of the process.

T4a: Yea, it’s a good thing that it helps him hone his arguments. And I think rather than
how we were saying that, I think it is kind of a masculine perspective that he seems to be
lacking at home. The other people that are helping him in that area of his life I don’t think
offer him much of that idea, that failure and challenges and so forth can be a good thing
for him.

R: So offering him the mentor role that you felt like he wasn’t getting in that moment.
[T4a: Yea, for sure] And at the end, it was a nice balance of empathizing but at the same
time reflecting back to him and asking him what it was like to hear that too.

T4a: Yea, and with that it is because I am just getting to know him so I want to know..., it
may have been the most challenging thing I had ever said to him. I’m not sure, it could
have been. So I wanted to know, how does he deal with something like this? Not that he
is going to be able to tell me directly, but we might still get something to move in that
direction so I can get a sense of how things land.

R: So it gives you a sense of how he takes stuff. Knowing whether to back off or if it is
okay. You also said for card one on the TAT, and this wasn’t on the tape, you said, “He
said that knowing what playing well entails he’s inclined to sit around and contemplate
rather than play.” And I think that is the card with the violin. [T4a: Yea] You said, “I
found this hopeful in that at least he seemed to be aware of intellectualization as a
defense and anticipate the difficulty of therapy.” That seemed to stand out for you so I
wanted to ask you about that.

T4a: That wasn’t on the tape? Then it must have been...

R: It was part of the actual assessment itself. So I wanted to ask about that. You said it
just showed you that he was aware of intellectualization as a defense?

T4a: I’m not connecting those thoughts right now. I remember he said a lot of fascinating
things about the violin. If you go with the idea behind that it has to do with the prognosis
of the therapy and it is really interesting.

R: Do you feel like that has played out?

T4a: Yea, he is saying that rather than playing he would rather sit back and contemplate
the possibilities.
R: Did that give you an idea of how he might approach your work together? Maybe him sitting back and trying to think about things rather than doing things?

T4a: Yea, all I know that I made out of that was from my perspective that this hyper intellectual thing was going to be an issue for him and find a kind of more holistic…

[Audiotape ended and had to be flipped]

…even unconsciously through the card gave me a sense that we were in alliance in some way, working against, to some degree, the intellectualization so that it is not just my agenda or it is not something for him that he is going to defend wholeheartedly. That he may actually want himself to let go of some of that, even as, in any given moment, he is so completely identified with it.

R: So you took it as something, it seems like, that was promising, [T4a: Yea] the fact that he could see that and be hopeful about it, like you said. If it was something that you saw but he didn’t see it would be more difficult to approach. [T4a: Right, precisely] How are you doing, are you alright? [T4a: Yea] There is not too much more left, just two more short clips and a couple more segments from the written description and that will be it, so there is not too much more. These next two clips will be about a minute each and they were right at the very end. This is where you are discussing the MMPI results and…, yea, I’ll just leave it at that and let you see what happens.

[Watched the sixth videotape segment]

R: Okay, How was that for you?

T4a: I don’t know what the fuck I was doing there. I think what I see the effect of it being was kind of destabilizing him. [R: Yea] Saying, “Here you see yourself as consistent but the report says the opposite.” So shaking him up a bit and then catching him by saying, “But it’s probably just because this machine doesn’t pick up the kind of nuances that you are attuned to.” I don’t know. Especially for such a short moment, it seems like it holds a lot. Kind of pulling the rug out from under him and then catching him. I think that is a good metaphor for it because both of those things are going to be going on in the therapy.

R: Yea, so kind of preparing him for that. Letting him see what it’s going to be like, because it was somewhat of a challenge but then it’s holding at the same time. Like you said, that was a great metaphor that you just used, pulling the rug out to shake him up a little bit but then being there to catch him at the same time.

T4a: It seems strange to me too at the same time, but that is the best I can make out if it.

R: It was interesting to see…, I’ll just give you a little bit of feedback here. He got a lot out of that actually. [T4: Oh, really] With that…, he was like, “it showed me that there was this space for human interpretation versus the machine interpretation.” You know, that you were aware of these nuances that the computer couldn’t pick up and stuff like
that. [T4a: Okay. That’s cool.] Another thing that stuck out for me that he mentioned was when your phone rang before, he was like, “Man, some people might see that as a negative thing but I thought it was great because it showed me that he has this human side.” It was really interesting to see that so I just wanted to give you a little feedback about that.

T4a: That’s great. Thanks for that. That’s nice.

R: So, that was a great metaphor that you used as far as..., it is interesting to see, being a therapist, that the times we might be self-conscious about the things that we do, that we may see as a mistake or say, “Man, maybe I shouldn’t have done that.” But then to see that the client may take it differently. It reminds me of the beginning too, like of when we talked about at the beginning how it turned into something good.

T4a: That is good to know, especially in this case with him. The feedback I am getting back through this process is that some of those spontaneous things are very generative, which I didn’t necessarily know until now.

R: And just to let you know, I watch the same clips with you as I do with the client. I don’t read any parts of the…, like I ask you about your written description and I ask him about his written description. I don’t overlap that. But I watch the same clips so I imagine you might expect that it may get brought up in the next session that you have with them, just to give you a heads up about that. So one more clip we will watch, it just continues from the last one, and then a few more things to ask and we will be finished.

[Watched seventh videotape segment]

R: So, what did you feel like was going on there and how was it for you?

T4a: It’s interesting to know that that was the very last thing that happened. And it is also reminding me, for some reason, of when I was in the Rorschach class a friend of mine worked with him and her thing was just, “Oh my god, OCD. Unbelievable, overpowering OCD.” So it is funny that he comes in with these things to give me and he makes sure, right as we leave, he’s like, “Here you go.” But he did it kind of casually too, which is kind of funny because as relaxed as he seemed to be toward the end of the session he still made sure to give me those. These have to be important.

R: Yea, it seemed to communicate something in and of itself, right? That he wanted to point to these things, and they are all anxiety things – anxiety, OCD, panic tests.

T4a: Which, maybe for you, maybe we didn’t deal with that issue a lot in the assessment but he definitely talked about in the intake that he had a previous therapist and she shifted his diagnosis from something kind of extreme to something lighter, but it was about anxiety and stuff.
R: Okay. I’m just wondering how that was to have him do assessments outside and then give them to you?

T4a: I mean honestly I think it probably just felt like more work. [R laughs and says: Okay] Because he did this MMPI, all this massive stuff, and then he was like, “Here is a few more things.” So I was like, “Man, a few more things to look through.”

R: It was, it literally was giving you more work.

T4a: But what else about that? What did I make out of him at the time? It just clued me into him because later on he would…, when he has a dream to share with me, inevitably right after he shares the dream he says, “Then I went online and found that this means this and this means this.” He always interprets all the symbolism of his dream through some website.

R: So it fits with this style to do his own homework. But there does seem to be something meaningful about just the act of him giving that to you. Okay, well there are just two other things that I wanted to ask you about. You said, “I am struck by how consistent my initial impressions of his issues are eight months later.” Which impressions were you thinking about when you wrote that?

T4a: Just that…, when I use the word “impressions” maybe that has this interpretive connotation, but what I really meant to say was that what he brought me in the first session and this assessment and how I understood it was basically him working on his sense of individuation, his sense of social alienation and how both of those tie into this mother that is holding onto him.

R: So there is all of these themes that came up earlier that you have continues with through all of this time. [T4a: Absolutely] You said, “It’s also nice to reflect back and see how far he has come.” In thinking about that, you said, even in just writing this…

T4a: Yea, when he has that moment, when he is sitting at this table and he says, he is describing everyone else and he says, “All I want to do is become a philosopher.” That has loosened up a lot from his…, his investment in that has definitely loosened up in a big way. Yea, his social life seems a lot more open and active and interactive.

R: Yea, it is interesting to see the stuff that have carried over and continues, that has been built upon and the progress that he has made. [T4a: Yea, sure.] Okay, was there anything else you wanted to say about the assessment process or anything like that or things with him or just in general about collaborative assessment?

T4a: No. I mean, this process is nice to actually take this time to come here and look at…, focus in on things because things are so busy around here that it’s just…, yea, I found this really interesting.

R: The interview? Being able to sit down like this?
T4a: Yea, for sure. Just to focus in on certain things like what was going on, how did I see it at the time? It’s pretty uncanny to see that my interpretations stayed almost exactly the same as a month before. I actually don’t feel great about that.

R: What do you mean?

T4a: I don’t know. I just don’t know how to take that. I guess it’s cool to be consistent, but at the same time I hope that my thinking will shift a bit.

R: So mixed feelings towards that. Well, I really appreciate it. Like you said, I’m really glad that you are getting something out of this as well because I am definitely getting a lot out of this and I really appreciate the help. [T4a: Yea, yea, it’s good] Any other questions you have for me or anything like that?

T4a: No.

R: Alright.
Transcription T4b

R: Alright, so this is going to be similar to last time when we interviewed in that I’m going to read you some segments of your written description and ask you to elaborate. And then we are going to watch some clips of your assessment, some videotape clips, and then I’ll ask you to keep in mind the questions, “What was going on here?” and “How was that for you?” And keep in mind too that I’m focusing on the process, not necessarily like the…, I know the content plays in… What’s that?

T4b: So not necessarily about interpretation and formulation as much as what is going on in the interaction.

R: Exactly, more like the interaction, the moment, the process, things like that.

T4b: That might be kind of difficult to separate but I’ll do what I can.

R: Yea, I know that they are intertwined. I know that it is hard to separate sometimes, but just try to if you can focus on that. [T4b: Okay] Okay, do you have any…, but we have had some technical difficulties so…

T4b: So the question is, you said, “What was going on here and what was it like?”

R: “What was going on here and how was it for you?” is kind of the guiding questions, but really focusing on process.

T4b: But, when you say, “What was going on here?” that is usually the one that brings the interpretations and stuff like that.

R: That’s true. That is a good point. I guess you could just say, “this is what was going on and then…” Yea, I could see how that would lead toward interpretation.

T4b: Yea, just asking about what is going on. [R: Yea, yea] Okay, but I can do that.

R: But just, yea, maybe in that way just try to keep it in that kind of a frame. So we can go ahead and get started. When we watch the tapes you may need to stand a little bit closer to the TV (in order to hear it), and I apologize because the tracking has been making it a little bit hard to see at times but we will deal with it as it goes. So, from your written description you said, “I felt bad for not having better informing him in the intake that the next time he came in that he would be taking a multiple choice test (PAI) and that we wouldn’t have much time to talk. He seemed disappointed when I let him know that was the plan. He started filling out the form at a slow pace, which I took as not really wanting to do it. He sped up after a little while. When I asked him how it was taking the test he said, “Most of that stuff I’ll tell you anyway.” (In other words, it was unnecessary).” Um, what…?

T4b: I don’t know if you have tape of this or if that was another session, do you?
R: At the end..., it was interesting, this was at the beginning but that wasn’t until the very end that he said like that on the tape. Like right on the way out he says, “Most of that stuff I’ll tell you anyway,” but we are going to watch the video segment with that at the end. But it seems kind of like the bookends right there at the beginning. So, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

T4b: I don’t know what else I can say other than..., [R: Okay] it’s been over a year, but if I remember right I didn’t tell him the session before..., in the intake I didn’t tell him, “Next time you come in I’m going to have you take..., sit here for an hour and a half and do this bubble test.” So, when he came in, I think, expecting to talk and then having him sit there and do that it felt like..., I just wish I had given him a heads up.

R: Okay. And he seemed reluctant at first but then went with it.

T4b: Yea, yea. So, even my impression of him today is that he does what he needs to do. He has said a lot of times that he does things to help people out. So, I think in that moment that is what was going on. Like, “This is not what I want to do but okay, I’ll do it.” And I thought it showed itself in the slow way in which he filled it out.

R: Yea, and I think that is a common thing that some people may encounter is they feel like the person just wants and they may be disappointed by having to do these tests because they just wanted..., they were looking forward to just getting some stuff out that day. But we’ll talk about that at the end again and we’ll see..., I feel like maybe sometimes that can change by the end, that initial impression. Okay, so we’ll come back to that at the end and it will come back with the video clip that we watch as well. So, let’s watch the first video clip and you may need to stand up close to hear it. It is about five minutes or so and I’ll tell you what was going on here so you can have kind of an idea in case it starts skipping. This is where you were doing the Draw a Person and you started off by asking him, “What kind of psychological insights do you think we could pull from these drawings?” And he talks about the only thing that differentiates between male and female is the hair. He’s like, “I don’t know,” and he is kind of nondescript, like the drawings. And you pointed out, you said, “That is kind of paradoxical because you told me before that you don’t see men and women as too similar.” And then he goes on to say, “Well, the chemicals inside make us different.” And then he talks about how there are some differences in that men think logically, women react emotionally, women create problems, men solve them, things like that. And then he talks about how women don’t listen, he doesn’t have that many people who listen to him. He said he was a good listener growing up but people don’t listen to him and talk over him. So, let’s watch some of this.

[Watched first videotape segment]

R: Alright, so what did you think of that?

T4b: The first part, the way I would say what happened there I think was..., I don’t think I had many questions about those pictures. Those pictures didn’t trigger much in me so I
think I just put them out there. He didn’t say a whole lot about them, but he did say something about gender so. Well, I asked him to draw one of each gender so I can see why he said that. But basically we are dealing with not much, you know.

R: Yea, because I think they were like stick figures he even said. They were very basic, he did them pretty quickly.

T4b: Yea, that’s right. So we had very little to work with so I just jumped on that. It was probably something I had heard at intake, stereotyping women and stuff like that, so I brought it back up when he said that. I kind of pushed it because he didn’t go anywhere with it originally and then I brought it back and said, “What are some of the specific differences?” So I don’t know about that. Basically, I was encouraging him to elaborate on something he had mentioned in the intake. But eventually it gets a little more organic and he starts going some other places with it.

R: Yea, it’s interesting because you started with a very open ended question, “What do you get out of this?” You know, and he came back with something very basic so then you kind of pointed out, not only a paradox but a contradiction. Like, “What you said before doesn’t really go with what you just said.” But it was in a curious way, it seemed like, and it invited…. it opened up a lot more, it seemed like. [T4b: Okay] Yea, which seems to be collaborative in a sense. You know, it’s pointing out…, it was a curiosity but at the same time pointing out this paradox. It seemed pretty fruitful. I mean, it went all the way from talking about gender and the differences and the similarities there to not feeling listened to and wanting to be listened to.

T4b: Yea, the little detour in him talking about how he likes to wear certain clothes. He also talked about being fired from some jobs for coming in late, but meanwhile like he said nobody was working anyway. But yea, you are right, ultimately the thing that came out of that was him saying that he is a good listener and he doesn’t find it reciprocated. And as I was listening to this again I imagine, at least the way I take it now and I imagine I did at the time was, he’s making these comments about just wanting to be listened to or he said for himself that he doesn’t give advice or interrupt people unless they ask for it directly so some of this I was taking as tips on how to work with him.

R: Yea, definitely, definitely. So he is giving you tips right there on how he wants the work to go and the relationship to look. [T4b: Yea] And it was interesting there, you could see too, maybe you could look from an outsider’s perspective and see that maybe he doesn’t respond well to open-ended questions [T4b: Mmhm] and maybe more direct specific stuff he might respond better to. [T4b: Yea, for sure] Okay, so let’s watch this next clip. This one is about two minutes. It starts off with you pointing out, you said, “You only used this corner of the page to draw.” [T4b: Yea] and you said, “What do you make out of that?” and he said, “Not wanting to be noticed, wanting to disappear.” [T4b: Mmhm] And you said, “Does that tie back to being quiet?” and he said, “Yes.” And you said, “If you used the whole page that would be too loud.” And he said, “Yea.” You also pointed out that he did it quickly and he said, “Well, I can’t draw, “ and that it was kind of embarrassing. So…
[Watched second videotape segment]

R: Okay, so what do you feel like was going on…?

T4b: What was that last line? He doesn’t want…

R: He doesn’t want anybody else to know how bad of a drawer he is. So how was that?

T4b: There were some really long pauses and I wasn’t writing, right? Did you notice that? [R: Yea] So, for me I think what was going on was…., I think he was taking the opportunity to emphasize the abuse, give me some background. So that just gave me some pause. I guess the seriousness of it required maybe more silence than thoughtful responses I guess, or careful responses maybe.

R: I mean there seemed to be a decent amount of collaboration, even though there were pauses. I mean, “Why only this corner?” You know, and private versus public. [T4b: Yea], and how he wants to hold himself and present himself, I guess. There was a lot there.

T4b: Well, there was the issue of safety and then later…., safety was the first thing he said and then later kind of not wanting to be embarrassed and not wanting to show his weaknesses. But what I’m…., I don’t know, I’m just guessing, but I may not have even had that in mind when I asked him that question. I don’t know. Yea, I probably did. That drawing himself small and in the corner was about being inconspicuous. I don’t know.

R: You feel like that was speaking again, like you said a minute ago, to how he wants to be treated in your relationship with him? Or maybe like how he is approaching in an inconspicuous kind of…, like doesn’t want to put himself out there?

T4b: No, because I would say the opposite for him. He was quite open with the whole intake and everything. But, yea. What I like about that one in terms of collaborative assessment is the way you have this picture…., the pictures speak volumes is what I’m getting at. And I started by saying, “I don’t know or didn’t think he would respond that way,” but it didn’t really matter because to talk about that little picture brought out a lot of stuff.

R: Like you said, if you had just interpreted that on your own, I mean, who knows, “Okay, he drew himself in the corner and wants to be inconspicuous.” [T4b: Yea, that’s a good point, yea.] but then the ability to ask him actually about it and ask him for feedback about it opened up so much more, it seems like.

T4b: Yea, it was just a little stick figure on a piece of paper but it ends up being very symbolic. And like you said he gets to articulate that. I found it very helpful, that piece right there.
R: Yea, I think so. It seemed to be pretty useful. Even in that short clip and even with so many pauses, because of the discussion that came out of it. Okay, in this next one you said, “Do you have any examples in your life…” this is following right after the last clip, I’m not even moving the tape. You said, “Do you have any other examples in your life when you take that approach?” And he says, “Interesting, there is a lot of contradictions in that.” And then he is like, “I love to drive this [specific car]. Everyone notices, it’s not inconspicuous.” And he talks about how he loves shoes, talks about how his mom was stylish and was a dress maker. And you said, “The things you are bad at you want to hide and want to show off the things you are good at.” And he said, “Yea, I’m good at a lot. I’m bad at drawing and I suck at singing.” So let’s watch it. This is about three minutes.

[Watched third videotape segment]

R: So, how was that for you? What did you see going on there?

T4b: I don’t know. Again, it has been a long time since this happened, but I think at the time I wrote the report that I had the impression that I was the one that highlighted that contradiction, but he was the one. It was an open-ended question, I asked him, “Are there examples of this being inconspicuous?” and he said, “It’s a contradiction.” Yea, I’m just struck by the fact that I thought I was the one that put that together but he was the one to do that, so…But then in the report he is the one, I guess, analyzing himself and I show that in the writing as well. So it’s not me making an interpretation about his contradiction but he is explicitly pointing out this contradiction himself and he came to it in a pretty dialogical way.

R: Yea, it was interesting because the first time with the open-ended question it didn’t seem like he may have responded as well as you would have liked him to, [T4b: Mhm] but with the second one I mean he comes out with this…, it’s interesting because with the first open-ended question you followed up with the paradox [T4b: Oh, yea] and in this one he follows up with pointing out a contradiction.

T4b: That’s interesting. You might wonder if he was taking my cue as to how this was going to go.

R: Yea, right?

T4b: Like he was looking for contradictions or something.

R: Yea, that’s interesting. But then it provided this spontaneous kind of “when not” kind of moment, right? [T4b: Yea] Like him saying, “That’s interesting that I do that because I’m much more the other way.”

T4b: The stuff he was talking about with the clothes and his grandmother being a seamstress and all that ended up being pretty relevant and interesting. And I don’t know…, just giving him the opportunity to bring it up, I think, is an important part of the whole process.
R: That’s interesting. Just from asking him to relate it to his life. [T4b: Yea] I mean, to add some context to it, [T4b: Mmhm] got some important stuff out of it, it seems. [T4b: Right] Okay. Is that any stuff you talk about now? Like do you feel like it is any stuff that relates to things? Those themes?

T4b: Yea. I don’t know how to explain it now. Yea, it relates to the abuse, it’s kind of identification with his mother and his father. I mean he even goes to fluidly talking about how his father was hyper-critical and although he didn’t make it directly, just through the sequence of the discussion a lot of what his father was critical about was this kind of being too feminine or in some way tough enough. And when you meet him, he is quite tough. [R: Yea] But, yea as a kid they apparently dolled him up and put nice clothes on him and stuff and that pissed his father off. So those are pretty central issues of how he was situated.

R: That started even this early. [T4b: Yea] Yea, Okay. So we can move on to look at where you are talking about the TAT. So you had moved from the draw a person to the TAT. And I noticed that there wasn’t like when you were actually administering the TAT…, like you did the draw a person and then you gave him the TAT, there wasn’t a whole lot of actual interaction or collaboration besides the administration during the actual…, like while you were getting his responses. It seemed like you waited to discuss your impressions and ask him to collaborate until after all the cards, until after you had shown him all the cards. [T4b: Yea] Is that like a style or preference? Is there a reason behind it? I am just curious.

T4: Yea, I do it that way because…., I don’t know, it is not that there is a lot of theory behind it. In the same way that you caught that he is kind of following my lead as to how I am interpreting things or what I am writing up and so I feel like if I interpret the first…, or if we start discussing the first card and he hears the kind of questions I am asking it’s going to have….., cause him to answer or tell stories about the other cards in a certain way. [R: Okay] But whether or not that certain way is different or worse or better than just having him do all of the stories in a row, I don’t know. [R: Okay] There is not a ton of thought that has gone into that. I may have been given that advice at one point to just have him tell all the stories first.

R: Okay. And I’m wondering…., it sounds like you are talking about not wanting to interfere as much and hearing what he says and then bringing it back to more of the dialogue.

T4b: Yea, I think it is just kind of an analytic stance I took with the cards and I think that the TAT is usually based on that.

R: Is that what you usually do? Like usually when you do the TAT is that what you do? That style?
T4b: Yea, again I guess the idea behind it is that maybe he is somehow responding more purely out of his psyche to the card rather than to what he thinks I want.

R: Okay. So this next one is about two and a half minutes and you start off saying, “I want to ask you about the card with the boy sitting there by himself, could you relate that to your own childhood?” So again asking him to put it into context. And he said, “I knew why I was alone. I didn’t want to be at home. Home wasn’t a safe place.” And you interpret that and he responds and there is somewhat of a disagreement and then he talks about how is dad was a jerk and how you think every guy is a jerk when your dad is a jerk, kind of a thing. Okay, so we’ll watch some of this.

[Watched fourth videotape segment]

R: Okay, so how was that?

T4b: Good. I’m getting confused on whether that interpretation was the same one that came up later in the therapy with a similar conversation, but it might have been different.

R: The interpretation about…

T4b: Yea, the interpretation where he was wondering, “why me?” type of thing. I found it very, very helpful that… just clarifying that developmentally you don’t ask a question like that. I thought that was really good.

R: Yea, because you said, “I could see that little boy wondering, why me?” and he said, “No, I didn’t wonder that until later.” So it showed you the difference from where he was to where he is, right?

T4b: Yea, it was similar to…, now I’m remembering what the thing was. I gave a similar interpretation to a question about why his…, if he wished his mother would have stopped in and stopped the abuse because some of this was coming out of a class I was in and getting some consultation and this idea that maybe he has this anger at his mother because she didn’t step in. Intuitively it’s funny, now this is really helpful to me because intuitively I didn’t feel that was the case but everyone else was like, “Of course he is angry at her because she didn’t step in.” So I ask him and he goes, “No, at the time women didn’t leave their husbands. It wasn’t heard of. There was no infrastructure for it and in the culture it just didn’t happen.” And so again, he is giving me these really nice context pieces. Like, “No he’s not old enough to ask this kind of question,” or “No he’s not going ask this kind of question in this particular context.” So, I just like the way he grounded the type of psychology with therapy.

R: Yea, and it’s interesting to see how even though he didn’t…, like even though he disagreed with the interpretation it still produced a lot.

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T4b: Yea, yea, yea. So I guess it’s a good…, like you said I guess you know you have a
good working relationship or alliance when you can be off the mark and it is still
productive.

R: Exactly. It kind of makes us feel secure in what we are doing. [T4b: For sure, yea.]
That even when you are not on it can still be productive and helpful. Um, you had said…,
we didn’t watch this segment of the tape because I pulled more from parts where there is
more collaboration than the actual administration of the TAT. But you had said (in your
written description), “About TAT card 1 that if the kid sticks with it, he’ll get better.
Because this card can reveal something about people’s impression of therapy I took it as
a very hopeful sign.” [T4b: Yea] So there was this thing during the actual administration,
there was this positive…

T4b: Yea, interesting, so it comes out in the symbol of the story of card 1 but it is also
very much showing itself in the process between us too, the exchange.

R: Yea, exactly. In the card response and the discussion part. Okay. Alright, so we have
got a couple more clips. There are two more of these video clips and then a few of the
written description pieces and then we should be done so there is not too much more.

T4b: Okay, I’m just going to go grab some tea.

R: Yea, sure. [pause for a moment] Okay, so in this one you said…, I think you were
giving feedback about the PAI at this point and you said, “The test said you don’t have
any close relationships.” No wait, actually we have to rewind it. I am getting mixed up
and ahead of myself here. I was doing the last clip. In this one you said, “It said others
might perceive you as hypersensitive, hostile and unforgiving.” And you pointed out,
“Those are strong words. I wanted to run it by you.” And he said, “It depends. I am not
sensitive but I can be hostile and unforgiving. If am angry, I am not good at hiding it.”

[Watched fifth videotape segment]

R: That was a short clip. What did you think about that?

T4b: Just a really great, concise description or self-description about how he deals
socially with his emotions. Angry at other people and whatever is meant by sensitivity, he
is careful and private about that [R: Mmhm] but he doesn’t seem to have any issue with
confrontation and stuff like that.

R: Yea, kind of letting you know, “If I’m angry you’ll know it,” kind of a thing.

T4b: Yea, well that’s interesting because I don’t know if that is the case. But potentially
at that point, yea that is probably what he…, if you take what he is saying at face value
then that would be relevant to our interactions as well.
R: Yea, he did kind of seem to agree and disagree at the same time. Like the sensitive part he didn’t like, but the hostile and unforgiving he was like, “Yea.”

T4b: Yea, it’s not that he is saying that he is not sensitive, he’s saying from the way he is perceived he says he doesn’t think he is perceived as sensitive.

R: Mmhm. How was it to present that? Because it seemed like it was…, you said, “These are pretty strong words.” Were you expecting…, concerned about how he might respond to that?

T4b: Um, I suppose I was…, I was just aware that the…, I think I would have had a similar approach with anyone. It was the style I was using, I was just pulling things directly from the test. [R: Yea] I said “strong words” because hostile is not part of the things I might say. I mean the whole things were these general statements.

R: Mmhm. I just noticed now as we were watching it, he seemed more laid back and kind of relaxed. He was even talking louder, you could hear him better. He seemed more kind of like… [T4b: Yea, yea] Like at the beginning he was really kind of quiet and looking out the window more [T4b: Yea] and I’m noticing in this clip he has got his arms back on the couch [T4b laughs] his legs are out, he is speaking louder and is kind of joking a little bit. [T4b: Okay] Do you have any thoughts about that?

T4b: Um, I guess I am just hoping that he was feeling understood and that made him feel a bit more relaxed, and also that he wasn’t having to perform. I think he got a taste that this was a dialogue, this was a conversation, this was a collaboration so he didn’t…, I’m just thinking that the tightness and the quietness is about doing something that someone else wants you to do. [R: Yea] Doing something for me. And I think that as he started to see that this was more open and collaborative that maybe he relaxed more.

R: So, he let his guard down a little bit [T4b: Right] and started feeling more comfortable, like this isn’t as bad or as painful as he anticipated. Okay, so this next clip is about a minute long so it is short and in it you were talking about the PAI and how it said, “You don’t have any close relationships, but that is obviously inaccurate. You would think after asking over 300 questions it would be able to come up with something accurate.” And he said, “Most of that stuff I could tell you anyway. I know the issues I have, they come from my mother and father.” [T4b: Okay] So, and while we are watching the clip I am going to fast forward and flip this audio tape do I don’t have to keep worrying about it. [T4b: Okay]

[Watched sixth videotape segment]

R: Okay

T4b: Yea, for me that really just confuses the question of…, like even before he sat down I already felt anxious about giving him that test. [R: Mmhm] And in this case I am the one that kind of refers to the MMPI in a sarcastic way to start with and he confirms that,
you know. What can I say about that? For me what was unclear is to what degree was I reading him from the beginning? Was my anxiety from the outset accurate that he probably didn’t want to do that test? And in the same way, like he said, was that really a round about way to get to some things that he could have told me directly? I’m kind of fumbling around with this.

R: It’s okay. I mean, it was interesting because he said, “Yea, it’s pretty accurate but most of that stuff I could have told you myself.” So it is kind of a mixed statement. Like we were just saying a minute ago we noticed that he was more comfortable and outgoing toward the end so I am wondering if he had mixed feelings about it. Because we were saying at the beginning it seemed like going in that he was disappointed [T4b: Yea] because he didn’t get to talk and he was concerned about what the experience was going to be like, not what he expected. But then I wonder at the end if it might have been better than he expected, he got more out of it than he expected, but is still saying, “I could have told you that stuff.” I don’t know, what kind of impressions do you have?

T4b: I’m just kind of wrapped up in myself and my own issues about assessment that I feel that I’ve been guided to really downplay the objectifying nature of the test. Yea, to just set any doubts about the usefulness of them aside. Not only set them aside, but they are my own hang ups and bullshit and stuff. So I’m sitting here listening to those voices as I’m watching this and I’m wondering to what degree my reading and his responses really have to do with my own, what I brought to the table. If I had more enthusiasm about giving someone the MMPI, would we not have had that kind of conversation?

R: But I feel like there is a strategy behind it though. I mean, I feel like you are showing him and putting him at ease by saying, “You know, this stuff isn’t set in stone because this test says that.” [T4b: Yea] We can question it and it doesn’t necessarily always fit and we can talk about it and that is what matters more.

T4b: Yea, and I think I did that throughout the assessment and maybe I’m asking in a way. You know what, I think your interpretation was actually the question I was trying to ask him with that statement. You know, “This wasn’t too bad was it?” [chuckles] Or maybe more along the lines of what I was rambling about was that, “It wasn’t as bad for you as I think it is.” And he’s saying, “Well, the test is accurate but we could have done it a different way.” So I just sort of get a sense of “good enough,” we are moving ahead.

R: Yea. But it did seem to bring up, like we talked about in some earlier clips, about some transference stuff and I don’t know how long that might have taken to get to. You know, like him saying, “You can treat me this way.” Or, “I don’t want to be treated that way.” It seemed to bring it up earlier.

T4b: Yea, for sure, for sure.

R: Okay I just had a few more things from the written description that you had said, and this relates back to an earlier clip, you said, “When I asked what questions he had as a child in response to his home being unsafe. He said that questions like “why me?” come
later on in life. I liked that he was pulling me out of psychodynamic thinking into his experience of childhood.” Can you say a little more?

T4b: So that is what I was saying earlier when I brought up the story. Yea.

R: That you like that, that he put you in…, that you were focusing on the childhood and he was like, “No, it was more later on.”

T4b: Yea, what I’m saying there is that he moved me from abstractions and conceptions to just the fact of how he experienced his life as a child and later on.

R: Yea, I probably should have asked that closer to that part on the tape, following that clip.

T4b: The reason why I like it is just because I aspire to be very phenomenological in my therapy and so for him to have to force me to look that way was good because I wouldn’t have noticed that I was drifting off into abstraction.

R: So you feel like he helped to put you more in his context and show you where he was coming from. [T4b: Absolutely] Okay, and then the last two statements you made, you said, “Generally I felt that we were deepening our relationship (building rapport) and that I was rapidly learning more about him. And I was grateful for his honesty. I had the impression that we were on a good track in exploring the relationship issues he brought with him.” So it sounds like from your side too…, I mean, we were just talking about how for him the assessment may have gone better than he expected, but it seems like for you too possibly from what you said you got out of that. [T4b: That the assessment went better…] than maybe you had expected. [T4b: Oh] You were saying that you were rapidly learning more about him, on a good track.

T4b: Yep, it was very useful, yea. So, my doubts weren’t about the assessment so much as…, or my struggles weren’t about the assessment as much as about standardized tests. That is where that heavy anxiety comes in. But…

R: More the objective tests?

T4b: Yea, yea. They are fine to work with. They are easy enough to work with collaboratively. The issue is just about what we talked about before. I am just saying that to say that I don’t know if I really had expectations either way, but I definitely found it to be very fruitful, the process.

R: Okay, and this was some time ago, but you said, “It’s nice to return to some of the stories and imagery of that assessment over a year later when I feel that I know him pretty well…a feeling of open-heartedness.”

T4b: Yea, that is the same of when I started watching the tape, was I care a lot about him and I just feel good, you know, I feel good to hear his stories and hear him talk.
R: How was it watching it now?

T4b: What I found interesting is that I felt like I was taking up..., my comportment was similar to the way he was dealing with the assessment, which is when there was time to pause I was looking out the window. [R: Hmm] So there was something about it that was kind of scattering for him and I was maybe taking on some of that.

R: So mirroring him a bit as you were watching him. [T4b: Right] Yea, okay. Well, we are done with the interview but I just wanted to ask if there was anything in general about collaborative assessment you wanted to add or after doing this or if it brought up anything for you about it.

T4b: Yea, I think what I like about it is sort of all the stimuli everywhere when you are doing the assessment, like through this statement or this sentence completion or this picture, there are so many kind of touchstones or spring boards. I don’t know how you want us to talk about them. The issue for me is there is a way that you can’t follow..., I feel in the assessment you have to be vigilant about bringing the discussion back to the materials. I mean, conversely then, I have God knows how many sessions later with no materials, whereas... So, for me, I don’t know. I think it would be more interesting to have things spread out a little more. Just an idea.

R: Okay, so spreading out the materials rather than having to do them all in that one session?

T4b: Yea, yea. It allows you to follow a certain line of inquiry and similarly to bring in materials later in the theory would give you more of a stimulus I guess.

R: A very rich one, it seems like you are saying. [T4b: Yea] Especially with the discussion it seems. [T4b: Yea] Okay, well thank you very much. I really appreciate it. [T4b: You bet.] It has been a great help.