EVALUATOR EMPATHY IN PSYCHOPATHY INTERVIEWS

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology and Philosophy

Sam Houston State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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August, 2017

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ABSTRACT

Vera, Lauren M., *Evaluator empathy in psychopathy interviews*. Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology), August, 2017, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

The psychological literature posits two distinct outlooks on the use of empathy in forensic evaluations. On the one hand, some authors maintain that the use of empathy within a forensic evaluation constitutes manipulation on the part of the evaluator, imbuing defendants with a false sense of therapeutic alliance (Shuman, 1993). On the other hand, authors of more recent articles suggest that, when properly regulated, empathy can convey a sense of professionalism and respect on the part of the forensic evaluator that might ultimately prove helpful in gaining the defendant's cooperation (Brodsky & Wilson, 2013). The current study examined whether or not evaluator empathy influences interviewees' perceptions of evaluators and evaluator-interviewee alliance. Undergraduate participants were interviewed by either an empathetic or non-empathetic clinician about antisocial and psychopathic personality traits. Imbedded in the interview were 10 forced-choice (yes vs. no) criterion questions about undesirable behavior (e.g., Have you ever been accused of lying?). Participants completed measures of psychopathy and normative personality traits approximately 5-7 days before being interviewed. Following the interview, participants completed measures of psychopathy, their use of impression management strategies during the interview, perceived alliance with the evaluator, and their perceptions of the evaluator's level of empathy. Evaluators completed measures of participant personality traits, psychopathy, and impression management strategies. Findings indicated a stronger sense of alliance between participants and empathetic evaluators, however those interviewed by an empathetic evaluator did not admit to more undesirable behavior. Empathetic evaluators rated

participants significantly lower in psychopathy, and reported less impression

management on the part of participants when compared to non-empathetic evaluators.

KEY WORDS: Empathy, Psychopathy, Forensic Assessment, Forensic Evaluation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Clinicians are often encouraged to reflect empathy—through verbal and nonverbal displays – in assessment and treatment sessions (Frankel, Rachlin, & Yip-Bannicq, 2012; Brock, Cassell, Tyrone, Maureen, Dubey, Halia, Leigh, & Laurel, 2015). This practice is believed to encourage respect, understanding, and rapport between clinician and client (Meissner, 1996). There is, however, considerable debate as to the appropriateness of empathetic expressions from clinicians conducting forensic evaluations for the courts. Of particular concern is the possibility that empathy would lead defendants to revealing potentially prejudicial information about their legal cases. The American Psychiatric Association Task Force on the Role of Psychiatry in Sentencing addressed this issue directly, holding that the use of empathy in a forensic evaluation is permissible within the context of minimizing harm to the defendant, but not to an extent that would cause the defendant to slip into a "therapeutic mindset" (American Psychiatric Association, 1984, p.203).

Despite the recommendations from this task force, others have argued that neither forensic evaluator nor defendant can truly delineate where acceptable empathy (i.e., empathy to avoid harm) ends and harmful empathy (i.e., empathy that misleads the defendant into assuming a therapeutic relationship exists) begins (Shuman, 1993). And there is no clear safeguard for protecting defendants from these effects. Although the Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology (2013) encourage forensic evaluators to inform defendants about their legal rights related to the evaluation and the limits of confidentiality, defendants may still find themselves "seduced" by the evaluator's use of

empathy and be at risk for assuming that a therapeutic alliance exists where one does not (Simon & Wettstein, 1997). Criminal defendants, who often feel that nobody is on their side, may be especially susceptible to the effects of a highly empathic evaluator. The informed consent process itself might lead a defendant to believe that the evaluator empathizes with him or her, and has the defendant's best interests in mind, as opposed to the interests of the attorney or court. If this is the case, the defendant might become vulnerable to disclosing potentially harmful information (e.g., previously unreported criminal behavior), which could have serious legal ramifications for the defendant.

Despite the possible risks of empathy in forensic evaluations, arguments for its employment are not entirely absent from the current literature. Brodsky and Wilson (2013) posited that, while excessive displays of empathy in forensic evaluations are inappropriate, empathy in moderation can convey respect, professionalism, and rapport. For example, small displays of reflective empathy could serve to humanize the evaluator to the defendant, or at minimum, demonstrate a respect for the rights of the defendant being interviewed. Though the goal of a forensic evaluator is not to build a therapeutic alliance with the defendant, empathy could prove useful in gaining the defendant's cooperation with respect to the evaluation – which is arguably essential for the completion of a thorough assessment.

Despite these varying positions on empathy in forensic assessment, no study has directly examined the effects of empathy on the forensic evaluation process or outcomes. Most studies of clinician empathy come from the treatment research literature, where empathy is associated with client outcomes.

Clinician Empathy Research

Overall, findings from the clinician empathy research literature show that empathy has been associated with stronger therapeutic alliance (Meissner, 1996), more positive treatment outcomes (Watson, Steckley, & McMullen, 2014), and lower treatment drop-out rates (Moyers & Miller, 2013). Although all commentators agree that it is inappropriate for a forensic evaluator to use empathy to build a strong therapeutic alliance, and forensic evaluations offer no treatment outcomes to speak of, these findings suggest possible benefits of using empathy to enhance the engagement of the defendant in the forensic assessment process. That is, similar to drop-out rates being influenced by the therapist's level of empathy, perhaps a defendant's level of engagement and cooperation in the assessment process is also influenced by the evaluator's level of empathy, with defendants providing more information to empathic evaluators.

Though no study has specifically explored the influence of evaluator empathy on defendant disclosure and cooperation, studies have examined how other evaluator traits and behaviors influence interviewee behavior, disclosure, and cooperation. For example, one study showed that evaluators' whose personalities were more similar to those they were interviewing tended to illicit more self-disclosure from the interviewee (Persons & Marks, 1970). Another study found that evaluators who were perceived, by interviewees, as more concerned and invested in the interview process (and interviewee) increased the probability that an interviewee would accept a job offer (Alderfer & McCord, 1970). Although these two studies suggest that using empathy may lead to better outcomes, another study showed that interviewee impression management strategies had less of an effect on the evaluator's impressions when the evaluator was higher in negative

affectivity (i.e., a generally negative attitude and mood; Chen, Yang,& Lin, 2010). In other words, less empathic evaluators may be less likely to be influenced by impression management.

Possible Effects of Empathy on Evaluator Decision-Making

In addition to affecting interviewees, clinician empathy may affect clinical decision-making. A forensic evaluator must proffer a link between the available data collected during an evaluation and their ultimate opinion regarding the legal question at hand (e.g., competency to stand trial, suitability for civil commitment, mental state at the time of the offense). If an evaluator is unable to manage his or her feelings towards a defendant, then an empathy- bias might exert an undue influence on his or her findings and compromise a forensic evaluator's objectivity (Shuman & Zervopoulos, 2010). For example, the opinion of an evaluator performing a competency for execution evaluation might be more influenced by that evaluator's own feelings about the defendant, and about the death penalty, rather than the relevant legal standard they were retained to address. On the other hand, some have argued that an overly negative attitude, or lack of empathy for a defendant might also bear on a forensic evaluator's decision-making (Rogers, 1987). Indeed, should a defendant's psychopathic traits and uncooperative behavior create negative feelings on the part of the evaluator, this evaluator might be more prone to disregarding other relevant psychopathology and providing a more unfavorable report of the defendant (Protter & Travin, 1983; Sattar, Pinals, & Gutheil, 2002).

This issue is further complicated when individual differences in evaluator empathy are considered. Research has revealed that differences in an individual's ability to empathize is influenced by factors such as age (Khanjani, Jeddi, Hekmati, Khalilzade,

Nia, Andalib, & Ashrafian, 2015; Wieck & Kunzmann, 2015) and gender (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Gleichgerrcht & Decety, 2013). Within professional psychology, empathy is also associated with theoretical orientation preference (Ivtzan, Redman, & Gardner, 2012). Within the context of forensic evaluations, differences in evaluator empathy might have an impact on assessment results. Research has shown that evaluator personality traits and attitudes toward offenders are associated with the scores they assign on ostensibly objective measures of psychopathic personality traits and risk for future offending (Boccaccini, Murrie, Gardner, & Rufino, 2014). For example, more agreeable evaluators view offenders as less psychopathic than less agreeable evaluators (Miller et al., 2011). Related to this, research has shown that self-reported empathy is positively correlated with the personality trait of agreeableness (Magalhães, Costa, & Costa, 2012). If more empathic evaluators tend to be more agreeable, then more empathic evaluators may also view offenders more favorably (e.g., less psychopathic).

The Empathy Construct

Brodsky and Wilson (2013), proponents of moderate empathy in forensic assessment, argue that it is inappropriate to treat empathy as an all or nothing dichotomous construct (i.e., empathetic or non-empathetic). Instead, they argue that empathy involves an array of cognitive, emotional, and social components. Their position is consistent with factor analysis research, which seems to support the claim that empathy is a complex concept, encompassing various factors (Andrew, Cooke, & Muncer, 2008; Daly, 2005; Johnson, Cheek, & Smither, 1983; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Muncer & Ling, 2006); de Wied, Maas, van Goozen, Vermande, Engels, Meeus, Matthys, & Goudena, 2007). Some of these factors include emotional reactivity (i.e., the effect that

the emotions of others have on an individual), cognitive empathy (i.e., the ability to assume the perspective of another person), and social skills (i.e., knowing how to appropriately respond to the emotional expression of others).

Empathy researchers have also proposed several subtypes of empathy, including cognitive empathy, affective empathy, behavioral empathy, receptive empathy, and reflective empathy (Brodsky & Wilson, 2013). It is possible that certain types of empathy are acceptable in a forensic evaluation while others are not. For example, Shuman (1993) discusses how receptive empathy (i.e., when one experiences an appreciation and understanding of another's experiences) might be an inherent piece of conceptualizing another's mental health problems for the purposes of a forensic evaluation. On the other hand, Shuman contends that reflective empathy (i.e., an outward expression of empathy) might mislead a defendant into believing that the evaluator is serving a therapeutic role.

Additionally, early empathy research linked the construct with a number of ostensibly positive traits that might assist forensic evaluators in performing their duties. These traits include emotional intelligence (Munro, Bore, & Powis, 2005), social intelligence (Daurio, 1978), therapeutic effectiveness (Kendall & Wilcox, 1980), and increased accuracy in observed personality traits (Mills & Hogan, 1978). Studies have also demonstrated that those low in empathy, such as individuals high in narcissism and Machiavellianism, tend to be perceived by others as cold, rude, and disinterested (Andrew, Cooke, & Muncer, 2008; Munro, Bore, & Powis, 2005) – an impression that would arguably hinder the success of a forensic evaluation. In other words, a forensic evaluator lacking in empathy might be vulnerable to biases that are just as problematic as empathy-bias. Indeed, some evaluators have noted that the most common complaints

voiced by defendants concern the competence and rude demeanor of some forensic evaluators, as opposed to accusations that the defendant was seduced into disclosing prejudicial information (Parmegiani, 2004).

Current Study

Although there has been considerable professional debate about the appropriateness and utility of empathy in forensic evaluations, no study has examined the effects of empathy in forensic assessment. The current study explored the effects of evaluator empathy in psychopathy evaluations. Psychopathy assessment is common in risk assessment due to the moderate association between psychopathic traits and future violence (Edens, Campbell, & Weir, 2007; Leistico, Salekin, DeCoster, & Rogers, 2008; Yang, Wong, & Coid, 2010). Although there are various conceptualizations of psychopathy, psychopathy is generally defined as a condition underscored by egocentricity, a lack of emotional empathy, and displays of antisocial behavior (Frick, 2009).

Research participants were undergraduate psychology students who signed up for a study concerning personality traits and off-campus behavior. Each participant was randomly assigned to a non-empathetic or empathetic interview condition. In the non-empathetic condition, the evaluator refrained from both verbal and nonverbal demonstrations of cognitive, emotional, and expressive empathy. In contrast, evaluators in the empathetic condition were instructed to demonstrate a typical degree of cognitive, emotional, and expressive empathy; that is, a degree of empathy considered appropriate within the context of a clinical setting. For example, the empathetic evaluator might nod her head as if to express an emotional understanding of the participant's experiences; or

verbally express empathy with commonly used therapeutic reflections (e.g., "That sounds like it must have been difficult for you", See Appendix A).

The content of the interview was identical for both the non-empathetic and empathetic conditions. The evaluator asked questions typical of a psychopathy assessment, covering topics such as impulsiveness, deceitfulness, and irresponsibility (Appendix B). Although the evaluators did not ask about violent criminal behavior, they did ask about the participant's engagement in potentially impulsive, and ostensibly irresponsible behaviors (i.e., Tell me about a time when you got into trouble for breaking the rules). The interview also contained 10 forced choice (yes vs. no) questions about misbehavior that served as a criterion measure of participants' openness in the interview (e.g., Have you ever lied to get something you wanted? Have you ever stolen money from a friend?). At the end of the interview, the evaluator rated the participant on measures of psychopathic and normative personality traits.

Prior to being interviewed, participants completed (online) self-report measures of psychopathic personality traits [Trirachic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM); Patrick, 2010], and normative personality traits (HEXACO-60, Self-Report; Ashton & Lee, 2009). Following the interview, participants completed measures of their use of impression management strategies during the interview, their perceptions of the evaluator (personality, empathy), and their perceived alliance with the evaluator.

I selected the TriPM as my primary measure of psychopathy because it is a self-report measure grounded in Patrick's Triarchic theory of psychopathy. The three TriPM subscales measure Boldness, Meanness, and Disinhibition. The Boldness scale focuses on social dominance, anxiety, and fearfulness. Boldness scores are associated with

normative personality traits like extroversion and neuroticism (Stanley, Wygant, & Sellbom, 2013), as well as psychopathy scales (i.e., fearless dominance) on other established psychopathy measures (Stanley et al., 2013). A recent study also indicated that Boldness scale scores were able to significantly predict factor and facet scores on the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 1991, 2003) (Wall, Wygant, & Sellbom, 2015). The Meanness scale measures callousness, aggressiveness, and cruelty. Meanness scores have been shown to predict reports of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (Poy, Segarra, Estellar, Lopez, & Molto, 2014; Stanley et al., 2012). Meanness is also positively correlated with other self-report psychopathy subscales, such as cold-heartedness (Sica, Drislane, Cuadek, Angrilli, Bottesi, Cerea, & Ghisi, 2015; Stanley et al., 2012). Finally, the Disinhibition scale focuses on traits relating to irresponsibility and anger. Scores on this scale have been shown to significantly correlate with the personality traits of agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness. Disinhibition scores are also correlated with scores on other self-report psychopathy measures (Sica et al., 2015; Poy et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2012).

I used the HEXACO-60 to provide a broader assessment of participant personality traits, with a focus on Agreeableness, Honesty-Humility, and Conscientiousness in this study. These three HEXACO traits are often associated with scores on psychopathy measures (de Vries, Lee, & Ashton, 2008; de Vries & van Kampen, 2010; Gaughan, Miller & Lynam, 2012; Lee & Aston, 2004; Lee & Ashton, 2005). It may be that evaluator empathy affects how others (e.g., evaluators) perceive these normative (subclinical) traits, even if they do not affect perceptions of the more severe characterological traits included on psychopathy measures.

The primary goal of the current study was to examine whether evaluator empathy impacts the outcome of a psychopathy assessment. If empathy does impact the assessment, participants interviewed by an empathetic evaluator should report higher levels of alliance with the evaluator than participants interviewed by a non-empathic evaluator. They should also rate the evaluator as more empathetic. The extent to which the increase in alliance affects evaluator accuracy is not entirely clear. It may be that those interviewed by an empathetic evaluator are especially willing to admit to past instances of misbehavior, allowing for a more accurate assessment of psychopathic traits. If this is the case, those interviewed by empathic evaluators should report more misbehavior and less use of impression management strategies during the interview. As a result, empathetic evaluators' ratings of participant psychopathic and normative personality traits should more closely correspond with participants' self-ratings than those from non-empathic evaluators.

It is also possible that participants will view empathic evaluators as being malleable. If this is the case, those interviewed by empathic evaluators will admit to less misbehavior and report more use of impression management strategies during the interview. As a result, empathetic evaluators' ratings of participant psychopathic and normative personality traits may correspond poorly with participants' self-ratings.

Hypotheses

Overall, the study allowed for the examination of two hypotheses and four research questions. I use hypotheses when I expected a directional effect and research questions when their likely direction was not clear.

Hypothesis 1. Participants interviewed by an empathic evaluator will report higher levels of alliance with the evaluator than those interviewed by a non-empathetic evaluator.

Hypothesis 2. Participants interviewed by an empathetic evaluator will assign higher ratings of evaluator empathy than those interviewed by a non-empathic evaluator.

Research question 1. Will participants admit to more or less misbehavior when interviewed by an empathetic evaluator? Ultimately, psychopathy evaluators want participants to acknowledge prior instances of misbehavior. The empathy level that leads to the highest level of self-reported misbehavior may be most useful for psychopathy assessments.

Research question 2. Will participants report using more or less impression management when interviewed by an empathetic evaluator? Ultimately, psychopathy evaluators do not want participants to engage in impression management. The empathy level that leads to the lowest level of self-reported impression management may be most useful for psychopathy assessments.

Research question 3. Will empathetic evaluators view participants as more or less psychopathic than non-empathetic evaluators? Although the psychopathy evaluators will not be blind to condition assignment, they will not be given any information about how I expect evaluator empathy to affect their perceptions of participants. If evaluator empathy affects psychopathy evaluations, I should find a difference in psychopathy (and related HEXACO trait) ratings between empathetic and non-empathetic evaluators. I do not, however, have a strong reason to predict the direction of these differences. On the one hand, it may be that participants report more antisocial and psychopathic traits to

empathetic evaluators, which would lead to higher psychopathy ratings and lower honesty-humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness ratings from these evaluators. On the other hand, it may be that participants engage in more impression management with "softer" empathetic evaluators, which could lead to lower ratings of psychopathy and higher ratings of honesty-humility, agreeableness, and conscientiousness from empathetic evaluators.

Research question 4. Will the correspondence between self-report and evaluator-rated personality trait ratings be stronger for empathetic or non-empathetic evaluators? If evaluator empathy matters, one type of evaluator should provide more accurate ratings of psychopathy and related traits (agreeableness, honesty-humility, conscientiousness) than the other.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Overview

This study used a between-subjects experimental design to examine the effect of

evaluator empathy in assessments of psychopathic traits. Participants were

undergraduates needing to fulfill a research participation credit, required by the

Psychology Department at Sam Houston State University. Approximately one week prior

to being interviewed, participants completed (online) measures of psychopathy and

normative personality traits. Each participant was then interviewed once, by an evaluator

instructed to present as empathetic or to withhold any expression of empathy. The

empathetic and non-empathetic evaluators conducted identical, semi-structured

interviews, which focused on deviant behavior and dispositional traits commonly

associated with psychopathy. Embedded in the interview were ten forced-choice (i.e., yes

vs. no) criterion questions designed to assess participants' willingness to admit to past

incidents of misbehavior. At the end of the interview, the evaluator rated the participant

on measures of psychopathic and normative personality traits, as well as participant use

of impression management strategies. Each participant then rated the evaluator's overall

level of empathy, the degree to which they felt the evaluator was aligned with their needs

and interests, and the extent to which they used impression management strategies during

the interview.

Participants

Participants were 94 male, undergraduate psychology students seeking credit for

requisite research participation, subsequent to their enrollment in an introductory

psychology course. Random assignment resulted in 46 participants being interviewed by an empathetic and 48 by a non-empathetic interviewer. The majority of our participants ($n = 88$) were between the ages of 18-24 years old (93.6%, n = 88), with the remaining participants falling in the age ranges of 25-34 (3.2%, n = 3), 35-44 (2.1%, n = 2), and 55 and older (1.1%, n = 1). With respect to race, 54 identified as Caucasian, 23 reported being Hispanic or Latino, 11 identified as Black or African American, while the remaining six participants reported being of another racial background (e.g., Native American, Asian). We used male participants because males comprise the majority of individuals encountered in corrections settings – where forensic evaluations are most likely to be requested.

Four female doctoral-level clinical psychology students, each of whom had completed two doctoral-level courses in forensic assessment, served as evaluators. These evaluators had completed numerous forensic evaluations ($M = 30.75$, $SD = 10.90$) as part of their clinical training (e.g., competence, sanity, risk). The same evaluators served as both empathetic and non-empathetic evaluators. Each evaluator was randomly assigned to a condition (i.e., empathetic, non-empathetic) prior to each interview she performed. Interviewer A conducted 28 interviews, while Interviewers B and C conducted 24 interviews respectively, and Interviewer D conducted 18 interviews.

Prior to the start of this study, each interviewer received approximately two hours of training on the items being used from the Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV). This training included familiarizing each interviewer with the 9 items being used from this measure, and providing them with examples of how to interpret and score each of these items. Additionally, to maintain consistency in scoring, the descriptions for

each item were printed on the PCL:SV scoring sheet used during each interview. This way, the interviewers were all referencing the exact same scoring criteria with each participant.

Measures

Interviewer Empathy and Alliance Rating Questionnaire. The constructs of empathy and working alliance are generally viewed as necessary for forming a strong therapeutic relationship (Castonguay, Constantino, & Holtforth, 2006). Most studies treat empathy and alliance as different constructs, with empathy being defined as a demonstration of emotional and cognitive understanding, and working alliance representing the level of cooperation, connection, and agreement (Feldstein & Forcehimes, 2007) between clinician and client. However, there is evidence to suggest that although these two constructs might be distinct, they are not entirely unrelated. For example, Malin and Pos (2015) recently found that measures of expressed empathy (on the part of the therapist) predicted client reports of working alliance. Further, Shaughnessy (1996) contended that empathy was critical to the working alliance between a therapist and client.

Given the evident importance of empathy and working alliance in the therapeutic relationship, researchers have designed several measures to assess these constructs; however, existing measures did not appear to adequately suit the current study. With respect to empathy, commonly used self-report questionnaires (e.g., Interpersonal Reactivity Index [IRI; Davis, 1980]; Hogan's Empathy Scale [Hogan, 1969]) contain items that would be unrealistic for participants in the current study– even if the measures were adapted into an observer-report form (e.g., "I have at one time or another tried my

hand at writing poetry," "Being in a tense emotional situation scares me"). Observer

reports of empathy are also available (i.e., The Barrett-Lenard Relationship Inventory

[BLRI; Barrett-Lenard, 1986]), but items on these measures are more appropriate for

long-standing therapeutic relationships (e.g., "Sometimes he thinks that I feel a certain

way, because that is the way he feels.") as opposed to the relatively brief interviews being

conducted in the current study. With regard to working alliance, the Working Alliance

Inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) is arguably the most ubiquitous measure

of working alliance in the literature. Although some items on this measure appear to be

well suited for the current study (e.g., "I felt comfortable with [my therapist/ the

evaluator]") the majority of items pertain specifically to therapy goals and therapeutic

progress.

     With these limitations in mind, I opted to develop a measure that would allow

participants to rate empathy and alliance in this relatively brief assessment study. The

Interviewer Empathy (13 items) and Alliance Rating Questionnaire (15 items); I used in

the study included both empathy-related and alliance-related items (see Appendix B).

Empathy items focused on the level of emotional and cognitive understanding

demonstrated by the evaluator (e.g., "The person who interviewed me understood my

point of view on the things that we discussed."), and alliance items focused on the degree

of cooperation and connection between the participant and the evaluator (e.g., "The

person who interviewed me would probably help me if I asked for it.").

     In the current study, internal consistency was .84 for the 13-item Interviewer

Empathy scale total score and .77 for the 15-item Alliance Rating Questionnaire total

score. Scores on the two measures were strongly correlated ($r = .80$, $p < .001$).

Psychopathy Checklist: Screening Version (PCL:SV). The PCL:SV (Hart,

Cox, & Hare, 1995) consists of twelve items derived from the PCL-R. I used the PCL:SV

because scoring for the measure does not rely on the criminal background of the person

being scored and is therefore more appropriate for use in non-forensic settings than the

PCL-R. The twelve PCL:SV items belong to one of four facets (Interpersonal, Affective,

Impulsive Lifestyle, Antisocial Behavior), respectively. Each item is scored on a three-

point scale (0, 1, or 2), with higher scores indicating a higher level of the psychopathic

trait, and total scores ranging from 0-24. The PCL:SV manual indicates high interrater

reliability (mean weighted ICC_2 = .92) and concurrent validity with the PCL-R (r = .80).

For the current study, evaluators scored participants on nine PCL:SV items:

Superficial, Grandiose, Deceitful, Lacks Remorse, Lacks Empathy, Doesn't Accept

Responsibility, Impulsive, Lacks Goals, and Irresponsible. Three of these items fall in the

Interpersonal Facet of the PCL:SV, three are considered part of the Affective Facet of the

PCL:SV, and the remaining three items comprise the Lifestyle Facet of the PCL:SV

(Harris, Boccaccini, & Murrie, 2014). We selected these items because we believed that

evaluators could assign scores based on information obtained via a semi-structured

interview (Appendix C). There were no records or collateral information available to

assist with scoring.

We calculated a PCL:SV Total score and three facet scores (each comprised of

three items). Internal consistency was .66 for the nine-item PCL:SV total score used in

this study. We also formed thee-item facet scores, which we use with caution given low

levels of internal consistency: .45 (Interpersonal), .61 (Affective), and .42 (for the three

item Lifestyle).

HEXACO-60. The HEXACO-60 is a personality inventory, available in a self-report and observer report form, consisting of 60-items rated on a five point Likert-type scale (Ashton & Lee, 2009). The measure is a short-form of the original HEXACO-PI-R (consisting of 100-items; Ashton & Lee, 2004), and was created by taking 10 items from each of the six HEXACO-PI-R factors (Honesty-Humility; Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience). A unique, and possibly advantageous feature (particularly in a forensic context) of the HEXACO measure that will be used in this study, is the Honesty-Humility factor; which has been shown to more strongly correlate to psychopathic personality features when compared to other normative personality measures. For example, studies have found significant negative correlation (r = -.45) between scores on HEXACO Honesty-Humility, and scores on the Primary Psychopathy subtype scale from the Levenson Psychopathy Scale (Levenson, Kiehland, & Fitzpatrick, 1995). Other studies have found even larger correlations between self-reported Honesty-Humility and psychopathy – ranging from -.62 to -.79 (de Vries et al., 2008).

The HEXACO-60 has demonstrated good internal consistency in prior research, with coefficients ranging from .73 to .80 across studies (Ashton & Lee, 2009). In the current study, internal consistency coefficients for the self-report form were .79 (Honesty-Humility), .78 (Emotionality), .77 (Extraversion), .74 (Agreeableness), .83 (Conscientiousness), and .78 (Openness). Internal consistency coefficients for the evaluator report form were .79 (Honesty-Humility), .89 (Emotionality), .85 (Extraversion), .86 (Agreeableness), .94 (Conscientiousness), and .85 (Openness).

TriArchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM). The TriPM is a 58-item self-report measure of psychopathic traits conceptualized across subscales of boldness, meanness, and disinhibition (Patrick, 2010). The triarchic conceptualization of psychopathy encompasses many previous theoretical approaches to psychopathy, including traits measured by the PCL-R and traits originally introduced by Cleckley (1941/1988). The boldness subscale is defined by high social dominance, low anxiousness, and general fearlessness, whereas the meanness subscale is defined by callousness, interpersonal aggression, and cruelty. Finally, the disinhibition subscale is defined as high impulsivity, irresponsibility, and anger (Patrick, Fowles, & Krueger, 2009). Research has shown internal consistency values for each scale of the TriPM ranging from Boldness (α= .82-.89), to Meanness (α = .88-.90), to Disinhibition (α = .84-.89; Sellbom & Phillips, 2013). Internal consistency coefficients for the current study were .78 (Boldness), .87 (Meanness), and .83 (Disinhibition).

Research examining the relation between TriPM scores and five-factor model personality traits has boldness most closely related to extraversion (r = .42), whereas meanness most strongly correlates, in a negative direction, to measures of agreeableness (r = -.63) and conscientiousness (r = -.44), and disinhibition correlates with measures of neuroticism (r = .32) and *conscientiousness* (r = -.45; Stanley, Wygant, & Sellbom, 2013). With respect to other measures of psychopathy, Patrick (2010) found that each scale was associated with particular facets of the PCL-R (i.e., the Boldness scale was most associated with the Interpersonal facet [r = .27], the Meanness scale was most associated with the Affective facet [r = .25], and the Disinhibition scale was most associated with the Lifestyle facet [r = .39]). What is more, this study also found that all

three TriPM scales independently predicted scores on the Antisocial Behavior facet of the PCL-R (Boldness [$r = .17$], Meanness [$r = .20$], and Disinhibition [$r = .31$]).

Impression Management. Each participant was asked to complete a 10-item questionnaire regarding their use of impression management and deceit during the interview process (see Appendix D). The items focus on the degree to which the participant intentionally avoided (through omission or dishonesty) disclosing information that might lead the evaluator to perceive the participant in a negative light. The measure also addresses the extent to which participants believed the evaluator was easy to fool or manipulate. The purpose of these items was to measure the use of impression management strategies among participants, as well as to measure whether participants viewed empathetic or non-empathetic evaluators as more susceptible to participant impression management. In the current study, internal consistency was .56 for the self-report of impression management.

Evaluators also rated the extent to which the participant was engaging in positive impression management and deceit during the interview (see Appendix E). These questions paralleled the impression management questions that each participant was asked to report on as well. These items allowed the researchers to explore whether empathetic or non-empathetic evaluators were more accurate in their perceptions of positive impression management strategies. In the current study, internal consistency was .85 for the self-report of impression management. The correlation between self-reported and evaluator-reported impression management was .12 ($p = .26$)

Misbehavior Criterion Questions. As previously mentioned, we embedded 10 dichotomous (yes or no) questions in the interview designed to measure past misbehavior

among participants. The purpose of these criterion questions was to assess whether or not participants in one condition would admit to more or less misbehavior when compared to the other condition. These misbehavior items included questions about lying, deceit, manipulation, and rule breaking.

Procedure

 Study Context. All students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at Sam Houston State University are required by the Psychology Department to earn three hours of research participation in order to pass the course. Students are instructed to sign up for research participation opportunities through the department's online Psychology Research Participation (PeRP) system, which allows researchers to post descriptions of their current project(s), available times to participate in the project, and any pre-requisites necessary to qualify for participation. Once a student has signed up for the current study, they were then directed to the online measures of psychopathy and normative personality traits, which they completed prior to their interview.

 Recruitment. The primary researcher posted information and available interview times for the study on the PeRP system. This researcher also visited introductory psychology classes, in person, to encourage students to sign up through the PeRP website. Male undergraduates were informed that they were being asked to participate in a study about the relationship between personality and behavior.

 Interview Session. The designated evaluator and participant were randomly assigned to either the empathetic or non-empathetic condition. Upon arrival to the study site, the evaluator briefly reviewed the study's purported purpose with the participant before obtaining informed consent. The semi-structured interview (see Appendix B)

lasted approximately twenty minutes. The interview focused briefly on obtaining psychosocial background information about the participant, before shifting to items related to psychopathic traits measured by the PCL:SV – paying particular attention to participant responses to the ten, previously mentioned, criterion questions. Though the interview questions did not directly inquire as to the participant's involvement in illegal activities, the questions focused on potentially deceitful, irresponsible, impulsive, and insensitive behaviors in the participant's academic and personal life.

Interviewers assigned to be empathetic were asked to display a number of empathetic behaviors in response to participant's answers (see Appendix A). These displays were a mixture of cognitive empathy and affective empathy. For example, empathetic evaluators displayed cognitive empathy through the use of verbal expressions (e.g., "That's understandable.") or non-verbal cues (e.g., head nodding to indicate an understanding). They also demonstrated affective empathy through verbal (e.g., "That must have made you frustrated.") and non-verbal (e.g., reciprocal facial expressions of participant's emotions) cues. On the other hand, non-empathetic evaluators were instructed to ask the interview questions, ask for any relevant follow-up information, and note the participant's response without any indication of cognitive or affective empathy. Essentially, non-empathetic evaluators were instructed to refrain from the very behaviors that empathetic evaluators were encouraged to demonstrate.

At the end of each interview, the participant was asked to complete the Interviewer Empathy and Alliance Rating Questionnaire. Additionally, evaluators completed the nine-item PCL:SV scoring sheet, the HEXACO-60 (observer report), and the evaluator report of impression management.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Self-Reported Personality Traits: Pre-Interview

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for participants' self-reported personality traits on the HEXACO and Tri-PM, separately for participants interviewed by empathetic and non-empathetic evaluators. Because participants completed these measures 5 to 7 days (on average) before being interviewed, these scores provide information about the extent to which the two groups reported similar levels of psychopathy and related personality traits before the experimental manipulation. There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups, which was expected given that participants were randomly assigned to conditions.

Participant Report of Alliance and Empathy

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for participants' reports of evaluator empathy and alliance, separately for participants in each condition. Consistent with our first and second hypotheses, participants assigned to the empathetic condition reported significantly higher levels of alliance with the evaluator [$t(94) = 3.16$, $p = .002$, $d = .65$] as well as higher ratings of evaluator empathy [$t(94) = 5.50$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.13$]. These findings indicate that participants interviewed by an empathetic evaluator reported experiencing a stronger sense of cooperation, agreement, and understanding with the evaluator when compared to participants interviewed by a non-empathetic evaluator. The results also point to the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation by indicating that the evaluators were successful in demonstrating either empathy or non-empathy depending on the condition to which the participant had been assigned.

Participant Reports of Misbehavior

Our first research question asked whether participants would admit to more or less misbehavior (as measured by 10 criterion questions embedded in the interview) when interviewed by an empathetic evaluator. Table 2 provides the misbehavior criterion measure total score for each group, and Table 3 provides information about how often participants in the two conditions admitted to having engaged in each type of misbehavior. Ultimately, participants in the two conditions did not differ in their admission—during the interview—of any type of misbehavior. That is, at the item level, participants interviewed by an empathetic evaluator were not any more likely (or unlikely) to admit to various kinds of misbehavior when compared to participants interviewed by a non-empathetic evaluator.

Although there was little evidence of any differences between the two groups at the item level, we summed participants scores across the 10 items to examine whether there might be a consistent difference when we looked across the 10 items (see Table 2). Overall, the 94 participants in each condition responded yes to about half of the misbehavior criterion questions ($M = 5.53$, $SD = 1.91$). There was, however, no significant difference in reports of misbehavior between conditions using this 10-item scale [$t (94) = .81$, $p = .42$, $d = .17$]. That is, participants did not acknowledge engaging in any more or less undesirable behavior when interviewed by an empathetic evaluator as opposed to a non-empathetic evaluator.

Participant- and Interviewer-Reported Impression Management

Our second research question asked whether participants would engage in more or less impression management when interviewed by an empathetic evaluator compared to a

non-empathetic evaluator. The findings in Table 2 indicate no meaningful difference in self-reported impression management across the two conditions [t (94) = 1.16, p = .25, d = -.24]. However, empathetic evaluators assigned lower ratings of impression management than non-empathetic evaluators [t (94) = 3.06, p <.01, d = -.63; see Table 4].

Evaluator Ratings of Psychopathy and HEXACO Traits

For our third research question, we asked whether empathetic evaluators would provide higher or lower ratings of participant psychopathy on the PCL:SV than non-empathetic evaluators. The results in Table 4 show that empathetic evaluators rated participants as significantly less psychopathic compared to non-empathetic evaluators [t (94) = -4.59, p = <.01, d = -.57]. This was particularly noticeable with respect to items on the Lifestyle facet [t (94) = 3.40, p = .001, d = .70], as opposed to those on the Interpersonal facet [t (94) = 1.17, p = .24, d = .24] and Affective facet [t (94) = 1.49, p = .14, d = .31].

Table 5 provides mean ratings for each of the nine PCL:SV items, separately for empathetic and non-empathetic interviewers. Although there was a clear pattern of empathetic interviewers assigning lower scores across all nine items, the differences were largest—large enough to reach statistical significance—for the three items on the Lifestyle facet: Impulsive (d = .59), Lacks Goals (d = -.37), and Irresponsible (d = -.41).

Importantly, there were no pre-study differences in participant levels of self-reported psychopathy (see Table 1). Thus, even though the two groups did not differ in theory pre-study levels of self-reported psychopathic traits, evaluators differed in their psychopathy ratings depending on their role as empathetic or non-empathetic. Empathetic

interviewers rated participants more favorably (less psychopathic) than non-empathetic interviewers.

Comparisons between HEXACO ratings from empathetic and non-empathetic interviewers also suggested that empathetic interviewers tended to view participants more favorably (see Table 4). Empathetic interviewers rated participants as significantly more conscientious ($d = .71$, $p < .001$) and open ($d = .40$, $p = .05$). In terms of absolute value, they also rated participants as more honest ($d = .32$) and agreeable ($d = .12$), although these differences were not large enough to reach statistical significance (see Table 4).

Correspondence between Self-Report and Evaluator-Rated Personality Trait Ratings

Table 6 and 7 provide correlations between all self-report and evaluator-report study ratings. Self-reported psychopathy scores were all significantly correlated with evaluator PCL:SV ratings. That is, self-reported TriPM total scores for each of the measures three subscales positively correlated with PCL:SV total scores (Boldness, $r = .35$; Meanness, $r = .41$; Disinhibition, $r = .44$).

Similarly, significant correlations were also found between self-report and evaluator-report ratings of corresponding HEXACO traits. The largest of these correlations were between self-report and evaluator ratings of Extraversion ($r = .62$), Emotionality ($r = .62$), Conscientiousness ($r = .59$), and Openness ($r = .42$). Correlations between self-report and evaluator reports of Honesty-Humility ($r = .29$) and Agreeableness ($r = .21$) were somewhat smaller, but still large enough to reach statistical significance.

As shown in Table 7, non-empathetic evaluator ratings of psychopathy were significantly correlated with participant report of misbehavior, particularly with respect to the PCL:SV Interpersonal and Lifestyle facet items. On the other hand, PCL:SV ratings provided by empathetic evaluators were not significantly correlated with the criterion item total score for misbehavior.

We used hierarchical linear regression to examine whether there was any evidence that one type of evaluator (empathetic or non-empathetic) provided more accurate ratings of participant personality traits than the other. We defined accuracy as correspondence between self-reported and evaluator-reported personality traits. We examined three regression models for each self-reported personality trait, using centered variables. The first included the corresponding evaluator rating, the second added a dummy coded variable reflecting condition assignment (0 = non-empathetic, 1 = empathetic), the third added an interaction term (trait x condition). A statistically significant interaction term would indicate that the association between self-reported and evaluator reported traits varied depending on evaluator empathy.

The results in Tables 7 and 8 and show that there was no evidence of an interaction effect for psychopathy ratings or the HEXACO traits most commonly associated with psychopathy (Honesty Humility, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness). In other words, there was no evidence that the association between self-reported and interviewer-reported psychopathic traits differed depending on whether the interview was conducted with or without expressed empathy. The interaction approached significance for Agreeableness ($p = .10$), which indicated that the association tended to be somewhat

stronger when Agreeableness ratings were assigned by non-empathetic interviews ($r =$ .35, $p = .02$) than empathetic interviews ($r = .01$, $p = .98$).

      The one statistically significant interaction effect for a HEXACO trait was for Openness, but the pattern was different. For Openness, the association tended to be stronger for ratings from empathetic interviewers ($r = .49$, p < .001) than non-empathetic interviewers ($r = .37$, $p = .01$).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Measures: Pre-Interview

Measure	Self-Report Empathetic		Self-Report Non-Empathetic		t	p	d
	M	SD	M	SD			
HEXACO-60							
Honesty-Humility	3.29	0.70	3.41	0.70	.83	.41	.17
Emotionality	2.87	0.74	2.79	0.59	.58	.56	.12
Extraversion	3.10	0.47	3.11	0.48	.10	.92	.02
Agreeableness	3.19	0.57	3.26	0.63	.56	.57	.12
Conscientiousness	3.70	0.70	3.47	0.59	.73	.09	.36
Openness	3.55	0.72	3.55	0.59	.00	.00	.00
TriPM							
Boldness	35.67	7.85	37.42	7.67	.09	.28	.23
Meanness	17.13	9.25	17.94	10.28	.40	.69	.08
Disinhibition	15.93	7.82	15.98	9.40	.03	.98	.01
Total	68.74	16.60	71.33	19.41	0.69	..49	..14

Note. Empathetic (*n* = 46), Non-Empathetic (*n* = 48)

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Study Measures: Post-Interview (Self-Report)

Measure	Self-Report Empathetic		Self-Report Non-Empathetic				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Empathy/Alliance							
Empathy	50.13	4.57	44.02	6.07	5.50	<.001	1.13***
Alliance	61.93	6.36	58.02	5.64	3.16	.002	.65**
Impression Management (self-report)	19.80	4.14	20.81	4.30	1.16	.25	-.24
Misbehavior	5.70	2.00	5.38	1.83	0.81	.42	.17

Note. Empathetic (*n* = 46), Non-Empathetic (*n* = 48)
***$p \leq$ .001. **$p \leq$ .01. *$p \leq$ .05.

Table 3

Self-Reported Misbehavior During the Clinical Interview

Measure	Self-Report Empathetic ($n = 46$)		Self-Report Non-Empathetic ($n = 48$)		χ^2	p	OR
	%	n	%	n			
Criterion Questions							
Have you ever been accused of lying?	80	37	92	44	2.49	.12	0.37
Have you ever lied to get something that you wanted?	61	28	50	24	1.12	.29	1.56
Have you ever stolen money from a friend of family member?	22	10	15	7	0.81	.37	1.63
Have you ever been in trouble for breaking the rules?	83	38	85	41	0.14	.71	0.81
Have you ever been in trouble with the law?	24	11	25	12	0.02	.90	0.94
Do you think you could ever tell a lie, or spin the truth, if you had to?	89	41	88	42	0.06	.81	1.17
Have others ever told you that you were manipulative?	17	8	21	10	0.18	.67	0.80
Have you ever been accused of cheating?	37	17	29	14	0.65	.42	1.42
Did you feel bad after you hurt the person's feelings?	89	41	79	38	1.74	.19	2.16
Have you ever gotten away with things for which you could have been arrested?	50	23	54	26	.163	.69	0.85

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Study Measures: Post-Interview (Interviewer Report)

Measure	Interviewer Report Empathetic		Interviewer Report Non-Empathetic				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
HEXACO-60							
Honesty-Humility	3.04	.47	2.87	.57	1.57	.12	.32
Emotionality	2.71	.67	2.66	.74	0.34	.73	.07
Extraversion	3.44	.51	3.44	.49	0.00	1.00	.00
Agreeableness	3.01	.49	2.95	.55	0.56	.58	.12
Conscientiousness	3.55	.91	2.96	.76	3.42	<.001	.71
Openness	3.06	.48	2.83	.65	1.94	.05	.40
PCL-SV							
Total (9 items)	2.41	2.24	3.81	2.65	-2.76	.007	-.57
Interpersonal (3 items)	.83	1.08	1.10	1.15	1.17	.24	.24
Affective (3 items)	.85	1.11	1.23	1.34	1.49	.14	.31
Lifestyle (3 items)	.74	1.10	1.48	1.01	3.40	.001	.70
Impression Management (evaluator report)	26.30	5.70	29.71	5.10	-3.06	.003	-.63

Table 5

Interviewer Ratings: Psychopathy Checklist – Screening Version (PCL:SV)

PCL:SV Item	Observer Report Empathetic		Observer-Report Non-Empathetic				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Superficial	0.24	0.52	0.33	0.52	0.84	.40	-.17
Grandiose	0.17	0.44	0.23	0.43	0.67	.51	-.14
Deceitful	0.41	0.58	0.54	0.71	0.97	.33	-.20
Lacks Remorse	0.27	0.50	0.35	0.60	0.70	.49	-.14
Lacks Empathy	0.33	0.52	0.44	0.62	0.93	.35	-.19
Doesn't Accept Responsibility	0.26	0.49	0.44	0.58	1.62	.11	-.33
Impulsive	0.26	0.49	0.60	0.64	2.88	.005	-.59**
Lacks Goals	0.26	0.49	0.46	0.58	1.80	.07	-.37
Irresponsible	0.22	0.42	0.42	0.54	2.00	.04	-.41*
Nine Item Total	2.41	2.24	3.81	2.65	2.76	.007	-.57**

Note. $N = 94$. ***$p<.001$. **$p < .01$. *$p \leq .05$.

Table 6

Correlations between Self-Report and Evaluator-Report Study Variables

Self-Report	Evaluator-Report								
	Misbehavior	PCL:SV	Honesty Humility	Agreeable	Consc.	Emotionality	Extraversion	Openness	Impression management
TriPM									
Boldness	.07	.35***	-.22*	-.13	-.13	-.44***	.49***	.01	.09
Meanness	.24*	.41***	-.29**	-.25*	.16	-.29**	-.18	-.07	.12
Disinhibition	.38**	.44***	-.36***	-.27**	-.43***	-.36**	.01	.07	.05
HEXACO									
Honesty Humility	-.27**	-.19	.29**	.20*	-.04	.06	.02	.01	-.04
Agreeableness	.06	-.10	.11	.21*	-.11	.10	.10	.03	.07
Conscientiousness	.15	-.33**	.20*	.21*	.56**	.09	.08	.04	-.23*
Extraversion	-.13	-.08	.07	-.05	-.01	.24*	.66***	.18	-.14
Emotionality	-.12	-.25**	.02	-.05	.06	.54***	.03	.18	-.08
Openness	.16	.20*	-.11	-.24*	-.04	.16	.-.01	.45***	-.02
Empathy	-.03	-.37***	.31**	.10	.40***	.31**	.17	.21*	-.26*
Alliance	-.05	-.28**	.25**	.15	.39***	.24*	.26**	.23*	-.23*
Impression management	.17	.34**	-.32**	-.08	-.30**	-.20*	-.10	-.17	.12

Table 7

Correlations between Self-Report and Evaluator-Report Study Variables

Evaluator Report (PCL:SV Total/PCL:SV Facets)	Criterion Item Total
Non-Empathetic PCL:SV Total	.38**
Interpersonal	.46**
Affective	.10
Lifestyle	.34*
Empathetic PCL:SV Total	.18
Interpersonal	-.04
Affective	.18
Lifestyle	.22

Table 8

Summary of Hierarchical Multilevel Regression Models Examining the Correspondence

between Self-Report and Evaluator Ratings of Psychopathy

PCL-SV Score/Model	Estimate (B)	SE	t	p
TriPM Boldness				
Model 1				
PCL:SV	.34**	0.30	3.41	<.01
Model 2				
PCL:SV	.33**	.31	3.20	<.01
Condition (Con)	-.02	1.59	-.21	.83
Model 3				
PCL:SV	.23	.41	1.74	.09
Condition (Con)	-.02	1.59	-.14	.89
PCL:SV X Con	.15	.64	1.14	.26
TriPM Meanness				
Model 1				
PCL:SV	.39***	.37	4.09	<.001
Model 2				
PCL:SV	.41***	.38	4.12	<.001
Condition (Con)	.07	1.94	0.72	.47
Model 3				
PCL:SV	.46**	0.50	3.54	<.01
Condition (Con)	.07	1.95	.68	.50
PCL:SV X Con	-.08	0.78	-.59	.56
TriPM Disinhibition				
Model 1				
PCL:SV	.42***	.32	4.48	<0.001
Model 2				
PCL:SV	.46***	.33	4.66	<0.001
Condition (Con)	.12	1.68	1.27	.21
Model 3				
PCL:SV	.44**	.43	3.47	<0.01
Condition (Con)	.13	1.69	1.27	.21
PCL:SV x Con	.02	.68	.17	.87

(continued)

PCL-SV Score/Model	Estimate (*B*)	*SE*	*t*	*p*
TriPM Total Score				
Model 1				
PCL:SV***	.56	.61	6.45	<0.001
Model 2				
PCL:SV***	.58	.64	6.47	<0.001
Condition (Con)	.09	3.23	0.99	.33
Model 3				
PCL:SV***	.56	.83	4.78	<0.001
Condition (Con)	.09	3.25	1.00	.32
PCL:SV X Con	.03	1.31	0.29	.77

Note. $N = 94$. PCL-SV = Psychopathy Checklist – Screening Version total score. ***$p<.001$.
**$p < .01$. *$p \leq .05$.

Table 9

Summary of Hierarchical Multilevel Regression Models Examining the Correspondence between Self-Report and Observer-Report HEXACO-60 Scores

HEXACO Factor/Model	Estimate (*B*)	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Self-Report Honesty-Humility (SR HonHum)				
Model 1				
OR HonHum	.21*	.13	2.03	<.05
Model 2				
OR HonHum	.23*	.14	2.21	.03
Condition (Con)	-.13	.14	-1.22	.23
Model 3				
OR HonHum	.24	.18	1.78	.08
Condition (Con)	-.13	.14	-1.21	.23
OR HonHum x Con	-.01	.28	-.10	.92
Self-Report Emotionality (SR Emo)				
Model 1				
OR Emo	.54***	.08	6.18	<.001
Model 2				
OR Emo	.54***	.08	6.13	<.001
Condition (Con)	.05	.12	.51	.61
Model 3				
OR Emo	.47***	.11	3.96	<.001
Condition (Con)	.05	.12	.51	.61
OR Emo X Con	.11	.17	.92	.36
Self-Report Extraversion (SR Extra)				
Model 1				
OR Extra	.66***	.08	8.42	<0.001
Model 2				
OR Extra	.66***	.08	8.37	<.001
Condition (Con)	-.003	.07	-0.03	.97
Model 3				
OR Extra	.80***	.12	7.14	<.001
Condition (Con)	-.003	.07	-.03	.97
OR Extra x Con	-.19	.15	-1.72	.09

(continued)

HEXACO Factor/Model	Estimate (*B*)	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Self-Report Agreeableness (SR Agree)				
Model 1				
OR Agree	.25*	.12	2.47	.02
Model 2				
OR Agree	.25*	0.12	2.51	<.05
Condition (Con)	-.07	0.12	-0.73	.47
Model 3				
OR Agree	.40**	0.15	2.99	<.01
Condition (Con)	-.07	0.12	-0.72	.48
OR Agree x Con	-.22	0.23	-1.65	.10
Self-Report Conscientiousness (SR Consc)				
Model 1				
OR Consc	.56***	.06	6.51	<.001
Model 2				
OR_Consc	.57***	0.07	6.16	<.001
Condition (Con)	-.02	.12	-.19	.85
Model 3				
OR Consc	.44**	.11	3.09	<.01
Condition (Con)	-.01	.12	-.13	.90
OR Consc x Con	.16	.14	1.19	.24
Self-Report Openness (SR Open)				
Model 1				
OR Open	.45***	.11	4.80	<.001
Model 2				
OR_Open	.47***	.11	4.89	<.001
Condition (Con)	-.09	.12	-.96	.34
Model 3				
OR Open	.31**	.13	2.71	<.01
Condition (Con)	-.11	.12	-1.13	.26
OR Open x Con	.26*	.22	2.27	.03

Note. $N = 94$. OR = Observer Report.
***$p<.001$. **$p < .01$. *$p \leq .05$.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Some in the forensic evaluation community have posited that one of the biggest risks involving the use of empathy in forensic evaluations is the potential for defendants to assume a therapeutic relationship exists, and subsequently disclose harmful information regarding their misbehavior. Our study demonstrated that participants did not admit to more misbehavior during a psychopathy assessment interview when being interviewed by an empathetic evaluator as opposed to a non-empathetic evaluator, nor did participants report engaging in more impression management with one type of evaluator than the other. In fact, the only significant differences in participant report across our two conditions involved perceptions of evaluator empathy and alliance. Specifically, participants reported feeling a stronger sense of alliance with empathetic evaluators when compared to non-empathetic evaluators. These findings suggest that although those arguing for limited empathy in forensic evaluation are correct in assuming defendants feel a stronger sense of compassion, cooperation, and understanding with empathetic evaluators, this sense of alliance does not necessarily lead to the disclosure of potentially harmful information for the evaluee's case. Similarly, based on their own self-report, participants did not engage in more impression management when interviewed by one type of evaluator over another. Thus, it may be that participant behavior and self-disclosure does not significantly change depending on level of empathy demonstrated by the evaluator interviewing them.

Although participant reports seemed to be relatively unaffected by evaluator empathy, this was not the case for evaluators' ratings of participants. Instead, there was

clear evidence that empathetic interviewers viewed participants more favorably than non-empathetic interviewers. Empathetic interviewers rated participants as less psychopathic, more conscientious, more open, and as having engaged in less impression management. Given that participants' self-report of psychopathy and impression management did not differ across conditions, it would appear that evaluator empathy had a greater impact on interviewers than interviewees.

Differences in the ratings of participant psychopathy by empathetic and non-empathetic interviewers were most evident for items comprising the Lifestyle facet of the PCL:SV (irresponsibility, impulsivity, lacks goals). One possible explanation for this finding is that the 10 criterion items embedded in the interview—which evaluators were asked to score as present or absent—focused on behaviors more relevant to this facet of psychopathy than the Interpersonal and Affective facets. In other words, the interview may have focused more on lifestyle factors than other factors. It is also possible the behaviors related to the Lifestyle facet are more open to misinterpretation than behaviors linked to the two remaining facets, and therefore the empathy (or lack thereof) of the interviewer had more of an impact on Lifestyle facet scoring.

Overall, there were no significant differences in self-reported misbehavior across the two study conditions. While this may suggest participants were not influenced by evaluator empathy when reporting misbehavior, it is also possible that the absence of any differences is attributable to the relatively mild content of the criterion questions. Perhaps evaluator empathy has a stronger effect on willingness to endorse more egregious types of misbehavior or shortcomings, such as physical violence and cruelty. We avoided questions about more serious and illegal forms of misbehavior to avoid IRB concerns

with potential harm to volunteer participants and mandated reporting, but it may be that the effect of evaluator empathy only becomes clear when asking about these more serious forms of misbehavior. The vast majority of our sample admitted to at least half of the 10 study items involving misbehavior, but the most frequently endorsed items concerned what might be construed as socially common forms of misbehavior (e.g., lying). More serious, and potentially illegal, forms of misbehavior (e.g., stealing money from another) were endorsed far less frequently (< 25%). Future research in this area would benefit from studying whether or not differences in reported misbehavior emerge when participants are questioned about more serious forms of misbehavior.

Implications for Practice

Although the findings of the current study suggest that evaluator empathy does not impact participant use of impression management or how participants respond to questions about misbehavior, empathy does appear to impact how evaluators perceive participants. This finding suggests the need to expand the discourse on evaluator empathy in forensic evaluations to include the possible effects of empathy on evaluators, including how natural variations in evaluator empathy may explain variability in forensic evaluation outcomes. Whether naturally empathetic evaluators view defendants in a more favorable light might have a bearing on the final evaluation and legal outcomes for real-world defendants. Research on adversarial allegiance has already demonstrated that evaluators hired by the defense view defendants as having lower levels of psychopathy than those evaluators working for the state (Murrie, Boccaccini, Turner, Meeks, Woods & Tussey, 2009); perhaps the findings from the current study are yet another factor influencing evaluator ratings of ostensibly objective constructs.

It's possible that situational factors like adversarial allegiance, and not just personality differences, might also shape the degree of empathy demonstrated by forensic evaluators. For example, an evaluator retained by the defense could behave more empathetically towards a defendant regardless of that evaluator's natural proclivity towards empathy prior to the evaluation. Similarly, could being hired by the state influence an otherwise empathetic evaluator into assuming a less-empathetic stance in relation to the defendant? Often studies examining forensic evaluations focus solely on the behavior and personality of the defendant being evaluated. However, our study adds to current research alongside studies related to adversarial allegiance – which seems to have transitioned from viewing forensic evaluations as only being solely influenced by traits and behaviors of the defendant being interviewed, to a social interaction in which the behavior, attitudes, personality, and environmental influences concerning both parties (i.e. the evaluator and the defendant) are equally meaningful in shaping the outcome of the evaluation.

Limitations

Several aspects of this study design limit the conclusions that can be drawn from this study. For instance, we used undergraduate research participants – not criminal defendants undergoing a forensic evaluation due to obvious legal and ethical concerns. Thus, relative to the potential consequences facing a criminal defendant subsequent to a forensic evaluation, our participants were not facing any real consequences associated with admitting to misbehavior. More specifically, participants in our study likely had less of an incentive to impression manage, or outright deceive, than a defendant facing criminal charges might. Nevertheless, the correlations between self-reported

psychopathy, HEXACO, and PCL:SV scores provided by the evaluators suggest we were, in fact, still assessing psychopathic traits despite this limitation.

Regarding the measures used, we used a shortened subset of items from the PCL:SV rather than the full PCL:SV. We omitted the items related to adolescent and adult criminal behavior, as these would not be appropriate to discuss with participants given the context of the study. We also did not have access to participant records, and therefore had to rely solely on self-report and observations made during the interview. A typical criminal forensic assessment would have allowed for the review of records.

This study utilized doctoral level clinical psychology students who were assigned to assume a different role (empathetic or non-empathetic) during each interview. While the interviewers were trained in how to most clearly represent the two interview styles, this is not exactly what happens during the course of a forensic evaluation. In a real world setting, it's likely that experienced evaluators do not deliberately choose to be empathetic or non-empathetic. Rather, their approach to evaluations occurs more naturally as a confluence of their personality, training, and professional values. Secondly, while our interviewers had experience in conducting forensic evaluations, they had conducted these evaluations under supervision and they were certainly less experienced than more practiced forensic evaluators. Finally, though our evaluators were not blind to the study conditions in our design, they were not aware of the specific research questions that were the focus of the study. Making them aware of the study conditions was necessary in order to ensure a consistent and accurate portrayal of empathy and non-empathy, but they did not know we expected participant behavior or their ratings of participant's traits to differ across the two conditions.

Another limitation concerns our findings regarding how participants behaved during the interview process. As previously mentioned, no significant findings emerged regarding participant self-report across the two conditions. It is, however, possible that participants actually *did* present differently when interviewed by an empathetic evaluator, but not in a manner that was measured by this study – as we wanted to focus our study on reports of personality, psychopathy, and impression management. Unfortunately, due to confidentiality constraints, these interview sessions were not recorded and are therefore unavailable for closer review. Future research might consider exploring these potential differences using a more broad range of behavioral indicators.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, this study is the first to explore whether or not the presence of empathy in a forensic interview leads to more reported, and potentially damaging, misbehavior – as some researchers have feared. Ultimately, the evaluators appeared to be more influenced by empathy than the participants. Empathetic evaluators viewed participants more favorably than non-empathetic evaluators, even though the participants in the two conditions self-reported similar levels of psychopathic traits and misbehavior. This suggests there is a need to expand the discourse regarding empathy in forensic evaluations – from the effect of empathy on defendants, to the effect of empathy on the evaluators.

The findings of this study provide some new directions with respect to future research. For example, if there are differences in how empathetic and non-empathetic evaluators view defendants with respect to psychopathy, subsequent research could explore who is more accurate in their findings related to this construct. That is, are

empathetic evaluator ratings of psychopathy more in line with defendant self-reports of psychopathy and record reviews? For example, our results suggest a stronger correlation between non-empathetic evaluator psychopathy ratings and participant misbehavior when compared to empathetic evaluator psychopathy ratings. This could mean that non-empathetic evaluators are viewing defendants more accurately that empathetic evaluators, or it could suggest that non-empathetic evaluators focus much more on reported misbehavior than empathetic evaluators. Any significant difference in evaluator ratings (empathetic versus non-empathetic) might provide more guidance for how forensic evaluators should approach their assessment. Additionally, while our study focused on measures of psychopathy an evaluator might use in the course of a risk assessment, future studies can explore the impact of empathy on other types of forensic evaluations (e.g., competency to proceed, criminal responsibility, civil commitment). In turn, a more diverse sample of clinicians and participants would add to the generalizability of findings from future research.

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APPENDIX A

Instructions for Interviews

Empathetic Interviews:

- Demonstrate cognitive empathy through the use of the following behaviors:
    o "I can imagine that if I were in your position I would have done something similar."
    o "I probably would have done the same thing."
    o "I can see that."
    o "That's understandable."
    o "Makes sense to me."
    o Knowing head nod.

- Demonstrate affective empathy through the use of the following behaviors:
    o "That must have been really scary/sad/frustrating/upsetting for you."
    o "I'd feel the same way in your situation."
    o "Did that make you feel ____?"
    o Non-verbals, expressing: Shock, sadness, amusement, etc.
    o Expressions of sympathy

Non-Empathetic Interviews: Avoid any display of cognitive and affective empathy and conduct the interview as such:

1. Ask interview question.
2. Ask for follow-up information when necessary.
3. Note participant response to questions and follow-up inquiries.
4. Proceed to next question.

APPENDIX B

Interviewer Empathy and Alliance Rating Questionnaire

Participant ID: _____

Interviewer: _____

Please answer the following questions about your impressions of the person whom you

interviewed using the following scale:

> 5 = strongly agree
> 4 = agree
> 3 = neutral (neither agree nor disagree)
> 2 = disagree
> 1 = strongly disagree

_____ 1) The person who interviewed me was friendly. (Empathy)

_____ 2) The person who interviewed me did not seem to care how I was feeling.
(Empathy)

_____ 3) I feel like I could trust the person who interviewed me. (Alliance)

_____ 4) The person who interviewed me was judging me. (Empathy)

_____ 5) The person who interviewed me understood my point of view on the things that
we discussed. (Empathy)

_____ 6) I enjoyed talking with the person who interviewed me. (Alliance)

_____ 7) I would NOT want to spend time socializing with the person who interviewed me,
outside of our interview. (Alliance)

_____ 8) The person who interviewed me would probably help me if I asked for it.
(Alliance)

_____ 9) The person who interviewed me is probably considered a good friend by others.
(Empathy)

_____ 10) The person who interviewed me was NOT a good listener. (Alliance)

_____ 11) I am worried about the outcome of this interview. (Alliance)

_____12) I believe the person who interviewed me felt similar to how I was feeling during the interview. (Empathy)

_____13) I believe the interview was able to see my side of things during the interview. (Empathy)

_____14) I don't believe the person who interviewed me was aware of my feelings. (Empathy)

_____15) I could tell by how the person who interviewed me reacted that they did not appreciate my point of view. (Empathy)

_____16) I believe that the person who interviewed me has had similar experiences that I have had. (Empathy)

_____17) The person who interviewed me would stand up for me if I needed them to. (Empathy)

_____18) The person who interviewed me got caught up in what I was saying. (Empathy)

_____19) The person who interviewed me was NOT on my side. (Alliance)

_____20) The person who interviewed me had my best interests in mind. (Alliance)

_____21) Me, and the person who interviewed me, understood each other. (Empathy)

_____22) The person who interviewed me was impartial. (Alliance)

_____23) I felt comfortable talking to the person who interviewed me. (Alliance)

_____24) I got along well with the person who interviewed me. (Alliance)

_____25) The person who interviewed me did NOT seem to like me. (Alliance)

_____26) The person who interviewed made me feel uncomfortable. (Alliance)

_____27) I felt like I had to be careful in how I responded to the person interviewing me. (Alliance)

_____28) Me, and the person who interviewed me, respected each other. (Alliance)

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Participant ID: _____

 Interviewer: _____

Interview Guide

- Can you think of a time when you told someone that you would do something and then you didn't do it? What happened?

- Have you had any other problems completing your class assignments this semester? If yes, why was that?

- Are you someone who likes to plan things out, or do them spur of the moment?

- Have you ever been accused of lying?
    - Tell me about that time…

- Have you ever lied to get something that you wanted?

- Have you ever stolen money from a friend?

- Have you ever been in trouble for breaking the rules?
    - Tell me about it.

- Do you think you could ever tell a lie, or spin the truth, if you had to?

- Without going into specifics, have you ever been in trouble with the law before?

- What about talking your way out of rough situations? Do you think you could do that if you had to?

- Have others ever accused you of being manipulative?
    - If yes, why do you think that was?

- What has your attendance been like this semester? Have you ever skipped class before? If so, why was that?

- Are you someone who likes to do dangerous things for fun?

- Tell me a story about a time you did something dangerous.

- What did you get out of doing that dangerous activity?

- Have you ever been accused of cheating?

- Have you ever been mean to someone for no reason?

- What are your plans for the immediate future? What will you do this week?
  - What about in the next 5 years?
  - What about in the next ten years?

- When you set a goal for yourself, how likely are you to reach that goal?

- What problems do you have achieving your goals?

- How good are you at being able to tell what other people are feeling?

- Tell me about a time when you could tell what someone was feeling before they even had to tell you.

- When a friend is sad about something, do you often feel sad too?

- Are you someone who people turn to when they need to talk about their problems? Why/Why not?

- Tell me about a time when you hurt someone's feelings.
  - How did you feel about it afterwards?

- Tell me about a time you felt guilty for something that you did.

- Tell me about a time when you did something selfish.
  - How did you feel about it afterwards?

APPENDIX D

Participant Report of Impression Management

Participant ID: _____
Interviewer: ___

_____

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how true it is.

> 5= strongly agree
> 4= agree
> 3 = neutral (neither agree nor disagree)
> 2 = disagree
> 1= strongly disagree

_____1) I avoided talking about my past misbehavior with the evaluator.

_____2) Generally, I told the person who interviewed me what I thought they wanted to hear.

_____3) I was completely honest with the person who interviewed me.

_____4) The person who interviewed me was easy to fool.

_____5) I was very careful in how I responded to the evaluator's questions.

_____6) I believe the evaluator would be able to tell if I was lying.

_____7) Sometimes, I told only part of the truth.

_____8) I felt comfortable telling the evaluator about my life.

_____9) I told some, but not all of the truth.

_____10) I lied to the evaluator on at least one occasion.

APPENDIX E

Interviewer Report of Participant Impression Management

Participant ID: _____
Interviewer:
_____
Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how true it is.

5= strongly agree
4= agree
3 = neutral (neither agree nor disagree)
2 = disagree
1= strongly disagree

_____1) The participant avoided talking about their past misbehavior with me.

_____2) The participant was telling me what they thought I wanted to hear.

_____3) The participant was completely honest with me.

_____4) The participant tried to fool me.

_____5) The participant was careful in how they responded to the my questions.

_____6) I would be able to tell if the participant was lying to me.

_____7) Sometimes, the participant only told part of the truth.

_____8) The participant felt comfortable telling me about their life.

_____9) The participant told some, but not all of the truth.

_____10) The participant lied to me on at least one occasion.

APPENDIX F

Instructions for Scoring the PCL: SV Items

PCL:SV *Purpose*
- To identify individuals who require more thorough assessment with PCL-R (in forensic settings)
    Or
- "To assess and diagnose psychopathy" (in civil psychiatric or *community* settings)
    – Note: You are scoring a *lifestyle*, not a particular moment in time

Scoring
0= Does not apply (doesn't demonstrate trait, or even demonstrates opposite trait)
1= Applies to some extent, but not enough for 2; Uncertain whether applies; Cannot resolve discrepant info in favor of 2 or 0
2= Item applies. Reasonably good match. Behavior consistent with "flavor" of this item

- "Use the item definition to create a prototype, or ideal image, of the item and decide how closely the individual matches the item"
- "…could receive a score of 2 on an item by manifesting one or two of the item characteristics to a great degree or most of the characteristics to a moderate degree"
- Item Scoring
  (continued)
- Omitting items
    – *Occasionally* necessary when data is missing or insufficient
    – Only when absolutely necessary, not as an "easy out" of hard scoring decision
    – (Is this even permissible for this study?)
    –

Select PCL:SV items/traits

- **Irresponsible**
    - "…exhibits behavior that frequently causes hardship to others or puts others at risk. They tend to be unreliable as a spouse or parent; they lack commitment to relationships…. Their job performance is inadequate; they are frequently late or absent without good reason. They are untrustworthy with money; they have been in trouble for defaulting on loans, not paying bills, etc."
- **Impulsive**
    - "…acts without considering the consequences of their actions. They act on the spur of the moment, often as the result of a desire for risk and excitement. They may be easily bored or have a short attention span. Consequently, they

        lead a lifestyle characterized by instability in school, relationships, employment, and place of residence"

- Listen for impulsivity in stories
- **Deceitful**
  - "…Commonly engage in lying, deception, and other manipulation to achieve their own goals (money, sex, power, etc). They lie and deceive with self-assurance and no apparent anxiety. They may admit they enjoy conning and deceiving others. They may even call themselves 'fraud artist'."
  - Consider consistency of info throughout interview (self-contradictory?, changing?).

- **Lacks Remorse**
  - "…Individuals who appear to lack the capacity for guilt. It is normal to feel justified in having hurt someone on at least a few occasions; however, high scorers on this item appear to have no conscience whatsoever. Some…will verbalize remorse but in an insincere manner; others will display little emotion about their own actions or the impact they had on others and will focus instead on their own suffering…."
- **Doesn't Accept Responsibility**
  - "…avoid taking responsibility for their harmful actions by rationalizing their behavio, greatly minimizing the consequences for others, or even denying the actions altogether. Most of their rationalizations involve the projection of blame (or partial blame) onto the victim or circumstances. Minimizations usually involve denying the victim suffered any serious…consequences. Denial usually involves claiming innocence.."
  - Listen for the themes/explanations in stories about failures or complications.

- **Superficial**
- "….interpersonal style appears superficial (glib) to others. Usually tries to make a favorable impression by "shamming" emotions, telling stories that place him in a favorable light, and making unlikely excuses for undesirable behaviors. Incorrect jargon. Superficial, yet engaging.
- Potential questions/data: *Superficial*
- Rate the participant's demeanor!
- Was she charming or likable? Was he "smooth" (or trying to be)? What was general tone, and approach to the situation?

VITA

Lauren M. Vera, M.A.

Department of Psychology and Philosophy
Sam Houston State University

EDUCATION

2011-present   **Doctor of Philosophy Candidate**
Clinical Psychology, Sam Houston State University
Dissertation: Evaluator Empathy in Psychopathy Interviews
(Proposal Defended: 09/2015)
Advisor: Marcus Boccaccini, Ph.D.

Master of Arts
Clinical Psychology, Sam Houston State University
Thesis: Do Defendants appear to have Different Personality Traits
when Being Interviewed by Allied and Opposing Evaluators?
Advisor: Marcus Boccaccini, Ph.D.

2010   **Master of Arts**
Forensic Psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

2006   **Bachelor of Science**
Psychology, Sam Houston State University

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

08/2016-Present   **Pre-Doctoral Psychology Intern**
U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, Springfield, Missouri
Responsibilities:
- Conduct supervised forensic assessment
- Provide individual and group therapy
- Provide crisis management
- Participate in relevant training experiences related to clinical and forensic psychology

Population: Ethnically diverse, adult male offenders incarcerated in a federal medical center
     Supervisors: Lea Ann Preston-Baecht, Ph.D., Ashley Christiansen, Ph.D., Elizabeth Weiner, Ph.D., Gina Masessa, Ph.D, Vincent Barnes, Ph.D., and Randy Brandt, Ph.D.

10/2015- 07/2016	**Practicum Student- Individual and Group Therapist** Federal Prison Camp Bryan *Responsibilities:*

- Co-facilitate therapeutic groups within the Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP), Non-Residential Drug Treatment, and Resolve Trauma Program with a particular focus on psychoeducation and cognitive skills building
- Administer and interpret a multitude of assessment measures to therapeutic group members, including the Trauma Symptom Inventory (TSI-2), Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI), and the Detailed Assessment of Posttraumatic Stress (DAPS)
- Perform intake evaluations
    - Co-author intake reports
    - Collaborate on determination of inmate care level
- Conduct suicide risk assessments
- Provide individual psychotherapy as needed
- Participate in weekly multidisciplinary treatment team meetings
- Attend weekly community meetings

Population: Ethnically diverse, adult female offenders incarcerated in a minimum security federal prison camp
Supervisors: Jennifer Rogers, Psy.D. & Leana Talbott, Psy.D.

09/2014- 10/2014	**Practicum Student-Group Therapist** Montgomery County Juvenile Probation Department (Family Assault Program) *Responsibilities:*

- Co-facilitated a skills-based group focused on the provision of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) interventions designed to provide effective coping skills to manage anger, communication strategies, conflict resolution techniques, and decision-making strategies

Population: Low-income, ethnically diverse families with a history of documented assault on the part of an adolescent within the home
Supervisor: Darryl Johnson, Ph.D.

06/2014- 08/2015	**Practicum Student- Clinic Coordinator** Sam Houston State University Psychological Services Center *Responsibilities:*

- Completed telephone intake interviews and screenings of potential clients
- Led weekly clinic meetings
    - Assign and monitor client cases
    - Facilitate group discussions on a wide array of clinical issues

       ○ Arrange weekly supervisor coverage
       ○ Address clinic issues/concerns with student clinicians & faculty
- Assisted in day-to-day clinic administrative tasks
- Conducted Quality Assurance reviews of all cases every semester

Population: A diverse, low-income, multi-ethnic population of adults, adolescents, and children
Supervisor: Mary Alice Conroy, Ph.D., ABPP

08/2013-
05/2014

Practicum Student-Individual Evaluator
Montgomery County Juvenile Probation Department
Responsibilities:
- Conducted psychodiagnostic evaluations on juveniles as ordered by the court or probation department
  ○ Assessments included use of a wide array of intelligence, achievement, and adaptive behavior measures
- Authored integrated reports, and provided treatment and placement recommendations

Population: Ethnically diverse, justice-involved youth
Supervisor: Darryl Johnson, Ph.D.

08/2012-
07/2016

Assistant Forensic Evaluator
Sam Houston State University Psychological Services Center
Responsibilities:
- Conduct court-ordered evaluations consisting primarily of a comprehensive clinical interview, and symptom responses assessments
- Discuss assessment and case formulation with primary supervisor
- Co-author reports for adult forensic evaluations, including evaluations of competence to stand trial, criminal responsibility
- Conduct psychodiagnostic evaluations, and provide treatment recommendations

Population: Justice-involved adults
Supervisor: Mary Alice Conroy, Ph.D., ABPP

08/2012-
08/2015

Practicum Student-Individual Therapist & Evaluator
Sam Houston State University Psychological Services Center
Responsibilities:
- Provided individual evidence-based interventions to children and adults, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), components of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation/Narrative Story-Telling (STAIR-NST)
- Conducted intake evaluations, and authored intake reports

- Formulated detailed treatment plans and closely monitored treatment goals
- Attended and participated in case conferences
- Engaged in suicide risk assessment and prevention
- Administered and scored assessment materials, including cognitive, achievement, adaptive behavior, personality, neuropsychological, and behavioral measures
  - Assessment included, but were not limited to, ADHD, learning disabilities, and comprehensive psychological evaluations
- Engaged in integrative report writing for ethnically diverse college students and child, adolescent, and adult referrals from the community
- Communicated assessment results and recommendations to clients

Population: A diverse, low-income, multi-ethnic population of children, adolescents, and adults seeking outpatient services
Supervisors: Lisa Kan, Ph.D., David Nelson, Ph.D., Craig Henderson, Ph.D., Melissa Magyar, Ph.D., & Darryl Johnson, Ph.D.

RELATED CLINICAL WORK EXPERIENCE

09/2010-07/2011   **Senior Community Liaison**
Kings County Hospital
Responsibilities:
- Imbedded on inpatient psychiatric unit as part of interdisciplinary treatment team
- Assisted treatment teams with the intake of new psychiatric admissions
- Facilitated daily community groups on the unit
- Managed the aftercare plans for recently discharged patients
- Re-evaluated the aftercare plan for those patients with multiple admissions
- Authored reports of revised aftercare plans for those patients with multiple admissions
- Conducted home visits to newly discharged patients as deemed necessary

Population: A diverse, low-income, multi-ethnic population of adult psychiatric inpatients
Supervisor: Janine Perazzo, LMSW

04/2009-04/2010 **Psychology Extern**
Kings County Hospital Forensic Office
Responsibilities:
- Observed and helped conduct supervised competency and treatment evaluations for the court
- Co-authored competency reports
- Observed and administered both clinical and forensic testing for defendants including, but not limited to, the Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status (RBANS), Test of Memory Malingering (TOMM), and the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R)
- Observed competency hearings
- Participated in continuing education seminars on current topics relevant to the field of forensic psychology, and attended Grand Rounds at Kings County Hospital.

Population: Justice-involved adults
   Supervisor: Alan Perry, Ph.D.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

09/2015 **Invited Guest Lecturer**
Clinical Psychology Proseminar , PSYC 7330, Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology & Philosophy
Responsibilities:
- Presented dissertation proposal and related research to first year doctoral students

Supervisor: Marcus Boccaccini, Ph.D.

08/2015-05/2016 **Graduate Teaching Assistant**
Assessment of Intelligence and Achievement, PSYC 5395, Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology & Philosophy
Responsibilities:
- Supervise administration and scoring of numerous intelligence, achievement, and adaptive behavior measures, including: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-IV (WAIS-IV); Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Cognitive Abilities (WJ-IV COG); Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement (WJ-IV ACH); Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – III (WIAT-III); and The Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-II (ABAS-II)
- Guest lectured on the administration and scoring of the Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Cognitive Abilities (WJ-IV COG)

Supervisor: Marsha Harman, Ph.D.

11/2012 & 04/2012	**Invited Guest Lecturer**

Introduction to Psychology, PSYC 1301, Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology & Philosophy
Responsibilities:

- Lectured about the basic tenets of social psychology, including social cognition, persuasion, intergroup relations, and social influence, to a large undergraduate class

Supervisor: Christopher Wilson, Ph.D.

03/2012	**Invited Lecturer**

Victims and Violence, PSYC 4333, Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology & Philosophy
Responsibilities:

- Lectured on the topic of ritualistic behavior in serial rape cases for an upper-level undergraduate class

Supervisor: Robert Cramer, Ph.D.

SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

07/2015	**Peer Supervisor**

Sam Houston State University Psychological Services Center
Responsibilities:

- Supervised and trained a doctoral practicum student for the Psychological Services Center's Clinic Coordinator position
  o Performed diagnostic interviews to be observed by the trainee
  o Observed the trainee conduct interviews
  o Trained student on key administrative components, including Quality Assurance reviews of client files
  o Provided guidance on and psychoeducation about unique needs of low socioeconomic clients, multicultural issues, and protocols for suicide risk assessments conducted via telephone intake

Supervisors: Mary Alice Conroy, Ph.D., ABPP & Darryl Johnson, PhD.

08/2013-08/2015	**Peer Supervisor**

Capstone Practicum, PSYC 8381, Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology & Philosophy
Responsibilities:

- Supervised second-year doctoral students on their psychotherapy and psychological assessment cases
  o Co-facilitated supervision sessions with a licensed psychologist
  o Reviewed video-taped therapy sessions

     o Verified scoring of various testing protocols
     o Edited clinical documentation as needed
     o Reviewed and provided feedback for case presentations

Supervisors: Mary Alice Conroy, Ph.D., ABPP, Lisa Kan, Ph.D., & Adam Schmidt, Ph.D.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

09/2015-present   **Principal Investigator**
Evaluator Empathy in Psychopathy Interviews
Responsibilities:
- Designed an experimental study exploring the influence of evaluator empathy on reports of defendant psychopathy and normative personality traits
- Overseeing data collection
- Training student evaluators on semi-structured interview protocol

Supervisor: Marcus Boccaccini, Ph.D.

02/2014-08/2014   **Co-Investigator**
The Influence of Context on Personality Reports
Responsibilities:
- Recruited and administered a multi-instrument survey to 150 undergraduate participants across public and private settings to assess differences in personality reports

Supervisor: *Rowland Miller, Ph.D.*

10/2012-06/2013   **Principal Investigator**
Do Defendants Appear to have Different Personality Traits when Being Interviewed by Allied and Opposing Evaluators?
Responsibilities:
- Designed an experimental study exploring the influence of adversarial allegiance on self- and other reports of personality
- Oversaw data collection
- Trained interviewers on semi-structured interview protocol

Supervisor: Marcus Boccaccini, Ph.D.

08/2012-08-2013   **Graduate Research Assistant**
Influences on Evaluator and Juror Decision Making
Responsibilities:
- Assisted in data collection for various research projects related to

forensic evaluator decision-making, juror decision-making, and psychopathy

Supervisor: Marcus Boccaccini, Ph.D.

03/2010-05/2010   **Graduate Research Assistant**
Ritualistic Behavior in Serial Rapists and Rapists Who Go On to Murder
Responsibilities:
- Trained in crime scene analysis and collected data utilizing case studies from the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Entered and coded data
- Served as a rater for interrater reliability analyses

Supervisor: Louis Schlesinger, Ph.D.

08/2009-05/2010   **Co-Investigator**
Ritualistic Behavior in Serial Rape Cases
Responsibilities:
- Designed and conducted a research project investigating the presence of ritualistic behaviors in case studies from the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Entered and coded data

Supervisor: Louis Schlesinger, Ph.D.

04/2009-06/2009   **Graduate Research Assistant**
Sentencing Disparities in Cases Involving Terrorism
Responsibilities:
- Assisted in data collection for a project involving racial disparities in punishment and judgment of defendants accused of terrorism
- Contacted potential participants, qualified potential participants to take the survey, handled any participant concerns and questions regarding the survey

Supervisor: Alexis Robinson, Ph.D.

PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Vera, L., Boccaccini, M., Burks, A., Mena, C., Klien, S., Wechsler, H., & Murrie, D. (2015, August). Being in the room: Interviewer and coder differences in psychopathy and normative personality trait ratings. Poster presented at the annual convention of the *American Psychological Association*, Toronto, Canada.

Gardner, B. O., **Vera, L.**, Ridge, B., Bitting, B. S., & Miller, R. S. (2015, February). Place and personality: Need for cognition scores vary across settings. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, Long Beach, CA.

Gardner, B. O., **Vera, L.,** Bitting, B., Ridge, B., & Miller, R. (2014, August). The Influence of Context on Personality Reports. Poster presented at the annual convention of the *American Psychological Association*, Washington, DC.

Vera, L., Boccaccini, M., Burks, A., Mena, C., Klien, S., Wechsler, H., & Murrie, D. (2014, March). Do defendants appear to have different personality traits when being interviewed by allied and opposing evaluators? Paper presented as part of a symposium at the annual meeting of the *American Psychology-Law Society*, New Orleans, LA.

Bitting, B. S., Boccaccini, M. T., Formon, D. L., Gardner, B. O., & **Vera, L.** (2014, March). Validity of the PAI coefficients of fit among offenders. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *American Psychology-Law Society*, New Orleans, LA.

Miller, A.K., Gardner, B.O., Duncan, J.M., Kline, S.A., & **Vera, L.** (2013, March). Gender discrimination in the courtroom: An explanatory model of foreperson selection. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *American Psychology-Law Society*, Portland, OR.

Duncan, J., Wechsler, H., & **Vera, L.** (2012, March). Perception of administrator influence's effect on eyewitness decision-making. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *American Psychology-Law Society*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Horn, S., **Vera, L.**, Assey, D., & Trofman, M. (2010, April). Ritualistic behavior in serial rape. Paper presented at *John Jay College of Criminal Justice's Annual Forensic Psychology Masters Research Conference*, New York, NY.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

04/2015	Callous-Unemotional Traits and Conduct Disorder: Implications for Understanding, Diagnosing, and Treating Antisocial Youths Consolidated Continuing Education and Professional Training, Sam Houston State University *Presenter:* Paul J. Frick, Ph.D.
02/2014	Clinical and Conceptual Problems in the Attribution of Malingering in Forensic Evaluations Consolidated Continuing Education and Professional Training, Sam Houston State University *Presenter:* Richard Frederick, Ph.D.
05/2013	Best Practices in Forensic Mental Health Assessment: Evaluation of Criminal Responsibility Consolidated Continuing Education and

Professional Training, Sam Houston State University
Presenter: Phillip Lyons, J.D., Ph.D.

04/2013   Child Custody Evaluations
                 Didactic Training, Sam Houston State University
                 Presenter: Carmen Petzold, Ph.D.

01/2013   International Perspectives on Preventative Detention
                 Didactic Training, Sam Houston State University
                 Presenter: John Petrila, Ph.D.

10/2012   Psychopathy Checklist – Screening Version
                 Didactic Training, Sam Houston State University
                 Presenter: Daniel Murrie, Ph.D.

10/2012   Forum on Ethics and Personal Values
                 Didactic Training, Sam Houston State University
                 Presenter: Phillip Lyons, J.D., Ph.D.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2011-present   American Psychology-Law Society (APA Division 41)