



Appendix B

Problem Descriptors

1. **Abuse of power.** This social role problem type involves the misuse of power most often through the use of physical or psychological force. Examples include: a husband who physically abuses his wife or refuses to allow her to see her friends; a son who steals money from his elderly parent; a supervisor who bullies employees.
2. **Ambivalence.** This social role problem type is often accompanied by feelings of uncertainty, indecisiveness and vacillation. Some examples include: a college student who is caught between what he desires and his parents' expectations of him is having difficulty deciding which major to choose; a woman who is undecided about a marriage proposal; an individual who is unhappy at his/her job and vacillates between quitting and taking steps to find another job.
3. **Conflict.** This social role problem type involves some form of friction, disagreement, or discord that arises between individuals. Although conflict may lead to violence or the use of psychological or physical force such that one person intimates or threatens another (in which case the role type would be abuse of power), it may also take the form of tension, frustration, and anger. Thus, in this role type problem, the use of power and control, physical or psychological force or exploitation are not involved. Some examples include: a woman who has a long standing rivalry with her sister is upset when she and her sister have an argument about the sale of their mother's home; a man reports ongoing arguments with his wife causing him anxiety and upset; a person is having heated arguments with their neighbor over loud music.
4. **Responsibility.** This social role problem type may occur when one's role responsibilities or expectations are felt to be too difficult and/or a person fails to live up to role expectations or responsibilities. Some examples include: an unemployed father of a newborn reports feeling anxious because he is unable to meet the responsibilities of supporting another child; an employee feels unable to provide quality work unless she works many overtime hours, for which she does not get paid; a college student feels overwhelmed and unable to keep up with coursework.
5. **Dependency.** Dependency usually becomes a problem when there is a pervasive and or excessive need to be taken care of or when there is a denial of normal dependency needs. Adults with dependency problems often exhibit submissive and clinging behaviors and perceive themselves as being unable to function independently without the help of others. Alternatively, adults with dependency problems may refuse to recognize any need for help or reliance on others. As with all role descriptors, culture influences role performance expectations with respect to independent behavior as well as how dependency needs are met. Some examples of dependency need problems include: a woman who defers all decisions regarding her health care to her doctor; a 40-year-old male who is unemployed living at home and financially dependent on his parents; a person who is unable to leave her house without the assistance of a best friend.
6. **Loss.** This social role problem type often occurs following a significant separation or loss and may be accompanied by reactions such as anxiety, depression, fear, anger, or loneliness. Examples include: the death of a loved one, divorce, loss of a personal relationship, a move, loss of income, home, or a significant decline in health just to name a few.

7. Isolation. Individuals who withdraw or isolate from others do so for varied reasons. Some may withdraw or isolate in response to a perceived hurt, a stressful situation or due to problems stemming from a medical or mental health problem. For some, social isolation may be a chronic state and stem from long standing problems of low self-esteem, insecurity or a mental disorder. Some examples of isolation type problems include: a man in a nursing home who no longer wishes to communicate with others; a returning vet who moves to an isolated cabin because he can no longer tolerate being near others; a woman who learns she is HIV positive no longer communicates with friends and family.
8. Victimized/Oppressed. Victimization/oppression is the result of exploitation and the unjust use of force. Relationships involving physical or psychological abuse or often result in a person feeling intimidated, fearful, and exploited by others. Victims often experience a range of symptoms including fear, anxiety, distress, numbing, anger, self-blame, alienation, and powerlessness. Examples of the victimized/oppressed problem type include: a woman who is raped by her partner, an undocumented immigrant who is forced to work for low wages; an elderly woman who is financially abuse by her daughter.
9. Mixed. Mixed type should be used when no one dimension of role performance difficulty predominates and the role performance problem is best described by a mixture of dimensions. An example would be a mother who withdraws from friends and family after the death of one of her children. (A mixture of Parental role – Loss and Isolation types).
10. Other. Other type should be used when none of the listed dimensions of role performance adequately describes the case dynamic.