

Interpreting the Inwald Personality Inventory-2 (IPI-2™)

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The Inwald Personality Inventory-2 (IPI-2) is a valuable tool that can aid in the selection of law enforcement officers, public safety personnel, and other candidates vying for employment in high-risk occupations or positions of authority. This paper outlines a step-by-step process for interpreting the IPI-2, and provides suggestions for ways to conceptualize and organize the information to facilitate efficient report writing. As always, it is recommended that test results be used as one component in a comprehensive selection procedure and not as a sole decision-making tool. Overall suitability for employment should always be derived from consistencies across multiple sources, and any discrepant information should be explored further for verification.

Guidelines for Interpreting the IPI-2

Step 1: Review the Validity Measure

The Guardedness Scale is the IPI-2 validity measure of social desirability and provides insight into how the candidate approached the testing process. In other words, did the candidate try to portray an overly positive image or seek to minimize shortcomings? An elevated score suggests that the test taker may not have been entirely honest or candid in responding.

Step 2: Review the Public Safety and Security Norms Profile Graph

The Public Safety and Security Norms Profile Graph includes raw scores and T-Scores for all 17 IPI-2 scales and should be reviewed to determine if any scales are elevated. T Scores

above 69 are considered to be “significantly elevated”, while T-Scores over 59 are considered to be “somewhat elevated”. In either case, a quick review of this graph provides clues about potential problem areas that could require further exploration.

Step 3: Review the Scale Descriptions and Interpretations

This section of the report describes the IPI-2 scales by identifying the content that each scale was constructed to measure, and pointing out the meaning of elevated scores for each scale. The narrative interpretations provide additional insight into the candidate’s performance and are useful in helping to identify attitudes, behaviors, and patterns of historical life events, which studies have suggested significantly correlate with performance in high-risk occupations. Practitioners are cautioned against using the results from one individual scale as the sole basis for hiring decisions.

Step 4: Organizing and Conceptualizing the IPI-2 Scales

Psychologists familiar with the original IPI are used to seeing the report narrative organized into four overarching categories. Although the IPI-2 was not developed using this framework, it can be helpful to conceptualize the new scales into four general categories to facilitate report writing and to provide a framework for explaining the results to non-psychologists. These four categories include:

- Social Interaction
- Abnormal Behavior
- Dependability
- Legal Concerns

Social Interaction

Scales to Review: Rigidity (RG), Passivity (PS), Social Difficulties (SD), and Irritability (IR)

Public safety jobs require significant interaction with the public, so it is important that a candidate have adequate social skills. These scales provide insight into how the test taker is likely to function in social situations. For example, how flexible will the test taker be

when interacting with others and dealing with changing circumstances? Does this candidate tend to be assertive or passive in his or her interactions with others? Does he or she have a history of positive interpersonal relationships? Does the test taker typically manage his or her emotions effectively? Elevations on these scales may be indicative of someone who would have difficulties effectively interacting or working well with others.

Abnormal Behavior

Scales to Review: Substance Use (SU), Volatility (VT), Anxiety (AX), Abnormal Thoughts (AT), Depressed Mood (DM), Elevated Mood (EM), and Health Concerns (HC)

It is critical that public safety candidates be screened for potential mental health problems. These scales can provide insight into the emotional and mental stability of the potential employee. For example, is the test taker exhibiting symptoms related to anxiety or depression? Are there problems pertaining to anger management or to substance use? Is this candidate preoccupied with health concerns and/or does he or she exhibit unusual thought patterns? Although elevations on these scales should not be used to make an actual clinical diagnosis, high scores may indicate possible mental health conditions that require further evaluation.

Dependability

Scales to Review: Non-Conformity (NC), Unreliability (UR), and Risk-Taking Tendencies (RT)

Individuals working in law enforcement and public safety must behave in a reliable and trustworthy manner. These scales examine a candidate's ability to follow established rules and procedures. For example, can the test taker be trusted or relied upon to meet the demands and expectations of the job? Is there an inclination to act impulsively or can he or she control his or her impulses? These scales can provide insight with regard to overall dependability.

Legal Concerns

Scales to Review: Admitted Illegal Behavior (IB) and Criminal Accusations (CA)

These scales explore the test-taker's reported history of illegal behavior and interactions with

law enforcement. For example, has the test taker ever been accused or convicted of a crime? Admissions of this sort raise concerns with regard to the test-taker's willingness to adhere to legal regulations and societal standards of behavior. Further examination into such endorsements is warranted and may disqualify a test taker for employment in the public safety sector.

Step 5: Review the Critical Items for Follow-up Evaluation

This section provides a list of any of the 64 Critical Items endorsed by the test taker. Critical Item endorsement may be evidence of emotional or behavioral difficulties and further exploration is always recommended.

As referenced in the Inwald Personality Inventory-2 Manual, the endorsement of 11 or more IPI-2 critical items may be useful in identifying test takers who are at higher risk for termination. Whenever possible, the critical item responses should be verified (reconciled) by other test information and additional sources and further exploration of the content of the endorsed item with the test taker.

Step 6: Review the Estimated Psychologist Recommendation and Field Training Officer (FTO) Prediction Scores

The IPI-2 includes five prediction scores based on empirical research. These scores include the Estimated Psychologist Recommendation, as well as four Field Training Officer predictions for various aspects of a candidate's performance:

- Control of Conflict
- Public Relations
- Report Writing
- Overall Field Training Officer Rating

These predictions, although based on small samples, can provide insight into how the candidate might perform in specific areas critical to success in law enforcement.

The discriminant function analysis from which these predictions were developed used all of the IPI-2 scales, each with their own degree of weight. It is therefore possible for a candidate to have endorsed a specific constellation of items that led to him or her being classified as "not likely to recommend" on the Estimated Psychologist Recommendation or "not likely to

meet expectations” on one or more of the FTO Prediction Scores, even if he or she did not produce any elevated or significantly elevated scale scores (i.e., T-Scores above 59). In this instance, the evaluating psychologist should refer to the Item Printout provided at the end of the IPI-2 report and further explore these potential problematic areas with the test taker and verify the information with other sources.

Step 7: Review the Item Printout

The Item Printout provided at the end of the IPI-2 Report, is a summary of the test-taker’s responses to all IPI-2 items, as well as the total number of omitted responses and a list of all items the test taker endorsed that contributed to T-Score elevations categorized by each scale. Much like the Critical Items, responses that contributed to T-Score elevations can be used to help identify problematic areas for further exploration and/or verification.

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