



CENTER FOR APPLIED THEORY OF MIND

Social perspective taking, gaining, shifting and shaping

BASIC MENTALIZING

BMI™ REPORT

Basic Mentalizing Inventory • To Sense and Perceive

Client: **John Doe**

Date of assessment: **1 January 2024**

Assessment of:

- Embodied Sharing of Affect and Behavior
- Nonverbal Social Indicator Detection
- Nonsocial Sensing and Associating

Dear John,

Thank you again for using our services. We are pleased to present you with this report, which is based on the results of the Basic Mentalizing Inventory (BMI) that you recently completed. This report is designed to provide you with insight into your tendencies in regard to the sharing of affect and behavior with others, your capacity to detect social indicators in nonverbal behavior, and your sensorial awareness, all of which are critical components of basic mentalizing.

It is important to note that the results described in this report are based exclusively on the self-assessment that you provided in the inventory. Thus, the results provide insight into your own observations, and depending on the specific question, how you think other people would describe you.

The BMI is an eclectic research instrument based on several theories, and supported by a wide body of scientific research. The insights derived from this assessment will assist you in designing a roadmap to bridge any gaps in your skill set, and pursuing the most suitable advice, training and/or counseling program offered by the Center for Applied Theory of Mind. It is important to remember that your insights and capabilities are susceptible to changes over time, and that this report reflects your feedback as of a particular point in time.

This report is strictly confidential and intended for use only for the purposes authorized by our General Terms and Conditions. In accordance with applicable privacy law, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we handle your inventory data as follows:

- 1) Upon completion of the inventory, your results are moved to an offline standalone server that is accessible only by authorized CAToM personnel.*
- 2) For our policies concerning the collection and handling of your data we refer to the following website page:*

<https://www.centerforappliedtheoryofmind.com/data-we-collect>

We hope that this inventory will provide you with the insight and incentive that you need in order to get (or stay) on course to becoming a great reader of minds.

Yours sincerely,

The Team from the Center for Applied Theory of Mind

INTRODUCTION

What mentalization is

Mentalization pertains to the human ability to *take, gain, shift* and *shape* perspectives. We use our mentalization abilities as a guide to explain or predict human behavior, both our own and that of others. The mentalization process starts with the detection of social signals and cues (social indicators) in the verbal and nonverbal behavior of others. The process continues with the attachment of meaning to those social indicators. These meaningful inferences allow us to explain past behavior and to predict future behavior. Likewise, our own perspectives can be inferred through the mentalization process.

Mentalization lies at the core of the key cognitive processes that we use to interpret and guide social behavior. It is, by and large, an interpersonal endeavor that we rely upon in order to make social interactions run more smoothly and, at the same time, to achieve our objectives. In addition, we use our mentalization abilities to assess the trustworthiness and competence of others, helping us to make better social affiliation decisions. Mentalization is critical to successful affiliation and cooperation with others. It is also key to gaining competitive advantage over others and/or to socially distancing ourselves from those whose interests do not align with our own.

What the Basic Mentalizing Inventory assesses

The BMI is used to assess your current basic mentalizing tendencies and habits. Basic mentalizing encompasses the most elementary aspects of mentalization. It is rooted in our primitive tendency to share in affect (feelings, moods or emotions) and to synchronize our behavior with people around us. These synchronizing abilities are critically important in understanding human cognition, affect and behavior in social interaction. Furthermore, basic mentalizing encompasses the detection of nonverbal social indicators – such as gestures, vocalics (nonverbal auditory expressions) and facial expressions. It also includes the sensing of nonsocial exteroceptive and interoceptive stimuli - such as noise or fatigue, that don't transmit social information, but nevertheless have a considerable impact on our attentional focus and our interpretation of social indicators.

In this BMI report, your self-view with regard to your current basic mentalizing competencies is examined. First, your tendencies with regard to mimicry, affective contagion and behavioral contagion will be discussed. Next, we delve into your own perception of your nonverbal social indicator detection. Finally, we review your scores on nonsocial sensing and associating.

Please note that a “high” score doesn't necessarily indicate a “good” assessment, and a low score doesn't necessarily indicate a “bad” assessment.

SECTION 1	4
EMBODIED SHARING OF AFFECT AND BEHAVIOR	4
1.1 MIMICRY SELF-AWARENESS	5
1.2 AFFECTIVE CONTAGION SELF-AWARENESS	6
1.3 BEHAVIORAL CONTAGION SELF-AWARENESS	8
1.4 EMBODIED SHARING INSIGHT	9
1.5 APPLIED EMBODIED SHARING	10
SECTION 2	12
NONVERBAL SOCIAL INDICATOR DETECTION	12
2.1 NONVERBAL INFORMATION CHANNEL RELIANCE	13
2.2 DECODING GENERAL SOCIAL INDICATORS	14
2.3 DECODING AFFECT INDICATORS	15
2.4 DECODING INTENT INDICATORS	16
2.5 ENCODING SOCIAL INDICATORS	17
SECTION 3	19
NONSOCIAL SENSING AND ASSOCIATING	19
3.1 INTEROCEPTIVE SENSING	20
3.2 INTEROCEPTIVE ASSOCIATING	21
3.3 EXTEROCEPTIVE SENSING	22
3.4 EXTEROCEPTIVE ASSOCIATING	23
3.5 DETECTING NONSOCIAL INDICATORS IN OTHERS	24
Concluding Comments	26

SECTION 1

EMBODIED SHARING OF AFFECT AND BEHAVIOR

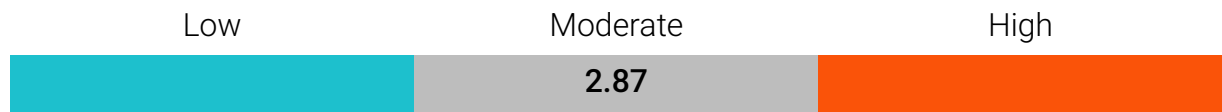
The embodied sharing of affect and behavior relates to our primitive human tendency to synchronize our affect and behavior with our social environment. This sharing of affect and behavior with others is brought about through mimicry and the associated conveyance of affect and behavior - also referred to as affective and behavioral contagion. The sharing of experiences through mimicry, affective contagion and behavioral contagion provides a starting point for the recognition of mental states, and helps us to form connections with others.

Affect and behavior are often shared subconsciously. However, affect and behavior can be shared on two different levels: the subconscious level and the conscious level. At a subconscious level, the tendency to synchronize affect and behavior *does not involve any differentiation between self and others*. In other words, we experience the shared affect and behaviors as though they originated within ourselves. This can lead to confusion since we do not automatically consider the possibility that our own affects and behaviors actually originated with others. When we are not aware of this third-party influence, we can miss a valuable opportunity to gain insight into the mental states of others.

At a conscious level, on the other hand, we have a cognitive awareness of the link between what we perceive and the activation of shared representations. If we are aware of this tendency, we can regulate the degree to which we are influenced by it. We are able to distinguish our own affects and behaviors from those of others, and mentalize more effectively about ourselves and about others.

This first section is subdivided into the following five subsections: **Mimicry Self-Awareness, Affective Contagion Self-Awareness, Behavioral Contagion Self-Awareness, Embodied Sharing Insight and Applied Embodied Sharing.**

Your total score

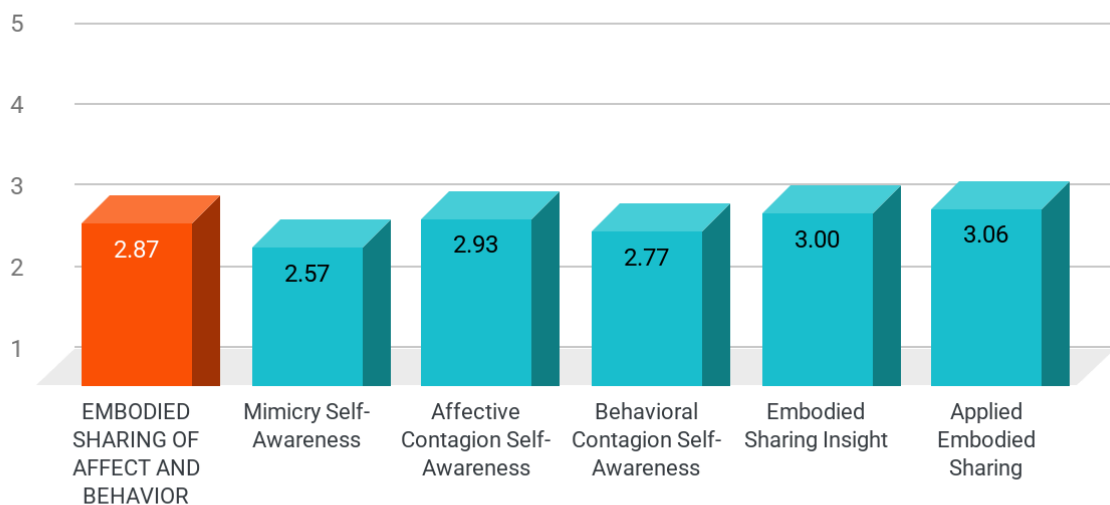


Subscales

The bar chart below shows your total score and your scores on each subsection.

EMBODIED SHARING OF AFFECT AND BEHAVIOR

Calculated scores per subsection



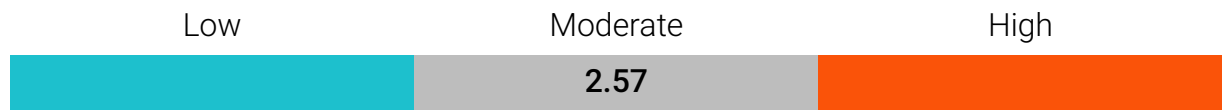
1 - 2.33 = low | 2.34 - 3.67 = moderate | 3.68 - 5 = high

1.1 MIMICRY SELF-AWARENESS

“Mimicry” is the action or skill of imitating someone or something. It covers a wide spectrum of different reactions (facial, verbal, emotional and behavioral) through which we imitate others. We mimic others predominantly through our personal interactions with them. We can, however, also mimic others as a reaction to looking at a picture or other representation. The imitative behavior of mimicry facilitates the learning of new behaviors and skills from others. Moreover, it helps to strengthen our connection with others, as it is done, for the most part, with affiliative intent. Most importantly, mimicry functions as a source of social information from which we can infer mental states.

This subsection provides insight into how aware you are of your tendency to synchronize your affect and behavior with other people, as measured by how much you agree or disagree with statements like: *"I reflect back the facial expressions of others during interaction."*

Your subscore



What your subscore means

This result indicates a moderate score when it comes to your tendency to mimic others. Looking at the results in more detail:

A moderate score on Mimicry Self-Awareness indicates you tend to mirror others' emotions and behaviors at an average level. However, for some, this score might also reflect a lack of awareness about how much they naturally do this.

Mirroring the feelings, emotions and moods of others and their behaviors helps you understand them by paying attention to your own emotional and behavioral reactions. When you naturally mimic people and are aware of this tendency, it can yield a variety of benefits. Studies show, for instance, that mimicry is strongly associated with success in social interaction. Mimicry is also associated with higher positive self-evaluation. Affective mimicry isn't the same as empathy, but it has been linked to accurately understanding others' emotions, feelings and moods. Behavioral mimicry helps conversations flow smoothly and supports social learning.

Being aware of your own mimicry is an important basic mentalizing skill, but

it can come with some drawbacks. For example, if someone is not being truthful about their emotions, you might unknowingly base your understanding on their misleading display. Mimicking can also trigger stereotypical behavior in the person being mimicked, which could unintentionally shape your perception of them. Additionally, mimicking too much might make others uncomfortable, especially if they start to question your sincerity.

Having a moderate tendency to mimic others—or not being fully aware of this habit—could slightly limit your ability to pick up on valuable social cues that improve your understanding of others.

Taking a closer look at the results, you scored moderate on statements that involve mimicry behavior that might make other people uncomfortable, such as copying their accent, speech impediment, or stereotypical behavior. Therefore your tendency to mimic others seems to be well-balanced and appropriate.

1.2 AFFECTIVE CONTAGION SELF-AWARENESS

“Affective contagion” is a *form of social contagion* involving the spontaneous embodiment of emotions and related behaviors of others. It often starts with mimicry, and is followed by sensory feedback via our interoceptive system, which associates the most likely affect with the observed behavior.

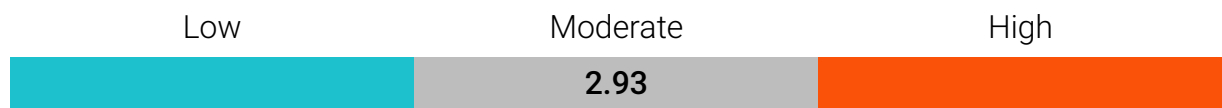
Unlike mimicry, the emotions, feelings, or moods elicited by affective contagion can persist even after the triggering - or mimicked - event has passed. Moreover, the elicited affect can resurface if we later find ourselves in a similar situation. With affective contagion, affects are transferred not only by direct interaction with other people, as is the case with

mimicry, but also via third-party accounts or depictions, or memories of an event. Affective states can also be transmitted by music, movies, or works of art.

Affective contagion can manifest itself in two ways. First, as a similar response - for instance, aggression by one person triggers aggression in another. Second, as a complementary response - for instance, the display of anger by one person triggers a fearful response in another. This possibility of alternative responses illustrates another key difference between mimicry and affective contagion. Affective synchronization is so prevalent in our social environment that it provides fertile ground for mentalizing.

This subsection provides insight into your tendency to take on emotions, feelings, or moods, as measured by how much you agree or disagree with statements like: *"When I think of a friend who is dealing with a sad situation, I get teary-eyed."*

Your subscore



What your subscore means

This result indicates a moderate score when it comes to your tendencies to become "infected" by affective states of others, or by other mood changers or enhancers such as ambient influences in the environment (light, noise, temperature, etc.) or in a movie. Looking at the results in more detail:

A moderate score on Affective Contagion Self-Awareness implies that you are somewhat susceptible to taking on the emotions, feelings and moods of others, although for some people a moderate score might be attributable to insufficient self-awareness of their inclinations in this regard.

An average susceptibility to the affective states of others lowers the risk of feeling overwhelmed and fatigued due to the emotions, feelings and moods of others. If the sharing of affect remains largely below your level of consciousness, however, it can lead to unexplained stress and negative feelings.

A moderate sensitivity to affective contagion can also make it slightly harder to notice or interpret important social signals, which could affect your understanding of what others are thinking or feeling.

As mentioned in the description of this component, affective contagion can manifest itself as a "similar response" or as a "complementary response." Your results indicate that you sometimes respond to the affective states of others in a complementary way.

1.3 BEHAVIORAL CONTAGION SELF-AWARENESS

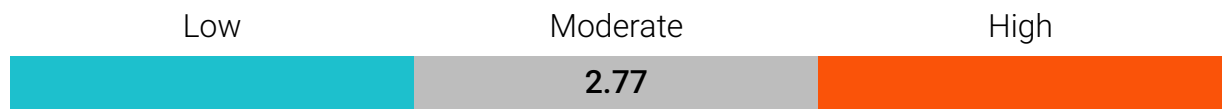
"Behavioral contagion" is the *subconscious, spontaneous, unsolicited and uncritical adoption* of the behavior of other people. Similar to affective contagion, it is often elicited through mimicry, and the effects can last well beyond the triggering behavior. As with affective contagion, behaviors are transferred not only by direct interaction with other people, but also via third-party accounts or depictions, or by triggered memories of an event. Analogous to affective contagion, behavioral contagion can influence a person to display either similar behavioral patterns, or a complementary (opposite) behavioral pattern.

Behavioral contagion is seen as a powerful social influencer, and it explains how the behavior of an individual, or of a few different people, can easily become a crowd phenomenon. Behavior that we adopt through behavioral contagion often informs others

about our own mental states that are linked to these behaviors, such as a particular belief indicated by the rituals of others that we imitate.

This subsection provides insight into your tendency to pick up on the behavior of other people, as measured by how much you agree or disagree with statements like: *"When I see other people ignoring the rules I tend to do the same."*

Your subscore



What your subscore means

This result indicates a moderate score when it comes to your understanding of, and your inclinations toward, behavioral contagion. Looking at the results in more detail:

A moderate score on Behavioral Contagion Self-Awareness signifies that you are somewhat susceptible to adopting the behaviors of others. For some, this moderate score may also reflect an insufficient self-awareness of their own tendencies in this regard.

If you're not naturally inclined to adopt the behavior of others, or aren't aware of this human tendency, you might at times miss or misread important social cues. This can make it harder to understand what others are thinking or feeling and might lead to social missteps, like unintentionally breaking etiquette or behaving in a way that others find awkward or inappropriate.

That said, being moderately influenced by the behavior of others can also

protect you from mindlessly copying unhealthy or inappropriate actions. Taking time to reflect on how susceptible you are—and how aware you are of this—can help you find a balance.

With the right awareness, you can benefit from the valuable social insights that come from behavioral contagion, without losing control over your own actions.

As with affective contagion, behavioral contagion can manifest itself as a "similar response" or as a "complementary response." Your results indicate that at times you tend to respond to behavioral contagion in a complementary way.

Additionally, you scored high with regard to your tendency to adopt the undesirable behavior of others, such as breaking the rules when others do, or taking on unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking or driving aggressively when others do. This indicates that you may tend to become "infected" by the undesirable behavior of others.

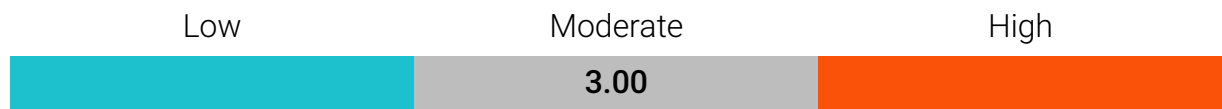
1.4 EMBODIED SHARING INSIGHT

Awareness of our human tendency to share in the affect and behavior of others facilitates mentalizing about them through the examination of our own feelings and behavior. Insight into our tendency to imitate others helps us to distinguish our own sensations and behavioral inclinations from those that we "catch" from others. This is important when it comes to identifying the cause of our own affects and behaviors, and implementing corrective measures at the right source. Additionally, this insight helps us to understand

aspects such as why we imitate certain people more than others, or what circumstances increase the tendency of people to take on the affect or behavior of others.

This subsection provides insight into your awareness of the embodied sharing of affect and behavior, as measured by how much you agree or disagree with statements like: *"I know why I copy certain people more than others."*

Your subscore



What your subscore means

This result indicates a moderate score when it comes to your insight into your tendency to imitate others. Looking at the result in more detail:

Even if you are aware of your tendency to imitate others, that doesn't necessarily mean you understand when and why it happens or how affective and behavioral contagion works. It also doesn't guarantee that you're highly attuned to when and why others share emotions and behaviors through their actions.

A moderate score on Embodied Sharing Insight suggests that you have a reasonable understanding of both your own mimicry behaviors and those of others.

Not having a fully clear grasp of the factors that influence when and why people mimic others—such as the person, place, time, or situation—can make it harder at times to regulate this kind of sharing in yourself and to

support others when they struggle with their susceptibility.

Enhancing this insight can help you better navigate social interactions and regulate the flow of emotions and behaviors.

Looking more closely at your results in this subsection, you scored in the moderate range on questions related to your self-other distinction. This implies that at times tend to be influenced by the affect and behavior of people around you due to a "diffused self-other distinction."

To you, it might at times seem that your feelings and behaviors come entirely from within, without recognizing how much they are shaped by those around you.

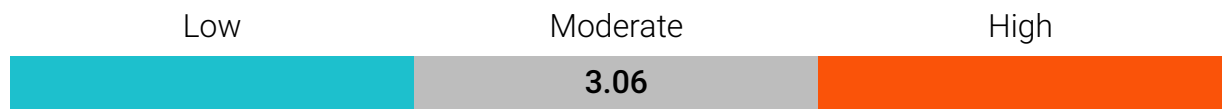
Self-mentalizing skills such as checking in with yourself throughout the day can help you recognize patterns in how others affect you.

1.5 APPLIED EMBODIED SHARING

Awareness of the human tendency to synchronize their affect and behavior with one another enables us to assess whether a person wants to affiliate and/or cooperate with, to form or solidify connections with, or to learn from and about, us or someone else. It better equips us to socially distance ourselves from others in subtle ways by ignoring or opposing their behavior. Additionally, it enables us to more quickly and accurately recognize relationships between people – who enjoys superior status, who likes/dislikes whom, who the decision maker is, etc. Finally, it gives us the ability to elicit behavioral changes in others, in a nonverbal and non-confrontational way, by “infecting” others with our own displays of the desired behavior or affect.

This subsection provides insight into your use of the ability to share in the affects and behavior of others as a means of influencing their mental states and behavior, as measured by how much you agree or disagree with statements like: *"I would not know how to benefit from imitating the affect or behavior of others."*

Your subscore



What your subscore means

Even if you are aware of your tendency to imitate others and understand it well, this doesn't necessarily mean you know how to consciously apply mimicry or affective and behavioral contagion to your advantage. The ability to actively use these skills is what this component—Applied Embodied Sharing—measures.

Your result indicates a moderate score when it comes to using your understanding of embodied sharing to influence the mental states and behavior of others. Looking at the results in more detail:

A moderate score indicates that you have a modest understanding of how to benefit from embodied sharing of affect and behavior with others. This suggests that at times you might find it challenging to connect with others through shared emotions and behaviors. You may not always naturally use this process to support your goals, build strong relationships, learn from others, or collaborate smoothly.

There may be times that you have difficulty subtly creating social distance in

a calm, non-provocative way. Similarly, influencing others' behavior or mood in a nonverbal, non-confrontational manner—such as inspiring them to mirror your desired behavior—might feel like a challenge.

You may not fully tap into the power of emotional and behavioral 'contagion' to shape your environment. This could mean missing opportunities to boost your mood, improve focus, or inspire positive behavior in those around you.

Lastly, you might miss relevant embodied signals and cues that would help you to make meaningful inferences in support of your higher-level mentalizing.

Enhancing your awareness of these dynamics and your understanding of how to apply embodied sharing to your benefit could help you gain more control over your social interactions and environment.

SECTION 2

NONVERBAL SOCIAL INDICATOR DETECTION

This second section regarding basic mentalizing competencies deals with the detection of social indicators that are conveyed nonverbally – such as gestures, postures and facial expressions - without the embodied sharing found in mimicry, affective contagion and behavioral contagion. Social indicators are pieces of information that convey social rules, norms and values, and mental states, such as affects, beliefs and intentions, upon which we predict or explain behavior. Nonverbal social indicators can be extralinguistic, in other words not involving or beyond the bounds of verbal communication, for instance, hand gestures. They can also be paralinguistic, which pertains to the non-lexical elements of speech, for example, tone of voice. In popular literature, nonverbal behavior is often referred to as body language. Nonverbal behavior is, however, broader in scope than body language, as it also encompasses other aspects, such as the way we dress to make an impression. The use of emoticons in electronic communications is another example of nonverbal communication.

In designing this inventory, we divided the social indicators from which we can infer mental states into three categories: first, general social signals that reveal the rules, norms and values that exist in a particular setting; second, affect indicators that reveal a person's affective mental state; and third, indicators that reveal a person's intentions. As all of these indicators often stay below the threshold of our awareness, becoming more aware of them can strengthen our capacity to gather significantly more social data, which can be used to increase the accuracy of our mentalization efforts.

This second section is composed of the following five subsections: Nonverbal Information Channel Reliance, Decoding General Social Indicators, Decoding Affect Indicators, Decoding Intent Indicators and Encoding Social Indicators.

Your total score

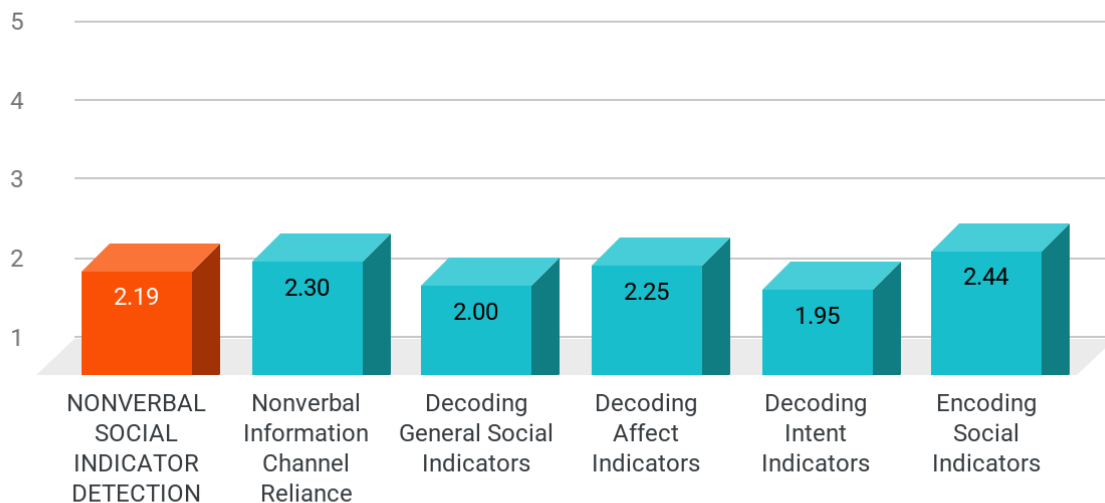


Subscales

The bar chart below shows your total score and your scores on each subsection.

NONVERBAL SOCIAL INDICATOR DETECTION

Calculated scores per subsection



1 - 2.33 = low | 2.34 - 3.67 = moderate | 3.68 - 5 = high

2.1 NONVERBAL INFORMATION CHANNEL RELIANCE

Nonverbal indicators can come in many different shapes and sizes, as people have a variety of nonverbal encoding channels at their disposal, such as posture, gestures, stance and movements, facial expressions, eye movement and gaze, tone of voice, touch and distance, physical appearance and object choice, and use of time. We have to be aware of all of the different channels through which we can receive nonverbal communication. We also need to use these channels appropriately to transmit our own nonverbal messages clearly and effectively. Generally speaking, however, people are not well-versed in using all of the available information channels. People have individual biases in their channel preferences. Some people consistently rely on certain nonverbal channels, others adjust their channel preference depending on the situation. People tend to rely on the channels they are best able to use and interpret based upon their particular skills.