

Gift Adults: Issues and Interventions



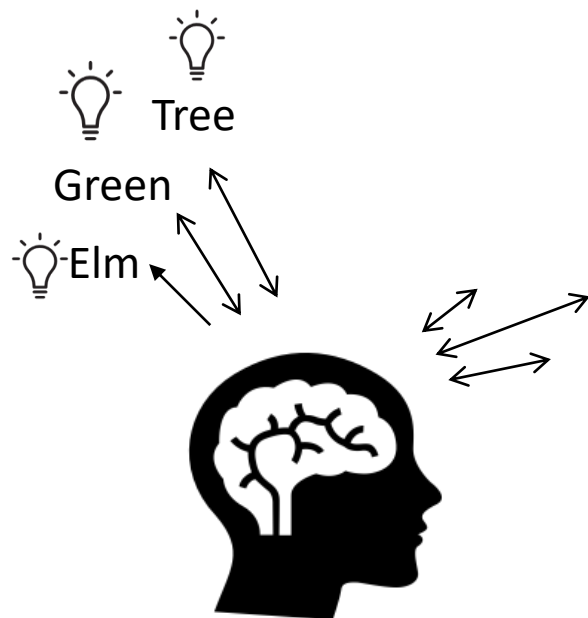
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What does 'gifted' mean?

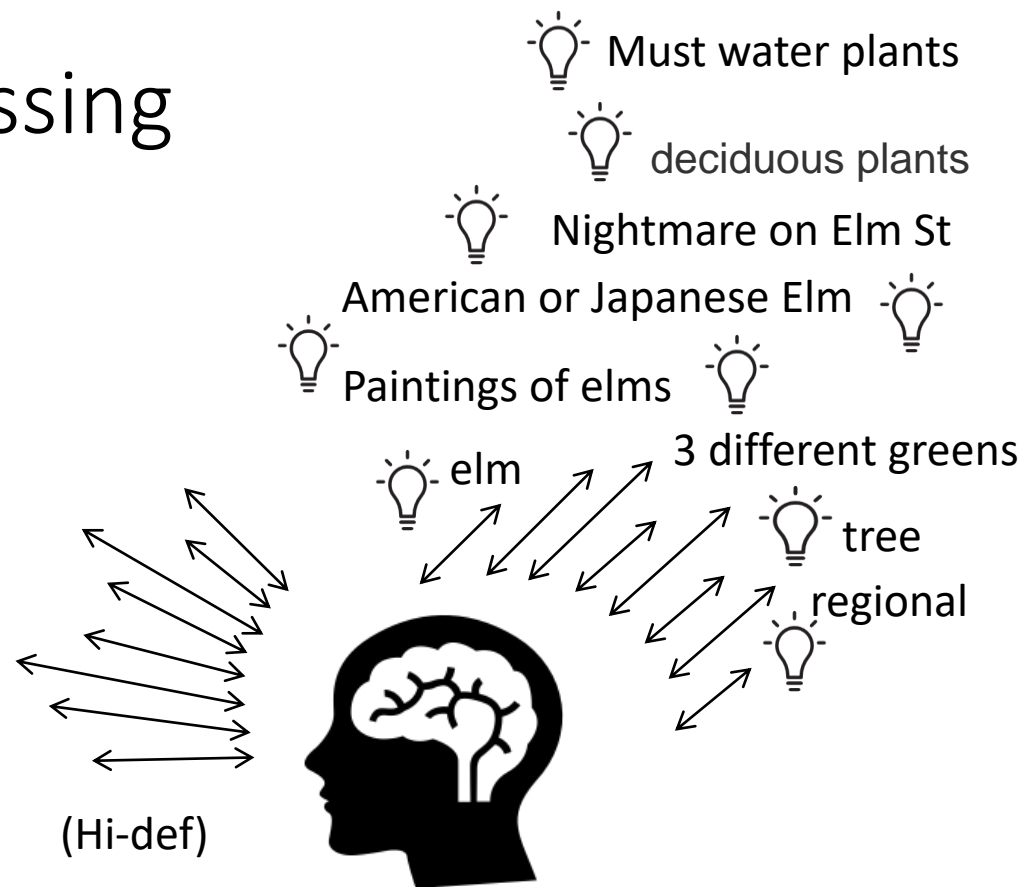
Higher than
average levels of
input/output
processing across
many different
cognitive traits:

- Analysis
- Creativity
- Insight
- Moral Reasoning
- Perfectionism
- Motivation
- Emotionality
- Entelechy

Neurotypical Vs. Gifted Processing



Neurotypical



Gifted Atypical

MR <70 IQ

Borderline
MR 70-80 IQ

Neurotypical 80 -120 IQ

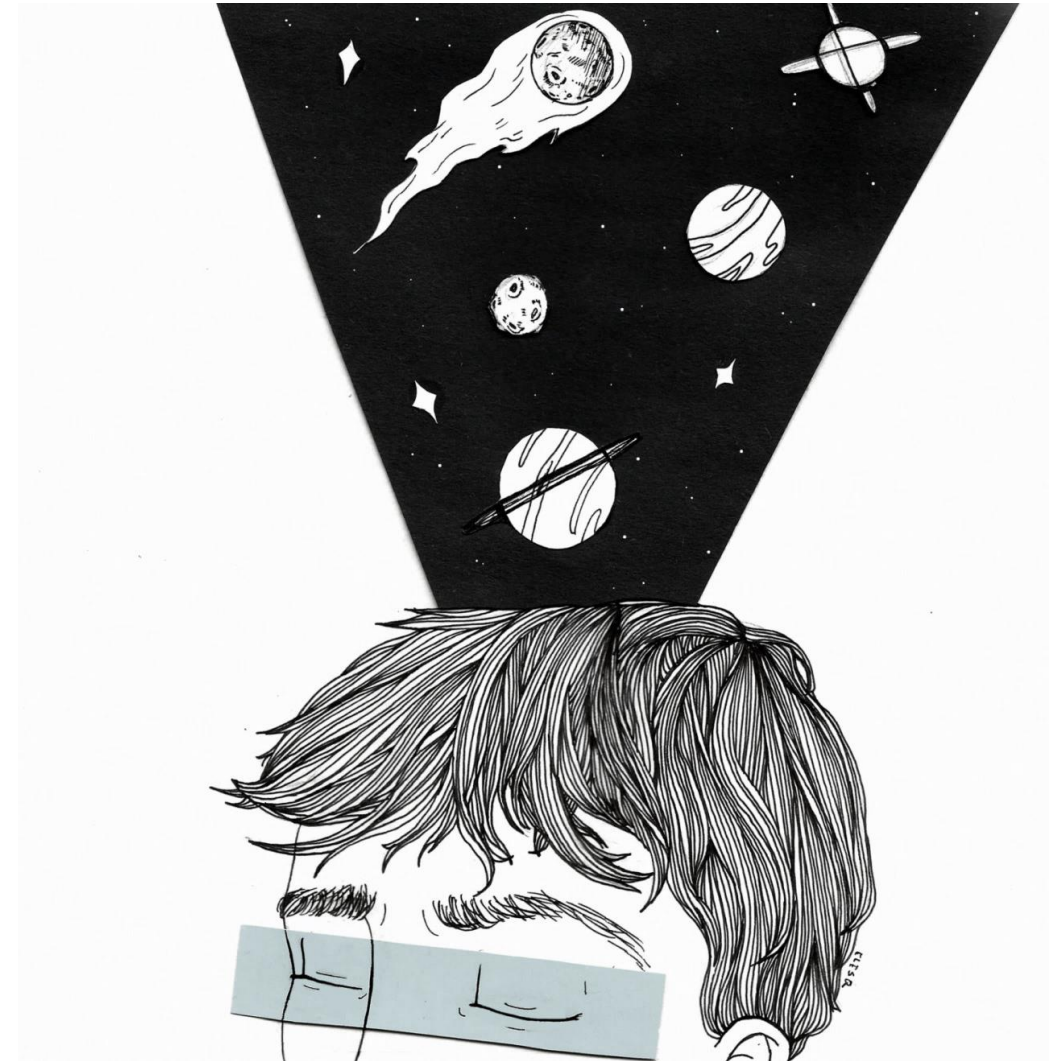
Borderline
GT120-128

Gifted 129-139 IQ

Genius >139 IQ

Reflection Questions

- Do you know anyone who might process this way constantly?
- What do you think this is like for them? For you?



Elliana Esquivel

Over-Excitabilities

- **PSYCHOMOTOR:** talk compulsively, act impulsively, nervous habits/tics, workaholism, compulsive organizing
- **SENSUAL:** buying sprees, seeking center of attention, intense **over-reactions** to clothing tags, classroom noise, overeating, etc., seek enhanced sensory experiences that can be harmful (drugs, hypersexuality, etc.)
- **INTELLECTUAL:** rabbit holes, pedantic, argumentative, overly-elaborate planning, thinking about thinking, moralizing
- **IMAGINATIONAL:** mix truth with fiction, create own private worlds, distorted reality, may have difficulty completing tasks when some incredible idea sends them off on an imaginative tangent.
- **EMOTIONAL:** mood extremes, complex emotions, over-empathizing, overexposure of self, intolerance for shallow/small talk, lost in own feelings, highly self critical

Misdiagnoses/Comorbidity

Mood Disorder

- *Anxiety Disorders*- perfectionism, pressure on achievement, emphasis on problem solving, moral outrage
- *Dysthymic or MDD*- aloneness & alienation culminate in existential depression, loss of meaning, entelechy
- *BP1, BP2, or Cyclothymic Disorder*- periods of depression, and periods of anxiety for above reasons
 - A+ students 4x more,
 - advanced mathematicians 12x more

Thinking Disorders

- *ADHD*- emotional OE, impatience, and psychomotor OE—rule out via situational assessment (pervasive or situational)
- *ODD*- intensity, sensitivity, and idealism (values or no empathy)
- *OCD*- intellectualizing, sense of urgency, perfectionism, idealism, and intolerance for mistakes (Growth or fixed mindset?)

Other Areas of Dysfunction for GT Adults

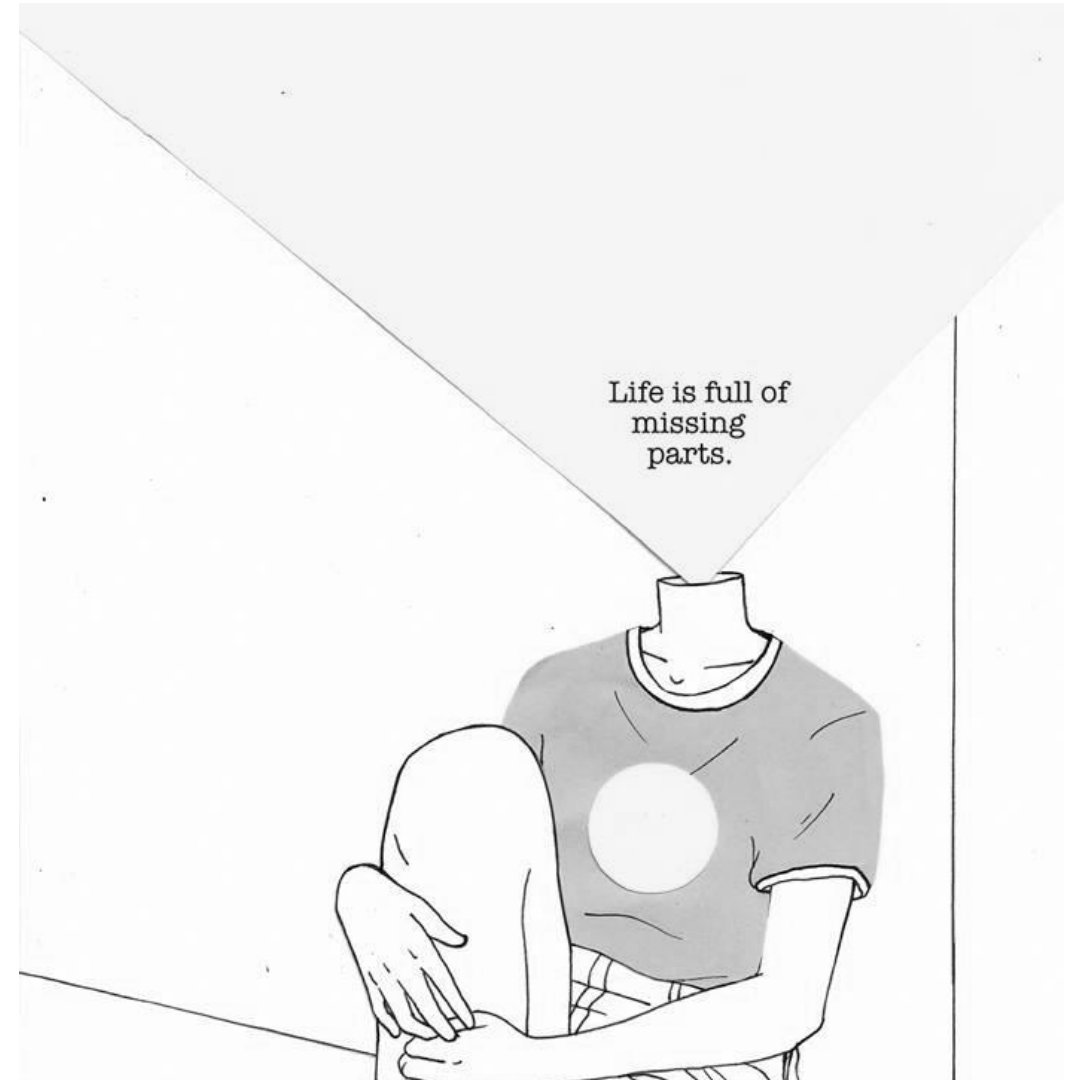
- **Belongingness:** “alien” and not like others (even family)
- **Asynchronicity:** out of time, identify better with period in future/past
- **Hyper-processing:** using brain power indiscriminately
- **Imposter Syndrome:** do not think they are smart (especially females)
- **Multipotentiality:** good at many things/careers, hard to prune
- **Procrastination:** perfectionism issue, rebellion, emotional overwhelm
- **Self Actualization:** not living up to potential/under-achieving
- **Self Esteem:** internalizing failures, highly self criticism
- **Relational Distress:** scapegoated/insecure attachment/low mutuality

Heylighen 1992

Kreger Silverman, 2012

Reflection Questions

- Do you agree that giftedness can cause psychosocial issues in adulthood?
- What do you think about the potential for misdiagnoses /comorbidities for GTs?



Clinical Assessment Tool*

Traits

- Do you learn new things rapidly? (analysis)
- Do you persevere with your interests?
(motivation)
- Do you have unusual ideas or perceptions?
(creativity)
- Do you often connect unrelated ideas?
(intellectual)
- Can you feel along with and for others?
(emotion)
- Do you often question rules or authority?
(moral)
- Do you have a strong need to "make a difference?" (entelechy)
- Do you look for consistency in systems and rules? (perfectionism)

OEs

- Are you a high-energy person? (psychomotor OE)
- Are sexual touch/smell/sight as important as orgasm?
(sensual OE)
- Are you always questioning everything? (intellectual OE)
- Do you write, speak, think, or dream in vivid imagery?
(imagination OE)
- Do you try to describe your feelings with precision?(emotional OE)

Issues

- Do you feel different, like an outsider, or alien?
(belongingness)
- Do you feel like relationships have failed you? (relational)
- Do you focus on the complex and overlook the simple? ?
(hyperprocessing)
- Have you had difficulty selecting a career path? (actualization)
- Do you feel like you are meant to do something special?
(actualization)

Case Study*

Personal Characteristics

- Female
- 30s
- Mother
- Partnered
- Caucasian
- Non-religious
- Heterosexual

Diagnoses History

- BP1
- MDD
- GAD
- PD
- Agoraphobia
- OCD

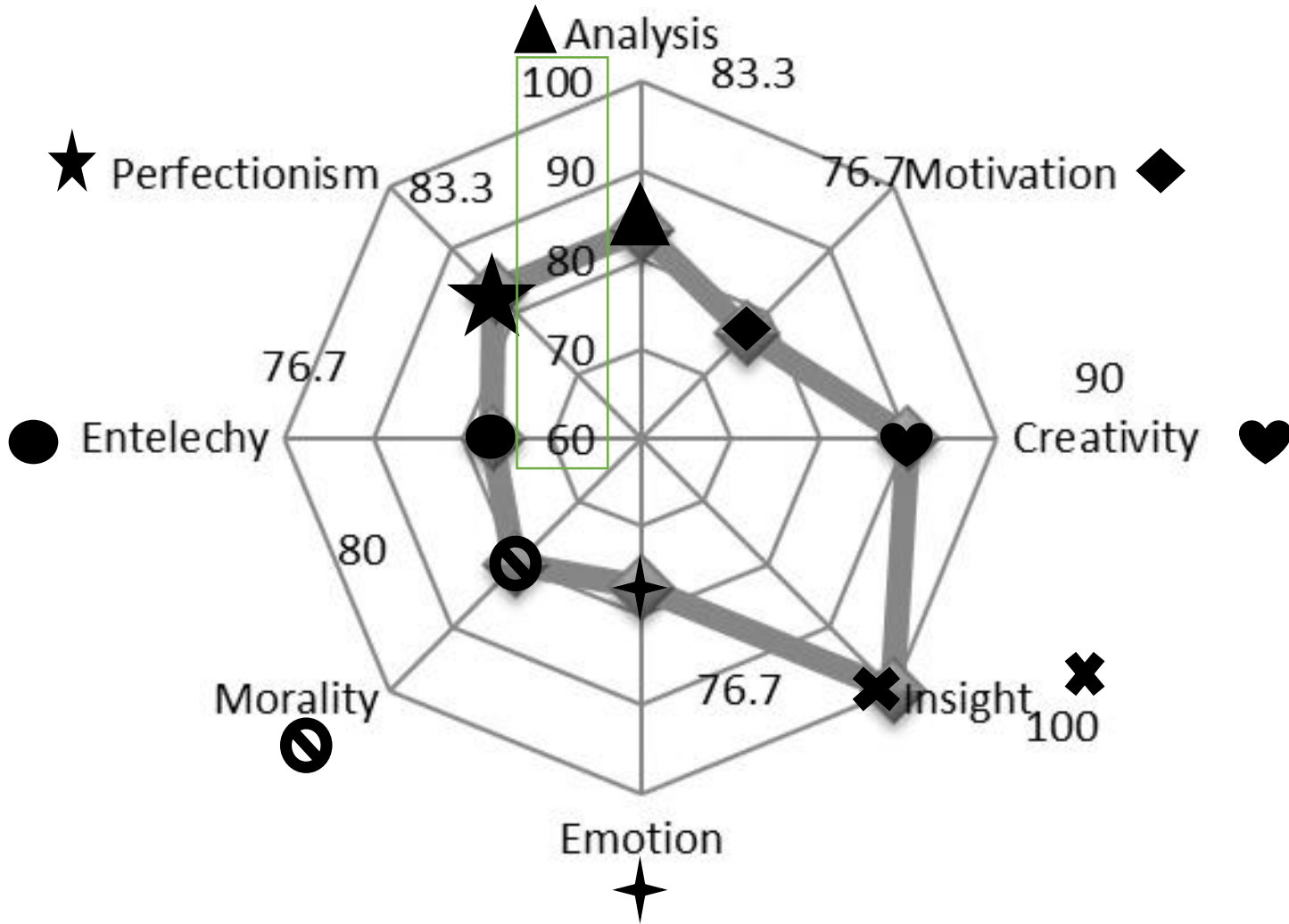
Presenting Issues

- Unable to leave home
- Panic Attacks
- Unable to work
- Mood Swings

Systemic Issues

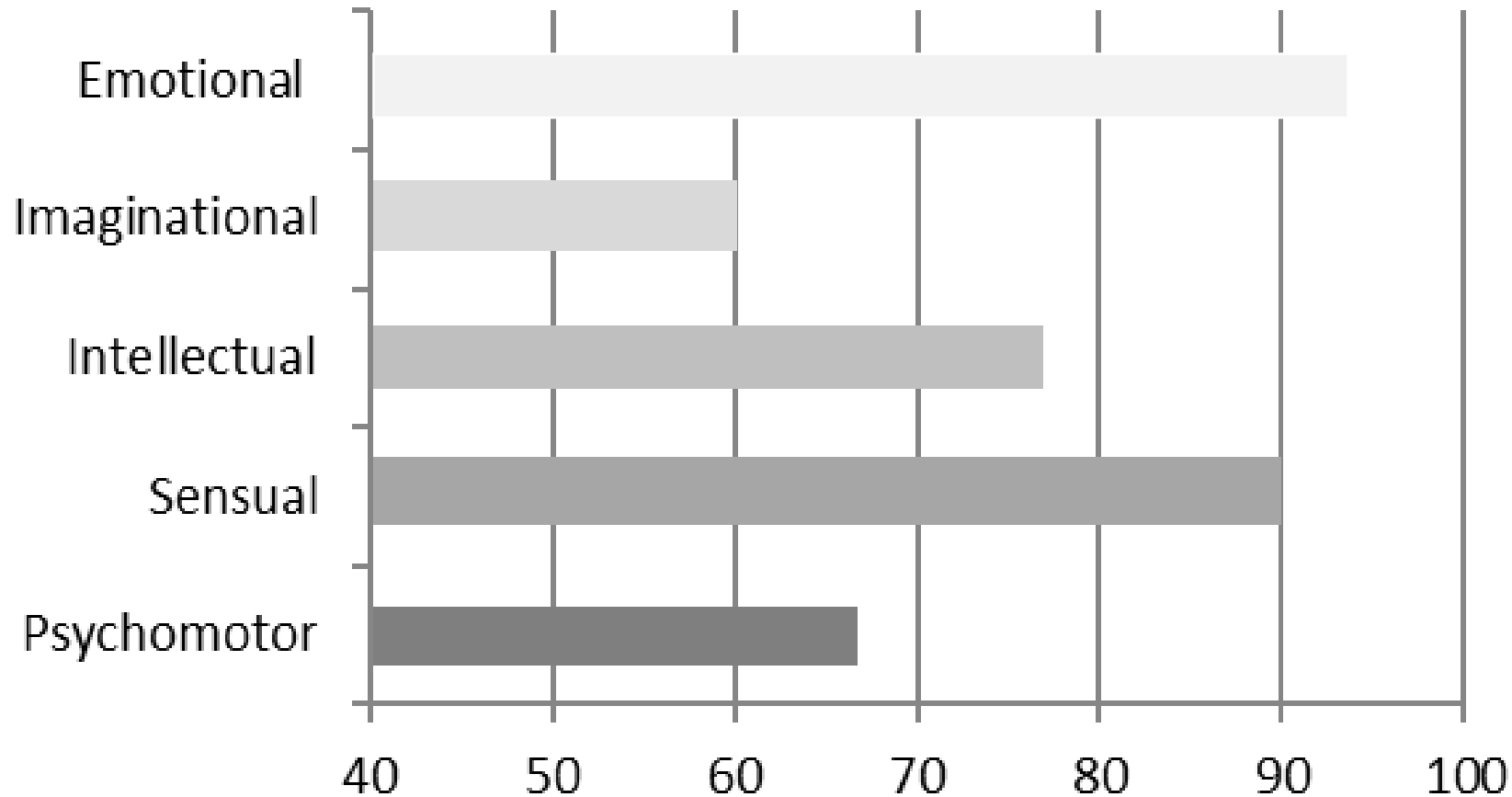
- FoO dysfunction
- Poor social support
- Enmeshed with son
- Disorganized Attachment

Traits



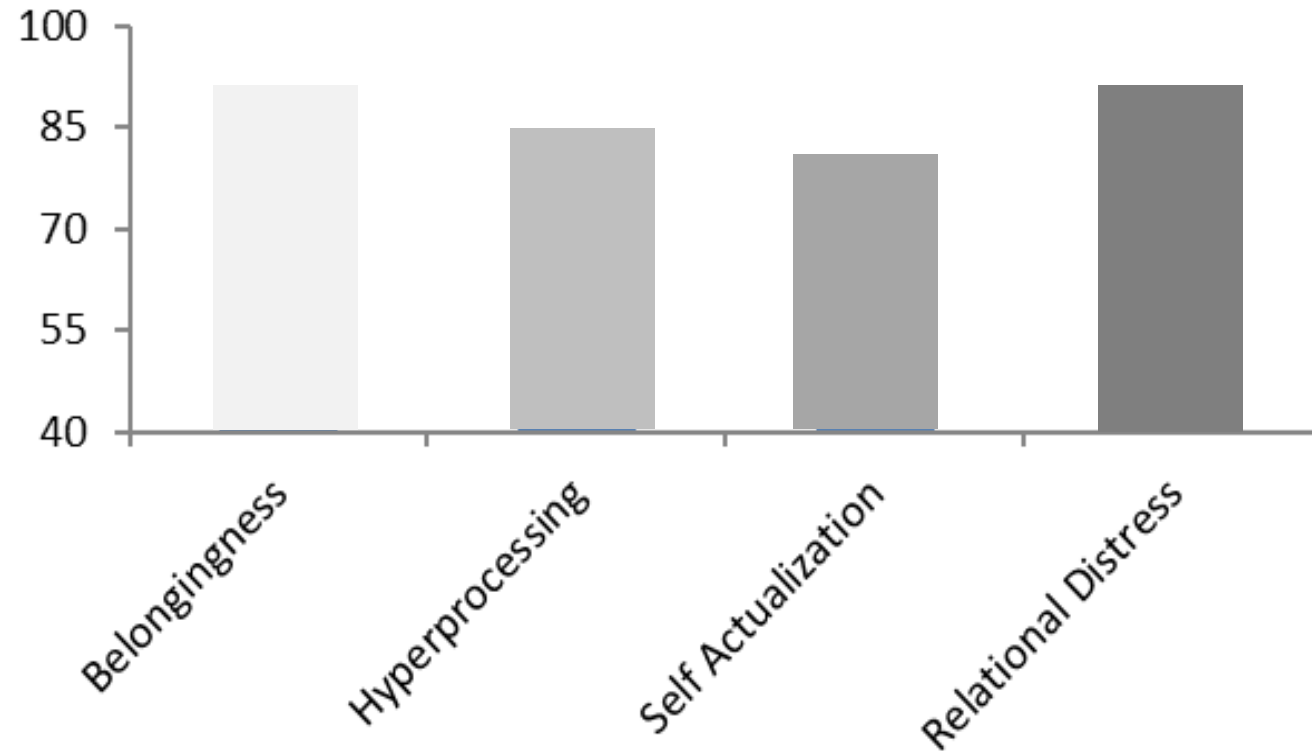
- All traits gifted (>75%)
- Insight=most active
- Creativity also high
- Trouble areas may be emotion, motivation, and entelechy
- Emo OE relevant
- Highly self critical = high insight + chronic MDD/GAD

Overexcitabilities



- 3 OEs
- Anxiety triggers
- Require tools
- Over or Under stimulated?

Issues



- All areas of dysfunction
- Belongingness and relationships = most distress
- Emotional and Sensual OEs relevant
- FOO issues
- Disorganized attachment

Reflection Questions

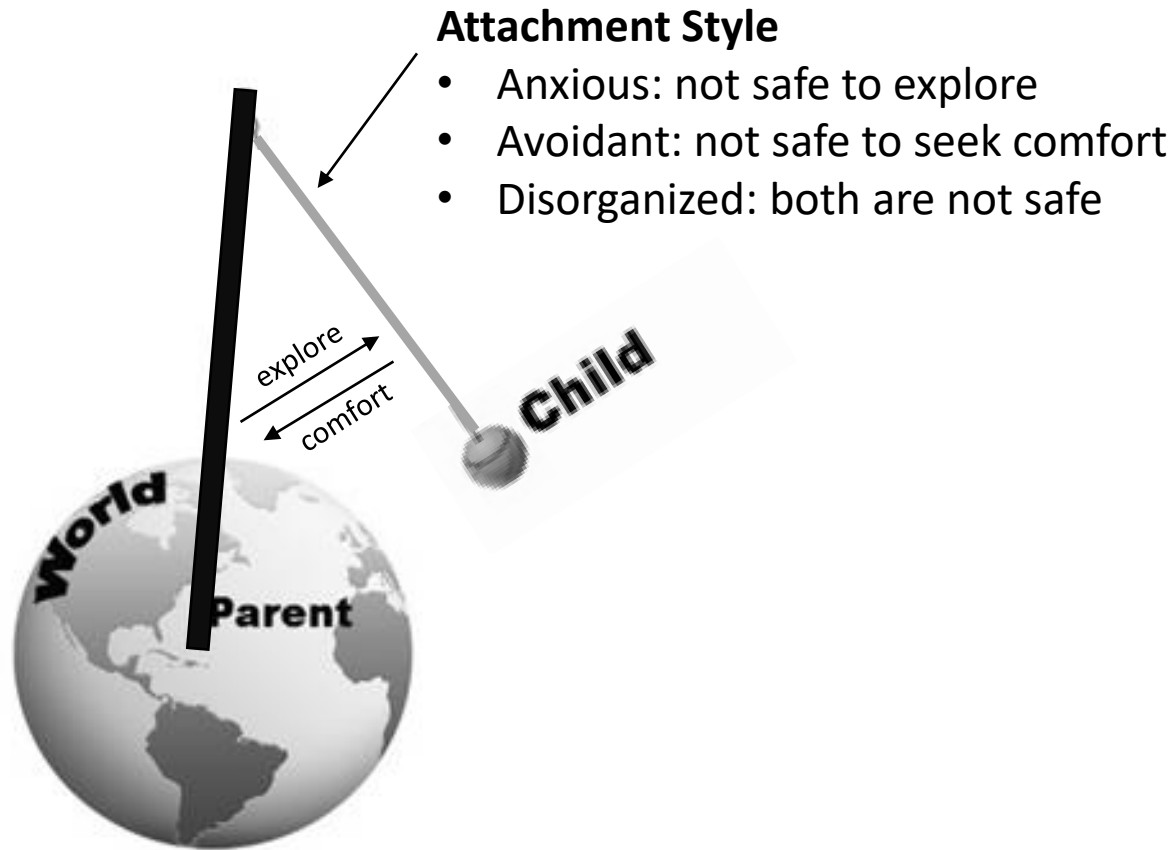
- What interventions /therapies come to mind for gifted issues?
- Do you have clients that may have similar mental functioning?



Martine Johanna

Family of Origin Interventions

Attachment Repair



Inner Child/Reparenting

- My inner child has the following wounds: _____
- I was often told I was too: _____
- I forgive my caregivers and others for: _____
- My inner child wants to explore the following activities: _____
- What comforts my inner child is: _____
- I will accept and love my inner child unconditionally even when: _____
- I will tell my inner child the following positive affirmations: _____

Hyper-processing Interventions

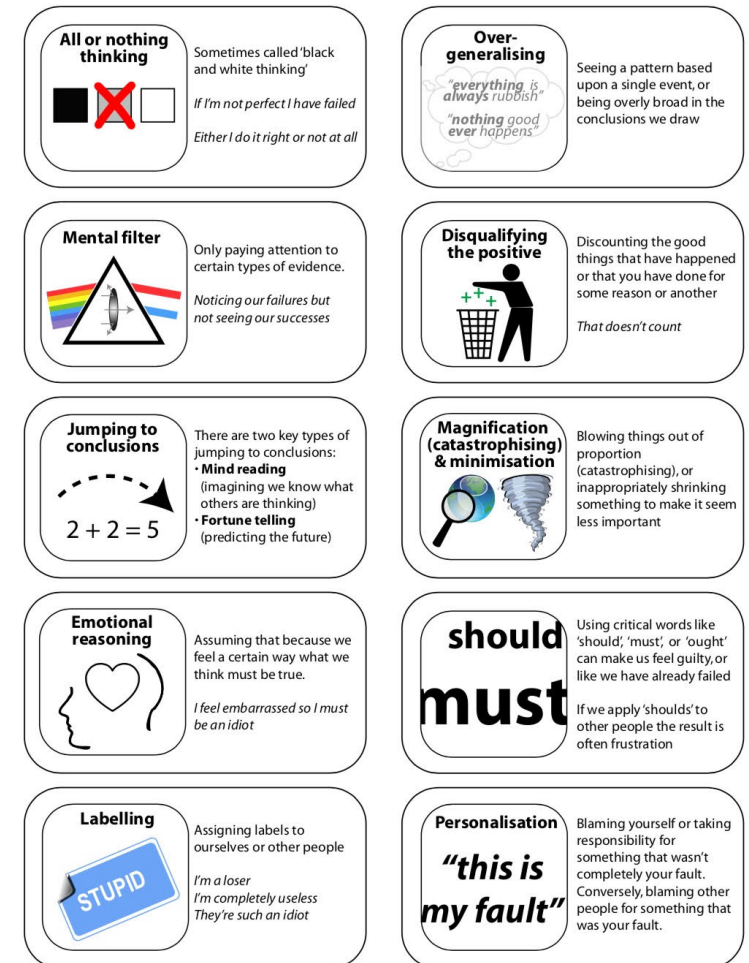
Growth Vs. Fixed Mindset



Carol Dweck 2006

Cognitive Distortions

Unhelpful Thinking Styles



Values Work

Gifted adults suffer from loss of meaning more regularly than neurotypical peers; therefore, they often benefit from doing values driven work.

Maisel, E. (2013)

Values Exploration Exercise

www.laveldanaylor.org

To understand what makes life meaningful to you, you need to know what your values are and how to meet them. First, list your values using simple values words, such as courage or independence (look online for values words if needed). Then define what each of the value words means to you—what behaviors tell you that value is present, or absent. Next, rate your own behaviors using the scale—how often do your own behaviors reflect the definition you wrote down. And finally, circle 3-5 values that would be the most difficult for you to live without, these are your core values. Maximize meaning in your life by adhering to your core values, as defined by you, when making decisions, pursuing purpose, meeting your needs, and prioritizing relationships. Revisit your values periodically to see if your values have shifted or need redefining.

Value Words	Value Definitions	Scale
EX: Courage	Facing what hurts or scares you.	1--2--3--4--5

Reflection Questions

1. What values make me feel the best/worst when met/violated?
2. What are currently my core values? Has then changed over time?
3. How well do I communicate my values to others?

Over-excitabilities Tool Boxes

SENSUAL STRATEGIES

- Create/find an environment which limits offensive stimuli and provides comfort
- Seek appropriate opportunities for being in the limelight, ask for needs specifically (praise, encouragement, gratitude).
- Provide time to dwell in the delight of the sensual (massages, sexual stimulation, sunlight, water, etc.)
- Tactile items that soothe should be kept handy (mint, soft fabrics, eyemasks, earbuds, squeeze toys, heat/cooling pads, etc)

INTELLECTUAL STRATEGIES

- Mantras for knowing all answers to all questions, growth mindset, choice/consequences model for decisions
- experiment with time boundaries for tangential ideas ('rabbit-holing'), evaluate pursuit of passion and relational costs
- Explore small/local ways to help on big/global moral issues, practice forgiveness of grievances, resentment work

EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Accept all feelings, regardless of intensity, name the feeling, ask what it needs from you to be okay, self care
- Know triggers, identify physical signs of emotional stress such as headache, sweaty palms, and stomachache,
- Avoid defensiveness, use love languages, ask for help with needs meeting, set boundaries

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