



Assessment of Parenting Competency in Mothers with Mental Illness (Vital Statistics)

Teresa Ostler Ph.D.

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The stakes are undeniably high when it comes to deciding whether a mother with mental illness can raise her child in a safe, nurturing environment. Now, mental health professionals will have sound assessment strategies—refined over 10 years of study—that fairly evaluate the parenting competency of mothers with a wide range of mental illnesses, from "baby blues" to schizophrenia.

Going beyond measuring only the mother's degree of mental illness, the safety of the environment, or the rate of child development, this groundbreaking resource integrates multiple approaches so that professionals understand the full picture of parenting competency.

Mental health professionals will

- **Assess with confidence.** This program is backed by more than 10 years of refinement and testing, and has been shown to produce superior evaluations.
- **Accurately profile parenting strengths** and weaknesses with state-of-the-art methodology.
- **Enhance every part of their parenting evaluation process**, including interviews and observations, home visits, report writing, sharing results with the family, and testifying in court.
- **Discover the eight critical principles** for ensuring that an assessment is sound.
- **Learn about available assessment instruments** and get guidance on when to use each.
- **Limit bias** by recognizing factors that can influence assessment results, such as cultural differences and high stress levels of parent and child.
- **Get keen insight into life with mental illness** through the compelling stories of mothers and children.

With this much-needed resource, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and child welfare professionals will be primed to conduct more accurate assessments, make informed decisions, build stronger mother–child relationships, and facilitate family preservation whenever possible.

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