

Mental Health Assessment Report

Ann Cummings

GCN602

Summer 2020

## MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Name:** Karen Dawkins

**Age:** 49 years, 7 months

**Date of Birth:** 11/15/1970

**Date Tested:** 06/26/2020

**Tester:** Ann Cummings

**Tests Administered:**

Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)

Beck Depression Inventory – Second Edition (BDI-II)

**Medications:**

None reported.

**Referred by:**

Karen was referred by herself.

**Reason for Referral:**

Karen came for a mental health assessment regarding an inability to control angry outbursts. The verbal outbursts are affecting her personal relationships.

**Background Information:**

Karen is a 49-year-old, African American female who is married with three children (ages 24, 17, and 7). Karen resides in an apartment in Bronx, New York with her two youngest children. She and her husband are estranged. It has been three years since they last lived together.

Karen was raised in Bronx, New York by her mother and stepfather. She is an only child. Her stepfather became a part of her life when she was five years old.

Karen recalled having a difficult relationship with her mother. She explained that, during her childhood, her mother was demanding and was aggressive with discipline. She felt that her mother was often disapproving of her. Karen stated that her mother was a “bully who used anger and verbal insults” to communicate. Karen explained that her maternal grandmother was also an intimidating authority figure who used harsh words and anger to control the actions of others.

Karen stated that she has vowed to “never be like my mother” and has been disappointed with her own angry behavior as it has resembled the behavior of her mother and grandmother. Karen stated that she believed her mother suffered from depression but was never diagnosed. Karen reported that her mother always denied feelings of depression and was uncomfortable discussing subjects of mental health.

Karen has had very little relationship with her biological father and knows little about him. She stated that she has remained very close with her stepfather and that he has had significant influence in her life and on her religious views.

Karen explained that her stepfather was always supportive of her efforts in school. She stated that he would not intervene in her relationship with her mother or grandmother. She reported that there were times that her mother would verbally abuse him and Karen, and he did little to stop the abuse.

As a teenager, Karen was often in physical altercations with classmates at school. She stated that she had trouble controlling her anger when others would do or say things that upset her. This behavior continued into early adulthood. Karen stated that she has never been incarcerated as a result of her violent behavior. Upon conception of her first child, Karen decided to stop engaging in physical fights with others. She did not seek professional mental health support at that time. She stated that she continued having difficulty controlling angry verbal outbursts. She reported having been able to avoid physical fights since her first child was born 24 years ago.

Karen stated that her verbal outbursts have recently increased in frequency and intensity. She has had angry verbal disputes with strangers (e.g., the cashier at a grocery store, and a server in a restaurant). She stated that “the littlest thing can set me off.” She was asked to leave the grocery store recently due to an angry outburst at a cashier.

Karen obtained a bachelor’s degree after completing high school. She stated that she obtained a job as a physical therapist in a retirement facility when she completed her bachelor’s degree. She has worked the same job for 25 years. She explained that she enjoys her work. Karen reported that she was informed that she will be transferred from her current work location where she has worked for 25 years. She explained that the transfer will require her to move to Connecticut. She reported that she was unable to recall a specific date, but she was informed of the transfer “about two or three months ago.” Karen expressed feelings of stress related to moving and transferring to a new location for work. She explained that her job requirements would not change. Notably, Karen admitted that her stress levels affect the likelihood of an episode or outburst of anger.

Karen stated that she has relied heavily on her Christian faith to help her through difficult times emotionally. She stated that she regularly attends church and has found social support among other church members. She expressed deep devotion to her faith and to God. She stated that she is concerned about finding a new church when she moves. Karen reported recently having difficulty getting to sleep.

Karen explained that her general feelings of agitation have influenced her relationship with her children and those that she is close to. Karen was asked to rate her feelings of anger on a scale of one to ten, one being very little anger and ten being outraged. She reported that she generally has feelings of anger at 3/10 but can easily escalate to angry feelings that are 10/10. She stated that she has reached a 10/10 at least once a week for the past several months, typically (but not always) with family. She reported that she has had difficulty concentrating following episodes of anger. She stated that she was at a level of 3/10 during the interview.

She reported that she feels fatigued during the day more days than not. She explained that she has recently found it difficult to relax. Karen stated that she worries about “going off” on the

people that are close to her. She expressed that the primary form of communication with her children has been yelling. She stated that most of her interactions with her children involve her becoming angry. She denied any physical abuse of her children.

### **Behavioral Observations:**

Throughout the interview and testing processes, Karen was attentive and maintained eye contact. She was cooperative during the interview and testing except when discussing the topic of her marriage. Karen became briefly agitated when asked about her marriage and declined to discuss the relationship. Karen's speech was logical and coherent. Her mood was stated to be "a little nervous." Her affect was appropriate to the topic of conversation and congruent with her stated mood. Receptive and expressive language skills were intact.

### **Test Results:**

Karen completed the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). The BAI is a 21 item self-report measure of anxiety. On this measure, Karen totaled a score of 23 placing her anxiety within the moderate range. Karen indicated, through choice of a maximal score for these items, that fear of losing control, inability to relax, and nervousness bothered her severely within the last week.

Karen also completed the Beck Depression Inventory – Second Edition (BDI-II). The BDI-II is a 21 item self-report measure of depression. On this measure, Karen totaled a score of 15 which indicates depression on the low end of the mild range. She did not select a maximal score on any item. For changes in sleeping pattern, Karen expressed that she is sleeping less than usual, and for changes in appetite, Karen indicated that she has less than usual appetite. She scored highest (scores of 2) on categories of self-criticalness and agitation.

### **Formulation:**

Karen is a 49-year-old, married, African American female with three children. She came to counseling due to an inability to control temper outbursts. She expressed being concerned that her anger is affecting her relationships and daily functioning.

During the interview, Karen expressed feelings of stress, changes in sleeping patterns, change in appetite, irritability, and an inability to relax. The results of Karen's completed anxiety inventory showed that she has experienced moderate levels of anxiety. Her depression inventory results indicate that she experienced low levels of mild depression.

Information gathered during the interview reveals that Karen has had a lifelong pattern of angry and irritable moods with a frequent loss of temper. Her temper outbursts occur both at home and outside of the home. Karen's consistent pattern of argumentative behavior, irritable mood, and frequent loss of temper with little provocation support a diagnosis of other specified disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorder (312.89); recurrent outbursts do not meet full requirements for criterion A of intermittent explosive disorder. She has recently experienced an increase in frequency and intensity of the temper outbursts. The increase in frequency of

outbursts began subsequent to job related stressors suggesting a diagnosis of adjustment disorder with mixed disturbance of emotions and conduct (309.4).

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Karen receive a psychiatric evaluation to determine whether she would benefit from medication for anxiety. It is also recommended that Karen attend weekly psychotherapeutic sessions with a mental health professional to address her temper outbursts. Karen would benefit from cognitive behavioral skills to learn how to solve problems and develop awareness of angry thoughts and impulses. Calming techniques would be a productive tool for Karen to learn and implement to reduce physiological tension associated with anger and anxiety.

Ann Cummings

Graduate Student in Mental Health Counseling