

# **SOCRaTEs: A measure of the social climate in therapeutic environments**

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## **The SOCRATEs Project - Aims**

“[T]o derive a brief, internally reliable measure of social climate unique to therapeutic communities and other therapeutic treatment environments, using existing data derived from the application of an existing measure of social climate within therapeutic communities (and therefore tailored specifically to them)”

## Measures of the TE

1. Ward Atmosphere Scale - WAS (Moos 1974, 1996) – reworded for TCs as the Community Oriented Programme Environment Scale (COPES)
2. Group Environment Scale (GES) (Moos, 1997)
3. Residential substance abuse and Psychiatric Programmes Inventory (RESPPI) (Timko 1994, 1995)
  1. Physical and Architectural (PACI)
  2. Programme and Service (PASCI)
  3. Resident Characteristics (RESOI)
  4. Community Oriented Programme Environment Scale (COPES)
  5. Rating Scale for Observers (RSO)
4. Good Milieu Index (Friis, 1996)
5. EssenCES (Schalast, 2008)

## **Community Oriented Programme Environment Scale (COPES)**

Moos (1974, 1996) identifies 10 critical factors in the 'therapeutic environment':

1. Involvement
2. Support
3. Spontaneous Behaviour
4. Autonomy
5. Practical Orientation
6. Personal Problem Orientation
7. Anger and Aggression
8. Order and Organisation
9. Clarity
10. Staff Control

COPES is a 100 True/False question measure.

## EssenCES

Schalast (2006) identified 3 'underlying' factors for the EssenCES:

1. Therapeutic Hold/Support
2. Experienced Safety
3. Patients Cohesion and Mutual Support

EssenCES is a very short (17 question) scale set across these items with excellent validity and wide usage.

I agree

|    |   | not at all               | little                   | somewhat                 | quite a lot              | very much                |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | This unit has a liveable atmosphere   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | The inmates care for each other   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3  | Really threatening situations can occur here  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4  | In this unit, inmates can openly talk to staff about all their problems                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5  | Even the weakest inmate finds support from his/her fellow inmates                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6  | There are some really aggressive inmates in this unit                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7  | Staff take a personal interest in the progress of inmates                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8  | Inmates care about their fellow inmates' problems                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9  | Some inmates are afraid of other inmates  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Staff members take a lot of time to deal with inmates                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | When inmates have a genuine concern, they find support from their fellow inmates        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | At times, members of staff feel threatened by some of the inmates                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | Often, staff seem not to care if inmates succeed or fail in the daily routine / program | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## EssenCES – problems

However:

1. It is only for use in forensic settings and some items are not suitable for other settings (e.g. “I am scared of some people”)
2. It is unidirectional, i.e. it tells us whether an environment is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ according to these scales rather than describing it
3. No special relevance to TCs/Enabling Environments

Therefore:

- We need a measure that is sensitive to the unique environmental situations of TCs
- It needs to be both statistically viable as well as theoretically consistent

## **The NLCB/ATC Project**

Association of Therapeutic Communities (ATC) together with the University of Nottingham, funded by the then National Lottery Charities Board, completed:

- A naturalistic, comparative, cross-institutional study ‘in the field’ to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic community treatment for people with personality disorders.
- This study looked at 21 therapeutic communities overall in England and Scotland which claimed to treat people with personality disorders, over the period 1999 – 2002.
- Was preceded by a systematic literature review + meta-analysis, and followed with 3 publications.



## **Factor analysis of the NLCB/ATC data**

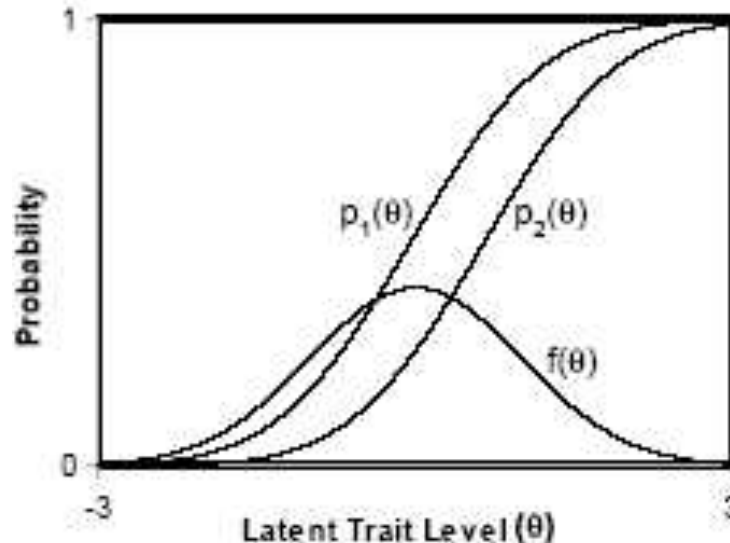
1. We used the data from the NLCB/ATC project to perform factor analysis to develop measure
2. 905 complete cases were selected from the original dataset in the analysis
3. Polychoric correlations were used with direct oblimin rotation
4. Item selection determinant on (in order):
  1. redundancy (i.e. the item did not duplicate existing items within the scale);
  2. high factor loading;
  3. low cross-factor loading;
  4. high item-total-correlation within the factor scale.

The scale was also updated to reflect more modern language used in therapeutic environments

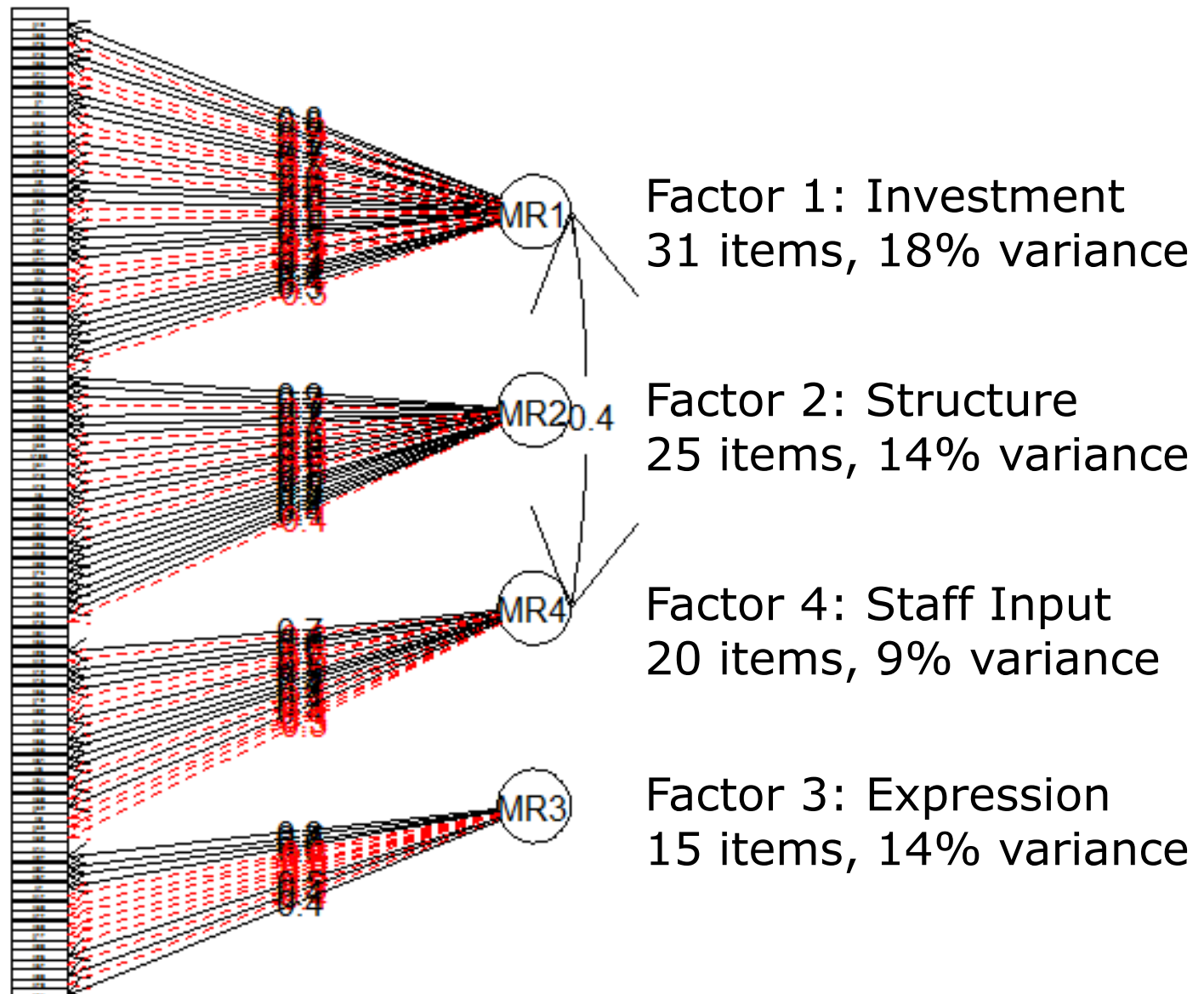
## Polychoric Factor Analysis

A *polychoric* correlation is an estimate of the relationship between dichotomous (or binary) variables.

It works by assuming that the relationship between the variables is really *continuous* and therefore that a certain point a high enough score on one variable would 'push' the other from one condition into another (e.g. From 'low' to 'high'):



# Results of a Polychoric Factor Analysis of ATC/NLCB COPES data – 41% variance



## Factor Structure of the SOCRaTEs

1. **Member Investment** - members' sense of investment in, and trust of, the therapeutic environment – i.e. Haigh's "Attachment" and Rapoport's "Involvement"
2. **Structure** - aspects of the environment relating to "Containment", which is related to safety, and does not have a direct parallel in the work of Rapoport except as the antithesis of "Permissiveness"
3. **Expression** - this scale was seen to relate to Rapoport's concept of "Therapeutic Permissiveness" and Haigh's comparable theme of "Communication"
4. **Staff input** - this factor is related to Rapoport's notion of "Democratisation" and also – albeit inversely – to Haigh's "Agency"

# SOCRaTEs: Initial Version

## SOCRATES

(Please tick one box for each question)

|  | Mostly<br>True              | Partly<br>True           | Neither<br>true nor<br>untrue | Partly<br>untrue         | Mostly<br>false          |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Staff and client member members have equal say in the running of the programme.        | NA <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Client members here follow a regular schedule every day                                | MI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Client members are expected to share their personal problems with each other           | MI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Very few client members have any responsibility around here                            | MI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Client members often help each other   | MI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Client members put a lot of energy into what they do around here                       | MI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Client members are strongly encouraged to be neat and orderly here                     | ST <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Client members here are expected to demonstrate continued progress towards their goals | ST <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Client members are rarely punished by taking away their privileges                     | ST <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 This place usually looks a little messy   | ST <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 Client members who break the rules are punished for it                                | ST <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 People feel free to express disagreement here   | EX <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 Client members here rarely argue with one another                                     | EX <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 Staff members never start arguments here  | EX <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 Sometimes people here play practical jokes on each other                              | EX <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16 Client members often complain about this programme                                    | EX <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 Staff rarely give client members a detailed explanation of what the program is about  | SI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 Staff always compliment a client member who does something well                       | SI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 There is little discussion about exactly what client members will do when they leave  | SI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 If a client member member's programme is changed, staff always explain why            | SI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 The staff go out of their way to help new members get acquainted here                 | SI <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22 I feel this programme is the right place for me                                       | NA <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## So what happens now....

- These results are only preliminary, we need to do more analysis, for example:
  - Differences within the dataset between staff /patients and different types of TCs
  - Further analysis on the factor structure of the measure
  - Further refinement of the individual items
- We also need to further validate the measure by trialling the measure in TCs
- More specifically, we need to collect data across TCs at three different time points: at 1, 6 and 12 month intervals
- Timescales to be determined (pending NHS ethical approval)





Personality disorder Institute  
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