

3 Interpreting and using the SNAP–Behaviour profile



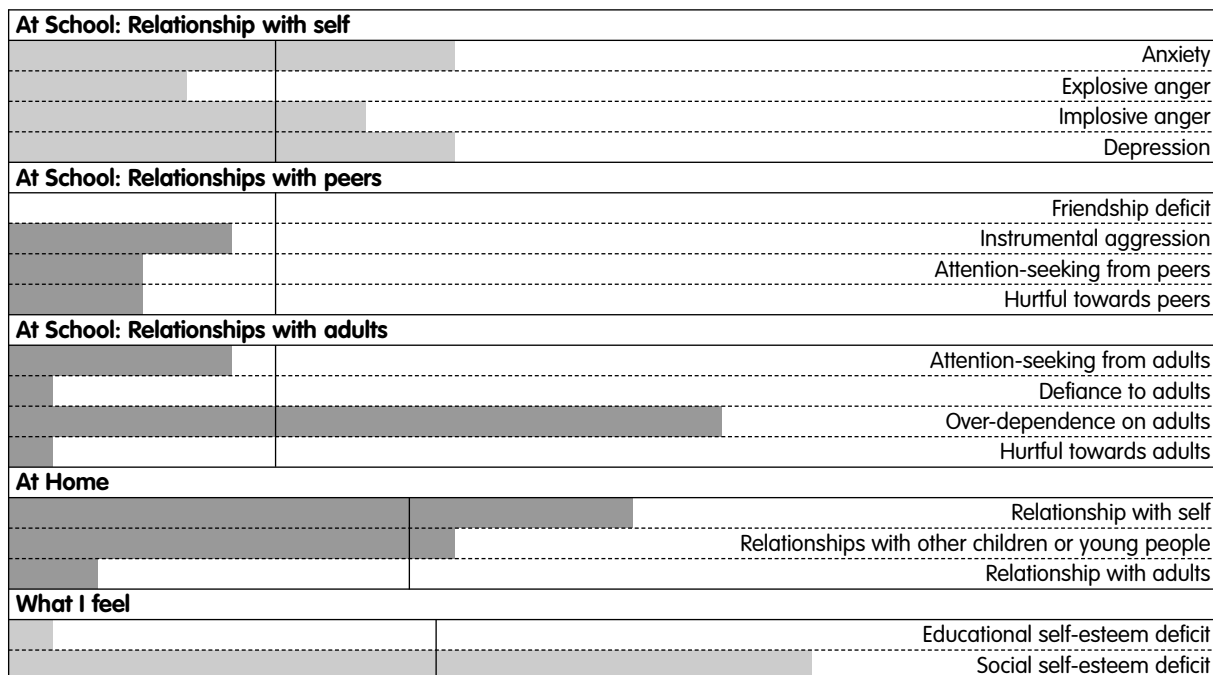
What SNAP–Behaviour gives you

Once answers have been entered into the computer, the underlying matrix of responses will then be analysed to yield the relative weightings of the problem areas detected. Clicking on the *View Profile* button brings up a bar chart showing the relative importance of each of the strands for that pupil.

The SNAP–Behaviour profile

This on-screen bar chart (which can be printed using the on-screen button) profiles the pupil’s apparent difficulties and contextual factors, based upon the answers to the questions. Three examples from the piloting and validation trials are shown below – each is the profile of an actual pupil, as perceived by his/her teacher or Learning Support/classroom assistant, with names changed to preserve anonymity.

Wayne



Here, it seems plausible that, in the classroom, Wayne’s anxiety, inwardly-turned anger and depression are leading (perhaps predictably) to a marked over-dependence upon adults. At home he presents as an unhappy child, without positive patterns of friends and relationships, though there are no problems with adult relationships at home. The lack of problems with educational self-esteem suggests that he may be academically successful – but the high score for social self-esteem deficit suggests that he perhaps feels his social difficulties very intensely.

Gemma

At School: Relationship with self		
		Anxiety
		Explosive anger
		Impulsive anger
		Depression
At School: Relationships with peers		
		Friendship deficit
		Instrumental aggression
		Attention-seeking from peers
		Hurtful towards peers
At School: Relationships with adults		
		Attention-seeking from adults
		Defiance to adults
		Over-dependence on adults
		Hurtful towards adults
At Home		
		Relationship with self
		Relationships with other children or young people
		Relationship with adults
What I feel		
		Educational self-esteem deficit
		Social self-esteem deficit

In Gemma’s case, in school her obvious outward-turning anger appears to be manifesting itself in a need to gain attention from peers; and it seems plausible that the defiance towards adults may be a means of gaining that peer attention. Equally plausibly, the adults may be direct targets of her explosive anger. Knowing the *contexts* in which her anger appears, and to whom it is directed, will obviously point the way here. Her ‘at home’ profile suggests that she is a difficult, unhappy and defiant child at home as well as at school; and the self-esteem profile suggests that she sees herself in very poor terms academically, but is socially quite comfortable with herself – she seems unaware of the peer difficulties observed in the classroom.

Lakshmi

At School: Relationship with self		
		Anxiety
		Explosive anger
		Impulsive anger
		Depression
At School: Relationships with peers		
		Friendship deficit
		Instrumental aggression
		Attention-seeking from peers
		Hurtful towards peers
At School: Relationships with adults		
		Attention-seeking from adults
		Defiance to adults
		Over-dependence on adults
		Hurtful towards adults
At Home		
		Relationship with self
		Relationships with other children or young people
		Relationship with adults
What I feel		
		Educational self-esteem deficit
		Social self-esteem deficit

As can be seen from the profile, Lakshmi seems angry with others, but also ready to use aggression quite deliberately for her own ends. Unsurprisingly, she has few friends. Her defiance towards adults might arguably be a result of her anger; or it might be part of the way in which she uses aggression towards her own ends. Her self-esteem, both social and educational, seems wholly unaffected; and at home it is only in her relationships with other children that there is significant difficulty – the scores suggest she seems happy with herself at home, and has good relationships with the adults in her home life.

Each of these pupils is all too recognisable – as is our bafflement about how best to help: *how* to start to defuse some of the anger or the anxiety; *how* to start to build the confidence; *how* to start to diminish the overdependence, or the readiness to exploit and manipulate peers....

The information/helpsheets

This is the purpose of the pull-down information/helpsheets. There is a separate sheet for each bar on the Profile, covering each strand of difficulty in school, at home and with self-esteem. They can all be accessed in full by clicking on-screen on the relevant bars of a pupil's profile: they are automatically personalised to the individual pupil, and are generated as Microsoft *Word* documents that you can edit and adapt as you wish.

As noted on page 16, you can now make the content of the personalised helpsheets more *age-appropriate* to the individual pupil. Thus, students of secondary-school age will not be provided with information about strategies, etc, which are clearly more relevant to primary-age pupils, and vice-versa. If you wish to include *all* available information, however, you can do so. (Pupils aged between 11 and 12 will always receive all available information, which you can then edit as appropriate.)

The twelve information/helpsheets for schools are similar in format, though obviously not in content. Each one sets out to explain the particular difficulty and how to recognise it; each offers an illustrative snapshot of such a pupil. Then, most importantly, comes the core content of the sheet, the *How can we help?* section. As well as suggesting a range of targeted strategies, each helpsheet uses a SEAL framework (see page 4) to encourage the pupil's understanding of his or her difficulties, and includes a checklist to help the pupil reflect about his/her progress in dealing with those difficulties

For parents, three information/helpsheets are available via the *At Home* part of the profile. Similarly, there are sheets for both educational and social self-esteem. Some examples are shown below.

Which strands should be seen as significant?

Even the most serene and well balanced among us would show some evidence of difficulties, were questionnaires such as these to be completed for us.

A difficulty is arguably only significant when a *significant cluster* of characteristics is present. All of us show *some* signs – happily, many fewer of us show enough signs to suggest a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty.

Answering all these questions about social, emotional and behavioural characteristics will produce *some* indicators for *any* learner. It is only when some notional critical threshold is passed that the cluster of characteristics becomes potentially significant.

Therefore it is expected that there will be a number of low-level positive responses showing on the profile for any pupil. For this reason, the *mean* difficulty level for each pupil is shown as a line across the bar chart. In the example given for Luke (p. 00), for his classroom behaviour, six strands were clearly above this line, the others below it. The picture is one of an unhappy, lonely and withdrawn pupil at school, which is also reflected in a low social self-esteem, and difficulties with peers at home as well.

Note that this ‘mean’ line is the mean of the scores *for that individual pupil*: it does not represent a norm of any kind, nor an arbitrary cut-off point. It simply provides you with further information upon which to base your interpretation of the pupil’s difficulties.

In deciding which strands are significant, it would not be helpful to suggest precise guidelines and cut-off points. But it seems a helpful rule of thumb to assume that those which are clearly above the average *for that pupil* are those which should take priority. Exactly which strands they should be remains a matter for individual judgement in each case.

As stated earlier, it is not essential to answer *all* questions in the SNAP–B questionnaires – but the more that can be answered, the more accurate and reliable the assessment is likely to be. As a general guide to the confidence that can be placed in a given SNAP–B assessment, therefore, the ‘**confidence indicator**’ at the top of each on-screen profile gives the overall percentage of questions in the School and Home questionnaires that have been answered – i.e. excluding any questions which may have been skipped altogether. While this clearly does not constitute a formal psychometric measure of confidence, it does provide a useful commonsense indicator as to whether further information should be sought before major decisions are taken.

Important caution: Your own professional judgement, and knowledge of the pupil’s circumstances, are important in interpreting the Profile: *this is not a standardised assessment.*

Feedback to school and families – which sheets?

Because difficulties seldom exist in isolation, it is likely that more than one will be prominent for any single pupil. It will depend upon your professional judgement which to select and how many to act upon. Whether to issue several SNAP–Behaviour helpsheets, or whether to use them to compile a single individualised resource, will again depend upon your professional judgement and the time available. The advice should be regarded as a pic’n’mix bank of ideas, to be combined with the ideas and approaches already in use in each school, according to the combination of difficulties experienced by each pupil. All the advice will not be suited to every pupil with that difficulty or at every age-group – select according to your knowledge of the pupil; and if there are ideas from other sections that suit a particular pupil, use them too.

A general observation of how boys and girls respond to their challenges is that girls are more able and comfortable verbally expressing their feelings and exploring solutions based on cognitive insight. Boys, generally speaking, are more receptive to active and experiential interventions such as role play.

Intervention programmes that are actively supported by a pupil's home are *much* more likely to be effective than when a school works alone.

The sheets for 'Explosive anger' and for 'Helping at Home: relationships with adults' are shown as examples.

Sample information/helpsheets

