



Sample Immigration Psychosocial Evaluation - COR Visa

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PSYCHOSOCIAL EVALUATION

Name: Johnny Doe
Date of evaluation: February 24, 2024
March 4, 2024
March 16, 2024
Evaluator: Name, Credentials (FL License # MHXXXXXX)
Date of Report: March 29, 2024

Evaluation Procedures:

- Clinical interview with Johnny Doe
- Clinical interview with Johnny’s mother - Mrs. Jane Doe
- Revised Children's Depression and Anxiety Scale (RCADS)
- Revised Children's Depression and Anxiety Scale – Parent version (RCADS-P)

The above procedures were conducted in English (with Johnny) and in Spanish (with his mother) in a virtual meeting room. All historical information is based on the statements of Johnny Doe and his mother, Mrs. Doe.

I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor based in Tampa, Florida, in good standing with the Florida Board of Mental Health Counseling. I hold a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling from Nova Southeastern University and bring over a decade of clinical experience in diverse inpatient and outpatient settings with expertise in clinical assessment and evaluation.

I am not Johnny Doe’s therapist and met with him solely for the purpose of this psychosocial evaluation. I met with him as an impartial, objective assessor, and I have no vested interest in the outcome of his father’s immigration case.

Per the recommendations of the APA (American Psychological Association), I do not provide



increase the risk of developing other mental health issues later in life⁴; Some studies suggest an association between childhood anxiety disorders and depression and substance use disorder in adulthood⁵.

To address Johnny's separation anxiety disorder, I strongly recommend initiating individual and family therapy with a child and adolescent psychiatrist or psychologist specializing in attachment issues. This therapeutic approach will focus on developing coping mechanisms and alleviating symptoms. Mrs. Doe has already taken the initiative to contact the school counselor to discuss these concerns.

A comprehensive treatment plan incorporating cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychoeducation would be beneficial at this stage. CBT techniques, such as psychoeducation, cognitive restructuring, and gradual exposure therapy, can be effective in managing anxiety. I have provided his parents with information on separation anxiety disorder and local mental health resources.

A separation from his mother would have significant negative impacts on Johnny, including:

Family Ties and Impact

- Johnny, a native-born American, has formed a deep and enduring bond with his mother. She is his primary source of love, support, and guidance. Any separation would be a traumatic event, likely causing significant emotional distress and negatively impacting his future development.
- For Johnny, the absence of his mother would cause significant psychological damage and would have dire consequences for his future emotional development. He is already experiencing profound emotional distress with only the possibility of family disruption.
- If Mrs. Doe were not permitted to remain in the United States, Mr. Doe would be parenting Johnny on his own, which would place him at a higher risk for emotional problems. Studies suggest that single parents are more likely to have poor mental and physical health than partnered parents^{6 7}.
- Studies from Canada, the United Kingdom, and South Korea that compared single and

4 Patel AK, Bryant B. Separation Anxiety Disorder. JAMA. 2021;326(18):1880. doi:10.1001/jama.2021.17269

5 Woodward LJ, Fergusson DM. Life course outcomes of young people with anxiety disorders in adolescence. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2001 Sep;40(9):1086-93.

6 Kong KA, Choi HY, Kim SI. Mental health among single and partnered parents in South Korea. PLoS One. 2017;12(8):e0182943. 10.1371/journal.pone.0182943

7 Tobias M, Gerritsen S, Kokaua J, Templeton R. Psychiatric illness among a nationally representative sample of sole and partnered parents in New Zealand. Aust N Z J Psychiatry. 2009;43(2):136-144. 10.1080/00048670802607196



partnered fathers showed that single fathers have poorer self-rated health⁸, more depression⁹, and poorer quality of life¹⁰. This would impact Mr. Doe's ability to parent effectively and provide emotional support for Johnny. It would also limit Mr. Doe's ability to maintain a healthy and well balanced lifestyle that would support continued growth in his chosen field.

- Being raised alone without his mother would impact Johnny both psychologically and emotionally. Children separated from their mothers are at a much higher risk for many social and emotional problems. The overwhelming surge of stress hormones can have detrimental effects on the body, increasing the likelihood of developing serious health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and various cancers¹¹.

Social and Cultural Impact

- Johnny was born and raised in the United States. He sees himself as an American, and this country is the only home he has ever known.
- If Mrs. Doe were to return to Panama, the high cost of frequent travel for Johnny to visit his father would be a significant financial burden. As the sole income earner, Mr. Doe would not be able to afford these travel expenses. Additionally, the family's financial situation, including the lack of affordable child care, requires that they remain together.
- Johnny has lived his entire life in the United States, and although he speaks some Spanish, his formal education has been in English. If he had to begin attending school in Panama, the teachers would only speak Spanish, and Johnny would have difficulty understanding the material. As a result, he would likely fall behind in his studies.
- Johnny is currently enrolled in school in St. Petersburg, FL, where he is learning standard fifth-grade academic material. He is thriving and supported by his teachers. If he were to relocate, he would not have access to the same educational opportunities he does in the United States.

⁸ Janzen BL, Green K, Muhajarine N. The health of single fathers: demographic, economic and social correlates. *Can J Public Health*. 2006;97(6):440–444.

⁹ Cooper C, Bebbington PE, Meltzer H, et al. Depression and common mental disorders in lone parents: results of the 2000 National Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. *Psychol Med*. 2008;38(3):335–342. 10.1017/S0033291707001493

¹⁰ Kong KA, Kim SI. Mental health of single fathers living in an urban community in South Korea. *Compr Psychiatry*. 2015;56:188–197. 10.1016/j.comppsy.2014.09.012

¹¹ Allison Eck, Psychological Damage Inflicted by Parent-Child Separation is Deep, Long-Lasting, NOVA Next (June 20, 2018),

[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/body/psychological-damage-inflicted-by-parent-child-separation-is-deep-long-](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/body/psychological-damage-inflicted-by-parent-child-separation-is-deep-long-lasting/)

[lasting/?utm_source=FBPAGE&utm_medium=social&utm_term=20180620&utm_content=1603761016&linkId=53285432&utm_source=FBPAGE&utm_medium=social&utm_term=20180623&utm_content=1608267756&linkId=53391996](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/body/psychological-damage-inflicted-by-parent-child-separation-is-deep-long-lasting/?utm_source=FBPAGE&utm_medium=social&utm_term=20180620&utm_content=1603761016&linkId=53285432&utm_source=FBPAGE&utm_medium=social&utm_term=20180623&utm_content=1608267756&linkId=53391996)

Economic Impact

- If Mrs. Doe were to return to Panama, the cost of travel for her son to visit regularly would be prohibitive. If Mr. Doe was the sole breadwinner for the family, and perhaps supported his family financially in Panama, he could not afford for Johnny to travel to visit him, and he would have difficulty maintaining two households. .
- Currently, Mr. Doe is the main breadwinner for the family and Mrs. Doe helps with part time earnings from helping care for the neighbor. If Mrs. Doe were not allowed to remain in the United States, the family would lose the main caregiver support for the children, and Mr. Doe would not be able to afford child care to maintain his employment as a truck driver.

Health Conditions and Care

- Johnny is suffering from Separation Anxiety Disorder, and an extended separation from his mother would make him more vulnerable to other psychological disorders. Studies show that experiences of separation from parents in immigrant children lead to these children exhibiting poorer literacy and higher risk of emotional and behavioral problems than children who stay with their parents.¹²
- In my professional opinion, Johnny would benefit significantly from psychotherapy to address his Separation Anxiety Disorder. The anticipatory grief and severe fear of family disruption he is experiencing at such a young age is concerning and could have lasting negative effects if the family were to be separated.
- The mental health system of Panama has serious limitations and a marked lack of qualified human resources. In addition to already existing limitations, there has been a global spike in psychiatric illnesses and overall quality of life since the 2020 pandemic. Despite legislation in 2023 categorizing mental health as a human right, there has been no report of regulation since the law came to be.¹³ If Johnny were to relocate to Panama, it would be difficult for him to receive the care he needs.
- In the United States, mental health care is far more accessible than in Panama; the World Health Organization reports that in Panama, there are 5.84 psychiatrists per

¹² Lu Y, He Q, Brooks-Gunn J. Diverse Experience of Immigrant Children: How Do Separation and Reunification Shape Their Development? *Child Dev.* 2020 Jan;91(1):e146-e163. doi: 10.1111/cdev.13171. Epub 2018 Oct 19. PMID: 30339267; PMCID: PMC6474826.

¹³ The Borgen Project. (2024, November 18). The New Reform Benefiting Mental Health in Panama. [borgenproject.org]. Retrieved from <https://borgenproject.org/mental-health-in-panama/>



100,000 people and 5.20 psychologists per 100,000 people¹⁴. In comparison, in the United States, there are 29.86 psychologists and 10.54 psychiatrists per 100,000 people¹⁵.

In my professional opinion, Johnny would be psychologically devastated to lose his mother as she is a primary attachment figure in his life. He is already showing profound symptoms in the form of fear, worry, headaches, stomach aches and social anxiety and isolation. If Johnny were to relocate to Panama in an effort to maintain family unification, he would not have access to the psychological care that he requires. Johnny is showing signs of increasing anxiety that is becoming intrusive and pervasive. Any extended separation from his father could result in further profound emotional and mental impacts.

I, Maria Carusillo, LMHC, hereby state and declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the United States that the above declaration is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signature

Evaluator Name, Credentials
March 29, 2024

¹⁴Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization (April 15, 2022) Country Profiles (Panama) World Health Organization Mental Health Atlas – 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/mental-health-atlas-gtm-2020-country-profile>

¹⁵ Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization (2018) Country Profiles (United States) World Health Organization Mental Health Atlas – 2017 Retrieved from https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/atlas/profiles-2017/USA.pdf?ua=1