



Sample Immigration Psychosocial Evaluation - VAWA Visa

This is a partial report for demonstration purposes only: as part of our commitment to privacy, we do not include any identifying information in sample documents. Actual Immigration Evaluations are more detailed and comprehensive.

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PSYCHOSOCIAL EVALUATION

Name: “Juana Perez”

Date of evaluation: September 24, 2022
October 4, 2022
October 16, 2022

Evaluator: Maria Carusillo, LMHC (FL License # MH13789)

Date of Report: October 29, 2022

Evaluation Procedures

- Clinical interview
- Clinician Administered PTSD Scale for DSM 5 (CAPS 5)
- Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale 21 Items (DASS 21)
- Review of legal records

The above procedures were conducted in Spanish in a virtual meeting room. All historical information is based on the statements of Juana Perez. 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 Mrs. Perez' therapist and met with her solely for the purpose of this psychosocial evaluation. I met with her as an impartial, objective assessor, and I have no vested interest in the outcome of his immigration case.

Per the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA), I do not provide therapeutic services to clients for whom I have completed an evaluation. The APA guidelines



state that “providing forensic and therapeutic psychological services to the same individual or closely related individuals involves multiple relationships that may impair objectivity and/or cause exploitation or other harm.”¹

Therefore, if the results of the assessment conclude that therapeutic services are recommended, I'll follow ethical guidelines and refer the client to a qualified clinician.

Identifying Information and Reason for Referral

Mrs. Juana Perez is a 27-year-old native of Nicaragua who has lived in the United States since 2019. In 2013, she met Mr. John Q. in Nicaragua, had a daughter by him in 2014, and married him in Florida in 2019. After living together, Mr. Q. became manipulative and emotionally and physically abusive. The relationship dynamics worsened and became increasingly unsafe as Mrs. Perez started her married life with Mr. Q. and their daughter. Mrs. Perez is in the process of separating from Mr. Q., and Suncoasts to find alternative housing for herself and her daughter within the next few days.

Mrs. Perez was referred by her immigration attorney for a clinical evaluation to assess the impact of the domestic violence she experienced during her marriage to Mr. Q.

Behavioral Observations and Mental Status

Mrs. Perez appeared promptly for her scheduled virtual session at the agreed date and time. She was well-groomed and dressed appropriately in casual attire. She presented as cooperative and answered all questions that were asked. Overall, she had a respectful and polite demeanor. She expressed nervousness due to the sensitive nature of the topics to be discussed. She would become tense, and her affect appeared tearful when describing traumatic incidents. Her speech was fluent, and there was no evidence of a thought disorder. Sessions were held in Spanish for her comfort, although she is able to understand some English.

Mrs. Perez was alert and oriented to person, place, and time. Her mood was anxious and stressed, and her affect fluctuated between tearful and anxious. Her responses were coherent and easy to

¹ American Psychological Association (2013) *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology*. American Psychologist, January 2013. doi: <https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/forensic-psychology>



violence with Mr. Q.. She is now seeking legal counsel to protect herself and her daughter from separation following years of threats from her husband.

Education and Employment History

Mrs. Perez enjoyed school and reports being a good student. She completed her high school education and was pursuing a degree in Accounting in Managua, Nicaragua. She reports being one year shy of graduation when Mr. Q. encouraged her to quit her studies after their move to the United States. He stated that it was more important for Mrs. Perez to become employed and contribute to the household's finances.

Mrs. Perez obtained a work permit, which is still active. Once she started earning personal income, Mr. Q. became controlling, manipulative, threatened deportation, verbally abused Mrs. Perez and her daughter, and was physically assaultive in front of the child.

Mrs. Perez is currently working three jobs: as a store clerk at Marshalls during the day and overnight as part of the cleaning crew at the Dollar Tree, in addition to cleaning homes on the weekend. Mrs. Perez' long-term goal is to secure housing for her and her daughter and eventually continue her studies to become an accountant.

Marriage to Mr. Q.

Mrs. Perez met Mr. Q. while she was still living in Nicaragua. They met in an area called Managua. An aunt of Mrs. Perez had met Mr. Q. in Portland, Oregon, and introduced them. They began dating in 2013 and would see each other approximately six times a year, either with him visiting Nicaragua or Mrs. Perez traveling to Portland where he lived at the time.

Mrs. Perez became pregnant with their daughter in 2013, and on April 12, 2014, she gave birth to Kai in Masaya, Nicaragua. Mr. Q. chose to retire and move to Masaya, Nicaragua, in 2017 to live with Mrs. Perez and their child. She was working as an esthetician and attending school to become an English teacher. Mr. Q.'s patterns of manipulation and abuse began with him ejecting Mrs. Perez from their home whenever he became angry at her. At that time, she had the resources, access to family, and community support to manage his aggressions. In 2018, they separated for four months due to continuous squabbling but decided to try again for the sake of



and threats, including physical and sexual assault. Their child has been used as leverage, Mr. Q. multiple times threatening to take her daughter away. Isolated from family and community support, Mrs. Perez has had limited options to remove herself from the unsafe environment she is in.

Mrs. Perez is presently working with Legal Aid of Sarasota to learn more about her rights and her options to maintain custody of her child. She is attempting to leave her home with Mr. Q. and seek shelter with help from a friend she met through work and through use of a family services non-profit agency. Since the beginning stages of the relationship, Mrs. Perez reports noticing signs of controlling and manipulative behavior, but for what she thought to be the emotional health of their child, she chose to stay in the relationship. Mrs. Perez, has experienced profound effects on her mental health which have affected her ability to cope with basic life stressors on a daily basis. Mrs. Perez is traumatized, and her mental health is significantly affected as a result of the years of domestic violence encountered.

Based on my clinical observations, her report of symptoms, and the tests administered, I have diagnosed Mrs. Perez with:

- **F43.10 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**
- **Rule Out Major Depressive Disorder**

I recommend further observation and monitoring of Mrs. Perez' symptoms to determine if a separate mood disorder diagnosis, such as Major Depression, is warranted. Her depressive symptoms may be a response to the history of trauma she has endured. In addition to individual therapy, I suggest she consider joining a support group to explore the potential psychological impacts of her years of abuse and to learn coping skills that can alleviate her more acute symptoms. Specifically, I recommend seeking a therapist trained in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) or another trauma-focused modality to help manage the acute symptoms of PTSD. Suncoast Family Services can provide referrals to trauma therapists. She has been provided with resources on safety planning for domestic violence and is advised to continue working closely with her advocates at Suncoast.