

# MARET Counseling and Assessment Software

*Update Version 2.3.0*  
*Release Date: May 24, 2008*

This is one of our most significant updates so far. Many new features have been added. Furthermore, a lot of code has been cleaned up that has needed clean-up for a long time. The new features to the system will greatly enhance what you do as a counselor. This is especially true of the *Individual Treatment Planner* and the *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts Management System*.

Version 2.3.0 was targeted long ago as the finalization of my creative efforts. For approximately eight years my son Nick and I have been laboriously programming the *Millennium Edition* of the *Counseling and Assessment Software*.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the versions named 2.2.x I have endeavored to add new features and enhance existing features. This was a sort of evolutionary process (as I grew toward my Doctorate, the software grew). I had envisioned that Version 2.3.0 would be the culmination of that work: the completion of the whole *Counseling and Assessment Software* package. This current release is that version and I believe I have accomplished what I intended to do. This, essentially, is my legacy.

This version of the *Counseling and Assessment Software* package is the most robust counseling tool available anywhere by any means available. I dare to say that nothing else will ever match its potential and scope. It can do virtually anything that a counselor or a licensed therapist wishes to do. There is nothing outstanding that has not been covered; nothing substantial needs to be added to the system to enhance it any more.

While this may be the case, we will continue to refine this version and post updates as the system is further refined. This will include a comprehensive review of all printed and viewable documentation. It will include additional documentation as time goes on. Furthermore, it will include the next phase of our development: comprehensive education for counselors and professional therapists.

We understand that some of our users are marginally equipped to deal with the situations that they deal with. Those users are in a bind. Oftentimes, they are required to counsel individuals that they do not feel competent to counsel. Even worse, they are not in a situation that will allow them to engage in extensive structured education to equip them to counsel in those situations.

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<sup>1</sup> The *MARET Counseling and Assessment Software* package has existed in various other formats since 1988.

Therefore, we plan to provide that education on the *MARET Premium*<sup>2</sup> website so that counselors and therapists of all types can be fully equipped to counsel in the situations that come to them.

We believe this is especially important as insurance regulations drive more and more people to “free” counseling. In our economy people don’t have the means to pay for extensive professional counseling. Insurance regulations are continually limiting the number of sessions that a person can engage in with a professional counselor. This diminishing of services will continue as our economy continues to erode. Often people turn to pastoral counselors and expect the same service as they would receive in professional counseling. We will do our best to equip you in that endeavor. Modules like the *Individual Treatment Planner* and the *Mood/Anxiety Disorders* module are a movement in that direction.

Below you will find a summary of each of the major modifications that we have made to the system. There are many other minor revisions that we have not listed.

## **Individual Treatment Planner**

### **Features of the Individual Treatment Planner**

We have intended to create an *Individual Treatment Planner* for a long time. The creation of the *Relationship Treatment Planner* laid the groundwork for the *Individual Treatment Planner* and provided a “template” for its creation. That template allowed use to create the *Individual Treatment Planner* in a matter of days, once we engaged the project.

What is the *Individual Treatment Planner* designed to do? It has the same framework as the *Relationship Treatment Planner*. Its scope, however, is much more comprehensive for the individual. The *Individual Treatment Planner* is designed to assess thirty-four different areas of possible deviation in the client’s life. When deviation is located, those areas are displayed in the *Individual Treatment Planner* treatment plan.

As is the case with the *Relationship Treatment Planner*, the *Individual Treatment Planner* creates a comprehensive individualized treatment plan for counseling. There are over 500 variables associated with this treatment plan creation. No two treatment plans will ever be the same.

After administering a series of *MARET Assessments*, the treatment plan is created. That treatment plan virtually directs the counseling process from beginning to end. This includes the potential inclusion of 20 DSM-IV technical diagnoses and treatment suggestions for those issues. You are informed from beginning to end what needs to be done to complete treatment for every issue that is raised by the client’s own self-reporting.

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<sup>2</sup> Please contact us if you are not a member of the *MARET Premium* website. If you counsel to any extent it is imperative that you become a member of this web site.

## How to use the Individual Treatment Planner

It is best not to exclude any *Assessment* that the *Individual Treatment Planner* “wants” to include. Therefore, in order to use the *Individual Treatment Planner* the therapist should first administer the following Assessments: *QuikTest*, the *Personality Style Assessment*, the *Addiction and Dependency Scale*, and the *Foundations Assessment*. The therapist should also go through the *Mood/Anxiety Disorders* framework to discover specific DSM-IV issues that are present in the client (that framework is discussed below).

Once you have administered all of the *Assessments* and you have surveyed the *Mood/Anxiety Disorders* framework, you should proceed to the *Individual Treatment Planner*. You may attach *Assessments* when you enter the *Individual Treatment Planner* or you may attach them manually later on. Once all of the *Assessments* have been attached (or excluded), the individual treatment plan is automatically created. Once you accept the *Terms of Use*, you can view that comprehensive treatment plan. You will find this treatment plan most enlightening and most helpful in any individual counseling session.

Try it out and see what it can do for you. To enter the *Individual Treatment Planner* click on the button indicated by the arrow below (in *Figure #1*).

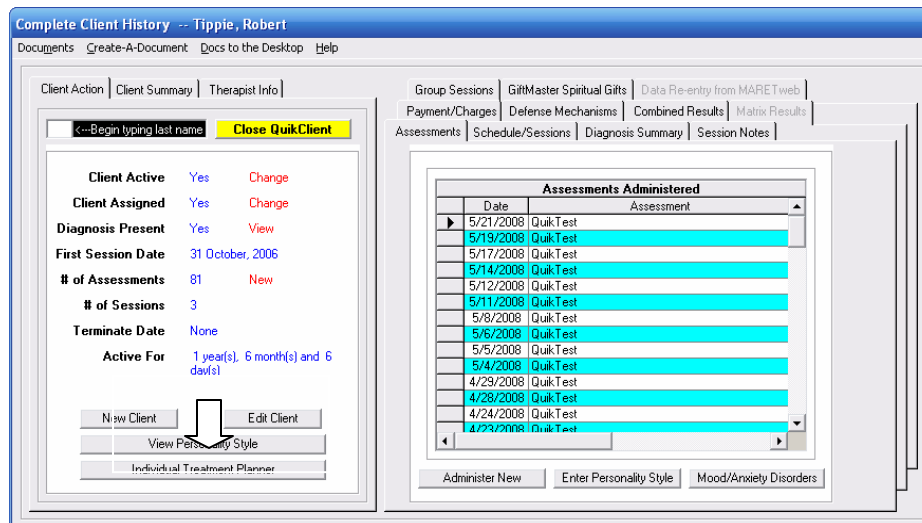


Figure #1: Location of the Individual Treatment Planner

Below (in *Figure #2*) you will find a graphic representation of the first screen in the *Individual Treatment Planner*. It displays a summary of all information related to the client’s case. More specific and more detailed information can be obtained regarding specific treatment procedures and modalities by clicking on each of the additional tabs. Additional information is included on the Help menu click at the top of the page.

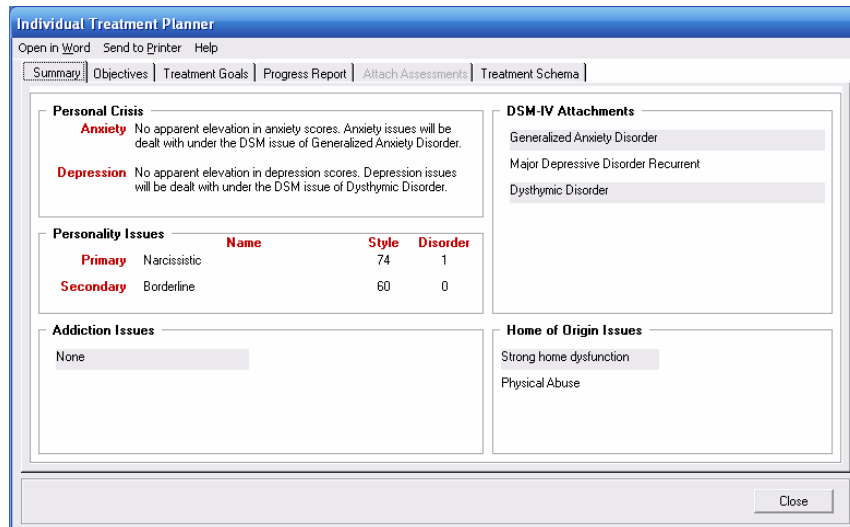


Figure #2: Summary Screen in the Individual Treatment Planner

## Personality Style Assessment Workbook

The *Personality Style Assessment* has been part of the *MARET Counseling and Assessment Software* package for some time. Its use, however, is not as prevalent as we would desire. Unfortunately, this tool is the most comprehensive assessment of personality style and disorder available anywhere, even though it lacks substantial use. It assesses personality according to the most current standards of personality assessment. It is also attachable to the *Individual Treatment Planner* and the *Relationship Treatment Planner* for comprehensive treatment directives.

One of the probable reasons for the lack of use for the *Personality Style Assessment* is because it is somewhat “hidden” from the user’s view. If the user does not know how to access it, they will not use it (even if it is free to use!). Therefore, we have moved it more toward the forefront of the system. Use of this tool is essential in all counseling cases. You must use it. There is no case wherein the *Personality Style Assessment* should not be used. Future upgrades to this system will focus more and more on the use of this tool. Learn to use and interpret this vital *Assessment*. It is so essential.

Below (on the next page in *Figure #3*) the arrows indicate the place to obtain a printed copy of the *Personality Style Assessment*, the place where the *Personality Style Assessment* paper result should be entered, and the location where the *Personality Style Assessment* can be viewed, once they are entered into the system.

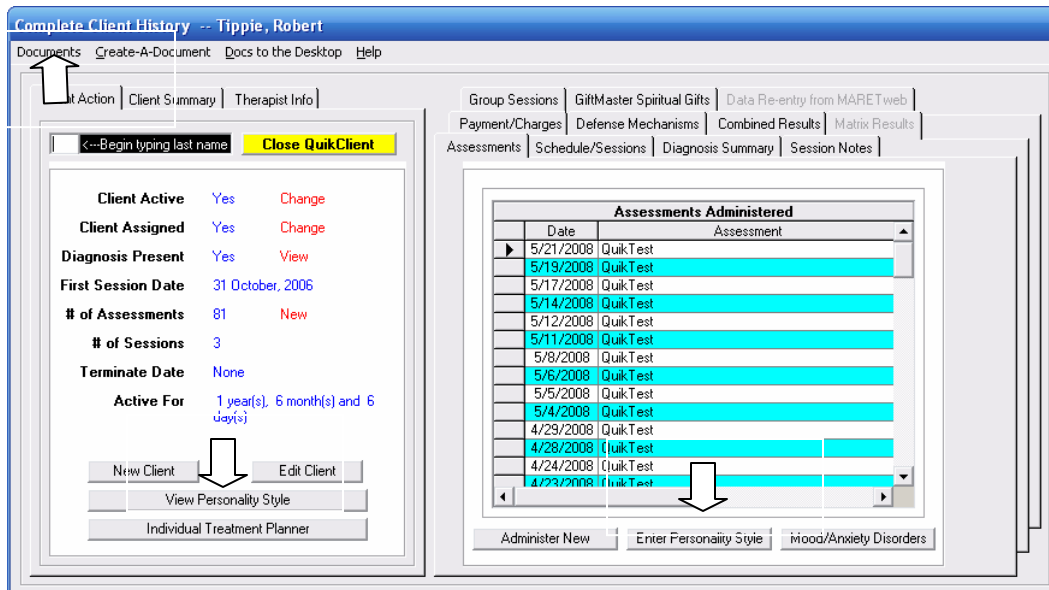


Figure #3: Location of Important Personality Style Clicks

The screen below is a visualization of the results that are obtained when you click on the *VIEW PERSONALITY STYLE* button (Figure #4). Notice that there is a click for a *Personalized Workbook*. This is a comprehensive document that leads the client through every facet of dealing with their personality issues. The therapist may choose to go through this document with the client or the therapist may choose to allow the client to have this document and go through it on their own (based on the client's motivation and orientation to their disorders).

The *Personalized Workbook* is an all-new feature of the *Personality Style Assessment* reporting data for Version 2.3.0. Use it as often as you can. It is free to use!

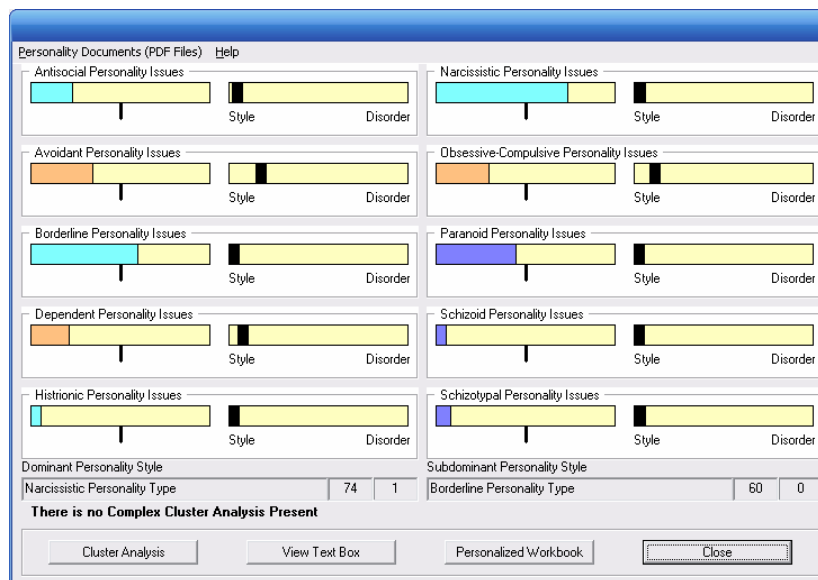


Figure #4: The Personality Style Graphics Screen

## GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts Management System

The *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts Management System* has always been a “dream” of mine. However, I have been keenly aware of the fact that the old system did not function as I intended – if it functioned well at all. That was partly because of old programming mentality that was used in the system’s creation. It was also due to the fact that there was always something more pressing to complete, before we upgraded *GiftMaster*.

My original intentions were to create a comprehensive system wherein a congregational leadership could rapidly administer the *Spiritual Gifts Assessment* (no matter what the congregation’s size) and then attach each individual to specific volunteer jobs within the congregation that accurately matched their gifts. Thus, *GiftMaster* is designed to be much more than simply a spiritual gifts assessment – that is the purpose of the *Spiritual Gifts Assessment* developed by *MARET*; *GiftMaster* is a whole different “animal.”

In the current version of the *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts Management System* you can record each volunteer job in the congregation. Then, you can attach spiritual gifts needed for that job. Finally, the system allows you to locate individuals to fill those jobs in three distinctly different ways. At any given time you can clearly see all open volunteer positions that have not been filled and all individuals who are not currently attached to a volunteer job.

This system allows you to use as many people as possible in volunteer positions. Furthermore, it boosts morale in your congregation since the most people possible will be doing exactly what they are gifted to do!

If you have been a user of *MARET* for some time and you have never experienced the *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts Management System*, now is the time to start! *Figure #5* below shows what you see when you click on the *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts* tab. It also shows you the location of the “button” to enter the *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts System* main menu.

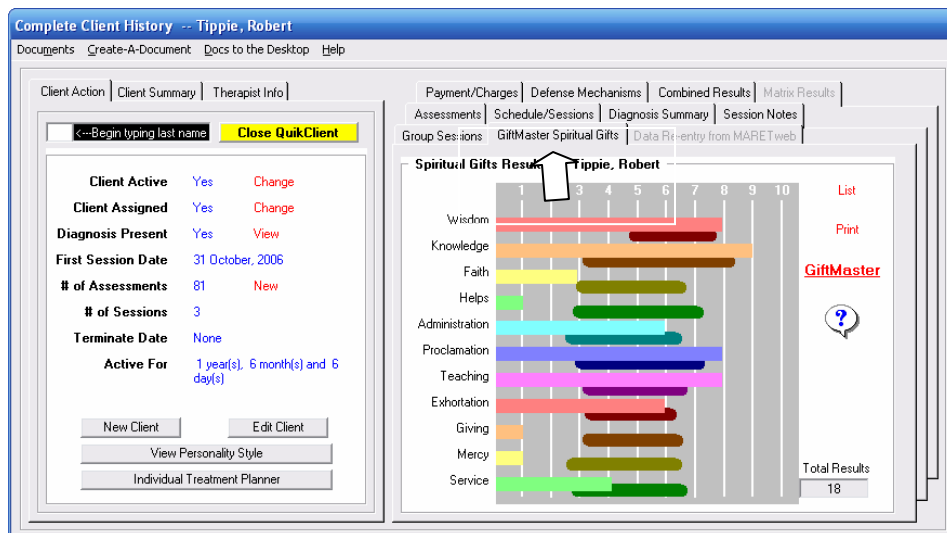


Figure #5: GiftMaster Tab and GiftMaster Entry

Below (Figure #6) the user will find a graphic representation of the entry screen of the *GiftMaster Spiritual Gifts Management System*. This screen provides a summary of information related to all gifts in the system, gifts that have been attached to specific jobs, and an average of all eleven gifts for the whole congregation.

The user will note that there are a number of tabs at the top of the *GiftMaster* main screen. Those tabs allow the user to do the following: (1) View and edit information related to specific volunteer jobs within the congregation; (2) view people who have taken the *Spiritual Gifts Assessment*; (3) locate a job for a specific person; (4) query all open jobs with appropriately matching people; (5) view complete job/people matches; and, (6) view the complete job base hierarchy.

This program is worth the cost of the *MARET Counseling and Assessment Software* package alone. If used to its fullest extent, it will revolutionize the way your congregation functions.

More comprehensive *GiftMaster* education can be found on the *MARET Premium* web site after June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008.<sup>3</sup>

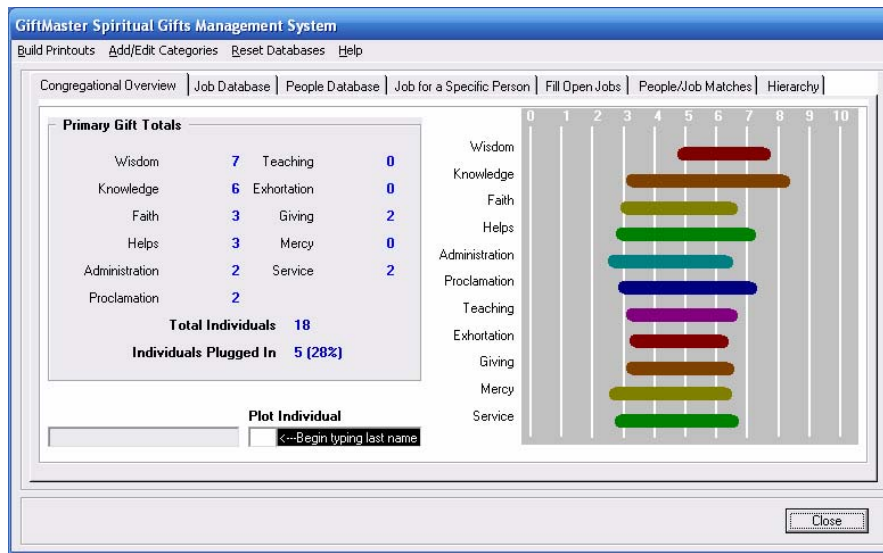


Figure #6: *GiftMaster* Main Entry Screen

## Mood/Anxiety Disorders

The DSM-IV is often a complicated tool to use. And, many pastors don't even know what it is. However, there are some benefits to understanding the diagnostic criteria associated with the DSM-IV classifications.

There are two distinct areas of the DSM-IV that gather a significant amount of the diagnoses when individuals come into counseling. Those areas are associated with Mood Disorders and

<sup>3</sup> If you are not a member of the *MARET Premium* web site, please contact us at the phone number/email address located on our web site at: [www.maretsoftware.com](http://www.maretsoftware.com).

Anxiety Disorders. Our society is over-run by both of these disorders at this time (and probably will be for a long time in the future).

The Anxiety Disorder classification is rather self-explanatory. It deals with all manner of anxiety states that might afflict an individual. The Mood Disorders classification, however, is somewhat covered up by the title. Mood Disorders include things like Major Depressive Disorder and Dysthymia (which is a lower-grade form of depression). These are prevalent throughout our society (and, they are becoming more prevalent by the day).

Although you may not deal with the DSM-IV on a regular basis, it is important to accurately assess an individual “technically” when they come into your office. Technical assessment of an individual always affects the way that you treat an individual in therapy. Without a tool like the *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component this creates a perplexing situation: either you take the time to learn the whole structure and diagnostics of the DSM-IV, or you do without that critical information.<sup>4</sup> You have no choice but to choose one option or the other.

We have eliminated the need for you to choose between no technical diagnosis and prolonged (and painful) education. We have created a module that will do the diagnosing for you! All you need to do is answer some questions about the demeanor of the client. When you have answered those questions, you will be presented with technical diagnostic statements associated with your responses to the questions on the *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component.

The *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* information is automatically attached to a client’s record when you select it. No further action or education is required on your part. Furthermore, when you use the comprehensive *Individual Treatment Planner* the disorders assessed on the *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component are listed on the *Individual Treatment Planner*. There are specific and intricately created treatment directives for each of those disorders. Thus, you are guided along every step of the way!

Below (in *Figure #7*) the arrow indicates the way that you display the *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component. Click on that option once you have a client loaded to assess an individual with the *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component.

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<sup>4</sup> Technical diagnosis of an individual is critical since treatment modalities may vary according to the technical diagnosis. The *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component does the diagnosis for you!

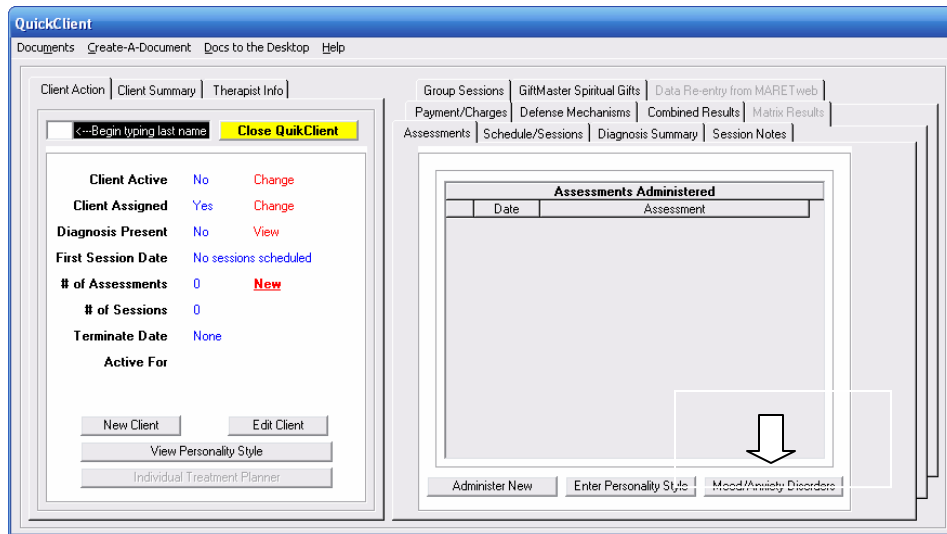


Figure #7: Entering Mood/Anxiety Disorders

Once you click on the *Mood/Anxiety Disorders* button (above in *Figure #7*), you will be presented with up to thirty different screens associated with technical DSM-IV criteria related to all Mood Disorders and Anxiety Disorders in the DSM-IV. (There may be substantially less screens based on the choices that you make.) This is essentially a decision-tree-type process. All you need to do is answer questions about the condition of a client. These questions are all related to technical DSM-IV criteria for diagnosis. You do not need to know those technical criteria nor their associated diagnosis. You simply need to answer the questions. When you are finished answering the appropriate questions, there will be diagnostic criteria available to you, if there is a diagnosis is present. If a diagnosis is present, a simple mouse-click will apply that diagnosis to the client's record. No other education is needed on your part.

Below (in *Figure #8*) you can see the entrance screen to the *Mood/Anxiety Disorder* component. Once you click on the *NEXT* button, you will receive additional information to answer.

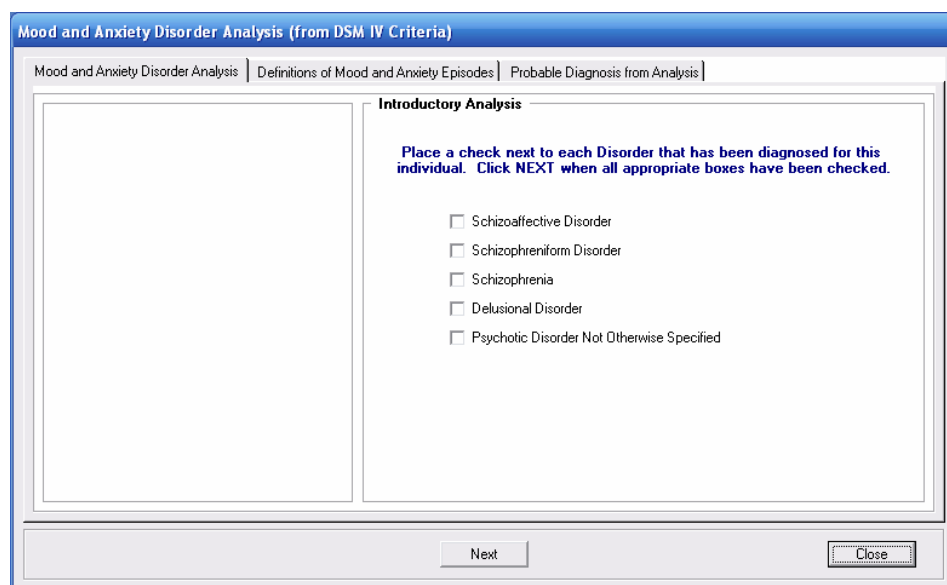


Figure #8: Introductory Screen in Mood/Anxiety Disorders

## QuikTest

While greatly under-used, *QuikTest* is one of the most powerful tools that *MARET* has ever created. It can give the therapist or the counselor tons of immediate information that is vital to the client.

When *QuikTest* is administered five or more times to a single individual, the reporting capabilities of the *Assessment* are magnified. Cumulative scores appear and additional graphs are presented. The user can gain access to the exact degree and scope of the anxiety, depression and potential for self-destructive behaviors over a long period of time – not just a single episode, as is the case with a single administration of the tool.

We have added additional features to the multiple-administration reporting of *QuikTest*. This includes the following:

- Results animation that allows the user to click one button and cycle through all results from the first set of results to the last. This prevents the need for the user to manually look through the historic record of *QuikTest* results.
- We have added the following reports to the cumulative bar graph screen. The screen now displays the following data: (1) the average score for the cumulative items selected; (2) the median score for the cumulative items selected; (3) the complete scoring range of the cumulative items selected; (4) the 90-110 percentage scoring range of scores for cumulative results (which should under optimal conditions contain 68% of all scores); and, (5) the client's personal two standard deviation scoring range for cumulative results (based on their average score).

Users who are not familiar with the multiple administration capabilities of *QuikTest* are encouraged to take the *Assessment* themselves more than four times over the next week or so. View the results (as you normally would for the results of any *Assessment*). You will see the power of the multiple reporting screens.

## Backup Module

The backup and recovery module was incorporated into the *MARET Counseling and Assessment Software* package in Version 2.2.91. Since that time, we have successfully helped a number of users regain access to their system files when they have a hard drive catastrophe.

We have not been satisfied with all of the features of the backup and recovery module, however. There were a few things that it did that we were not satisfied with. Furthermore, we did not like the fact that the user still needed to upgrade to the most recent version to gain access to all document files. We have resolved those issues. Now, the backup and recovery module is more powerful than ever!

## New Graphics Screens

In the previous version (2.2.96), only some of the graphics display screens for *Assessment* results were upgraded to the “new” method. That new method contains multi-colored bar graphs and allows the user to rollover those bar graphs to obtain details about the specific scores. We had intended to upgrade all screens for some time but have put off this process since it was a real “chore” to accomplish.

We have finally upgraded all screens. Some of the previous screens upon examination were relatively useless – as far as the information that they disclosed. Such is not the case anymore. All graphics screens now display multi-colored bars and the bars are all rollover “event” bars. This allows you to gain immediate information about the individual’s scores simply by moving your mouse over the colored scoring bar.

Below (*Figure #9*) you will find the upgrade to one of our previously “most-dismal” display screens. Each of the colored bars now contains a rollover “event” that allows you to get a brief description of what the score means by simply placing your mouse over the colored bar. This is a great enhancement to the old way of reporting data.

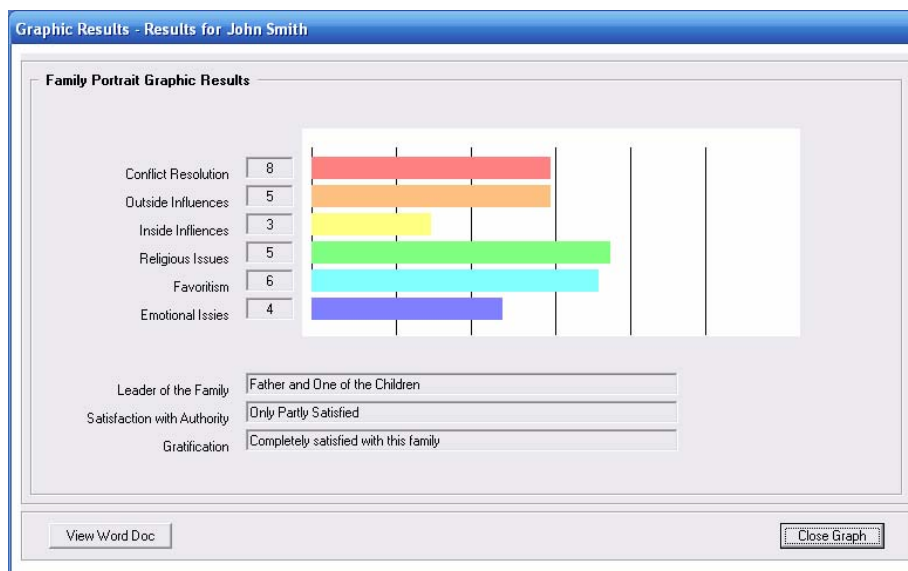


Figure #9: New Family Portrait Graphics Screen (an example of all enhancements)

## Enhanced Help Files

Our Help files have needed upgrading forever. I have neglected this programming task since upgrading the Help system is a real discomfoting process. But, I really felt that in light of the fact that Version 2.3.0 was supposed to be the ultimate system, I should update the way the Help system functions. And, much to my delight, the process was not nearly as difficult as I envisioned it to me (well, it wasn't that easy).

Two things have been changed regarding Help files. First, we have gone through every menu item (at the top of form pages) and looked through the Help information on those pages. I believe that we have edited and updated all of those menu items with new information.

Second, we have updated the actual Help engine. You may find that Help engine by clicking on the *Question Mark* in the lower right corner of the main screen. When you do so, you will find three separate categories of Help files. Each of those should now display PDF files associated with the item that you select. We no longer support the old style MS Word documents for Help.

## **Enhanced Error Reporting**

There are many times when I am talking with someone on the phone that has a specific system error and they try to explain the error to me. Sometimes, that error “cascades.” What does that mean?

Well, in the previous error reporting methodology our error statement were limited to 250 characters. That meant that any error that was larger than 250 characters would carry over to another error message. An error that was 750 characters long would “hit” and display three separate times (for the same error). That is no longer the case. We have eliminated some text on the error statement and we have set the error statement to an unlimited length. This should mean that any error statement that occurs will appear only once on the screen. We have also enhanced the error database so that it is easier and more intuitive to read errors when on a technical call with *MARET*.

This is largely beneficial to us as the programmers. But, at the same time, it will also be beneficial to you since we will be able to solve your errors more rapidly.