

# To Adhere or To Not Adhere: The Importance of Standardized Confederate Behavior

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## The Contextual Assessment of Social Skills (CASS):

- Videotaped conversational role-play assessment, including two three-minute conversations with a confederate trained to act interested or bored (CASS-I, CASS-B)
  - e.g., bored/disengaged confederates show low affect, limited eye contact, poor posture; interested confederates show positive affect and appropriate eye contact
- Demonstrated social behavior might be influenced by social cognition in youth and adults with ASD
- Heavily reliant on the ability of confederates adhere to prescribed conditions

## PRIMARY AIMS

- Develop and utilize a coding scheme to validate confederate behavior in the CASS<sup>1</sup>
- Assess other variables affecting confederate behavior, e.g., condition, site, gender

## METHOD

### Confederate Validation Code

- Developed using outlined protocol from Ratto et al. for conditions, CASS-B and CASS-I
- Utilized 4-point Likert scale to assess behavior from disengaged to engaged on a continuum

### Participants

- N=28, 16 females and 12 males
- Age range: 9-20 (M=15.50, SD=3.71)

The largest influence on confederate adherence was the confederate's condition (CASS-I or CASS-B).

Figure 1: Adherence/Non-Adherence by Condition (CASS-I, CASS-B)

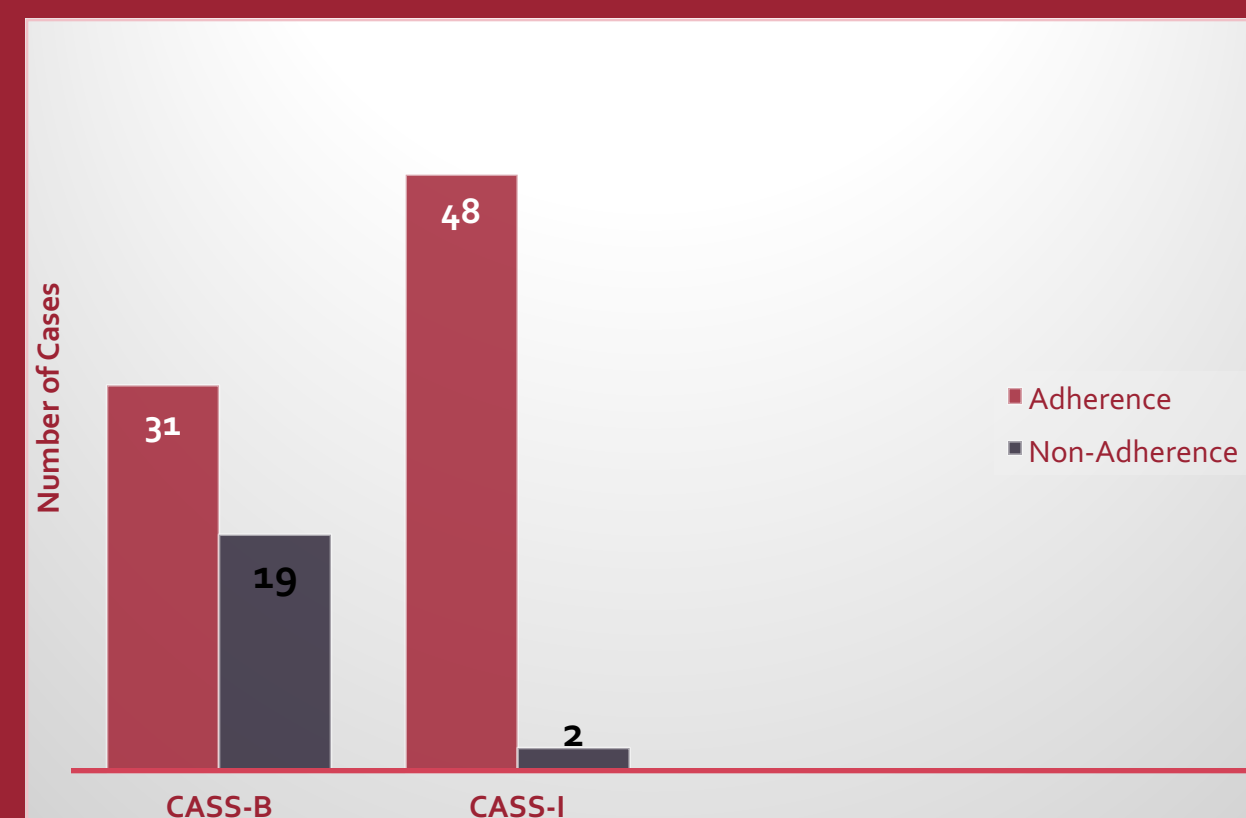
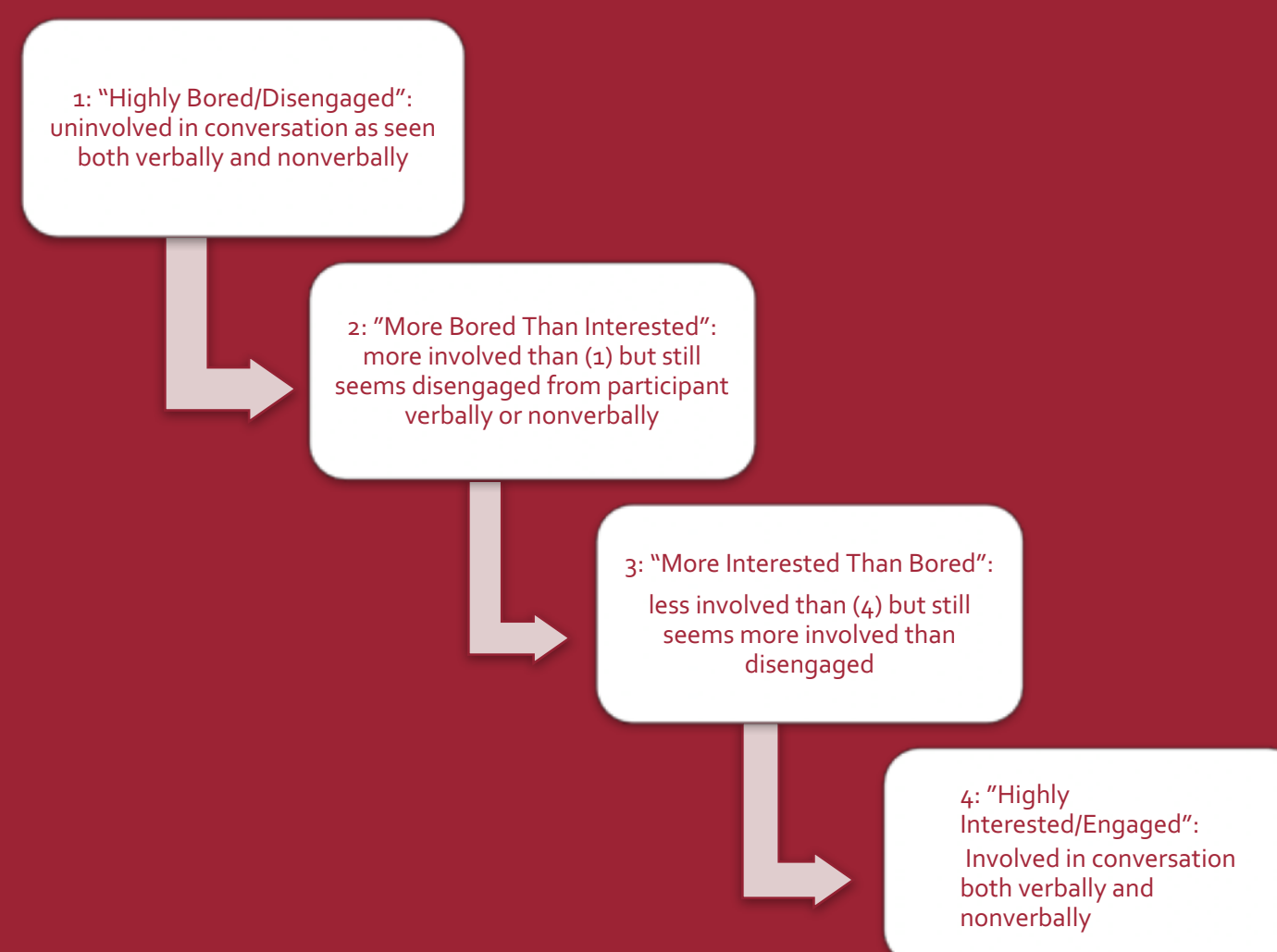


Figure 2: Chi Square Test of Independence Results

Condition	Non-Adherence	Adherence	Total	X <sup>2</sup> value **
CASS-B	19 (19.0%)	31 (31.0%)	50 (50.0%)	17.420
CASS-I	2 (2.0%)	48 (48.0%)	50 (50.0%)	

Figure 3: Confederate Validation Code



## Procedure

- Videos ( $n=100$ ) were coded using the Confederate Validation Code (see Figure 3) by one trained undergraduate coder, demonstrating at least 80% agreement with trained researcher across 10% of videos
- "Adherence" indicated confederates acted engaged or disengaged depending on demeanor, e.g., CASS-B coded as 1 or 2, CASS-I as a 3 or 4
- Chi-square tests were used to assess adherence/non-adherence by condition and by site
- A paired-samples  $t$ -test was used to compare the average adherence for the interested condition and average adherence for the bored condition for confederates who administered both conditions.

## RESULTS

- The ratio of confederate adherence to non-adherence in CASS assessments is approximately 4:1.
- For confederates who administered both conditions ( $n=13$ ), the average hit of CASS-I assessments (M=.9744, SD=.09245) was **greater** than the average hit of CASS-B assessments (M=.6962, SD=.39815).
- No significant differences found between gender and adherence, site and adherence

## DISCUSSION

- Results highlight the need for increased/ongoing monitoring of confederate behavior
- The results suggest a need for improved or more rigorous training for bored (CASS-B) confederates
- Results point to a need for increased understanding of confederate influence on data from observational assessment, such as the CASS



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