

# Is There a Doctor in the House?



When your organization speaks, do you listen? Probably not as closely as you think.

Most people in business understand that the health and well-being of an organization's culture is susceptible to all sorts of pathogens—silos, poor communication, lack of leadership, self-preservation—the list goes on and on.

Recognizing, diagnosing, and treating these organizational diseases can prove challenging. Because it is so challenging, quite often we only address the symptoms and not the actual cause.

But what if there was a way to get at what's really ailing our organization...in less than ten minutes?

Arbinger's mindset assessment—now new and improved!—provides just the thing.

## How the Mindset Assessment Works

The mindset assessment, which was originally released in early 2016, underwent a refresh in mid-2017. The new version of the mindset assessment asks a series of twenty questions, to which

individuals respond by ranking their answers on a 1-10 scale. Each question is designed to identify and measure the various components of mindset. For example, the questions touch on self-accountability, collaboration, self-correction, responsibility, transparency, and more. The first ten questions measure the participant's own mindset on the inward-outward continuum, while the final ten questions assess the participant's perception of their organization's collective mindset.

Once completed, a score and analysis are provided by email, indicating where the assessment-taker and their organization lie on a spectrum ranging from inward mindset to outward mindset. The analysis also gives individual and organizational scores in five mindset categories: Awareness, Helpfulness, Accountability, Vertical Alignment, and Horizontal Alignment.

## **Understanding the Overall Mindset of an Organization**

Knowing where an organization falls on that spectrum can help identify the source of the organization's disease.

The more inward an organization is, the more likely it is to have various problems including a culture of blame, poor communication, lack of collaboration, self-preservation at any cost, etc.

By contrast, the more outward an organization is, the better its overall health.

"A lot of instruments help you to see what's happening behaviorally in an organization, but the mindset assessment is designed to help you see what's happening at a deeper level," said James Ferrell, an Arbinger managing partner and author. "One person taking the assessment will provide insight on that person's view of the prevailing mindset within the

organization. As you multiply that and have many people in the organization take the assessment, you start to get a collective picture.”

With each question specifically engineered to address a common ailment or condition, the assessment provides a baseline for organizations to begin shifting mindset. Over time, it can be used as a tracking device to ensure upward and outward momentum.

## **Think Your Organization Is in Tip-Top Shape?**

“There’s a saying that people don’t need a doctor until they’re sick,” said Sam Whitney, one of the brains behind the mindset assessment. “One of the problems with an inward mindset is that you don’t know you have it. We wanted to develop a tool that could expose organizational mindset really quickly, and would allow people to walk away with an analysis of their score as well as suggestions for moving forward. As soon as you start to see those weak points, you begin to question the virtue of your organization’s effectiveness, and that in turn causes you to question your place, and your part in that organizational breakdown. You’re revealing a foundational mindset and bypassing a lot of the common barriers by getting to the core of organizational issues.”

## **Understanding Individual Mindset is a First Step Toward Organizational Change**

Previous iterations of the mindset assessment only asked organizational questions. In the new version, individuals receive insights on their own mindset. One thing to keep in mind when considering this score is what Arbinger’s work

reveals about the ubiquitous problem of self-deception: If an individual's score is significantly higher than their organizational score, the magnitude of that gap may suggest that the individual's own score is skewed higher than is accurate. (Read more about the self-deception gap [here](#).)

In other words, individuals really don't know when they have an inward mindset. This can contribute to the overall health (or lack thereof) of an organization. When individuals fail to see that they have an inward mindset, they also fail to see how they are part of the overall problems. Instead, they blame others for the issues at hand. With no one taking any responsibility, it's difficult to make any changes.

By contrast, when individuals work to develop an outward mindset, the organization sees corresponding health improvements. Whatever an individual's mindset assessment score, they will realize professional and personal improvements by learning to work in an increasingly outward mindset way. They will benefit as an individual. And over time, these individual improvements will help to raise the organization's mindset score.

## **Through the Mindset Assessment, Organizations Are Able to Identify the Cause of the Disease *and* the Initial Steps Towards a Cure.**

For example, in one instance, Arbinger led a client organization through the assessment and encountered some unanticipated results.

"The company takes great pride in their culture, so they were particularly surprised to learn that a significant percentage of their employees didn't feel safe expressing their opinions openly, and didn't feel empowered to make decisions," shared

the facilitator. “It really gave the CEO pause and led to a rich discussion in the workshop and in our post-workshop support work.”

As in this example, the mindset assessment can guide organizations and leaders in what needs to be addressed to improve the overall health of their organization.