The PANSS: Difficulty in Abstract Thinking

There is often some confusion about the proverb items within the PANSS in terms of both their appropriateness and understanding what you are looking for. In terms of the latter, this document aims to illustrate what to look for with examples.

Clients do not have to know the exact meaning of these ‘old sayings’, they merely need to display an ability to interpret them in an abstract way. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concrete (literal)</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A rolling stone gathers no moss</td>
<td>‘If a stone is rolling down a hill it won’t get covered in moss’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t cross the bridge until you come to it</td>
<td>‘You can’t go over a bridge until you’re close enough to it’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One swallow does not make a summer</td>
<td>‘You get more than one bird if it’s summer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The acorn never falls far from the tree</td>
<td>‘An acorn falls down under a tree, it can’t go far’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual meanings of the proverbs (according to the internet!):

“Plain as the nose on your face” Something is very clear and obvious
“Carrying a chip on your shoulder” Resentful about something or feel that they have been treated badly
“Two heads are better than one” Two people are better able to solve a problem than just one
“Too many cooks spoil the broth” When there are too many people trying to do something they can make a mess of it

“Don’t judge a book by it’s cover” Don’t immediately judge things on face-value
“One man’s food is another man’s poison” What’s good for one person isn’t necessarily good for another
“All that glitters is not gold” Appearances can deceive you
“Don’t cross the bridge until you come to it” Do not worry about things or do things until they actually happen

“What’s good for the goose is good for the gander” The sexes should be treated in the same way
“The grass always looks greener on the other side” We always want what we can’t or do not have
“Don’t keep all your eggs in one basket” You may miss other opportunities if you only concentrate on one thing
“One swallow does not make a summer” A single example of something positive does not necessarily mean that all subsequent similar instances will be

“A stitch in time saves nine” Acting on a new task or problem straight away will be less work than if one left it until later
“A rolling stone gathers no moss” People always moving, with no roots in one place, avoid responsibilities and cares
“The acorn never falls far from the tree” Children tend to be similar to their parents
“People who live in glass houses should not throw stones at others” People who have a fault should not criticise others for having that same fault