



Soft Skills for Caring for Patients with Intellectual Disability, Mental Illness, or PTSD

Student Workbook



Name: _____

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Intellectual Disability

Scenario #1

Michael is a 55-year-old man with an intellectual disability and many health conditions. He is unable to be independent in the community because he requires medical oversight.

Michael wants to go out of the facility every Wednesday to attend his preferred church service, but no nurse is available to leave the facility with him. He becomes distraught and struggles to understand why he cannot leave to go on his own.

Michael becomes verbally aggressive towards staff and is refusing to leave his room. Stacey, his caregiver for the day, is struggling to understand how best to support him. He begins asking her again to take him out into the community to attend church.

Pre-brief questions:

How would you feel if you wanted to go somewhere but could not go on your own and there was not anyone available to take you?

In what ways could you help Michael meet the unmet need of going out to church service?

Debrief questions:

In what ways was the scenario successful? In what ways could it have been improved?

Do you feel Michael's needs were met successfully?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #2

Tyler works at a local grocery store several days per week. Juan, who is Tyler's in-home caregiver, has been going with him to work for years. He is there for oversight and hands-on assistance as needed when Tyler is working.

Tyler recently began opening snacks at work and eating them. This has never been an issue for the last several years that Tyler was working at the store, but Tyler's boss has threatened to cut his work hours if he continues to eat snacks at the store.

Juan wants to work with Tyler at home about this issue but isn't sure where to start.

Pre-brief questions:

What reasons might cause Tyler to eat snacks at work?

How could Juan teach Tyler not to eat snacks at work?

Debrief questions:

Does it appear Tyler has a plan to not eat the snacks at work?

Do you think Juan and Tyler need to continue working on this plan to ensure he understands?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #3

Melinda is a young woman residing in an adult family home who has an intellectual disability and mental illness. She struggles with anxiety and depression but has a difficult time coping with it.

Recently, Melinda has refused to leave her room, attend meals, or perform regular hygiene tasks.

Charlie is a caregiver at the home that has a good rapport with Melinda and she is generally able to help her get going when she's struggling more than others. Charlie knows that Melinda is a fan of humor and the TV show Friends.

It has been five days since Melinda has taken a shower, and Charlie wants to support Melinda to complete her hygiene tasks today. It also appears that Melinda struggles to understand what daily and regular hygiene tasks are. She needs coaching and support to understand this.

Where should she begin?

Pre-brief questions:

What are some ways to help support people when they are struggling with depression?

How do you think supporting someone with ID and depression is different than supporting someone without ID or Down Syndrome?

Debrief questions:

Was this a solution that benefited Melinda just in the moment, or do you believe it could benefit her in the long run? It appears that Melinda has a history of struggling with this behavior.

What are general ways to open the conversation to address Melinda's depression and her refusal to participate with her?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #4

Margaret is an 85-year-old woman with an intellectual disability. She is in a nursing facility because she is unable to take care of herself. Margaret uses a wheelchair for mobility and struggles to push herself. She needs extensive monitoring and hands-on assistance to complete her physical health needs. She struggles to cognitively understand the prompting that Chris is giving her when he is trying to help her get dressed for the morning.

When Chris tries to help Margaret get dressed, she gets angry and yells at him. He isn't sure how to respond.

Pre-brief questions:

Imagine yourself in Margaret's position. How would your frustration from not understanding come out?

What is Chris missing in his communication with Margaret in prompting her to dress for the day?

Debrief questions:

What do we know about how to best support people with ID? What do they need?

How can we apply those needs in this conversation?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #5

Chad is a 7th grader who has been leaving his general education classes claiming he is feeling sick so he can visit the nurse. Carol is not finding anything wrong with Chad, other than it appears he feels lonely and sad.

Chad finally admits to Carol that nobody wants to be his partner in class and starts crying to Carol.

Carol needs to support Chad to help him feel better, but he keeps focusing on the idea that nobody likes him.

How can Carol support Chad in the moment while also trying to keep him from visiting her all the time so he stays in class?

Pre-brief questions:

Can you imagine the feeling of being left out? Did you observe this as the case during your high school and middle school experience for kids with developmental disabilities?

What might make Chad feel better in this situation?

Debrief questions:

Were the solutions helpful for Chad, or are there solutions that might have worked better that you didn't have time to brainstorm and role play today?

How can Carol prevent Chad from leaving class so often to visit her?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #6

Verita is an adult woman with cerebral palsy. She lives alone but has a caregiver visit her every day for a few hours to help her with her activities of daily living. Verita uses a wheelchair for mobility and struggles to get around her house because of the narrow doorways.

When Tamara arrives at Verita's house, she realizes that Verita is stuck in her bathroom and cannot navigate her wheelchair out of the bathroom. Tamara can manipulate the wheelchair to get her out. Now, Verita is anxious about staying alone because she was in her bathroom for several hours before Tamara arrived.

Verita has asked for Tamara's help with fixing this issue but isn't sure where she wants to start.

What options could Tamara present to her?

Pre-brief questions:

What would you suggest for Verita to consider for solving this issue?

What dangers could arise for Verita if this issue is not resolved?

Debrief questions:

Who else might need to help Verita and Tamara to solve this issue?

Will the solution be sustainable in the long run for Verita?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #7

Thalia is a nine-year-old girl with a developmental disability. She lives in her family home with two siblings and her parents. She has a caregiver for help with activities of daily living and occupational therapy.

Robert is Thalia's caseworker. Robert asked Jennifer to have Thalia's parents sign her annual consent paperwork, but Thalia's parents only speak Spanish and Thalia does not speak Spanish.

In order for Jennifer to continue providing these services to Thalia, the paperwork must be signed.

What options should Jennifer consider when addressing this situation? She is not the one responsible for ensuring that the paperwork is signed, but does not want to upset Robert by asking him to do the work. If the paperwork is not signed, Thalia's needs will not be met and she will not be safe.

Pre-brief questions:

What are the ethical dilemmas in this situation?

What is the best option for Jennifer in meeting this need?

Debrief questions:

Did the outcome make you feel comfortable as the role player?

What better solutions can you identify if any?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #8

Jazmine is a young woman with an intellectual disability who lives in a group home setting. She has always been pleasant and appropriate with her peers until recently. She has been having anxiety lately that is causing her to pick arguments with her housemates. Shelby has noticed that it seems like nothing can make Jazmine happy, and every evening she has asked for an as-needed anti-anxiety medication.

Shelby feels like there needs to be a better solution to this situation than to regulate everyone's feelings after an argument. She wants to do something more preventative but isn't sure how to best support Jazmine so that the household is calmer and she feels better overall.

Pre-brief questions:

In what ways could Jazmine's ID impact the experience with anxiety?

What solutions could you see helping to reduce the anxiety and improve the household relationships?

Debrief questions:

If the solutions used in the role play today didn't work, what are other potential long-term options?

What are additional anxiety relief symptoms that could be helpful in a moment of anxiety?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #9

Timothy is an adult man with an ID. He lives in his parent's home and has a caregiver visit him a few hours every day for overall support that his parents cannot provide when they are at work.

Timothy has a new goal of getting a job, and he wants Cheryl to help him. Cheryl got him set up with a job coaching agency, but the agency runs into trouble because Timothy seems to be falling asleep during skills training sessions.

The skills trainer asks Cheryl not to bring Timothy back if he continues to fall asleep during their work together at the agency office.

Cheryl and Timothy need to figure out why he's falling asleep. Upon conversation, it appears that Timothy is staying up until very late playing video games.

What options can Cheryl and Timothy come up with to prevent this from continuing to happen so that Timothy can reach his goal of employment?

Pre-brief questions:

What will happen if Timothy continues to fall asleep during skills training classes?

What ideas do you have to prevent Timothy from staying up so late?

Debrief questions:

Does this solution appear to be sustainable so that Timothy can go back to class?

How can Cheryl and Timothy test the solution to identify if it will be sustainable long-term?

Intellectual Disability

Scenario #10

Jeffrey recently expressed to Chase the desire to learn to ride the city bus to go on outings independently instead of Chase having to drive him everywhere. Jeffrey lives alone and can complete basic tasks independently.

Chase, although worried, realizes that Jeffrey is an adult who deserves to learn to ride the city bus. Together they begin learning the public bus system and local places that Jeffrey wants to visit independently.

They agree that Jeffrey should have a backup plan, should there be an issue where he gets lost on the bus.

What backup plans can Chase suggest to Jeffrey to keep him safe?

Pre-brief questions:

What could the impact of getting lost in the community be for Jeffrey?

What are some ways to reduce that impact?

Debrief questions:

Was the solution one that protects Jeffrey as much as possible?

If Jeffrey gets lost in public and has anxiety about this, what is one in-the-moment strategy that Chase can teach him to reduce that anxiety?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #1

Judy lives alone. Her husband passed away a few years ago, and she developed dementia shortly after. She has a paid caregiver visit her daily for several hours per day to ensure her health and meet her safety needs. The caregiver's tasks are housekeeping, cleaning, and helping Judy shower, dress, and prepare meals for her. Jan visits her every day for the last three days and noticed something concerning.

Each day, Jan enters the kitchen to see that the stove top burner is on. Judy says that she was making tea and forgot to turn the burner off. Jan is worried about Judy's safety and needs to have a conversation with her about it. Jan is hoping that Judy will be willing to have a caregiver present for more hours throughout the day (preferably 8 am-8 pm) to ensure that she is not cooking without oversight or support. Jan is anxious to have a conversation with Judy because Judy is very independent and has been hesitant to have care giving support.

Pre-brief questions:

Imagine yourself in Judy's position. How would you feel knowing that you are struggling to care for yourself effectively?

Imagine yourself in Jan's position. What kind of worry would you have if you noticed that Judy's stove top was left on consistently?

Who else in Judy's life might you want to engage in the conversation about her health?

Debrief questions:

Judy: How did you feel being the patient in the scenario? Did you feel cared for? Were you okay with the outcome?

Jan: How do you think the conversation went? Was it effective?

Generally: Was everyone okay with the outcome of the situation, or did they want a different outcome to occur?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #2

Jose is an older man with late-stage Alzheimer's. He no longer recalls most short or long-term memories. He has difficulty feeding himself and requires hands-on assistance for daily living (dressing, showering, etc.). Over the past few days, Jose has begun to decline further. The care staff is worried that he is at the end of his life. He has stopped eating even when spoon-fed. Jose's adult children have started to visit him more often but are trying to force him to eat food. They are struggling to watch him decline. Jennifer's supervisor asks her to ask Juan and Stephanie to stop trying to force-feed him and allow him to eat when he is ready instead of agitating him further by forcing him to eat, which prompts Jose to slap their hands away.

Jennifer should engage Stephanie and Jose in a conversation about feeding Jose regularly but not forcing him to eat when he doesn't want to. The conversation needs to acknowledge their love for their father and their father's dignity as well as his right not to eat when he doesn't want to.

Pre-brief questions:

How would you feel watching someone attempt to feed someone who is refusing to eat?

How is forcing someone to eat when they do not want to a violation of their dignity?

Debrief questions:

Juan and Stephanie: Did you feel supported and cared for by Jennifer in the conversation? Did it help you to realize that forcing your father to eat is not helpful?

Jennifer: How did you navigate discomfort in this scenario?

Everyone: Was this a successful conversation?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #3

Jerry and his granddaughter, Shannon, live together. She works during the day and provides him care at night.

Jerry's symptoms are mild and early. He can care for himself during the daytime independently, but he struggles at night.

Jerry has begun to wander in the evening. Shannon worries about how to best support him. He occasionally accepts medication at night to sleep well and avoid wandering, but other times he does not.

Shannon needs to have a conversation with Jerry that, to best support him at home, he needs to comply with taking medications that will prevent him from wandering. She feels if he does not comply, she cannot continue to care for him at home alone because she worries he may walk into the street or away from the house and not find his way home.

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about Alzheimer's and memory loss being worse at night?

What are some ways of preventing additional memory loss in the evening time?

Debrief questions:

Jerry: Did you feel the two of you concluded that you both can support Jerry together? What went well or didn't go well?

Shannon: Do you feel that you can continue to support Jerry successfully at home, given the conclusion?

What are your overall thoughts or further questions after the role play?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #4

Tulsi lives in an assisted living facility. She has begun having dementia symptoms and requires more hands-on care for health and safety. She is a fall risk.

Tulsi likes to shower daily but prefers to have female staff. Tyler offers to help Tulsi shower as he is her assigned caregiver on the day shift, and she prefers to shower on the day shift. Tulsi is offended that a man offered to help her shower. She becomes tearful and angry.

Tyler needs to reconcile the relationship, as it appears she's distraught by his offer.

Pre-brief questions:

Imagine yourself in Tulsi's position. Would you be uncomfortable if a member of the opposite sex tried to help you shower? Now add symptoms of dementia on top of this. What do you feel in this situation?

If you were Tyler, how would you handle Tulsi's fearfulness and frustration towards you?

Debrief questions:

Did you come up with a solution that supports Tulsi's need to shower and her need to protect her privacy?

What went well in the conversation?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #5

Charles recently moved into a facility setting because his Alzheimer's became too difficult for his wife to support him independently at home.

Charles has expressed multiple times each day to Jackson, a caregiver that he appears to prefer, that he misses his wife, and it is making him quite sad. He is beginning to present symptoms of depression.

Jackson wants to help problem-solve with Charles so he feels more comfortable and less sad missing his wife.

Pre-brief questions:

If you moved to an unfamiliar setting and were no longer living with your long-term spouse, how would you feel best supported?

How could a caregiver support you in reducing your new sadness/depressive symptoms?

Debrief questions:

Charles: Did this feel like a supportive, helpful solution for you?

Is there anything about the conversation that did not feel comfortable, or you wished could have gone differently?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #6

Sheri is a woman with middle-stage Alzheimer's. She's been residing in an adult family home for several years. A new resident moved into the home, where a total of five older adults live. Patrick owns the AFH and acts as a caregiver there.

Sheri is often triggered by the new resident. She feels as though the new resident is not friendly to her and purposely antagonizes her. At dinner yesterday, Sheri threw a plate of food at the other resident.

Patrick cleaned up the food and offered for the new resident and Sheri to eat in different areas of the house in the evening. He needs to have a conversation with Sheri about the interaction the next day to come up with a solution to the feelings that Sheri has. In their conversation, he realizes that Sheri is having increased anxiety about sharing space with others. It appears Sheri is not upset by anything specific to the peer but that her general anxiety is causing her to be hyper-focused on her peer.

Pre-brief questions:

Have you experienced anxiety? What was helpful to you if you have?

Have you observed others experiencing anxiety? What was helpful for them in managing it?

Debrief questions:

Were the solutions offered helpful for everyone? (Reducing Sheri's anxiety, keeping her peer safe, and allowing Patrick to best support both Sheri and her peer.)

Are there any additional solutions that could be helpful?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #7

Vlad lives independently. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's a few months ago and is receiving paid care at home until his care needs require him to have more intensive supports.

Vlad is refusing to shower. He has not taken a shower in over a week. Each day that Joshua visits, he asks him to shower, but Vlad declines. Joshua is concerned because Vlad is a heavy man who must clean his skin folds for his health and safety.

Vlad's physician communicated to Joshua that he needs to shower as soon as possible. Joshua needs to have a conversation with Vlad that hopefully ends in him taking a shower.

Pre-brief questions:

What health issues can come up when a person does not shower?

What ideas do you have about how to successfully engage a client in appropriate bathing/hygiene protocols?

Debrief questions:

Was the identified plan sustainable for ensuring that Vlad showers consistently?

What other solutions could be explored if he still refuses to shower in the future despite the identified plan?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #8

Wilma is in early stages of dementia. She lives with her husband, who also has mild dementia symptoms. Both Wilma and her husband can support themselves independently as they have food delivered and a laundry service.

Wilma has Type 1 diabetes and has a nurse, Deborah, visit her home once per month to have her labs drawn.

Recently, Wilma has begun having abnormal lab results. Her nurse is concerned that she isn't meeting her diabetic needs as well as she has historically.

The nurse needs to suggest to Wilma that perhaps they have a caregiver visit a few times per week for diabetic care and general health and safety oversight.

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about diabetes management? How could dementia symptoms make managing diabetes more difficult?

If you were a person who lives independently but might benefit from in-home caregivers, how would you want someone to approach the conversation with you?

Debrief questions:

Did the conversation between Wilma and Deborah appear successful?

What adjustments could have been made for the conversation to be even more successful?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #9

Kyle lives in an adult family home. Before living at the AFH, and before he retired, Kyle was a long-term chef. He loves food and believes it is a way of expressing oneself. Kyle is unhappy with the food at the AFH.

He has become verbally aggressive at mealtimes.

Trisha, the caregiver who works the evening shift at dinner time, is finding it difficult to work with Kyle because of his frustrations with the meals she cooks.

She needs to find a solution for Kyle to be happy at mealtimes.

Pre-brief questions:

How important is food in your life?

How would you feel if you were not eating food that gives you joy and happiness?

Debrief questions:

Was a solution identified that honors Kyle's love of food and reduces his verbal aggression?

What are other solutions that they can offer Kyle?

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Scenario #10

Charity is a woman who lives in a nursing facility as related to her late-stage Alzheimer's and breast cancer. Charity has declined treatment for her cancer, and her adult children are having a challenging time with this.

Each time her children visit, they try to convince Charity to attend cancer treatments. Charity has asked Connor to hold a family meeting to communicate to her children her desire for them to stop trying to convince her to attend treatment. Connor complies because he has observed Charity already trying to communicate to her children her desire to not prolong her life by going out to multiple treatments every week. She wants to die peacefully at the facility while doing what she wants, when she wants. She wants her children to respect this.

Connor's conversation with her adult children prompts him to realize how they are struggling with anticipating the grief of their mother's upcoming death (not immediate but in the near future).

Pre-brief questions:

Can you imagine being at the end of your life and struggling because your children do not respect your wishes? How would you feel?

Can you imagine being Charity's children actively watching her die? How would you feel?

Debrief questions:

Was the outcome successful?

Do you think Connor was able to communicate the need for boundaries to Charity's children?

What could have gone better, if anything.

Scenario #1

Tabitha is a woman in her early 20's who is currently residing in a psychiatric inpatient facility. She has severe anxiety that has made it difficult for her to engage in group therapy.

Jessie is a caregiver that works in the facility who wants to establish a trusting relationship with Tabitha because she knows it will be essential to facilitate robust services to reduce her anxiety.

Jessie will be doing her Monday morning check-in with Tabitha, and she wants to use this time to establish a trusting relationship. Where does she begin?

Pre-brief questions:

Can you imagine how you would feel if you were in an inpatient facility because of your mental health?

What are the best ways to begin to establish a trusting relationship with someone?

Debrief questions:

Was Jessie successful in starting to develop a relationship? Why or why not?

How can Jessie continue to build a relationship with Tabitha moving forward?

Mental Illness

Scenario #2

Cameron was recently hospitalized for his depression. It was leading him to engage in self-harming that was dangerous to his health. He is currently in the emergency room at the hospital. Christopher is his nurse.

Christopher is an emergency room nurse and does not have psychiatric experience. He is struggling with how to best support Cameron because he is non-compliant with his medication. Cameron is refusing to accept his medications, and he will be in the ER a few more days until a bed opens for him in the inpatient facility. Cameron has not explained to Christopher why he doesn't want to take his meds, but he feels that his medications make him numb, and he doesn't enjoy that feeling.

Christopher wants to help Cameron to take his medications. What is a good route?

Pre-brief questions:

Why might it be necessary for Cameron to take the prescribed anti-depressant?

How would you approach this situation with someone?

Debrief questions:

Did Christopher honor Cameron's dignity and respect while also trying to provide him education about medication's benefits?

Do you believe that the solution they identified will be helpful to Cameron long-term? Why or why not?

Mental Illness

Scenario #3

Edward is a 4th grader who struggles with OCD. He is in a behavioral classroom because his OCD makes it difficult for him to be in general education classes. Maria is an educator in his classroom. At the beginning of the year, he was doing well with managing his compulsive behavior, but lately, his need to count has taken over his ability to be present at school.

He is constantly counting in the daytime and refuses to participate in any school work and is interrupting his peers because of it. The other day, Maria was trying to engage Edward in a history lesson when Edward slapped her because she tried to distract him from counting.

Maria needs to call Jocelyn, Edward's mother, to discuss how to best support him.

Edward is not receiving any supports outside of school, and Maria would like to refer him to outpatient mental health services but needs to discuss it with Jocelyn first.

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about the OCD cycle?

How do you imagine a parent would feel knowing that their child is struggling so much with mental health at a young age?

Debrief questions:

Was Maria's conversation with Jocelyn helpful and productive? Why or why not?

Do you think that Jocelyn received the conversation well? Why or why not?

Mental Illness

Scenario #4

Patrick is residing in an inpatient facility for eating disorder treatment. He struggles with anorexia and has been hospitalized recently. Patrick is only allowed to have blind weights taken, meaning that they weigh him, but he is not able to see his weight. Only staff can.

Tim is the Certified Nursing Assistant assigned to Patrick's care. Patrick is trying to convince Tim to tell him how much he weighs. He says to Tim: "I won't tell a nurse. Please just tell me what I weigh."

Tim is not allowed to tell Patrick of his weight per policy. How does Tim respond effectively?

Pre-brief questions:

Why do you think the policy is in place to take a "blind" weight?

What would you do in Tim's position?

Debrief questions:

Was Tim effective in his communicating the policy to Patrick? Why or why not?

What better way could Tim communicate in the future if Patrick continues to ask despite multiple boundaries being set previously?

Mental Illness

Scenario #5

Leslie is a patient at an outpatient mental health office where she comes once per week for therapy. She enjoys her therapist and feels that their treatment is incredibly beneficial to her. Trisha is a caregiver that works at the office and provides medical assisting and other services. She greets Leslie at the door and checks her in.

Trisha tells Leslie that her counselor is out sick for the day and apologizes that she wasn't notified by phone. Leslie begins to panic. She gets tearful, has a difficult time breathing, and sits in the corner of the room. She states: "I'm supposed to see my therapist today. I always see her. I don't know what to do now. I'm having a panic attack."

Pre-brief questions:

Have you ever had a panic attack? If so, how did it impact you?

What do you know about the biological ways to calm a body during high stress and/or anxiety?

Debrief questions:

Did Leslie appear to feel supported during this episode?

Did Trisha help Leslie find a suitable option instead of seeing her current therapist?

Mental Illness

Scenario #6

Catherine is a 45-year-old woman who has bipolar disorder. She lives independently and is very stable when she takes her medications.

She is visiting her doctor's office for her quarterly meeting when she notifies Rhonda, the caregiver checking her in, that she hasn't been stable on her medications for a few weeks. She states that she doesn't think she needs them anymore. Rhonda knows that Catherine has a history of going on and off her medications, and is worried that this could lead to a manic episode for Catherine.

Rhonda wants to effectively communicate to Catherine a reminder that she historically seems to be the most stable when on her medications.

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about mania? How can it be dangerous?

What are the best ways to explain to someone the benefits of taking medications?

Debrief questions:

Did Rhonda effectively communicate her concern to Catherine? Why or why not?

Do you believe that Rhonda is likely to begin taking her medications again after this meeting?

Mental Illness

Scenario #7

Maria is a 37-year-old woman who has schizophrenia and lives in a group home for individuals with persistent mental illness. She has active auditory and visual hallucinations. She recently began targeting Charles when he works. One day at work, Maria swears at Charles and asks him to leave immediately.

Charles isn't sure how to best respond. He cannot leave the environment because it is his job, but he does not want to continue upsetting Maria.

How can Charles best respond to this situation?

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about schizophrenia?

What should you not do when working with someone with auditory or visual hallucinations?

Debrief questions:

Was Charles able to respect Maria's need for space while still doing his job? Why or why not?

What other ideas could you identify that may be beneficial to Maria while she targets Charles at work?

Mental Illness

Scenario #8

Jackson is attending an after-school program at his doctor's office for depression. He was diagnosed at age 12 and is currently 15 years old. Last year, Jackson was hospitalized for a suicide attempt. His depression is much less severe now than it was then, but Libby, one of the caregivers who work at the office, overheard Jackson telling another teenager in the group that he is "ready to go again."

Libby isn't sure exactly what their conversation was, but she is worried that Jackson is suicidal again. She needs to pull him aside after group and check in with him because she is a mandatory reporter and if Jackson is suicidal, she needs to assess for risk.

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about mandatory reporting?

What are the best options for confronting Jackson about the conversation?

Debrief questions:

Do you feel that Libby was appropriate in how she pulled Jackson aside and asked him to check in with her?

Based on Jackson's response, are you worried about his health?

Mental Illness

Scenario #9

Carmen is in the final trimester of her first pregnancy. She has a history of anxiety, and pregnancy has made it worse. Carmen reports to Holly that she is having anxiety and panic attacks weekly. She isn't able to take the anxiety medication that she was taking before because she is pregnant. She reports having a tough time sleeping and eating. She is terrified to give birth and states: "what if I'm not a good mother?"

She admits to Holly that she's not currently excited to give birth because of the anxiety she has regarding parenting.

Pre-brief questions:

What else might be going on that is prompting Carmen's anxiety?

What may be some non-pharmaceutical services that would help Carmen address her anxiety?

Debrief questions:

What supports would you recommend Carmen access for her anxiety after giving birth, based on the conversation?

Did Carmen feel supported in the conversation? Why or why not?

Mental Illness

Scenario #10

Mason is currently residing in a psychiatric inpatient facility as related to his first manic episode. He climbed a 12-story building and sat at the top, refusing to get down. A neighbor called the police and paramedics, and they transported Mason from the site to the hospital.

Since he has been at the hospital and gotten on medications to help manage the mania, he has displayed severe depressive symptoms. Mason has stopped attending meals and groups with the other patients and is refusing to leave his room.

Tyler is the nurse assigned to Mason. He wants to convince Mason to attend a few groups today. How can he best do this?

Pre-brief questions:

Mason missing therapy groups will have negative consequences on his health. What are they?

What are some helpful ways to convince Mason to attend groups?

Debrief questions:

Was there a solution you feel was more effective than the other in the suggested approaches? Why?

What other ways could you think of to engage Mason in coming out of his room and joining groups?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #1

Nova attends an outpatient group two days per week at a local mental health facility for PTSD. She was in a car accident at the age of 23, and her best friend died in the driver's seat.

Nova has reoccurring dreams about the accident, feels guilt, and has refused to get into a vehicle for nine months. She has been biking everywhere she needs to go. While it is feasible to bike everywhere, she acknowledges that her quality of life isn't nearly what it would be if she felt comfortable driving again. She also realizes that the reoccurring dreams prevent her from getting adequate sleep.

Nova attends the group and mentions to Callie, a caregiver at the clinic, that she hopes to have her medication increased and someday drive soon.

How can Callie best respond to validate her and support her in this important step in her recovery?

Pre-brief questions:

Why is validating progress so essential in working in healthcare and mental healthcare?

How can Callie best support Nova to feel positive about these steps she is taking?

Debrief questions:

Did Nova feel supported and have access to the best care possible? Why or why not?

What additional services or offerings might Callie have given Nova?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #2

Joe has PTSD from his military service. He has been involved in a group program for veterans for several months, but he continues to have difficulties with nightmares. His nightmares come and go, but when he has them he isn't able to sleep for several nights. This leaves him with manic-type symptoms after not sleeping.

Joe attended his weekly group session, and Charles noticed that Joe was having a difficult time sitting still, was interrupting others, and was not staying on topic easily. He had to be redirected by Charles several times.

Charles wants to check in with Joe about how he's sleeping. What is the best way to do this?

Pre-brief questions:

What negative impacts could Joe's behavior have on the therapy group?

Why should Charles be worried about Joe's behavior?

Debrief questions:

Was Charles effective in his communication with Joe? Why or why not?

If Joe does not respond well, what might Charles recommend to him to help him sleep more often?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #3

Hallie is a 15-year-old with PTSD. She is currently in an inpatient facility as a result of severe PTSD symptoms and depressive symptoms. She has PTSD as a result of childhood sexual trauma. Hallie is very triggered by having a male nurse assigned to her care for the evening. She refuses to exit her room and has barricaded the door with her chair. The facility staff can see her on camera and know that she is safe and is not harming herself.

How can Joshua best reconcile this situation?

Pre-brief questions:

How does Hallie's age (lack of full cognitive development) impact her decision making when a male nurse is assigned to her?

What ideas do you have to best support Hallie in the moment?

Debrief questions:

Was the solution that was identified sustainable for the facility to use with Hallie again in the future?

Was the solution effective? Why or why not?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #4

Catherine is a 78-year-old woman who resides in a nursing facility. She has PTSD from an abusive relationship as a young person. Catherine is not married and has no kids. She has had very few social supports in her life and still struggles significantly with symptoms.

Catherine is on a turning schedule as a result of healing a pressure wound and when Harriet visited her at 2 a.m. for her turning schedule, Catherine was triggered by her entering the room. Catherine threw a book at her out of fear.

How can Harriet best support Catherine at this moment?

Pre-brief questions:

What do you know about PTSD and fear?

Catherine throwing a book at Harriet isn't healthy or appropriate. How can Harriet navigate this without shaming Catherine and letting her know that throwing a book at her is not acceptable behavior?

Debrief questions:

Was the outcome the preferred solution?

What services might Catherine benefit from to reduce the likelihood that she is triggered by Harriet entering her room to provide her care?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #5

Jessica is a senior in high school who has PTSD from her family's immigration process from Mexico to the United States. She is a senior in high school, and her PTSD presents as fear and constant worry. She is generally hyper-vigilant around the security guards at school. When they enter her classroom, she will begin to hyperventilate, and it makes her teacher, Anthony, worry about her.

How can Anthony best support Jessica as related to the presentation of her PTSD?

Pre-brief questions:

Can you understand the fear that Jessica may have regarding security guards if her family had difficulty during immigration with the border and border control even though they immigrated legally?

How can a teacher best support Jessica in the moment vs. long-term in this situation?

Debrief questions:

Was Anthony successful in supporting Jessica from Jessica's perspective? Why or why not?

What other solutions might help Jessica, given that she will soon graduate from high school but will still have PTSD?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #6

Harry was in a car accident last year that caused him to be paralyzed from the waist down. He has been in rehabilitation for almost a year for multiple surgeries and outpatient rehabilitation to recover as many functional abilities as possible.

Thomas, Harry's caregiver, has noticed lately that Harry has been waking up in the middle of the night yelling out the name of a friend who was in the car with him and died in the accident. He has also noticed that Harry has been short and easily frustrated.

Thomas is wondering if Harry is having PTSD symptoms but is unsure how to best support Harry. How should he proceed?

Pre-brief questions:

How can PTSD present?

Can you imagine being in Harry's position? How might you want to receive someone giving you information about PTSD?

Debrief questions:

Was Thomas's communication to Harry effective? Why or why not?

Since Harry agreed he is having PTSD symptoms, what services might Thomas help Harry access to process these symptoms?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #7

Tracy is a pregnant woman who has had several miscarriages before this pregnancy. She is in the final trimester and expects to give birth to a healthy baby, per her midwife and medical team. Tracy has been having severe fear and nightmares about having another miscarriage with this pregnancy. She is reporting anxiety all the time and ruminating thoughts that seem to take over. She wants to distract herself by sleeping, but she is afraid of having more nightmares. She isn't sure what to do and has admitted to Jocelyn that she feels miserable.

How can Allie best support Tracy?

Pre-brief questions:

Who might Tracy turn to for support in this situation?

How can pregnancy symptoms complicate Tracy's PTSD?

Debrief questions:

Did Tracy feel supported and validated by Allie as well as confident in their plan moving forward? Why or why not?

Who else might Allie involve in Tracy's care during this time in her pregnancy?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #8

Juanita is a woman who has PTSD from a prior sexual assault. She is at her local clinic to have her annual physical. Juanita is experiencing PTSD symptoms (anxiety, fear about potentially being unsafe, ruminating thoughts telling her she's unsafe even when she is safe, etc.) because of Carolyn's need to examine her body to ensure she's healthy.

Carolyn knows that Juanita has a history of sexual assault and a diagnosis of PTSD. How can Carolyn best support Juanita at the moment?

Pre-brief questions:

What should Carolyn do before the physical exam even starts to best support and prepare Juanita?

What can Carolyn offer to Juanita in the moment to provide support?

Debrief questions:

Did Juanita feel supported by Carolyn's offering and respect regarding her PTSD? Why or why not?

What else might Carolyn do next time to best support Juanita?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #9

Charles is a 62-year-old man who just recently experienced a house break-in when he was living alone and decided to move into an assisted living facility as a result. He has his apartment but is visited every day by caregivers for support.

Charles admits to Shirley that he feels very anxious about having caregivers visit his room because it reminds him of the break-in; even though he knows that logically this isn't occurring, he still often feels unsafe.

How can Shirley support Charles?

Pre-brief questions:

What systems could be put into place to prevent Charles from feeling as though someone is entering his apartment without his permission?

How might Charles's PTSD continue to impact his health if it isn't addressed?

Debrief questions:

Will the system identified help Charles long-term? Why or why not?

Will Charles feel safer immediately after this adjustment? Why or why not?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Scenario #10

Noah is seven years old and was removed from his birth parents' home for severe trauma. He is in foster care with a loving and kind family, but he is terrified of developing a relationship with them. He has been refusing to leave his room and attend family meals, and keeps waking up every night screaming.

Noah's caseworker, Cameron, is doing a routine visit. Cameron's job requires him to screen each child for PTSD. He realizes that Noah scores very high on this screening tool.

How can Cameron support Noah and his foster family?

Pre-brief questions:

How might growth development impact how Noah experiences PTSD?

What services might the foster family benefit from to best support Noah?

Debrief questions:

Are you confident that Noah might begin to experience less fear and flashbacks in his sleep with the plan identified?

How did Noah feel when told he would go to counseling?