MFTO 645 Case Studies

**Case Study 1**

Julia and Javier have come in for counseling. Julia is a 34-year-old Caucasian female, and Javier is a 32-year-old Hispanic male. They are about to celebrate their 11-year anniversary but have been having frequent arguments. Together they have three children who are all under the age of 8.

Julia works at a well-known shoe manufacturer. She worked hard throughout the years and was promoted to project manager about 6 months ago. She has high expectations of herself and prides herself on being able to take her kids to soccer practices while managing a successful career. She is very critical of herself when she does not maintain these standards. Lately, she has missed a few of her kids’ games and is struggling to meet deadlines at work.

For the past month, Julia has felt unusually tired and has had a difficult time focusing at work. Where she used to get energy from her work and family, she now feels irritable and wants to withdraw. She has called in sick to work several times in the last month, and her coworkers have noticed she is less engaged and productive.

Javier reported that Julia is less interested in sex and that she has been having difficulties sleeping. He complains that she has been keeping him awake at night when she’s restless. He said that when he asks Julia what’s wrong, she says nothing and picks a fight with him.

Julia said that Javier is demanding too much of her, and instead of asking what is wrong, he should help out more. When you talked with Julia alone, she confides that she has not felt like herself. She has been feeling more and more dissatisfied with her life. Although she is not currently thinking about harming herself, she does wonder what the point is and thinks about death. Julia was tearful as she told you how frustrated she is with herself. She said, “I know I should be happy. I’m just not.”

**Case Study 2**

Scott is a 26-year-old Caucasian male who has a successful career as a case manager at a treatment center for adolescent boys. He came in reporting feeling tired all the time. Scott’s partner indicated that Scott has been picking fights with him. He further complained that Scott has been bringing his stress about work home. Scott confirmed that even though he has consistently been promoted and gets good reviews at work, he continuously worries about losing his job. He has had these thoughts for the past 7 months and has not been able to get rid of them. Scott would like to go back to school to get his masters but has not been able to finish the application. He said that each time he sits down to work on it he is filled with dread that he will fail. Scott further reported that he has been having trouble sleeping and difficulty concentrating. He said that he cannot keep himself from thinking about, even sometimes picturing, losing his job or failing at school.

**Case Study 3**

Rolanda, a 54-year-old African American woman, has come to counseling to talk about her 24-year-old son, Dion. She stated that her husband of 30 years recently died, and since that time, she has noticed some changes in Dion that are concerning. Dion recently left his wife, Anya, and son, and he is living in an expensive apartment. She reported that he is spending a lot of money and does not seem to care about taking care of his family or how he will pay the bills. Dion called her the other day, and Rolanda had difficulty following his conversation. She said that he was talking about how he needed to complete a top secret project before it was too late. As she has become more concerned for her son, she decided to reach out to Anya. Anya told her that she too is concerned and that just a couple weeks ago she was worried about Dion’s safety because he was talking about wanting to die and saying things like, “I’m worthless and I don’t know why you put up with me.” She further reported that Dion called into work frequently and slept all day. Then, all of a sudden 3 days ago, he seemed to have an abundance of energy, announced he had a top-secret mission, and has not been home since.

**Case Study 4**

Peggy, a 76-year-old African American female, was found in a long-term recovery center, approximately 4 weeks after her home was broken into, where she was robbed and beaten. Peggy is recovering successfully from her physical injuries; however, she is displaying signs of stress and confusion. Over the last 4 weeks, she has cried a lot.

Peggy eventually returned home, but she feels stressed and regularly has to check to make sure the doors and windows are shut and locked. She stated that she has been experiencing nightmares and, thus, is scared to be at home alone. As a result, her adult children have been taking turns staying with her. They reported that she has been confused and often seems absent. Her oldest daughter explained that she spaces out a lot and then is unable to recall what they were talking about. Her children are not sure what steps to take next.

**Case Study 5**

Paul, a 16 year-old biracial male, has recently had a growth-spurt and has gained in both height and muscle. At a height of 6 feet, 4 inches he is especially excited about trying out for the basketball team. He has started getting a lot of attention over his newfound physique and decides to start working out more and watching what he eats. This shift in his exercise and eating habits has had a large effect on his weight, which dropped from 150 pounds to 110 pounds in a matter of 4 months.

Paul’s mother has grown concerned and decided to take him to the doctor’s office, but she was told Paul was in good health. Paul’s mother did not give up, and she continues to take him to the doctor until he is referred to a specialist. In the meantime, Paul gradually becomes more distant from his friends and has started to fail some classes. Whenever approached about his weight or diet, Paul becomes irate and lashes out. His parents also noticed that Paul has incorporated many rituals around eating and exercising into his day, does not deviate from them, and gets upset and anxious if something prevents him from acting out or completing a ritual. Eventually, Paul becomes emaciated, his skin has become very dry, and his hair has started to thin.

**Case Study 6**

Claudia is a 35-year-old single Hispanic female and a successful trial attorney. However, over the past 6 months, Claudia has lost several cases she felt could easily have been won if she were on her A-game. Claudia states she spends many sleepless nights reviewing her case information to see if there is any additional information she can use to her clients’ advantage. However, she has stated that, for the last 3 months, she has been having a difficult time concentrating and just ends up reviewing the same few pages of information for hours at a time, without much to show for it.

Claudia states that she knows how important it is to get a good night’s rest. She wants to and tries to sleep but frequently wakes up in the middle of the night and is not be able to get back to sleep. Thus, she generally will get up and review case information. Claudia states that she typically only gets 3 nights of solid sleep throughout the 7 days of the week.

Claudia states she does not even drink caffeinated beverages and of course does not use drugs as that would have serious consequences for her job as a trial attorney. Claudia is worried about her inability to concentrate and losing more cases.

**Case Study 7**

Lizzie, a 10-year old Caucasian female, lives with her mother, father, and younger brother. Lizzie’s mother is a librarian at the local elementary school and her father is a chef. Lizzie attends the local elementary school and will be moving up to middle school next year. At a recent parent–teacher night, Lizzie’s mother and father were worried to find that she has been struggling with her coursework and has lagged considerably behind in math and English.

There have also been some issues in social groups, and Lizzie is often involved in fights on the playground. On an encouraging note, her teacher is happy to report that Lizzie is doing very well in sports.

Lizzie’s parents have noticed that she has become more and more disorganized over the past year. She has often lost her homework, schools supplies, and lunch, and is often late for school as it takes her so long to get ready. Lizzie is often fidgety and finds it tough to pay attention, even on things that she finds entertaining; for example, it is rare for her to be able to sit and watch a movie through to the end.

Lizzie’s mother remembers that she was a lot like this when she was a child, and has not worried until now. Both parents are concerned about the fact that Lizzie is struggling scholastically, but they are more concerned about the fact that she appears to be having issues making and keeping friends.

**Case Study 8**

Lucy is a 79-year-old Vietnamese female living in New Jersey. She has four grown sons and eight grandchildren. Her husband died about 10 years ago, and she misses him dearly. She often reminisces about the fun times she and her husband had out on the town and often at the casino. Since her husband passed, she still frequents the casino, either with friends or by herself. Her sons have often commented that they are concerned about how often she goes to the casino and are worried that she has been dipping into her savings all too frequently to finance her trips to the casino.

When she gets into an argument with one of her sons, daughter-in-laws, or just misses her husband she often goes to the casino to relieve her stress or get over her sadness.

One of her sons stated that every time she visits him in Arizona, all she wants to do is go to the casino and that she doesn’t spend the time she has with him and her grandchild. He states most nights she does not come back home from the casino until 3 in the morning.

Lucy is always very excited when she wins at the casino and can typically talk to her sons for hours on end about how much she won and what happened leading up to the wins. Her sons state that she gets so excited that she will repeat the story over and over again. However, Lucy never seems to share with her sons how often she loses and how much she loses at the casino, but will claim often that she typically makes the money that she loses back at the casino the next day.

**Case Study 9**

Ronnie is a 17-year-old Caucasian male living with his mother and older sister. Since about the sixth grade, his mother reports that he has been a difficult child. Ronnie’s mother describes constantly being irritated with having to talk to other parents who are upset with how Ronnie has treated their child. Most of the issues reported are about bullying and fights. In fact, Ronnie seems to really enjoy fighting and taking items from the other kids he fights. The latest issue that has Ronnie’s mother most concerned was a case of pranks between two high schools before a big football game. Students from the opposing high school toilet-papered the statue of the school mascot, and in return, Ronnie decided to kill several cats and hang them from the opposing school’s field goal post.

**Case Study 10**

Timmy, a 40-year-old Caucasian male, comes in for court-appointed counseling. Timmy was charged with assault, but he claims that it was self-defense. He describes the situation saying that he was confronting a roommate about not paying rent. Timmy then described that the roommate rushed to push him aside to leave, so Timmy was forced to choke his roommate in self-defense. Timmy describes his roommate as stupid and unintelligent, and that he’s never had a roommate who was on the same intellectual level as himself.

Upon further sessions, Timmy continues to talk about the big job he is going to get and how he is going to make a lot of money, and even tells his therapist that he’s going to make more money than any therapist makes. However, Timmy has not held a steady job over the last 10 years and has not received any education past his high school diploma. More than once, he said he has been fired because he knew more than his manager and that all of his managers were stupid and did not know what they were doing. Timmy also discussed that he did not get hired for a job because he told the hiring manager interviewing him that he should have his job.

During the years he has been unemployed, his two brothers have paid for his rent, food, and all utilities. Even with this assistance, Timmy discusses how in his whole life no one has ever helped him and that everyone is out to get him. Recently, one of his brothers advised Timmy he would not be able to take him shopping for groceries because he was watching his sick daughter. Timmy discussed how he found that irritating and said his brother should just give him his credit card.

**Case Study 11**

Daniel is a 21-year-old African American Certified Nursing Assistant at a hospice center. Daniel’s family and coworkers have observed peculiar behaviors, gradually increasing over the last few weeks. In several cases, they have noticed him talking to himself, each time looking irritated and upset.

Recently, he has been very nervous around computers, believing that the government is using them to watch his every move. Additionally, he accused a bystander of being a federal agent, assigned to monitor his movements and kill him when he gets the signal from the President of the United States.

His parents have tried to get him to go with them to a psychiatrist for an evaluation, but he refuses. He has accused them on several occasions of conspiring with the government to have him killed so they can remove his brain and use it for research. He has been put on leave from his position at the hospice center due to management worried about the safety of their patients and will not let him return until he has received help.

Although Daniel sometimes has a few beers with his friends, he’s never been known to abuse alcohol or use drugs. He does, however, have an estranged older brother who has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals over the years due to erratic and bizarre behavior.

**Case Study 12**

Josefina is an 85-year-old woman who lives with her daughter and grandchildren. Recently, Josefina had a nasty fall and broke her hip, resulting in a necessary surgery. The surgery was a success, and Josefina’s physical recovery has gone amazingly well.

However, 2 days after the surgery, Josefina’s daughter has noticed her mother has been confused. Before the surgery, her mother knew exactly where she was and why she was there, but since the surgery, she keeps asking her daughter where she is and why she is there.

Josefina also seems to be confused about the year she is in and tends to think she is in the past. Josefina’s daughter also noticed that since her surgery she has reverted back to her first language, Spanish, even though she hasn’t spoken Spanish in decades, and Josefina’s daughter only knows English.