



MODULE 4. UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AND MENTAL ILLNESSES

Case Scenarios

Case Scenario 1: Depression (15-Minute Participant Discussion)

Read the following to participants:

Sarah is a 22-year-old female who lives alone. You have been called to her home for a wellness check by her parents who are concerned about her and haven't been able to contact her. Upon arriving you are met by a young lady who appears sad.

Ask participants:

- How might you respond to Sarah?
- What questions might you ask to get more information about her and her situation?
(Remind participants to ask about sleep and medications.)

Once participants have provided responses, read the additional information below:

Sarah has recently become withdrawn from her family and friends. She has become less interested in her appearance. She no longer plays sports or spends time with her friends. She has lost interest in the activities she used to enjoy, like going to concerts and movies. Sarah has been calling in sick to work more often, and she is noticeably moodier and more pessimistic about her future and life, in general. She has recently reported to friends that she felt worthless and hopeless.

Sarah has recently been seen drinking excessively when she does go out with friends. Sarah also appears to be losing weight. When her family called her recently, she did not answer. They were concerned, so they called the police for a wellness check. When police arrived, they found Sarah withdrawn and could tell she had been crying. The police also noticed a couple of pill bottles nearby that appeared to still have medication in them.

Continue the discussion about the scenario, use the questions below for reference:

- What are some of Sarah's notable symptoms?
- What might you expect Sarah to be experiencing?
- What interventions might you suggest?
- If Sarah is resistant to intervention suggestions, how might you respond?
- Please give some examples of calls you have responded to that have involved a person living with depression—how did you handle it? What would have helped you with that type of call?



Case Scenario 2: Mania (15-Minute Role-Play)

For this case scenario, a co-instructor will act as a person having a manic episode. The instructions for this role can be found below. The co-instructor needs to demonstrate the characteristics of mania in a manner that provides participants the opportunity to practice the various response tips discussed in this module.

Role-Player Instructions: You are a person having a manic episode. You think your ex-spouse has taken the children and won't let you see them. Simulate that you are outside an apartment building yelling up to the window where your ex lives. You are threatening to take them back to court. When law enforcement arrives, talk very fast, explain that your ex did not return the children after the last visit and that you have court papers that say you have custody. You pace around talking quickly to the officer and periodically turn around to yell up at the window. You tell the officer you know people in high places and that if the officer doesn't help you that you will call and get them fired. You jump around topics, one minute upset with your ex and then the next talking about why you should never have married that person.

The intent of this activity is for the officers to practice slowing you down, setting boundaries, being patient, validating your feelings and situation, asking about sleep and medication, and giving you choices. We want to see if the officers can reduce the intensity of the situation to get you to cooperate and communicate more without escalating.

Identify a volunteer to respond to the scenario. Ask them to demonstrate:

- (1) Slowing things down, and
- (2) Being patient

Identify a second volunteer to respond to the scenario. Ask them to demonstrate:

- (1) Acknowledging and validating the person's feelings, and
- (2) Asking about sleep and medication

Identify a final volunteer to respond to the scenario. Ask them to demonstrate:

- (1) Setting clear limits in the situation, and
- (2) Giving the person choices



Case Scenario 3: Psychosis (15-Minute Role-Play)

For this case scenario, a co-instructor will act as a person having a psychotic episode. The instructions for this role can be found below. The co-instructor needs to demonstrate the characteristics of psychosis in a manner that provides participants the opportunity to practice the various response tips discussed in this module.

Role-Player Instructions: You are outside of a local business, and you think you are the owner of it (delusion). The shop owner is telling you to leave but you refuse. You accuse the shop owner of spying on you to take the business away from you. When law enforcement officers arrive, you say how the shop owner is stealing the business away from you and that he has involved the government to spy on you and to forge ownership papers. While the officer is talking to you, periodically go silent and listen as if you hear voices. You can say to the officer that the shop owner has people behind the wall talking to you telling you to go away. At times you mumble and talk to yourself, not giving eye contact, but looking around, being preoccupied. You are not necessarily acting with high energy, but a more controlled irritability and you argue with the officer, saying they are not listening to you.

The intent of this activity is for the officers to practice slowing you down, getting you to focus on them, being patient, validating your feelings and situation, not arguing with your delusions, and giving you choices. We want to see if the officers can reduce the intensity of the situation to get you to cooperate and communicate more without escalating.

Identify a volunteer to respond to the scenario. Ask them to demonstrate:

- (1) Slowing things down,
- (2) Keeping the person focused on the officer, and
- (3) Validating and acknowledging the person's feelings

Identify a second volunteer to respond to the scenario. Ask them to demonstrate:

- (1) Not buying into the delusion, and
- (2) Giving the person choices