Biopsychosocial Assessment: Part A

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Presenting Problem:

Shawn Smith (pseudonym) is a 25 year old single Caucasian male, with no children who has recently moved from his mother’s house into his own apartment where he lives alone. Shawn has two younger brothers, ages 19 and 22. His father committed suicide when he was 13 years old and as an attempt to protect his younger brothers, his mother convinced him to hide from his brothers the fact that his father shot himself. To this day, his younger brothers still think that their father died in a car accident. Shawn has come to see a social worker because of the anger he feels towards his mother and father and the sense of responsibility he feels for letting his brothers live their lives believing this lie for the past 12 years. Shawn also resents that his mother took away much of his family after his father died; not allowing Shawn or his brothers to associate with his father’s side of the family; grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins were all cut out of their lives.

Family of Origin History:

Shawn’s mother, Lisa was 23 years old when she gave birth to him and his father, Drew was 25 years old. His parents were married one year earlier. Shawn’s mother has her Associates of the Arts degree and worked as a classroom aide in a first grade classroom until her retirement 4 years ago. His father was a pilot who attained his pilots licensing at North Western University when he was 23 years old. Shawn has two younger brothers; Jason who is 19 years old and is currently unemployed and living at home with his mother while taking classes at Lansing Community College and John who is 22 years old and is a graduate from Grand Valley State University and is a Shift Supervisor for Interstate Warehousing, he currently lives with his girlfriend in Grand Rapids. Shawn believes that all three of his mother’s pregnancies were planned, along with a still born birth of his sister that occurred when Shawn was 2 years old. Shawn’s upbringing and home life was described as good during the early years. They lived their lives as Catholics and celebrated the Catholic holidays, such as, Christmas and Easter as well as Thanksgiving and birthdays. Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving consisted of a large gathering of the whole family and involved gifts and Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny for Christmas or Easter. Each holiday the family would attend mass at St. Paul’s Catholic Church. Birthdays were described as special and an exciting time for Shawn. He was very close to his grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins so his birthdays were a time when they would all get together; family would give him gifts and have cake and ice cream. Shawn describes his family as middle class and says that he was never rich but didn’t think that he was going without. As Shawn got older he began to notice that his father was gone a lot because of his job as a pilot which saddened him. He explains his mother’s parenting as strict and as he got older he noticed that she became angry and mean, resorting to spanking as punishment for the boys. Shawn began to notice that when his father was home he would frequently be consuming alcohol and the vision of his father passed out in his living room chair surrounded by 40 ounce beers will be instilled in his mind forever. As his father’s drinking progressed Shawn noticed mounting tension between his mother and father and occasionally witnessed his father hit his mother. Eventually his parents separated when he was 12 years old due to the substance abuse and physical abuse that was occurring at an accelerated rate. During the separation, Shawn’s father moved into his parent’s house and resided there for 6 months, until his death. While he was living with his parents, Shawn’s mother began to deny his father visitation with the children, Shawn is furious about this because he thinks that this is what drove his father to suicide. Shawn says that he now knows that his father was receiving counseling and had consequently been on his way home from a meeting with his psychiatrist when he committed suicide. His father was found on the side of the road in his car with a gun-shot wound to his head. The concept of death had never been addressed in Shawn’s family so the death of his father came as a huge shock to him. He was 13 years old and the big brother to his younger brothers, age 7 and 10 and felt a sense of responsibility for them. Shawn’s mother immediately sat down with him alone and explained what had happened, she then went on to say that it would be best to tell his brothers that their father died in a car accident rather than revealing the truth to them because they were “too young” to understand, Shawn agreed. He explains that after his father died, he was no longer allowed to spend time with his paternal grandparents, or any other relatives from his father’s side. Shawn also explained that his mother blamed his paternal grandparents for his father’s death and vice versa.

Developmental History:

Shawn was born at 37 weeks and weighed 6 pounds 13 ounces via C-Section. When he was born he had jaundice and was kept in the hospital for a week for treatment. Shawn was breast fed until he was 9 months old without issues. He first walked at 16 months, talked at age 2 and potty trained at age 3. He was not told by anyone whether he was delayed or advanced in his development that he can remember. He thinks that his development was normal.

Health History:

When Shawn was born he had jaundice and received UV light treatment in the neo-natal unit for a week after his birth. During childhood, Shawn had chicken pox but does not remember having them and he also had a tonsillectomy when he was in 3rd grade. The only bone he’s broken is his arm which he broke when he was 6, as the result of falling off of a swing set. Shawn has never been in an accident, and has never had a chronic illness or weight issues nor had any surgeries as an adult. Shawn explains that diabetes is the only chronic illness that runs in his family and his father was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and alcoholism.

Substance Abuse/Abuse:

No substance abuse reported by Shawn. Shawn explains that he grew up watching his father struggle with alcohol abuse so when he was younger he had no interest in drinking. He began drinking at age 19 when he joined the United States Marine Corps because all of his fellow soldiers were drinking. He says that he drinks but he has it under control and only drinks on average 5-7 alcoholic drinks per week, which he thinks is normal for a man his age. He has no other reported addictions, such as cigarette smoking, eating, and gambling or drug addiction. Shawn does recall moderate physical and verbal abuse as a child. He and his brothers were spanked for punishment and his parents often used demeaning words when yelling at them. Shawn reports that this instilled fear of his mother and father. He has never been treated for any type of abuse.

Mental Health History:

No reports of any mental health diagnosis. Shawn did receive counseling after his father’s suicide at Community Mental Health as well as by his middle school and high school counselors. Shawn does not think that this counseling was helpful because he was in group counseling with his brothers who did not know the truth about their father’s death and this caused Shawn to feel overlooked. Shawn also felt conflicted because his mother was also filling his mind with her own thoughts and opinions, not realizing how impressionable a 13 year old can be. Shawn thinks that he was not given an opportunity to make his own decisions and gain his own attitudes about his father’s death and about his family that had been cut from his life. Shawn attended counseling for 3 months and received no medications because his mother was against it.

Legal History:

There is no legal history presented by this client.

Immigration History:

There is no immigration history presented by this client.

Relationship/Sexual History:

Shawn states that as a child he had few friends, mainly neighbors. He was very shy and quiet and an introvert. As he entered middle and high school he began to gain more friends through groups that he was a part of, such as band. He reports that his friendships are much stronger and numerous today and thinks that this is because he has become much more extroverted and values friendships much greater now than as a child. Shawn reports that he began dating at age 15. He is heterosexual and this was his first girlfriend, their relationship lasted 5 years. He states that his first sexual experience was when he was 16 years old and explains his sex life as healthy. He explains that at the beginning of the sexual relationship they used condoms and later explains that his girlfriend was put on birth control pills which then they did not use protection. Shawn does not report ever contracting a sexually transmitted disease. Currently Shawn is not involved in any serious relationships but does engage in sexual activity occasionally, in which he uses condoms.

Family of Creation History:

Shawn is currently single, not married and has never been married. He has no children and has never been in a situation with a woman where abortion was utilized. Shawn reports that he has been in two committed relationships, his first relationship from age 15-20 and a second from age 22-24. The first relationship was a healthy relationship although Shawn thinks that they may have been too young to be in such a serious relationship. Shawn reports that the relationship ended when she cheated on him when he was stationed in Iraq with the Marines. She ended up marrying and having a child with the man she cheated on him with, she is now divorced. The second committed relationship that Shawn reports lasted 2 years and he explains as “two great years.” He states that he became very close with her family which made the break up extremely hard for him. She ended the relationship because she didn’t think that he was as serious about the relationship as she was and she thought that he lacked sensitivity.

Religious History:

Shawn reports being raised Catholic. He was baptized when he was 6 months old, received his First Communion when he was 8 and completed Confirmation when he was 12. Shawn states that he and his family attended church every Sunday. He explains that he now feels conflicted because of what he was taught by the church and by his parents growing up and the actions that his father ultimately took to take his life. He now reports attending church only on holidays when his mother and brothers attend.

Educational History:

Shawn reports being an A student through elementary, middle and high school as well as being on the honor roll and a part of the National Honor Society. He graduated high school on time in 2004. He reports attending Mott Community College as a part of their Law Enforcement Training Academy; he then finished his Bachelors of Criminal Justice degree at University of Michigan Flint in 2011. He believes that he is a very intelligent human being and that his experiences in life and in the military have been a great learning experience.

Employment History:

Shawn reports having chores as a child and up until he moved away from his mother’s home. He shared responsibility with his brothers in doing the dishes, laundry, yard work along with taking out the trash and keeping his room clean. Shawn states that his first real job was working for his maternal grandfather’s excavating company beginning when he was 16 years old where he was paid $8 per hour to dig holes and trenches in residential and commercial environments. Shawn explains this job as unrewarding and he felt unfulfilled. This caused Shawn to contemplate the military. At age 18 Shawn reports that he joined the United States Marine Corps where he was employed until he was 22 years old. While in the Marine Corps Shawn’s pay varied based on what position he held and whether or not he was deployed; which he was twice. As Lance Corporal Shawn reports making approximately $22,000 per year and once promoted to Platoon Sergeant making approximately $38,000 per year. He states that he felt underpaid for his duties as well as devalued. Shawn reports working as a deputy for the Jackson County Sheriff’s department for 1 year after choosing not to reenlist in the Marine Corps. He transferred to the Flint Police Department due to the fact that he lives near Flint where he currently works as an officer where he gets paid $42,000 per year. He thinks that this is fair but is saddened that he is being paid more to patrol Flint than he was fighting for his country in Iraq.

Military History:

Shawn reports his involvement in the United States Marine Corps from 2004-2008 where he was promoted several times and received titles such as Lance Corporal and was promoted to Platoon Sergeant in less than a year. He also received awards for expert rifleman, and was ranked in the top of his company in highest physical fitness. Shawn explains that one of his top honors was his receipt of “Certificate of Commendation.” Shawn reports that he was deployed for two tours of duty. He speaks of his experience in the military as an intense experience with an enormous sense of responsibility with lack of control. He states that he has never made better friends or met better men and women than when he was in the military. He explains that being overseas and seeing the suffering and unthinkable conditions made him grateful to be an American and urged him to continue fighting for his country. Shawn reports seeing things and experiencing things that he “would never wish upon anyone” he was trained to shoot and kill when threatened and those were the orders he followed. He states that he witnessed several fellow soldiers’ horrific deaths from road side bombs and snipers and says that he will forever be haunted by scenes from his deployment but thinks that this has been a positive influence. As a Platoon Sergeant, Shawn explains that he was the one who went into unknown territory first to explore in order to clear the area for his platoon to enter. Shawn states that this was a huge weight on his shoulders and an enormous responsibility which put a lot of stress upon him; it was his “duty to protect his platoon.”

Financial History:

Shawn reports that he is unsure of his family’s financial situation growing up; he thinks that as a child he was middle-class because they had a nice home and had all their needs met. He explains that after his father’s death his mother received an unknown, but large amount of money from insurance policies, personal savings and investments. Shawn states that his mother took this money and built a $500,000 home in a neighboring city. Shawn feels frustrated with his mother’s decision to do this, he thinks that her actions were excessive and unnecessary and could have been better spent on the education of his brothers. Currently Shawn reports his personal financial situation as comfortable. He is a single man living in a reasonably priced apartment making $42,000 per year plus benefits at the Flint Police Department.

Strengths:

Shawn states that he is a very strong and stable individual who is always striving for more. He knows what he wants and will work hard to attain it. Shawn is highly educated and has experienced many distinctive experiences that he has gained an abundance of personal knowledge and growth from. He is a very hard worker, has a well-respected job that he enjoys and is a valued member of society. He reports having a strong relationship with his middle brother John who serves as his support system. Shawn explains that he is beginning to understand that he is his own person and can make his own judgments and decisions regardless of what his mother has instilled in his mind.

**Step 1: Working with the Client**

Through Mr. Smith’s assessment he has shared with me some his main issues that are negatively affecting his life that he would like to work on.

The following issues are:

* His resentment towards his mother.
* His father’s suicide which he has not effectively coped with.
* His feelings of guilt for allowing his brothers to believe that their father died in a car accident rather than tell them the truth; that he committed suicide.
* The absent and strenuous relationship with his extended paternal family members.

**Step 2: Prioritize the Problems**

* Has not effectively coped with father’s suicide
* Resentment towards his mother
* Guilt associated with brothers
* Absent relationship with paternal family

**Step 3: Translate Problem into Need**

**Problem Need**

* Has not effectively coped with father’s suicide Greif counseling This is an objecive
* Resentment towards his mother Counseling with motherThis is an objecive
* Guilt associated with brothers Counseling with brothersThis is an objecive
* Absent relationship with paternal family Reconnect with family

**Step 4: Evaluate Levels of Intervention for Each Need**

**Need #1: Greif Counseling**

Micro Strategy: Find an agency where grief and loss counseling is available.

Pros:

* Mr. Smith’s insurance policy covers this type of counseling.
* He would be able to discuss his feelings with someone who will listen.

Cons:

* Mr. Smith might not be comfortable going to counseling and talking with a stranger about his feelings.
* He might have to travel outside of his area to find these services.

Mezzo Strategy: Find a loss and grief support group.

Pros:

* He will be able to relate with others who share similar feelings.
* He will be able to speak openly about his feelings without judgment by his mother.

Cons:

* Lack of support groups pertaining to suicide.
* Mr. Smith might not be comfortable discussing his feelings and experiences with a large group.

Macro strategy does not apply because this is a unique personal need that must be addressed at a micro or mezzo level.

**Need #2: Counseling with mother**

Micro Strategy: Consult with family counselor with mother present.

Pro:

* Mr. Smith can gain assistance in effectively expressing his feelings and issues to his mother.
* His mother will better understand how he is feeling and they can begin to work on their relationship.

Cons:

* Possibility that mother may not comply.
* Possibility that no resolution is found between Mr. Smith and his mother.

Mezzo Strategy: Find a conflict resolution workshop for family members.

Pros:

* Will allow interaction with others who share similar circumstances.
* Provides support system.

Cons:

* Both Mr. Smith and his mother may not comply.
* There may be a fee for services.

Macro strategy does not apply because this is a personal need that does not need intervention at a macro level.

**Need #3: Counseling with brothers**

Micro Strategy: Attend family counseling with brothers.

Pros:

* Will serve as a stable platform for Mr. Smith to decide whether or not to inform his brothers of the cause of their father’s death.
* Will provide guilt resolution as Mr. Smith is able to express his feelings to his brothers.

Cons:

* Brothers may resent him for keeping this secret for 12 years.
* Mother may resent him for revealing the truth.

Mezzo Strategy: Attend grief and loss seminar or workshop with brothers.

Pros:

* Mr. Smith with be able to effectively cope with the support of his brothers as will his brothers with his support.
* Will serve as a platform for relationship mending and building.

Cons:

* Schedules may conflict.
* Brothers may not comply.

Macro Strategy: Consult local human services agencies about advocating for children’s rights when faced with the death of a parent.

Pros:

* Laws and regulations could be created in order to avoid situations such as this, in that children should have the right to know the truth surrounding the death of a parent to prevent traumatization later in life.
* This is something that Mr. Smith and his brothers could work towards together.

Cons:

* Lack of funding.
* Lack of support from local agencies and government officials.

**Need #4: Reconnect with family**

Micro Strategy: Request a meeting with family.

Pros:

* He would have an opportunity to explain why he has been absent from their lives and his feelings surrounding the situation.
* He would gain a large support system.

Cons:

* His family may not be open to reconnecting.
* He may lose relationship with mother by going against her wishes.

Mezzo Strategy: Attend relationship building workshop with family.

Pros:

* Would serve as platform for relationship building.
* Would relieve his feelings of anger and sadness he felt about losing his family.

Cons:

* Scheduling conflicts when trying to get a number of people together.
* Some tenuous relationships may not be restored.

Macro strategy does not apply because this is a personal issue that can be effectively addressed through micro and mezzo intervention.

Goal #1: Cope with father’s suicide through grief counseling.

Objective #1: Locate grief counselor.

Task #1: Ask physician for referral to grief counselor within 2 days.

Task #2: Make appointment with grief counselor within 3 days.

Task #3: Show up to appointment and work on setting up a treatment plan within

5 days.

Objective #2: Attend local grief support group.

Task #1: Conduct an online search for local support groups within 3 days.

Task #2: Client will ask counselor or physician for recommendations and referral

to support group within 1 week.

Task #3: Attend grief support group within 10 days.

Goal #2: Gain healing and understanding within the client’s relationship with his mother.

Objective #1: Have mother agree to family counseling.

Task #1: Call mother and inform her of the need for counseling within 2 days.

Objective #2: Locate a family counselor.

Task #1: Ask for referral from physician to family counselor within 3 days.

Task #2: Make appointment with family counselor within 5 days.

Task #3: Attend family counseling with mother within 10 days.

Objective #3: Find a family conflict resolution workshop.

Task #1: Search online for local workshops within 3 days.

Task #2: Inform mother of date, time and location of workshop within 5 days.

Task #3: Attend workshop with mother within 2 weeks.

Goal #3: Inform brothers of the cause of guilt he has been feeling in a way that preserves the relationship and promotes healing.

Objective #1: Have brothers agree to counseling with client.

Task #1: Contact brothers and inform them of the need for counseling.

Objective #2: Find a family counselor.

Task #1: Ask physician or social worker for referral to family counselor within 2

days.

Task #2: Discuss options with brothers within 5 days.

Task #3: Attend family counseling with brothers within 2 weeks.

Objective #3: Attend conflict resolution workshop.

Task #1: Seek resources through local agencies pertaining to conflict resolution

within 3 days.

Task #2: Get brothers to agree to attend workshop within 5 days.

Task #3: Attend workshop with brothers within 2 weeks.

Goal #4: Improve relationship with paternal family.

Objective #1: Connect with each paternal family member.

Task #1: Call family members and explain situation and intentions within 3 days.

Task #2: Meet with family members within 1 week.

Task #3: Secure understanding of feelings among family members within 2

weeks.

Objective #2: Attend family relationship building workshop.

Task #1: Ask for recommendations for family workshops in the area within 3 days.this part should also specify who will do the task

Task #2: Gain family compliance within 5 days.

Task #3: Attend 2 workshops with family members within 1 month.

**Contract for Intervention Plan**

**Client Name:** Shawn Smith

**Description of the Problem:**

Mr. Smith is in need of treatment to cope with the grief associated with his father’s suicide and to improve his strenuous relationships with his mother and brothers. He also needs assistance in reconnecting with his paternal family.

**Primary Goals:**

* Cope with father’s suicide through grief counseling.
* Gain healing and understanding within the client’s relationship with his mother.
* Inform brothers of the cause of guilt he has been feeling in a way that preserves the relationship and promotes healing.
* Improve relationship with paternal family.

We the undersigned, agree to the objectives in the following plan:

* Locate grief counselor.
* Attend local grief support group.
* Locate a family counselor.
* Attend a family conflict resolution workshop.
* Connect with each paternal family member.
* Attend family relationship building workshop.

Signature of Client Date

Overall this paper shows a good understnding of this process. Need to work on getting clearer about the differences between goals and objectives but even most people in practice do not clearly know that so I am not very concerned about it.

44 points