

Refresher Workshops: Psychosocial Assessment

Presented by Authority & Quality Improvement Services
(AQIS)

AOABH Support Team

Psychosocial Assessment: Initial Assessment

- The Purpose: to get to know your client
 - PC starts to get to know the client by gathering information about the client
 - Helps to understand the client's current symptoms and how they are causing impairments
- Helps to guide your Care Plan

Psychosocial Assessment: Presenting Problem & Current Episode

- Presenting Problem: Questions to ask
 - What brings you here today?
 - What can I help you with?
 - Who referred you to services?
- You can use your clinical judgement and ask the question **“How is the client’s mental illness affecting them?”**
- Incorporate quotes
- EXAMPLE: Client was discharged from College Hospital Costa Mesa 3 days ago. Client states she cut her wrists, “but it was not a suicide attempt I [clt] was just upset.” Client is withdrawn and recently dropped out of school due to not leaving her house for over a month. Client came in with her mother to start services.

Psychosocial Assessment: Presenting Problem & Current Episode

- Symptom Grids: These are important to fill out because they start to breakdown and explore client's current mental health symptoms and how they are affecting them on a regular basis.
- Symptom Grids are:
 - Psychosis
 - Mood
 - Anxiety
 - Somatic

Psychosocial Assessment: Presenting Problem & Current Episode

- Utilize blue prompts when filling out Symptom Grids
 - Describe duration, severity & frequency
 - What makes it worse?
 - What makes it better?
 - What is the impact on the client's life?
- Always utilize narrative boxes when filling out the symptom grids

Psychosocial Assessment: Recent & Past Harm Assessment

- Broken down into 3 Sections:
 - Suicidal Ideation
 - Suicide Attempts – if click 'YES', Past Suicide Attempts Details section will open
 - Thoughts of Hurting Others
- If answer YES, want to look at:
 - When & how?
 - What was the resulting treatment?

Psychosocial Assessment: Psychiatric History

- History of mental health treatment
 - Age of onset
 - Narrative: what type of treatment, where, for how long, was clt engaged in treatment
- Psychiatric Hospitalizations
 - Narrative of what type of hospitalization, where, for how long
 - If mark 'YES', will open the 'Psychiatric Hospitalization' section

Psychosocial Assessment: Psychiatric Hospitalizations

- Provide as much information as possible
- Want information to be accurate
- Utilize information from other sources if possible
 - Hospital/Treatment records
- Document hospitalization: first, last, longest, how many in the last year
- Provide dates if possible

Psychosocial Assessment: Mental Status Exam

- The Mental Status Exam (MSE) is an important part of the comprehensive clinical assessment process.
- It is a way of documenting observations on the client's state of mind for a particular point in time.
- The information contained in the MSE, along with biological and historical information obtained through the assessment process, informs the diagnosis.

Psychosocial Assessment: Mental Status Exam

- This information should match what is the symptoms grids/narratives
 - Appearance/Speech/Interaction/Eye Contact/Motor Activity
 - Emotional State
 - Thoughts/Content/Perceptions
 - Sensorium/Intellectual Function
 - Areas of Immediate Concern

Psychosocial Assessment: Care Coordination

- Important to document if the client has Medi-Cal or any other type of Health Insurance
- If mark 'NO' on 'Does client have Medi-Cal/Health Insurance':
 - Will be asked: 'Have BHS staff offered client assistance in obtaining Medi-Cal/Health Insurance?'
- Need to fill out 'Intervention/Outcome' section

Psychosocial Assessment: Substance Abuse & Recovery

- Past and Present use of tobacco smoking use
- Past and Present use of any substance use or abuse (legal or illegal)
 - EX: marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, alcohol, over the counter medication, pills, etc
 - Want to gather basic information and link back to MI if possible
- EXAMPLE:
 - Client uses methamphetamine and cannabis to reduce the intensity of her auditory hallucinations. However, methamphetamine increases the intensity of symptoms and makes her more aggressive and engages in fights.

Psychosocial Assessment: Family History

- Include blood relative with mental health diagnosis or substance abuse
- Discuss any current issues with family
- Questions to Ask:
 - Do you have a supportive family?
 - How is your relationship with your family members?
 - How does your relationship with your family affect your mental health?

Psychosocial Assessment: Abuse & Trauma

- History or current events of abuse and trauma
- QUESTION TO ASK/THINK ABOUT:
 - How is abuse/trauma affecting client today?
 - Is affecting client's mental health?
 - How does client manage/deal with abuse/trauma?

Psychosocial Assessment: Education

- Can use the narrative to start looking at impairments due to MI:
 - Is the clt currently in school?
 - What are some of the challenges they faced at school due to MI?
 - Did they drop out of school due to MI?
- **EXAMPLE:**
 - Due to auditory hallucinations and disorganized thinking, client has difficult doing homework and studying for his tests and he is not able to complete assignments in school. Client recently dropped out of school 2 months ago.

Psychosocial Assessment: Employment

- Can use the narrative to start looking at impairments due to MI:
 - Is the client currently working?
 - What are some of the challenges they faced at work due to MI?
 - Have they ever been fired due to MI?
- EXAMPLE:
 - Due to paranoia and delusional thinking, client believed that his co-workers were videotaping him to show to his supervisor that he was incompetent and he walked away from his job after one month. This event took place 2 months ago and client is currently unemployed.

Psychosocial Assessment: Living Arrangement

- Can use the narrative to start looking at impairments due to MI:
 - Is the client currently in homeless?
 - Is homelessness due to MI?
 - Has the client ever been evicted due to MI?
 - Where is the client currently living?
- EXAMPLE:
 - Due to auditory hallucinations, delusional thinking, and poor impulse control, client becomes convinced that her neighbors are plotting against her. She becomes confrontational and engages in physical altercations. This resulted in client being evicted from her apartment 1 month ago.

Psychosocial Assessment: ADLs

- Can use the narrative to start looking at impairments due to MI:
 - Is the client able to complete ADLs on their own?
 - How does MI symptoms affect client in completing ADLs?
 - Who assists client with ADLs when necessary?
- **EXAMPLE:**
 - Due to disorganized thinking and diminished self-awareness, client has difficulty going to the store to buy food and utilizing the bus as she believes that others want to hurt her. For the past 4 months, client has been depending on others for her basic needs.

Psychosocial Assessment: Legal

- Always want to link back to MI:
 - Has client recently been in jail due to MI?
 - Is client currently on conservatorship due to MI?
 - Is client currently on Probation due to MI?

Psychosocial Assessment: Strengths & Social Support

- Strengths section as this may help with identifying areas that can later be used for treatment planning.
- When looking at strengths, look beyond the traditional strengths.
- **Strengths** can include:
 - Abilities and accomplishments
 - Interests and aspirations
 - Risk and Protective Factors
 - Recovery resources and Developmental assets (such as a support team or WRAP plan)
 - Unique individual attributes

Psychosocial Assessment: Strengths & Social Support

- When considering strengths, it is beneficial to explore other areas not traditionally considered “strengths.”
- Such examples include:
 - an individual’s most significant or most valued accomplishments
 - ways of relaxing and having fun
 - ways of calming down when upset
 - preferred living environment
 - personal heroes
 - most meaningful complement ever received

Psychosocial Assessment: Clinical Summary

- Family or client's story + Your clinical assessment = hypothesis or clinical interpretation.
- The summary also helps explain how the client's needs are identified and provides direction in treatment planning.
- It includes:
 - barriers to the client achieving their goals
 - characteristics
 - Strengths
 - motivation for behavior
 - previous vocational and educational experiences
 - current desires.

Psychosocial Assessment: Clinical Summary

- EXAMPLE:

Clt has a history of childhood trauma and depression. She struggled in school and has had very few friendships in her life. She appears scared and timid. Mother reports she has been this way most of her life but in the last 2 years has become verbally aggressive. She yells and throws things. Clt spoke a lot about her father's substance abuse and violent behaviors which impact her ability to trust others. Clt wants peer relationships but lacks social skills. Clt is motivated to make changes and begin services, she is in the contemplative stage of change. There appears to be a level of enmeshment as mother answers questions before clt can even respond. Clt's delusions about the KGB has a significant impact on her quality of life. She wants to stay home to be safe and fears going in public. Clt enjoys her close-nit family that provide love and support to clt. Due to clt's paranoia and mood changes, it will be imperative that clinician goes slow to build trust with clt. Due to clt's recent hx of mania, sx relapse will need to be monitored closely including mood changes, changes in sleep, and mental status.

Contact Us

For additional support or questions please contact:

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