

## **Developmental Case Conceptualization**

### **Introduction**

In this assignment, we will be examining the case of a 24-year-old female movie actress who has experienced significant trauma throughout her life. We will use theories of human growth and development to conceptualize her case and determine appropriate counseling interventions. Two frameworks that will be applied to this case are attachment theory and psychosocial development theory.

### **Case Conceptualization**

According to some of Cecily's past experiences, learning of trauma history and symptom presentation can aid in determining the counseling intervention needed for Cecily. For example, Cecily's trauma history mentions her experience being tied to a bed that resulted in injuries with a potential tragedy that could have occurred. This particular experience along with some of her childhood trauma can lead to a specific need for trauma therapy. In regards to symptom presentation, Cecily's symptoms of night terrors, flashbacks, and hypervigilance are all present and also aids in determining the proper counseling intervention. All in all, these experiences have impacted Cecily's life, however, learning of these experiences can help tailor interventions specific to her needs.

By applying attachment theory to this case, we can link Cecily's challenges in forming healthy relationships to her early disorganized attachment including the abandonment from her mother and the absence of a father figure in her life. The primary objective is to enhance attachment security and assist Cecily in cultivating healthy relationships. Interventions may involve examining attachment patterns, establishing a secure therapeutic bond, and working on

developing healthy attachment behaviors. Similarly, through the lens of psychosocial development theory, Cecily's past experiences are seen as impacting her development through various stages. For instance, her traumatic childhood such as the abandonment by her mother might have impeded the development of trust and autonomy.

While there are several potential interventions that could be used, a few interventions tailored for Cecily's traumatic experiences could include safety, and emotional regulation/grounding techniques. There is still unresolved trauma with Cecily's past, and beginning with establishing a safe and stable therapeutic environment would be key to earning Cecily's trust. It would be significant for Cecily to feel physically and emotionally safe in sessions.

Emotional regulation and grounding techniques are also potential interventions that could be used for Cecily's case. The development of coping strategies to regulate overwhelming emotions would be beneficial for Cecily's symptoms. Grounding techniques could also be used when she is experiencing night terrors, flashbacks, or hypervigilance. Some examples include practicing deep breathing techniques, and mindfulness can be effective. Mindfulness is thought to be associated with an increased ability to stay present with moment-to-moment experience—to approach life fully, rather than withdrawing or avoiding life's challenges (Siegel, 2020). There are a few of the interventions that can be implemented for Cecily's case.

In regards to Cecily's goals, some of the listed interventions also align with being able to sleep again at night without waking up thinking she is on fire, wanting to stop watching everything going on around her like she is in a movie, and trying to figure out what the purpose of the fire was. In Cecily's case, one significant factor to consider is being able to adjust as the

client progresses through her sessions. Being able to adjust interventions on the client's input and evolving goals is important to ensure therapy remains aligned with the clients changing needs.

Encouraging open communication and feedback is key.

### **Culturally Relevant Strategies**

In Cecily's case, her Puerto Rican heritage and background can be taken into account within this case. Culture impacts development significantly, as mentioned in the Siegel text, social development proves challenging for almost all children in some form or another, students from diverse cultures being no exception. Children become aware of ethnic stigmas at a very young age, and these stigmas can lead to academic anxiety and low intrinsic motivation (Siegel, 2020). Understanding these cultural dynamics become imperative, calling for the application of culturally sensitive approaches to promote resilience and well-being.

Culture relates and intertwines within development, functioning, resilience, and well-being. In development, it relates to culture in the understanding of cultural norms and how it shapes individuals emotionally and socially, and how identity formation changes through life stages. In regards to functioning, communication styles and behaviors are all affected by culture norms and values. In some cultures, resilience factors are present when social support systems are offered and most times resilience is embedded within cultures. Lastly, cultural perspectives greatly impact perspectives on well-being. Cultural beliefs on well-being play a crucial role in an individual's attitude regarding health and wellness.

Two culture dynamics that will be discussed are Cecily's Puerto Rican culture influence, and the stigma and cultural norms surrounding sexuality. Cecily's Puerto Rican background might influence her views of herself and her future goals. This cultural heritage could shape her

perceptions of identity, expectations within relationships, and societal norms, affecting her approach toward her experiences and life choices.

The stigma and cultural norms surrounding sexuality and Cecily's involvement in the sex industry reflects how cultural norms and societal perceptions of sexuality, particularly in Western culture, could impact her self-perception and well-being. The cultural context around sex work and societal judgments might affect her views on relationships, self-worth, and her perceptions of what is considered a 'normal' or acceptable lifestyle.

Some ethical and culture strategies when working with a client are cultural competence and respecting the client's autonomy. It is important to acquire knowledge of the client's cultural background, stigmas, and awareness of stereotypes when working with a client. Education on traditions and beliefs are also significant. It is also important to consider how culture influences perceptions, behaviors, and communications. Respect of autonomy is vital in following some of the ethical guidelines. Providing treatment plans and interventions that respect the clients cultural preferences would be important as well.

While there are many potential suggestions for treatments that emphasize resilience, optimal development, and wellness, a few potential treatments that will be discussed are cognitive behavioral techniques and cultural sensitivity. Cognitive behavioral techniques utilize behavioral interventions to challenge negative thought patterns. This will enhance coping skills and adaptive behaviors. Cultural sensitivity is important to always respect the client's cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Incorporating cultural practices that promote wellness is key.

By integrating these practices and strategies into treatment plans for clients, therapists and counselors can help clients not only address their challenges but also develop the skills and resources needed to thrive, grow, and maintain wellness in various aspects of their lives.

## **Summary**

The case conceptualization process has been beneficial in understanding the client's experiences, identifying appropriate interventions, and considering the influence of culture on Cecily's development. Cecily's case illustrates the multifaceted impact of trauma. It highlights the intricate interplay between early attachment disruptions, ongoing abuse, and their enduring effects on mental health and relationships. This applies as a mental health professional by recognizing the complexity of trauma's repercussions on various life domains.

Lastly, another key takeaway was learning of cultural sensitivity. As a mental health professional, this brought perspective on how important it is to respect cultural nuances, acknowledge stigmas, and tailor interventions accordingly. Through the application of attachment theory and psychosocial development theory, I have gained insights into the client's attachment difficulties and developmental challenges.

### References

Siegel, D. J. (2020). *DEVELOPING MIND : how relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. Guilford.