

Case Scenario: Mindfulness or Imagery with a Depressed Patient

Remember Alfonso? Alfonso, 52, is a new client and complains of insomnia, anxiety, and feelings of profound sadness. During the assessment, you learn that his mother died two months earlier in a nursing home, where she had lived for three years with Alzheimer's. Alfonso tells you he feels "terrible, just like scum," because he was not present with his mother when she died and, in fact, had not visited her regularly for two years before her death. He explains that she had lived with him and his family for 10 years after his father died, but she grew progressively more debilitated and harder to care for. When she started wandering from home, he and his wife decided she needed secure care. For the first year, he visited her twice a week, but then she stopped recognizing him and it pained him to visit her in such a state. Alfonso states that, in addition to avoiding the anguish of visiting a mother who no longer recognized him, he also was so busy with his job and family that he did not want to take the time to see her. He visited his mother only 3 times in the year before her death; his final visit was four months before she died. Now he believes he should have visited her more frequently, and he stays awake at night berating himself for his lack of attentiveness. He tells you he was a "bad son" and is "an unforgivably bad person." He reports feeling exhausted "24/7" but "can't sleep," and lies in bed at night "until one or two in the morning, just thinking about how horrible my life is and how nice it would be to just end it all." He mentions having thought about death and dying "a lot. Like, a *lot*," but denies having a specific plan for killing himself or having engaged in prior attempts to do so. "I feel pretty lousy right now," "but I'm not going to do anything about it. I don't *do* much of anything, some days." He says he thinks about suicide every day, both because he wants to end his pain and because he feels he does not deserve to live. He has stopped eating regularly, is unable to focus at his job as a computer technician, and is irritable with his wife and children.

Please start at the beginning of the session and plan to conduct a 45- to 50-minute role-play session. The goals for this practice session will be to conduct the mood check, set the agenda, ask for updates and review Action Plan, prioritize the agenda, work on agenda item 1(which will be facilitating a CBT technique from this week's reading to help Alfonso and create a new Action Plan to practice this skill), summarize the session, review Action Plan for the coming week, and elicit feedback. This session outline is based on chapter ten from this week's Beck reading.

Timeframe: 5 minutes to prepare, 45-50 minutes to role-play, 10 minutes to debrief (total of 60-65 minutes). Then you can take a break and then switch roles. Each person will role play being Alfonso. If you are in a group of three, then you will adjust the time of the role-play to 5 minutes to prepare, 35 minutes to role-play, 5 minutes to debrief (total of 45 minutes). Make sure each person takes a turn being the therapist.

Before starting the role-play, decide...

- Where are you in treatment (e.g., early in treatment, etc.)?
- What is the goal for the practice session?
- What technique(s) will you be practicing?
- What do you want the role-player to know?

Additional information for the role-play:

When asked for an update: Alfonso continues to feel sad and struggles with intrusive thoughts about being a bad son. Just this weekend he was reminded of how much fun he and his mother had when he was a child and would go on outdoor adventures in the woods. He really feels like he let her down and should have done more to help her.

Previous Action Plan: Alfonso was asked to “test the validity” of his thought. He was able to use this technique to entertain the idea that at times he was a good son.

Typical Session Outline

- Briefly review clients mood and functioning (approx. 5 min)
- Bridge previous session to current session (approx. 5 min)
- Set agenda and prioritize items (approx. 5 min)
- Review homework (approx. 10 min)
- Discuss agenda items and identify homework (approx. 25 min)
- Summarize session (approx. 5 min)

Agenda Setting

- Work with client each session to determine how the session will be spent.
- Each offer items they would like to discuss.
- Decide order and amount of time for each.
- Within first ten minutes of each session
- You may facilitate more agenda setting in the start of treatment to model for patient.
- As time passes, the focus becomes more on the client to set the agenda.

Finally, after you each have taken a turn to be the therapist, please write up a brief reflection on your experience as the clinician. Chose three items from the list below and **submit a brief one-page reflection to Moodle** (under class 7 assignment).

- *How did I feel?*
- *What did I notice?*
- *What did I learn?*
- *Was it helpful?*
- *What did not change?*
- *What are the implications of this experience for my understanding of cognitive behavioral therapy and theory?*
- *What do I want to know more about?*
- *What questions came up?*