

Abnormal Psychology Writing Assignments (Case Studies) Guidelines

General Instructions: All papers need to be typed, double-spaced with a font size of 12. Please type your name, course & title of the case study assignment at the top of your paper. Late assignments will be marked down 5 points for each class session they are late. Each assignment is worth 25 points.

To complete the assignment, you need to thoroughly read through the case study. Take notes on the symptoms of the client. Read the pages on the DSM IV TR completely (pages 103-104). Then write a 5 Axes Diagnosis of the client according to the DSM IV TR criteria. Your diagnosis should take the form of the table on the bottom of page 104. You must make the actual diagnosis or diagnoses (if the client has more than one disorder). Make sure your diagnosis is placed on the correct axis. If your diagnosis doesn't fit one of the axes, write "none" on the axis.

After writing the 5 Axes Diagnosis, write a Mental Status Exam Narrative (M.S.E.) in essay form in the following manner:

*Write one paragraph to justify your diagnosis. In other words, why do you think this client has the diagnosis you are making? Do NOT just summarize the case. Instead, identify symptoms that meet the criteria for the DSM IV TR diagnosis. For example, if you think the person in the case study suffers from schizophrenia, give examples of his symptoms & explain how those symptoms match the DSM IV TR's criteria for schizophrenia. Be thorough, convincing & use the DSM IV TR to back up your diagnosis. **Be sure to refer to the DSM checklists in your text. For each disorder, there will be a corresponding checklist. You need to address each part of the checklist.**

*Write a second paragraph describing another diagnosis that the client might possibly have. This is called a differential diagnosis. Because Psychology/Psychiatry, like medicine, is not an exact science, you must consider other possible diagnoses for the disorder. For example, if you went to a M.D. with the symptoms of a sore throat, the doctor would need to consider various diagnoses before deciding on the one that most closely fit your symptoms. He/she might diagnose you as having a "flu" but write "allergies" as your differential diagnosis to keep in mind for future reference. Similarly, if you were a psychologist working with a patient, you would need to consider different diagnoses. Again, in making the differential diagnosis for the case study assignment, use the DSM IV TR to back up your argument. Again refer to the DSM checklists in your text.

* Write a third paragraph describing which form of treatment (psychotherapy, medication, etc) you would suggest given your diagnosis of the case. Be specific in what type. For example, you would suggest cognitive-behavioral therapy or antidepressants, not drug therapy or psychotherapy. You can tie in discussions from the text, video, lectures, etc to support your suggestion(s) for appropriate treatment.

Your end result for the case study should take the following format:

Axis I:

Axis II:

Axis III:

Axis IV:

Axis V:

Mental Status Exam Narrative:

One paragraph to support the diagnosis you have made above.

One paragraph to name the differential diagnosis or diagnoses & support that argument.

One paragraph to suggest treatment for the psychological disorder(s) you have diagnosed.

(The 3 paragraphs of the M.S.E. should be a minimum of 1 page total.)