

Case 1: Daniel

Daniel is a 9-year-old, white male who has been referred for outpatient behavioral health services due to concerns for hyperactive and aggressive behaviors. At your assessment, Daniel presented with his mother. Daniel presents as incredibly hyperactive, difficult to redirect, and with little regard for his mother. Mother presents as calm but tearful at times stating that she is desperate for some help with his behavior. As part of the assessment, Daniel reports to you that mother “whoops” him. When you ask to clarify, mother admits that she spansks Daniel when he misbehaves.

At a subsequent session, Daniel appears to have bruising to his cheek. When asked what happened Daniel reports “my mom whooped me for being bad.” Mother denies the allegation and reports that Daniel sustained the bruising from rough housing with his brother. His mother states, “And that’s another thing about Daniel, he lies all the time. I think he’s trying to get me in trouble.”

Question 1: Given the information you have about this child and family, what are some further questions that you could/would ask related to abuse/neglect?

Question 2: Are there any (potential) ethical considerations in this case? If so, describe.

Question 3: Given the information you have, what are your next steps?

Question 4: Who would you consult with or collaborate with in this case (if anyone)?

Question 5: How would you document this information?

Case 2: Aniyah

Aniyah is a 14-year-old, black female who you've been working with for the last 8 weeks. Her primary presenting concerns are difficulty with emotional regulation, self-injury, and suicidal ideation. Aniyah is motivated and engaged in treatment. Over the last several weeks, Aniyah's symptoms appear to be worsening. She reports an increase in self-injurious behaviors using a craft knife in her art kit. 3 weeks ago, you brought parents in to discuss your concerns and reiterate the safety precautions (locking up sharps, going through patient's room, daily mood checks, daily body checks, etc.). Aniyah reported at the next session that her family is doing mood checks but that she still has access to the knife in her room. You discuss safety precautions with the family in detail and process barriers to securing the sharps she has access to. Her parents assure you they will lock the items up. Today, Aniyah reports that she attempted suicide last night by cutting her wrists. She reports that still had access to the knife in her room. She does appear to have a fresh cut to her wrist.

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Case 3: Brianna

Brianna is a 16-year-old, Asian-American female who presents due to concerns of anxiety and depression. Brianna reports to you that last night, her 22-year-old boyfriend, Jake, sexually assaulted her. During her account of this, she reports that they previously had consensual sex but last night she told him no and “he didn’t listen.” Brianna reports that she just wants to forget that this happened and move on with her life. She reports that she plans to cut Jake out of her life and has already unfollowed him on Instagram and blocked him on Facebook.

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Question 4: Who would you consult with or collaborate with in this case (if anyone)?

Question 5: How would you document this information?

Case 4: Dylan

Dylan is a 6-year-old, Hispanic male being seen for hyperactivity and inattention concerns. Dylan was removed from his parents' care when he was 3 months old due to concerns of neglect. He was returned to his parents' custody after 6 months and subsequently removed again when he was 3 years old due to concerns for abuse. He was returned shortly after he turned 4. Dylan's parents have been clean and sober for the last 2 years since he was returned to their care. Dylan's mother works full time and his father works part time so that he is able to get Dylan to and from school. Dylan's parents report a great deal of mistrust with the Child Protection agency in their county given the history. They report that, although it was the push they needed to get sober, they don't feel that the agency did everything they could to reunify them quickly. As part of your introduction to treatment, you explain mandated reporting. Dylan's parents had a lot of questions and stated that they were unsure if they wanted to continue treatment for fear they would be falsely reported. Despite their reservations, Dylan's parents elected to continue on in therapy to "learn how to raise our son to be the best he can be and figure out how we can be the best parents we can be."

At your session, Dylan reports to you that his father pushed him down last night "because I was running all over the place" and he hit his head on the kitchen cabinet. Dylan's parents report that Dylan was running around the kitchen uncontrollably and he was getting ready to knock over a pot of boiling water on the stove. Dylan's father admits that he shoved Dylan out of the way for fear that he would pull the boiling water onto himself. Dylan presents with a knot on his head and a bruise on his forehead.

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Case 5: Charlie

Charlie is a 12-year-old, black male who presents with severe behavioral concerns. Charlie has been known to be highly aggressive including choking siblings, throwing heavy objects at parents and siblings, and attacking parents. Charlie's parents report that they are having to restrain him several times per week for their safety and the safety of their other children. They admit that Charlie has sustained bruising and scratches as a result of the restraints. Parents also report that he sustained a spiral fracture in his wrist a few months ago as a result of restraint which prompted them to engage in behavior treatment. Charlie's parents report that they avoid restraint as much as possible but indicate that Charlie's behaviors put them and their other children at risk of severe harm. Charlie reports to you "My parents hurt me. They pin me down to the floor and they twist my arms until they break."

Charlie and family have been engaged with you in a treatment program that targets severe behavior. Charlie has made little progress while in treatment and behaviors continue to escalate quickly. As part of treatment, you've been working with parents on alternate responses to Charlie's behavior. At this session, Charlie's parents report that he was restrained last night for lunging at his sister. The restraint re-aggravated the previous injury to his wrist. Charlie's parents appear genuinely upset and appear highly stressed by the current situation.

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