

Anthony Fania

Inclusive Teaching in Education

Professor Vyas

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Behavior Intervention Plan

LISA

Lisa is an 11th grade student at Perth Amboy High School. She resides in Perth Amboy with her parents, and is an only child within her family. At the age of seventeen, she considers herself a “young woman” and as such has begun dating students within the school. She also greatly enjoys dance, drawing, and photography. Lisa however suffers from major depressive disorder, and this has caused numerous issues not only in her academic life, but her social life as well. Lisa, unfortunately, is known as “that crazy girl” by other students, and her consistent depressive episodes often happen in public areas such as the hallway, girl’s bathroom, cafeteria, or even the classroom. Her diagnosis was brought on within recent months following a failed relationship with her then boyfriend, Eric. Unable to end the relationship amicably, Lisa ultimately entered multiple stages of grief; ranging from stalking, bartering, threatening, and even self harm (starving herself and cutting). Her parents try to take her to a psychiatrist to help her diagnosis, but they are unable to be consistent financially. However, Lisa has made attempts to move on from Eric and is now in a supposed relationship with another boy named Jack, who is a senior. Lisa, despite this, continues to have random breakdowns in the hallway (a fit of tears, anxiety, fatigue, lethargy, and sulking). She is also known for having to excuse herself for long periods in class to either use the bathroom, visit the school councilor, or text her boyfriend. Because of this, many teachers have become frustrated and are unable to help her repair failing grades. Lisa has also begun hurting Jack emotionally by comparing him to Eric, and also blames him for issues she has in life, even though both Jack and Eric have supported her depression and anxiety (while simultaneously vouching for her random absences or taking the blame for her episodes). Lastly, while Lisa’s friends have been initially supportive in helping her recover, they are strained in their interactions with Eric; any mention of Eric is enough to cause Lisa to break down, and her friends do their best to keep him out of her sight. With multiple teachers worried about Lisa’s emotional and psychological well-being, and her grades with their impact on her getting into college, they have requested a Behavior Intervention Plan as a course of action.

Analysis

Major Depressive Disorder

Known as major depression, clinical depression, or unipolar depression. This disorder may also work in tandem with bipolar depression. Major depression affects in multiple ways: Trouble sleeping, loss of weight, agitation, and irritability. Guilt and worthlessness are also common feelings. Some can function reasonably well, and put on a "happy face" in front of others, while deep down they feel quite depressed and disinterested in life. However, most people will either have depressed mood or a general loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed, or a combination of both. In addition, physical and mental symptoms that may include: fatigue, difficulty with concentration or memory, headaches, body aches, and thoughts of suicide. Unfortunately, there is no one way someone is affected by major depression, hence why bipolar depression may work in tandem. One affected could be happy or even euphoric, and within seconds, cross to the other negative pole of mood.

Demographic

Within adults, major depressive disorder affects twice as many women as men. Both genders are commonly affected between 25-44 years of age, and least common for those over the age of 65. In children, clinical depression affects girls and boys evenly. Within an entire life, major depression will affect 10%-25% of women and 5%-12% of men. At any one point in time, 5%-9% of women and 2%-3% of men are likely to be clinically depressed. Although major depression can occur at any age, the average age for developing the illness seems to be in a person's mid-20's. Despite this, the average age of onset concerning the condition appears to be decreasing. Those with a parent or sibling who has had major depression may be 1.5 to 3 times more likely to develop the condition than those who do not.

Diagnosis and Symptoms

A. The person experiences a single major depressive episode.

1. For a single episode, a person must experience at least five of the nine symptoms below for more than two consecutive weeks, and be affected for the majority of the time of every day.
 - a. Depressed mood (or irritable mood in adolescents)
 - b. Significant reduction of interest in most or all activities.
 - c. Considerable loss or gain of weight, caused by a drastic increase or decrease in appetite.
 - d. Difficulty falling or staying asleep (insomnia) or oversleeping (hypersomnia).
 - e. Behavior that is agitated or slowed down, such that can be observed by peers or family.
 - f. Feeling fatigued or diminished in energy.
 - g. Thoughts of worthlessness or extreme guilt (not about being ill mentally).
 - h. Inabilities to think, concentrate, or make decisions.
 - i. Frequent thoughts of death or suicide (with or without a specific plan), or attempt of suicide.
2. The person's symptoms do not indicate a mixed episode.
3. The symptoms cause a great distress at home, work, school, or other important areas.
4. The symptoms are not caused by substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, or prescribed/unprescribed medication), or a medical disorder.
5. The person's symptoms are not due to normal grief or bereavement over the death of a loved one, they continue for more than two months, or they include great difficulty in functioning, frequent thoughts of worthlessness, thoughts of suicide, symptoms that are psychotic, or behavior that is slowed down (psychomotor retardation).

B. Another disorder does not better explain the major depressive episode.

C. The person has never had a hyper, manic, or hypomanic episode, unless the episode was caused by a medical disorder or use of a substance.

Context and Observations

- **Lisa appears to suffer her episodes at random times of the day, including at school or home. However it has been observed by both teachers and peers that the following can also trigger an episode:**
 - The sight of Eric himself (in the hallways, in class, outside of school, or pictures)
 - The mentioning of Eric, be it his name, his friendship with others, or who he's possibly romantically involved with.
 - Any romantic media, such as movies, television shows, or music that deals with failed love, breaking up, betrayal, etc.
 - Any mention that Lisa herself is "crazy".
 - Any subject matter that involves death.
 - Refusal to let Lisa "talk it out", or shutting her down when she needs to either vent, cry, or leave the room.
- **At Perth Amboy High School, the majority of teachers are unequipped to handle students with depression, and typically refer students to one of three guidance councilors at the school.**
- **If all three guidance councilors at the school are occupied, Lisa has no other person to talk with, and must resort to texting during class or finding isolation until her episode or feelings subside.**
- **Lisa father and mother both work, and are gone for the majority of the day, leaving her boyfriend and friends the only support system she has for the bulk of her daily life. On weekends, only her mother is able to deal as best she can with Lisa depression.**

Hypothesis

Lisa was never able to fully recover from her romantic feelings of Eric. In the bustle of school life where relationships form and end, Lisa also attends a school where word of mouth easily spreads information. Her lack of support with adult figures also is a contributing factor, as she is limited of people to talk to and with many adults who don't understand her reasoning for failing grades is attributed to a severe need of emotional and psychological help. Her major depressive order is the result of her quick replacement relationship with Jack, feelings of worthlessness from the previous relationship and overall self-esteem, and lack of adults able to guide her or carry her through her own self analysis to find her positive self-esteem. She has resorted to self-harm, starvation, leaving class, and forcing new romantic relationships as her method of suppressing her own feelings. Her negative reputation at school also has pushed her into believing that there is no hope for her recovery, even with the small support she does have.

Sociocultural Factors

Lisa's major depressive disorder also rides on her relationship with what friends she has. Her friends are still amicable with Eric, but aren't allowed to acknowledge that with Lisa herself. There is also pressure at the high school to have a relationship: A partner for dances, a date for football or basketball games, a date for prom, a date to show on social media, and a date to hold hands with in the hallway. Lisa's forced new relationship with Jack could also be the pressure to act like Eric never happened, however her unresolved feelings and suppressed right to vent or talk have made her relationship with Eric worse: branding her as the "crazy ex" or the "crazy girl" at the school. This has made her attempts to recover worse, because despite infrequent talks with an outside psychiatrist or talks with a guidance councilor, she still has to deal with the reputation she has earned from her disorder. The bipolar depressive side also makes her unpredictable and intimidating to be with.

Function Based Intervention Plan: Overall

It is clear that Lisa needs an immediate group of adults she can rely on, and furthermore, the communication of any teacher she has class with. Along with a group of adults, Lisa's friends also need communication and understanding of her disorder so that her actions don't seem abnormal or unmanageable. Lastly, Lisa needs communication of the idea that she can control herself that she is the owner of her heart, mind, and actions. She is in control of her life and no one else; she doesn't need to succumb to the idea of Eric controlling her actions and happiness.

Environmental Modifications: Class, Technology, and Socially

1. Lisa is to be allowed to sit anywhere she pleases within the classroom that makes her comfortable, so long as she can see boards, monitors, and the teacher. This is only allowed if Eric and Jake are absent from the class.
2. At the beginning of all her classes, Lisa is to place her phone on the teacher's desk so she may focus on her lessons. The teacher will not read her texts, turn off the phone, or make calls unless in the event of the emergency. Lisa will have her phone returned to her once class is over. She is still expected to follow technology rules and guidelines in the hall, during assemblies, etc.
3. Lisa's classes will not be with Eric or Jake unless there is no other way, and should the councilors have no choice but to merge schedules, Lisa is to sit at the front of the room and out of sight of either boy. She is to not speak to them and respect personal space.

4. Lisa's friends are to escort her to and from her classes should she need, and allow her to vent if she needs. The friends are to keep her from Eric's sight, but allow Jack to be around if Lisa desires.
5. Teachers are to recognize if Lisa needs to leave for a moment or be escorted to a councilor to talk. If one of her friends is not available to escort her, a security guard she is comfortable with may escort her.
6. Any student mentioning Lisa in the negative is to be disciplined accordingly: No bullying is allowed. Students are only allowed to mention Lisa's behavior if they are concerned about her safety and health.
7. All teachers are required to let Lisa schedule an after-school meeting to discuss grades or personal issues if she chooses. Communication is required should grades worsen or improve.
8. Lisa's parents will be notified of these changes. Should they have concerns, they may schedule a parent-teacher meeting.

Measurable Goals

1. A specific councilor and teacher of Lisa's choosing will be assigned to checking on her overall state. That teacher will offer advice or listen to any issues she may have at the beginning of school, before homeroom, or after school hours.
2. Lisa is to write or type any times she feels most vulnerable to an episode, or any negative/positive feelings she might need help with.
3. At the end of each week, all of Lisa's teachers are to not only tell her of her grades and any progress, but inform her of what she needs to improve on to bring her grade up, or how to maintain improved grades.
4. Lisa's parents are to watch their daughter's behavior and email her teachers of any concerns with homework, tests, and other assignments.
5. Jack and Lisa's friends are to report to her teachers any improvement or worsening of Lisa's behavior, as additional evidence of the plan's effectiveness.

Antecedent Events

1. Lisa is not to bring up any past experiences with Eric to either Jack or her friends. Her focus socially is to advance, and not dwell on the past.
2. Only her designated councilor is to discuss past events with Lisa. Current teachers are only to know of her present state and goals.
3. Eric is not to have contact with Lisa, but can continue socializing with anyone he chooses so long as he isn't generating negative reputation.

4. Parents are to inform Lisa's councilor of any other past events or triggers Lisa may not remember or withhold.

Consequences

1. Lisa is to be treated the same as any other student at the school. She is not excused from texting during class, fighting, bullying, or aggression.
2. Lisa is to be handled by a security guard, should her teacher and friend be unable to calm her down during an episode.
3. Should Lisa fail to improve her grades in the coming two weeks after the plan's implementation, her parents will be contacted to further amend the plan to help her improve.
4. Should Lisa continue to chastise Jack or speak ill of Eric, or attempt to find Eric, Jack will be removed from Lisa's list of escorts.

Skills

1. Lisa is to be taught how to manage anxiety by her councilor, and teachers will be informed of any exercises she learns.
2. Lisa's friends as well as Jack are encouraged to help Lisa practice her self-help exercises (breathing, meditation, writing out feelings, etc.)
3. Lisa is encouraged to positively generate her feelings within assignments or electives.

Evaluation

1. **At the end of the first two weeks after the plan, Lisa's teachers and councilor will meet and compare grades, behavior, and overall well-being.**
 - a. **Should improvement be seen, the plan will go on for the next two weeks.**
 - b. **Should no improvement or worse behavior be seen, then Lisa's parents will be contacted. Lisa's friends will be contacted if the extent of negative behavior is severe enough.**
2. **After four weeks, Lisa's teachers and councilor will meet with Lisa and her parents for a conference to compare grades, behavior, and overall well-being.**
 - a. **If significant improvement is seen, the plan will continue for the rest of the year.**
 - b. **If little or worse behavior is seen, then the parents, Lisa, along with her teachers and councilor will have to reform the plan and seek additional outside help to aid Lisa's depression.**