

CASE SCENARIOS

What is a case scenario?

A case scenario is an examination of a real or simulated problem so that learning can take place through the discussion of each facet.

When might case scenarios be useful?

Case scenarios can be used to discuss appropriate responses to a situation and to consider how potential problems could be prevented. They tend to be used in situations where rules or laws cannot be applied or where there is some ambiguity.

Trainees can draw from their previous experience and knowledge, applying this to new situations that are presented by the case scenarios. A range of issues can be drawn out through the facilitation of group discussion and peer learning. Case scenarios are also useful in helping put theory into practice.

Case scenarios are one of the most useful ways of enabling attitudinal objectives to be met as they allow peer discussion. Participants have the opportunity to try a number of approaches and to use problem solving techniques. Scenarios may also enable the facilitator or trainer to gauge whether participants have understood key issues.

Writing scenarios

The situations need to be as realistic and as accurate as possible. When writing scenarios give as much information as necessary but be aware of time constraints. Make sure the delegates have time to read them and if appropriate circulate them before the session.

Be aware that the purpose of the scenarios will alter depending on your training objectives and context. It is usually helpful to guide the training and provide some structure especially if the concepts are new to the participants. Vary the case scenarios to make them interesting and to enable a range of issues to be covered.

If possible (time is a key issue) participants who have enrolled on a training course may provide some examples of situations/problems they have experienced where mental health may have been an issue. These can be used as a basis for training with the trainer drawing out key issues by the use of questions. Using situations that are real to participants makes the training relevant to them and is likely to increase their involvement. The questions used are dependent on the needs of the trainee group and the learning objectives of the training.

The scenarios can be selected and adapted for the group attending the training. The trainer should consider in advance specific issues which need to be

highlighted about a given scenario and raise them during discussion. It may be useful to employ questioning techniques to draw out specific issues for discussion.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CASE SCENARIOS EXAMPLES

The following scenarios are examples of cases used for training sessions. Depending on the specific staff group being trained some scenarios are adapted to make them more relevant to the specific training group.

Scenario One

A group of students comes to find you. They are concerned that a girl is in the toilets crying. They think they saw the same girl earlier on and she was upset then. One of them thinks she has some painkillers with her.

What do you think might be going on?

How would you respond to the situation?

Scenario Two

A second year student bumps into you at a social event. She always seems lively and outgoing, the life and soul of the student bar. When you have been talking for a few minutes she takes her cardigan off to reveal several cuts on her arms. Her demeanour remains unchanged.

What do you think might be going on?

How would you respond to the situation?

Scenario Three

You are standing at the bus stop on your way to a job interview when a student approaches you. The student is clearly distressed. He is a student you have had regular contact with and he is becoming increasingly more demanding, wanting more frequent contact with you.

How would you manage the situation at the time he approaches you?

When you speak to him, he says that he could not manage without your support and when you broach the subject of him getting some other help, he gets angry and accuses you of not caring.

How would you respond to him?

How could you prevent such situations arising?

Scenario Four

There is an overseas student whom you are friendly with. You have spoken together about their home situation. He seemed to be doing well in his first year here but now

you notice his personal appearance has deteriorated and he has become increasingly withdrawn. Other students have told you that the student is not attending lectures, which seems out of character.

What do you think could be going on?

How would you respond?

Scenario Five

A student approaches you in the Library, (or other open area) and starts to bombard you with questions. She will not make eye contact and is using repetitive hand movements. As she continues to talk you notice that she is starting to shake and sweat. You try to answer her questions but she does not seem to be listening to you.

How would you respond to this situation?

What concerns might you have?

After spending some time with the student she is becoming increasingly loud and is disrupting other students.

How would you manage this situation?

Scenario 6

A group of students come to talk to you about their anxieties concerning one of their friends (a student of yours). They tell you that they have noticed that she finds excuses for not coming into meals and that when she does eat with them, she only eats very little. They think that she has lost weight since the beginning of term. They ask your advice.

How do you respond to this situation?

Does anyone else need to know?

Scenario 7

A female student approaches you about a male student living in the same accommodation. She says he is strange and gives her funny looks. She has heard him at night shouting out loud when in his room on his own. This is making her feel uneasy and she wants to change her accommodation. She doesn't ask you to do anything but you feel you ought to investigate further.

What do you think might be going on?

How would you respond to the situation?

You later discuss this with a sub-warden who tells you that the same student had difficulties in their house the previous year. They seem to think he might be going for counselling.

Would this new information affect your thinking?

Scenario 8

Another librarian approaches you and expresses concern about an agitated and abusive student. The student is unable to express his request. You offer to deal with him personally. He becomes even more agitated and shouts "I can't do this". Other students begin to watch the situation. You suggest that the student sits down. Although you have dealt with agitated students before, you are concerned that this student is somehow different. His eyes are red and he is constantly gesticulating in an aggressive manner. Although his breath smells of alcohol he does not seem to be drunk.

What do you think might be going on?

How would you respond to the situation?

Scenario 9

Whilst you are doing a security check at night you find a student sitting outside a building. You ask if he is all right and he bursts into tears. In between sobs he tells you he has just found out that he has failed all of his exams and doesn't dare tell his parents. They have told him that anything less than a 2:1 would be a family disgrace.

How would you respond to the situation?

SIX POINT PLAN FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY

Stay calm

- Consider safety: yours, others, the students
- Engage with the student (if appropriate)
- Be direct and clear
- Take threats of self harm and attempted suicide seriously
- When in doubt consult with others