

Strengths Based Approaches to Supporting Cross Cultural Education for Students with Mental Health Diagnoses

Scenario 1

Marissa

Marissa is a high achieving 19 year old Creative Writing major. She is White and comes from a working class family. She writes extensively about her recovery from anorexia nervosa and has had several pieces published in campus student journals. She hopes to study abroad in Spain next year, but her parents have some concerns about her health and ability to care for herself. When you meet with Marissa she tells you that she has been working with a counselor for the past four years and feels that she has her eating issues under control. Marissa describes having a target weight that she has been able to comfortably maintain for the past year. She describes a clear, if rigid, understanding of what her diet needs to consist of. She is happy to sign a release with her therapist and nutritionist so that you can speak with them. As she is leaving she reflects that moving out of her parents' home has been helpful in her recovery from her eating disorder and one reason she wants to go abroad is to create even more separation between she and her parents.

What questions would you want to ask Marissa in order to find out about his strengths?

What strengths do you imagine Marissa has?

Scenario 2

Josh

Josh is a 20 year old African American sophomore who is planning to study abroad in London next fall. He is a graphic design major and is interested in the professional program offered at his chosen program. Josh disclosed that he has struggled with depression since he was 15 years old. He has had periods of time when he has isolated himself and found it difficult to meet his academic obligations. Josh was hospitalized two years ago when he was “at his lowest.” Josh takes medication daily and this has helped to him be less depressed. He volunteers that he knows that he must severely limit his alcohol intake or that he will experience “black hangovers” that leave him in a funk for days.

What questions would you want to ask Josh in order to find out about his strengths?

What strengths do you imagine Josh has?

Scenario 3

Bridget

Bridget is a White 21 year old junior who wants to go on a short term faculty led program to Dublin. She has several alcohol violations on her record, and was hospitalized once for alcohol poisoning. She wants to go on the Dublin program because several of her friends are already signed up for the trip and she has some Irish ancestry. When you meet with Bridget to discuss concerns about her participation on this program, she shares that she has been participating in AA and in recovery for 14 months. She shares that her friends do drink but know that she does not.

What questions would you want to ask Bridget in order to find out about her strengths?

What strengths do you imagine Bridget has?

Scenario 4

Dan

Dan is a 25 year old Mexican American man. Dan comes from a very supportive and large Catholic family and lives at home. His home is a highly stimulating and lively environment with several generations living under one roof. He is completing college as a part time student because he has always found social interactions to be stressful and he finds it easier to take a few classes at a time. Dan was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome when he was eight years old and has often found it challenging to understand social situations. He has learned to think his way through social situations and can usually manage interpersonal interactions without too much difficulty. He is highly methodical in his approach to his studies. He is majoring in Chemistry with a minor in Spanish. Dan can become overwhelmed when he is pressured to make quick decisions. For instance, Dan was once escorted by public safety from a professor's office after becoming agitated and yelling at his professor for asking him too many questions at once. He hopes to study abroad in a Spanish speaking country, and has approached you for some help making a plan.

What questions would you want to ask Dan in order to find out about his strengths?

What strengths do you imagine Dan has?