

CASE CONFERENCE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

Mental Illness

In order to gain a better understanding of mental illness, you will read a story (novel, autobiography, etc.) where a main character suffers from a mental illness. You will then present your character's background and symptoms at a case conference. You will then do some research on that disorder and write up a final paper that is structured as described below.

1. The first step is to pick your novel
2. The second step is to read your novel
3. The third step is to complete a character analysis
4. The fourth step is to present at the case conference*
5. The fifth step is to research a possible diagnosis
6. The sixth step is to finalize the paper

***A case conference is a common occurrence in mental health settings where psychologists and other mental health professionals share their ideas and insights in order to provide the best treatment for clients. You will act as a psychologist and present your client describing his/her background and symptoms. By carefully listening to presentations, your colleagues (classmates) will diagnosis your client to compare to your diagnosis.

Attached you will find a character analysis handout/chart. As you are reading your book, you should fill this out to the best of your ability. Having your information organized in this way is very helpful when you go to write up your case conference presentation and when you write the research paper.

TIMELINE

You will have a great deal of time to complete this assignment, but it is very important that you meet each deadline so that you do not fall behind. The due dates for various components of the assignment, and their point value, are below.

- _____ Bring novel to class (5 points)
- _____ I have finished novel
- _____ Case Conference Presentation and Feedback(25 points)
- _____ Final Paper (70 points)

Specifics about the Research Paper

PAPER LENGTH

5-7 pages

The paper should be:

1. Double Spaced
2. 1 inch margins
3. 12 point Times New Roman font

The paper should NOT include first person! Have someone proofread your paper!

PAPER ORGANIZATION

Introduction

In this first paragraph, you want to give your character's name, a little bit of background information, and introduce the reader to the diagnosis.

Part 1 - Case Study

I. Character Analysis

In this section, you should thoroughly answer as many of the following questions as are relevant to your character

What is this person's socioeconomic background?

Where did this person grow up?

What is this person's likes and/or dislikes, strengths and/or weaknesses?

Describe this person's family and other significant relationships

Describe other personal characteristics

II. Stressors

note: you are expected to have quotations from the novel in this section

In this section, you should thoroughly answer as many of the following questions as are relevant to your character

Describe this person's unhealthy relationships

Describe some of the problems in this person's life: economic, educational, occupational, legal, etc.

III. Symptoms

note: you are expected to have quotations from the novel in this section

What are this person's main symptoms?

When do these symptoms emerge?

IV. Outcome of Case

In this section, you should thoroughly answer as many of the following questions as are relevant to your character

Was there treatment?

Was this treatment effective?

What is the long term prognosis for this person - have the stressors discussed above been reduced or eliminated? How?

Part 2 - Research on diagnosis

I. Diagnostic Criteria

What are the most common symptoms of this disorder?

What is a typical age of onset?

Is this disorder more common in one gender?

II. Etiology

What are the most common causes for this disorder?

Is there a genetic component of this disorder?

III. Treatments

What are the most common treatments available?

How effective are the current treatments?

IV. General Research

note: not everyone will have this section

In this section, you should comment on relevant information not discussed under other headings. For example:

Are there any controversies surrounding this disorder?

Are there any new trends in diagnosis and/or treatments for this disorder?

Conclusion - Evaluation of Case

In this paragraph, you should discuss the ease with which your client was diagnosed. In other words did your client clearly suffer from a mental illness that is classified in the DSM V or was it a collection of symptoms that lent themselves to a variety of possible explanations? If you are so inclined, discuss the significance of this sometimes ambiguous process.

REFERENCE PAGE

-You must have at **LEAST FOUR** sources, excluding your book

-You must use in -text citations

GRADING -

-Your paper will be worth 70 points

-Late papers will lose 5 points for each day they are late.

Case Conference Booklist

Accessible books:

Speak, Laurie Halse Anderson
Soft Spots, Clint Van Winkle
American Sniper, Chris Kyle
All Around the Town, Mary Higgins Clark
A Child Named It, David Pelzer
Perks of Being a Wallflower, Stephen Chbosky
Just Checking, Emily Colas
Cut, Patricia McCormick

Challenging books:

The Eden Express, Mark Vonneget
Sybil, Flora Schreiber
Silence of the Lambs/Red Dragon, Thomas Harris
Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness, William Styron
She's Come Undone, Wally Lamb
I Know This Much Is True, Wally Lamb
The Hour I First Believed, Wally Lamb
Nobody's Child, M. Balter and R. Katz
Fight Club, Chuck Palahnuik
Best Little Girl In The World, Steven Levenkron
Prozac Nation, Elizabeth Wurtzel
Birdy, Edith Warton
Smashed, Koren Zailackas
The Quiet Room, Lori Schiller
Electroboy, Andy Berhman
Yellow Birds, Kevin Power