

A.M.B.E.R. clinic
Albuquerque
Multidisciplinary
Behavioral Evaluation for
Recovery and Resiliency

Alya Reeve, MD, MPH

University Of New Mexico Health Sciences Center

Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology & Pediatrics

PI, Continuum of Care

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**“Clinical Assessment:
Techniques, Strategies,
Adaptations”**

Techniques

- **Arrange schedules to minimize rushing.**
- **Get independent sources of information.**
- **Listen to ALL the information.**
 - **spoken, unspoken**
 - **alliances**

Techniques

- **Create alliance by reducing nonverbal threats**
 - Positioning in the room
 - Angle of interactions
- **Answer questions; explain procedures or steps**
- **Involve patient in discussion & consent process**
 - **Make sure no one is rendering patient invisible**

Techniques

- **Do not have to do everything in one day!**
- **Develop desensitization plans for procedural anxiety.**
- **Record signs and symptoms without diagnostic categorization.**
- **Permits re-examination of hypotheses**

Strategies

- **Create atmosphere in which patient will reveal their understandings.**
 - **Safe environment**
 - **Respecting confidentiality**
- **Use patient's communication of symptoms or distress more than support staff articulation(s).**

Strategies

- **Keep record system for reference**
- **Note sources of information, corroboration**
- **Consider environmental, emotional, physiological factors contributing to behavior and intention**
- **Assume the person is alive**

Adaptations

- For procedures:
 - Desensitize in stepwise fashion
 - Introduce people as is feasible; allow the patient to control the rate of exposure
 - If routine exam you will gain a lot by taking even a year to gain trust
- Create opportunities to observe the action or behavior of interest

Adaptations

- **Atypical presentations of common diagnoses**
 - **Aggression may be masking depression**
 - **Pain is most frequent cause of changed behavior and altered sleep**
- **Nonverbal communication**
- **Inability to follow commands for AIMS**

Adaptations

- **Observe the patient's response to other people talking about their interactions, talking for the patient.**
- **Accept questions as a way to make you real in the patient's world**
- **Use the multi-axial system of diagnosis**

Putting it together

- **Have to take a little time**
 - **Synthesize information, observations, expectations...**
- **Bio-psycho-social; holistic approach**

Clinical Assessment

- There has to be a purpose to clinical examination
- What does this report answer, to whom?
- Are medications warranted?
- Is psychotherapy available?

Communication

- Information has to go to the team providing supports.
 - Written report; oral report
- Psychological support is needed by everyone on the team

Communication

- **New findings, or new complications should be disseminated**
- **Team members need to challenge each other to develop and maintain best practices.**



Innsbruck, Austria

**Railroad Station
2006**

Next presentation:

9-17-2012

**“Psychopharmacology
– first of a series”**

resources and back issues can be found at Continuum
of Care website:

<http://som.unm.edu/coc/Training/powerpointnew.html>

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