



ECHO Idaho: Counseling Techniques for Substance Use Disorder CASE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Presenter Credential: M.Ed.

After review of the case presentation and discussion of this patient’s case among the ECHO Community of Practice, the following suggestions have been made:

Summary: The client is a 38-year-old female with stable housing, part-time employment, and Medicaid coverage. She has a history of mild alcohol use disorder in remission and past meth and marijuana use, last reported eight months ago. Currently on supervised probation for a domestic violence charge, she attends therapy, AA, and domestic violence treatment. She identifies faith and her husband as key supports, but his terminal cancer poses a risk for relapse and crisis. Treatment focuses on coping skills for distress tolerance and impulse control.

Question: Guidance is needed in addressing her emotional reservedness and preparing her for impending grief.

Recommendations:

Risk Factors and Relapse Prevention:

- Continue monthly check-ins and assess any changes in risk factors.
- Leverage her primary coping mechanisms – boundary setting and connection – to help her identify and process emotions effectively.
- Explore her existing support system and develop a structured weekly plan to maintain stability, particularly given her husband’s health situation.
- Consider integrating a safety plan focused on managing grief and substance use triggers.
- [Recommend St. Luke’s program for discussions on the realities of palliative and hospice care.](#)

Emotional Vulnerability and Defense Mechanisms:

- Encourage deeper emotional processing in sessions by creating a safe space for vulnerability.
- Acknowledge her use of charm and humor as defense mechanisms but gently guide her toward authentic emotional expression.
- Reinforce that humor is a strength but also help her build comfort in experiencing and expressing difficult emotions.

Grief Preparation and Coping Strategies:

- Introduce “coping ahead” strategies to prepare for anticipated grief.
- Encourage discussions on what might happen and how to implement coping mechanisms in advance.
- Consider using [Five Wishes](#) resources to help her navigate end-of-life planning.
- Ensure she has support systems in place for when her husband passes
 - Friday Night Women’s AA Meeting: Sunlit Beaches, 7 pm MT (950 W State St, Boise, ID).

Long-Term Emotional Wellness and Treatment:

- Discuss the benefits of ongoing treatment for personal growth and emotional well-being.
- Reinforce the connection between emotional wellness and sobriety, encouraging her to continue therapy long-term for stability and self-care.

Consider presenting follow-up for this patient case or any other patient cases at a future ECHO Clinic session.

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