

CASE STUDIES: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As you review the following case studies, you may want to consider these questions for thought or discussion:

- What standardized tests and measures (including psychiatric, for example, a depression screen) would you select for this patient? Why?
- Based on available data, what short- and long-term goals would you write for your plan of care? Consider using the acronyms SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) or ABCDE (actor, behavior, conditions, degree, and expected time frame) to guide your goal writing.
- What elements (procedures, psychosocial aspects, communication aspects, etc) would you make sure to include or omit in your plan of care for this patient? Why?
- What are your anticipated needs, if any, for consultation and referral for this patient?
- How will you transition this patient toward lasting health behavior change following discharge (eg, recommending a YMCA membership trial)?

Case 1

A 23-year-old female college soccer player was referred to outpatient physical therapy 2 weeks after a left combined anterior and medial cruciate ligament tear. Her goal is to return to practice by the end of the semester, which is 4 weeks away.

- Social history: she lives on campus on the third floor of a dormitory without an elevator available. She is involved in extracurricular activities, including theater (backstage this semester), a student service club, and campus worship services.
- Medical/psychiatric history: GAD (diagnosed 4 years previously), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and pain medication prescribed occasionally impairs concentration
- Impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions found on initial interview and examination
 - Pain rated 8/10 at times in left knee, especially after using crutches to walk between classes
 - Left knee joint inflammation that impairs positioning while sitting
 - Left quadriceps weakness (able to hold knee straight against gravity without resistance)
 - Difficulty managing stairs to dormitory with backpack due to shortness of breath
 - Slightly decreased grades in 2 classes due to sleepiness from pain medications
 - Unable to participate in soccer practice

Case 2

A 41-year-old male construction worker is starting rehabilitation through worker's compensation for a back injury sustained in a fall from a 10-foot height through roof beams to the floor below. His goal is to return to work.

- Social history: he lives in a 2-story house with his wife, who works as a schoolteacher. Her parents assist with caring for their 2 children while both are at work. He has counseling twice per month for PTSD; finally, he reports difficulty with obtaining transportation to 25% of scheduled therapy appointments.
- Past medical and psychiatric history: recurrent lumbar disc protrusions, obesity, partial rotator cuff tear (2 years prior to current injury), PTSD from serving overseas in the military in his 20s, and a long history of taking low-dose opioid pain medications as needed