

Mental Health Clinical Scenarios

A 45-year-old woman is feeling down and irritable.

Her symptoms have been going on for about six weeks. She has recently got divorced but there is an ongoing custody battle with her former husband over their 2 teenage children. She has also just had a bad performance review at work due to her inability to meet deadlines and is fearful of losing her job. She explains that her work problems have arisen because she has been unable to keep her concentration focused on work.

She expresses feelings of worthlessness and wonders sometimes what is the point of living. She has to force herself to stay engaged in her children's activities and other interests that she used to enjoy; she feels she is 'just going through the motions'. She had a similar episode after the birth of her second child, but pulled out of it after several months. She has poor eye contact and looks tired.



- ? What is the most likely diagnosis?
- ? What other questions would you ask?
- ? What treatment would you advise?

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A 22-year-old man comes to see you with his mother. She is concerned about him as he spends most of his time in the house and refuses to go out alone.

He used to live independently and worked until a few months ago. The patient states he made an error on his income tax statement and is convinced that the tax authorities have hired detectives to gather information about him. He states that, since his mistake, he uncovered an essential flaw in the taxation algorithm, which may expose the underpinning of the system of government. He is convinced the government have hired assassins disguised as bikers.

After moving in with his mother, he did not see the bikers, but says they are trying to trace his "mental activity". Also, he hears them outside his house talking about how they will kill him; he reported the problem to the police and is seeking help "to defeat the tax collectors". He appears suspicious, and his answers to questions are delayed, during which he appears internally preoccupied.



What is the most likely diagnosis?



What tests would you request?



What treatment would you advise?

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