

A Beautiful Mind

Overview

A Beautiful Mind is the story of John Nash, a real mathematical genius who began having symptoms of schizophrenia upon entering graduate school at Princeton University in 1948. Peers viewed Nash as odd, eccentric, and lacking in basic social skills. Nash often skipped class, wrote mathematical formulas on windows, and spent many hours pursuing an “original idea” befitting his intellectual abilities. Most interpersonal interactions were with Charles (his roommate) and two or three other fellow students.

Once he began teaching, John met a young woman, fell in love, got married, and had a child. The Cold War was at its peak. With his ability, John was able to decode messages intercepted from the “enemy.” Soon after, a government secret agent hired him to look for hidden messages in newspapers and magazines. His entire life became consumed with this “mission.”

Over time, it became apparent that John’s mission was a delusion. Furthermore, it became clear that the secret agent and his college roommate Charles were hallucinations. Initially, John was treated with insulin shock therapy; later, his treatment was with medications.

It is important to note that the movie ***A Beautiful Mind*** skips many years (1960s--1980s) of the life of the real John Nash, which were quite tumultuous. He and Alicia divorced, although they eventually remarried. Nash had a relationship with another woman, which produced a son, John David. His son with Alicia, John Charles, was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

After decades of fighting the symptoms of his disease, Nash received the Nobel prize for his mathematical discoveries.

For the purposes of this exercise, you are a nurse working with the Nash family as depicted in the film during the time when his illness was at its worst.

Client name: John Nash

Psychiatric diagnosis: Schizophrenia

DSM-IV-TR criteria:

1. Two or more of the following characteristic symptoms:
 - Delusions
 - Hallucinations
 - Disorganized speech (e.g., frequent derailment, incoherence)
 - Grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior
 - Negative symptoms (i.e., flat affect, alogia, avolition)

Type responses to questions in the response boxes

2. Disturbance of one or more major areas of functioning, such as work, interpersonal relations, or self-care markedly below the level achieved prior to onset of symptoms
3. Continuous signs of the disturbance persist for at least 6 months
4. Not due to another psychotic or mood disorder, substance, medical condition, or pervasive developmental disorder such as autism

Type responses to questions in the response boxes

Date:

Your name:

Name of the client: John Nash

Name of the movie: *A Beautiful Mind*

What is the chief complaint? (In the client's own words and report of others)

Response:

Based on the above information and a close viewing of the movie, what questions would you raise during history taking? What are some possible answers? You might base your questions on the:

History of the client's illness

Past psychiatric history, treatment, and treatment outcomes

Psychosocial history

Response:

What other observations do you have about the client's behavior?

Response:

In your opinion, is the diagnosis discussed above accurate?

Response:

What DSM-IV-TR criteria support (or negate) this diagnosis?

Response:

What treatment plan would you outline?

Response:

With what expected outcomes?

Response: