

Chapter One

An Introduction to the Competency-Based Assessment Model

Multiple Choice Questions:

The DSM is considered:

- a) A general medical disorder that results from an iron deficiency anemia
- b) A psychological measurement of intelligence
- c) A tool to treat mental illness
- d) **The standard reference used to diagnose all mental disorders**

The principal aim of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is to:

- a) Describe the causes of specific physical disorders
- b) Prescribe the “best practices” when treating a specific mental disorder
- c) **Provide clear and cogent criteria for diagnostic categories**
- d) Justify reimbursement for counseling services from third party payers

Which one of the following is not found on the axes of the DSM?

- a) Psychosocial and environmental problems
- b) General medical conditions
- c) The presenting clinical problem
- d) **Cultural background**

Social workers are encouraged to fully evaluate each client according to the DSM’s five axes or dimensions. The fourth dimension is:

- a) **Psychosocial and environmental problems**
- b) General medical conditions
- c) The presenting clinical problem
- d) Personality disorders and/or mental retardation

The ecological perspective posits that:

- a) A person's behavior can be best understood as reacting to environmental stressors
- b) **Assessment of a person's behavior considers the reciprocal interactions between the person and their environment**
- c) Individual growth and development requires a habitat that is rich in resources
- d) The biological, psychological, and social systems impacting on a person's life differ little from one another

The social worker who asks about a client's work history is exploring:

- a) Intrapersonal issues
- b) Social issues
- c) **Interpersonal issues**
- d) Cultural issues

Axis II is used to code all of the following except:

- a) Mental retardation
- b) Schizotypal personality disorder
- c) **Adjustment disorders**
- d) Obsessive compulsive personality disorder

All of the following are noted on Axis I except:

- a) Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders
- b) Mood disorders
- c) **Mental retardation**
- d) Adjustment disorders

All of the following are noted on Axis III except:

- a) Infectious and parasitic diseases
- b) Diseases of the digestive system
- c) Neoplasms
- d) **Somatoform disorders**

A client receives the score of 80 for their highest level of functioning within the past six months on the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) scale. Select the most accurate statement pertaining to this score:

- a) The resulting score is coded on Axis IV and indicates optimal psychosocial functioning over the past six months
- b) **The result is coded on Axis V and indicates optimal functioning for the past six months**
- c) The result is coded on Axis V indicating the individual is in imminent danger of severely harming themselves or others
- d) The result is coded on Axis IV and indicates the individual is performing poorly

Axis IV lists those psychosocial stressors or environmental problems that appear to have an impact on Axes I, II, and III. All of the following should be noted on Axis IV except:

- a) Problems with access to health care services
- b) Problems related to interaction with the legal system
- c) Problems with primary support group
- d) **Other conditions that may be a focus of clinical attention**

True/False:

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, first published in 1952, is a highly theoretical and descriptive approach to diagnosis. **False**

A client receives a score of 90 on the DSM - IV GAF scale. This is considered "optimal functioning". **True**

Avoidant personality disorder is noted on Axis III. **False**

Although the personality disorders originate during the childhood years, they are considered adult disorders. **True**

Social phobia is always listed on Axis IV. **False**

Axis III denotes general medical conditions. **True**

Generalized anxiety disorder should be listed on Axis I. **True**

Fill in the Missing Answer:

For each of the following, indicate on which Axis in the DSM - IV the item should be noted.

Housing problems _____ **Axis IV**
 Diabetes _____ **Axis III**
 Mental retardation _____ **Axis II**
 Cancer _____ **Axis III**
 Schizophrenia, paranoid type _____ **Axis I**
 Antisocial personality disorder _____ **Axis II**
 Dementia, Alzheimer's type _____ **Axis I**
 Borderline personality disorder _____ **Axis II**
 Bipolar I disorder, most recent episode depressed, severe without psychotic features
 _____ **Axis I**
 High blood pressure (hypertension) _____ **Axis III**
 AIDS/HIV _____ **Axis III**
 Divorce _____ **Axis IV**
 Death of a spouse _____ **Axis IV**
 Specific phobia, animal type _____ **Axis I**
 Being a victim of a crime _____ **Axis IV**
 Hepatitis C _____ **Axis III**
 Major depressive episode _____ **Axis I**
 Anorexia nervosa _____ **Axis I**
 Dissociative identity disorder _____ **Axis I**
 Specific phobia, situational type _____ **Axis I**

There are five diagnostic axes in the DSM - IV multiaxial classification system. Please completely identify each axis and include an example in each axis.

Axis I _____ **Clinical disorders and other conditions that may be a focus of clinical attention**

Example: Major depressive disorder, recurrent

Axis II _____ **Personality disorders and mental retardation**

Example: Dependent personality disorder

Axis III _____ **General medical conditions**

Example: Asthma

Axis IV _____ **Psychosocial and environmental problems**

Example: Being arrested

Axis V _____ **Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF)**

Example: GAF = 50; serious symptoms (suicidal ideation, severe obsessional ritual)

Short Essay:

1. Describe how Axis I is used in the DSM's multi axial system.

Suggested response:

- **Axis I records clinical disorders;**
- **Except for the personality disorders and mental retardation which are reported on Axis II;**
- **When a client has more than one Axis I disorder, all disorders should be listed;**
- **The primary diagnosis is listed first.**

2. Describe how Axis II is used in the DSM's multi axial system.

Suggested response:

- **Axis II is reserved for recording personality disorders and mental retardation;**
- **When a client has more than one Axis II diagnosis, all should be recorded;**
- **Axis II may also be used to indicate maladaptive personality features that do not meet the threshold for a personality disorder.**

3. Describe how Axis III is used in the DSM's multi axial system.

Suggested response:

- **Axis III records general medical conditions that are possibly relevant to a client's psychiatric disorder (or disorders);**
- **There are several broad categories; for example, infectious and parasitic diseases, diseases of the nervous system and sense organs, complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium (or the 6 weeks after childbirth), signs, symptoms, and ill-defined conditions, and injury and poisoning to list a few;**
- **This axis recording represents an effort to encourage the practitioner's thorough evaluation of the client;**
- **And to promote communication among healthcare providers.**

4. Describe how Axis IV is used in the DSM's multi axial system.

Suggested response:

- **Axis IV records psychosocial and environmental problems that clients have that may impact the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of their psychiatric diagnosis (or the disorders listed on Axis I and Axis II);**
- **These environmental problems are usually a negative life event (or events) but they might also list a "positive stressor" if it leads to a problem in functioning;**
- **These psychosocial problems may play a role in the start or exacerbation of a client's mental disorder;**

- Alternatively these problems may be a consequence of the client's psychopathology;
- The problems are grouped into various categories; examples include problems with the client's primary support group, problems related to the social environment, occupational problems, housing problems, or economic problems to list a few.

5. Describe how Axis V is used in the DSM's multi axial system.

Selected responses:

- Called the Global Assessment of Functioning or GAF, this axis attempts to provide a standard method to describe a person's overall level of psychosocial functioning using a numeric scale;
- Primary purpose is to provide a quick and efficient method of assessing and summarizing a client's current psychiatric status;
- Arranged in increments of 10 points but the practitioner can use individualized scores for each interval;
- The range is from 1 to 10 representing persistent danger of self harm to 91 to 100 indicating superior functioning;
- Commonly used to assess clients at the beginning of treatment, to monitor their progress, and to provide status at discharge.

6. Identify some of the major problems associated with the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF).

Suggested responses:

- The scale collapses multiple and complex dimensions of a client's functioning into one score;
- The reliability of the scale is not the best except for practitioners who have had extensive training (and usually as a part of research projects) --- that is, a score of 55 may mean one thing to a practitioner and something else to another;
- The GAF shows essentially no predictive validity of a client's level of functioning.