

PSY 440-001 Take Home Questions 3

Directions: Answer the questions from Section A for 30 points. These questions should be answered in approximately 2 to 3 pages of typewritten, double-spaced text. Answer 1 of the questions from Section B for 20 points. Answer 1 of the questions from Section C for 10 points. Answers for Sections B should be between 1½ and 3 pages. Answers for Section C should be between 1 and 1½. Make sure your responses should adequately address all aspects of the question. Be sure to review the web page for specific directions and guidelines for answering questions. Your name should only appear on the Identity Code Sheet, which should be stapled to the back of your answers.

Answers are due on Wednesday, April 16, at the beginning of class

Section A

1. Read the following case study:

“I’m a writer,” said Ima Dee Loosional. It was her first visit to the interviewer’s office, and she wanted to smoke. She fiddled with a cigarette and didn’t seem to know what to do with it. “It’s what I do for a living. I should be home doing it now—it’s my life. I know I’m the finest creative writer since Dostoevsky. But my friend Teri Clauth said I should come in, so I’ve taken time away from working on my play and my comic novel, and so here I am.” She finally put away the cigarette.

“Why did Teri think you should come?”

“She thinks I’m high. Of course I’m high. I’m always high when I’m in my creative phase. Only she thinks I’m too nervous.” Ima was slender and of average height; she wore a bright pink outfit. She looked longingly at her pack of cigarettes. “God, I need one of those.”

Her speech could always be interrupted, but it was salted with neat turns of phrase and original similes. Ima was able to give a coherent history. She was 45, married to an engineer, and had a daughter who was nearly 18. And she really was a writer who had sold several articles about a wide variety of subjects to women’s magazines over the last several years.

For three or four months, Ima had been in one of her high phases, cranking out an enormous volume of essays on wide-ranging topics. Her “wired” feeling was uncomfortable in a way, but it hadn’t troubled her because she felt so productive. Whenever she was creating, she didn’t need much sleep. A two-hour nap would leave her rested and refreshed, ready for another 10 hours at the word processor. At those times, her husband would fix his own meals and kid her about having “a one-track mind.”

Ima never ate much during her high phases, and she lost weight. But she didn’t get herself into trouble: No sexual indiscretions (but a lot of “friendly time” with her husband), no excessive spending (“I’m always too busy to shop”). And she volunteered that she had never “seen visions, heard voices, or had funny ideas about people following me around.” She had never spent time “in the funny farm.”

As Ima paused to gather her thoughts, her fingers clutched the cigarette package. She shook her head almost imperceptibly. Without uttering another word, she grabbed her purse, arose from her chair, and fled from the room. It was the last the interviewer saw of her for a year and a half.

In November of the following year, a person who seemed like an impostor announced herself as Ima Nutt and dropped into the office chair. She had gained 30 or 40 pounds, which she had stuffed into ill-fitting, tacky slacks and a bulky sweater.

“As I was saying,” were the first words she uttered. Just for a second, the corners of her

mouth twitched up. But for the rest of the hour, she talked soberly about her latest problem: writer's block. About a year ago, she had finished her play and was well into her comic novel when the muse deserted her. For months now, she had been getting out of bed about lunch time and spending long afternoons staring at her word processor. "Sometimes, I don't even turn the darn thing on," she said. She couldn't focus her thinking sharply enough to create anything that seemed worth saving. The pleasure had gone out of her life. She felt down in the dumps. Most nights she tumbled into bed at 9:00. She felt tired and heavy, as if her legs were made of bricks.

"It's cheesecake, actually," was the way Ima explained her weight gain. "I have it delivered. For months, I haven't been interested enough to cook for myself." She hadn't been suicidal, but the only time she felt even the slightest bit better was when Teri took her out to lunch. Then she ate and made conversation pretty much as she used to. "I've done that quite a bit recently, as you can plainly see." Once she returned home, her sad and lethargic feelings returned.

Finally, Ima apologized for walking out a year and a half ago. "I didn't think I was the least bit sick," she said, "and all I really wanted to do was get back to my computer and get your character on paper!"

What diagnosis would you give Ima Dee Loosional? What are the diagnostic features of that disorder that she meets? What other disorders (and diagnostic criteria) would you need rule out in order to be confident in your diagnosis of Ima Dee? Discuss in detail how you would approach psychotherapy with Ima Dee Loosional.

Section B

2. Describe and discuss three risk factors for suicide and three warning signs someone will commit suicide. Discuss what you should do if a friend confides in you that they are considering killing themselves.

3. Describe and discuss the impact a child with autism spectrum disorder can have on a family. Discuss in specific the different types of stressors a family might encounter.

Section C

5. Pretend you are a therapist working with a suicidal client. Prepare a Safety Plan for that client.

6. You are a person who has been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Write a journal entry that describes what you might experience in a therapy session.

Bonus Point Opportunity:

6. Point your browser to <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>. Describe the content of the website and your reactions to it. Critically evaluate the usefulness of this website for someone who has been diagnosed with major depressive disorder. (4 points)