

Appendix H: Practical 3A

Role-play 1: Part A: Second Session with Michelle Smith

Participant's Briefing Instructions

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Instructions for Role-play Volunteer (Michelle Smith)

These are the instructions for the person helping the student with their role-play by acting in the role of the client, Michelle Smith. You must use the following information to assist you in your interactions with the student during the role-play. The role-play will consist of the student conducting the beginnings of a second counselling session with you. While you are encouraged to use your creativity and judgement during the role-play, follow the instructions below.

Please note that the gender of the volunteer doesn't need to match the gender of the character they will be playing as long as the volunteer can accurately portray the character as described in the following instructions.

Background Information

You are Michelle Smith, a 45-year-old woman who saw the counsellor for the first time last week.

You sought counselling because you are a very busy and "stressed out" woman. You work full-time, study part-time, and are a full-time wife and mother.

You are married to Jake (aged 46), and together you have two children, Trent (aged 12) and Rebecca (aged 9). You feel you struggle to stay on top of your various family, work, and study commitments and do not get enough sleep. Jake works long hours as an architect and is not around to help much with the day-to-day running of the household or looking after the kids. Because you work full-time, the kids go to before and after-school care, and you often worry about "failing" them as a mother. You work full-time as an assistant accountant for a large manufacturing firm and are also studying to complete your CPA (Certified Practising Accountant) qualification to improve your career prospects.

You were recently feeling exhausted and overworked and were contemplating quitting your CPA studies – the reason that you sought out counselling was to help you make this decision. During your previous session, the counsellor enabled you to work through this decision, and you decided to continue with your studies and explored options for finding more time to study.

You are pleased with your decision – you feel more energised by the thought of finishing your studies. Still, you realise that you need to focus more on better managing your time and stress because you know that once your studies start again (they are due to start again next week), you will feel pressured and potentially overwhelmed. This is what you want to explore during the session today. You think it would be helpful to explore your time management practices to identify where things have gone wrong in the past and to identify changes you could make while studying for your upcoming unit.

So far, you have passed every CPA unit you have completed with high marks, but you have felt like each unit has been a struggle. You feel as though you can never find the time to study except when everyone else is asleep (and you don't study well at this time because you are so tired). Even though you have the best of intentions and start each unit by scheduling specific study block hours into your schedule. In practice, you find that you allow other things to intrude. For example, you will spend that time helping your children with their homework, taking

Participant's Briefing Instructions

them to and from various extracurricular activities, or doing household chores instead of studying at the times you had set aside for studying. At the time, you reason that these tasks are more critical than your study.

However, when you think about it, you can see that you get anxious when it comes time to sit down and study. You think of yourself as a lousy student, which makes you feel uneasy, and you feel better if you spend that time achieving other tasks you need to do – you see it as a more efficient use of your time. You feel better because you have achieved something and temporarily escape the anxiety your study produces.

You complete most of your study in the week before your exams. During this period, you barely get any sleep – you tend to study from when the kids go to bed at around 8:30 pm until around 4:00 am and then get just a couple of hours of sleep before waking up again to get the kids ready for school and go to work. This week, you feel highly irritable, your work standards fall, and you feel unhappy with your life. You don't like this pattern, and you want to change it. You would prefer to space out your study by completing it during scheduled study blocks, but you can't seem to stick to any schedules you develop. You suspect this is because you have too many competing priorities, and you like completing the other tasks when you are meant to be studying because those tasks do not make you anxious.

Despite your anxiety around studying, you are keen to finish your CPA because you see it as the best option for progressing in your career. Career progression is significant to you, but so is your need to be a good mother. You think you will have failed as a woman if you can't do both. You want to be a loving mother while building a career, and this need drives you and allows you to continue to function on the reduced amounts of sleep you get in the lead-up to your exams.

Sometimes you feel a little resentful of the time you spend taking care of the kids and the household and its impact on your study/career, but you don't like expressing that thought because you think it makes you a "bad mother".

During the role-play:

Below are some specific instructions about things you must say/do during the role-play.

- At the beginning of the role-play, the student will greet and welcome you – you should respond naturally to any small talk they make.
- Suppose the student asks any questions about steps you have taken since your last session together. In that case, you should say that you are very relieved to have decided to continue your studies and completed the steps you agreed to in the previous session.
- If the student asks you what you would like to focus on in this session, you should reply that you are particularly interested in focusing on your time management skills to manage your stress better when your CPA study resumes next week. You should say that it would be helpful to explore your time management practices to identify where things have gone wrong and to identify changes you could make while studying for your upcoming unit.
- You should use the "background character information" to help flesh out the conversation when the student asks about your previous study, stress, and time management experiences. Respond in a way that comes to you naturally based on the student's questions/probes while using the background information. Note: don't simply read this information out – instead, respond in a manner that makes sense to the conversation you are having with the student.
- During the role-play, while you talk about how you have previously handled your study and your anxiety around it, you should become agitated/anxious (e.g., start shaking your knees, biting your nails, or otherwise physically express that you are agitated/anxious).

Participant's Briefing Instructions

- At some point during the role-play, you should express that you know you're failing as a mother because you aren't putting your children first.
- At some point during the role-play, you should say that you are a terrible student. Explain that you feel anxious when it comes time to study because you know you will fail.
- Towards the end of the role-play, the student should summarise the key aspects you discussed during the session. Suppose you believe that the student's summary is accurate. In that case, you should respond by saying something like "Yes, that's right"; however, if you don't think the student's summary is accurate, you should clarify any aspects you believe have been misunderstood. The role-play will conclude once you are happy with the student's summary.