# 17 CULTURAL CASE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND TREATMENT PLANS

Amber (45) is the CEO of a computer software company in California. She has never been married but did live with Martin (46) in a committed relationship for five years in her mid-twenties. He ended their relationship when he decided he was ready to have children, and she was not. Amber is the oldest of three adult children who lived with their wealthy parents in an exclusive neighborhood in San Francisco. After being educated in Boston, she returned to California after graduating with a bachelor's degree from Harvard and a doctorate from Yale in computer engineering. Amber sees her parents once a week and her siblings on an erratic basis as they live out of state. Amber's father is White, and her mother is African-American. While he was a successful banker and she was a successful artist, they were actively excluded by some friends and relatives as a result of their marriage. Amber indicates her parents were very happy together and have a very egalitarian relationship. While Amber indicates being very satisfied with her professional life, considering herself to be a self-made success, she indicates experiencing a profound loneliness that began about six months ago. An in-depth mental status exam was conducted that included intellectual and personality assessment. On the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale IV (WAIS-IV) Amber functioned in the superior range of intelligence. She showed no signs of cognitive confusion or difficulties with memory. On the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2), Amber appeared to be responding in an open and honest manner. There were no signs of significant pathology although her scores on anxiety and depression were somewhat elevated. On a survey of adverse experiences, she indicated having experienced both sexual and racial harassment. You practice multicultural therapy (MCT) as developed by Hays (2008, 2013). MCT considers every encounter between people to be a multicultural experience as everyone's identity is influenced by his or her membership in many different social groups. To understand her loneliness, Amber will need to understand how her complex cultural influences are interacting to give her a sense of herself, others, and how to operate in the world. The number of social groups, or cultural influences, in Amber's life may grow or contract at different points in her life. Because it is a natural, human process, all social groups form stereotypes of themselves and others. Overtime, they may come to perceive their own values and experiences as more normal or valid than that of other groups. Unfortunately, this leads to in and out groups and accompanying unequal distribution of power in society. MCT perceives the oppression that Amber may experience, as a member of one or more out groups, as the major source of her psychological distress. The dominant groups in society have shaped institutions and social norms to reflect their "truth." If Amber is departing from the social norms that society deems as appropriate, she may be the target of aggression or microaggressions from others. Developing a multicultural understanding will help Amber recognize that there are many possible ways for her to live her life that are all valuable, and they are all embedded in a cultural context that is more or less visible to dominant and minority groups. Amber's loneliness may be a result of factors that are particular to her, or they may be the result of oppressive behavior from others. Determining this causality will have a major impact on treatment. In areas where her pain comes from social injustice, she may need to become an activist in her personal or social life for her personal distress to be truly alleviated.

Amber was born into a complex cultural context that consisted of many intersecting social groups. Each social group had its own worldview that guided members' beliefs, expectations, values, behaviors, and rules for

living (Sue & Sue, 2013). Being the child of a mixed-race couple meant that from the moment of conception, Amber's development might have been impacted by differing cultural expectations from her White father and her African-American mother about how to handle a pregnancy. The fact that some of her parents' relatives and friends stopped interacting with them after their marriage may have meant Amber's birth was not met with the universal approbation that many children receive. Both of her parents were very successful in their careers despite not having full family support; however, perhaps due to a lack of family support, Amber played a major caretaking role in the family for her younger siblings. Throughout her development, how Amber viewed the world, how she came to value computer engineering, and how she made decisions how to act as a woman were influenced on both unconscious and conscious levels by the "truths" about the right way to live emanating from the social groups that are always influencing her identity. Amber's truths about living were first shaped by her parents' values and beliefs and then, to an ever-increasing degree, by the many social groups she became a part of or was excluded from (Sue & Sue, 2013). To understand Amber from a cultural perspective, you must go far beyond the facts that she is a woman with dark brown skin, a slim physique, and a doctorate in computer engineering. You will need to understand what her cultural heritage means to her, what it has meant to her parents and her ancestors, and how it influences her current worldview. It may be Amber has developed her own special life path through blending all of her cultural influences together. On the other hand, there may be one source of cultural influence that has had an overarching influence on her beliefs, values, and attitudes (Comas-Díaz, 2012).

In MCT, you will start by pulling apart and analyzing each of Amber's cultural influences. At any point in time, some of these cultural influences play a greater role in her identity than others. MCT will use the ADDRESSING framework to help Amber understand the full impact of cultural influences on her attitudes, emotions, behaviors, and relationships with others. These cultural influences include (a) **A**ge and generational influences, (b) **D**evelopmental or other **D**isabilities, (d) **R**eligion and spiritual orientation, (e) **E**thnic and racial identity, (f) **S**ocioeconomic status, (g) **S**exual orientation, (h) **I**ndigenous heritage, (i) **N**ational origin and primary language, and (j) **G**ender-related information including roles, expectations, and relationships. While there are other sources of cultural influence on Amber, the ones highlighted in the **ADDRESSING** framework represent areas in which there has been systematic oppression from the institutions of the United States (Hays, 2013). It is external oppression that is likely to be playing a significant role in her feelings of loneliness.

In evaluating these nine cultural influences on Amber, you will be determining when she is a member of the dominant or minority group. Dominant group membership does not necessarily reflect numerical superiority. Dominance reflects the group's ability to control the environment. It is dominant social groups that are in control of the institutions of society at large and thus set most of the rules for day-to-day living. Members of dominant groups find their values reflected in institutions such as schools and criminal justice. Members of dominant groups find it easy to celebrate their religious holidays as they are reflected in national holidays or traditional days off from school or work (Hays, 2008). Dominant groups are free to consider their experiences and values as normal and their values as representing "truth." They have the opportunity to live their day-to-day lives without awareness of the physical and emotional realities of members of minority groups. Members of the dominant group may have limited contact with those in the minority position. For example, families with children may live close to schools, and seniors may live in adult-only communities. Wealthy people may live in gated communities in the suburbs while the poor live in the inner city. This physical separateness can fuel the misunderstandings of each other's beliefs and values.

Minority status represents having one's access to power limited by the dominant group. Minority status indicates having the reality of one's lifestyle misrepresented by mainstream institutions, such as media, that seek to maintain the current power structure. Only by keeping the minority members marginalized and excluded from positions of influence can the dominant group maintain their power and control of society. Members of minority communities must be very aware of the values, beliefs and expectations of the dominant culture(s) that have power and influence; they are dependent on the dominant group for employment,

housing, education, and social services. The environment people live in is very powerful in influencing their psychological adjustment. Social justice fosters mental health, and experiences of injustice are the major source of psychological distress and dysfunction (Sue & Sue, 2013). While being part of a minority culture leads to greater exposure to oppression, it also brings with it culturally specific strengths such as a sense of group cohesion and pride, positive traits and qualities promoted by the culture, and natural helpers and practices. Having to deal with racism and discrimination may have taught Amber how to tie her self-esteem to her own judgments of her achievements rather than relying on the judgments of others around her.

Within age and generational influences, children (23.5%) and elders (13.7%) are minority groups in the United States (Vespa et al., 2013). Amber is a 45-year-old adult, and within the United States, she is part of the privileged group that is given more respect and privileges. Amber recognizes that on entering menopause, she has begun the long tumble down from the dominant group of adults with the most social respect, into the group of assumed inferior, older adults with cognitive and health problems. If Amber was 65 rather than 45, ageism might be an important component in her loneliness. Palmore (2001) found that ageism is frequent and extends from microaggressions, such as people making assumptions that Amber is too old to drive safely, to more serious discrimination where she is denied a promotion or a loan based on an assumption that she is losing competence or may develop a debilitating disease that will prevent her from repaying the loan. In addition to her age per se, Amber has generational influences that affected her view of herself and others. Amber was born in 1969. There was a great deal of social activism in her youth around racial prejudice and discrimination, and Martin Luther King had been assassinated a year before her birth. Thus, the meaning of being biracial might be substantially different for her cohort than for those biracial individuals born in 2000 who would see Barack Obama as the first biracial, African-American and White President of the United States for eight years.

Within the social influences of developmental disabilities and those acquired later in life, people with disabilities were in the minority group representing 19% of the total population of the United States in 2010 (Brault, 2012). There are currently five federal laws that seek to protect individuals with disabilities from being discriminated against including The Americans with Disabilities Act; The Rehabilitation Act; The Workforce Investment Act; The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act, and The Civil Service Reform Act. However, these laws don't force restaurants or employment buildings that were in existence before these laws were enacted to make their buildings accessible. If Amber is physically abled, she has many invisible privileges such as the ability to enter any building and climb the stairs if an elevator doesn't exist or is out of service. She can attend weddings or go to parties at new locations without researching in advance if the location allows reasonable access for someone with mobility problems. If Amber is in a wheelchair, she might be lonely because traversing the halls at work, no one says hello to her because they are looking at their own eye level, not closer to the ground where Amber is. At this time, you have no information suggesting that Amber has any disabilities. However, as she ages, the likelihood that she will experience at least temporary disabilities increases. As the CEO, she may be responsible for policies that save money for the company but that make the work environment less friendly or inaccessible to less able bodied individuals.

Within the cultural influence of religious and spiritual orientations, people who are not Christians are in the minority group within the United States. Based on 2008 census data (U.S. Census, 2012c), Christians made up 57% of the population. Of these, 31% who identified as Christians indicated they were Protestant, and 19% identified as being Catholic. The next largest category included individuals who indicated they considered themselves to be not religious/secular. These individuals represented 11% of the population. Of the many minority religions that were represented on the Census, the next largest groups were Jewish at 0.9% of the population, Muslim at 0.4% of the population, Buddhist at 0.4% of the population, and Hindi at 0.2%. While Amber is likely to be a Protestant Christian, and thus from the dominant religious group, there has been a long-standing separation between the White Christian churches and the African-American Christian churches

as a result of long-standing discrimination and prejudice (Boyd-Franklin & Lockwood, 2009). Where does Amber, belong? If Amber lives close to her parents, she may continue to belong to the church they raised her in. However, if it is populated by White, wealthy individuals, then she may be part of the tolerated minority within her own home church.

For ethnic and racial influences, people who are not White are in the minority group. Amber has a White father (77.9% of the population) and an African-American mother (13.1% of the population). Where does she fit? Biracial individuals currently represent 2.4% of the population based on Census Data (U.S. Census, 2012c). Can she hate the Whites who discriminate against her when they look like family? What about when they don't accept her as family? As a biracial individual, Amber may experience daily microaggressions perpetrated by members of the dominant White social group against members of the African-American community—to which her mother belongs. She may also be very aware of the negative stereotypes of White people—her father's group—held by many members of the African-American community. Biracial people may be put under pressure to choose a "side." For example, in attending religious services, she may have to choose between a church attended primarily by White group members and one attended primarily by African-Americans. These are choices she and her sisters have to make because they are both White- and African-American. Each of Amber's racial groups may think there is only one path to a healthy and adaptive life, leaving Amber in conflict over which path to take (Comas-Díaz, 2012). On the other hand, her rich, biracial cultural identity may have helped her develop significant resilience in the face of life stress. She may have learned the best problem-solving strategies and best coping strategies from both cultural groups. She may have learned how to function successfully within both the White and African-American community providing her with many social resources. She may have learned to exert power, where she has it, in a compassionate and respectful way toward those of less power (Comas-Díaz, 2012).

In terms of sexual orientation, all who are not exclusively heterosexual are in the minority group. Amber lived with a male for five years and appears interested in pursuing further male partners. This suggests she is part of the heterosexual dominant group. However, if Amber was to be aware of herself as a bisexual person, a lesbian, or other sexual minority, she would be part of a group that was quantitatively smaller than the dominant group and actively discriminated against (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008). While professional groups such as the American Psychological Association [APA] (2012a), the American Psychiatric Association (n.d.), and the ALGBTIC (2012) all stress that sexual minority individuals are following different but adaptive patterns of development, considerable discrimination, and prejudice continues to exist against these individuals. They may develop more psychological difficulties as a result of living within a hostile environment (APA, 2008; Herek & Garnets, 2007).

Within the culture of socioeconomic status, people with less money, education, lower status occupations, or living in rural areas are in the minority group. Living in San Francisco, with a banker for a father, and successful artist for a mother, Amber was raised as a member of the elite. She is likely to have lived within an upper-class neighborhood and mingled with the children of the wealthy and powerful in society. She was provided with a first-class education and an accelerated entrée into the world of success. She thinks of herself as a self-made success. She is currently unaware of the privilege she was raised with and how big an impact that may have played in her current position as a CEO. Amber was raised to be a member of the capitalist group who represent 2% of the labor force. This group has the power to dominate in the workplace and in the political arena (Zweig, 2008). In shocking comparison, the poor are a numerically superior group representing 15% of the population; most of these individuals live below the poverty line (Macartney, Bishaw, & Fontenot, 2013). Despite their numerical superiority, they have little power to control any employment they might get, where they live, what they eat, and where their children go to school. It is not uncommon for individuals living within different ranges of socioeconomic status to have very little knowledge of each other's circumstances. This is because they live in different neighborhoods, have different places of employment, and their children go to

different schools (Books, 2007; Lott, 2002). Thus, Amber may be unaware of how much privilege she has in her life and how it helped elevate her to her current position as CEO of a software company.

In terms of indigenous heritage, American-Indians and Alaska Natives represent the original inhabitants of North America. There are currently 5.1 million people who identified as indigenous (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a). Amber lives in San Francisco where there is a yearly protest held by indigenous people to abolish Columbus Day (Pan Tribal Secession Against the Empire, 2012). The soul wound created in indigenous people as a result of the White colonial efforts to eradicate their culture and their physical existence (Duran, 2006) may resonant personally with Amber. While she is a member of the dominant, nonindigenous group, she has heard family stories and seen art created by her mother, detailing slavery and racism in the United States. This may have sensitized her to the genocide perpetrated against the indigenous people of the United States, and she may be more sensitive to not committing aggressions or microaggressions against an indigenous person.

For national origin, refugees, recent immigrants, and international students are in the minority group. There are many unauthorized immigrations into the United States with an estimated 11.7 million coming from Latin America (Passel, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012). Whether immigration is lawful or unlawful has major implications. Under President Obama, prosecutions for unlawful entry more than doubled between 1992 and 2012, and most individuals sentenced for unlawful entry go to prison (Passel et al., 2012). Even if aware that they need social services, illegal immigrants may not seek physical or mental health services due to fears of deportation, language barriers, a lack of interpreters, and cultural differences (Bemak & Chung, 2008). In terms of national origin, Amber is in the dominant group as she, her parents, and her grandparents were born in the United States. However, acts of racial prejudice and discrimination are still common in the United States. Amber's own experience with prejudice may make her more sensitive to the needs of immigrant groups, or she may feel more threatened by them as potentially taking opportunities away from members of her own social groups.

Finally, for gender, women and transgender people are minority groups (APA, 2012a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010c). In 2010, women represented 51% of the population of the United States, and this majority increases as men and women age (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010c); despite being the numerical superiority, men continue to hold more positions of power and authority than women. Amber may have experienced a great deal of prejudice and discrimination as she pursued her education at Harvard and Yale as there would have been few women in her computer engineering classes. Amber admits that many of her new clients assume she is a secretary when they come for meetings and ask her for coffee. While these acts would be considered microaggressions, Amber is likely to have experienced this type of behavior over and over, and it would have created significant stress for her (Sue & Sue, 2013). Transgender individuals represent less than 1% of the population and are a minority group. This group is highly discriminated against (American Psychological Association, APA Task Force on Gender Identity & Gender Variance, 2008) and currently has no power or social influence.

Amber is a member of both dominant and minority groups. Her identity in the moment, as she relates to some specific person within some specific social situation, will be influenced by differences in social power between herself and the other person. From individuals where she expects, perceives, or receives oppression, Amber will experience stress due to her relative lack of power to control important aspects of her life. Contrarily, in interactions where she expects, perceives, or receives power, she will experience an increase in resources and strength. Thus, just as Amber may have been victimized by dominant group members in some situations, she may also have been acting as an oppressor in other situations. Understanding when Amber may be the oppressor and when she may be the oppressed will help determine how much Amber needs to be making personal changes to reduce her loneliness and how much she needs to be engaging in social activism to change an oppressive environment. Seeking social justice is a key component to treatment using MCT as oppression is the major cause of psychological stress and dysfunction. Treatment will help Amber discover that there are many ways to live a valuable life, each pathway embedded in a multicultural context.

## ROLE OF THE CLINICIAN

Your major role will be to help Amber identify the impact of her cultural influences on her sense of herself, others, and her worldview. Through an analysis of the sources of power and oppression in Amber's life, you will help her become aware of when her isolation is influenced by external forces of oppression and when it is coming from her own personal expectations, perceptions, and behavior. MCT is a technically eclectic model. As Amber's cultural identity is very complex, many different types of interventions may be needed, including interventions that are not typically considered as part of mainstream psychotherapy (Hays, 2008). You need to remain flexible in your thinking and respectful of Amber's values and beliefs as you consider techniques that might build on her personal strengths and resources in culturally congruent ways. For example, you may include culturally specific healing rituals in Amber's treatment plan. Historically, the church has played a major role in the welfare of the African-American community. If church services are a source of cultural strength for Amber, they will be integrated into her treatment plan. Cultural influences could impact the treatment plan in many ways. For example, African-American culture values respect within relationships. Amber has indicated that within her role as CEO, she believes her instructions to staff are treated with less respect than she deserves. Amber could reflect more on her African-American culture and how respect is shown in relationships. She could then decide if a meeting with her staff as a whole, independent staff members, a memo to staff, or so forth would be the best framework for educating her staff as to how she wants her instructions handled. It could be that staff members are behaving in ways she finds disrespectful due to cultural disconnects rather than intentional disrespect. However, Amber may need to make practical changes in her work environment. If employee racism is at the base of this disrespect, Amber needs to consider if she wants to be patient and work toward building more constructive relationships with her employees or if it is time to use her power within the company to fire the problematic employees and hire new ones, thus taking action to change a hostile environment.

Before Amber walks in the door, you need to prepare yourself to be an effective clinician for her as an individual. Every interaction between two people, including the treatment relationship, is a multicultural experience (Comas-Díaz, 2012). Cultural differences between you and Amber will influence treatment. As a result, you will need to be very self-aware of how your belief systems and worldview influence your work with her. Listening to Amber about her experiences will be important. But, you must first find ways to expand your contact with individuals who will help you recognize the limits of your worldview (Hays, 2008, 2013). You will need to reflect on what you consider to be appropriate interventions for treatment and how these might be influenced by your own worldview rather than the "truth" about what might be the best interventions for Amber at this time (Sue & Sue, 2013). However prepared you think you are to be an effective helper, you need to approach treatment from a position of humility. There may be sources of knowledge that you don't consider traditional that will help you gain a greater understanding of Amber. For example, are there experiences you could gain from music, food, movies, literature, religious observations, and so forth that would help you understand sources of cultural influence on Amber? You need to go beyond traditional sources of knowledge as they are limited by your own cultural stereotypes (Hays, 2013).

How will you know where to expand your knowledge base? You will start by using the ADDRESSING model to compare your own areas of privilege and oppression to Amber's. For example, Amber talks of beginning to experience menopause. Have you had any personal experience with menopause? How much value do you place on fertility as an aspect of a woman's identity? How much are you educated about the impact of this developmental milestone on women? Are you aware of negative or positive stereotypes about older women? Becoming self-aware of what you know and don't know about older women's issues is your first step in preparing yourself for Amber's treatment. Your second step is to educate yourself about menopause so you can more fully understand how Amber may be thinking, feeling, and experiencing becoming an older woman (Hays, 2013). Amber comes into treatment identifying as biracial. Are you monoracial, biracial, multiracial? How will you feel at the gut level if she asks you

how many biracial individuals you interact with on a daily basis? It is hard not to feel defensive and close your mind when you feel that in some way you are being criticized or having your competence questioned. However, to help Amber, you must demonstrate compassion for her viewpoint and for her experiences (Hays, 2008, 2013). If your experience with biracial individuals is limited, admit it. Validate her right to be concerned about whether you have enough experience with biracial individuals to be helpful to her. It is an assumption of privilege to assume that treatment will progress satisfactorily, without you having this experience, even though she is concerned it will not. Forming categories and stereotypes is a typical human coping strategy; helpers are not immune from this. The fact that you enter the relationship with the desire to help Amber, does not automatically give you the skills to be able to do this (Hays, 2013).

In your first treatment session with Amber, you will ask her to describe herself from her own perspective and also as the people within her social network might describe her. Using the ADDRESSING system, you will help her become aware of the complex cultural influences within her life. She is likely to be most aware of identities in which she is currently feeling oppressed and least likely to be aware of areas in which she is privileged. This is because individuals in dominant groups are not encouraged to be aware of the privileges and power their identity gives them. It just surrounds them like an invisible cloud and influences less powerful people to act in a differential, and preferential, manner. Members of minority groups are raised to be sensitive of differentials in power while members of dominant groups may take their privilege for granted. When listening to Amber, you will need to be alert for signs of sociocultural bias that are leading her to be oppressed or leading her to oppress others.

After you and Amber collaborate in this culturally responsive assessment of her loneliness, you will be aware of what changes Amber needs to make in how she interacts in the world. For example, Amber may be unconsciously committing microaggressions that keep others at a distance. On the other hand, external sources of oppression may need to change. Perhaps employees close to her in power resent her being their boss. If they cannot learn to respond respectfully to her valid requests, Amber may need to find some new employees who will. It may be that it is a combination of both internal and external attitudes or behaviors that are leaving Amber lonely. You have no preconceived plan for how Amber will become more socially connected. You believe that there are many different routes out of loneliness that are equally valid roads to a life that is worth living (Comas-Díaz, 2012). Thus, you will build Amber's view of what she wants to achieve, and what she would view as treatment success, into your treatment plan to help her find satisfaction in her life. There may be times when your own world view and values comes into conflict with Amber's. While you will not impose your cultural values on her, it is possible you might seek to expand her options in order to help her balance the needs she may have across her many social identities.

Whatever interventions are chosen to help Amber, using the ADDRESSING framework creates an environment where the need for social justice becomes explicit. Whether injustice and oppression has come from others directed to Amber, or from Amber directed to others, the pain and suffering that comes from oppression becomes inherent. Amber will have more power to make changes in environments in which she has been the source of oppression than when she is the recipient (Hays, 2013).

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

### Evidence-Based Treatment

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) indicated on May 15, 2017 five programs as evidence-based when "cultural" is put into the search engine; there were also 17 programs with promising outcomes. Other programs that also emphasize effectiveness for specific cultural groups come up when other terms are put into the search engine such as "family." Three examples from programs specifically listed as cultural will

be discussed covering a variety of different age groups and targeted concerns for how they might have been beneficial to Amber at different points in her life.

Connect is a 10-week group program for parents of children 8 years and up that was developed in 2003 (Giannotta, Ortega, & Stattin, 2013; Stattin, Enebrink, Özdemir, & Giannotta, 2015). The program is designed for children who show significant behavioral and/or mental health problems. The targeted changes are increasing caregiver ability to promote attachment security, setting age-appropriate limits, and ensuring child safety. This program can reduce depression and depressive symptoms and shows promising outcomes for increasing family cohesion; decreasing nonspecific mental health disorders and symptoms; increasing general functioning and well-being; increasing knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about parenting; improving parenting practices; decreasing alcohol use; and increasing attention given to parenting. There are adaptations to the program to increase cultural and gender sensitivity with treatment manuals available in English, French, and Swedish. This program might have been beneficial to Amber's parents if they had struggled to help her develop a positive self-identity as a biracial child. The fact that some family members rejected their marriage may have led to significant stress within the marital relationship as well as led to more social isolation for Amber's nuclear family. The fact that Connect provides education about the developmental needs of children, and on how to be an effective parent, might have helped Amber's parents receive the educational support from the program that their family elders might not have been offering them.

Culturally Informed and Flexible Family-Based Treatment for Adolescents (CIFFTA) is a family-based treatment with multiple psychoeducation components that can be selected from to fit the unique features of each family. It was developed by Daniel A. Santisteban, PhD. The manual provides a decision-making process for choosing which modules to use for which families. The intent is to adapt the modules given, and the family sessions that follow, to the culture-specific values that are important to the family. This treatment is designed for Latinx adolescents who use substances, have conduct disorders, or a history of juvenile court involvement and psychiatric hospitalization (Santisteban, Czaja, Nair, Mena, & Tullocha, 2016; Santisteban, Mena, & Abalo, 2012; Santisteban, Mena, & McCabe, 2011; Santisteban, Mena, McCabe, Abalo, & Puccinelli, 2016). This treatment is effective for reducing cannabis use and cannabis disorders and shows promise for reduction of anxiety disorders and symptoms, cocaine use and disorders, disruptive disorders and behaviors, increasing family cohesion, improving parenting practices, and reducing relational or social aggression. The goals are to give adolescents skills and knowledge for handling stress and to support the development of positive family relationships. The program can be provided in English as well as in Spanish. It has been developed to be appropriate for families of disadvantaged and underserved populations. There are culturally informed psychoeducational modules within the program. For example, some were particularly designed within the Latino cultural context of immigration, acculturation stress, and dealing with discrimination (Santisteban, Mena, & Abalo, 2012). This program might have been beneficial to Amber's family when she was a teenager if, due to the significant sexual and racial harassment she had experienced, Amber had developed abusive practices around alcohol or cannabis use. Adolescents may engage in substance abuse for pleasure, under peer pressure, as a form of self-medication, or as a form of rebellion. Amber's parents made the decision that they would marry whether or not their family, or society at large, considered their marriage a positive event. However, as their child, Amber had had no control over whether or not they married—yet she was stuck with experiencing all the consequences of their marriage. Thus, she might blame her parents for the difficulties that she faced as a biracial adolescent. While Amber would have significantly less difficulties than the adolescents this form of treatment was initially designed for, if it was modified for the strengths that her family had, they might have progressed quickly through this form of treatment to a successful conclusion.

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Treatment (TARGET) is an educational and therapeutic intervention for adults, adolescents, and families developed by Julian Ford, PhD. in 2001 (Ford, Steinberg, Hawke, Levine, & Zhang, 2012; Ford, Steinberg, & Zhang, 2011). It is designed for the group

treatment of traumatic stress disorders; co-occurring addictive, affective, personality, or psychotic disorders; and adjustment disorders as a result of a variety of stressors. This program is empirically validated for the treatment of anxiety disorders and symptoms; increasing coping; increasing general functioning and well-being; decreasing internalizing problems reducing trauma; and stress-related disorders and symptoms. This program can be adapted for a variety of populations to be gender specific, culturally responsive, and attuned to specific types of trauma experiences. The types of trauma it can target include childhood trauma, sexual trauma, intimate partner violence, community violence, sexual identity–related trauma, and military trauma (Ford, Chang, Levine, & Zhang, 2013; Ford & Hawke, 2012; Grasso, Ford, & Lindhiem, 2016; Marrow, Knudsen, Olafson, & Bucher, 2012). This type of treatment would have been appropriate for Amber and her family if she had experienced severe adverse experiences such as physical assault or date rape as she was developing. Despite the fact that she was extremely bright and came from a high-functioning family, these types of adverse experiences could have caused her significant trauma. In addition, while her parents might know a lot about child development and the basics of quality parenting, it is unlikely they would know how to respond to their vulnerable child being physically attacked or sexually harmed.

One of the main difficulties in looking for an evidence-based program for work with Amber is that culturally based programs are often designed for relatively homogenous populations, such as Latinx-American immigrants from Mexico. Whether the treatment would be effective with Amber, a biracial African-American and White-American, is unknown. Even if she was Mexican-American, she could be third generation; you can expect there to be many differences within the cultural group of Mexican-Americans based on levels of acculturation and socioeconomic status, for example (Carter et al., 2017).

Hays's cultural model helps you address this complexity by using the process of understanding the unique cultural influences of clients and their differences with the clinician as a mechanism for individualizing treatment to Amber as a unique individual. However, at this time, Hays's approach is not yet evidenced-based through having successfully undergone randomly controlled trials (RCT).

## Common Factors in Effective Treatment

Research has discovered a number of common factors to effective treatment (Duncan, 2014; Lambert, 2013). These include the *extratherapeutic factors* that Amber would bring with her to treatment; the quality of the *therapeutic relationship* that develops between you and Amber; your ability to provide a *clear structure* to treatment sessions so that Amber can see her pathway to success; the level of *expectancy and hope* that Amber has that treatment with you will be successful; and your ability to respond positively to *feedback that Amber* gives you about treatment and know whether changes are needed in how it is being conducted.

Amber enters treatment with a range of strengths including her superior level of intelligence, high level of personal insight, her excellent vocational skills, her stable source of income, and her positive attachment to family members. These *extratherapeutic factors* are outside of your control as a clinician yet account for 40% to 86% of the variance in a positive treatment outcome (Duncan, 2014; Lambert, 2013). Using the positive resources that Amber brings with her to treatment, within your treatment plan, can enhance her ability to make positive changes (Lambert, 2013).

Another critical factor in effective treatment is the establishment of a warm, respectful, and collaborative *therapeutic relationship*. Hays's ADDRESSING model approach stresses the importance of you listening respectfully to Amber and focusing the content of the conversation on what she says she needs from you. You will not try to impose your point of view of life as the "only way" as her past partner, Martin, did (Duncan, 2014; Duncan, Miller, & Sparks, 2004; Miller, Hubble, Duncan, & Wampold, 2010; Wampold, 2010). Rather, you will titrate your approach to what she specifically indicates is important to her.

Your ability to provide Amber with a *clear structure* for how cultural treatment will be of value to her can account for approximately 14% of the variance in positive outcome (Duncan, 2014; Lambert, 2013). Amber's

history demonstrates that her father's White-American heritage and her mother's African-American heritage have brought her both strengths as well as areas of stress. Her needs as a biracial child, particularly the oldest child in a family with two very successful parents, was different from her parents' needs. Hays emphasizes the importance of assessing 10 domains of cultural difference that together help to explicate Amber's unique history of oppression and privilege. From exercises exploring this rich history, Amber can gain a clear structure for understanding her current struggles with loneliness. This emphasis on integrating cultural differences within treatment is supported by ethical guidelines of diverse helping professions (APA, 2007a, 2008, 2012a, 2013) as well as the growing research base on cultural differences (Carter et al., 2017; Comas-Díaz, 2016; Pillay, 2005).

A fourth common factor in effective treatment is Amber's level of *positive expectancy and hope*. A high level of positive expectancy and hope is associated with from 15% to 28% of the variance in positive outcome (Duncan, 2014; Lambert, 2013). Amber comes in discouraged because she views herself as facing barriers to relationship success that if she was "only a White man" or at least "a man" she would not have to face. However, Amber has a long history of facing difficult challenges and then overcoming them. Therefore, if you are able to enhance her expectancy and hope, by regularly underscoring all the steps she has mastered that are leading her toward goal attainment, Amber could profit from treatment quickly.

The final common factor in effective treatment is your ability to respond in a positive way to any *feedback that Amber gives you* about either the treatment relationship, the treatment goals, or how treatment is progressing session by session. Amber is a powerful CEO and has strong analytic skills. It will come naturally to her to provide feedback either directly or indirectly. You will want to listen carefully for any signs that she is ready to give you feedback and then either incorporate her feedback into the next session or explain to her why you are unable to do this.

## Master Clinician Strategies

Amber it is an ideal client in many ways in that she is young, bright, well educated, and financially able to participate in many different types of services in support of her goal attainment. However, not all clinicians will be equally able to support her in making constructive change. Master clinicians are much more effective than the average clinician in getting their clients to profit maximally from treatment. Strategies they use in achieving these excellent outcomes have been named deliberate practice.

An important component to deliberate practice is for you to ask Amber after every session, *how helpful* she found the session to be. If Amber believes she is spinning her wheels, or if she feels that her situation is getting worse and she's even more lonely than before, then she is likely to drop out of treatment or have her functioning deteriorate. Asking her if there is anything different you could do to make treatment more helpful to her can be a valuable strategy for strengthening the healing qualities of treatment. Amber is bright, verbal, and insightful, thus, it is very likely she could provide you with specific ideas for what is and isn't working in treatment sessions for her.

Another important component of deliberate practice is to put your ego on the sidelines and directly ask Amber what her *comfort is with the therapeutic alliance* and if it is continuing to strengthen, is remaining the same, or is deteriorating. It is Amber's view of the treatment alliance that is predictive of positive outcome not your own. Clinicians have been found to be vulnerable to the same self-serving biases as everyone else, unless they receive specific training to avoid these (Walfish, McAlister, O'Donnell, & Lambert, 2012). In addition, Amber has experienced sexual and racial harassment in the past. Research indicates that the person with less power, which in this case is Amber because she's the one seeking help, is more accurate in determining if microaggressions are occurring within the treatment session (Sue & Sue, 2013).

You are going to have to be very comfortable reflecting on Amber's constructions of how much individual *sessions are helping*, how comfortable she is with her *alliance with you*, and in addition, how well she views *treatment progressing well overall*. Her success at achieving her goals has to take priority over your feelings of potential defensiveness that she wants changes in one or more aspects of the treatment process. As a CEO,

Amber has needed to give many employees feedback, review the company's success overall, and consider her own level of success. Thus, she is likely to experience a lot less discomfort over giving you concrete and specific feedback than you might be to get such feedback from someone who allegedly has less power within the treatment session than you do; this may be particularly difficult given that she may well be earning much more money than you and have a lot more experience than you in directing the work of other people.

Deliberate practice will also require that you *measure, strategize, and review treatment* on a regular basis and use this information to continue treatment as is, modify treatment, or make very significant changes in how Amber's treatment is being conducted. Amber's high level of intelligence and strong educational background means that she could respond effectively to both formal surveys as well as informal questions about treatment. These strategies could be used to help her tell you what she no longer needs help with and what she wants your continued support with. You will need to seek to define with Amber what signs would represent to her that she is making progress on relieving her feelings of loneliness. For example, does she want to track how many personal phone calls she has in the evenings? Does she want to keep a diary of interesting conversations she has with potential dates during the week? Then, once you have selected the outcomes you are going to measure and have decided how frequently you are going to measure them, you can have productive reviews with Amber to decide whether treatment is progressing satisfactorily.

Finally, deliberate practice requires you to be proactive in *developing deep knowledge of interpersonal strategies*. Not all clients will require the same interpersonal behavior from you as Amber might. Some of Amber's interpersonal issues may involve situations you have never faced before, such as helping a heterosexual woman, who is the CEO of a successful company, find a heterosexual male partner who does not find her high level of achievement threatening. Other interpersonal issues that Amber faces may be more typical for you such as helping her deal with sexual or racial harassment. It is important that you recognize when you are in need of trying a different interpersonal strategy within the therapeutic relationship. You need to become very comfortable seeking out support in developing these skills when necessary if you want to become a master clinician.

## CASE APPLICATION: INTEGRATING THE DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT

An interview with Amber will now follow with a clinician grounded in Hays's cultural perspective. There are many domains of human complexity that might provide relevant insights into Amber's current difficulties. The domain of development has been chosen to examine within two cultural conceptualizations and treatment plans.

### Interview With Amber (A) From a Cultural Perspective

*C:* I understand you are here because you are feeling deeply lonely. Can you start by telling me about yourself?

*A:* (analytically) I just turned 45. (pause) It is stupid, but suddenly my age is bothering me.

*C:* It feels stupid to you in this moment, but it might be valuable to understand how your age might be defining you.

*A:* (irritatedly) It is stupid to care about my age. It's not like I am on death's door. I just have a few wrinkles.

*C:* Young women are glamorized in advertisements and movies while old women are stereotyped as irritating or obsolete.

*A:* (irritatedly) I don't believe that. I know who I am . . . (long pause)

*C:*   Most of us take in the stereotypes around us even when we aren't aware of it. (long pause) Stereotypes can help us understand things we aren't familiar with, but they can also constrain or harm us if we don't consciously examine their validity for guiding us.

*A:*   (A looks speculatively at C) Turning 45 last month has made me feel more lonely than usual. I had a big blow out party. I kept finding myself standing in a dark corner, watching all my guests eating and laughing. Everyone seemed to be having fun but me. (long pause) I kept thinking about all my guests who had children and that I never would. (looking down) It's stupid, because I never wanted children.

*C:*   But now?

*A:*   (angrily) My menstrual cycle is becoming erratic, and I have hot flashes. My gynecologist says I have begun menopause. (pause) The symptoms don't make me feel that bad. (pause A is looking away) I keep remembering doing everything I could to avoid getting pregnant because it would interfere with important things going on at work. I should be happy now. I don't have to worry about getting pregnant, but I'm not happy, and it's irritating.

*C:*   Menopause reminds you that you won't be giving birth. Before it was your choice, but now biology is choosing for you.

*A:*   (angrily) I like to be the one who makes the choices. I have worked hard to have the power and control to be the chooser.

*C:*   Biology doesn't care that you are a powerful CEO. (long pause) Do you regret not having children?

*A:*   (softly) Both my parents pressured me to have children. It was exhausting always having to affirm my right to not have children. I had enough of having to take care of children when I was growing up. (long pause)

*C:*   You had to care for children?

*A:*   (analytically) I didn't have to exactly. My parents were always rushing around accomplishing things. I really admired my parents and wanted to have the same type of drive. On the other hand, I was the eldest, and my two younger sisters clung to me like glue when my parents were gone; they were always crying that they were lonely. I didn't mind at first, being the one to tuck them in and help with homework. But, I did get tired out being the one they always turned to. I would have to work late into the night to get my own homework done. When I left to go to college, I went far from home—all the way to Boston; I wanted to finally just look after myself.

*C:*   Just you, (pause) and . . . (pause)

*A:*   (happily) I feel selfish to say so, but I loved it. The years sped by. I met a great guy in graduate school; we moved in together and had five great years. (excited) My career began to really take off as I approached 30, and I was really enjoying the ride. (pause, irritated) Then, he gave me the "it's time to settle down speech." (pause) What kind of crap was that? I had been clear from the start that I wanted a career. Both of us were working hard and doing great. In what way hadn't "we" settled down?

*C:*   You felt you had been honest in indicating your career was a priority. However, somehow, he felt it was a young woman's spree rather than a long-term choice.

*A:*   (angrily) Exactly. He admitted that he had assumed when we were older I would stop working and be a full-time mother. I don't know where he got this. I never expressed an interest in this. (getting loud)

What infuriated me the most was that he was so sure his plan was right, and something was wrong with me if I didn't see it that way. (long pause, softer) I brought this up, and he said I had to decide right then, or he was walking out. (long pause)

*C:* That moment? (long pause)

*A:* (angry)Yes. I feel angry just thinking about it. We had always talked about being equal partners. He always seemed to listen to me talk about work like I listened to him. (frustrated) I could understand that he might have changed his mind about kids—he hadn't wanted them either when we first met. (long pause) But, it seemed as if he had always just assumed I didn't mean it when I said I didn't want kids. (long pause, angry) When I said he was taking control and changing all the rules in our relationship, he said he could tell what my decision was, packed his bags and off he went. He dated other women for about four months, got married, and now has three kids. (sigh)

*C:* (tentatively) What does the sigh represent?

*A:* (calmly) I don't regret the relationship ended. I don't think I regret not having children. I think I regret not screaming my lungs out at him that he was acting like a sexist from the Stone Age. I was supposed to change, but he didn't need to. We were together for five years. Then, after a few months, he got married to someone else. I was to give up my position of authority—that I had worked so hard to get—but he was to keep his and get the relationship.

*C:* He didn't have to choose, he could have both power and the relationship. (pause) Could your loneliness represent you buying into this to some extent?

*A:* (angrily, loudly) I refuse to let that be true. My parents were partners. I think I always expected we would be partners and was shocked to see what a jerk I had been living with all those years.

*C:* You wanted him to know you had been genuine about what you wanted and that it was him who was changing the rules, not you. You regret not saying more to him before he walked out.

*A:* (calmly) Yes, it felt too much like he was leaving me rather than we were deciding not to stay together. It was also so abrupt. I thought it over many times, and I didn't see it coming from him—though I wondered about his parents. (C looks questioningly at A) We always had Friday night dinner with my parents and Sunday morning brunch, after church, with his. They never seemed comfortable with me even though we shared a meal every weekend for five years!

*C:* (surprisedly) It doesn't make sense.

*A:* (earnestly) I had asked him once if it was because my dad was White; both his parents are African-American. He denied it, but while I had my parents invite them to Friday night dinner every once and a while, they never had my parents over. They seemed as uncomfortable with my parents as they were with me.

*C:* (matter-of-factly) You noticed the same pattern.

*A:* (matter-of-factly) While I didn't have the kind of parents who played games with me or tucked me in at night, they did talk to all of us about not being naïve about the racial divide. They said they both came under a lot of social pressure to end their engagement. They refused to be divided, but it came at a price; they both had family and friends who found excuses to not be around much after they got married.

*C:* (pause) Found excuses?

*A:*  (angrily) They weren't going to admit they were bigots. Both my parents made a lot of money before they even met each other. So, it couldn't have been anything but race.

*C:*  Both of your parents had the power and privilege that money can bring. Yet, within society, they were still oppressed. Being a mixed-race couple put them in a minority group, and they faced oppression at a really personal level.

*A:*  My mother was proud to be African-American. Her art was a powerful combination of both her African heritage and the Black slave experience. She knows all about her family for generations back. They told stories until they had the freedom to be able to write them down. My mother was the first to paint rather than write. She was proud of her race and her family.

*C:*  She was aware of the pain your family suffered in slavery, as well as the strengths that came to the family from sharing the story down through the generations. I wonder if she anticipated the pain she might feel if her biracial children were rejected by either African-Americans, European-Americans, or both?

*A:*  Her way of dealing with it was just to paint a very angry painting and then tell us to blow it off.

*C:*  Do you think being biracial has anything to do with your current loneliness?

*A:*  (irritated but thoughtfully) That would make sense, wouldn't it? New clients are very disrespectful to me. In fact, they often assume I am a secretary and ask me to get them coffee. (long pause) It could be my skin color, but I think the disrespect comes more from my being a woman. It infuriates me that women get treated this way. As adults, we are the majority of the general population, a small majority but still. (pause)

*C:*  Domination comes from having the most power and control in society, not having the greatest numbers.

*A:*  (sighs) Well, I hate thinking of the world this way. (sincerely) I have to admit that I do like the power and control I have at work. Getting the job done well carries so much satisfaction with it. (long pause, happy) I truly love what I do, and my hard work has given me both intellectual challenges and financial security. (long pause, angrily) I shouldn't be lonely! It is just infuriating. I should be able to handle this. I usually handle things well. I do!

*C:*  At work, when problems come up, you can handle it, but later you feel so lonely, and it doesn't feel right. What might be behind it?

*A:*  (long pause, softly) Men go out with women who make less money than them all the time. But when I meet someone, he always asks what I do, and when I tell the truth, the light goes out of his eyes.

*C:*  If you tell the truth?

*A:*  (calmly) I have tried hedging; just saying I am in computer software. This starts things out smoothly. But, at some point I can't avoid letting them see my apartment, and when they do, they act like they just found out I had an STD.

*C:*  It is frustrating you need to hide from people what actually is an area you have a right to be very proud of, your achievements at work.

*A:*  (emphatically) Yes! Men get to be proud. When I think about it, my mother's paintings hang up all over the house, but at the dinner table, when we were together as a family, we were always listening to what my father was doing.

*C:*  Your father may have had no idea that by monopolizing the family conversations he was subtly telling the family that your mother's accomplishments weren't as important as his.

*A:* (vehemently) He was proud of her work. He is proud of me. I am sure of it because I have overheard him telling his friends about my having a bachelor's degree from Harvard and my doctorate from Yale. (long pause) Yet, I don't remember him actually listening to me talk about what I studied at either place or what I am doing at work right now.

*C:* Bias can operate on the unconscious level. He may absolutely have been proud of both of you and your mother, yet still not really listened to either of you. While you have the power at work to set the agenda of what gets discussed, at home, it has been your father who has the power to decide this. Whenever you interact with anyone, issues of power and control come up. Whoever is on top may consciously or unconsciously oppress the other person by treating their opinions or experiences with less respect.

*A:* (irritably) Not feeling listened to makes me feel angry. (pause) I hate feeling that way, but why do you think it relates to my feeling lonely?

*C:* It might not. But, could the men you go out with unconsciously expect to set the agenda. Then, you walk in full of personal power, and it makes them uncomfortable, and they put you at a distance?

*A:* I don't care about the money, so why must they?

*C:* It might be because men expect to make more money. It might just be that your confident tone and your assurance in stating your opinions are all subtle ways of showing that you are a powerful woman. It may be this package that might make men assume you won't be interested in them.

*A:* (frustratedly) I know so many men who make more than the women they are with.

*C:* That fits the stereotype that women like successful men. Where are the cultural images showing men with successful women? (pause)

*A:* They are the underlings that follow in her shadow, not her equals. (pause) If she falls for him, in the movies, it's because the guy somehow knows more about living life or understanding people. Somehow they make the guy superior to the woman in some way even though she makes more money.

*C:* Social stereotypes are very powerful, even when we try to fight against accepting them. (long pause) You look angry, not lonely right now.

*A:* (angrily) I am mad at you.

*C:* Why?

*A:* You keep saying things are playing a powerful role in my life when I say I ignore them! You think you know me better than I know myself, and you don't!

*C:* I can understand why you would be angry with me. (pause) I didn't mean to invalidate your opinion. What I was trying to say is that sometimes, maybe not for you, but for a lot of women, it is hard for these negative stereotypes not to sink in at some level even when we don't want them to.

*A:* (factually) I appreciate your apology. (pause) Maybe there is something to what you say. (long pause) I want to say the problem is my being dark skinned, I want to say it's the money.

*C:* You want to but . . . (long pause)

*A:* (Still angry) Even last year, I can remember enjoying it that some men jumped back five feet from me when they found out I was a CEO.

*C:*   But . . . (pause)

*A:*   (angrily) It's my age. I am so furious with myself. A few wrinkles and hot flashes, and I am expecting to be alone for the rest of my life.

*C:*   It is harder for women to have these signs of age because there are so many subtle and not-so-subtle signs from society that older women don't have value.

*A:*   (tensely) But, I argue back when someone says something rude about an older woman.

*C:*   This personal advocacy on your part is great. You should feel good about yourself that you stand up for what you believe in. However, whether you're watching the news and seeing the United Nations arguing about human rights, watching a romantic comedy, or seeing magazine advertisements that target men versus those that target women, you will see a lot of old men with power that have young women on their arms, not women their own age. Movies will show older women alone or struggling to look like younger women. It's hard to be surrounded by all of these negative stereotypes and not be influenced by them.

*A:*   (angrily) I swear I still don't want to have children. But, I think I do want to settle down and stop all the dating.

*C:*   I hear you. You have a right to not have children. It is your choice.

*A:*   I feel like you believe me. My parents kind of give me pitying looks as if I'm making it up because I'm not married.

*C:*   You wish your parents would validate and accept your choice rather than assume you don't mean it—that feels so in validating. (A nods) We have spent a lot of time talking about what might be behind your loneliness. Your age is related to it but not because you can't have children. (A nods) Do you think we have missed anything that might be relevant to discuss right now?

*A:*   (tiredly) I think we have got it. It's just old wrinkly me.

*C:*   I have a lot of respect for wrinkly you (A smiles). We have talked about a lot of tough stuff, and you have plowed through it and thought hard about the issues that came up. The plan for next week would be to do something that parallels this but for your strengths rather than your loneliness. We would consider how all your cultural influences bring you strengths or give you options for how to work through this loneliness. (long pause, A is looking down) Do you want to come back and do this?

*A:*   (pause, looks up, determinedly) Absolutely.

## Cultural Case Conceptualization of Amber: Assumption-Based Style

Amber belongs to many social and cultural groups whose norms influence her interactions with others and her view of how the world works. Could her loneliness be the result of racial oppression? Amber is biracial, with an African-American mother and a European-American father. In both communities she doesn't "fit" or feel comfortable. Could her membership in the upper-class set her apart? As a CEO of a new company, she earns a salary and enjoys a sense of power and control over her day-to-day work environment, experienced by only 2% of the population. What about her gender? The world of software engineering is dominated by men. Amber feels her male colleagues get treated with more respect than she does. What about her recent awareness of herself as middle aged? Amber has begun menopause, and her negative stereotypes of older women may be causing her distress. Issues of power and control pervade every social encounter Amber has. In some interactions, her loneliness may be a function of oppression coming from others—such as racial discrimination.

In other interactions, it may stem from instances in which she has taken on the oppressor role and set herself apart from someone else; for example, treating a restaurant server as invisible. Through developing a deeper respect for cultural differences, Amber can define her own unique path to happiness and not be constrained by any one group's definition of the "true" path. Amber's prior success in forging her own way to educational and employment success bodes well for her ability to find ways to use her personal power constructively and learn how to seek social justice when external forces of oppression stand in her way.

Amber's racial influences come from both the African-American and White cultural groups. As a biracial person, Amber makes up part of a very small minority of the population that faces active discrimination. Where does she belong? The world view of African-Americans is often described as collectivist, valuing communal welfare, strong interdependent emotional connections with family and extended family members, and a present day orientation. The White culture is often described as individualistic, valuing autonomy, everyone responsible for his or her own actions, and a future orientation. Where does Amber fit in this? She may be experiencing significant oppression as she is torn between two world views and never quite belonging to either group. On the other hand, she may have had the opportunity to draw strengths from both cultural influences as a bicultural person. Amber's parents tried to prepare her for the oppressive experiences she might have. She heard stories from her mother and father about how they lost friends and relatives when they married. Amber's mother told her family stories of racism and oppression. These stories helped Amber draw strength from her African-American cultural heritage. In addition, from her father, she gained the beliefs that with hard work and perseverance, she could be another member of the family to succeed at prestigious universities like Harvard and Yale. Amber respects the achievements of both her parents and thus has personal knowledge that both cultural groups can experience success. Thus, when biracial Amber experienced microaggressions for five years from her African-American boyfriend's family, it made her feel uncomfortable. However, it did not influence her assessment of her own worth as a person.

Amber has a great deal of social power when examining the cultural influences of socioeconomic status. She is a highly educated, wealthy woman from a wealthy family. She is the CEO of a computer software company. Her worldview, as a wealthy individual, is that she deserves the power and privileges she has earned through what she sees as her own hard work and personal abilities. As Amber grew up, she developed the expectations and perceptions that when you work hard, and have great ideas, you can achieve success. Therefore, she is very aware of how hard she worked in college and graduate school, as well as in the world of work, to achieve the position she now has as a CEO. Amber has no awareness of how her parents' wealth supported her in becoming a computer engineer with a doctoral degree. Few families living in San Francisco could have afforded to send a child to a private school in Boston. In addition, if Amber hadn't gone to a highly competitive high school, she would have had a much harder time developing the academic skills needed to gain entrance to Harvard. These privileged experiences cut Amber off physically and emotionally from the experiences of individuals who were not wealthy and powerful. Thus, Amber has the freedom to consider her current experiences with success normal and considers herself a self-made success. When people do not listen to what she says or treat her opinion with respect, she is taken aback. From her wealthy background, leading a good life means Amber will pursue success, power, influence, and money. It is possible that her current loneliness is due to her behaving in a directly oppressive way toward others with less power than herself. She may also be committing microaggressions that put people at a distance. Amber has some growing awareness of how her wealth may play a role in her loneliness as she has begun to try to keep that she is a CEO out of the equation when she first meets a potential romantic partner. Amber recognizes on some level that it only takes one look at her apartment for a date to end abruptly. While Amber can see that her wealth itself is setting people at a distance, she currently remains unaware of how her attitudes and behavior might also play a role.

Amber is frustrated by the fact that although she is part of the numerically superior group, as a woman she is treated with less respect than her male colleagues. She is likely to have been the recipient of many forms of active

discrimination as well as the microaggressions she talks about, such as being taken for a secretary at meetings. Despite her dedication and hard work, Amber is aware that her male colleagues had a smoother upward career path. Even now, as the CEO of the company, there are times she has to insist before a male executive follows her instructions. This has less to do with Amber and more to do with the society in the United States still being heavily embedded in patriarchy. As such, men hold most of the positions of power and authority, and woman leaders are considered less competent or anomalous. Amber behaves as an androgynous person in many regards. She has taken on the female worldview that it is important to have an enduring relationship with a man. However, she has rejected the view that as a woman, her major life satisfaction should come from giving birth and raising children. She took care of her two younger sisters as they were growing up, and she feels this was her stint with nurturing young lives. She has taken on the male worldview in valuing competition, success, and making money as exciting and satisfying. When she began a relationship with her ex-boyfriend, Martin, they both indicated they didn't want children and were excited at the prospects of working together as equal partners in a relationship. Five years later, in a shocking change of face, Martin told her he was leaving her if they didn't marry and have children. When she reiterated she did not want to have children, he walked out, and within a few months, was marrying another woman who quickly became a stay-at-home mother. Martin was a member of the dominant group of powerful males. He was socialized to not recognize the barriers that were in Amber's path to success that he did not have to face. Privileged people don't have to know the differences between themselves and the less advantaged or the rules of society. He "just expected" that Amber would come around to his point of view. He may have had no conscious awareness that he held this expectation. However, as the years rolled by and she didn't change, he asserted his power to control the future of their relationship—which wasn't as egalitarian as Amber thought. Traditional gender role stereotypes include that women should marry good providers, and men providers will be wealthier than they are. The reverse stereotype is not true. The unflattering male stereotype is that if a man marries a woman who makes more money than he does, he is a kept man. This may be why, upon seeing her luxury apartment, men seem to flee. Amber, with no steady romantic partner, and entering menopause, is violating the stereotype of what makes a woman a success. Amber may be lonely knowing the barriers she is facing to developing a satisfying, intimate relationship.

In the cultural influence of age and generational influences, Amber is middle aged and thus a member of the privileged group that holds the stable positions in society. There are stereotypes for how people will behave and what their life will be like at different ages. Childhood is supposed to be carefree. It wasn't for Amber, as the fast pace her parents led in their careers left Amber and her two younger sisters alone a great deal. Amber took over the mothering role, made lunches for her sisters to take to school, and made sure their homework got done. The stereotype of the college years is that they are carefree. Amber made sure she could put herself first by intentionally going to a college that was literally across the continent from her home. She loved it, and after achieving her bachelor's degree at Harvard, went on to receiving a PhD at Yale. It was at Yale graduate school that she met the man she thought she would be spending her life with. They were both completely committed to a fast-paced life in computer software. She was loving it and taken completely by surprise when just as she was closing in on 30 and being very successful in her career, her partner said it was time to get married and for her to stay home and take care of their children. Amber was blindsided by this. She had thought they had an equal partnership and that neither one of them wanted children. While she could accept his changing his mind, the manner in which he left made her feel oppressed and disrespected as he quickly married someone else. Amber is now 45. The stereotype of middle age indicates she is at a time when she can expect the most employment stability and economic success. Earlier in her career, she was struggling for recognition of her ideas. Now, she is the CEO of a company. While generally successful, she is still treated disrespectfully by some of her employees. Generational influences may have led this cohort of workers to still see all CEO's as male and feel uncomfortable with her management style. At this time, Amber feels most confident that her entering middle age is what has led her to feel lonely at this time. Despite her

parents invalidating her decision to not become a parent, Amber is confident in her decision to not become a mother. Amber is furious with herself but believes it is the fact that she's becoming a more wrinkly that is behind her current crisis of loneliness.

Stereotypes of aging include mental deterioration and incompetence. These may be influencing Amber at a conscious or unconscious level. Amber has just begun to experience hot flashes, and she is recognizing that she is now headed down the slippery slope to being an older woman—the type of woman who is described in popular literature as a bitter old woman, an old maid, a crone. Old male CEOs are often found bringing young women to business events. Female CEOs may bring their husbands or perhaps a son. Who is Amber going to bring? She has loved the fast pace of the technology field. While earlier in her life she wanted to put her career first, now, as the option for having children seems to be biologically fading away, she doubts her decisions. As the years have melted away, she is beginning to wonder how many of the choices were hers and how many were forced on her by societal pressure that doesn't force the same choices on ambitious men.

Amber is experiencing significant loneliness that has lasted for six months. It is unclear at this time if her loneliness is more a result of external factors, such as discrimination and prejudice or if it is more a result of internal factors, such as Amber working too many hours to meet enough people. At this time, she is most aware of feeling oppressed as a middle-aged woman, someone who is left over, not chosen by a man and not able to give birth to children. Based on her interview data, her racial heritage, her socioeconomic status, and her gender may also play relevant roles. It would be a microaggression to blame Amber for emotional pain that had more to do with the environment than her own attitudes or actions. Whenever one of her cultural influences puts Amber in the minority group, she is in a position where she may be marginalized and oppressed by the dominant group. In areas where she is in the dominant group, such as socioeconomic status, Amber may need to increase her awareness of how her attitudes and behaviors that exert power and privilege may be serving to oppress others and set her apart from them. Windows of opportunity for change are that Amber's position as a CEO gives her a great deal of power that she could exert in a positive way to help herself and her employees have less stressful lives.

## Cultural Treatment Plan: Assumption-Based Style

*Treatment Plan Overview.* Amber comes in for help dealing with her intense loneliness, however, she has many strengths that come both from within herself as well as from her social connections. Thus, treatment should be straightforward, and she should accomplish her goals swiftly. The cultural influence that she considers most relevant to her loneliness at this time is her age and generational influences. Goal 1, which deals with this, will be worked on first, and if she finds relief from her loneliness, then treatment will conclude. However, if issues remain, then the goals that focus on her gender, racial and ethnic influences, and socioeconomic status will also be integrated into the clinical work. For each of Long-Term Goals 1–4, Amber will evaluate the differences in power and privilege she experiences within each of these cultural influences and how they might relate to her loneliness. They build in order to Long-Term Goal 5, which will represent an integration of all that she has learned. The plan follows the *basic format*.

LONG-TERM GOAL 1: Amber will examine the impact that her age and generational influences may have on her current experience of loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1. Amber will articulate her stereotypes of young adults, middle-aged adults, and seniors in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

2. Amber will articulate the strengths and weaknesses she perceived herself to have as a young adult, middle-aged adult, and her view of who she will be when she is a senior.

3. Amber will research her generation in terms of their expectations for themselves as individuals and for society and then consider what these generational influences have led her to expect from herself and how to see the world.

4. Amber will read a book on development to compare and contrast her current views on aging with medical and psychological data.

5. Amber will examine a relationship she currently has with a young adult and consider the impact of her middle age on this relationship, considering generational influences on her behavior as well as the influences she thinks come from age differences in particular.

6. Amber will examine a relationship she currently has with a senior and consider the impact of her middle age on this relationship, considering generational influences on her behavior as well as the influences she thinks come from age differences in particular.

7. Amber will articulate any age or generational influences that may play a role in her current loneliness, including the impact of environmental stressors outside of her control as well as personal influences within her control as an aging person.

8. Amber will develop action steps to reduce any emotional distance she may be experiencing with people due to age and generational factors in her personal, social, and work environments.

9. Amber will consider the power she has in terms of financial, educational, and social resources and create two agendas for herself, one for her personal life and one for her work life, containing action steps for using her positive power to reduce oppression of older people within her personal, social, and work environments.

LONG-TERM GOAL 2: Amber will examine the impact that her wealthy background and employment as a CEO have on her current experience of loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1. Amber will articulate her stereotypes of poor, middle-class, and wealthy individuals in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

2. Amber will articulate the strengths and weaknesses she perceived herself to have as an individual fresh out of school in her first job, her life as a CEO, and what she expects her income and lifestyle to be when she retires.

3. Amber will read a book on the current economic situation and its impact on the poor, middle class, and wealthy and discuss in what ways this new knowledge did or did not change her social stereotypes of people at different ranges of SES.

4. Amber will examine a recent interaction she had with a secretary or someone from the cleaning staff of her company and consider the impact of their differential incomes and power on what they talked about, the language they used, the way they noticed or didn't notice other people during this interaction, who had the power to initiate social contact, and who had the power to end the social contact.

5. Amber will examine a recent interaction she had with another software CEO and consider the impact of their greater income and power on what they talked about, the language they used, the way they noticed or didn't notice other people during this interaction, who had the power to initiate social contact, and who had the power to end the social contact.

6. Amber will articulate any socioeconomic influences that may play a role in her current loneliness, including the impact of environmental stressors outside of her control as well as personal influences within her control as an aging, wealthy, CEO.

7. Amber will consider the power she has in terms of financial, educational, and social resources and create two agendas for herself, one for her personal life and one for her work life, containing action steps for using her positive power to reduce oppression of lower-income groups within her personal, social, and work environments.

LONG-TERM GOAL 3: Amber will examine the impact that her female gender has on her current experience of loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1. Amber will articulate her stereotypes of men and women in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

2. Amber will articulate the strengths and weaknesses she perceives herself to have as a woman and how similar or different she believes her experiences have been to other women.

3. Amber will read a book on the role of gender in personal and social environments and consider in what ways a gender analysis does and does not provide insights in her current situation.

4. Amber will consider the relationship she had with Martin when they were in their twenties and articulate in what ways male and female stereotypes may have played a role in the initiation and termination of this relationship.

5. Amber will examine a relationship that she currently has with a male who is not her employee and consider the impact of her female gender on this relationship considering signs such as who interrupts whom, who sets the topic of conversation, who changes the subject, who has the power to the end this social contact, who has the power to initiate another social contact, and who has the most power in the relationship.

6. Amber will examine a relationship she currently has with another woman who is not her employee and consider the impact of her female gender on this relationship considering signs such as who interrupts whom, who sets the topic of conversation, who changes the subject, who has the power to the end this social contact, who has the power to initiate another social contact, and who has the most power in the relationship.

7. Amber will join a business women's association and consider the dynamics of the organization and what she thinks the strengths and weaknesses of this organization are in comparison to a male-dominated organization such as one she belongs to as a software engineer.

8. Amber will articulate any gender influences that may play a role in her current loneliness, including the impact of environmental stressors outside of her control as well as personal influences within her control as an aging, wealthy, female CEO.

9.  Amber will create an agenda of action steps to take in which she will use her androgynous strengths of caring about the development of long-term relationships, ability to develop an agenda, ability to set up reachable goals, and ability to solve problems using a future orientation to reduce gender discrimination in her personal, social, and work environments.

LONG-TERM GOAL 4: Amber will examine the impact of her biracial heritage on her current experience of loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1.  Amber will articulate her stereotypes of Whites, African-Americans, and biracial individuals in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

2.  Amber will articulate the strengths and weaknesses she perceived her mother, her father, and herself to have and how similar or different she believes her family experiences with race represents what happens in the general population.

3.  Amber will read a book about biracial experiences in the United States and consider in what ways it does and does not provide her with insights about her current situation.

4.  Amber will examine a relationship that she currently has with a White person who is not her employee and consider the impact of her biracial identity on this relationship considering signs such as who interrupts whom, who sets the topic of conversation, who changes the subject, who has the power to the end this social contact, who has the power to initiate another social contact, and who has the most power in the relationship.

5.  Amber will examine a relationship she currently has with an African-American person who is not her employee and consider the impact of her biracial identity on this relationship considering signs such as who interrupts whom, who sets the topic of conversation, who changes the subject, who has the power to the end this social contact, who has the power to initiate another social contact, and who has the most power in the relationship.

6.  Amber will examine a relationship she currently has with some who is biracial or multiracial and not a member of her family and consider the impact of her biracial identity on this relationship considering signs such as who interrupts whom, who sets the topic of conversation, who changes the subject, who has the power to the end this social contact, who has the power to initiate another social contact, and who has the most power in the relationship.

7.  Amber will articulate any racial and ethnic influences that may play a role in her current loneliness, including the impact of environmental stressors outside of her control as well as personal influences within her control as an aging, wealthy, female, and biracial person.

8.  Amber will consider whether the strengths she has stemming from her White heritage in planning and controlling her schedule could be used to give her more time to socialize with others.

9.  Amber will consider whether a greater integration of the collectivist worldview of her African-American heritage into her personal attitudes and behaviors toward others would reduce her loneliness.

10. Amber will articulate what she would like to do personally to reduce racial and ethnic discrimination in her personal, social, and work environments.

LONG-TERM GOAL 5: Amber will examine the impact of having differing worldviews coming from her cultural influences of age and generational influences, socioeconomic status, gender, and race on her loneliness and create her own unique truth for pursuing a happy and successful life.

*Short-Term Goals*

1. Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her age and generational influences and her CEO identity.

2. Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her age and generational influences and her identity as an attractive woman.

3. Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her African–American and White cultural stereotypes of middle-aged and senior people.

4. Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her African-American and White cultural stereotypes of women.

5. Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her African-American and White cultural stereotypes of wealthy people.

6. Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between how she is to behave as a person who happens to be a woman and a CEO.

7. Amber will articulate her worldview of how best to operate in the world based on her analysis of cultural influences on herself.

8. Amber will consider what she would like to do, both in terms of personal actions, and in terms of social justice, that might alleviate her loneliness.

9. Amber will consider whether taking on a multicultural worldview would add to her sense of satisfaction in her personal, social, and work environments and how treating cultural groups with more respect in these environments could decrease her social isolation from others.

## Cultural Case Conceptualization of Amber: Symptom-Based Style

Amber enters treatment with the sole complaint that she is intensely lonely. She is a biracial woman who has overcome oppression based on her race and on her gender to become a CEO of a computer software company. She has many strengths that she can use in trying to overcome her loneliness. She has a flexible mindset and desire for family connections from her African-American mother. She has developed a future orientation and the ability to set achievable goals from her White father. Amber has a strong internal drive for achievement that has led her to develop a strong work ethic and the ability to persevere. Amber is a very independent person who can set her own agenda even in dealing with people for whom she is profoundly attached. Despite her many professional successes, Amber has been very lonely for the past six months. She is more aware of what she doesn't think is related to this loneliness, such as her gender and biracial identifications, than of why her entry into middle age should be causing her distress. Amber's loneliness will be examined within the cultural influence of age and generational influences. This and other cultural influences will be examined to determine if her loneliness is more a result of external sources of oppression, internal sources such as her beliefs and actions, or both. While Amber is lonely, she has also continued to achieve at a very high level at work, socialize regularly with her parents, and continues to socialize with others. On psychometric testing, she showed no signs of cognitive confusion or suicidal or homicidal ideation

of impulse control problems. She is currently functioning at a very high level occupationally, is financially secure, has a family support system, and has the resources she needs to attend therapy. This is most consistent with a working diagnosis of Z60.2 Problem Related to Living Alone (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Amber is very lonely, yet the flexible mindset and desire for family connections that she learned from her relationship with her African-American mother can be used in addressing this problem. From her mother, Amber learned that there were many pathways to happiness and many adaptive ways to live a life. Amber's mother told her stories of their long line of African-American forbearers. These relatives tracked their heritage across the generations, using oral traditions during and before the slave years. Once they learned to read and write English, they began to write this history down to keep it alive. Amber's mother is the first family member to track this history not with words but through the visual arts. Both hearing the stories, and seeing her mother transform the written words into images, encouraged Amber to think flexibly and recognize that two disparate ways of understanding the world—such as using words and using images—could be equally valuable ways to express powerful ideas and build strong family connections. Amber has repeatedly reflected on these lessons as she has aged, and they have supported her in refusing to believe that there was only one acceptable way to solve a problem or live a life.

Amber is very lonely, yet her future orientation and skills at setting achievable goals, drawn from her relationship with her White father, can be used in addressing this problem. Amber's father was very successful in the banking world. He actively helped her learn how to consider the long run over the short run and set achievable goals. Amber found herself very exhilarated by goal attainment, particularly as the stakes got higher and higher as she aged. While she faced discrimination based on her gender and her race, Amber's future orientation and ability to set goals served her well. Amber set her sights on acceptance at a premier university after high school and set goals that allowed her to develop the high grade point average and intellectual power to gain entry to Harvard. Once in college, she set the goal of gaining entrance into a premier graduate program. She kept this goal in mind through four years of hard work at an extremely competitive university and gained entrance to a graduate program at Yale. After graduation, she gained a position in San Francisco and set her sights on rising in the ranks to a position of power. Amber has returned to live near her family now taking on the position of the CEO of a computer software company. At the age of 45, Amber is just at the beginning of a very successful career in the computer industry. Even as she is reflecting on her loneliness, she shows excitement at developing new achievable goals in the new high stakes world of her middle-age years.

Amber is very lonely, but the strengths she draws from respecting the lessons drawn from both the female gender role socialization encouraged by her mother and the male gender role socialization encouraged by her father can be used in addressing this problem. Amber viewed both of her parents as highly ambitious and career oriented with an egalitarian relationship. However, while her mother's paintings hung all over the family home, at meal times, her father controlled the conversation, and it centered around his life. Her father's employment centered around money while her mother's centered around expression of emotion. Thus, Amber learned that there were strengths to be learned from both the female and male gender role. As a result, Amber took on an androgynous role. From the male gender role, she incorporated a single-minded focus on pursuing control, power, and prestige within the business world. From the female gender, she incorporated a value for spending time with family and having a lifelong partner. Amber shares a meal with her parents once a week. When she and her ex-boyfriend Martin were living together, they shared a meal with his parents once a week. However, when she realized he wanted to be the authority in the home, the strengths she has in recognizing her own needs and setting her own agenda allowed her to leave this relationship despite her earlier belief that she had found a lifelong partner. Amber does not just want a partner, she wants one who values an egalitarian relationship as she does, and she is willing to face the potential of further loneliness in order to not settle for less than she views as right for her.

Amber is very lonely, but her internal drive and history of hard work and persistence are strengths she can draw from in addressing this problem. Amber began to fully recognize the benefits that came from her hard

work and persistence after she was accepted into Harvard as an undergraduate. She did not burn out there. Rather, no longer responsible for taking care of her two younger sisters, she threw herself completely into her work. Amber continued her excellence in performance and gained entry into a premier doctoral program at Yale. She selected computer engineering as her field, which was dominated by men. However, despite gender bias slowing down her upward mobility, she continued to work hard and produce excellent work and is now CEO of a software company. While sometimes frustrated that her male executives don't always follow her instructions, when she insists, they do. She has the power at work, and 45-year-old Amber can expect to hold it for a long time to come. However, while 45 means good in the years left to work, 45 means bad in the world of biology. While actively rejecting parenthood in her twenties, Amber's signs of menopause have made her feel as if she has lost control of her choice to have or not have children. Amber's awareness of herself, as an older woman, is what she targets as the main force behind her feelings of loneliness. She does not regret not being a mother, but she regrets having the choice taken away from her.

Amber is very lonely, but her ability to function as an independent person who can determine her own agenda is a strength she can draw on to overcome this problem. Amber showed these strengths even in her young adult years. While in love with and deeply committed to Martin, when he told her that her choice was to give up her career and have children or give up her relationship with him, despite the pain the relationship rupture caused her, she was confident in her decision. Amber doesn't dwell on the loss of Martin as a partner per se; however, turning 45 has caused her to be more aware that her perspective pool of partners is dwindling. Amber is continuing to date and throw parties, but she is tired of doing so. Amber doesn't value having sexual encounters with many partners. Perhaps due to the strong family orientation of her mother, or female gender role stereotypes, Amber seeks a stable relationship with a man who will value his own independence as well as hers. Amber's awareness of herself, as an older woman, is what she targets as the main force behind her feelings of loneliness. She wonders if the pool of men her age, who are not married, contains her partner for life. Will she still be attractive to him? Amber has seen male CEO's walking around with younger women, but she can't imagine her colleagues would accept it if she came in with a younger man. Her stereotypes of older women are all negatives. Concerns about living the rest of her life alone may be playing a leading role in her current loneliness, but this angers her, and she wants to fight against it.

Amber is a biracial woman who has learned to draw strength from a variety of resources including her parents, her education, and her personal drive and experiences. While she has been feeling lonely for the last six months, Amber has been functioning at a high level at work and has maintained her weekly connections with her parents as well as an active social calendar. She has a multiplicity of strengths including a flexible mindset; a desire for family connections; a future orientation and skills at setting achievable long-term goals; an internal drive that powers her hard work and persistence; and the ability to function independently and set her own agenda. A window of opportunity for change at this time is that Amber is ready to take active steps to reduce her social isolation and has a flexible mindset that makes her open to the new experience offered by the clinician. She can easily become aware of the many facets of her multicultural identity and consider how these might be related to her current problem. Amber's many strengths bode well for her efficient achievement of her treatment goals.

## Cultural Treatment Plan: Symptom-Based Style

*Treatment Plan Overview.* Amber's many strengths will make treatment straightforward and it is likely that she will attain goals quickly. At the current time, she targets the cultural influence of age and generational influences as most relevant to her loneliness. Therefore, short-term goals will start out examining this cultural influence. If this provides enough power for her to initiate change, she will progress to the next long-term goal. If she needs further work, she will continue with short-term goals that target other cultural influences. Long-term goals should be approached sequentially as they build on each other. The treatment plan style follows the *SOAP format.*

SUBJECTIVE DATA: Amber's presenting complaint is that she is very lonely and has been lonely for quite some time. While her social disconnection is causing her distress on the personal level, particularly as signs of aging remind her that her child bearing years are over, across many domains of cultural influence, Amber experiences a lot of privilege and power.

OBJECTIVE DATA: Standardized testing revealed that Amber was performing in the superior range of intellectual functioning on the WAIS-IV. Her performance on the MMPI-2 revealed that she was responding in an open and honest manner and showed no signs of significant pathology, however, there were signs of some depression and anxiety. She has very good verbal communication skills. She maintains regular contact with her parents and siblings. She frequently dates and is very successful in the work environment. Thus, her feelings of loneliness are most compatible with a DSM V diagnosis of Z60.2 Problem Related to Living Alone (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). However, Amber is living in a society that is still highly racist and sexist, and she indicated on the adverse experiences scale having experienced significant harassment on both accounts. Thus, if either one or both of these adverse experiences turns out to be related to her loneliness, then adding a diagnosis of Z 60.5 Target of (perceived) Adverse Discrimination or Persecution may be appropriate (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

ASSESSMENT: Amber expected to feel satisfied and empowered by her current lifestyle as a CEO. While she has found these work achievements to be satisfying professionally, she still feels deeply lonely within her personal life. She is exploring whether some of this loneliness comes from external sources such as possibly being a target of racism for her ex-boyfriend Martin's parents and society's generally racist treatment of African-Americans. She also has felt the target of a gender double standard by her ex-boyfriend Martin and some men within the work environment. However, she doesn't believe these are the predominant sources of her current loneliness. There are some indications that the approach of menopause is having a significant impact on how she views herself as a woman, and this may play a significant role in her loneliness as she may fear that she will be less appealing to men and therefore less likely to find a life partner. Although she is not showing significant symptomatology at this time, her deep feelings of loneliness are important to address. Amber is currently functioning at a very high level occupationally, is financial secure, has a family support system, and has the resources she needs to attend therapy. Her superior level of intelligence and long history of hard work and persistence reflect an individual who has the personal resources to make progress in attaining her goals of developing a more satisfying personal life.

*PLAN:*

LONG-TERM GOAL 1: Amber will examine how her flexible mindset and desire for family connections can be used to decrease her loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1.  Amber will watch the news, read one of her business magazines, and go to see a popular movie and consider what stereotypes of middle-aged versus 20-something men and women emerge.

2.  Amber will discuss her own stereotypes of middle-aged versus 20-something men and women and how these are similar or different to what emerged from her media analysis.

3.  Amber will research her generation in terms of their expectations for themselves as individuals and for society and then consider what these generational influences have led her to expect from herself in her work and personal life.

4. Amber will read a book on development to compare and contrast her current views on young adults versus middle-aged adults aging with medical and psychological data.

5. Amber will consider memories she has about herself as a 20-something businesswoman versus a recent memory of herself as a 45-year-old businesswoman and consider her strengths and weaknesses at each age in the world of business.

6. Amber will consider whether there are many different ways to live as a 45-year-old woman who wants to maintain an active business career but also desires strong family connections.

7. Amber will reflect on the many different avenues she could pursue to meet a significant other who might respect her desires to have an active business career but who also desires strong family connections.

If ready, go on to Long-Term Goal 2, if not, continue:

8. Amber will watch the news, read one of her business magazines, and go to see a popular movie and consider what stereotypes emerge of poor, middle-class, and wealthy individuals.

9. Amber will discuss her own stereotypes of poor, middle-class, and wealthy individuals and consider how these are similar or different to what emerged from her media analysis.

10. Amber will read a book on the current economic situation and its impact on the poor, middle class, and wealthy and discuss in what ways this new knowledge did or did not change her social stereotypes of people at different ranges of socioeconomic status.

11. Amber will consider in what ways her current social class is a result of her hard work and personal motivation and in what ways it is a result of being born into a wealthy family who had the ability to teach her the skills and provide her with the opportunities that could lead to her current economic advancement.

12. Amber will look around her environment and come up with examples of individuals living as hardworking and praiseworthy people who are in the middle and lower class.

13. Amber will take a look inside of herself and consider how she would feel about dating a hard-working and praiseworthy person who is middle class, how she would need to dress, and what activities they might do so that both she and the other person felt connected and comfortable.

14. Amber will take a look inside of herself to consider how she would feel about dating a hard-working and praiseworthy person who is lower class, how she would need to dress, and what activities they might do so that both she and the other person felt connected and comfortable.

If ready, go on to Long Term-Goal 2, if not, continue:

15. Amber will watch the news, read one of her business magazines, and go to see a popular movie and consider what stereotypes emerge of men and women.

16. Amber will discuss her own stereotypes of men and women and consider how these are similar or different to what emerged from her media analysis.

17. Amber will read a book that discusses gender role stereotypes and discuss in what ways this new knowledge did or did not change her social stereotypes of men and women.

18. Amber will look around her environment and come up with examples of men and women who are and are not living hard-working and praiseworthy lives and in what ways they are or are not living as gendered individuals.

19. Amber will articulate the strengths and weaknesses she perceived herself to have as a woman and how similar or different she believes her experiences have been to other women.

20. Amber will take a look inside of herself to consider how she would feel about dating a hard-working and praiseworthy male who is closely following gender stereotypes versus one who was living a more androgynous lifestyle and consider how she would need to dress and what activities they might do so that both she and the other person felt connected and comfortable.

LONG-TERM GOAL 2: Amber will examine how she could use her strengths of having a future orientation and setting achievable goals to decrease her loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1. Amber will attend church services and intentionally sit next to people older than herself, younger than herself, and a similar age as herself and initiate small talk before and after the services and be aware of her feelings of social connection or disconnection while she is doing it.

2. Amber will take two action steps at work that could reduce any emotional distance she may be experiencing with people due to age and generational factors and be aware of her feelings of social connection or disconnection while she is doing them.

3. Amber will take two action steps in her personal life that could reduce any emotional distance she may be experiencing with people due to age and generational factors and be aware of her feelings of social connection or disconnection while she is doing them.

4. Amber will consider whether there are any age or generational influences that may be playing a role in how much her loneliness abates when she interacts with other people outside of the dating context.

5. Amber will analyze her reactions to these action steps and consider if they were valuable in moving her toward a future in which she did not feel consistently lonely versus whether decreasing her loneliness can only occur if she finds her long-term partner.

6. Amber will consider whether there are any men younger than her, similar to her in age, or older than her that she would be interested in dating and whether her own reactions to her partner's age or the reactions of other people in the environment would have the greatest impact on whether she actually invited this person out on a date.

If ready, go on to Long-Term Goal 3, if not, continue:

7. Amber will walk through a crowded mall and observe individuals she perceives to be Whites, African-American, and bi- or multiracial and consider in what ways their behavior is similar and different and in what ways their treatment in stores and restaurants is similar and different.

8. Amber will read a book that describes the social and personal costs and benefits of being biracial in the United States and consider in what ways it does and does not provide her with insights about her loneliness.

9.  Amber will articulate the strengths and weaknesses she perceived her mother, her father, and herself to have and how similar or different she believes her family experiences with race have been from the experiences she observed in the mall and what she read about in the book.

10. Amber will consider whether there is a man of similar or different racial backgrounds from her that she finds hard-working and praiseworthy and whether it would be her own internal reactions or the reactions of other people in the environment that would have the greatest impact on whether she actually invited this person out on a date.

11. Other goals if needed.

LONG-TERM GOAL 3: Amber will examine how she could use her strengths of hard work and persistence to decrease her loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1.  Amber will spend a week keeping a diary about her thoughts as she moves through the day and sees people of different ages, genders, socioeconomic status, racial heritage (and so forth) and consider what she has learned about her worldview of how to live a successful and happy life.

2.  Amber will ask her mother to discuss her successes and struggles in trying to have a balance of career and family and solicit advice about her current loneliness.

3.  Amber will ask her father to discuss his successes and struggles in trying to have a balance of career and family and solicit advice about her current loneliness.

4.  Amber will ask at least one of her sisters to discuss her strengths and struggles in trying to have a balance of career and family and solicit advice about her current loneliness.

5.  Amber will write in her diary about her thoughts, emotions, and physical reactions to the advice she got from her mother, father, and sister(s) about her current loneliness.

6.  Amber will consider if age and generational influences played a role in her reactions to the advice of different members of her family.

7.  Amber will write out an agenda of what she could do in the next week to decrease her loneliness based on what she has learned about herself and her family environment from soliciting advice.

If ready, go on to Long-Term Goal 4, if not, continue:

8.  Amber will attend a business women's association meeting and consider how she feels at this meeting, in comparison to how she feels in a male-dominated meeting and if this influences her feelings of social connection or disconnection.

9.  Amber will write out an agenda of what she could do in the next week to decrease her loneliness based on what she learned about this gender analysis of social groups.

10. Amber will write in her diary her emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations as she carries out her agenda next week and consider whether internal gender stereotypes or social pressures are playing a role in her reactions.

11. Other goals if needed.

LONG-TERM GOAL 4: Amber will use her value for independence and her ability to set her own agenda to decrease her loneliness.

*Short-Term Goals*

1.  Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her age and generational influences and her CEO identity and whether these come more from her own internal desires or social pressures.

2.  Amber will articulate any conflicts she experiences between her age and generational influences and her identity as an attractive woman and whether these come more from her own internal desires or social pressures.

3.  Amber will set an agenda for herself for the next month for what steps she will take to create a balance between her CEO identity and her personal identity in order to decrease her feelings of loneliness.

4.  Amber will keep a diary of her thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations as she goes through the action steps on her agenda.

5.  Amber will consider the power she has in terms of financial, educational, and social resources and consider whether differential power between herself and individuals she considers to be playing a role in her loneliness and whether this comes more from her own internal reactions or social pressures.

6.  Amber will consider what her worldview is now for what it means to lead a successful or unsuccessful life based on the greater awareness she now has of the role that power and social pressure have in her life.

7.  Amber will consider what she would like to do in terms of personal actions, actions within her work sphere, and in terms of social justice that might alleviate her loneliness.

8.  Other goals if needed.

## PRACTICE CASE FOR STUDENT CONCEPTUALIZATION: INTEGRATING THE DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT

You will now be presented with an interview of Dan conducted by a clinician grounded in Hays's cultural precepts. Following the interview will be a series of exercises designed to help you develop an in-depth understanding of Dan's strengths and areas of concern. There are many domains of human complexity that might provide you with further insights into Dan's behavior. Within these exercises, you are asked to try to integrate the domain of development into your case conceptualization and treatment plan.

### Information Received From Brief Intake

Dan is a 75-year-old male widower of five years. When his wife, Connie, died, their daughter, Helen, moved back into the family home to care for Dan. Dan and Connie had been married 50 years and had lived in the same house their entire life together. Dan was an architect who inherited the family architectural firm from his father, Maurice. Dan and Connie had two children. Their oldest son, Gerry (age 46), moved to France after completing his college degree and rarely returns to the United States for visits. Their daughter, Helen (age 48), had moved back to live in her home town in a small condominium near her parent's home after she graduated from college. After being single for most of her life, she married in her early forties to a Mexican citizen, Rodrigo, who immigrated to the United States and became a citizen. He worked as a chef in a Mexican

restaurant, and Helen worked as a dental assistant. They have one son, Juan, who is currently 12 years old. Helen and Rodrigo divorced when Juan was 10 years old.

Dan looked painfully thin and gaunt when he attended his interview. His doctor had filed a mandated report to adult protective services when Dan came in to get his pneumonia shot and the nurse noticed his arms were covered in bruises. Dan denied there were any problems at home but agreed to come in for this interview in order to get the doctor to promise not to contact Helen and ask her any questions. Dan came in for a brief intake. He was angry and responded to questions very briefly. During a mental status exam, Dan showed signs of functioning in the superior range of intelligence. He made a lot of sarcastic comments about himself using labels such as demented, senile, an idiot, and retarded. He showed no signs of cognitive confusion, memory loss, depression, or suicidal ideation. On a survey of adverse experiences, Dan indicated being emotionally and physically abused as he grew up and having a parent who might have been an alcoholic. Dan also indicated perpetration of emotional and physical abuse as an adult and heavy use of alcohol. Dan refused to discuss these results and therefore it wasn't possible to screen in or screen out the possibility of substance abuse. While his referral for treatment had been a result of indications of elder abuse, he denied all the allegations.

## Interview With Dan (D) From a Cultural Perspective

*C:* I read the report from your internist indicating that you came to a recent appointment with him showing a great deal of bruising on both your arms.

*D:* (angrily) I don't want to talk about that, and I want you to know that I am not a man who is used to being pushed around. You can't make me talk about those stupid bruises if I don't want to talk about them.

*C:* You are very right about that. (long pause) You describe yourself as a man who doesn't want to be pushed around. (D glares directly at C) Would it be all right for us to talk more about who you are as a strong man?

*D:* (cautiously) What do you want to know?

*C:* Honestly, I want to know all about who you are. Could we start with what it does or doesn't mean that you are 75 years old?

*D:* (caustically) I am not demented, if that is what you are insinuating. I did not get bruised because I am clumsy. I have always been athletic, and I am still playing tennis and golf.

*C:* Tennis and golf are great sports. (pause) You get a lot of exercise so you're in good shape. (D nods) So, where did your bruises come from since you are in great shape and not clumsy?

*D:* (with pride) Don't think you can trap me into talking about something I do not want to talk about. My memory is just as sharp now as it has been all my life. Just like my weight is exactly the same as it was when I graduated from college. I have never been one to over indulge in food, now my daughter Helen— that's a different story. How she let herself get so fat has always been beyond me.

*C:* You started out by being proud of your own athleticism. How did you end up criticizing Helen?

*D:* (caustically) Why shouldn't I criticize her? She's my daughter. She got fat when she hit her teens—just when she should have been paying more attention to her looks. My wife tried to help her with diets. Connie was like me. We met on our college tennis team and both stayed fit all our lives. My oldest child, Gerry, he can also swing a racket and has also stayed fit; at least he looks fit in the pictures he

sends home. Helen was always the outsider in our family, sneaking food out of the kitchen; she eats all day now.

*C:*  You value being physically fit, and you always have. Connie shared this value, but Helen doesn't.

*D:*  (angrily) I lost my Connie five years back, and now Helen is living with me. What a terrible exchange! Helen never learned to cook decently—she loves food so much, you think she would put more effort into cooking. She is such a nag always trying to make me do things I don't want to do. My Connie was not like that. But there is no point crying over it anymore she's dead—that's what I try to tell Helen, but she is still crying.

*C:*  (questioningly) You don't like to hear her cry? (pause, D nods yes) Do you ever try to comfort her?

*D:*  (snapping) I didn't believe in that emotional spoiling when she was a small child, and I certainly don't believe in it now that, to put it mildly, she is full grown.

*C:*  So, you never had that type of relationship some dads have with their daughters. Where she crawls up on your lap and sniffles and you comfort her?

*D:*  (proudly) In my family, we learn early to keep a stiff upper lip. There is no point in everyone knowing how you're feeling. You are the only one who cares anyway. It's babyish and immature to cry. You need to be independent and take care of yourself.

*C:*  It sounds like you value stoicism and independence?

*D:*  (tensely) Any sane man would.

*C:*  Not all cultural traditions consider men unemotional. For example, Latino and Italian cultures encourage men to be emotionally expressive, and many cultures encourage interdependence rather than independence.

*D:*  (emphatically) My family is from Vermont. There is not an emotional bone in our bodies—and I thank the good Lord for that.

*C:*  I get it. You are proud of your Vermont heritage and glad to be stoic. (long pause) You also seem to value being independent and in charge. (D nods) Since you are so independent, why did Helen move in after Connie died?

*D:*  (frustratedly) I didn't ask her to. (pause, irritated) I sprained my ankle last year and needed help getting back and forth to the doctor. Helen used this as an excuse to stop working and move in with me. I didn't want her to. All I wanted was a little help getting to the doctor. She said my appointments were getting her into trouble at work. She never could stand up for herself. She just quit her job. Typical of her, she never had any strength of character.

*C:*  You sprained your ankle and needed some help getting to appointments. Has your full mobility returned?

*D:*  (explosively) Do you see crutches? A wheelchair? Are you blind!

*C:*  (firmly) I apologize for touching a raw nerve. I was not suggesting that you had any difficulties. I am just trying to understand who you are right now. I can hear how angry you are. Sometimes people go from being abled, to disabled, and this is quite a blow to their freedom—it makes them angry.

*D:* (hostile) I am completely self-sufficient. (With emphasis) It is Helen who has all the self-sufficiency of an 8-year-old.

*C:* You have said a lot of demeaning things about Helen today. Why is that?

*D:* (pause, ignoring the question) It wasn't a big deal. I told my doctor that. (pause) But he had to make the bruises a big deal by calling those protective services people—as if I need to be protected from anybody. I'll tell you what happened, but don't you go making a big deal about it. (pause) Helen had gotten on my nerves nagging at me so I went into my den, knocked back a few scotches while I watched TV. I guess I had a few too many because I don't remember getting any bruises. But, I can't deny it—I am not blind or deaf. I did have quite a few that day at the doctor's office.

*C:* It seems very important to you that I know you aren't impaired in any way.

*D:* (squirming and angry) Well, wouldn't you?

*C:* You are right. If I was having problems hearing or seeing, this impairment would weigh heavily on me. I spend my days listening to people and looking at them carefully to try and understand them. This would be really hard for me to do if I developed a sensory impairment.

*D:* (with hostility) You admit it, your identity is tied up in being a good spy.

*C:* (calmly) What are all these put down about? (long pause while C looks into D's eyes) I wonder if you feel it is necessary to let me know you are a powerful person by insulting me?

*D:* (matter-of-factly) Well, I am a powerful man. I was the head of a successful company, like my father before me, I was the head of my household and everyone in the family knew it.

*C:* Did you and your wife share any of this power?

*D:* (explosively) Don't you read your bible? The husband is the head of the house.

*C:* You sound angry again. I wasn't trying to be disrespectful of your religious beliefs. What should I understand about them, so I don't misunderstand your family?

*D:* (long pause, intently glaring at clinician) Okay, you got me there. I am not a religious man. I was just trying to yank you out of this irritatingly calm attitude you have.

*C:* (looking directly in D's eyes) I haven't stayed calm to play a power game with you. (pause) Being such a powerful man all your life must make coming here to seek help an alien experience. Usually, my being calm helps others feel more comfortable in talking about why they are here. It doesn't seem to work that way with you.

*D:* (surprised) You talk as if you mean what you say.

*C:* I do. Let me assure you of one thing. I have heard all your insults today. But it's up to me if I say anything about it or not. (pause) I'm stoic.

*D:* (laughing) Well, if you recognize I can get your goat, I guess I can stop trying so hard to do it.

*C:* Great, let's see what else we can agree on. You have always been a strong man with decided opinions. You are a very successful man at work who also likes to be in charge at home. You have grown older, but this has not changed who you are. But you have some concerns that others might consider you senile or

decrepit just because you're older. You are a wealthy man from a wealthy family, and everything was going according to plan until your wife died. Religion didn't help you then, and it's not relevant now because you aren't religious.

D: (disgruntled) No, and if I was, I'd ask God why he messed things up for me. (intently) Connie was in great health, she wasn't supposed to die. It made no sense. We were about to go to Europe to visit our son, Gerry; we hadn't seen him in years. (long pause) Well, let's change the subject. Dwelling on her death won't bring her back. I've told Helen over and over that crying won't help. I offered her some Scotch; it makes more sense to have a few drinks than cry. At least the Scotch tastes good. (D is looking down and nodding to himself) No point crying over it, as I've told Helen over and over.

C: Different people grieve in different ways. You've made it clear that you and Helen were cut from different cloth. You love sports, she doesn't. Why would you grieve in the same way?

D: (matter-of-factly) Because there is a smart way and a stupid way, and Helen always manages to take the stupid way. She has always been a disappointment to me—but I can't kick her out of my house. The fool quit her job. She's middle aged, she's fat. Who would want to hire her? And, she's got that 12-year-old boy. She needs to stay home and take good care of him; if she is capable of it.

C: Why are you calling your grandson, the boy?

D: (angrily) I can call him anything I want. She is the one who named him Juan, which is a name I hate. No one in our family has been named Juan. Now, John is a good name, but Helen won't hear of it even though the dumb Mexican never even stayed with her.

C: Do you talk like that about Juan and his dad at home?

D: (sharply) No, of course not. I told you, I'm not an idiot. I don't want to hurt the kid, it's not his fault. It's all Helen's fault. She went on a trip to Mexico with some of her friends, and she comes back married to someone who just wanted to be an American citizen.

C: How long were they together?

D: (sharply) Ten years too long if you ask me.

C: Ten years sounds like a long time to stay together if you only want citizenship. Maybe, just like 50% of the marriages in the United States, they got a divorce because they weren't getting along.

D: (angrily) That's just what Connie said, but she was always making excuses for Helen, and it didn't help Helen any. (long pause) Connie thought it was sweet how Rodrigo—that was his name—would make tacos for dinner or some other Mexican something or other. What's he, a woman? Why is he cooking?

C: Lots of men like to cook.

D: (yelling) In my day, men were men, and they certainly didn't cook for their lives. If he is working hard, he doesn't have time to cook.

C: You feel very strongly about what men should and shouldn't do. You don't have to yell at me. I will listen to what you say, even if you speak quietly.

D: (firmly) If you don't try to push that feminist nonsense on me that men can cook, I won't need to yell. No one is going to make me believe something I don't want to believe.

C: (intently) I am not trying to force anything on you. No two people share all the same beliefs. (pause) But, considering your executive skills, I know you can evaluate a lot of information and come to conclusions based on it. (D nods) There are a lot of different ways to live the good life that involve different balances between work and family life. I will try to always treat your comments with respect, and I would also like to be treated with respect.

D: (irritatedly) I am proud to be an outspoken person. I tell people what I think.

C: What I think is that you feel comfortable saying very insulting things about people of Mexican heritage, about women in general, and Helen in particular.

D: (struggling to stand up) If you think I will tolerate you calling me a racist, I will just leave. I told the same to Helen, if she objected to how I referred to her husband, she could just leave.

C: It would be very lonely for you if everyone left. (D looks down, long pause) I don't ever want to insult you. I believe everyone deserves to be treated with respect. (pause) I can't be helpful to you if I am not honest. You have lost your beloved wife, and I don't want you to lose out on the love you could get from Helen and Juan. The way you talk about them could lead to you to losing out on seeing them.

D: (sarcasticly) Calling me a racist is helpful and honest feedback?

C: (intently) First of all, I didn't call you a racist. I said your comments were insulting. I try to describe things not label them. Second, people of all kinds want to be treated with respect. Just as you made it clear to me you want to be treated with respect. (long pause)

D: (irritatedly) Okay, no need to get all sensitive on me. Yes, I do call Helen names, she's my daughter for God sakes, and Juan is my grandson. I am the head of the house, I can say what I want, and I always have. So, don't describe me as a racist again.

C: Did I hurt your feelings? (D nods) Sorry, (pause) I'm not buying it. Remember, you told me you were stoic. (D laughs, long pause) However, you have made it clear that Helen isn't stoic. I'm worried, that you got those bruises because you mouthed off about somebody Helen loved, like Juan, and she beat you for it.

D: (quiet for a few minutes looking down) No, that's not what happened. You can stop worrying. It was an accident, but it didn't happen the way I told my doctor it did. I've told you before that it irritates me how much Helen eats. It was late at night, I was tired. I had told her one million times I didn't want my money spent on junk food. However, once again she'd gone to the store and bought a lot of crap to eat. I told her I'm trying to help Juan learn how to play tennis and that requires a healthy diet. (Looking down)

C: (long pause) So, she went to the store and bought more crap. What happened next?

D: (sharply) I have to say I am proud that she showed some spunk. The only thing she stands up to me about is that damn food. (looking down, rubbing his arms)

C: Could you describe exactly what happened?

D: (sharply) Of course I could, but . . . (long pause)

C: I know it is hard to talk about, but I assure you, I can take it. Tell me.

D: You don't have to sound so dramatic. It wasn't anything. She came home Sunday with a cake, cookies, you name it. I yelled at her that it was my money, and I didn't want that crap in the house. She cut herself a

big piece of cake and swung it back and forth in front of my face. I reached out and pushed the cake off her plate. She put her plate down and came toward me. I should've stood my ground, but I took a step back and fell down over a rip in the carpet.

*C:* (long pause) Sorry, I don't buy it again. (pause, while looking directly at D) A rich man like you doesn't have ripped carpet.

*D:* (long pause) Would you believe it if I said her 10-year-old, (sees look on C's face) I mean Juan, gave me a shove? (C shakes head no). Okay, so it was Helen. She pulled me toward her, and then when I started to yell, she pushed me away. She knows I work out. She figured I could take it. She didn't know she was going to bruise my arms and cause me to fall. My doctor should have minded his own business.

*C:* The doctor had to do something. There is a law against elder abuse, and his code of ethics requires him to try to protect you, just like mine does, even though a powerful man like you doesn't feel in need of any protection from others.

*D:* (very red in the face and loud) That's right. I don't need help.

*C:* I can hear that you are angry again. Does Helen have your temperament?

*D:* (mumbling) No, Helen isn't anything like me. She's not like Connie, either. She's more like my mother-in-law. She was fat, too.

*C:* Physical appearance is very important to you. I don't know if you realize it, but you haven't told me anything else about Helen besides that she was fat, stupid, and married a man who used her.

*D:* (hostile) I can see what you are doing, and I don't like you saying insulting things about my family.

*C:* You can say it, and it's not insulting, but if I say it, it is? (D nods). If Helen was under 18, and I had heard you insulting her like that, over and over, I would be mandated to report you to child protective services for verbal abuse.

*D:* (sarcastic) You have got to be kidding!

*C:* (looking steadily at D) No. Trying to teach Juan to eat lots of fruits and vegetables rather than cake and cookies, that's a parent choice respected under the law. However, if you called him "the kid" to his face over and over, never using his name, and called his father a dumb Mexican in front of him, you would be verbally abusing him under the child protective services law.

*D:* (matter-of-fact) Laws keep changing. I can't imagine what my father would have thought of that child abuse law. Verbal abuse to call a kid names? Geez, my father used to take his belt off and beat my back black and blue at the drop of a hat. If I get a B+ on a paper not an A; off came the belt. What would he think of your child abuse law? (D is looking down and shaking his head)

*C:* Yes, society has really changed its views on parenting over the years. If your father took his belt to your back today, I would be making a report, and you would probably be sent to foster care for a while.

*D:* (intently) Is that what you are going to do to me? Have me sent off somewhere out of my own house because Helen got a little rough?

*C:* No. The difference is that you are an adult. You are smart and in complete charge of your faculties. If you don't want to press charges against Helen, nothing is going to happen.

*D:* (emphatically, but squirming) Good, that's what I want. No interference.

*C:* Is seeing me interference?

*D:* (sarcasticly) Why should I come back here?

*C:* I know you like Scotch, but that isn't the best way to prevent things from getting bad again at home.

*D:* (looking down, tensely) You think Helen might do it again?

*C:* (looking directly at D) Yes. (pause) I think you and I should work on this together, so she never does.

*D:* (looking at C, tensely) I don't want to be told what to do.

*C:* We would take your smart executive skills and my smart, respectful communication skills and work it out together.

*D:* Maybe, I will come back. (pause) I will have to think about it.

## Exercises for Developing a Case Conceptualization of Dan

### Exercise 1 (4-page maximum)

GOAL: To verify that you have a clear understanding of cultural treatment.

STYLE: An integrative essay addressing Parts A–C.

NEED HELP? Review this chapter (495–501).

A.  Develop a concise overview of all the assumptions of cultural treatment (the theory's hypotheses about key dimensions in understanding how clients change; think broadly, abstractly) as an introduction to the rest of this exercise.

B.  Develop a thorough description of how each of these assumptions is used to understand a client's progression through the change process in paragraphs that provide specific examples to fully explain each assumption.

C.  Conclude your essay through describing the role of the clinician in helping the client change (consultant, doctor, educator, helper), the major approach taken to treatment, as well as common treatment techniques. Provide enough specific examples to clarify what is distinctive about this approach.

### Exercise 2 (4-page maximum)

GOAL: To aid application of cultural treatment to Dan.

STYLE: A separate sentence outline for each Section A–F.

NEED HELP? Review this chapter (495–501).

A.  Create a list of Dan's weaknesses (concerns, issues, problems, symptoms, skill deficits, treatment barriers), and indicate which Dan wants help with.

B.  Create a list of Dan's strengths (strong points, positive features, successes, skills, factors facilitating change), and indicate which Dan is aware of having.

C.  For each of the nine cultural domains of influence in the *Addressing* model discuss (a) how much power and privilege he experiences, (b) whether he experiences oppression or oppresses others

in this domain, (c) what power and prestige he draws from this domain, (d) what sources of oppression he draws from this domain, and (e) how salient this domain is in his overall view of himself at this time.

D. What are Dan's most salient domains of cultural influence at this time, and why?

E. Considering what you said in Part D, what are Dan's overall worldview and values?

F. Considering what you said in Part D, are Dan's current difficulties involving elder abuse mostly a result of internal or external influences?

## Exercise 3 (6-page maximum)

GOAL: To develop an understanding of the potential role of development in Dan's life.

STYLE: A separate sentence outline for each Section, A–J.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 4 (107–115).

A. Assess Dan's physical functioning at this time and how, and in what ways, this has influenced his performance and level of motivation within home, educational, work, social, and other environments.

B. Assess Dan's cognitive functioning at this time and how, and in what ways, this has influenced his performance and level of motivation within home, educational, work, social, and other environments.

C. Assess Dan's emotional functioning at this time and how, and in what ways, this has influenced his performance and level of motivation within home, educational, work, social, and other environments.

D. Assess Dan's interpersonal functioning at this time and how, and in what ways, this has influenced his performance and level of motivation within home, educational, work, social, and other environments.

E. Assess how adaptively Dan is functioning at this time, including consideration of self-image and self-efficacy, emotional regulation, impulse control, problem-solving skills, what he needs most to support healthy functioning at this time, and what, if any, barriers or facilitating factors to adaptive functioning exist at this time.

F. Assess the situational strengths and risks in Dan's life at this time and how much control he has in trying to enhance these strengths or mitigate these risks.

Answer the following self-reflection questions in detail, providing specific examples to support your points from your own life:

G. How much do you know about how the process of development influences physical, cognitive, and socioemotional development for older adults?

1. How well do you think your educational experiences have prepared you for recognizing the strengths and challenges of the case of Dan (be specific and concrete)?

2. How well do you think your professional experiences have prepared you for developing an effective treatment relationship with Dan (be specific and concrete)?

3. How well do you think your personal experiences have prepared you to work with Dan (be specific and concrete)?

4.  What cohort effects might influence your worldview (general view of people and society, what are important concerns facing the world, how people communicate, what is rewarded and punished in this world)?

5.  Based on what you have learned in the past, and the information in Chapter 4, describe the worldview(s) that Dan might have and how these might be similar or different from your own worldview (be specific and concrete).

H.  In what ways have older adults been most visible within the current media?

1.  Describe the stereotypes you have seen portrayed most frequently within television and movies of older adults (be specific and concrete).

2.  Describe how ageism may have operated in these stereotypes (be specific and concrete).

3.  Describe current events in which older adults have been covered within print, magazine, and/or news reporting (be specific and concrete).

4.  Describe how ageism may have operated in this coverage (be specific and concrete).

5.  Describe a recent political issue that has received significant coverage within the news media and what if any role age group biases might have played in the issue (be specific and concrete).

I.  Consider what you have learned about older adults from reading Chapter 4 that might have been unfamiliar to you before, and then discuss what might currently be your limitations in working effectively with Dan.

1.  Discuss the knowledge bases you might need to develop further to be effective with Dan, and explain why you think these will be of value.

2.  Discuss the skills you might need to develop to increase your effectiveness in working with Dan.

J.  What action steps could you take as you progress through the different stages of treatment to be effective with Dan?

1.  What might you change in how you interact within the rapport-building phase to develop a more effective working alliance with Dan (be specific and concrete)?

2.  How might you structure the treatment environment to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome with Dan (be specific and concrete)?

3.  What aspects of a theoretical orientation do you think might be most influenced by the developmental stage of the client (be specific and concrete using an orientation you are familiar with)?

4.  What might you change in the treatment-planning phase to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome with Dan (be specific and concrete)?

## Exercise 4 (3-page maximum)

GOAL: To develop an understanding of intersectionality of oppressions within Dan's Life.

STYLE: A sentence outline for each section, A–F.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 3 (67–76).

A.  Assess what sources of oppression, inequality, and stigma exist in Dan's life currently or in the past.

B. Assess what signs there are of Dan being disruptive and resistant to sources of oppression, inequality, and stigma at this time.

C. Assess what signs there are of Dan being inactive or apathetic to sources of oppression, inequality, and stigma at this time.

D. Assess what suppressed knowledge might exist within Dan's social groups for dealing with sources of oppression, inequality, and stigma and how might this be accessed.

E. Assess what coalitions might be of value for Dan to develop with others who are experiencing similarly oppressive influences.

F. Assess what social action might benefit Dan's thoughts, feelings, self-identification, meaning making, and community affiliations at this time.

## Exercise 5 (4-page maximum)

GOAL: To develop an understanding of the potential role of violence and trauma in Dan's life.

STYLE: A separate sentence outline for each Section, A–I.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 2 (45–61).

A. Assess how safe, secure, and supported Dan is within the institutions of society/justice system/social services/financial services (level of institutional support, level of institutional betrayal).

B. Assess how safe, secure, and supported Dan is within the local community/neighborhood housing/safety of streets/stores/employment (level of community support, level of community betrayal).

C. Assess how safe, secure, and supported Dan is in the work environment (level of support for success, level of violence exposure, or neglect of scaffolding for success).

D. Assess how safe, secure, and supported Dan is at home with others/caretakers/siblings/extended family (how well are developmental needs being met, how much is violence or neglect the norm).

E. Assess how safe, secure, and supported Dan is within self in terms of thoughts, feelings, fantasies, wishes, and actions (positive, hopeful, and affirming versus negative, inhibiting, and destructive).

F. Assess how safe Dan is overall (assess role in violence, types of violence exposure, frequency of exposure).

G. Assess how secure Dan is overall (assess personal employment/caretaker employment, food security, housing security, medical security).

H. Assess how developmentally supported Dan is overall (assess emotional, cognitive, and physical development).

I. Assess what is most critical to do to ensure Dan's human right to safety and peace within this case.

## Exercise 6 (2-page maximum)

GOAL: Using empirically based professional practice in the case of Dan.

STYLE: Answer Sections A–D in short answer format.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 9 (218–220).

A. Consider Dan's most prominent symptoms, and enter them into the NREPP database, and discuss what you found in terms of their utility in treating Dan at this time.

B. Consider Dan's most important cultural identifications, and enter them into the NREPP database, and discuss what you found in terms of their utility in treating Dan at this time.

C. Consider whether there are other research bases covering some of Dan's important characteristics, issues relevant to his presenting concerns, relevant to his strengths, or relevant to treatment that might be helpful to Dan, and discuss this information in terms of its utility in treating him at this time.

D. Considering 1–3, use your clinical judgment discuss how you might proceed with treatment for Dan at this time.

## Exercise 7 (2-page maximum)

GOAL: Using common factors in effective treatment in the case of Dan.

STYLE: Answer Questions A–I in short answer format.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 9 (221–226).

A. What extratherapeutic factors does Dan bring in to treatment (be specific and include both strengths and weaknesses within the framework of cultural treatment)?

B. At the end of this interview, how would you evaluate the therapeutic relationship with Dan (be specific and comprehensive and consider the role of the clinician within cultural treatment)?

C. What treatment techniques did you see used within the interview, and in what ways did you perceive it to be effective or ineffective with Dan (be specific and comprehensive and stay within the lens of cultural treatment)?

D. How much expectancy and hope did Dan express, and did you see any signs of the clinician trying to enhance these factors (be specific and comprehensive and consider the framework of cultural treatment)?

E. Dan just said, "I don't want to be told what to do." What might you say to validate his response (make sure to use the language of cultural treatment)?

F. What might you say to enhance expectancy and hope after hearing this comment (Part E) (make sure to use the language of cultural treatment)?

G. How did the clinician respond to Dan's feedback during the interview, and did you view this response as effective or ineffective (be specific and comprehensive and consider the framework of cultural treatment)?

H. Dan just said "So, don't describe me as a racist again." What might you say to validate his feedback (make sure you use the language of cultural treatment)?

I. What might you say to demonstrate you are going to respond to his feedback (Part H) (make sure to use the language of cultural treatment)?

## Exercise 8 (3-page maximum)

GOAL: Using research on what makes a master clinician for the case of Dan.

STYLE: Answer A–F in short answer format or complete sentence format.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 9 (226–228).

Assume you are the clinician in this case and just completed this interview.

A. Write a comment to solicit feedback from Dan on this session's helpfulness (remember to use the language of cultural treatment).

B. Write a comment directly asking about Dan's comfort with the therapeutic alliance (remember the role of the clinician in cultural treatment).

C. Write a comment directly asking if Dan considers treatment to be progressing well so far (remember to use the language of cultural treatment).

D. What specific issues do you think you need to measure, strategize, and review after each session is over based on Dan's comments about what he wants to be addressed in treatment (remember to use strategies from the framework of cultural treatment)?

E. What interpersonal strategies do you think would be specifically valuable to use in working with Dan based on his response to the interview (remember to use strategies that are congruent with cultural treatment)?

F. How might you respond in the next session considering Dan's negative feedback from this session that he will just leave if you are going to call him a racist (remember to use the language of cultural treatment)?

## Exercise 9 (6-page maximum)

GOAL: To help you integrate your knowledge of cultural treatment and issues relevant to development into an in-depth conceptualization of Dan (who he is and why he does what he does).

STYLE: An integrated essay consisting of a premise, supportive details, and conclusions following a carefully planned organizational style.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 1 (7–20) and Chapter 4 (107–116).

*STEP 1:* Consider what style you could use for organizing your cultural understanding of Dan that (a) would support you in providing a comprehensive and clear understanding of his social and cultural groups and (b) would support language that he might find persuasive in protecting himself from further elder abuse.

*STEP 2:* Develop your concise premise (overview, preliminary or explanatory statements, proposition, thesis statement, theory-driven introduction, hypotheses, summary, concluding causal statements) that explains Dan's overall level of functioning as an individual who is struggling to understand his changes in power as a result of developing disabilities related to his physical health. If you're having trouble with Step 2, remember it should be an integration of the key ideas of Exercises 2 and 3 that (a) provide a basis for Dan's long-term goals of being a well-functioning older adult, (b) are grounded in cultural theory and is sensitive to issues of development, (c) highlight the strengths he brings to cultural treatment whenever possible, (d) consider if Dan needs trauma-informed care, and (e) consider if Dan has an intersection of oppressions within his identity.

*STEP 3:* Develop your supporting material (detailed case analysis of strengths and weaknesses, supplying data to support an introductory premise) from a multicultural perspective that integrates an in-depth understanding of Dan, an older adult who has acquired disabilities and was recently abused by his adult daughter. If you're having trouble with Step 3, consider the information you'll need to include in order to (a) support the development of short-term goals, (b) be grounded in cultural theory and sensitive to issues of development, and (c) integrate an understanding of Dan's strengths in analyzing his worldview and values.

*STEP 4:* Develop your conclusions and broad treatment recommendations including (a) Dan's overall level of functioning, (b) anything facilitating or serving as a barrier to his developing his cultural strengths at this time, and (c) his basic needs as he evaluates his worldview and values being careful to consider what you said in Exercise 3 (be concise and specific).

### Exercise 10 (4-page maximum)

GOAL: To develop a theory-driven action plan for Dan that considers his cultural strengths and is sensitive to issues of development.

STYLE: A sentence outline consisting of long- and short-term goals.

NEED HELP? Review Chapter 1 (7–20).

*STEP 1:* Develop your treatment plan overview, being careful to consider what you said in Exercise 3 to try and prevent any negative bias to your treatment plan.

*STEP 2:* Develop long-term (major, large, ambitious, comprehensive, broad) goals that *ideally* Dan would reach by the termination of treatment and that would lead to an adaptive worldview and a healthy integration of his physical limitations into his identity. If you are having trouble with Step 2, reread your premise and support topic sentences for ideas, paying careful attention to how they could be transformed into goals that are realistic to Dan's needs and situation (use the *style* of Exercise 9).

*STEP 3:* Develop short-term (small, brief, encapsulated, specific, measurable, subsidiary) goals that Dan and you could expect to see accomplished within a few weeks to chart Dan's progress in becoming aware of how his worldviews and values, particularly around violence and power, instill hope for change, and plan time-effective treatment sessions. If you are having trouble with Step 3, reread your support paragraphs, looking for ideas to transform into goals that (a) might help Dan hypothesis test about his specific values around power and how to adjust to disabilities acquired later in life, (b) might enhance factors facilitating or decrease factors inhibiting his ability to pursue a safety plan, (c) might utilize his strengths in analyzing his life whenever possible, and (d) are individualized to him as an older adult who needs physical help and is both a victim and perpetrator of violence.

*STEP 4:* Review your treatment plan based on what you said in the treatment plan overview about whether this is a simple/straightforward case or a complex/severe case. Review your treatment plan, and consider whether it is generic or individualized to the specifics of the case of Dan. Revise the plan where necessary.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Books

Comas-Dias, L. (2012). *Multicultural care: A clinician's guide to cultural competence.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hays, P. (2013). *Connecting across cultures: The helper's toolkit.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hays, P. A., & Iwamasa, G. Y. (Eds.). (2006). *Culturally responsive cognitive-behavioral therapy.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Markus, H. R., & Conner, A. (2014). *Clash!: How to thrive in a multicultural world.* New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2013). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

### Websites

Pamela Hays, PhD. Dr. Hays maintains a website that provides easy access to her publications, her clinical practice, as well as her upcoming workshops and presentations.

www.drpamelahays.com

Jean Baker Miller Training Institute at the Wellesley Center for Women (JBMTI). JBMTI is the home of relational-cultural theory (RCT) and is dedicated to understanding people's complex interconnections.

www.jbmti.org

### Videos

Hays, P. (2012). *Culturally responsive cognitive-behavioral therapy in practice.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from www.apa.org/pubs/videos/4310900.aspx.

Lindner, E. (Producer). (2011, Oct. 31). *Linda Hartling: Relational-cultural theory* [Video file.] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ew4zBnz_GVc.

McGill Transcultural Psychiatry. (Producer). (2013). *Community mental health and cultural therapy in Jamaica* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://vimeo.com/52488730.

Wellesley Centers for Women. (Producer). (2014). *Forming healthy, thriving connections* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.wcwonline.org/Videos-by-WCW-Scholars-and-Trainers/forming-healthy-thriving-connections.