

Case Composite

Background Information

“Sasha” was a 30-year-old, pansexual, Latina, cisgender woman. She had lived at home with her parents, and she was not religious. She worked a white-collar, remote position.

Sasha was referred for an evaluation by her therapist due to severe emotional distress and trouble with daily functioning that was persisting in the face of therapy and psychiatric intervention. She struggled to maintain relationships, complete personal hygiene tasks, and function at work. Sasha’s therapist felt that depression or a bipolar disorder were likely, but was feeling very stuck in the treatment.

Since middle school, Sasha had experienced depressive episodes (characterized by weeks or months of sadness, difficulty getting out of bed, exhaustion, and isolation) and anxiety (characterized by worries related to work performance and her relationships). She also described episodes of possible mania or hypomania (characterized by a distinct 5 day period wherein she moved across the country impulsively; other smaller episodes of 1 day periods of impulsive spending, elevated mood, and feeling very energized). While she was never diagnosed formally with bipolar disorder, she was prescribed Prozac and Lamictal.

Sasha had experienced several traumas. As a child, she experienced a stranger exposing himself to her through the window of her family home while she was home alone. She experienced a sexual assault at age 15. At age 19, she was in a severe car crash with her sister, who was hospitalized for her injuries. Over the course of her life, she experienced multiple microaggressions and experiences of overt racism.

Socially, she had three long-term friends from elementary school, and made a variety of close friends in college. None of her high school friendships were lasting. Romantically, she was “always the one getting broken up with.”

A developmental history with her mother indicated no concerns in her early developmental period. Sasha had a history of migraines and fibromyalgia. Her family history included individuals with depression and bipolar disorder.

For the intake and testing session, Sasha arrived on time, but had an odor that indicated a lack of hygiene. She was tearful throughout her intake interview. She appeared anxious throughout testing and often became tearful throughout the testing, especially when discussing her history and her relationships.

Trauma Symptom Assessments

Trauma Symptom Inventory- 2nd Edition (TSI-2)

Validity Scale	T-Score	% ile
Response level	50	71
Atypical response	53	77
Self-Disturbance	63	88
Depression	57	74
Insecure Attachment	66*	92
Relational Avoidance	65*	91
Rejection Sensitivity	64	81
Impaired Self-Reference	63	87
Reduced Self-Awareness	62	85
Other-Directedness	61	85
Posttraumatic Stress	74*	>99
Anxious Arousal	69*	95
Anxiety	64	90
Hyperarousal	72*	98
Intrusive Experiences	72*	97
Defensive Avoidance	70*	98
Dissociation	73*	98
Externalization	71*	96
Anger	61	83
Sexual Disturbance	72*	97
Sexual Concerns	72*	96
Dysfunctional Sexual Behavior	69*	95
Suicidality	58	85
Ideation	62	86
Behavior	47	42
Tension Reduction Behavior	80*	>99
Somatization/Somatic Preoccupations	78*	>99
Pain	71*	>99
General	79*	>99
* = <i>Clinically Significant</i>		

Trauma Symptom Assessments

Multidimensional Inventory of Dissociation (MID)

Validity and Characterological Scales		
Scale	# of Items “Passed”	Mean Score (0-100 scale)
Defensiveness/Minimization	0 of 12	35.0
Rare Symptoms	1 of 12	0.8
Emotional Suffering	5 of 12	44.2
Attention-Seeking Behavior	1 of 7	21.4
Factitious Behavior	2 of 7	7.1
Manipulativeness	3 of 4	15.0
BPD Index	N/A	12.4
‘Ten’ Count	0 of 218 items endorsed as “10”	
Functionality and Impairment Scales		
Scale	# of Items “Passed”	Mean Score (0-100 scale)
Critical Items	4 of 10	15.0
Cognitive Distraction	4 of 12	65.0
Psychosis Screen	0 of 4	0.0
First-Rank Symptoms	5 of 8 symptoms	25.4
Criterion A: General Posttraumatic Dissociative Symptoms		
Scale	Mean Score (0-100 scale)	Clinical Significance
Memory Problems	58.3	200*
Depersonalization	24.2	125*
Derealization	32.5	200*
Flashbacks	52.5	240*
Somatoform Symptoms	20.8	250*
Trance	60.0	240*
Criterion B: Partially-Dissociated Intrusions		
Scale	Mean Score (0-100 scale)	Clinical Significance
Child Voices	8.0	89
Voices/Internal Struggle	8.0	89
Persecutory Voices	12.0	50
Speech Insertion	16.7	100*
Thought Insertion	28.0	67
‘Made’ / Intrusive Emotions	55.7	150*
‘Made’ / Intrusive Impulses	10.0	50
‘Made’ / Intrusive Actions	13.3	50
Temporary Loss of Knowledge	13.0	50

Experiences of Self-Alteration	8.3	75
Puzzlement About Oneself	43.8	167*
Criterion C: Fully-Dissociated Actions (Amnesia)		
Scale	Mean Score (0-100 scale)	Clinical Significance
Time Loss	65.0	200*
“Coming To”	20.0	150*
Fugues	30.0	250*
Being Told of Disremembered Actions	22.5	150*
Finding Objects Among Possessions	25.0	150*
Finding Evidence of One’s Recent Actions	14.0	150*

Broadband Emotional Functioning Assessments

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-3 (MMPI-3)

Validity Scales	T Score	Internalizing	T Score
CRIN	42	Suicidal/Death Ideation	44
VRIN	43	Helplessness/Hopelessness	51
TRIN	54F	Self-Doubt	72*
F	69	Inefficacy	66*
Fp	84*	Stress	76**
Fs	103**	Worry	72**
FBS	89*	Compulsivity	76**
RBS	84*	Anxiety-Related Experiences	88**
L	48	Anger Proneness	56
K	35	Behavior-Restricting Fears	91*
Higher-Order Scales	T Score	Externalizing	T Score
Emotional/Internalizing Dysfunction	81*	Family Problems	55
Thought Dysfunction	63	Juvenile Conduct Problems	48
Behavioral/Externalizing Dysfunction	48	Substance Abuse	52
Restructured Clinical Scales	T Score	Impulsivity	76**
Demoralization (RCd)	71*	Activation	80**
Somatic Complaints (RC1)	90*	Aggression	49
Low Positive Emotions (RC2)	75*	Cynicism	73*
Antisocial Behavior (RC4)	48	Interpersonal	T Score
Ideas of Persecution (RC6)	57	Self-Importance	42
Dysfunctional Negative Emotions (RC7)	85**	Dominance	58
Aberrant Experiences (RC8)	80*	Disaffiliativeness	78**
Hypomanic Activation (RC9)	72*	Social Avoidance	77**
Specific Problem Scales		Shyness	77**
Somatic/Cognitive	T Score	PSY-5 Scales	
Malaise	68*	Aggressiveness	46
Neurological Complaints	94**	Psychoticism	59
Eating Concerns	61	Disconstraint	51
Cognitive Complaints	76*	Negative Emotionality/Neuroticism	80**
		Introversion/Low Positive Emotionality	77*
* = Clinically Significant; ** = Maximum Limit			

Personality Assessments

Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-IV (MCMI-IV)

Validity	Base Rate		Profile of BR Scores
Disclosure	73		Average
Desirability	30		Low
Debasement	83		High
Clinical Personality Patterns	Base Rate	% ile	Profile of BR Scores
Schizoid	73	80	Style
Avoidant	87	92	Disorder
Melancholic	75	71	Style
Dependent	64	56	Style
Histrionic	31	23	–
Turbulent	12	11	–
Narcissistic	48	38	–
Antisocial	40	32	–
Sadistic	61	54	Style
Compulsive	67	65	Style
Negativistic	79	89	Type
Masochistic	72	74	Style
Severe Personality Pathology	Base Rate	% ile	Profile of BR Scores
Schizotypal	74	90	Style
Borderline	74	79	Style
Paranoid	64	61	Style
Clinical Syndromes	Base Rate	% ile	Profile of BR Scores
Generalized Anxiety	106	97	Prominent
Somatic Symptom	115	99	Prominent
Bipolar Spectrum	90	94	Prominent
Persistent Depression	77	78	Present
Alcohol Use	60	48	–
Drug Use	65	68	–
Post-Traumatic Stress	105	98	Prominent
Severe Clinical Syndromes	Base Rate	% ile	Profile of BR Scores
Schizophrenia Spectrum	73	92	–
Major Depression	92	84	Prominent
Delusional	64	74	–

Personality Assessments

Rorschach Inkblot Test (RIT)

Sasha completed the Rorschach Inkblot Test Association Phase. She provided 15 responses and responded to every card. At the start of the Inquiry Phase, she became uncomfortable at being shown the inkblots again and at needing to explain her responses. By the fourth response, she became tearful, physically shaky, and her words became difficult to understand.

The administration was stopped. The assessor put the images away and asked to practice deep breathing together, which lasted about 2 minutes until Sasha appeared more regulated. Sasha reported that she felt overwhelmed by one of the cards.

After asking if it was alright, she was shown the Location Sheet and asked if she recalled which card was upsetting to her. Sasha identified Card IV. The assessment was concluded at this point.

While her responses were not codable without the Inquiry Phase, some information was gleaned. Her responses involved several body parts, some of which were damaged in some way (“a uterus,” “a cervix, but it looks odd, like sort of broken up,” and “a broken leg”). Her answers often seemed to include the entire inkblot, and these responses were unusual and unlikely to fit the dimensions of the blots. As the cards became more colorful, this pattern became more notable. For example, to Card X: “It’s a mess, just too much everywhere. I guess it’s a concert, or something.” In four of the cards, she did see people or animals interacting in cooperative ways.

Neurodevelopmental Functioning Measures

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale - Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV)

Index/Subtest	Composite / Scaled Score	% ile	95% Confidence Interval	Qualitative Descriptor
Full Scale IQ (FSIQ):	115	84	111-119	High Average
General Ability Index (GAI)	123	94	117-127	Superior
Verbal Comprehension	110	75	104-115	High Average
Similarities	9	37		
Vocabulary	13	84		
Information	14	91		
Perceptual Reasoning	129	97	121-134	Superior
Block Design	15	95		
Matrix Reasoning	15	95		
Visual Puzzles	15	95		
Working Memory Index:	105	63	98-111	Average
Digit Span	10	50		
Arithmetic	12	75		
Processing Speed Index:	100	50	92-108	Average
Coding	10	50		
Symbol Search	10	50		

Neurodevelopmental Functioning Measures

Social Responsiveness Scale - Second Edition (SRS-2)

	Self		Father		Mother	
	T-Score	Range	T-Score	Range	T-Score	Range
Awareness	58	Normal	52	Normal	57	Normal
Cognition	57	Normal	44	Normal	46	Normal
Communication	65	Mild	44	Normal	48	Normal
Motivation	73	Moderate	51	Normal	64	Mild
Restricted Interests/Repetitive Behaviors	58	Normal	42	Normal	45	Normal
SRS-2 Total Score	65	Mild	45	Normal	51	Normal

Auxiliary Measures

Mood Disorder Questionnaire

Question	Response	Elaboration
Has there ever been a period of time when you were not your usual self and...		
...you felt so good or so hyper that other people thought you were not your normal self or you were so hyper that you got into trouble?	Yes	Made an unplanned move to another state over the course of a couple of days, without telling any loved ones
...you were so irritable that you shouted at people or started fights or arguments?	Yes	Experienced on a regular basis, recent example with family members when she was interrupted from a focused task
...you felt much more self-confident than usual?	Yes	Vacillates between days of extreme self-confidence and self-doubt; "there is no in-between"
...you were much more talkative or spoke faster than usual?	No	—
...thoughts raced through your head or you couldn't slow your mind?	Yes	Experiences racing thoughts on a daily basis
...you were so easily distracted by things around you that you had trouble concentrating or staying on track?	Yes	Feels easily distractible often, especially at work
...you had much more energy than usual?	Yes	Feels she can suddenly go without stopping, will start running "errands" to take advantage of the energy
...you were much more interested in sex than usual?	No	Either very interested in sex or not at all
...you did things that were unusual for you or that other people might have thought were excessive, foolish, or risky?	Yes	Similar response to question 1 - referenced big, sudden move
...spending money got you or your family into trouble?	Yes	Used to shop very often and struggles with credit card debt
Have several of these ever happened during the same period of time?	Yes	Especially overlap for feeling hyperactive and making impulsive financial decisions
How much of a problem did any of these cause you?	(0 = No problem) (1 = Minor problem) (2 = Moderate problem) (3 = Serious problem)	

Auxiliary Measures

Prodromal Questionnaire - Brief (PQB)

Within the last month and not including times that you were under the influence, have you ever...	
Do familiar surroundings sometimes seem strange, confusing, threatening, or unreal to you?	Sometimes I get very nervous, especially if I'm around people that I'm unsure about.
Have you heard unusual sounds like banging, clicking, hissing, clapping, or ringing in your ears?	I get ringing in my ears from marching band.
Do things that you see appear different from the way they usually do?	When I'm depressed, things feel duller. But other times, things seem saturated and exciting.
Have you experienced telepathy or psychic forces?	No
Have you felt that you are not in control of your thoughts?	No
Do you have difficulty getting your point across, because you ramble or go off the track a lot when you talk?	It can be hard to interact, it makes me anxious at times. I ramble and not make much sense.
Do you have strong feelings or beliefs about being unusually gifted or talented in some way?	No
Do you feel that other people are watching or talking about you?	When I can't get my point across and other people are waiting for me to finish my thought.
Do you sometimes get strange feelings on or just beneath your skin, like bugs crawling?	No
Do you sometimes feel suddenly distracted by distant sounds that you are not normally aware of?	I just feel easily distracted in general, a lot of things can make me lose focus.
Have you had the sense that some person or force is around you, although you couldn't see anyone?	No
Do you worry at times that something may be wrong with your mind?	<i>Becomes tearful, nods.</i> It feels like something has been wrong for a while.
Have you ever felt that you don't exist, that world does not exist, or that you are dead?	No
Have you been confused at times whether something you experienced was real or imaginary?	No
Do you hold beliefs that other people would find bizarre?	No
Do you feel that parts of your body have changed in some way, or that parts of your body are working differently?	No
Are your thoughts so strong that you can almost hear them?	No
Do you find yourself feeling mistrustful or suspicious of other people?	Sometimes, but it feels pretty natural, like a protective measure.
Have you seen unusual things like flashes, flames, blinding light, or geometric figures?	No
Have you seen things that other people don't seem to see?	No
Do people sometimes find it hard to understand what you are saying?	I'll go on talking about stuff and at some point they just stop being able to follow.

Diagnosing

(F31.81) - Bipolar II Disorder

(F43.10) - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder with dissociative symptoms

Recommendation to assess for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder after she receives appropriate treatment, including medication, for the above diagnoses.