

# Schizophrenia in adolescence

## Situation for trainee/student

You work in the outpatient clinic of child- and-adolescence psychiatry. Today you see Michelle Miller, 17 years, and her mother, who accompanies her. It is the first time you see the patient and her mother. Please take the history and try to develop a plan for the procedure.

You'll have 8 minutes time for the consultation! Good luck!

## Patient- role child:

Your name is Michelle Miller. You are 17 years old. Your mother is accompanying you to the hospital. It is the first time you are in a hospital. Your mother has made a date in the clinic and has pushed you to come here. You don't want to see a doctor.

## History

- For some weeks you haven't met your friends anymore.
- You have barricaded your room at home.
- You always listen to loud music and you sometimes react aggressively when your mother wants to talk to you.
- Most of the time you sit in your room on your own, this is the only place where you feel safe and where you can relax.
- At night you can't sleep therefore you sleep a lot during the day.
- You can not explain properly what you are thinking about. Your thoughts are shifting away.
- You often have the feeling you are not 'really in your body'.
- Sometimes you have the feeling people on the street can read your thoughts. Sometimes you have the feeling of being chased.
- Sometimes you hear voices that comment your actions, the voices say that many things you are doing are wrong. Once the voices told you, that your life

is spoiled- it'll be best to jump out of the window. But you could withstand jumping. (This will only be told, if the doctor asks you about voices)

- You are getting more and more scared. You don't feel safe in the flat, this is annoying for you. You only feel safe in your room.
- You have a sister, Denise, she is 14. You like her, but you don't have a close relationship with her.
- You are in your final year at school. Most of the time you still manage to go to school, because your mother takes you there nearly every morning. But in school you feel being chased, too. You have withdrawn from your two close friends. If the teacher addresses you, you mostly don't know what is going on.
- You are silent and withdrawn, you hardly talk at all.
- You have been smoking Cannabis for two years. But you'll only tell the doctor if he/she is in good contact with you and asks you about this.

In the consultation:

- You are tense. Your sight is drifting around the room, you don't have any eye-contact with the doctor, your gaze seems 'lost'. You are very withdrawn and silent. From time to time you are whispering something that no one can understand.
- If your mother talks to you, you'll sometimes react but most of the time you'll stay absent.
- If the doctor really tries to get into contact with you, you'll manage to concentrate on the conversation and you'll keep eye-contact. You'll then tell your story very hesitatingly and slowly.

### **Role of mother**

- You are Susanne Miller, 48 years. You are a lawyer. You are working a lot as your husband has left you 12 years ago and you are responsible for the family income. You have 2 children Michelle, 17, and Denise, 14. The father has no contact to the children.
- You are a very busy and successful lawyer and you have no time. Today you are coming to the psychiatric outpatient clinic with your daughter Michelle. You are under time pressure as you have to get to your practice, too.

- The reason for the visit is, that a teacher has called you and told you he is worried about Michelle's behaviour. Her school-achievement has gone down a lot and that she is acting very strange at school. She seems to be absent most of the time.
- You also realized that your daughter is withdrawn, but you have the feeling it is quite natural for an adolescence child to withdraw and to spend a lot of time in the own room. You were also not fond of seeing your parents at that age.
- At school Michelle's working attitude has decreased enormously and the teachers are not sure if she'll pass the final exams.
- You have another daughter, Denise, 14. She is doing fine.
- The children are on their own most of the time as you are working a lot. You often do not know what is going on at home. When you ask Denise, she says, that Michelle is most of the time in her room listening to loud music.
- You'll try to have dinner together every evening, but often you don't manage to be in time. You sometimes have a bad conscious about being absent from home so often.
- You are unconsciously denying the severity of the situation and you have no time for a 'problematic' child especially as you never had any problems with Michelle.

Character:

- You are a person that is very tough, straight forward, quite demanding. You are used to act as a 'leader'. You'll take care of the situation. You are going to tell the history, even if the doctor is trying to interfere. You are the one who is 'in charge'. You stay friendly, but you make sure that you are 'the boss'. E.g. 'I know this situation, Michelle is sometimes a little shy, she doesn't get into contact with strangers easily. So, to make it easier I'll tell you what's going on....'
- If the doctor wants to keep the child in hospital, you'll interfere: " I didn't expect that,... See, it is quite normal that children behave a little different in puberty... What do other think, if my child is in psychiatry.... How can I explain this.... There is no need to keep her here....Our family has always been normal..."
- If doctor makes clear, that this behavior is definitely not normal and that the girl needs professional help you'll finally accept a hospitalization/ admittance.

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**Objectives:**

**The student should**

- Get into contact and try to take a history from a psychotic adolescence
- Be able to communicate with two persons at the same time
- Communicate with a demanding relative, who has no insight into severity of situation
- Signalize understanding for the difficulty of the situation
- Convince mother and insist that a hospitalization is inevitable (danger for patient, others) rather than binging in compulsory hospitalization.

in Feedback:

- reflection about how to deal with a demanding mother
- reflection about different behavior in schizophrenia (people can be very agitated or very withdrawn)
- reflection about compulsory hospitalization (might be different in different countries)