

Multidimensional Assessment: A Deeper Analysis with Clients

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The multidimensional assessment is conducted on Micayla Elisabeth Brodish. She is 23 years old and originally from Telford, Pennsylvania. She is a Caucasian young woman and currently in graduate school studying Social Work. The following reflects the person-in-environment, biopsychosocial spiritual approach to Micayla's development.

#### **Early Childhood**

##### **Biological**

During early childhood, the child develops significantly biologically. Some of the issues, changes, and challenges during this time include rapid physical growth, proper nutrition, and the development of gross and fine motor skills. Consequently, according to the textbook, "On average the human grows 2.5 inches and gains 5-7 pounds in early childhood" (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams 2018, 180).

For Micayla, during early childhood she was petite, yet growing; she was described as long and lean by her mother. When Micayla was two and a half years old, she learned how to put on her own sock and jacket. However, she needed some assistance with putting on her shirt, pants, and shoes. The first time Micayla slept in a bed overnight was shortly after her second birthday. Micayla's gross motor skills were also developing well during this stage as she jumped for the first time two months after her second birthday and began galloping and hopping one month later.

When she was three years old, Micayla weighed 26 pounds (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) and was 34 inches long (50<sup>th</sup> percentile). When Micayla was three was also when she took swimming lessons for the first time. Through the lessons, Micayla learned how to blow bubbles in the water, as well as submerge completely, move arms in stroke-like patterns, jump into chin-deep water (assisted),

as well as, float face down (assisted), float on back (assisted), and jump into three foot deep water (assisted).

When Micayla was four years old, she weighed 36 pounds (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) and was 41 inches long (75<sup>th</sup> percentile). At four years old is also when Micayla's gross motor skills continued to develop as she began playing soccer for a community league team during the summers. When she was five years old, Micayla was 38.3 pounds (40<sup>th</sup> percentile) and was 43 ½ inches long (75<sup>th</sup> percentile). During her fifth year, Micayla learned how to ride a bike by herself.

### **Psychological**

During this stage, cognitive development and information processing is a time of “fanciful, creative, and imaginative thought” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 184). Additionally, communication and attitude and emotional regulation begins to be developed as well.

According to Micayla's mom, her temperament was quite easy going. She also had a big imagination and was highly creative. She would come up with stories to tell her parents during breakfast, but more impressively, she could remember a story after it had been read to her just a few times. At two and a half years old in church Sunday School, Micayla learned how to sing her first song which was “Jesus loves me.” A few months before her third birthday, Micayla regularly would go to the bathroom on the toilet and no longer wore diapers. In preschool, Micayla learned better how to write her name, and this is when she stopped sucking her thumb.

However, cognitively, Micayla did not align with where she should have been; thus, even after doing a pre-school program and a year of kindergarten, Micayla's parents were advised to hold Micayla back a year from entering first grade and to do another year of kindergarten. This decision was based on Micayla's kindergarten teacher who believed Micayla would have

struggled academically if she did not have more time for her cognitive skills to develop. There were not many details regarding specific cognitive skills which were lacking, but this was the overall reasoning behind the decision.

### **Social**

During early childhood, the sociability preschoolers develops with new experiences and age. According to the text, “Children aged 2 and 3 still stay physically close to adults and seek physical affection. Older preschoolers tend to seek the attention and approval of their peers through antics and playful gestures” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 200).

Socially, Micayla could be shy at first in new situations, but would easily warm up to people. On her first day of preschool she made a lot of friends and was excited to tell her parents about all her new friends. As the text states, “children’s social skills [are] enhanced by their participation in preschool” as Micayla’s experience displayed this (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 200).

Correspondingly, Micayla was a few months shy of two years old when her sister was born. According to her mom, she did not show sign of jealousy but was excited about having a sister. Additionally, Micayla was four years old when one of her brothers was born and similarly, was excited to have a baby brother.

### **Spiritual**

Micayla was born into a home founded in the beliefs of Christianity; thus, in early childhood she also believed there was a connection with a ‘higher power’. She regularly attended church on Sunday mornings and in addition to this, she also learned about God’s creation in preschool as it was based out of a church.

**Strengths or Protective Factors**

A social system that has a key influence during early childhood are the parents. As the text mentions, “parenting styles is a central focus of early childhood intervention” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 210). Parents who choose to discipline their children with logical and immediate consequences “help children develop the ability to think logically about actions and to make choices based on likely outcomes” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 212).

For Micayla, her parents reared on the parenting style of authoritative which by the text’s description is, “Nurturing, affectionate, sets boundaries, disciplines through guidance, [and has] open communication” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 200). Micayla’s parents resembled this through the logical consequences which followed her disobedience. For example, when Micayla was five years old, she lied about finishing her dinner one night, when, she threw the rest of it in the trash when her parents had left the room. Micayla’s parents let her leave the dinner table when they arrived back to the kitchen, only to call her back when they discovered the remnants in the trashcan. Her parents explained to her why it is not good to lie and how powerful words are and then put a tiny bit of hot sauce on her tongue for 30 seconds to further prove she needs to use her tongue wisely. All consequences always came with a conversation to help Micayla understand why what she did was wrong which developed Micayla, even through her disobedience.

**Weaknesses or Risk Factors**

A social system which can be a weakness or risk factor during this stage is also the parenting styles. While authoritative parenting is beneficial to the development of a child, authoritarian and/or permissive parenting styles can be harmful to the development of the child. While Micayla’s parents were primarily authoritative in their parenting styles, there were

moments when they became authoritarian as well. Authoritarian parenting can result in the child feeling guilt and shame as well as rejected, and unloved which can push the child away or constantly seek for the parent's affirmation their entire life.

### **Diversity**

Diversity of various races mixed throughout the surrounding neighborhood and preschool of a child is helpful as the child will see the intermingling of races is natural. Micayla grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia, however, it was a predominantly Caucasian middle-class community. While there was some diversity, it was limited. If there was more diversity, Micayla would have been able to grow up with a better sense of the uniqueness of individuals from around the world.

### **Overall Assessment**

Overall, Micayla's functioning was sufficient during early childhood. Her biological as well as her social growth and development were steady. While Micayla did struggle with cognitive development in kindergarten, the extra year in kindergarten made a significant difference and in turn resulted in her academic success in the future. Her temperament displayed her emotional regulation was sufficient and developing well.

## **Middle Childhood**

### **Biological**

The key biological and developmental changes in middle childhood consist of a "slow but consistent growth pattern" (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 238). Correspondingly, girls "retain the fat tissue longer, become rounder, [and] softer" (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 238). During this stage, gross motor skills are emphasized, however, their attention spans

become longer, and they have “better cognitive abilities” as well (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 239).

When Micayla was six years old she was 44.3 pounds (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) and 46 ½ inches long (75<sup>th</sup> percentile). She continued to grow in both height and weight steadily during middle childhood. Her motor skills also developed as she continued to play soccer for the community league. She always showed interest in sports activities as she would play four-square, kickball, basketball, and even football during recess.

### **Psychological**

Key psychological developmental changes that are typical during middle childhood include conservation, concrete thinking, as well as the growth of emotional intelligence and interpersonal awareness (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 242-252). Micayla developed steadily cognitively throughout middle childhood. She performed sufficiently in school and eventually was placed on a reading team to compete against other schools based on books they were assigned to read.

Correspondingly, Micayla grew in emotional intelligence as well as interpersonal awareness as she developed closer relationships with friends in school. Throughout elementary school, Micayla had a group of girl friends she would spend time with and through these friendships, Micayla further developed the capabilities to tell when someone was upset and needed someone to talk to. Micayla was often the person in the middle who would restore friendships amidst people.

**Social**

During middle childhood, group formation takes place; groups usually form their own set of rules and roles within itself. Peer relationships during middle childhood tell a great deal of information regarding mental health later in life. According to studies stated in the text, “difficulties in social adjustment are likely to lead to poor mental health” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 262).

Micayla belonged to two different groups in her middle childhood; she belonged to a group of girlfriends, and she also belonged to the guys she would play sports with at recess. Often times Micayla would leave her girlfriends in order to go and play sports during recess, and in order to “fit” the group of boys, Micayla recalled she would spit on the ground as the boys did when they would play sports. She adapted between her two roles as she would have sleepovers with the girls and would do “girly things,” yet also act as “one of the boys” when she was with that group.

**Spiritual**

According to Kohlberg’s stages of moral reasoning, Micayla was still within the first stage or pre-conventional reasoning, punishment and obedience as well as self-interest. Due to the foundation of Christian beliefs and authoritative parenting styles, Micayla would often find herself being obedient and/or disobedient based on the morals established by her parents through what the Bible teaches. Yet, her decisions were still based on the premise of self-interest as she would decide what to do by ruling out the costs and benefits of her behavior. She would not simply do things because of her own faith with God, but due to the punishment and obedience perspective of morals.

**Strengths or Protective Factors**

As a child transitions to the full-day education system, the school system plays a big role in the development of a child in middle childhood. As the text mentions, “schools go far beyond academic basics. Children must learn to conform to the rules set forth in their school, respond to teacher demands, interact successfully with age-mates, and manage their day-to-day responsibilities” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 267-268).

Micayla was excited about school as it gave her the opportunity to make new friends, as well as learn. This environment allowed Micayla to grow socially, psychologically, and biologically.

**Weaknesses or Risk Factors**

Family is still a social system which influences a child’s development greatly in middle childhood. While Micayla remained close with her family members, her family grew significantly as by the time she was six and a half years old, she had four younger siblings, two of which were newborn twins. Her parents were busy and Micayla often would focus on helping her mom at home when she could. Micayla began changing diapers and helping her mom around the house when she was six and a half years old. While it taught Micayla great responsibility, she was still a child and helping her mom around the house with her siblings at such a young age, she often felt neglected by her parents as they were busy with her siblings.

**Diversity**

Like early childhood, introduction to diversity of varying races and ethnicities provides a child to learn while he/she is young the beauty of uniqueness and diversity. Micayla did not grow up in a diverse community which stalled her discovery and experiences of diversity.

**Overall Assessment**

Micayla's overall development during middle childhood was sufficient as her gross motor skills continued to develop as well as her social, and psychological development had a steady growth through the experiences of the school system.

**Adolescence****Biological**

The key biological development issues, changes, and challenges that are typical during these years of adolescence are puberty, menstruation (for girls), acne, and sleep (or lack thereof). For Micayla, compared to the rest of her friends, she reached the stage of puberty late. These changes in her body also came with natural hormone changes as well as menstruation. Micayla, while she had been growing pubic hair for about a year prior, it was not until just before her fourteenth birthday she received her period for the first time. Micayla's motor skills continued to develop and become more precise as she joined a travel soccer team and ran track and field throughout middle school and high school.

**Psychological**

Micayla was succeeding in academics very well, and at the end of sixth grade (12 years old), it was decided Micayla needed a more challenging math environment so she skipped seventh grade math and in seventh grade took eighth grade math instead. Micayla continued to maintain a year ahead in math up to graduation of high school. If Micayla is being honest with herself, she did not try hard in academics throughout middle school and high school. It was not until later on in her academic journey (the end of her freshman year of college) that Micayla realized she can easily get all A's instead of all B's if she tried her best. Nonetheless, Micayla did

do the work required of her during this stage and still succeeded with mostly B grades and some A's.

As mentioned above, Micayla reached puberty late. So, by the time Micayla had reached puberty, most her friends' bodies were already very developed; this made Micayla feel insecure about her own body and thus, began self-image issues. Likewise, acne became a huge area for self-image issues as individuals at school would make comments about her acne. Self-esteem issues arose as her self-image was poor and social relationships with her friends grew tense in seventh grade. Micayla had psychological stress due to the tensions as her closest friends began bullying her each day at school. Micayla would come home from school and cry and tell her mother she did not understand why they were bullying her. This added stress lowered Micayla's self-esteem and issues of identity grew. Micayla thus, as Erikson mentions had identity confusion beginning in seventh grade and most of her high school career leading into college. This was in response to placing her identity in her relationships with other people; when her relationships were not going well or broke, she would feel as if she were losing herself and often felt lost.

Micayla displayed formal operational thought during adolescence. Due to Micayla's look of personal identity, she placed high value in what other people thought about her. This often led Micayla to have conversations with other people in her head, which would never actually occur, but she would play the entire scene in her mind. Often this was due out of her own insecurity and was more negative than positive, but nonetheless, displays formal operational thinking.

### **Social**

As previously stated, Micayla experienced bullying during her seventh-grade year. This created a lot of doubt in Micayla as to her own self-worth. However, peer pressure was also a huge influence in her social development. After the bullying from her girlfriends, Micayla no

longer trusted girl friendships and instead turned to boys for affirmation. Due to the fact Micayla placed her identity in her relationships, she found herself falling into bad peer pressure from boys because she did not want to be rejected. This led to Micayla doing things she was not proud of and mixing with bad crowds to get some type of affirmation for her self-worth. Micayla hopped from “serious” relationship to “serious” relationship with guys all throughout high school and never developed close friendships with girls. By the end of her senior year of high school, almost 19 at the time, the only relationships that would be difficult for Micayla to say goodbye to for college were her relationships within her family. She had not developed any close friendships with people from school.

### **Spiritual**

Micayla’s values and morals during this time reflected that of a mixture of the world and the church. She knew she needed community as humans we are all made for community. However, she had been deeply hurt by the “Christian” girlfriends who bullied her in seventh grade so her confidence in girls her age was lacking. Thus, Micayla looked to guidance from older spiritual mentors who encouraged her to believe she did have worth, even if she did not feel like she did. They challenged her to serve God through mission’s trips and becoming involved with the younger girls in youth group. Spiritually while Micayla did stay rooted in her beliefs, she also made a lot of compromises in order to vie for affirmation.

### **Strengths or Protective Factors**

A social system that has a key influence during this period of life was the church. While Micayla did not find support in friends, she did find support within the church. The church helped her develop a general sense of identity and role development as she allowed Christian women older than herself to pour into her and mentor her. This helped Micayla not feel so alone

as well as eventually find her own role in mentoring younger girls within the church. This strength and protective factor allowed Micayla to grow developmentally in the areas of spiritually, as well as socially and psychologically as she allowed older and wiser women to guide and mentor her.

### **Weaknesses or Risk Factors**

The social system that has a key influence during this period of life are peers and with it come many potential risks to development. In general, words are immensely powerful, but the words of friends and peers greatly influence this period of life on a person. This is the stage, as Erikson notes, to form identity or identity confusion. However, due to the intertwined psychological and social dependency on peers during this time, if a person does not have good social relationships, or if he/she allows their identity to be formed due to his/her relationships, identity confusion is a big risk factor. For Micayla, she unfortunately allowed her relationships with friends to define her identity which led to identity confusion for most of her adolescence.

### **Diversity**

It was in middle school and high school when the diversity of races was more so introduced to Micayla. This led Micayla to be romantically attracted to guys of differing races and ethnicities from her as she was interested in the differences between the other person and herself. However, her curiosity led her to choosing into some relationships with guys who did more harm than good as she was not as focused on the character of the person as she should have been.

### **Overall Assessment**

Micayla's overall functioning during this stage was stagnant. While she did grow developmentally, she faced a lot of setbacks developmentally due to peer pressure, low self-

esteem, and self-worth, as well as bullying. She allowed other people (bad influences) to speak into her life and make decisions for her instead of forming her identity herself. However, when it came to protective factors, it was her church and the women mentoring her which allowed her to grow spiritually, socially, and psychologically amid the challenges and issues. Correspondingly, Micayla/s academics and cognitive growth was sufficient as she skipped a grade of math.

### **Emerging and Young Adulthood**

1. Emerging Adulthood 18-25: Increasing independence; exploration of life possibilities; increased self-responsibility; a feeling of being between adolescence and adulthood.

### **Biological**

The key biological development changes and/or challenges that are typical during emerging and young adulthood consist of a “peak of physical development, loss of muscle and increase in fat weight, and development of health patterns” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 349). Micayla participated in track and field all through high school and was recruited to run at Nyack College. She ran on the track team all four years and reached her peak of physical development as her last two years on the team were filled with various injuries. However, it was not until after Micayla graduated with her bachelor’s degree and decided to take a break from working out (running) that she experienced the increase in fat weight. As she went to being a collegiate athlete and staying fit with healthy patterns to not working out at all, she developed unhealthy patterns which caused her to also see her shift in an increase in fat weight. She could tell her metabolism was slowing down with the weight gain as well. Within the course of three months Micayla gained a total of ten pounds. She is currently establishing healthier patterns with nutrition and exercise to have a healthier future.

**Psychological**

Some of the key psychological developmental changes in this stage include formal operational thought, wisdom, as well as intimacy, love, and/or isolation, and loneliness. Major life decisions are also a big step psychologically in this stage. As the text states, “significant life roles become established. Young people move from a preoccupation with the self to a focus on intimacy that often leads to marriage, children, and the need to establish a stable career path” (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 349).

For Micayla, she has seen growth in this stage as she has reflected on her past romantic relationships and evaluating why they did not work. She then, has analyzed herself and seen how she can grow. As she is in this stage currently, she has developed more confidence in herself with her identity and self-worth. She has grown through further emotional regulation by not allowing her current emotions to put a strain on her productivity for the day. She has also opened herself up to the pain of the past to psychologically heal from the pain so she can be emotionally healthy. She has also grown psychologically through independent decision-making and fewer reliance on other’s opinions for her.

**Social**

The social development in young and emerging adulthood typically includes marriage, as well as a work life (Ashford, LeCroy, Williams, 2018, 349). Correspondingly, Micayla is still within the phase of selecting a partner as she is still single and not married. However, she is within the workforce and has managed to establish healthy and beneficial friendships with her coworkers. She has also opened herself up to having deep and meaningful friendships with females again as she has healed from her past hurts. At times, it is easier for Micayla to default

into self-isolation and to retreat from these friendships as she is still adjusting to having close female friends; however, she has noticed the pattern and is in pursuit of stopping this bad habit.

### **Spiritual**

Micayla's spiritual development during emerging and young adulthood has grown substantially as she has used her morals, beliefs, and values in Christianity and the Bible to reshape her identity and her self-worth. It is within her spirituality she has found confidence in herself and a deeper wisdom to cope with life's circumstances.

### **Strengths or Protective Factors**

The social system which has heavily influenced Micayla and protected her during this life stage is the church and/or her relationship with God. Her morals, beliefs, and the community of believers around her are what have challenged her growth psychologically and socially. It was through the guidance and wisdom of other godly women who have helped protect Micayla from future bad choices in romantic relationships as well as health patterns and psychological damage.

### **Weaknesses or Risk Factors**

A risk factor during this time is the dynamic between intimacy and loneliness during emerging and young adulthood and the constant pressure from culture to be in a relationship. As a single young woman, the pressure to be in a relationship, get married, and have kids, can be overwhelming. Likewise, the pressure from current culture for young women to be in a serious, committed relationship can result in loneliness. This has been a weakness for Micayla during this stage, however, she is in the process of finding balance between being okay with being single as this does not mean she is lonely as she does have friends.

### **Diversity**

While in Rockland county there is diversity, New York City is far more diverse. As Micayla has been studying for her master's in social work at the Nyack College Manhattan campus, she has been surrounded by diversity continuously. She often finds herself to be one of the only, if not the only Caucasian in the room which is far different than her community growing up. However, this diversity has been beneficial to her as she has been able to appreciate the beauty of uniqueness and focus on learning more and appreciating the cultures of other people around the world.

### **Overall Assessment**

Micayla's functioning has been sufficient during emerging and young adulthood. While she has seen a setback in overall physical health and well-being, she is taking steps to improve her habits and take better care of herself physically. Correspondingly, Micayla's psychological growth has increased exponentially as she has a great value of self-worth and identity. Micayla is still growing socially as she is taking steps toward healthier relationships and friendships.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Summary of the Assessment**

Multilevel assessment is essential in understanding a client. This kind of assessment allows a social worker to delve deeper into the life stages of a client and analyze the biopsychosocial-spiritual areas of an individual. As seen through the assessment of Micayla, it is evident situations in her childhood affected her relationships later in life. The assessment gives opportunities to see patterns of behavior for a client as well as correlations between life events and current behaviors. While a multilevel assessment can be exceedingly long with details, it clarifies the ins and outs of a client and why he/she may behave the way he/she does.

### **Theories and Concepts Most Appealing**

The person-in-environment and the biopsychosocial-spiritual analysis are appealing considering the emphasis on wholistic treatment of a client. As a social worker it is important to look at multiple dimensions of a client as staying within one dimension will not provide sufficient help for the client. Wholistic treatment of a client sets the individual up for greater overall success and retainment of resources.

### **Overall Class**

This class has expanded my world view by pushing me to think about life stages more deeply; I had never thought about each stage with such detail. Correspondingly, hearing from other students and their experiences, it has been helpful to move beyond my own understanding of each of these life stages and hear from other individual's perspectives and experiences. Likewise, each case study which was analyzed, allowed for greater development of looking into social class, racial, moral differences and the effects it has in specific circumstances with clients.

References

Ashford, J. B., LeCroy, C. W., & Williams, L. (2018). *Human behavior in the social environment: A multidimensional perspective*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.