

Case Conceptualization and Intervention Development (CCID)

Wilmshurst (2015), Greene (2016)

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Problem identification (clarification of problem and diagnosis or classification)

On January 17th, 2014, Chanel Miller was sexually assaulted by a Stanford University student at a party held by one of the fraternities. The aftermath of this assault consists of various consequences presenting themselves in the areas of her self identity, personal relationships, hygiene practices and meeting of basic needs, emotional and mental states, and the view in which she sees the world. As diagnosing is beyond the scope of my position and expertise, I will address the problem identifications without providing a specific diagnosis but will discuss the links between her trauma and the interactions/dynamics that are present in Chanel due to the trauma of this incident.

The trial/legal system is one of the *external* factors affecting her in the aftermath of the assault, but the trauma she experienced in addition to navigating the legal system also led to a long and heavily emotional journey around a range of *internal* factors that presented themselves in many ways. Chanel experiences episodes of depression where she isolates herself to her bedroom or engages in activities and routines that allow her to avoid her emotions about the assault. She's locked herself in bathrooms and cried for hours on end, she was unable to brush her teeth or take a shower, struggled to sleep and refused to eat. Her post-traumatic stress symptoms presented in ways such as outbursts of anger, rage, confrontations with men who cat-call her or behave in masochistic and predatory behaviors, and emotional outbursts with

her loved ones. She battles with her identity, interpersonal relationships, depressive episodes, anxiety, isolation, anger and fear.

Problem understanding (ecological factors that precipitate and maintain the problem)

Chanel is a 23 year old Chinese-American female (who was 22 at the time of the assault) with a bachelors degree in literature from University of California Santa Barbara.

She was born in Palo Alto, California to a Chinese mother and an American father. She is the eldest daughter and sister to one other sibling (Tiffany). She has a long-term boyfriend (Lucas) and strong relationships with her close friends. Her family plays an important part in her life and she maintains strong relationships with her grandparents as well. Chanel internalizes much of the trauma she goes through as she does not want to burden her loved ones with what she is going through. As a result of this internalization, she decides to find communities in other areas of her life as well. These communities or groups consist of: enrolling in a photography/paper printing course at the Rhode Island School of Design, a comedy group, and an art therapy group. Her ability to seek out and be part of new communities may speak to the value she places on people, partnerships and community (this is a strengths based trait that could be used to assist in her healing process).

The legal system is another factor that maintains the problem within Chanel's ecological being. The trial and her court case is an unforgiving and lengthy process in which Chanel holds a lot of resentment for. This also limits her ability in being able to fully heal. Within this system, Chanel has support from a small group of people (Alaleh, her attorney and Detective Kim) who play important roles for her both logistically and legally, but interpersonally as well. In addition to the legal system, Stanford University as an institution had a major affect on

Chanel's ability to heal properly. Stanford's response to her assault was unsupportive and cold. As Chanel strongly identifies with Stanford and her sense of identity and disrupted her understanding of "home" - it has caused her to become distrustful of her community and contributed to trauma following the incident. It also facilitates a link to another factor involved in Chanel's ecological system: the way that victims of assault are treated and how society perpetuates a system that allows men to get away with misogynistic and sexually harmful behaviors. As Chanel moves through life following the assault, she recognizes that her interactions with men more often. She recognizes the entitlement men feel they have when they interact with women, and what the expectations of women are in that interaction (whether they want to engage or not).

Lagging Skills (that need to be prioritized)- in your own words or using Greene samples.

1. **Difficult managing emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally:** The feelings of intense sadness and deep anger worked against Chanel in providing clarity for her emotions. She engaged in depressive thoughts and negative self-talk, crying, and outbursts of anger toward others. They make sense to her specifically, but the behaviors are irrational in that they are projected toward the people who love her as well as open her up to some situations that may be harmful. Whether she understands the irrationality or not does not matter here, as her projections and behavior make her feel good in the moment and meet an *internal need in which only she can feed*.
2. **Difficult expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts in words:** this is a lagging skill that presents itself throughout her healing process. Chanel disassociates from others and socially isolates in order to keep herself as a separate entity from Emily Doe. "When my

therapist asked me if I'd noticed the assault affecting other parts of my life, I instinctively shook my head. The whole point is that it's entirely separate from my life, I've kept it that way for a reason" (Miller, 2019). She avoids addressing how the incident affects her, she cries in the bathroom for hours and away from others, she tries to play down how much she is struggling, and does not use the support from her community to help her heal, which is something she may have been inclined to do prior to the incident if ever she was struggling.

What is working for this individual? Strengths, Protective Factors

Chanel seems to have many strengths that can serve as protective factors for her. One of these is her understanding of how important community is. She was able to take initiative in seeking out and becoming involved in two new communities in the aftermath of the assault, one being the Rhode Island School of Design and again when she becomes part of the comedy club. She is able to easily involve herself with people and is likeable. Her friendships have a long history, and she is good at maintaining positive and strong relationships whether they are close in proximity to her or in other locations.

Chanel's family unit is a major protective factor for her. Coming from a two-parent household with two incomes, she was raised in a middle class family who values education and embodies the importance of what family means. Her protective nature comes from the desire to help others and the fact that she genuinely cares about the people she loves. She has a strong and stable romantic relationship with Lucas, even though they live across the country from each other. Her ability to be grateful for how supportive her people are and awareness of the privilege in that is another trait Chanel possesses that can be of huge benefit to her healing process.

Formulation of the intervention plan

a. What information are you using to determine which intervention is important (to overcome client struggles and meet their goals)?

It would be helpful to discuss with Chanel what areas she would like to work to overcome first, if possible. As she is not a client of ours and we are not able to have personal discussion with her, I think a good place to start would be some of the baseline issues such as taking care of her hygiene and basic needs and then move on to the issues that affect her close and interpersonal relationships with her family and friends. I would then want to help support her by addressing the area of her own emotional state/regulation. I believe by helping her with her basic needs, working on the problem areas within her personal relationships and helping to overcome her emotions and the regulation of her emotions - these will all provide her with tools and actions that will facilitate as a link to healing her identity and the way she feels and behaves within the aspects of her ecological framework.

b. What interventions might work?

Trauma-Focused Therapy from the Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in

Schools (CBITS): In CBITS, one of the therapeutic elements is through the form of art, written and verbal telling of a traumatic incident. This is due to the exposure element of this process.

When she reviews transcripts or has to sit down to write an impact statement, it is evident how strong the feelings of anger or other emotional responses arise in her. Some trauma-focused therapy could be used a cognitive behavioral intervention is allowing her to be exposed to these things in order for her to work through them in a therapeutic way.

***To note, Chanel expressed how helpful it was to go through the process of writing her memoir after the trial ended. This can support the theory of trauma-focused therapy being a good intervention to use.*

Solution- Focused Therapy: Solution-focused therapy can be incorporated into her healing journey. Finding exceptions is a major component to this type of therapy and Chanel seems to display quite a few exceptions in relation to her depression or anxieties. It is evident that she feels better when she leans into her vulnerability and allows people to support her, which disrupts the behavior of socially withdrawing from others. This is shown when she talks to her parents and can feel their love and support. It is noted that she feels better after she tells her employer about her situation, as her manager shows genuine concern and empathy for Chanel when hearing about it. In therapy, she realizes her role in perpetuating negative self talk when focusing on comments from people online (who she does not know), rather than focusing on how people react to the news in real life. This realization was transformational for her. If Chanel is able to notice how she feels when she lets her guard down to allow others to support her, she might be more deliberate about continuing to do so.

Mindfulness: As Chanel has been neglecting some of her basic needs and struggles with sleeping through the night and sleeping alone, mindfulness might be a good practice for Chanel. Implementing some mindfulness activities into her day might help to ground her and bring her back to present... which will hopefully assist with her emotional regulation and slow disrupt some of the sleep patterns and hygiene habits she has fallen into in the aftermath of the incident.

Art Therapy: As Chanel has a strong creative ability in both writing and art, so this could be a great way to express herself in a way that facilitates her healing. She does intertwine her

creative skills as she is going through the court case, and I would encourage her to continue expressing herself in any artistic way possible.

Group Therapy: Group therapy is an important intervention that might benefit Chanel in her healing, specifically because she feels a lot stronger when she is in the presence of others. People and community are a big part of her actual identity, so group therapy with other survivors would help her when she feels the need to isolate and her overall depressive episodes.

c. How will we monitor outcomes? Track progress?

Some of the ways we can track progress would be just by observation of habits, behaviors and routines (basic needs, sleep patterns, etc.). This can be translated to her therapist through journaling or jotting down how many hours of sleep she got or how many times she woke up through the night. It would help to write down what she was able to accomplish in terms of brushing her teeth and hair, if she showered or not, what she did for *herself* that day. To track progress in her isolation behaviors, using scaling techniques might be a good way to assess. We can determine exceptions through therapy sessions, and hopefully help her identify how she feels when exceptions are present. Scaling, journaling and self assessment monitoring would work well to monitor outcomes and track her progress in different areas of her personal struggles.

Problem Grid – adapted from Liese, B.S. & Esterline, K. M. (2015)

Problem	Behaviors	Feelings	Thoughts
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<p>Depression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weight loss ● Unable to eat ● Poor sleep hygiene ● Poor personal hygiene and basic needs satisfaction ● Withdraws/social isolation ● Disassociation 	<p>Disconnected from herself physically and emotionally.</p> <p>Chronic sadness</p> <p>Low self esteem</p> <p>Insomnia</p>	<p>“Emily had followed me, reminding me I was a go-nowhere, do-nothing, VICTIM. This life was too sweet. This kind of pleasure, creation, reserved for people who were not me.” (78)</p> <p>“I needed to continue my route of avoidance.”</p> <p>“Very quickly my world was reduced to my room” (160)</p> <p>“Just be yourself, she said. Which self, I wanted to reply.” (163)</p>
<p>Anxiety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constant trips to the bathroom when she had to testify. ● Fixation on her physical appearance. 	<p>Fear</p> <p>Worrisome</p> <p>Nervousness</p> <p>Uncomfortable</p>	<p>When Lucas went quiet, my illusion faltered, and I got a glimpse of what I was facing, the brutality of it, the oppression. The rules of court would not necessarily protect me; swearing under oath was just a made-up promise. (206)</p> <p>Alaleh had pushed us into the light and now we were being dragged back into the dark, logic disfigured. (213)</p>
<p>PTSD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blocking the door with furniture ● Frequent nightmares ● Sleeping with the lights on or needing to sleep near someone. ● How she feels around men/males who display sexual advances toward her. 	<p>Anger</p> <p>Rage</p> <p>Loss of sexual identity</p>	<p>“But the compliments didnt feel like compliments when my body language communicated I didnt want to be looked at, didnt want to be spoken to. They didnt feel like gifts when they were thrown at me or whispered so only I could hear. Every comment was translated into, “Ilike what I see and I want it.”</p> <p>“The idea of him being gone made me panic” (272)</p>

			<p><i>“Sometimes I’m too angry, seething after reading a rape story, I need to slice a dick off” (277)</i></p> <p>Something else was happening that I kept to myself: in between dinners and graduation parties, I shut myself in the bathroom, my shoulders quivered, and tears ran down my face...Now came the release, my body helpless against the anguish passing through in waves. Each time it would rise in me like the need to vomit, and I’d lock myself in and hyperventilate, my eyes stinging. I was scared of the way my body kept dictating these episodes. I’d grip the sink, turning on the faucet to drown out the sounds. Why are you sad, I kept thinking, you won. I did not want Lucas to hear me, to realize that I was still broken, not ready to let all of this go. (229)</p>
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<p>Anger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outbursts or reaction with anger toward people she loves as well as random strangers ● Bursts of heightened emotions when triggered by trial dynamics, interactions with men or society's allowance for predatory behaviors. 	<p><i>"Sometimes I'm too angry; seething after reading a rape story, I need to slice a dick off"</i> (277)</p>	<p>"Walking down the street was like being tossed bombs. I fiddled with the wires, frantically defusing each one. Each time I was not sure which wire would cause it to detonate, tinkering while swear ran down my forehead" (83).</p> <p>Nothing matched what I was feeling, my rage had nowhere to go. I smacked the cup of pencils, the thin stems spilling to the floor. I'M CHINESE. I screamed, slamming the table with my fists, throwing back my chair. I'M CHINESE. (235)</p>
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