SIMULATED PATIENT CASE SCENARIO TO TEACH LEARNING OUTCOMES IN PSYCHOSIS/DEPRESSION

**Background**

Peter is a 27 yo male, recently had relationship breakdown with partner of 5 years and with whom he has a 4 yo girl; Miranda who is currently living with her mother. No longer living with partner,he is living with elderly mother who can’t understand why he just doesn’t go and apologise and ‘make-up’. Currently unemployed as contract harvester within the Blue Gum industry.

**History and presenting problem (your brief)**

You have been brought to the Emergency Department this evening by the police as you were down the street at 1am loitering down the main street. On questioning by the police you couldn’t recall what you were doing down the street except to say you couldn’t sleep and the police state that you were ‘mumbling’ and talking to yourself. Recently your sleep has been disturbed and you wake at odd hours and can’t get back to sleep. You have taken to wandering down the street in the wee hours just to kill some time and get out of the house.

You always had smoked some marijuana on a weekly basis, generally on the weekend with some mates but lately (2-3 weeks since the break-up) this has been increasing to a daily basis – helps pass the time and makes you feel calmer. Your alcohol intake is increasing as well, drinking a few (6-10 cans of bundy and coke on a daily basis) previously you used to have only 1-2 at night after work.

You cant seem to find enjoyment in anything – even looking after Miranda, but money has been very tight since you lost your job and you haven’t had much money to spend on going out anyway. You havn’t been cooking or eating (not even your mother’s food). You have no energy and you feel you must be a bad father because you don’t seem to get any pleasure out of anything, even Miranda. You constantly blame yourself over the break-up of your relationship and you ruminate over little things in the past. You feel guilty about not having a job and not being able to contribute financially for Miranda – and doesn’t your ex-partner let you know it!! Every body seems to have it in for you, your mum – she’s getting sick of you moping around the house all the time. Your partner thinks I’m a hopeless father and provider and your mates don’t seem to have any time for you anymore, too busy with their lives to spend time having a few drinks and even the people at Centrelink are asking you weird questions and making it hard for you (to get the dole).

In the last couple of days you have been thinking about things, in your head about how you’re a bad father, how you’ll never get a job, your hopeless – a 27 yo living with his mother!! (These are just fleeting thoughts – you don’t have any suicidal thoughts or plans – but if the situation doesn’t change soon – who knows?)

**Attitude to Treatment**

You know that the doctor or the counsellor can’t change the realities of your troubles (financial and relationships etc.) so they can’t help you ‘I can’t imagine how medicines or talking to someone would help, as ultimately these are my problems’ (referring to relationship bust-up) you feel a bit paranoid and cant understand why the doctors/ED staff would want to help you.

**When asked more**

You and your partner sort of ‘hooked-up’ together after a flat-mate moved out. Within a very short time your partner was pregnant and you remained together because it was easy and because of the baby but over the last 6 months your partner hasn’t wanted to have anything to do with you physically and nothing you did seemed to be right. She is talking about moving back to Sydney to be with friends and family. The thought of not seeing Miranda again for a long time upsets you – its makes you feel very angry towards your partner that she could do this to you.

**Approach to interview**

You interact logically with the interviewer and are willing to be convinced of the benefits of medication or therapy, although you are pretty sceptical and a bit suspicious of the intentions of the ED doctors and staff but ultimately you do accept their recommendations for treatment.