



NUMINUS

Practice Groups: Integration Case

Assessment/Preparation

Will is a 58-year-old married male who works in finance. He has no children. He has been struggling with low mood, feelings of hopelessness and a lack of meaning. He tells you that he thinks he may be going through a “mid-life crisis.” He is nearing the end of his career, is not engaged in volunteer work, and has few hobbies. He has no religious affiliations. He has no diagnosed history of depression, although he suffers from generalized and social anxiety; and while he has friends, he tends to avoid most social situations. He is a long-distance runner and expresses that running decreases his anxiety.

His medical history consists of an MVA in which he experienced a concussion 10 years ago. He also was a heavy drinker when he was in his 30s but now only drinks socially. He does not use other substances although he used cannabis recreationally, on occasion as a teenager. His GAD-7 score = 15 (moderate to severe).

He tells you that he is hoping the psilocybin-assisted therapy will get him out of his “rut” and help him with his anxiety. He realizes he is isolated. Will is anxious about taking the medicine but is motivated because he feels lost.

His intentions are:

- Show me: Hope
- Teach me: Openness
- Help me: Find a direction

Medicine Session

Will takes 4 grams of *Psilocybe cubensis* mushrooms. During his session he finds himself in a forest. He explores the trees and eventually is absorbed into one, experiencing union with it. His awareness moves into the earth surrounding the tree, its roots, the tree trunk, branches, and leaves. He experiences himself growing out of the ground as the tree and as if this is happening for centuries. His wife and a female friend become one with him and the tree. He experiences both fear and profound joy. The fear fades and what arises for him is a sense of

overwhelming awe, and love of all things – plant, animal, human and that he is a part of everything, and everything is a part of him.

Integration Session

During the Integration Session, Will feels hopeful, disoriented, and confused. He has always been somewhat of a loner and doesn't know what to make of his experience. He tells you he doesn't believe in God but doesn't know how to explain his experience or how it might help him. He hesitantly asks you if you think this was a spiritual thing. He asks you what you think it all means.

Group Work

BEFORE MEETING WITH YOUR GROUP

For 5 minutes, reflect and record your own beliefs and views of spirituality and how you approach the topic with clients. Consider how you may have some biases towards client beliefs that are different from yours. How might you recognize these? How will you avoid imposing your own beliefs or opinions onto the client? (e.g. slow down, notice extreme reactions that arise). Discuss this with your small group.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In your group of 3, choose one person to be the client, one the therapist, and another the observer. The observer will pay attention to how the therapist embodies mindful caring attention and the kinds of questions they ask.
2. Use SIBAM to unpack Will's experience as well as the other Inquiry questions below as needed. If Will expresses this material on his own, there is no need to ask more about it unless there is utility on amplifying or reinforcing the experience to help him meet his intentions. See the following examples of potential SIBAM questions. The following questions are meant to be a guide:
 - S – What did you notice in the body, if anything during this experience and how did you meet or relate to those sensations?
 - I – Tell me more about the images of the tree and what happened?
 - B – What did you do during this period while you were part of the tree?
 - A – What emotions (affect) came up? How did you experience those? And then?
 - M – What might this experience say about you or mean for you?
3. Given Will's intentions and concerns, help him identify 2-3 values and how he has been or has not been behaving in ways that are consistent with these. Help him to come up with associated relevant and manageable tasks that he can commit to doing as home practice for the next week.
4. Discuss with Will how he might experiment with connection to others and the natural world in concrete ways. Make sure to elicit this from him.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- When did you notice this experience arising?
- How might you think about this experience?
- What happened that you interpreted this as a spiritual experience? How do you define spiritual? (If needed) - How might you reconcile your views of spirituality with this experience?
- How did you know? And then?

- What might be the advantages or disadvantages of seeing this experience this way?
- What from this experience might you be able to take into your regular life? How might you do that? What may get in the way?