

10881NAT Course in Observing and Documenting the Mental State
Examination - Assessment

Melissa scenario	
Vimeo link:	https://vimeo.com/663161495/72ecf16ff9
Hannah:	Hi, Melissa. So my name's Hannah. I'm going to be the clinician chatting with you today. I guess before we start, I was hoping to give you a little bit of an idea about what this might look like. So basically, this chat is just to give me a bit of an idea about what's been going on for you and how we might be able to help and support you best. Does that make sense?
Melissa:	Yeah.
Hannah:	<p>Yeah. So in saying that, I'm going to ask a bunch of different questions, and some of them might seem a little bit strange or a little bit weird. Just go along with me, with that. And I guess if there's anything that I ask that you don't want to talk about, that is completely fine.</p> <p>And if there's anything that I don't ask that you do want to kind of bring up and chat about, that's completely fine, too. So I'll just be guided by you. You can tell me as much or as little as you want.</p> <p>Before we start as well, I noticed in your notes that you're an Aboriginal woman. I'm not an Aboriginal woman. So I guess I just wanted to check with you if you feel comfortable chatting with me today or if you would like a family member or an Indigenous liaison officer to sit in with us.</p>
Melissa:	No, I think I'll be right. My mum was telling me this place isn't quite too bad?
Hannah:	Yeah. OK, that's good. And I guess in saying that as well, if there's anything that I do that is maybe not the most respectful or a bit culturally inappropriate, please let me know. So I don't want to say anything that's going to be offensive or do anything that might make you feel uncomfortable. So please feel free to let me know if there's anything I can do differently
Melissa:	No, thank you.
Hannah:	Of course. But I guess to start with, do you want to give me a little bit of an idea about what's brought you in here today?
Melissa:	Well, I lost my aunt, and she's like a mum to me. She's like my world. And I'd just not been feeling very good since then. I just don't want to do anything, and I don't want to be around anyone. And I just feel really down all the time.
Hannah:	OK. I'm really sorry for your loss, Melissa. What was your auntie's name?

Melissa:	You know how you said that you might not understand things, so fast, mum. We can't actually mention the name of somebody who passed away. So when I talk about her, I just say auntie, and it's OK if you just call her auntie.
Hannah:	That's OK? OK, good.
Melissa:	Yeah.
Hannah:	Thank you for letting me know.
Melissa:	Well, thank you for asking.
Hannah:	OK, tell me a little bit about your auntie. What was she like as a person?
Melissa:	She was like really-- she was a good girl, a good lady. Everyone loved her. She did a lot for the community, and she was real strong for me. And she taught me how to be a really good woman, and she'd try and motivate me to, you know, be the best I can. And I've got a good job, and I've got my life sorted because my aunt was a good role model.
Hannah:	She sounds like a pretty amazing woman.
Melissa:	She'd always make me laugh. She cheered me up when I was down. So I really miss her at the moment.
Hannah:	You mentioned, I think, she passed away about six weeks ago. Is that right?
Melissa:	Yeah, she'd been sick for a long time.
Hannah:	Yeah.
Melissa:	And so I've been helping to nurse her, and that was real hard because she was getting weak. And then she just couldn't get out of bed much anymore. And she's telling me all the time that I have to be real strong, but it's real hard because I'm not-- I'm missing her.
Hannah:	How have these six weeks been for you, Melissa? Can you tell me a little bit about, I guess, the emotions that you've been feeling and how you're feeling at the moment?
Melissa:	Just feel no good. My head is full, like I got lots of things going round and round. But my aunt, she's telling me-- before I come here, she's with me, and she's telling me it's OK to come talk to you more and that it will be OK. And I'm still going to miss her, but it's not going to hurt as much. But I feel like when I go to talk, it's like I can't get my words out because there's too much going on up there. And then I don't want to eat. I feel like I can't sleep. I didn't even want to get out of bed, and it's real hard for me to go to work.

	When I'm at work, it's just too many words in my head. I don't want to be around friends. I don't want to be near my boyfriend. I don't know. I feel like I don't. I want to be with my auntie. I don't want to be here even though she's with me all the time. She's sometimes near me. And that makes me feel good, but I feel real sad.
Hannah:	Yeah, so for you, if we looked at sadness and rated it on a scale out of 10, 10 being the most sad you've ever felt in your life, really difficult to do the things that you need to do, and one being pretty neutral, where do you think that you would rate that sadness for you?
Melissa:	Might be a 9?
Hannah:	9. OK. And so how long have you been feeling this way?
Melissa:	Six weeks, since my aunt passed away.
Hannah:	And is this something that has been kind of-- I guess that you felt the whole time? Or do you feel like there are periods where you kind of start to feel a little bit OK, and then maybe you don't feel? So then you start to feel no good again. And then you might-- is it kind of fluctuating a little bit like that, or is it pretty steady?
Melissa:	Up and down.
Hannah:	Up and down-- yeah.
Melissa:	At first, it was all the time, and now, up and down. It's hard sometimes. When I talk about her, I get real sad. Then if I'm by myself, it's no good, like in my head too much.
Hannah:	Yeah. How else is it, I guess, impacting on your day-to-day? Because so you say that you're kind of not really feeling like you want to eat or sleep, can't really get up and do the things that you want to do. Is it having an impact on kind of any other areas of your day-to-day or things that you might have found sort of joy in that maybe at the moment you're not?
Melissa:	I don't want to go out with my friends. I feel a bit shamed about this, but it's OK because you're a girl. So us women can talk about it. But I don't want my boyfriend to touch me or nothing. I don't know why because I love him, but I don't want him to come near me or touch me that way.
Hannah:	So do you feel like it's kind of had an impact on your libido as well?
Melissa:	What's that mean?
Hannah:	I guess your sex drive, and that's you've kind of felt a bit of-- maybe that's not as strong as it was before?

Melissa:	Yes, I don't. Is it because I don't love him anymore, or what is that? Why I'm not-- want him to be near me.
Hannah:	I think sometimes that can be part of that grieving process. So when we are feeling really low and really sad or maybe we might be feeling depressed that we don't really find, I guess, joy in things that we might have found joy in before. So even things like that can impact on our, I guess, our emotions and our feelings. But it can also impact on our physical body, so we might not have the same desires. And like what you said, might mean that we don't want to eat, we're having difficulty sleeping. I'd like to talk about eating with you, if that's OK?
Melissa:	Yes.
Hannah:	Because you did mention that you're not really eating at the moment. Have you noticed that you've lost a little bit of weight since the loss?
Melissa:	Yeah, a little bit-- maybe a few kilos.
Hannah:	OK. So just going back to what you were saying before about seeing your auntie, can you tell me a little bit about that? Do you feel like you see her like you see me sitting here, or is it a little bit different?
Melissa:	So you're thinking I'm mad?
Hannah:	No, not at all. I think it's-- I'm trying to understand your experience. Yeah.
Melissa:	Because, with our mob, that's normal for us. It's my auntie. And so sort of like maybe like if I'm lying on my bed, she'd sit there with me, and then I can hear her. She just telling me it's OK. She wants to keep my spirit strong. And yes, not in my head. I can hear her like I hear you. Yeah.
Hannah:	What about things-- like some people, when they are experiencing a lot of grief or a lot of, I guess, stress or trauma, they might also kind of say that they can taste or feel or smell things that maybe others can't. Is that something that you've ever experienced?
Melissa:	What do you mean? Like smell? Maybe like her perfume?
Hannah:	Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Melissa:	Sometimes, because when she's there, I suppose it's comforting for me. And then I can almost feel like and smell the perfume that she used to wear. Or sometimes before I see her, I can smell that smell, and it's like this perfume. And it makes me feel happy for a minute.
Hannah:	So am I right in, I guess, assuming that it's this quite comforting for you to see and to feel your auntie with you?

Melissa:	Yeah, it makes me feel good because it makes me feel like she's not here, but she's still with me. And so that's good to know she's going to walk beside me on my journey.
Hannah:	And is this something that your family members or your other family members are kind of feeling at this time or have felt before?
Melissa:	Yeah, my mum said she feels this way and some of my other aunties and uncles. And then I think they feel a bit ashamed to talk about that because I don't think people understand. So then they just keep that inside because people don't really understand that cultural way. But yeah, they feel that way, but it's not because they're mad. They're not hearing their voices and stuff. I'm going to take medication for it. It's just because this is like sorry business for us. Do you understand?
Hannah:	Can you tell me a little bit about that? What does what is explain sorry business to me?
Melissa:	Well, when someone pass away, I mean, it's different everywhere. For us, we all get together. We try to celebrate that person's life, and all our family come. And we do funeral. And we don't go to work. And when we used to live out on community, the community will shut down during when we have sorry business, and that's out of respect. And we go, and we sit with the body. And we talk to the body. And we look after that person. And my mum, she'd tell me when she was little and that and someone die, they wash the body, and they talk to that person. And that's our way, and that helps us feel like we're helping that person pass on.
Hannah:	That's really beautiful. Thank you for sharing and explaining that to me.
Melissa:	Thank you for asking me.
Hannah:	I guess I was hoping you could explain to me now a little bit about what are some of the thoughts that occupy your mind during the day?
Melissa:	Just about my auntie all the time. I just can't turn that off.
Hannah:	It sounds like you are kind of worrying about her a lot during the day. Is that one of those thoughts that kind of hangs around and kind of creeps in, even when you don't really want to have those thoughts, so you don't want to be thinking about that?
Melissa:	Yeah-- just miss her, so I was thinking about missing her and that I don't get to see her again. And I can't give her a hug, or I can't go to her house.

Hannah:	Yeah. I guess I'm going to ask another funny old question. Have you ever had any thoughts that, I guess, other people might have thought are strange or a little bit weird? No?
Melissa:	No.
Hannah:	OK. The next questions I'm going to ask might be a little bit sensitive. So you just let me know if you would like to have a break or if I'm kind of asking you anything that makes you feel a little bit uncomfortable. Is that all right?
Melissa:	Yeah.
Hannah:	Yeah. When you have been kind of having those thoughts and when you've been feeling really sad and really down, have you ever thought that you wanted to hurt yourself, or have you ever sort of self-harmed in the past by cutting or hurting yourself in other ways?
Melissa:	Look, maybe a couple of years ago, there was this lady always picking on me at work, and I had to go to my boss because it was real bad. And she'd makes me really angry all the time and sad. And I don't know. I just started scratching at myself because it just helped get rid of my anger, but I didn't do it because I wanted to die. I did it because it made me feel better.
Hannah:	Mm-hmm. And is that something that you've done since then?
Melissa:	No.
Hannah:	No? OK. What about having thoughts that you wanted to do that?
Melissa:	Yes, sometimes, because it's hard because I feel empty inside, but it doesn't mean that I'm going to do it.
Hannah:	Yeah. OK. What about ever having any thoughts that you wanted to end your life? Is that something that you've experienced?
Melissa:	I might have the thought, but I don't want to do it. I just feel like no good that my aunt is not here. And I feel like maybe how do I then move forward without her?
Hannah:	And when you have had those thoughts, have you ever had any thoughts of, I guess, how you might do that, or what you might do?
Melissa:	No, because it's just really a feeling or a thought I have, and then it goes away.
Hannah:	So is it more in terms of just a general feeling of I don't want to be here anymore?
Melissa:	Yeah, like when you get fed up with something.

Hannah:	Yeah. OK. How often do you think that happens for you when you're having those thoughts?
Melissa:	Just if I get real down, but then it goes away.
Hannah:	OK. What about ever having any, I guess, thoughts or urges that you wanted to hurt anybody else? Is that happening?
Melissa:	No.
Hannah:	OK. Another thing that sometimes people might be, I guess, going through is they might be having some-- be in a position where they have a little bit of difficulty financially or I guess with housing, or they might feel a bit vulnerable in certain situations with other people. Is that anything that's you've experienced?
Melissa:	No.
Hannah:	No.
Melissa:	I got good supports and that. If I didn't have something, my family would help me.
Hannah:	OK. What about any children? Do you have any children, or are you around any children frequently?
Melissa:	Just my nieces and my nephew.
Hannah:	Yeah, OK. When we talk about your thoughts, can you tell me a little bit about, I guess, how they occur? Are you feeling like you're having heaps and heaps of thoughts, and they're going really, really fast? Or are they kind of slow and it's hard to kind of keep track of them? What's it like for you?
Melissa:	No, they're real quick, fast, lots of them. But then I'll see an image of my aunt, and then I lose track. And I get real teary. They're hard to shut off.
Hannah:	When you were experiencing those thoughts, do you feel like they kind of, I guess, they flow on from each other, or are they a little bit kind of disconnected and a little bit here, there, and everywhere for you?
Melissa:	No, they're like one here, one there. They don't really make lots of sense. It's hard for me to keep track.
Hannah:	And I guess then when you're having conversations with people, is it also kind of hard to keep track of what the conversation is about and what you're talking about? Or is it kind of OK?
Melissa:	No, I don't lose my train of thought, and I can't finish my sentence. Or I get confused.

Hannah:	When we think about-- you mentioned before, and we talked a little bit about those kind of racing thoughts, does that ever kind of leave you feeling like you don't know what day it is or where you are or what time it is?
Melissa:	Yeah, you know when you go on like a holiday or something or Christmas or like lots of public holidays, and then you just forget which day it is? And I feel like that all the time, and I don't know what time it is. I wake up, and I think my auntie is still there. I get confused.
Hannah:	Do you know where we are at the moment?
Melissa:	Yeah, at the Lake Community Health Centre.
Hannah:	Yeah. Yeah. And what about the day of the week?
Melissa:	Yeah, like I said before, sometimes it's a bit foggy in my head, and I wake up. And I thought it was Tuesday, but I realise now it's Wednesday because that's when I had my appointment with you.
Hannah:	OK. And what about me? Can you tell me who I am or--?
Melissa:	Yeah. I think you said your name was Hannah?
Hannah:	Yeah.
Melissa:	And you work here. You're the mental health mob?
Hannah:	Yeah. Yeah. What about your memory? Have you had any difficulties with your memory lately?
Melissa:	Just-- I don't know. Like I said, it's a bit foggy. And sometimes I put things down, and I just forget where I put it. But I remember things about my aunt and stuff like that.
Hannah:	OK. And what about your concentration? Do you feel like you're able to kind of keep focus with things, or it's a bit difficult to kind of concentrate on tasks?
Melissa:	No, that one's real hard. That's why I can't be at work at the moment because I just can't make my mind stay on one thing.
Hannah:	So you mentioned before about your appetite and your eating and that you kind of haven't really felt hungry or that you haven't really wanted to eat lately.
Melissa:	I just don't want to eat. I've been trying to drink water, but I don't know. If I put the food in my mouth and that, it just-- I want to spit it out. I don't want to eat it.
Hannah:	I guess I'm just wondering what that's about for you.
Melissa:	Just losing my aunt just made me-- I don't know. I just didn't feel any good. Everything changed. I didn't want to-- I don't know. I don't want to eat, can't sleep. I don't seem to have much control over it.

Hannah:	And with that kind of, I guess, decrease in appetite and that you have been losing a little bit of weight, I guess I'm just wondering what do you think you'll do if you continue to lose weight?
Melissa:	I don't know-- probably get unhealthy. I just don't know what I'm meant to do about it because I just can't stop how I'm feeling, if that makes sense.
Hannah:	I guess I'm just wondering if by continuing to lose weight and not eat, if that's going to keep you feeling low. That's what I'm worried about.
Melissa:	Yeah, I think you're right, but I just know I've got to try and do something about it. I just don't know what to do.
Hannah:	I guess coming here today is a really good first step.
Melissa:	I suppose.
Hannah:	Yeah. So just so I have understood things correctly, I was hoping that I'd kind of let you know what I think might be going on, and you can tell me if you feel like, yep, that fits for you, and that applies or if I've misunderstood anything.
Melissa:	Yeah.
Hannah:	So we've spoken about how you're feeling and that you've had a really big loss in your life at the moment. And you've lost your auntie, and that's made you feel really sad and low and has really had a big impact on your functioning and your ability to do the things that you need to do and sleep and eat and your motivation. Is that sort of how you feel what's going on at the moment?
Melissa:	Yeah.
Hannah:	Yeah. You also mentioned about hearing and seeing your auntie with you but that that's not necessarily distressing for you at all, and it's actually quite comforting. That is that right?
Melissa:	Yeah, because I know she's been with me. That's like our way. And so I know at least that she's not in pain and that no more.
Hannah:	So what are your theories about why all of this is happening for you?
Melissa:	Well, you know, I think losing my aunt, she was my world, and she's not there anymore. That's real hard, and that's made me feel the way that I'm feeling. I just don't know what I'm meant to do. But I suppose I'm lucky in a way because cultural way, we believe the things we do. And I've being able to see her, and I've been able to talk to her and that sort of mean a lot to me.

Hannah:	Now, Melissa, unless there's something that I've sort of missed or anything else that you'd like to chat about or talk through, I thought maybe now we could have a little bit of a talk about how we can kind of help you best and support you best here.
Melissa:	I think I like that. That'd be good.
Hannah:	OK.
Time stamp 00:25:35	