

## QC48 Mental State Examination eLearning

### Example MSE for Harry

#### Context

Harry was brought to hospital by police. He came to the attention of police due to reports of a young man behaving in a bizarre and dangerous manner on the road, running in and out of traffic.

#### Appearance and behaviour

Young male, with fair complexion, thick dark eyebrows and short black hair, wearing jeans, with a grey and black patterned tee shirt and holding a cream baseball cap in his hands. Harry appears to be of stated age (18 years old) and of average build.

Little movement or gesturing during interview and initially appeared reluctant to answer questions; however, became more engaged as interview progressed. Eye contact limited, improving when talking on topics significant to him (special powers, concerns about his brother). Initially, rapport superficial as Harry appeared suspicious and guarded. Asked to terminate interview after several minutes, feeling 'tripped out', however, remained in the room and continued assessment.

#### Speech (rate, volume, tone, noteworthy qualities)

Speech was slow and hesitant at times. Volume of speech was normal overall, became louder when talking about his brother. Normal tone with occasional mumbling noted.

#### Mood (emotion type, depth, duration, fluctuation)

When asked about his mood, Harry replied, 'I'm alright', 'it feels pretty good to be invisible and know that I was chosen as the only one'. Also refers to being irritable, 'takes nothing to set me off' and when asked if he ever becomes depressed, Harry says, 'of course'. Unable to clearly elicit depth and duration of emotion. Dr Smith asks 'has it been every day for the past few weeks'? Harry responds with 'I just get sad sometimes when I can't remember my purpose'. Mood fluctuates from 'it feels pretty good' to, 'sad at times', to 'irritable, it takes nothing to set me off'.

#### Affect (range, intensity, reactivity, congruence)

Full range of emotion expressed with reduced intensity, slight grin, eyes down cast at times. Reactive at times, irritable when talking about brother, slight grin when talking about his 'special powers'. Mood and affect are congruent overall.

Neurovegetative features; Harry states he is getting enough sleep. Reports he does not eat at home as he believes his brother is putting iron filings in his food, so is only eating takeaway, admits to some weight loss. When asked about not attending school, Harry states, 'school is important for people without his special powers'.

## **Perception** (Sensory experiences, illusions, hallucinations)

Describes auditory hallucinations; hears voices he calls 'the agency', 'I hear them telling me stuff', 'the agency tells me I'm special as I can go invisible', 'the agency tells me people will try to steal my ability' and 'the agency tells me about my innerverse (the world inside me)'.

## **Thought content** (thoughts causing distress, impacting functioning, or signal risk)

Harry expressed systematised delusional thoughts during assessment; all his ideas are organised around the 'the agency'. He has grandiose ideas of having the power of invisibility and cannot be harmed when invisible. Harry expressed paranoid thoughts about his brother who 'monitors the monitor...puts gas in the air to stop me going invisible and puts iron filings in my food to stop the internet seeing me'. Also expressing paranoia about people wanting to steal his ability (invisibility).

Risk issues include harm to others and vulnerability.

Harry has a delusional belief that he is invisible and will not be harmed while invisible, 'they (the cars) can't hit what they can't see' when discussing his 'traffic surfing'.

Expresses some homicidal ideation towards his brother, stating 'if my brother didn't get over it, my power and everything... I might just have to kill him'. Denies having made plans or acted in response to these thoughts.

Denies suicidal ideation stating, 'that would be against the rules of the Innerverse'.

Vulnerable to death/injury by misadventure due to his delusional belief that he will not be harmed on the road 'traffic surfing'. Vulnerable to further deterioration in mental state, self neglect (poor sleep, appetite), and being charged with causing a traffic accident.

## **Thought form/flow** (amount/ rate of thoughts, how connected of thoughts to a central idea)

Harry answered questions directly with spontaneous flow of thoughts, sequential and with connection to a central idea of 'the agency'. Harry used a neologism; 'the innerverse' was how he described the 'world inside me', this word is only understood by him and 'the agency'.

## **Insight** (awareness of symptoms, explanation why the symptoms are occurring)

Harry is not aware of having symptoms of a mental illness. While he can describe his beliefs and experiences (e.g. 'the agency' told him of his powers to become invisible), he does not appear to view them as symptoms. Harry does not see how his symptoms are impacting on his functioning or safety. Harry explains his experience as special powers provided by 'the agency' 'they tell me codes'.

## **Judgement** (behaviour of concern, based on reality or not? consideration of consequences)

The police brought Harry to hospital because he was 'traffic surfing'. This is potentially harmful to him and others driving on the roads. He states he can do this because he is invisible (non-reality based), 'you just duck and dive through cars', 'they just whiz by, they don't even see me'. Harry states he is not worried about being hurt by the cars as 'they can't hit what they cannot see'. Harry states, 'it takes nothing to set me off', this may imply impulsivity.

## **Cognition** (Alertness, orientation, memory, concentration)

Harry was alert and responsive during the assessment. Harry was orientated to time and place and stated he was at the hospital, he knew the day, month and year. Harry was able to recall the police brought him to hospital. Able to stay focused for most of the assessment, however, was distracted by another patient on one occasion.