



Classification of mental disorders

DSM-IV lists nearly 300 mental disorders. Each entry describes criteria for diagnosing the disorder, the essential features and any associated features of it, and gives information about any specific race-, culture- or gender-related features. Clinicians must evaluate the client on five **axes** or branches of information.

Axis I Clinical Syndrome	The clinician must decide (through assessment procedures) whether the client is displaying features of one or more of the 300 or so disorders listed.
Axis II Personality disorders and specific developmental disorders	The clinician must decide whether the client is displaying one of the disorders which may not be the main disorder but could contribute. There are two major categories: mental retardation and personality disorders (for example, antisocial personality, dependent personality).
Axis III Physical disorders and conditions	Any medical disorders which may be influencing the situation. (e.g. diabetes, heart condition, malnutrition)
Axis IV Psychosocial stressors	Any personal circumstances in the past year which could add to the person's stress, such as unemployment, bereavement, divorce, being told of a serious illness
Axis V Global assessment of functioning (GAF)	The positive aspects of the person's overall functioning over the past few years, e.g. social relations, occupational functioning and use of leisure time.

Use the information above and in your notes to classify *Angela* as you think appropriate. The GAF scale is over leaf.

Angela was rarely reinforced for any of her accomplishments at school, but she gained her mother's negative attention for what Mrs Savanti judged to be poor performance at school or at home. Mrs Savanti repeatedly told her daughter that she was incompetent, and any mishaps that happened to her were her own fault.... When Mr Savanti deserted the family, Angela's first response was that somehow she was responsible. From her mother's past behaviour, Angela learned to expect that in some way she would be blamed. At the time Angela broke up with her boyfriend, she did not blame Jerry for his behaviour but interpreted this event as a failing solely on her part. As a result, her level of self-esteem was lowered still more.

The type of marital relationship that Angela saw her mother and father model remained her concept of what married life is like. She generalised from her observations of her parents' discordant interactions to an expectation of the type of behaviour that she and Jerry would ultimately engage in. Angela demanded that Jerry conform to her definition of acceptable interpersonal behaviour, because of her belief that otherwise their marriage would not be a mutually reinforcing relationship. However, Angela set such high standards for Jerry's behaviour that it was inevitable she would be disappointed....

Angela's uncertainties intensified when she was deprived of the major source of gratification she had, her relationship with Jerry. Despite the fact that she was overwhelmed with doubts about whether to marry him or not, she gained a great deal of pleasure through being with Jerry. Whatever feelings she had been able to express, she had shared with him and no-one else. Angela labelled Jerry's termination of their relationship as proof that she was not worthy of another person's interest. She viewed her present unhappiness as likely to continue, and she attributed it to some failing on her part. As a result, she became quite depressed.

Leon (1984) pp. 123-125 in Comer (1995) pp 122