

Emmanuel, Case #1

Emmanuel is a 15-year old Hispanic male. He has been adjudicated to the juvenile court due to repeated activity in minor theft, dealing drugs, and most recently he was involved in a shooting incident in which he seriously injured another youth. Emmanuel presents as a resistant and defiant youth who is unresponsive to attempts to engage him and who does not show remorse for his crime. He has a history of associating with a group of youth who are juvenile justice involved.

He states that he does not have a substance abuse problem; however, he had marijuana in his system at time of arrest. He has a history of using large amounts of alcohol and other drugs.

Emmanuel has had a long history of systems involvement in his life. He has had repeated out of home placements due to his family's dysfunction—mother's substance abuse and recent relapse from a brief period of recovery which culminated in a heroin overdose in which she almost died, and father's criminal activity. His father recently violated his own probation because of a weapons possession (gun). His parents have not yet participated in any of the family services that have been recommended by social service agency staff. During his out of home placements, Emmanuel was sexually abused by an older youth in the program, as well as an adult living in the home. He has a history of running away and truancy.

Due to his lack of involvement in school, Emmanuel has not completed even the equivalent of his freshman year of high school. He appears to have difficulty reading.

These problems appear to seriously impair Emmanuel's ability to trust others and engage them in positive ways. He does not make eye contact, holds himself rigidly while being interviewed, and does not appear to have any interest or commitment to a treatment or rehabilitation process. Emmanuel presents as a serious risk to the community and faces a future of progressively more intensified antisocial behavior.

Emmanuel, Case #2

Emmanuel is a 15-year-old male who refers to himself as Latino. He has been adjudicated to the juvenile court due to repeated activity in minor theft, dealing drugs, and most recently he was involved in a shooting incident in which he seriously injured another youth. He was sexually abused during an out-of-home placement by an older youth and an adult living in the home. Emmanuel presents as a powerful young man who is careful whom he opens himself up to. Given his history of being betrayed by trusted adults, this appears to be an appropriate self-protective device.

When asked to scale what he's like when he's really doing well and what he's like when he's doing badly, he responded that when he's doing well he is going to school, playing his music (apparently very talented with the guitar), and "not getting into it" with his mother and father. He says that there have been some times in his life recently (during the last two years) when he felt like things were really going well, but when his dad violated his probation when he was caught with a gun in his possession, Emmanuel said it all went crazy. In reference to the other end of the scale, how things look when he's not doing well, he said, "You're looking at it..." Emmanuel sees the world as a place that is not safe unless you defend yourself and that can really hurt people—he admits that now people see him as dangerous, and this bothers him. He admits that he doesn't necessarily have to be a dangerous person to keep himself safe, and that he's willing to explore ways of protecting himself without getting violent. He says he knows that he has been hurt in ways he describes as "really personal" and that he has to deal with it someday, but doesn't want to talk about it now.

He reports that he has used multiple drugs and alcohol in the past in large amounts, but that during the last year, he has quit doing everything but pot because he doesn't like feeling "out of control." He states that he uses pot to "relax" and to "chill out" because he gets really stressed out. He says that he doesn't think that he has a problem. He reports missing his parents and being upset that they have not been able to get to the family services yet, but also states that they have been able to talk on the phone and have done so regularly. His father says that he feels very afraid for Emmanuel and doesn't want him to go down the road he has. He expresses interest in getting involved with the family program as well as going to family treatment with his wife. Emmanuel says that he is worried that his siblings—ages 5, 7, and 12—won't "do the right thing" if he's not there to guide them, and said that he is proud of the fact that they haven't gotten into any trouble with the law. He says that it is important to him that they do well.

He has had multiple visits from a priest in his neighborhood who he has become friends with, and says that this guy is very "cool" and has really "hung in there" with Emmanuel, who said he initially wouldn't have anything to do with him, but gradually came around when he saw that the guy was sincere. The priest has offered to assist his mother and father in getting a ride to the family treatment program on a regular basis. Emmanuel says that he is upset about his mother's recent relapse, but that he does love his parents. He dreams of being a guitar teacher and owning a music store like his older cousin, Jose. This is his mother's brother and is who Emmanuel describes when asked to talk about who his hero is. He states that Jose is his hero because he is a good person who takes care of his wife, kids, and mother. In regard to his crimes, he says that he

knows he shouldn't have been in the place he was at when "the whole thing came down," and that he wishes he knew of a different way to make money. He does not at this point appear to

express remorse for the harm he caused the other youth, and this needs to continue to be a target for strategic therapeutic work. He had recently broken an association with a group of youth who wanted to involve him in a series of burglaries in a part of town known for providing housing to the elderly—Emmanuel said that he didn't think that was right, so some promising evidence of moral development is present. He really hates being locked up, and said that he is very motivated to figure out something else to do, because "this isn't it..." in terms of what he wants for his future.

He said that he gets headaches regularly, and has difficulty seeing, which makes him particularly paranoid. He said that he has never visited an optometrist, and is open to the idea of getting his vision checked. Emmanuel appears to be a young man with many challenges. He appears to have the capacity to learn from his experiences, form relationships with a caring adult despite fears of doing so, have insights, and envision a future for himself free from systems involved. While not ready to function safely in the community, Emmanuel possesses a lot of attributes of someone who is capable of working towards a better life for himself.

Implications of Dissonance Between the Two Cases

	Pathology Perspective	Strengths Perspective
How would this view of Emmanuel frame the official assessment?		
How would this view of Emmanuel frame the alcohol and drug treatment/service plan?		
How would this view of Emmanuel guide the attitudes of the professionals working with him in individual and group sessions?		
How would this view of Emmanuel include his cultural identity?		
How would this view of Emmanuel frame the way that his family was involved in treatment?		
How would this view of Emmanuel frame the development of aftercare/relapse prevention planning?		
How would this view of Emmanuel motivate him to engage successfully with the treatment program?		

Overall comments about the two perspectives: