Role-playing Scenarios: “Psychosis”

Patrol Officers: Scenario 1, “Billy”

FOR THE STUDENT-OFFICER:

“You are dispatched to COMCARE Crisis at 934 N. Water for a disturbance. Upon arrival, you speak with the Director and the calling party, whose son has just walked away from the facility before being assessed. They tell you that the son is mentally ill and developmentally challenged. His name is Billy. He has hurt his mother in the past and has been placed at OSH. He recently was released from jail and is off his meds. He is delusional and believes his teeth “spin” and that he is absorbing poisons from the air into his skin. He is homeless, and from a small town outside of Wichita. He is unable to care for himself for longer than a day. He also has a knife in a pouch on his belt but has not used it. You contact him two blocks from the facility walking on the sidewalk…”

FOR THE ROLE-PLAYER:

* Your name is Billy, and you are a developmentally challenged adult. You dislike law enforcement, and have been incarcerated for beating up your mother.
* You have been in the State Hospital at Osawatomie, but will not tell anyone that if asked.
* You are actively entertaining delusions that your teeth spin inside your mouth, and that there are poisons being absorbed out of the air into your skin. You will be very slow to respond to questions. If asked, you will simply say you’re “fine”, and refuse to answer any other questions about your mental health or history of treatment. If the officer asks about your meds, you will say that you don’t think you have to take them anymore.
* You feel frustrated because you are an adult and your mother and therapists still tell you what to do. You have difficulty communicating and will pause a long time before answering questions, or simply not reply at all if the question or direction is not important or demeaning in your opinion.
* You wear a folding pocket knife in a pouch on your belt because you grew up on a farm. You would never use it to hurt someone, and it is simply part of your everyday wardrobe. IF the officer demands your knife without hearing your side of the story you will become defiant and withdrawn. IF they build rapport first and explain WHY they want the knife, you will be reluctant but will hand it over.
* You are attempting to walk downtown for some smokes, and will continue to walk even if the officer talks to you. IF the officer addresses you as “Billy” and continues to walk with you for some distance, you will speak with him/her. Eventually if they are engaging enough, you will stop walking. IF they force you to stop, you will be resentful and quiet, but will stop walking. The officer will have to build more rapport to get you to speak freely again.
* IF the officer allows you to explain why you left and what you want to do, and admits that you are an adult and have some “input” or role in deciding what happens, you will become increasingly more reasonable, and would eventually return to the facility freely for assessment. IF the officer demands you go, you will ask if you are under arrest, argue, and become more withdrawn and refuse to go anywhere. You will become increasingly more irrational in your thinking and slow in your verbal responses.
* Once you agree to go, you will want to walk like an “adult man”, not ride in the patrol car. If the officer insists, and can explain why you need to go with him/her, you MAY decide to get in, depending on how well you feel they have communicated with you throughout this exercise.

FOR THE MODERATOR

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the script to the officer and allow them to begin the scenario by catching up with the role-player as he walks slowly away from you. Moderate and take notes to recall what techniques or phrases appeared to work well, and what set the officer back. If the officer seems deadlocked, solicit a suggestion from other observing officers for a possible “kick start” question or tactic to keep the scenario progressing. This is the first role-playing scenario, so go easy on the student-officer.

DEBRIEF: The officer is in a grey area at the beginning regarding legal justification to detain. No crime has been committed, he is not a threat to anyone else (based on statements made by mom/staff) and it is questionable whether the consumer is a danger to himself. As a self-care failure, he could be detainable from a law enforcement officer’s perspective.

This scenario is based almost exactly upon an actual incident that occurred in the City of Wichita this year. In that case, the officer involved was CIT-trained. The officer was able to calm the subject, have him hand over the closed pocket knife, and walk voluntarily to the facility. Eventually, the officer got the subject to voluntarily go with EMS to St. Joe after he refused to speak to the therapist.

Debrief by reviewing the directives to the role-player and allow the actor to explain why he responded to the techniques in the manner he did. Offer suggestions for improvement, THEN AND FINALLY, emphasize what was done right by the student.

Patrol Officers: Scenario 2, “Air Conditioner Party”

FOR THE STUDENT OFFICER

“You are dispatched to a welfare call, for an elderly subject who has called 911 claiming that there are people inside their window-mount air conditioner… On-scene, you knock on the door”

FOR THE ACTOR

* You are an elderly person experiencing delusions about people living inside your air conditioner. This has been occurring for sometime. You have no family, few resources, and the only thing you know is to call 911.
* You are convinced this delusion is true. You can hear multiple people in the air conditioner, and want the officer to get them out and arrest them for trespassing.
* If the officer speaks calmly and does not attempt to validate the delusions, you will eventually de-escalate and go to COMCARE Crisis with the officer. IF they do not build rapport and use empathetic understanding, you are free to go deeper into your delusion.

FOR THE MODERATOR

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the script to the officer and allow them to begin the scenario. Moderate and take notes to recall what techniques or phrases appeared to work well, and what set the officer back. If the officer seems deadlocked, solicit a suggestion from other observing officers for a possible “kick start” question or tactic to keep the scenario progressing. This is the first role-playing session, so go easy on the student-officer.

DEBRIEF: This is a fictional scenario, but elements can be found in hundreds of calls for service. Debrief by reviewing the directives to the role-player and allow the actor to explain why he responded to the techniques in the manner he did. Offer suggestions for improvement, THEN AND FINALLY, emphasize what was done right by the student.

Correctional Officers: Scenario 1, “I am Jesus Christ Reborn!”

FOR THE STUDENT-OFFICER

“You are a detention deputy working in a housing pod. In your pod, an inmate named Jerry is on a 15 minute racked watch. The inmate displays extremely bizarre behavior by claiming that he is Jesus Christ reborn to the world. He has been disruptive in the pod for three days- shouting about hallucinations of devils and angels. The inmate is let out of his cell to get his dinner tray and is carrying a “jail-made” cross around, touching the other inmates, and telling them he, “Jesus”, loves them. This is agitating the group. Now Jerry is approaching you…”

FOR THE ROLE-PLAYER

* You are an inmate named Jerry. You are in crisis and delusional. You believe you are Jesus Christ “reborn”, and have made a homemade cross to purify your fellow inmates.
* You also see angels and demons in the pod and believe they are real. You have difficulty communicating due to your hallucinations.
* You are not aggressive, but you are persistent in wanting to purify the student-officer and other inmates. IF the student officer remains calm, you will as well. If they develop rapport and can deflect your rambling, Biblically-inspired delusions effectively, you will return to your rack and comply with any requests.
* IF the student-officer is demanding, you will scream “Hellfire and Brimstone”, ranting and raving about the damnation that awaits the deputy and other inmates. You will scream “UNCLEAN!” and “GET BEHIND ME, SATAN!” if the deputy tries to touch you to escort you back without your consent.
* IF the deputy validates or plays along with your delusions, agreeing that they also see angels and demons or attempt to pretend that they can interact with your hallucinations, you see through this, become resentful and paranoid.

FOR THE MODERATOR

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the script to the officer and allow them to begin the scenario as the role-player walks up to the student-officer. Moderate and take notes to recall what techniques or phrases appeared to work well, and what set the officer back. If the officer seems deadlocked, solicit a suggestion from other observing officers for a possible “kick start” question or tactic to keep the scenario progressing. This is the first role-playing scenario, so go easy on the student-officer.

DEBRIEF: This scenario is based upon an actual incident in the Sedgwick County Jail. Debrief by reviewing the directives to the role-player and allow the actor to explain why he responded to the techniques in the manner he did. Offer suggestions for improvement, THEN AND FINALLY, emphasize what was done right by the student.

Corrections Officers: Scenario 2, “Histrionics”

FOR THE STUDENT-OFFICER

“You are working a pod and are called to speak with an inmate who is acting out. The subject is giggling and prancing about the pod. They are acting and speaking in a manner that is very childlike. You are ordered to get the subject back into a rack until CONMED can arrive for an evaluation…”

FOR THE ACTOR

* You are a diagnosed with a histrionic personality disorder. You are off your medications due to an arrest for traffic warrants. You are having a severe episode, but will slowly come around to empathetic understanding and concise, repeated and calm orders from the student-officer.
* Prance around the area laughing, giggling, and singing whatever tune suits you!
* You are carefree and will not take initial commands or requests seriously.
* If the student-officer develops rapport, you will become more serious and at least agree to go to your “bed”. IF not, then continue dancing and singing.

FOR THE MODERATOR

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the script to the officer and allow them to begin the scenario by catching up with the role-player as he walks slowly away from you. Moderate and take notes to recall what techniques or phrases appeared to work well, and what set the officer back. If the officer seems deadlocked, solicit a suggestion from other observing officers for a possible “kick start” question or tactic to keep the scenario progressing. This is the first role-playing scenario, so go easy on the student-officer.

DEBRIEF: The officer is in a grey area at the beginning regarding legal justification to detain. No crime has been committed, he is not a threat to anyone else (based on statements made by mom/staff) and it is questionable whether the consumer is a danger to himself. As a self-care failure, he is borderline detainable from a law enforcement officer’s perspective.

This call is loosely based on a classic scenario in the Memphis CIT curriculum. Debrief by reviewing the directives to the role-player and allow the actor to explain why he responded to the techniques in the manner he did. Offer suggestions for improvement, THEN AND FINALLY, emphasize what was done right by the student.