

Example Scenario - Gemma

Consumer Name: Gemma

Dx's: Bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, traumatic brain injury, progressive hearing loss

Family/Supports: Friend/Neighbor, Candace

Age: 56

Language: English

Income: Social Security Benefits (under \$1200.00)

Home Setting: Lives in rented mobile home in Pendleton

Social History: Gemma was born and raised in Hermiston, Oregon. She does not like to talk about her experiences as a child and has alluded to continuous physical, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse. Gemma was in relationship during her late teens when she experienced physical abuse that resulted in a TBI and almost killed her. Medical records show this occurred when she was 17.

Her TBI has contributed to cognition issues and hearing loss. Gemma's behaviors became increasingly erratic after her TBI, she has been arrested multiple times for misdemeanor crimes. Gemma is easily agitated and frustrated. Gemma's challenging behaviors are amplified when in the presence of men. Her progressive loss of hearing greatly upsets her and she can become violent in frustration. Gemma has a history of isolating herself, missing meals, and self-harm. Sometimes her friend/neighbor (Candace) will come over to check on her.

Presenting Issue: Recently Gemma experienced a fall resulting in a trip to the ER and several follow-up medical appointments. The injury has caused permanent nerve damage making it difficult for Gemma to get dressed on her own or to grasp items and utensils. More and more Gemma has been coming over to Candace's house or calling Candace to ask for help getting her shirts over her head or to button clothing. Candace notices that Gemma is losing weight and is concerned about her eating habits.

Since the injury Gemma has had to use the funds she normally saves for rent to cover her medical co-pays through Medicare; her only form of medical insurance. For the last three months she did not have enough money to cover her entire rent and was recently given a 30-day eviction notice for non-payment. She is also struggling to cover her food costs.

Candace is very worried about Gemma and calls your office for help. On the call Candace explains that Gemma is worried about pursuing financial assistance such as SNAP or Medicaid because of some paranoia she experiences over government involvement in her life but believes she would be interested in other resources.

Each team member should describe their local office's process when Candace calls their office. What potential services or referrals for services can be shared with Candace? How can Candace help Gemma get connected to the services? If Gemma had called your office herself how would the conversation be different?

What approach would your agency take to help ease concerns about interactions with government agencies? What collaborative strategies can your group come up with to keep Gemma from falling through the cracks?

What assistive technology or devices (AT/D) could help Gemma and potentially reduce some of the frustration she experiences? How could she access these AT/D resources on a limited income? What suggestions came from staffing the case with the representatives of Access Technology, Inc (ATI) and Public Utility Commission (PUC) at the workshop today?