

Name:

Date:

Contextual Care Exercise¹

What is the best next thing for this patient at this time?

The following case exercise is intended to facilitate reflection on the challenges of adapting Veterans' care to their individual needs and circumstances, or context. It is constructed from audio recorded encounters between clinicians and Veterans. This exercise will count toward both category 1 CME credit and ABIM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Credit for physicians participating in the Quality Improvement Project to Reduce Contextual Errors.

Please read each of the examples below and respond to the questions (type your answers in the boxes below).

CASE Example:

A patient with poorly controlled diabetes and a recent A1C of 11.1 is asked about whether he takes his medications as directed and acknowledges he doesn't take his morning insulin.

What clue(s) suggest this patient might be facing life challenges ("contextual factors") that are relevant to their health or health care?

What would be your next step?

¹ These materials have been developed with support from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Any views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States government.

Example continued:

The provider in our example asked the patient *why* he wasn't taking his insulin at breakfast.

What are some reasons providers DON'T ask a patient why they aren't taking their medications as prescribed?

The patient responded that he doesn't eat breakfast at home anymore and instead goes to local restaurants. He prefers to leave all his supplies at home as he doesn't like laying it all out in public places with friends around.

What contextual issue did the patient just reveal?

How would you adapt your plan of care to incorporate this patient's life context?

Example continued:

The provider in this example then spent time developing a plan with the patient enabling him to bring his insulin with him to restaurants. One strategy they discussed was a prefilled insulin pen. The patient agreed to try it out. This is an example of addressing "Attitude Toward Illness" (see 12 domains below).

Do you think the patient is more likely to take his insulin with breakfast?

Can you think of an example from your own work where a patient's access to medication has impacted their ability to manage their health?

CONTEXTUALIZING CARE DOMAINS OF CONTEXT	
1.	Access to Care The patient's ability to receive care in a timely manner.
2.	Competing Responsibility An obligation or commitment the patient has that impacts their ability to manage their health care.
3.	Social Support A patient's access to a supportive network of individual(s) able to assist if needed.
4.	Financial Situation The patient's ability to afford health and health care needs.
5.	Environment The physical and social setting that encompasses a patient.
6.	Resources The possessions and materials available to a patient that can facilitate a person's ability to manage their care.
7.	Skills, Abilities and Knowledge A patient's intellectual understanding and physical ability to manage health care.
8.	Emotional State The emotional condition of a patient as it relates to their ability to manage their health care.
9.	Cultural Perspective/Spiritual Beliefs The customs or a faith-based practice a patient has that impacts health care.
10.	Attitude Towards Illness The feelings a patient has towards their condition that impacts their ability to manage it.
11.	Attitude Towards Health Care Provider and System The patient's feelings and attitudes towards their providers and the health care system that impact their ability to manage their health care.
12.	Health Behavior The patient's actions and lifestyle choices that impact their health care.