

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 male Veteran on multiple medications mentioned that he was unable to take his medications every day of the week. As a result, sometimes his blood pressure and diabetes was not well controlled

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 knew from previous visits that the patient had been experiencing homelessness, but that he had been currently living in a shelter. The provider asked, “Aren’t you better able to take your medications now that you’re in a shelter?”

What are some reasons providers DON’T ask a patient why they aren’t seeing their primary care provider as recommended?

Example continued:

The patient stated that he was doing better now that he had a place to stay, but the shelter did not have staff to distribute medications on the weekends. So, he’d go a couple days without medication.

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 and patient discussed various work-a-round and developed a plan for the patient to store his weekend medications in a private location nearby so that he could take them without the shelter's staff having to distribute them. This is an example of an "Access to Care" issue (see 12 domains below) impacting the patient's ability to manage his health.

Do you think the patient, with the interventions you propose, is now more likely to attend to his own care?

Can you think of an example from your own work where a patient's Access to Care responsibility has impacted their ability to attend to their own health or health care?

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.

Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare (CINCCCH) Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital/Jesse Brown VAMC