



## **Utilization Criteria Integration: Six Dimensional Assessment through the Continuum Case Study Assignment**

### **James, a 27-year-old African-American Male**

#### **PRESENTING and LEGAL PROBLEM:**

James was encouraged to seek treatment for his use of alcohol by a friend he served with in the US Marine Corp. Since returning from his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, approximately 18 months ago, James' use of alcohol has continued to increase.

About 4 months after returning home, he was charged with his first DUI (BAC .12). His second DUI occurred 5 weeks later (BAC .21) In addition to James' friend, Paul, James' wife, Karen is concerned about his drinking and wants him to get help. She reports that he was always a drinker, but since he has returned from the military, his drinking has gotten much worse.

#### **SOCIAL HISTORY:**

James joined the Marines after completing his bachelor's degree in History. His friend reports he was a well-respected officer and leader. His younger brother also served in the military but was killed in action about 3 years ago.

James lives at home with his wife and 7-year-old son. He was medically discharged from service after surviving an attack. Since he has been home, he has been able to find small jobs, but no consistent work that he feels he can start a career around. He reports spending a lot of his time during the day at home or in the garage trying to find something constructive to do.

His closest friend is Paul, who he served with in the military. The majority of his friends are military friends and either live in another part of the country or are still in the military. He maintains contact through email and social media but hasn't seen any of



them in the last two years. James' parents are both alcoholics, and while he feels he has a good relationship with them, they rarely talk.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY:

James has never been involved in therapy. After his brother was killed, he felt his best coping strategy was to stay active in military service.

Since returning home he has experienced very intense nightmares on a nightly basis. Occasionally he catches himself daydreaming and experiencing the attack that left him badly injured and took the lives of many of his fellow soldiers. He reports being easily startled and triggered by loud noises. James will get up in the middle of the night at least once a night to get his handgun and check the perimeter of the house.

James will admit that these behaviors are problematic but does not like to talk about it. He states that he has not talked to anyone about what he witnessed. James states that he does not want help but would like to find some way of overcoming this because he feels he "zones out" and is not present as a father for his 7 year-old son.

#### SUBSTANCE USE HISTORY:

James first started drinking as a high schooler, and would binge drink about once every couple weekends, up to 6 beers per night. He stated that his drinking increased to every weekend during his first two years of college. In his junior year, he was not drinking as much or as often because he was trying to focus more on school, and he met Karen. His heavy drinking began when he came home from Afghanistan 18 months ago. James says that his drinking helped him relax during the day, helped him cope with some chronic pain, and helped him go to sleep at night. Within a couple months, his drinking increased from 2-3 beers per day to 6-8 beers per day. At no point did he feel like he was "drunk or out of control."

His first DUI caused a lot of arguments between himself and his wife, Karen. His drinking quickly increased to drinking 18-25 beers per day. James states that he wouldn't start to feel drunk until he got to 16 beers. He admits that his days started to feel like they were consumed by alcohol; either making the effort to buy it, drinking it, or recovering from the previous day's drinking.



James states that he knows his drinking is a problem and wants help. He states that he became aware of it as a problem because he would impose limits on himself, but not be able to stick to them. He states that he tried quitting twice, but would start to feel nauseous, start sweating a lot, have intense anxiety, and start experiencing shakes. He also states that he knows his drinking is affecting his marriage but continues to drink anyway. James has had trouble finding work since returning home. He associates this with the struggle most veterans have in finding employment, but states that even if he got called for an interview, he doesn't feel he would be able to be productive at work given the amount he has been drinking.

#### MEDICAL HISTORY:

While under attack in Afghanistan, James was shot 4 times. Despite a near full recovery, James continues to have problems with his lower back, where one of the bullets entered, shattering a vertebra and caused nerve damage. Two surgeries have improved his mobility and functioning, but doctors told him he will likely continue to have back pain for the rest of his life. James is not taking any prescription medication for the pain.

James has no other chronic health problems. Since he was a child he was active in sports and was in good physical health. While in the military he was viewed as an example of physical fitness. However, since leaving the military, his diet has become unhealthy and his pain has significantly limited his mobility. As a result, James has put on 50 pounds since returning home.

#### MENTAL STATUS EXAMINATION:

James appeared to be dressed appropriately and well-groomed. He was able to maintain appropriate eye contact. His mood appeared to be labile and moved quickly from stable to crying heavily when talking about how his alcohol use has affected his wife. He appears to be oriented x4. He denies any suicidal or homicidal ideation, and was cooperative during the assessment.