

- 6 Henry has been referred to a psychiatrist and has been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Whilst talking to the psychiatrist he disclosed he has a variety of symptoms including hearing voices telling him he is not a good person. He also has delusions where he thinks he is a superhero and can save the world. Henry has also withdrawn from his family and friends and no longer goes out to see his local rugby team play. He does not get on with his parents as he feels they were not loving parents when he was a child.

Henry's psychiatrist wants to treat him with a psychological treatment.

To what extent could **one** psychological treatment be effective for Henry's schizophrenia?

You must make reference to the context in your answer.

(20)

Henry's psychiatrist could use cognitive behavioural therapy to treat him. CBT combines cognitive and learning in order to treat mental health disorders. For schizophrenia, the first stage of Henry's CBT session would be to establish a therapeutic alliance. This means that Henry and his psychiatrist will build a strong rapport so that Henry feels comfortable in telling his psychiatrist about his thoughts, feelings and experiences to result in successful treatment. His psychiatrist would also destigmatize and educate him about his schizophrenia, such as what may be causing his hallucinations of the voices telling him he is a bad person and describe to him the difference between positive and negative symptoms. A positive symptom is an added characteristic to one's personality, such as Henry's delusion of thinking he is a superhero. A negative symptom is a taken away characteristic, such as his withdrawal from his loved



ones.

In the second stage, Henry's psychiatrist would identify his main stressors, such as certain sounds that may trigger his hallucinations. They would also identify the things he has stopped doing but had interest in as a result of the schizophrenia, such as not watching his ~~team~~<sup>rugby</sup> team play. Then they would think two days to create new and healthy routines so that Henry's life is not dysfunctional, this may include going out on a walk daily, despite the presence of hearing voices. In stage three, the psychiatrist would encourage behavioural activation, which is positively reinforcing someone to restart doing things they loved or were avoiding. For example, Henry may be rewarded for going to watch a local rugby team play and contacting his parents. His hallucinations and delusions will also be challenged to prove to him that they are not happening. For example, he may be asked to record the voices and then when he listens to it back, he won't hear the same thing. Equally, Henry may also be taught coping mechanisms, such as deep breathing or meditation during role plays so that he knows what to do ~~when~~<sup>when</sup> alone in similar situations.

In the last and final stage of CBT, Henry's psychiatrist



P 7 1 9 1 9 R A 0 1 9 5 6

will go back and review his progress, agree with him what he will do in emergencies (such as a psychotic break) and then gradually reduce his sessions.

One strength of using CBT for Henry is that he will learn skills about how to cope on his own. This should reduce the chances of relapse and readmission. This was found by a meta analysis by Nice in 2009, showing that CBT is effective. In addition it is a long term solution for him.

For example, Bradshaw 1998 conducted a study on a young woman with schizophrenia to see how effective CBT was. Carol's psycho social functioning, symptoms, hospitalisations and attitude towards treatment were all measured before CBT and then again later. 3 years later in both the 6 month and 12 month checkups on Carol, it was found that she had shown significant improvement in all the measured areas, showing that CBT is highly effective in treating schizophrenia. For Henry, this could be the same meaning that he may not have to go to treatment again.

Another strength of CBT is that it can reduce both positive and negative symptoms. For example, Chadwick and Lowe found that after CBT, 83% of people showed a reduction in the extent of their delusions and 42% rejected them all together. This is a strength because Henry



may no longer suffer from thinking he is a superhero and so is able to live a more normal life. In addition, this is also the cause for negative symptoms, such as his withdrawal from his family. Using CBT, due to behavioural activation, rewarding his behaviours he is more likely to continue doing them, as shown by operant conditioning. This shows that CBT is highly beneficial in treating both positive and negative symptoms which are experienced by Henry.

A weakness of CBT is that it does not take biological factors into account. For example, Henry may have a dopamine imbalance in his brain, causing his positive symptoms. It may be difficult for Henry to overcome these symptoms because they are uncontrollable due to their biological nature. However, if Henry does manage to do this, it is possible that he may develop new symptoms. CBT only treats current symptoms, so while Henry may be able to overcome the voices he hears, he may develop visual hallucinations. In this situation, his learnt coping mechanisms may be ineffective, causing him to need further treatment. This shows that CBT is not always effective and so may need to be used alongside another treatment, such as drug therapy.



In order to combat the biological issues, Henry could also take drugs on the side to ensure the most successful treatment. For example, risperidone is an atypical drug that blocks both dopamine and serotonin receptors. This means that both positive and negative symptoms may be reduced. For example, Emsten 2008 found that after taking risperidone, <sup>symptoms</sup> at least were reduced by at least 50% in 84% of patients and 64% went into remission. This shows that to treat Henry's hallucinations, delusions and withdrawal, drugs may be best used alongside his CBT.

In conclusion, CBT is the most effective treatment for Henry but it is likely that he takes drugs at the same time due to the extent of his symptoms. Taking drugs before doing CBT may also motivate Henry more to be cooperative and maximize his treatment. In this way, Henry may experience successful treatment for his schizophrenia.

(Total for Question 6 = 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 54 MARKS

