

CASE STUDY 4:
THE FICTIONAL CASE OF PEPE LE PEW
“STALKER OR LOVER?”

Pepe Le Pew is a three and a half foot tall black and white skunk that made his cartoon debut in 1945 for Warner Brothers and the Merrie Melodies. Merrie Melodies cartoons also feature such characters as Bugs Bunny, the Tasmanian Devil, Road Runner, Elmer Fudd, Yosemite Sam, Foghorn Leghorn, and Tweety and Sylvester – just to name a few! In 1949 Pepe and his cartoon creator won an Academy Award for their work in “For Scentimental Reasons.” The most recent work to added to Pepe’s resume was a small role in the film, “Space Jam,” starring athlete/actor Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny.

Pepe Le Pew is a heterosexual French skunk who is in love. The focus of his love is Penelope. Penelope is a black cat who, in her mind, had the great misfortune to meet Pepe. They first meet after she rubs up against a freshly painted white fence-post, which results in her obtaining a white stripe down her back like that of a skunk. Pepe, thinking she is a female skunk, immediately falls in love. However, Penelope does not reciprocate these feelings and leaves Pepe confused as to why she is not immediately attracted to him. Penelope, having a keen sense of smell, runs from Pepe and Pepe always gives chase. He muses, “She wants to play at the lover’s chase. It is the little girl in her.”

At times Penelope is so overcome by his smell that she passes out, but Pepe is always there to catch her before she falls. He takes these events as signs that she is playing hard to get. Pepe believes that she is a shy creature and too afraid to show her true feelings. Pepe is heard saying, “For some strange reason, this little orchid is shy.” Pepe has tried all of his best pick-up lines on Penelope, but to no avail. Some of his more famous lines are ones such as: “Sweetheart, if I follow you home will you keep me?” and “You have a map, yes? I would like to use it since I keep getting lost in your eyes.” It is only at the end, exhausted and out of breath from running, that Penelope gives up. However, her willpower only gives out for the moment, as she never becomes content to stay with Pepe Le Pew.

INTAKE I NTERVIEW SUMMARY

Identifying Information:

Pepe Le Pew is a 56-year-old heterosexual, single, never married, black and white skunk born in France who is currently employed as an actor. M. Le Pew currently lives alone and reports no formal education other than “life and love.”

Presenting Concern:

M. Le Pew is court-referred to treatment due to multiple arrests for stalking a Mlle. Penelope and breaking a restraining order that has been placed against him. M. Le Pew is resistant to treatment at this time, stating that Mlle. Penelope is “playing the lover’s chase; it is the little girl in her.”

Background, Family, and Relevant History:

M. Le Pew was born in France and brought to the United States at a young age by his parents, who separated soon after their arrival in the U.S. M. Le Pew was raised by his mother until he came of age and then went out on his own. Both of his parents are deceased at this time. He has no brothers or sisters of which he is aware. M. Le Pew currently resides in California.

Problem and Counseling History:

This is M. Le Pew’s first time in treatment. There is no history of suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation, psychiatric hospitalizations, or previous formal *DSM* diagnoses of any type. M. Le Pew has no history of drug abuse, but reports being a periodic social drinker of wine.

M. Le Pew’s legal history involves several court appearances as a result of stalking behavior directed at Mlle. Penelope. However, criminal charges recently were dropped as a result of an out of court agreement. Most recently, M. Le Pew violated a restraining order placed against him by the court on behalf of Mlle. Penelope, resulting in a mandate that he attend treatment.

Goals for Counseling and Course of Therapy to Date:

During the initial interview, M. Le Pew stated he is in counseling only at insistence of Mlle. Penelope. M. Le Pew states his goals for treatment are to satisfy Mlle. Penelope so that he may return to their “lovers’ chase.” M. Le Pew cannot identify any concerns regarding his mental health or adjustment other than “I am crazy with love, no?” M. Le Pew did agree to setting the goal of no further arrests for stalking and to a second session where he would be open to clarifying further goals for treatment.

Diagnostic Impressions

Using the DSM-IV-TR, prepare your own multi-axial diagnosis to Pepe LePew’s symptoms, and “compare notes” with others in class!

DEVELOPING AN INVERTED PYRAMID FORMULATION

STEP 1: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Pattern of grandiosity; need for admiration; appears pretentious; preoccupied with fantasies of ideal love; sense of entitlement; poor concentration; unclear goals; denial of problematic behaviors and places blame outside of self; disregard for sensitivities of others; overly sensitive to criticism

STEP 2: THEMATIC AND FUNCTIONAL GROUPINGS

Focused on fantasies of ideal love
Unwilling to identify problematic behaviors in self
Resistant to treatment

STEP 3: THEORETICAL INFERENCES (Cognitive-Behavioral)

- (1) Negative behavior
 - (a) stalking/violation of restraining order
- (2) Illogical thinking
 - (a) idealized love of Penelope
 - (b) grandiose sense of self, belief that he is irresistible to Penelope
- (3) Irrational belief Penelope is playing hard to get

STEP 4: NARROWED INFERENCES OF DEEPER DIFFICULTIES

The focus of therapy is on the specific behavioral problems and the cognitive beliefs that currently drive those behaviors.

Desperate belief that he is only ok if in a love relationship
Irrational belief that Penelope, although a cat, could reciprocate the love of a skunk

INVERTED PYRAMID CONCEPTUALIZATION
NARRATIVE EXPLANATION

Step One identified all the possible symptoms and behaviors noted during the intake interview.

In Step Two, three main themes were identified that would have the greatest impact on treatment and that would be the focus of counseling. Those themes were identified from Step One as the behaviors or thinking patterns that stood out most clearly from the initial interview and would require the greatest amount of attention.

Step Three contains the theoretical inferences that will form the targets for intervention (as outlined in the treatment plan). Cognitive-behavioral theory was chosen because it appeared most likely to be effective given M. Le Pew's dynamics. It is his behaviors that are causing current distress, and irrational beliefs that are stimulating these behaviors.

Cognitive-behavioral theory also allows for the deeper exploration of concerns that could be roots to his irrational beliefs and behaviors, but it is secondary to the goals of changing current behaviors. Step Four identified possible causes for current behaviors, to be explored during treatment if time allows and a therapeutic need emerges for this exploration.

TREATMENT PLANNING I: **ECLECTIC SOLUTION-FOCUSED**

Goals for Treatment:

- (1) Reduce frequency of impulsive behaviors and increase frequency of behavior that is based in careful thought.
- (2) Reduce thoughts that trigger impulsive behavior and increase self-talk that control behavior.
- (3) Develop the necessary skills for effective, open communication and mutual, enjoyable time for companionship.
- (4) Increase awareness of own role in the relationship conflicts.

Interventions:

- (1) Explore and document instances of impulsive behavior.
- (2) Assign the client to list the negative consequences that occurred as a result of negative behaviors.
- (3) Confront denial of responsibility for the behavior or the negative consequence.
- (4) Explore perceptions of current, ongoing conflicts regarding the relationship.

If the court and Penelope are agreeable:

- (5) Facilitate sessions with other with a focus on increasing communication.
- (6) Assist other to communicate clearly and express feelings directly toward client

Measurable Outcomes

Outcomes of treatment would be measured by a decrease in stalking behaviors by M. Le Pew as well as no further arrests. Further, a possible secondary measurable outcome would be an increase in effective communication between Mlle. Penelope and M. Le Pew as observed in sessions and reported by Mlle. Penelope.

TREATMENT PLANNING II: **COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY**

Goals for Treatment:

- (1) Decreased client resistance to treatment process.
- (2) Increased client awareness of irrational beliefs achieved by challenging those beliefs during the therapy session.
- (3) Increased client awareness of how irrational beliefs affect behavior.
- (4) Increased client ability to identify tendencies that lead to escalating desires and preferences resulting in negative outcome behaviors.
- (5) Reduced irrational beliefs and resulting behaviors.

Interventions:

- (1) Develop positive relationship with client through therapeutic process.
- (2) Challenge irrational beliefs as they emerge during the therapeutic process.
- (3) Assign homework that has client increase his awareness of irrational beliefs and dispute those beliefs.
- (4) Increase client's awareness of use of irrational language by identifying the use of absolutes when speaking in sessions.
- (5) Use imagery techniques to demonstrate positive behaviors.
- (6) Use role-playing to identify behaviors that increase negative consequences as well as behaviors that increase likelihood of positive outcomes.

Measurable Outcomes:

Increased acceptance of the need for treatment, and increased awareness of negative behaviors and irrational beliefs currently utilized by the client, as observed in progressive sessions, comprise initial, primary outcomes required for treatment to be successful. However, these are preliminary goals; merely stating awareness of negative thoughts and behaviors is a necessary but insufficient outcome.

Additional ultimate expected outcomes are: observed changes in sessions as outlined under "Goals for Treatment," decreased stalking behavior as reported by Mlle. Penelope and/or the court, and the occurrence of no further arrests or police confrontations.