



Beyond the Red Flags: A Case Study

CASE STUDY: JESSE

Jesse is a first semester freshman at a small liberal arts college. In his Introduction to Political Thought class, Jesse expresses very intellectualized thoughts regarding politics and nationalism. He argues that America was stronger prior to more lax immigration policies and that the U.S. should adopt a more nationalistic policy. He argues for states' rights to create separate but equal schooling for white and non-white citizens and supports the idea that citizens should need a passport or driver's license to vote. When speaking, he uses terms like "those people," "illegals," and "aliens."

In class, other students argue strongly against Jesse's points, and the arguments become increasingly heated. At one point, a classmate calls him a neo-Nazi, bigoted racist, and Proud Boy. Jesse argues back that he believes in none of those concepts, but rather "I argue for individuals to take pride in their own heritage and cultural experiences. Whites should not be made to feel guilty for things their ancestors did, nor be ashamed or taught critical race theory, which lacks scientific rigor."

Students around campus continue to escalate against Jesse, calling him a Nazi, racist, and ignorant. He argues back to them while remaining calm and offers some rather disturbing political statements. He challenges a social justice group that has a Black Lives Matter table with the idea that All Lives Matter, explains his support for Kyle Rittenhouse, and argues the Jews are no longer a marginalized group, but own the majority of the wealth in the United States.

During a talk on campus related to free speech, Jesse wears a Swastika on his clothes and an empty holster on his belt as part of an "empty holster protest." Other students confront him about the Swastika and he says, "It's actually a Hindu symbol of peace that was co-opted by the German Nazi Party." Another student punches him and is taken into custody by campus police. Jesse ends up in counseling the next day, frustrated and upset by the lack tolerance to different opinions on the campus. He tells his therapist on intake, "I came to this school because it claimed to be a place to engage in critical thinking and explore ideas. What I get instead is violence and hatred. I really don't understand this at all."

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- From your campus perspective, what are the limits of free speech vs. hate speech? How would the Swastika incident be handled on your campus? How would the empty holster protest be handled on your campus?
 - What role do faculty have in finding a way to engage students in debate and discussion in class and what limits do they have to set on the boundaries of these conversations?
 - Do you feel as if Jesse is escalating as a dangerous individual? Does his behavior seem to be trolling or something different?
 - What are some of the challenges for mental health treatment providers who find Jesse's view-point offensive? Is there a place for referral or denying Jesse care based on these beliefs?
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Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) and Treatment Process**Step 1: Gather Thematic Case Data**

Gather a summary of key facts in the case to support the subsequent steps.

**Step 2: Identify Risk Factors**

Risk factors related to the case are listed and described here.

**Step 3: Identify Protective Factors**

Protective factors related to the case are listed and described here..

**Step 4: Apply the WSIR**

The White Supremacist Indoctrination Rubric (WSIR) is applied to the case.

**Step 5: Create Risk Narrative**

A story about the nature of the overall risk of the case is included in this step.

**Step 6: Develop and Implement Interventions**

Specific interventions relevant to the case are included in this step.

Step 1: Gather Thematic Case Data



Location & People:



- Small liberal arts college
- Jesse is identified risk
- Classmates in his Introduction to Political Thought class
 - Argue with Jesse
 - Call him a neo-Nazi, racist, and ignorant
- Jesse challenges a social justice group
- No mention of friends, family, or other supportive people in his life
- A student at the free speech rally punches him

Jesse:

- First semester freshman
- Openly expresses nationalistic politics, advocates for
 - Stronger immigration policies
 - States' rights, including segregated schools
 - Strong voter ID laws
- Uses slurs and enflaming language like "those people," "illegals," and "aliens"
- Says in class "I argue for individuals to take pride in their own heritage and cultural experiences. Whites should not be made to feel guilty for things their ancestors did, nor be ashamed or taught critical race theory, which lacks scientific rigor."
- Confronts Black Lives Matter with "all lives matter"
- Argues against critical race theory to a classmate and says to his therapist, "I came to this school because it claimed to be a place to engage in critical thinking and explore ideas. What I get instead is violence and hatred. I really don't understand this at all."
- Supports Kyle Rittenhouse
- Posits the antisemitic idea that Jews own most of the wealth in the US and are not a marginalized group
- Wears a swastika to a free speech event and when confronted argues, "It's actually a Hindu symbol of peace that was co-opted by the German Nazi Party."
- Wears an empty holster to the same event
- After being punched by a fellow student, goes to the counseling center

Of Note:

- While many of his actions come across as trolling (he likely knows how the swastika will be interpreted), when talking to the therapist, he seems puzzled by the reaction. This disconnect should be explored.
- There is not mention of any support systems or other protective factors. These need to be explored.
- There is also no mention of weapons access or any affiliation with white supremacist groups. Most of what he says is in line with mainstream right-wing Republican thought (aside, perhaps, from his thoughts on segregation). It would be worth exploring his sources of information and if he spends time on overt white supremacist sites.

Step 2: Identify Risk Factors



Present Factors:

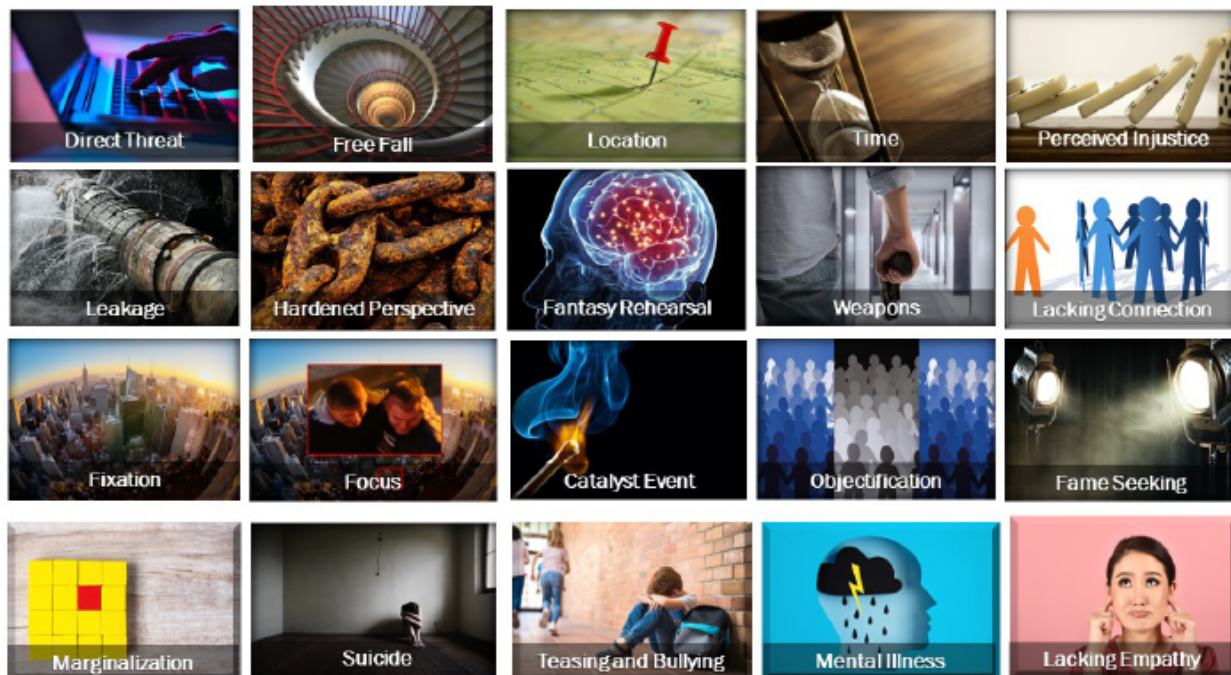
- **Hardened point of view.** Jesse expresses a consistent viewpoint that is strongly held on several topics. These include taking stances against immigrants, critical race theory, and white supremacist theory. To some extent, however, it would be useful to explore these ideas to an end. Is the true desire here to offend and upset others or are these truly his beliefs?
- **Marginalization.** There is outright anger and frustration at Jesse's perspectives and speech. He certainly feels different from many students on campus and particularly marginalized when it comes to his perceived rejection at being allowed to have his own beliefs.
- **Catalyst events.** Being hit by another student may be a catalyst event for Jesse to begin considering how he may defend himself during future arguments. It may also lead to further feelings of isolation, sadness, and potentially hopelessness.
- **Experience of teasing and bullying.** Jesse is taunted, teased, bullied, threatened, and physically assaulted by others for expressing his beliefs. There is, of course, the larger question of how much he brings these reactions on himself by continually confronting the core values of other groups, but there is no doubt he is experiencing teasing and bullying from others.
- **Social isolation.** There are few friends or other supports or connections mentioned by Jesse in this scenario. He is experiencing social isolation from others.
- **Lack of empathy and remorse for actions.** Jesse is surprised by the reaction to his behaviors, speech, and challenging of others' core values. There is a lack of empathy, insight, or awareness for why others would be upset about his behavior.

In Need of Further Exploration:

- **Grievance or dangerous injustice collection.** Jesse expresses frustration to his therapist about having his beliefs challenged by other people and being upset about being made to feel guilty for being white. This seems to be a recurrent surprise and/or area of conversation and question for Jesse, rather than something that he is expressing an intense anger about.
- **Feelings of isolation and hopelessness.** Jesse feels increasingly surprised and frustrated by others due to his beliefs. His thoughts and ideas are generally in the minority, and this results in him having fewer connections with people. While isolation is clearly present, more questions would need to be asked to develop a better understanding of how deep these feelings go, particularly after the violence of being physically assaulted.
- **Free fall.** Jesse does seem to be experiencing increased isolation and challenges in his social connections with peers. His academics are not directly mentioned and should be an area of further exploration.
- **Decrease in academic or work progress.** This is not mentioned directly in the scenario and should be explored moving forward.
- **Mental illness.** There is no current evidence of mental illness beyond Jesse's need for challenging other's core beliefs and, potentially, not being aware that the questions he asks, symbols he wears, or statements he makes carry consequences. Exploration of an underlying developmental disorder such as autism spectrum disorder or a personality disorder should be considered.
- **Use of substance.** There is no current evidence of substance use or abuse, but this may be worth exploring.

Not Present:

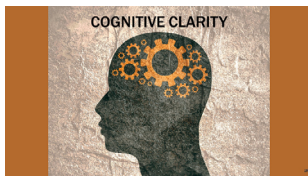
- **Fantasy rehearsals.** There is no evidence that Jesse is escalating in any type of attack plan. His expression of beliefs seems more driven to debate and argument on intellectual levels.
- **Objectification and depersonalization.** While there appears to be a lack of empathy and awareness as to why his speech and perspectives are upsetting to others, it does not appear that Jesse returns the name calling and negative descriptions other hurl at him, but rather he responds in a calculated, calm manner.
- **Threats.** There do not appear to be any direct or indirect threats of violence presented in this case.
- **Actionability.** There is not a clear mention of Jesse having access to a firearm. This would be an area useful for further exploration if there were any threats of violence or he expressed a need to defend himself from future attacks.
- **Drivenness and a justification for violent action.** While there is a drivenness for conflict and trolling others with his beliefs, this lacks any escalation toward violent action and is limited to debate.
- **Desire for fame.** There does not seem to be desire for fame or glory. There is a desire for debate and potentially trolling others that seem to be a driver for Jesse's behavior. There is an unspoken desire for attention, albeit as a firebrand.
- **Suicidal.** There is no direct mention of this. If there is more hopelessness and frustration expressed, then it would be useful to follow up with a suicide risk assessment.
- **Fascination with violence.** There is no evidence that Jesse displays a fascination with any kind of violence. In fact, it seems more likely he is focused on principled debate and dialogue.



Step 3: Identify Protective Factors



Present Factors:



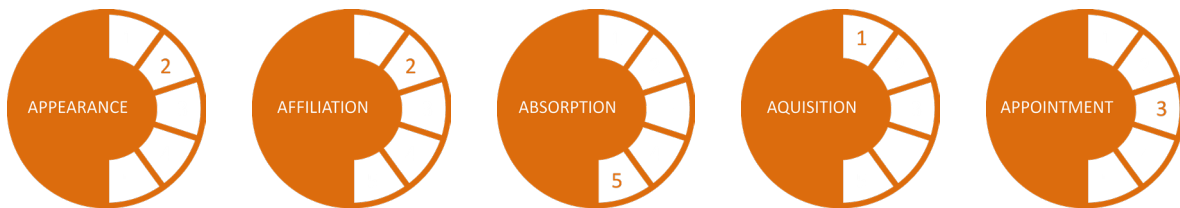
- **Environmental and emotional stability.** Jesse is experiencing a large amount of friction between himself and almost all other students on campus. There is not much information shared about his academic major, current academic progress, relationship goals, hobbies, social clubs, organization, or athletics. While he seems calm and reasonable in his desire to express and share his beliefs with others, there lacks an insight and awareness to how these controversial beliefs and behaviors will be received. While Jesse might initially describe himself as stable and that he is doing well at college and in his interactions with others, most of us would not see this as the case.
- **Social health and connection.** There is little connection with others and Jesse's social health and positive peer interactions are non-existent.
- **Access and satisfaction with non-violent outlets.** There are no places mentioned where Jesse feels free to express his ideas without immediate judgment and negative interactions. Therapy could be one place where this can occur for him and will be a critical aspect to his interventions.
- **Empathy.** Jesse lacks empathy and understanding as to why others would be upset about his statements and ideology. He also has a history of challenging others on their core beliefs and then is seemingly unaware why they may be upset by this.
- **Cognitive Clarity and Pluralistic Awareness.** While Jesse can express his viewpoints in a clear manner, there is a total lack of awareness of any perspective beyond his own. The wearing of a Swastika, despite the appropriation of the symbol from the Hindus, demonstrates a critical lack of awareness and insight.

Step 4: Apply the White Supremacist Indoctrination Rubric (WSIR)



Jesse has a deep absorption of the facts and details related to the white supremacist movement but is driven to debate and potentially troll others with these ideas, rather than to advocate violence.

Jesse has worn a swastika on his clothes representing *Passing Interest* (2) on **Appearance**. He is knowledgeable about many different groups but does not appear to be overly connected with any group beyond a *Passing Interest* (2) on **Affiliation**. Jesse has detailed and cataloged knowledge of white supremacist thought and would likely be at the *Historian/Marketer* phase (5) on **Absorption**. Jesse does not appear from the case study to have any knowledge or experience with weapons so this would lead to *None* (1) on **Acquisition**. Jesse seems to have an *Active Directive* (3) in terms of **Appointment** to a mission.



APPEARANCE

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION
1	None	Here there are no indications of tattoos, clothing, hair styles or symbolism related to the white supremacist movement.
2	Passing Interest	They show interest in tattoos, symbols, clothing or imagery associated with the movement. They may reference or wear tentatively some small affectation.
3	Casual Collection	They have some items of clothes that include symbols from the white supremacist movement. They wear these occasionally. They may have tattoos related to the movement, but they are small and in easily concealable locations.
4	Conscious Display	They have many items of clothing with white supremacist symbols, logos, or phrases. They may also have multiple tattoos that are visible and difficult to conceal. They may shift clothing or conceal tattoos to fit into a work setting or social setting, but often they can be found communicating a clear message through their clothes (e.g., Identity Evropa triangle, blood drop cross symbol).
5	Consistent Style	They are regularly found in clothing with white supremacist logos, phrasing or images and/or have visible tattoos, often on the neck or forearm, that are not easily concealed and convey their connection to the movement. They have adopted a hair style and other mannerisms connected to the white supremacist movement. They encourage others to wear and display white supremacist symbols.

AFFILIATION

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION
1	None	They have no affiliation (online or in -person) with any group that expresses extremist, white supremacist, or hate-based ideologies.
2	Passing Interest	They have looked at some groups online but have not requested more information or joined any newsletter or membership. Their online exploration exists on mainstream sites. They maybe have considered attending a local meeting, protest, or convention, but have not done so in person.
3	Casual Exploration	They have downloaded some online materials and are actively learning about the movement. They may have a local connection, group, or organization they have begun talking to and have attended a meeting, protest, or convention to learn more about the movement.
4	Active Membership	They have connections to several online resources with white supremacist content, many on “dark web” sites and forums, and have attended meetings, protests, or other group activities. They may have multiple accounts to hide their identity and follow those who hold white supremacist beliefs and/or active hate content directed to targeted groups (e.g., Blacks, Jews, LGBTQI+).
5	Leadership/ Recruitment	They maintain active membership to groups both online, especially on “dark web” sites and forums, and in-person where they have administrator, moderator, or other leadership status. They have acquired written materials, pamphlets or flyers and share these with others. They have an active social media presence that expresses white supremacist beliefs and/or active hate content to targeted groups (e.g., blacks, Jews, LGBTQI+). Their profile photo is a hate symbol or personal photo with their hate group.

ABSORPTION OF KNOWLEDGE

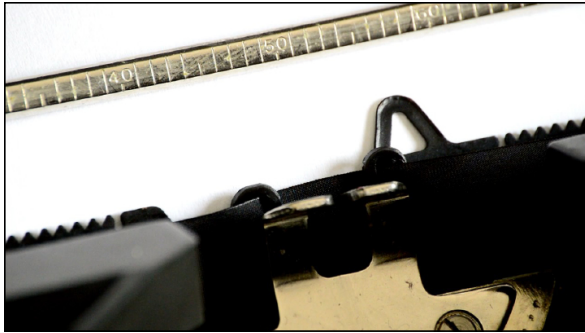
LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION
1	None	They know very little about the white supremacist movement and may suggest that it was over with the German Nazi Party.
2	Passing Interest	They have reviewed some material, perhaps read a book or manifesto, related to the movement. This is done more out of passive curiosity rather than direct pursuit.
3	Casual Exploration	They have acquired some knowledge about the movement and are looking to learn more. This may be through conversations with local members in-person or through joining online chat groups or membership websites. They may have some materials, images or documents saved, but these are limited to just a handful.
4	Focused Learning	They have a good amount of knowledge about the movement and have read several key texts. They have saved images, documents, and manifestos regarding white supremacy and hate to better defend their points. They share and talk with others about their study.
5	Historian/ Marketer	Their knowledge of the movement, ideologies and beliefs is detailed and well-researched. They make use of a catalog or classification system to store information and are always looking to acquire more. They have sophisticated counterarguments to those they debate and adopt a creative and manipulative use of social media. They publish and/or sell materials, logos, patches, stickers, and insignias to others.

ACQUISITION OF WEAPONS

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION
1	None	They have no interest and little knowledge related to weapons or dangerous materials. They have not previously fired a gun.
2	Passing Interest	They own no they weapons but have used a firearm on occasion at a range or while hunting. They have a basic knowledge of weapons.
3	Casual Exploration	They own or have easy access to firearms. They have the firearm for personal protection or hunting. They have taken basic firearm safety courses or have the equivalent knowledge. They show interest in other dangerous materials. They may have begun to acquire a few secondary items such tactical gear..
4	Soldier	They own multiple firearms or other weapons and have acquired them out of concern to use the weapons to be prepared for the coming conflicts. They have studied tactics and have taken combat firearm courses. They have multiple weapon systems. They practice with others and stockpile ammunition and/or do their own re-loading. They belong with a group or militia to support their training and work as a collective.
5	Specialist/ Officer	They have acquired deep knowledge of firearms and have stockpiled dozens of weapons. They may have a narrow area of expertise. They teach/support others in their acquisition of weapons skills. They train frequently and have specific plans detailing how weapons and gear will be used against specific groups. They study previous attacks to learn how to be more effective in their killing.

APPOINTMENT TO MISSION

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION
1	None	There is no mission considered and no commitment to any type of action against any group.
2	Passing Interest	They have a partial understanding and perhaps even agree with some of the white supremacist group's ideology, but have not joined a group, attended a protest or are considering action.
3	Casual Exploration	They have researched various groups, protests, and rallies and have expressed interest in attending. They either have attended event(s) or have plans to attend one soon. They feel aligned with the group's goals and mission yet are hesitant to become fully immersed or committed to action.
4	Active Directive	They are connected to a group and looking for ways to assist the group's mission forward. They align with the group's ideology, and they may have engaged in protests, rallies, harassing behavior or pseudo-militaristic tactics and training. They target other groups or protests to counter their messaging and look for ways to harm and disenfranchise those who they stand against.
5	Pathway to Violence	They are connected to a group or sub-group committed to violent action against those they hate. They have acquired weapons and engage in training and tactics to carry out a mission. The time, location and date may not be chosen yet, but they are certain it will occur and may be actively involved in recruiting and/or training of others to engage in violence to bring their vision of how the world should be to fruition.



Step 5: Create Risk Narrative

Two central aspects of this case are 1) Jesse has a deep knowledge white supremacist ideology, and 2) Jesse frequently engages others in debate, challenging their core beliefs, and receives insults, threats, teasing, bullying and physical violence in return. Given his higher cognitive ability and the ease at which most people would predict this type of reaction when publicly challenging others core beliefs, it seems incongruous that Jesse is surprised at these reactions, so it will be critical in this VRA to better understand if Jesse does this intentionally to 'troll' others or if he is truly surprised by their reactions.

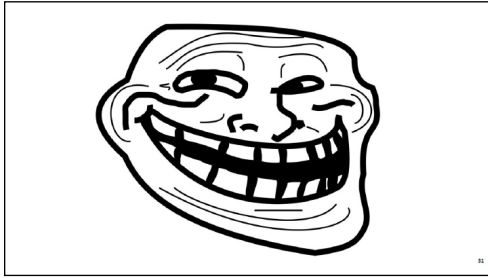
Since Jesse lacks any current attack plan with fixation or focus on a target, the central concern is an 'in-kind' relative response as he continues to experience teasing, bullying, threats and physical violence in response to his challenging and upsetting others. There are few unexplored aspects of the scenario, namely what he is studying and how he is progressing in his course, which are important to explore.

Jesse experiences social isolation and marginalization. While it would be reasonable to assume this could have a negative impact on his mental health, it is not clear if this will lead to retaliation, a re-doubling of his efforts to challenge and debate others, or acquiring a gun or weapon to defend himself from future attack. Does Jesse experience increased sadness, hopelessness, or suicide thoughts because of his conflicts and increased social isolation? While there have been no threats made by Jesse, it would be equally useful to assess his access to firearms.

Some motivators for Jesse to escalate his violence include his expression of frustration at being insulted threatened and physically assaulted. Future violence may be motivated by an upsetting event which arouses and upsets him, triggering an impulsive reaction. He could begin to see violence as a more viable option to control or change his circumstances as he often feels bullied, teased, and marginalized.



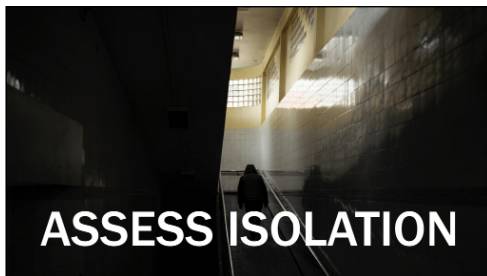
There are several disinhibitors for this violence including a lack of integration socially with others and a lack of anxiety about his actions. Jesse does have several pressing destabilizers, such as a disturbed perception of those around him including a disturbed perception of how his actions are viewed by others, and difficulty remaining rational and reasonable in his interactions. There seems to be few motivators for violence, yet it is useful to consider his aggressive actions towards others through a lens of potential escalation. In this case, he may increase his aggressiveness out of a desire to right past wrongs out of a sense of justice or honor protecting his right to expression. This may also contribute to a sense of status



or esteem as an outspoken firebrand such as a Howard Stern, Joe Rogan, or Rush Limbaugh. There is evidence he is excited or aroused by others expressing a viewpoint he disagrees with and the aggressiveness in that sense may be related to the proximity or a release of expression. While it is unlikely Jesse would see his arguments and conflicts with others as leading to a change in hearts and minds, but this assertive arguing and trolling may be related to a desire to change others' opinions (or at least confront them).

Overall, Jesse's risk for violence would be estimated at low with no evidence of a desire on his part to act violently to others. There is a concern the increased marginalization, conflict, and recent physical violence he experienced might lead to a potential in-kind response. It is worth mentioning that there is a highly unlikely potential that he is radicalized towards violence by the groups he is associating himself with and exploring online. In a thorough evaluation and treatment plan, it would be recommended to talk more with him about his affiliation with those who see violence as a path forward for their agenda and how his thoughts and ideas align or depart from this ideology.

Jesse would strongly benefit from encouragement to examine his behavior related to his desired outcomes. For example, if he wishes to engage in debate, is there an appropriate time or place to do that? If he wishes to change the minds of others through education or persuasive argument, is there a more effective way to reach this goal? It would be advised to explore his ability to understand his behavior as others experience it as well as the disconnect between his actions and the surprise at how others perceive him. To put it simply, it is more likely Jesse will be harmed by others who find his behavior insulting than to have him physically hurt someone else. Interventions should focus on helping him find new ways to define and meet his goals through his behaviors.



Step 6: Develop and Implement Interventions



- Reassurance to Jesse that the physical violence he experienced, unrelated to the reason, is not ok and will not be tolerated by the school. He should be made aware of the process in place to address physical assaults and be involved, as appropriate, in the process moving forward.
- There should be a discussion related to time, place, and manner as it applies to free speech. While Jesse should be encouraged to express his ideas, free speech is not always free of consequences. This should be approached carefully, as the physical violence that occurred should not be condoned or expected in the future.
- Jesse should be reminded of the conduct code as it applies to his behavior related to potentially harassing and unwanted conversations with other students on campus. While he has free speech rights, others have the right to exist without intimidation or threats, direct or otherwise, related to their safety.
- There should be a review of the college conduct policy as it relates to hate speech and symbols on campus. What is considered free speech and expression and what is considered hate speech and threatening symbols? This would be a good policy to review apart from Jesse. For example, how will the college respond to an art project involving a noose in a tree, an image of a burning cross, or a swastika symbol?
- Jesse appears to be surprisingly unaware and taken aback when people react poorly to his conversation and displays of images that most would consider offensive. Exploring the reasoning for this and determining if he is truly unaware or engaging in intentional trolling with his behaviors would help better determine a course of action.
- The school should review and monitor these events through its campus Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) or CARE team to ensure timely and proper follow-up. This may include obtaining release of information forms from Jesse's therapist to ensure progress and compliance with expectations.
- An intervention goal is to identify and connect Jesse to additional outlets for his thoughts that are more appropriate in time, place, and manner.
- There should be an exploration of a restorative justice student conduct process to address the physical assault that occurred.



THE PUNCH



FREEDOM OF SPEECH



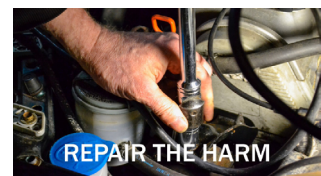
CONDUCT PROCESS



ON THE RADAR



FINDING OUTLETS



REPAIR THE HARM

Areas of Further Exploration:

- A discussion is warranted to determine if there are deeper connections to white supremacist ideology and actions. Many of these groups advocate violence to further their causes and it would be helpful to better understand how Jesse connects to these concepts. In other words, his absorption rating of a 5 on the WSIR indicates an almost encyclopedic knowledge of these concepts. What is the rationale for his time spend on this topic? When did he begin to explore these ideas?
 - There is also evidence of a rather wide expression of ideas related to white supremacist ideology. It would be helpful to ask Jesse more directly about which ideas he personally holds and what his thoughts are on the group's encouragement of violence to further their agenda.
 - There should be an exploration of disinhibitors related to a potential lack of guilt, anxiety, or remorse about the advancement of ideas that many find threatening and offensive.
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Counseling and Therapeutic Interventions:

A referral to therapy should address some of these general concepts.

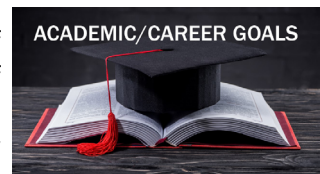
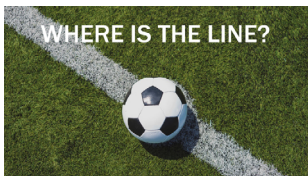
- A conversation about the physical assault and his well-being following this kind of violence, including a contextual exploration of whether this had happened before (being punched) and how he handled it then
- Exploring the nature of his ideology, where this developed and developing a better understanding of what core ideas and actions he is currently committed to
- Identifying and encouraging academic or career interests as a source of positive connection, including future political study, forensic debate, or communications
- Discussing family, friends, and his social life to determine if they are supportive
- Social skills training related to dating along with an identification of irrational beliefs and expectations
- Developing additional resiliency skills to address the growing disconnection between Jesse and others at school
- Assessing potential suicidal thoughts or behaviors that may develop because of his marginalization and likely teasing and threats of violence that may be occurring
- Developing empathy skills and encouragement to better understand the experience of others and why his behaviors are seen with such disdain
- Developing critical thinking skills that allow for multiple perspectives, alternative beliefs, and a reduction in Jesse's hardened perspective



Clinical Extra: Guidance for Clinical Staff

Therapeutic suggestions for treatment are typically not included in these types of VRA assessments beyond suggestions for the type and frequency of therapeutic treatment. These recommendations are included above. For the purpose of this book, the authors provide some suggestions based on the therapeutic approaches outlined in Chapter 13. These are organized based on the counseling and therapeutic interventions provided in the VRA above. As mentioned previously, it will be uncommon to receive this level of therapeutic direction in most VRAs, typically the comments are “outpatient therapy recommended.” If there is lack of direction from the VRA, the clinician will first begin with drafting these treatment recommendations based on their review of the VRA,

- **Support post-assault.** While a potentially challenging area to start with given Jesse’s troubling beliefs, there should be direct and immediate conversations around his reaction to the assault. This should include providing support and empathy related to his experience of physical violence. This kind of genuineness and concern for others is central to Rogers’ (1961,1980) work in person-centered therapy. Any potential comment related to the idea of “well, this was to be expected given what you said and have been doing” should be avoided. There may be a useful parallel process that could develop over therapy where the support and empathy Jesse receives from his therapist could be a springboard to him understanding this empathy is something he should be demonstrating; however, it would be recommended to address this later in treatment.
- **Assessment and developing supports.** It is unclear from the narrative what social and family supports may be available to Jesse. Does he have many friends? Has he made friends before? What is his family background? Are they supportive? How have those close to Jesse handled his thoughts and ideas? This can be seen as building up potential resiliency skills and addressing the conflict growing between Jesse and many of the students on campus.
- **Discussion of offensive behaviors.** A core question related to Jesse’s motivation is the disconnection between his words and actions and his surprise at how offended others are. This should initially be an exploratory, non-judgmental discussion of what Jesse’s expectation are when he says something offensive to them. He should be asked where these expectations came from and if they are still serving him well. The reality therapy approach to treatment (Glasser, 1975; 2001) offers some insight on how to intervene and better understand these cognitive distortions and lack of insight regard the response of others. Additionally, a focus on the development of discrepancy, outlined in motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 1991), would be important to challenge Jesse on his current behavior and how it is out of step with his goals.
- **Identify academic/career interests.** Exploration of future goals and identifying ways for Jesse to explore academic and career interests would be useful to encourage his progress towards his stated goals. This may involve the study of communications, forensic debate, public policy, or politics. Each of these fields stresses the importance of purposeful communication related to the outlined goals. Here the therapist could draw on reality



therapy planning skills (Glasser, 1975; 2001) to help Jesse identify next steps such as making an appointment, anticipating obstacles, and establishing small achievable goals. To aid this process, a direct referral to career counselors and the use of computer software designed to identify potential careers that Jesse would enjoy and find fulfilling would be helpful.

- **Absorption of white supremacist ideology.** Given the high level of knowledge Jesse has demonstrated in this area, the next area of exploration would be understanding how much of this ideology Jesse subscribes to and to what degree he resonates with the call to violence present in much of the writing. It would be possible he resonates with these ideologies as they create an opportunity for him to be unique and receive negative attention from others. Given all human behavior is purposeful, exploring the underlying goal of his mastery of white supremacist ideology would be useful to better explore alternative goals or paths to existing goals.
- **Suicide assessment.** While no direct suicide statements were made, an assessment would be helpful given the increase in marginalization and physical assault. The clinician should apply an idea to action approach to assessment and consider that Jesse may be hesitant and/or defensive when replying to questions that would make him seem weak or in need of help.
- **Empathy development.** Perspective taking and increasing empathy skills are critical areas of treatment that will help Jesse understand why his statements are so offensive to those he talks



- with on campus. Using the Rogerian approach, Jesse may learn from the way the therapist responds to him in an active manner, providing an authentic and genuine presence and treating him with unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1961;1980). The central tenet of humanism is having faith in Jesse's ability to behave well when free of obstacles and negative experiences in his own life. Essentially, the goal is for the therapist to teach Jesse how it feels to be heard and understood with the hope this is something he can practice with others.
- **Critical thinking skills.** The development of critical think skills is central to the cognitive behavioral approach. The therapist helps Jesse how his current behavior is out of step with his current goals. The motivational interviewing approach to change (Miller & Rollnick, 1991) would help Jesse explore what he is currently doing and if it is getting him closer or further from his goals. Further, Jesse could consider alternative thoughts and behaviors rather than those not beneficial to him. This provides an opportunity to introduce the process of change as it occurs over precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and/or relapse (Prochaska et al., 1994). By understanding this progression of change, Jesse can work on his behavior and see the results that help reduce difficulties he may be experiencing.



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