



Senioritis – DSM-VI Classification Activity



Objectives:

- To apply understanding of the definition of “**psychological disorder**” to a real-world situation.
- To simulate the process by which new psychological disorders become recognized as clinically valid.
- To apply understanding of causes and means of preventing **groupthink** and **social loafing**.

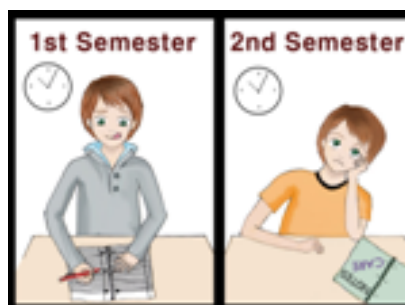
Task:

Senioritis is a sometimes-tragic affliction which affects hundreds of thousands of American students every year, some of whom are probably in this very room. In this activity you will evaluate the appropriateness of classifying senioritis as a psychological disorder. In small groups you will employ your vast expertise to create and present a proposal for consideration by your peers, who are also experts in the field.

In order to enhance the authenticity of this aspect of the task, it will be up to you as a group to decide how to accomplish your goal efficiently, effectively, and on time. For success in college and in most careers, it is essential that you develop the ability to be self-directed and work as a member of a team to accomplish complex tasks.

In working with members of your group, keep in mind what you know about groupthink and social loafing and how these social maladies can be avoided. As part of your grade, you will be asked to reflect on your group’s effectiveness and explain the steps you took to minimize chances of groupthink and social loafing.

You should also keep in mind what you have learned about personality. Be aware of how you might best take advantage of the personalities in your group. Also be aware of how aspects of your own personality might assist or impede the effectiveness of the group. For your group to maximize its effectiveness, you may need to stretch your behavior slightly beyond your normal comfort zone—for some this may mean speaking up more, for others, it might mean listening more and encouraging others’ input.



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Suggested Steps:

- Step one: brainstorm whatever you can think of about senioritis. Causes, symptoms, recovery, recurrence, etc.
- Step two: Classification – What type of disorder is it? Anxiety, mood, personality, psychotic, etc.
- Step three: Create an entry for the DSM-VI that includes the following sections:
 - **Diagnostic Features** (General Description)
 - **Associated Features and Disorders** (*Non-disordered* behaviors common among those diagnosed. Also any other distinct disorders that are more common among people with this disorder, essentially, people with Senioritis often suffer from what other disorders?)
 - **Specific Culture, Age, and Gender Features**
 - **Prevalence** (How many are affected)
 - **Course** (How it plays out over time)
 - **Diagnostic Criteria** (Usually a list of symptoms or behaviors, with some number required for clinical diagnosis, stating how many symptoms must be present to be diagnosed.)
 - **Differential Diagnosis** (Things that would exclude one from this diagnosis)
 - **Subtype(s)** (Persons which generally fit the primary diagnosis, but are distinguishable from the main group in a meaningful way).
- Step four: Plan your presentation to the class. You may use the document camera, so **create a document that is neat and easy to read**. You may use separate pages for different sections of your entry if you choose to do so.
- Step five: Make your presentation.



Time Parameters: 25 minutes to prepare

3-4 minutes to present and answer questions

