

Report: Month 1

Patient: Holden Caulfield

Analysis by: Dr. Cherise Boyer

Upon spending 26 hours speaking with Holden Caulfield in daily therapeutic sessions, I am under the impression that the patient is suffering from Clinical Depression. Clinical Depression is commonly initiated by a major loss or sudden change in ones life. Holden's depression began developing after the death of his younger brother, Allie, to cancer. Since Allie's death, Holden has been unable to find happiness and has severe guilt because of his inability to stop this change. The patient exhibits many of the symptoms associated with Clinical Depression. Holden is withdrawn from society, has a loss of motivation, persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, restlessness, and continually has suicidal thoughts.

During therapy, Holden many times brought up his brother and inferred the importance of Allie to his life and the traumatic effects it had on is life when he "disappeared". On July 18th, 1946 Allie died from leukemia while Holden was 13 years old. Holden is now 17 yet says "sometimes I act like I'm about 13," (9). Allies death seems to have Holden frozen in that year of his life unable to move past it. Allie was a very important part of the patient's life; he describes him as "terrifically intelligent" and "about a

thousand times nicer than the people you know that're alive" (38, 171). Upon his death, Holden broke all the windows in the garage where he slept that night (38), showing his rage and inability to cope with this change. He once mentioned that Allie and his sister are the only two things that he likes, saying "I know he's dead... just because somebody's dead, you don't stop liking them," (171). This indicates that Allie is still a main focus in Holden's thoughts and that he is unable to move past this time in his life. When ever Holden is feeling especially alone he imagines talking to his brother, in one instance Holden describes himself walking down a street block, "every time I'd get to the end of a block I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him 'Allie, don't let me disappear'... and when id reach the other side of the street without disappearing, I'd thank him," (198). The patient feels alone and turns to his brother for comfort. He is afraid people around him will just stop seeing him and that he will just fall "down, down, down," (197). The patient feels that it is unjust that his brother had to die while there are so many "phony" around. Holden is also paranoid that he will also develop cancer and die, declaring after reading a magazine that he "was getting cancer" which references to his fear of disappearing the way Allie did (196). Allie's death was a major loss to Holden's life, and because of his inability to cope, it led to his development of Clinical Depression.

Due to the patient's development of Clinical Depression he has been experiencing many symptoms, the major two includes loss of motivation and

withdraws from society. Holden Caulfield has been kicked out of four schools because of his bad grades. He is a very smart boy but has trouble applying himself in social situations. At his last school, Pencey Prep in Agerstown, Pennsylvania, he failed four out of his five classes (10). He doesn't like Pencey because he claims that it is full of phonies. At the school, he continually separates himself from all of his class mates. During a football game while everyone was down watching the game, Holden resided on top of a hill next to a cannon, and while he watched the game he shot insults at all of the students of Pencey (3). He dislikes both his roommate, Stradlater, and his neighbor, Ackley, because they appear "phony" to him. He doesn't have any close friends at the present time, but used to be close with a girl named Jane. He would play checkers with her, and comfort her when she was sad (33). Besides Jane, Allie, and Phoebe, Holden doesn't appear to allow himself to get close to anyone. To everyone else he seldom tells the truth, "I'm the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life," (16). The patient doesn't often open up to people because he is afraid of being hurt by them or having them "disappear" out of his life. He sometimes wears a red hunting hat that he bought in New York, and while he wears it he feels free to insult, or in a way "shoot", at the people around him. Holden looks for the fault in everyone and once he finds it he is disgusted with their phoniness. So as he wears his red hunting hat, Holden steps back further from society as he is only able to see the bad in it. The patient had tried to seek out companionship to fill his

loneliness by getting a prostitute. He was able to relate to her youth and hopeless life so was unable to use her for sex. When he meets people that he doesn't see as phony the patient will not allow them to be hurt. The patient's overall social activity is not productive because he only looks for the bad in people. Holden Caulfield lacks motivation in school and is unable to properly associate with society because of his depression.

In the midst of Holden's depression, he is able to find comfort in the innocence of youth and stability in consistency. The patient loves the museum. He talked for a long period of time about how he liked how it always remained the same, "I get very happy when I think about it. Even now," (120). Holden was able to find comfort in knowing the museum would be the same every time he went there, "Nobody would be different. The only thing that would be different would be you. Not that you'd be so much older or anything. It wouldn't be that, exactly. You'd just be different, that's all," (121). The patient recognizes that he is constantly changing as a person but finds stability in going back to the museum and finding it exactly the way it was when he left it. Holden also brought up the ducks at central park many times because he wanted to know where they went when the water froze over. The patient is more like a duck of the pond rather than a fish (like the cab driver he met), because he is constantly moving on when things get hard and "freeze over", whereas, the fish remain in the pond through the hard times. The patient desires to be a fish and find a permanent place of

consistent happiness but keeps running away at the sign of winter. Holden loves young children and desires to help them in any way he can. Due to his innocent brother dieing at a young age, Holden feels like he should find away to “catch” young children before they “fall”, in a sense making up for his inability to catch his brother. He finds happiness in his younger sister Phoebe because she is innocent and has not become a phony. He confides in her that if he could do anything in the world he would, “stand on the edge of some crazy cliff” while kids played in a field near by, and he would “catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff,” (173). Holden wants to be the one to prevent children from going through hardships and ending up in his state of mind. He wants to protect children and help them to preserve their innocence. As Holden Caulfield is coping with his depression, he finds happiness in youth and protecting them, and stability in things that remain the same, as he is seeking to become more like the fish in the pond.

Upon analysis of the patient, Holden Caulfield, he has proven to be suffering from Clinical Depression, brought on by the sudden death of his innocent brother, Allie. I recommend that the patient continue his therapy sessions with a psychoanalyst at the minimum of 2 times a week, as he slowly copes, and overcomes his depression. Also, he should begin taking moderate doses of norepinephrine uptake inhibitors, an antidepressant, to help him with a prompt recovery and cross back into society. Holden should also look into volunteer programs with children. Children bring happiness to

Holden, so it is my opinion that he should continue to invest in them as they restore his happiness. Holden is Clinically Depressed, but with some lifestyle changes, it is probable for Holden to recover and move on to live a complete and blissful life.