

SOAP Note Example for Depression

S

Subjective

In this section, record the client's concerns in their own words. This may include worries, preoccupations, sleep patterns, and how they impact their day-to-day lives.

Example: The client reports feeling “uninterested” in things he’d usually enjoy, such as playing hockey and spending time with his friends. He reports feeling low in mood for six months since his parents separated. It was decided that he would live with his father as his mother works night shifts, but he feels guilty for “leaving” his mother during this difficult time.

The client reports difficulty sleeping and, at times, stays up until 2 am playing video games to “take his mind off things.” He reports having difficulties concentrating at school and not wanting to be around his friends. He blames himself for his parents’ separation. He feels “wound up” and angry much of the time.

O

Objective

In this section, document the facts: signs, symptoms, and a mental state examination (appearance, behaviors, speech, mood, affect, thoughts, perception, cognition, insight, and judgement).

Example: The client is a fourteen-year-old male who was referred for counselling due to a decline in school performance and withdrawing from his peer friendships.

He was dressed in dark clothing, wearing a hoodie and unlaced shoes.

The client’s movements were slow and fatigued. His speech was normal in rate and tone.

The client reports a family history of depression: his mother had post-natal depression, and his paternal grandfather was “probably depressed too.” No personal history of depression.

The client denies thoughts of self-harm or suicide but has had occasional thoughts of “wishing I go to sleep and not wake up.”

The client reports disruptions in sleep, loss of appetite, low motivation, difficulties concentrating, and mood disturbances (irritability).

A

Assessment

In this section, include your formulation. This involves collating both objective and subjective information to form your impressions of the client's presentation, and, where applicable, a diagnosis.

Example: The client’s symptoms are consistent with a major depressive episode and have been present since his parents’ separation six months prior.

He experiences mood disturbances, anhedonia (loss of interest), and self-blame.

The client has occasional passive thoughts of suicide, but no plan/intent.

- **Diagnosis:** Symptoms suggestive of major depression.
- **Differential diagnosis:** Possible adjustment disorder or generalized anxiety disorder.

P

Plan

In this section, include your short-term and long-term goals for therapy.

Example:

- **Immediate:** Complete suicide risk assessment. Begin interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) for depression in adolescents. Schedule weekly sessions.
- **Follow-up:** Review progress after six sessions.