

## Depression Case 2

Anjali is a 34 year old married woman who is 16 weeks pregnant when you see her for assessment. This is her fourth pregnancy. Her first pregnancy was in 2014 and she had a miscarriage at 8 weeks gestation. In 2016, in her second pregnancy she was diagnosed with a severe foetal abnormality at her 20 week scan and, because she was told there was high likelihood this baby would have severe disabilities and may not survive beyond the age of 5, she and her husband made the difficult decision to have a termination at 22 weeks gestation. They called their baby Maya. They were referred for counselling which Anjali attended, but her husband had a high pressured job and so was unable to attend after the first 2 sessions. Anjali had a third pregnancy in 2017 and was told at her 12 week scan that there was no foetal heartbeat. She wanted to get pregnant again soon afterwards, but her husband was unsure whether he could cope with another pregnancy loss and when he eventually agreed they could try again it took Anjali a long time to conceive again.

There have been complications or identified abnormalities in the current pregnancy so far. Anjali has had a scan at 8 weeks and another scan at 12 weeks and these have been reassuring.

Over the last 6 weeks Anjali has become increasingly low in mood and tearful. Her sleep is interrupted and she has a very poor appetite. She feels she should be happy to be pregnant again and feels guilty that she has not bonded with her unborn baby, but she is unable to enjoy anything and spends a lot of time preoccupied by thoughts that her baby will not survive and that it will be her fault if something goes wrong. She is finding it hard to concentrate and focus at work and this has led to thoughts that she "can't do anything well". She feels hopeless and thinks that life would not be worth living if she has another pregnancy loss. She expects that things will not go well for her in life. She has no current plans or intent to harm herself. She has not wanted to tell anyone about the pregnancy and so she has avoided contact with her friends.

Anjali had not had any significant mental health problems prior to her first pregnancy. After the termination she described feeling very low and depressed for 9 months. She felt guilty and still wonders whether she made the right decision to have a termination and whether the baby may have survived if she had continued the pregnancy. At that time she had thoughts about wanting to jump of her 8<sup>th</sup> floor balcony.

In 2018 she had a severe depressive episode which lasted for 6 months. During this time she had to have 3 months off work. Her self-care deteriorated. She had suicidal thoughts, wrote a suicide note and her husband found her on the balcony of her flat in a distressed state and she said she had planned to jump from the balcony. She was under the care of the Home Treatment Team for 2 weeks and was treated with Sertraline for 6 months and saw a psychologist.

Anjali has many positive memories of her own childhood, but her mother died in a car accident when Anjali was 9 years old and her father became more distant after this. Her maternal grandparents were caring and supportive and looked after Anjali and her 5 siblings.

Anjali is a palliative care nurse. She enjoys her work but she has found it increasingly stressful. She has a sense that "nothing is progressing" in her life. She thinks people at work judge her negatively because she has had to take so much time off and she has not been promoted. She thinks that her family judge her negatively as she has not been able to have a child and she does not want them to know about her depression as they think people with mental illness are "weak". She has a large extended family and finds it hard when relatives ask her when she is going to have a baby and this make her feel "like a failure".

She has been married for 8 years and she and her husband initially had a good relationship. In the last 2 years they have argued more and Anjali describes their relationship as more distant. Her husband is an engineer and frequently travels for work.

Most of their friends have several young children and Anjali has gradually lost contact with friends as she has found it hard to see them in the last few years, particularly when her friends have been pregnant.

**What are your concerns?**

**What are the key issues that need to be considered in her care and treatment?**