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CASE REPORT

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Jordan Martinez -- Wrist Laceration: 24yo Male - Emergency Medicine - Wrist Laceration

Margaret Salzbrenner Hoopes[1]

[1] Medical University of South Carolina

* Correspondence: Margaret Salzbrenner Hoopes, hoopesm@musc.edu

ABSTRACT

The case of Jordan Martinez involves a 24-year-old male presenting with a wrist laceration in an emergency department setting, designed for learners in emergency medicine. The primary learning objectives are to enable students to demonstrate therapeutic communication strategies with distressed patients, perform mental status assessments including suicide risk screening, and identify nurse priorities for maintaining environmental safety during patient care. The clinical scenario presents Jordan with a 3.5-inch horizontal laceration on his left wrist, reportedly from falling through a window, though the injury is inconsistent with such a mechanism. He appears anxious and evasive, providing minimal eye contact and terse answers, with a background of limited social support and family history of mental health issues. Students are tasked with engaging Jordan in a supportive conversation to explore his emotional well-being and assess for suicide risk, using empathy and genuine concern to encourage disclosure. This case is useful in a curriculum for teaching foundational skills in therapeutic communication and safety assessment, aligning with competencies in person-centered care and professionalism.

Keywords emergency medicine; wrist laceration; mental health; therapeutic communication

CASE OVERVIEW

Jordan Martinez presents with a left wrist laceration after reportedly falling through a window. Engage him in a supportive, therapeutic conversation to explore his emotional well-being and assess for suicide risk.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate therapeutic communication strategies with a distressed patient in an emergency department setting.
2. Perform a mental status assessment, including suicide risk screening and safety follow-up questions.
3. Identify and address nurse priorities to maintain environmental safety during clinical patient care interaction.

CLINICAL PRESENTATION

Name	Jordan Martinez
Age	24
Sex	Male
Race / ethnicity	White Hispanic
Height	5ft 11in
Weight	170 lbs

Chief complaint. I cut my wrist and need it stitched up.

History of present illness. Jordan presents with a 3.5 inches horizontal laceration on his left wrist, stating it was caused by accidentally falling through a window. He appears anxious, offers minimal eye contact, and provides terse answers. He denies head injury or loss of consciousness. The story is inconsistent with typical fall-through-glass injuries.

Past medical history. No significant medical history.

Past surgical history. None reported.

Past psychiatric history. None reported.

Social history. Lives alone in a small apartment; works irregular shifts at a warehouse; limited social support; strained family relationship; drinks socially on weekends; denies other substance use.

Family history. Mother with major depressive disorder; father with hypertension; no known family history of suicide attempts.

Medications. No medications.

Allergies. NKDA

SIMULATED CHARACTER

Name. Jordan Martinez

Demographics. 24-year-old Hispanic male

Personality and mood. Guarded, anxious, and evasive with minimal eye contact. Displays discomfort and negative affect.

Identity, purpose and background. Jordan is deeply ashamed and fearful of being judged. He feels ambivalent about living but doesn't want to disclose his suicide attempt. He's wary of others and avoids direct questions about his injury.

Simulation behaviour. Only reveal suicide attempt if empathy and genuine concern are demonstrated. Avoid blunt questioning; respond positively to warmth and patience.

Opening line

> Hey... yeah, I just need this stitched up. I really don't want to be here long.

Procedures and actions available to the learner

Action	Result added to the chart	How the character responds
Vital Signs	Temperature 98.4 F; HR 102 bpm (tachycardic); BP 132/86; RR 20; SpO2 98%.	Is my heart rate normal? It feels like it's racing.
Wrist Wound Assessment	3.5 inches horizontal laceration across the left volar wrist, depth consistent with a sharp object; no tendon involvement; edges relatively clean; mechanism of injury inconsistent with typical fall-through-glass patterns.	Is it bad? Will it leave a scar?
Suicide Risk Screening (C-SSRS)	Responses vague; denies intent but hesitates before answering; observable emotional distress; indirect verbal cues suggesting hopelessness.	Do people really get better from feeling like this?

ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Item 1. What safety concerns were identified in this interview? *(free text, 1 point)*

Answer and rubric. Flat affect, injury that doesn't match history, lack of social support, lack of protective factors, inconclusive responses on suicide screening.

Item 2. Which communication approach is most appropriate for building trust with a guarded patient? *(multiple choice, 1 point)*

- A. Rapid-fire direct questioning
- B. Empathic reflections and open-ended questions
- C. Minimizing the patient's feelings
- D. Focusing only on physical symptoms

Answer and rubric. Empathic reflections and open-ended questions

Item 3. What are the nurse priorities for a client that has a self-harm/safety concern? *(free text, 1 point)*

Answer and rubric. Room safety (remove anything that could contribute to injury), work with team to ensure 1-to-1 monitoring until a licensed provider evaluates and/or clears the patient, nurse needs to expedite the need for intervention, documentation, etc.

DEBRIEFING DIMENSIONS

Empathy (narrative)	The ability to demonstrate understanding and genuine concern for the patient's feelings.
Thoroughness (narrative)	Completeness in gathering the necessary clinical and contextual information.
Therapeutic Communication (narrative)	Effectiveness in using communication techniques that promote patient comfort and openness.
Safety Assessments (narrative)	Skill in identifying and addressing potential risks to patient safety.

COMPETENCY ALIGNMENT: AACN ESSENTIALS 2021

Progression level. 2 - Advanced Beginner

The case requires the application of foundational skills in therapeutic communication and safety assessment, which are typically expected at an advanced beginner level.

Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice

Code	Competency	Rationale
1.1	Integrate knowledge from nursing and other disciplines	The scenario involves integrating knowledge of mental health assessment and therapeutic communication to address the patient's emotional well-being.

Domain 2: Person-Centered Care

Code	Competency	Rationale
2.1	Provide holistic, individualized care	The case emphasizes understanding the patient's emotional state and providing care that considers his feelings of shame and fear of judgment.
2.4	Deliver compassionate, culturally responsive care	The scenario requires demonstrating empathy and compassion to effectively engage the patient and encourage openness.

Domain 5: Quality and Safety

Code	Competency	Rationale
5.2	Use safety science principles	Identifying and addressing potential suicide risk involves applying safety principles to ensure patient safety.

Domain 9: Professionalism

Code	Competency	Rationale
9.1	Demonstrate ethical behavior	The case involves maintaining ethical standards in patient interaction, particularly in handling sensitive information about a suicide attempt.

Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development

Code	Competency	Rationale
10.4	Strengthen communication skills	The focus on therapeutic communication strategies directly relates to enhancing communication skills.

SIMULATION FORMAT

Platform	Figment Clinic
Format	Clinical encounter simulation with a full patient record
Synthesised voice	echo
Case first authored	April 2026

The interactive version of this case runs on the Figment Clinic platform. This article is the archival record of its content at the time of publication.

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