

MIDLIFE UNLOCKED

Case Discussion + Follow-Up Q&A

PATIENT CASE STUDY

Maya R. | Age 4 | *Referred by PCP for weight loss*

Meet Maya

Maya is a 41-year-old elementary school principal with a demanding schedule and is the primary caregiver for two kids. She describes herself as organized, driven, and used to solving problems. Maya has been a runner most of her adult life and typically exercises five mornings per week.

Over the past year, Maya has noticed changes in how she feels and functions. She reports increasing stress, disrupted/poor quality sleep, brain fog, mood changes, decrease exercise tolerance, and weight gain.

She has seen multiple providers over the last nine months. Each told her that her labs were “essentially normal.” No clear explanation or plan was provided.

Maya arrives frustrated and discouraged. Her first words to you are:
“I’ve seen so many people. Everyone says my labs are fine. But I feel like my body is shutting down and nobody can tell me why.”

What Maya reports in the intake:

- “I wake up exhausted every single morning. Like I never slept at all.”
- “My head feels foggy. I lose words in the middle of sentences.”
- “All of the weight I have gained is around my middle. Nothing I do works.”
- “My periods have gotten heavier and shorter. My doctor said it’s fine.”
- “I used to run to feel better. Now I want to stop as soon as I start.”
- “By 3pm I am looking for a cookie and coffee, most days.”
- “I feel like I’m holding everything together for everyone else and falling apart on the inside.”

Clinical Snapshot

- Skips breakfast or has coffee only
- Energy drink post-gym (200mg caffeine)
- Balanced lunch — protein and complex carbohydrate most days
- Afternoon crash — craves sugar, chocolate, anything and more coffee
- Small dinner eaten while working
- Late-night snacking when exhausted— crackers, kids' snacks, whatever is nearby
- High chronic stress load
- Limited recovery time

Relevant Findings:

Category	Findings
Sleep	7 hours, wakes often, unrefreshed
Energy	Very low
Mood	More irritable/overwhelmed
Menstrual Changes	Heavier cycles, now 24-26 days
Vitamin D	Low
Ferritin	Low-normal
Thyroid Antibodies	Elevated
Cortisol (AM)	Elevated
Exercise Capacity	Declining

Your Challenge

Maya was referred for weight loss. Her symptom pattern may suggest a much bigger story.

How would you approach her care?

Guided Reflection Worksheet

Complete prior to June 3rd. Bring your thinking — there are no wrong answers

Your Starting Place

1. What may be contributing to Maya's symptoms?

(Check all that apply)

- Chronic stress overload
- Perimenopause / hormonal transition
- Under-fueling / inconsistent nourishment
- Sleep disruption
- Thyroid dysfunction requiring follow-up
- Micronutrient insufficiency
- Overtraining / under-recovery
- Other: _____

2. What is the most important FIRST step in care?

(Choose one priority and briefly explain why)

CLINICAL NOTE: Phase of care: Stabilizing / Building / Integrating

Consider R.E.S.T.O.R.E. approach

- R — Regulate Stress
- E — Establish Regular Nourishment
- S — Support Digestion & Absorption
- T — Tame Inflammation & Immune Reactivity
- O — Optimize Metabolic Flexibility
- R — Rebuild Body Trust
- E — Enable Sustainable Change

3. How would you reframe the conversation with Maya?

Write 1-2 sentences you could say in the first visit that validates her concerns and builds trust.

Team-Based Care + Practice Application
Building the Care Team

1. Who should be a part of Maya's care team?

- Registered Dietitian
- Primary Care Provider
- OB/GYN
- Licensed Social Worker
- Endocrinologist
- Exercise Specialist / PT
- Sleep Specialist
- Other: _____

2. What role would the members have on the team?

Care team member + role: _____

Care team member + role: _____

Care team member + role: _____

Care team member + role: _____

3. What barrier is most likely to interfere with progress?

- Time demands
- Provider dismissal / mixed messaging
- Fatigue / low capacity
- All-or-nothing mindset
- Family responsibilities
- Unrealistic expectations
- Other: _____

4. What is one strategy you could apply in your own practice tomorrow based on this case?

Bring your responses to the live workshop.

There are no perfect answers. Your perspective will help drive discussion during our interactive case study workshop and extended Q & A. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you!