

Case Study Jessica

Jessica is a twenty-five year old Caucasian woman who comes from a divorced home. Jessica grew up in the North End of Burlington, Vermont. Jessica is about 5'6" and appears underweight and looks drawn.

Her parents got divorced when Jessica was eight years old and from that time she rarely saw her mother. Her parents both were alcoholics with her mother drinking mostly vodka and approximately a quart a day. Jessica's memories of her mother aren't warm, she remembers her mom hitting her and usually screaming and usually in a foul mood. Her father would come home from his construction job and sit in front of the TV and drink a 6 pack each night. Regardless of his drinking Jessica always remembers her father going to work and never missing a day. Jessica's mother left the home with one of her lovers. Her father mostly worked and spent his free time drinking in front of the TV. Jessica has no siblings.

Her parent's health problems mostly derived from their drinking. Her mother died of a failed liver at the age of 45 when Jessica was about 15 years old, she hadn't seen her mother for two years by that point. Her father is now 60 years old and appears to have early onset dementia and has high blood pressure, diabetes and a fatty liver.

Jessica believes her mother may have suffered from depression because all she can remember was she seemed sad, however, she is not sure if she was sad or drunk.

Jessica does remember spending time with her father's brother who tried to be a positive role model for her. Her uncle stressed education and hard work as a way to a better life. Jessica's uncle dies when she was twenty.

Jessica took her uncle's advice and studied hard at school, worked after school and went on to graduate from college. Jessica received a degree in nursing because she was committed to help others and is currently a registered nurse. Jessica was clean living and avoided abusing substances aside from an occasional drink. When she graduated school she got her own apartment, had a steady job and was on her way to a happy and productive life. Jessica spent most of her free time in the outdoors either hiking or just sitting and meditating in a natural setting.

Jessica practiced yoga and saw the world from a spiritual and not a religious perspective. She dated occasionally and never really felt connected to anyone. She also was not sure if she was bisexual, although she had a few experiences with various females.

Jessica's mental health appeared fine as she never showed any signs of mental instability.

At age 22 Jessica got into a car accident and broke her back, although she is not relegated to a mechanical device she does have difficulty with mobility. She walks slow and is often in pain. After the accident Jessica began to take opiates to deal with her incessant pain. Jessica states because of her low tolerance to pain she had to take more than prescribed.

Approximately a year ago she was pulled over for driving under the influence and because of that she lost her nursing job. With her job loss she was unable to pay for insurance and had to find alternative means to deal with her pain. She met a guy, Jimmy, who told her he could help her out. At first, he gave her some Oxycontin for her pain and then he began to pressure her for sexual favors to “pay” for them. She did not want to but because of her addiction she continued. Jimmy then introduced her to heroin. As she began using heroin her addiction escalated and Jimmy began to “loan” her to his friends to perform sexual favors, actually Jimmy was pimping her out and getting paid. During this time Jessica began to live in various houses and contracted Hepatitis C.

Jessica was eventually arrested for possession of heroin and is being offered an opportunity to participate in a diversion program. In order to do that she will also need a place to live, since living with Jimmy would certainly lead her back to negative activities.

Jessica meets with you the day after she is arrested and come to see you straight from jail. She appears depressed and in a state of uncertainty. She is a bit disheveled, had a scent of body odor, and slouched in her chair. Jessica however was oriented to person, place and time and was able to articulate a desire to get her life back on track. Jessica appears to have appropriate motor skills, is able to count backwards by 7 from 100 to 60. Jessica claims to not see or hear anything that isn't there. Her thought process seems logical and goal oriented.

Jessica did say she is still in pain and would like some pain management and also an opportunity to be enrolled in a MAT program. She tells you she was injecting at least 20 bags of heroin a day and overdosed on three occasions over the last year. She said she got some suboxone on the street and has been taking that since she was released from jail three days ago to help with her withdrawal.

Jessica also says she believes Jimmy isn't a bad person and was like her, just doing things for money. She would still like to continue to see him because she says he is the only person that cares for her.

Although she appears depressed she assures you she has no intention of hurting herself.