

Case Study and Questions

Wendy, age 30 and divorced, experienced the following symptoms: poor appetite, insomnia, decreased concentration for four years since her divorce and custody fight with her ex-husband. While she has been awarded full custody of her three children, ages 4, 8, 9, she reports that she is still grieving the loss of her marriage. She works a full time job, but has recently been counseled for her decreased productivity. She reports that this is related to her lack of concentration. She reports to be taking over-the-counter sleeping pills, but says they have been ineffective for the past several months.

A referral was made to Children and Youth from the school social worker due to concerns about the two school-aged children missing over 20 days of school during the first two marking periods. The social worker also reported that the 8-year old daughter seemed to be losing weight and the 9-year old son is failing five of his seven classes.

This Caucasian, lower middle income family lives in a townhouse in the suburbs of Harrisburg. The family reports having no relatives residing within 200 miles, the closest being in Pittsburgh. The mother reports having a positive relationship with her family, except "they do not understand my current situation."

Wendy reports that the family attended church on a regular basis until her husband had an affair and left her for his secretary. She reports she was too embarrassed to go to church since then because she "can't keep my family together." She used to teach Sunday school and attended activities with other woman in the church. Her children had been very involved with many friends, until they stopped attending three and a half years ago.

Case Study Questions

Questions about the case study to answer in small group and report to large group:

1. What diagnosis do her symptoms suggest? What are some other possibilities? Justify your decision.

2. How have the mother's symptoms of depression impacted the children?

Biologically?

Psychologically?

Socially?

Culturally?

Case Study Questions (continued)

3. In what other ways could the mother's untreated symptoms impact the family and children?

Biologically?

Psychologically?

Socially?

Culturally?

4. To what mental health services could this family be referred for assistance?
5. What treatment would you suggest, including medication options?