

Barbara's Case

Barbara is a 16-year-old Caucasian female. She has been in out-of-home care for three years and is currently living in a group home for girls.

Barbara was sexually and physically abused by her father and mother from age six to age 13. The abuse was finally discovered when Barbara told her secret to the school counselor. Efforts to maintain Barbara in the home and to reunify Barbara with her biological parents after placement were futile. Her parents refused to cooperate in case planning and continued to deny allegations of abuse.

Barbara has been in four foster homes in three years. Her last placement was with a foster family for one year before entering the group home. The foster family initially wanted to pursue adoption but when they discovered that Barbara was abusing alcohol and other drugs and was sexually active, they changed their mind. They believed that AOD abuse showed that Barbara was "willfully going against their religious beliefs." When they tried to get help for the problem, Barbara ran away. She was later found and placed in a drug rehab program for 90 days. After graduating from the program, Barbara entered the group home. Barbara has been participating in individual counseling and attending the required ALA-Teen meetings. She is beginning to make friends for the first time with girls in the group home.

Barbara is now in a school environment that is stable and that recognizes her special talents.

QUESTIONS

- A. What factors in Barbara's environment increase risk?

- B. What strengths does Barbara have that also protect her?

- C. How would you counsel a caseworker who has this case?