

Case Note Scenario

You are a case manager in an adult outpatient drug and alcohol treatment program. The center you work for provides only intensive outpatient and outpatient services. As a case manager for the outpatient component, you have an active caseload of 25 patients. You primarily work with young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who have some sort of involvement with the adult criminal justice system. Jennifer Martin is your patient. She attends both group and individual therapy sessions. For the past three weeks she has missed two group sessions, one individual session and has been 15 minutes late to another individual session. Jennifer is on probation for possession of a controlled substance and grand larceny. She has been in treatment for approximately two months. You, as her case manager, have asked her to attend this session after missing her last individual appointment.

Case Manager: "I am glad to see you made it today, Jennifer. I am starting to get worried about your attendance for the past two weeks."

Jennifer: "I've just been really busy lately. You know, it is not easy staying clean, working, and making counseling appointments. Are you really worried about me or are you just snooping around trying to get information about me to tell my mom and probation officer?"

Case Manager: "You seem a little defensive and irritated. Are you upset with me or your mom and your probation officer, or with all of us?"

Jennifer: "I don't know...it just feels like everyone is on my case. I am tired of having to report to everyone where I am going, what I am doing, why I am doing things, and not doing others. I am just so tired of everyone watching me. I guess that includes you too."

Case Manager: "So I am included on this list of people who watch over you. How did I get on this list?"

Jennifer: "You told my probation officer that I had missed group and individual sessions before you talked to me."

Case Manager: "And that makes you feel..."

Jennifer: "Pissed off. I thought you were different. I thought I could trust you, but you are just like everyone else in my life."

Case Manager: "Just like everyone else, meaning?"

Jennifer: "You go over my head, treat me like a child, don't talk with me first. I hate when people do that. Why did you have to talk to my probation officer before talking with me?"

Case Manager: "It sounds like I hurt your feelings and broke some kind of trust with you."

Jennifer: "Yeah, it feels like that." (Jennifer stops talking and looks at the ground, wiggling her leg back and forth.)

Case Manager: "Have you felt this way before, Jennifer? Hurt, and like the person you trusted has let you down?"

Jennifer: (Jennifer slowly raises her head and nods.)

Case Manager: "When did you feel like this, Jennifer?"

Jennifer: "When my dad divorced my mom, about two years ago. He promised he would stay in contact with me. Oh, he did for a while, about six months after the divorce, but his calls and visits got more and more sporadic. I didn't hear from him until I got arrested and put on probation. I hate talking about this stuff!"

Case Manager: "I know it is hard talking about this and it brings up a lot of strong feelings for you, but we need to do this. How are the feelings you have regarding trust related to your use of methamphetamine?"

Jennifer: "I don't want to talk about this; its too painful!"

Jennifer grabs her backpack and walks out of the counseling room. The Case Manager attempts to get her to return, but Jennifer keeps walking.