

## **Case Summary: Theresa**

Theresa is a 48-year-old, married Caucasian female. She lives in a Phoenix home with her husband, daughter age 21, and son age 17. She earned a B.S. degree in business from Arizona State University. She is now a vice president for a mortgage company.

### **Presenting Problem**

Theresa related that her discovery of daughter's possession of marijuana in her room prompted her to seek help for the stress that she suffers. She reported moderate conflict with her daughter and mild conflict with her son. She has increased her use of alcohol in the last three months to cope with extra difficulties on her job. In addition, she has been worried about the health of her father, who has been living independently since the death of Theresa's mother two years ago.

### **History of Substance Use**

Theresa used alcohol and marijuana frequently when she attended college. During this period she suffered from several blackouts and tolerance. She reduced her use of both drugs upon entering the work world after graduation. She and her husband experimented with cocaine and drank "socially" in the mid 1980s. When her mother died two years ago, her drinking increased to a near daily basis and became associated with marital problems at the time. She was scared by the effects that some weekend binges had upon her health and marriage. Therefore, she ceased use of alcohol for a year without treatment. However, she resumed drinking six months ago as work stress intensified. There has been a slight increase in tolerance and she has resorted to alcohol use on a solitary basis. She hides some of her drinking from her husband as she does not want to disturb the fragile peace that exists between them.

### **Family History**

Theresa was born in Cleveland, the oldest of three daughters. Her mother comes from a Russian heritage; her father was of German background. She described her mother as critical, nervous, and protective. She described her father as strict, hard-working, and distant. She helped her mother with her sisters and performed well at school until her teenage years. Then she rebelled, associated with peers who liked to use alcohol and drugs, yet managed to maintain decent grades in school. She did not suffer any physical or sexual abuse but noted how she disliked the criticism from her mother. She indicated that she has been anxious since adolescence, with worries as a frequent symptom. No anxiety attacks have been experienced.

Presently, she has an average connection with her husband, an average connection with her son, and a minimal connection with her daughter. Her husband has minimal connections with both children and a lack of conflict with both children.

### **Vocational History and Interests**

Theresa engaged in odd jobs following her graduation from high school. She moved to Phoenix to attend college at ASU. She worked for banks and retail firms during and after her graduation from ASU. She joined her current employer ten years ago. She enjoys working with customers but regrets the lack of creativity in her occupation. In fact, she has always been interested in art. She displayed some talent in painting during her high school and college years.

## **Social History**

Theresa related well to males and females in high school and college. She dated many men. After two serious intimate relationships with men in her life, she found her potential mate, a young man involved in photography. At age 26, she married this man.

She maintains a few friendships with females. She does not get along well with her middle sister, but does act protective towards her youngest sister. She does manage employees well, although she is not a popular supervisor.