Case Study

Imagine that you are working for a non-profit chemical dependency counseling center and you are assigned to work with the Stone family of four. This family consists of Jed Stone, 47-year-old, second husband to 43-year-old Jana Stone, and stepfather to 16-year-old James Marshall and 11-year-old Rosa Marshall. The Stone family has agreed to counseling to “fix” James, who has been cited by police for underage drinking twice, and most recently was charged with underage drinking during school hours (he was caught drinking with friends during lunch in his friend’s car and is now suspended from school).

Jed and Jana have been married for four years. Jana’s first husband died of a drug overdose ten years ago. Jed is a truck driver and travels across the country. He is home every 10 days for two nights at a time. Jana works regular hours as an administrative assistant for a high-level manager in a local tech firm. During your first meeting, you notice that Jed and Jana appear to be at odds with one another, and the children tell you later that their mom and step-dad always fight.

Although Jed tells you he doesn’t drink alcohol, you get the impression that he may use marijuana regularly. Jana drinks often with friends on the weekends and admits to binge drinking. She feels she has a right to drink as it allows her to “blow off steam” and deal with the stress of “raising these kids alone.” She doesn’t go to the bars and usually has friends over to her house for a party. Jed agrees that his wife has a right to party and is glad that she has friends to keep her company while he is gone. They both feel that the real problem is James and his friends.

You learn that James has recently started working for Subway and is rarely home. When he is home, he goes straight to his room and does not interact with his mother or sister. Rosa tells you that she spends a lot of time alone and with her mother. She often “takes care” of her mother on the days following one of her mom’s parties. Although she is quiet and withdrawn, she does tell you that she feels scared a lot.