

## Case Study #2

### Tara\*

Tara is a 12-year old student has the Special Education eligibility of Intellectual Disability (ID-Mild) and a medical history of emotional disorders. She has a diagnosis of Delusional Disorder.

Last year, she was removed from her home when social workers discovered that her mother's boyfriend was sexually abusing her. Tara and her two younger brothers were placed in separate foster homes.

Excerpts from an interview with Tara's teacher follows:

"Tara is imaginative and generally well-behaved. Sometimes it's difficult for me to distinguish between truth and imagination with her. Other staff members have said she is psychotic, and I read about her diagnosis, but she's never shown signs of hallucinations or hearing voices in my class. Tara often seeks affection in a way that a much younger child would. Her affection-seeking behavior seems out of character for a 12-year old, particularly because her appearance is mature for her age. She wears make-up and tight-fitting clothing.

Several weeks ago, I taught the basic lesson on pregnancy and childbirth in our health class. A couple days later, other girls in the class told me that Tara was claiming to be pregnant. I noticed that she had started bringing baby clothes to school, and there was a lot of secretive talk among Tara and the other girls. Eventually, Tara told me she thought she was pregnant. I asked her why she thought so. She explained matter-of-factly that she was probably pregnant because of what her mother's boyfriend had done to her. I explained to her several times that this was impossible because what he had done happened so long ago, but she refused to believe me.

A few days later, I found out that Tara sent several nude photos of herself to two high school boys on Facebook. Luckily, the boys reported the message and photos to the principal. When the principal called Tara's foster parent, she told him the photos had been taken by Tara's foster sisters. The foster parent claims that she told the girls to delete the photos. Obviously, they didn't. The foster parent refused to discuss the matter with Tara. She told me that this is my responsibility as the teacher. The principal agreed with her.

With this responsibility placed on my shoulders, I kept Tara after school one day and talked with her for a long time. I told her about how much I love my own children, but also how much time they take from me, and how I have very little time for myself. I also talked to her about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Unfortunately, Tara insisted that she wants to get pregnant. She also insisted that she would eventually get pregnant because of her experiences with her mother's boyfriend. I was completely unable to get through to her."

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In your response, please address the following questions. Use information from our Day 2 slides, learning activities, and relevant citations from our text.

1. How might biological, family, and/or school influences be contributing to Tara's behavior?
2. What cultural and/or "microcultural" factors should be considered?
3. What characteristics of adolescence might be applicable?
4. What questions would you ask to gain further understanding of this case? What would you recommend to the teacher?

\*Adapted from:

Kauffman, James M., Timothy J. Landrum. *Cases in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Children and Youth*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009. Book (pp. 47-48).