

Youth Friendly General Practice: Advanced Skills in Youth Health Care

Unit Two - Case studies - Intervention

Mark

Mark is a 14 year old boy brought in to see you by his mother. She is concerned because Mark seems to have lost interest in school. She is also concerned because he has no friends, spends most of his time in his room and is very irritable. He says he feels like an outsider at school and hates going to school because he doesn't fit into any peer group. He has bad acne and often gets bullied at school. He has missed more than 30 days of school this year with numerous minor ailments. He has also dropped out of all his usual sporting and social activities.

Mark has constant conflicts with his father over his school work. He has fallen so far behind in his studies that he thinks it is too hard to catch up. He feels tired all the time and doesn't sleep well. He says that his parents don't really care about him – all they worry about are his grades. He can't see any future for himself.

What are the main goals of your management plan?



What intervention strategies would you use to address the young person's problems and modify their risk behaviours?



What strategies would use to enhance their protective factors?



What other professionals would you seek to involve in providing treatment to the patient? (e.g. allied health professional or specialist; youth-specific services etc.)



Fatimah

Fatimah is a 15 year old student of Sudanese background who comes to see you on the advice of one of her class mates. She appears very anxious. Eventually she tells you she had unprotected sex on the weekend and is scared she might be at risk of pregnancy. She becomes teary and tells you her parents will “kill her” and her boyfriend if they find out. Fatimah is healthy and has had regular periods for the past two years.

A thorough sexual history reveals that she is involved in her first sexual relationship with a young man 2 years older at the same school. Her boyfriend has had previous sexual partners. The relationship is consensual and they have used condoms all the time, except yesterday, when they ‘didn’t have any on them’. They have had oral sex a couple of times. Fatimah and her boyfriend often go to parties on the weekends where they drink a lot of alcohol, but she does not take any illicit drugs. She says she would like to get a prescription for the contraceptive pill, but does not want her parents to know.

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Sally

Sally is an 18 year old first year student at a large university. She is having difficulty sleeping and her mother insisted she see a doctor. She is overwhelmed by the size of the university, having lived in a small town all her life. She is concerned about her 'shyness' and feels it is preventing her from making friends. She is anxious about meeting people. She really misses her family and her friends back home.

Sally is concerned about her performance on tests. Although she believes her study habits are adequate, she reports that she fails the tests because she gets too nervous about them. She is having difficulty sleeping and you notice that she looks very thin. She has started taking sleeping pills to help. When asked, she tells you that she doesn't feel like eating very much because she is so worried all the time and feels nauseous.

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Adam

Adam is a 16 year old boy who is a long-time patient of your practice. His mother brings him along because of his deteriorating school performance and his increasingly aggressive behaviour toward her. Adam enjoys school and hopes to be a businessman one day. He has a reputation as the ‘class clown’ and for disrupting class activities. His parents have recently separated and he is finding it difficult to cope with the change. He is currently living with his mum and 2 older brothers. He doesn’t really get along with his mum but has a good bond with his oldest brother.

Adam goes to mates’ houses most weekends and often ends up drunk. He says there’s nothing else to do around town. Adam finds that drinking alcohol makes him relax and he doesn’t get as angry. He has begun having a drink most days to achieve this feeling, often having a drink most evenings.

Adam is strongly built and is a good football player. He has the potential to play representative football if he attends training regularly and applies himself. This has been quite difficult for him lately as he has been feeling down. Adam knows that his drinking is unhealthy but doesn’t see any way of changing it.

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Tara

Tara is a 15 year old girl who presents with low mood and concerns about her body image. She is very bright academically but is struggling at school because she says that she doesn't fit in. She is frequently the target of harassment by other students because of her weight and her appearance (she dresses in black, has multiple body piercings and describes herself as a 'goth'). She has frequent mood swings and experiences severe anxiety about going to school. She frequently feels nauseous at school and has missed a lot of school this year because of her anxiety. Tara feels that she is ugly and overweight.

She is accompanied by her mother who reports that she herself has a history of depression, though she has mostly overcome this through counselling. Tara recently broke up with her boyfriend. She says she felt suicidal after this and shows you a number of slash marks on her arm. However, she says that this was not a suicide attempt. When she feels really depressed or anxious, she feels that the only way she can feel better is to cut herself. She has researched her problems on the internet and she is hoping that you will give her some medication to help relieve her anxiety and depression.

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Kylie

Kylie is a 15 year old girl who lives at home with her mother and father and 17 year old brother. Her parents both work long hours and Kylie and her brother are often home alone together. Kylie and her brother do not have a close relationship. Her mother has brought her along because she has been so ‘moody’ lately. Kylie can’t see what the fuss is about and maintains that everything is fine.

Kylie is in Year 10 and enjoys school. She is an excellent student and wants to study vet science at university. Kylie plays in the school band and is in the local hockey team. Kylie has a supportive friendship group who are concerned about her because she always seems so down.

Kylie drinks alcohol on the weekends at parties with her friends. She has sometimes gotten so ‘blind’ that she cannot remember what happened. At one party she woke up in bed with an older guy she did not know.

Kylie has had some depressed mood lately but is not suicidal. Kylie has cut her arms once but stopped because it hurt too much and only made her feel worse.

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Matt

Matt is a 17 year old young man who presents with relationship problems. He is very anxious about seeing you. Matt is worried about being HIV infected. He started having sexual intercourse for the first time 8 months ago. He has had a total of three different partners, all men. Sexual practices have included oral sex and receptive anal sex. He has nearly always used condoms but didn't on several occasions with his most recent partner who he broke up with 2 weeks ago. He has been feeling depressed because he was in love with this partner. He is unsure of the partner's HIV status or other sexual practices.

Matt lives at home with both parents and two younger sisters. He is at TAFE completing a computer course and works part time. He 'came out' to his family only a month ago, although he has "known that he is homosexual" since he was about 12. His mother cried but seems OK now but his father hasn't spoken to him much since. He has only told one of his friends, a good mate from school. He has found a local support group that meets once a fortnight and is making some friends there. He does not smoke and only drinks socially. He doesn't use any other drugs.

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Leah

Leah is a 16 year old girl of Pacific Islander background, who lives in an extended family including her parents, grandmother and 4 siblings, as part of a small community of other Islanders. She is in Year 10 at the local high school. Both her parents are unemployed. She is brought to you by a youth worker from a local youth centre and tells you that she is 6 months pregnant. The only other person who knows is her school principal. She says that the father of the baby is a 17 year old boy, a family friend, who also doesn't know. Leah is quite tall (170cm) and of large build so that her pregnant abdomen is quite well hidden. She tells you that she wants to give the baby up for adoption without anyone in her family or school knowing, and that she intends to "run away" for a couple of weeks around the time of confinement. She is willing to be referred to the local hospital for booking in and antenatal care, and is willing to receive assistance to help her find accommodation and support necessary to deliver the baby and organise the adoption.

She says that her family and cultural background is the main reason for her wishing to maintain secrecy around her pregnancy. She says that she has made her own decision because she and her family could face harsh recriminations within her extended family and community otherwise.

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