

Case Study | Unit 3



Jennifer, a 31 year old African American, middle class woman, presents following a DUI charge.

She says the charge was a fluke because she never drinks and drives. In fact, she was just going home from a co-worker's baby shower, where she believes she was the only person who was not "drunk."

Jennifer checks her watch as soon as she sits down and asks if the assessment can be somehow accelerated. Jennifer is a dental hygienist and has only taken a couple hours off from work. The practice where she works is currently understaffed. Jennifer is quite embarrassed about the DUI, especially since she recently realized that she is pregnant.

She says, "I come from a religious family. My father is a pastor. No one in my immediate family drinks now. I can't believe this has happened to me."

Jennifer shares that her father drank heavily in college, but he stopped when he began to believe that he was headed in the direction of his own father who died of cirrhosis of the liver at the age of 41.

Jennifer herself had some problems in college with what she called *dangerous drinking* but has since limited herself to 4 glasses of red wine a day; she quickly says that she will have to severely reduce that number now that she is pregnant.

Jennifer reports being extremely nervous about the pregnancy because her husband does not want children. Lately, she has also not slept well and has had recurring thoughts about an incident of childhood sexual abuse that she thought she had completely overcome years ago.

Jennifer has also noticed that she is having difficulty concentrating and is irritable, but believes that these symptoms are due to the pregnancy.

She suddenly looks somber and says, "It's ironic, but in the midst of my crisis, I think I've found some religion. Maybe it's not the overwhelming religion of my parents, but I do find some comfort in believing now, really, I'm fine. I wish there was some way you could help me fix this in a couple of weeks so I can get on with my life."