

Briona

Briona is a 14-year-old African-American female who is at-risk of out-of-home placement following a series of conflicts in her home with her mother and mother's boyfriend.

Family: Briona lives with her mother (Jackie), mother's boyfriend, and her two younger siblings (13 and 2). The youngest brother is the biological child of her mom and boyfriend.

Recently, Briona was engaged in two physical family conflicts where the police were called to the home. The night of both incidents police reported that her mother and boyfriend appeared intoxicated. The most recent incident occurred when Briona stayed out all night and did not come home until the next night. Her mother's boyfriend confronted her upon her return home, telling her she was worthless and wouldn't amount to anything and that she needed to start listening to her mother. Briona responded by telling him that he was not her father and did not have to listen to him. Her mother intervened and told Briona that she did have to listen to both of them and slapped her. Briona responded by hitting her mother back. Her mother's boyfriend intervened and tried to restrain Briona. She told him to get his hands off of her and pushed him away. The fight between her mother and Briona continued, and the police were called to the home. Her mother defended her actions to the police by pointing out she was just trying to establish basic respect in her home. The police felt that they had to file a domestic violence charge against someone and chose to file the charge against Briona, but called DCF on her mother. Her mother's boyfriend, who is on parole, got a warning from the police. After the police left, her mother's boyfriend gave her, Jackie, an ultimatum that either Briona goes or he goes.

When DCF came to the home to investigate, her mother told DCF to just take Briona and that she was "done." DCF encouraged the family to get counseling. Her mother agreed to services and called Helpers-R-Us for IHT services. For the next few weeks, her mother utilized the threat of removal as her only form of discipline. Briona reacted by escalating each argument, stating she would be fine with that, and claiming that Jackie was not a good mother and was always drunk anyway. Her mother would retaliate and say she would never amount to anything and that she was just like her father- "worthless." After one of these arguments, Briona stormed out of the house and went to her boyfriend's house and stayed for the weekend. When she returned home, her mother confronted her and told her to pack all of her things and get out. Briona responded with hurtful name calling, and a physical fight ensued. The police again were called out. IHT has just completed their assessment and have the following information:

Individual Functioning and Pertinent History: At age 11, Briona was allegedly sexually abused by one of her mother's previous boyfriends, but the charges were not substantiated. Briona remains angry at her mother for not believing her and for her mother's support of the alleged abuser. Briona never received treatment for the alleged abuse. Briona began cutting after the alleged abuse and has visible scars on both of her arms. Briona has not voiced any direct suicide intent, but after the most recent fight with her mother she indicated that it might be best for everyone if she wasn't around anymore.

Briona is highly impulsive and has poor emotional regulation. She does not stop to process possible consequences of her behaviors. Briona reports having difficulty falling asleep at night, and adds that she

just can't seem to turn her mind off. Her mother reports significant irritability and mood swings and wants her assessed for possible Bipolar Disorder. Briona had been receiving services at the local community mental health center for ADHD and was prescribed Adderall. The medication seemed to help decrease her impulsivity, but Briona admits not taking medication on a regular basis. Briona denies any substance use but her mother claims she has come home with bloodshot eyes and smells like pot, especially on the nights she is with her boyfriend.

School Functioning: Briona is repeating the 7th grade and is at-risk of failing again due to a combination of truancy and poor grades. She is in her third school this year. Brianna has trouble in math and science and reads at the 4th grade level. Her mother had requested that her home school test her last year for learning disabilities, but the day of the test Briona was truant and the school never rescheduled.

Peers: Briona has been hanging around older peers, who seem to be a negative influence on her behaviors. Her mother suspects that her boyfriend is part of a local gang.

Legal: Briona is involved in the juvenile justice system and has a probation officer who was assigned, following adjudication for a previous assault charge with a peer at school. There is a pending court hearing for the domestic violence charge with her mother. As part of probation, Briona is drug screened and has tested positive for Cannabis on two occasions.

Health Concerns: Briona is privately concerned that she might be pregnant. She has not been to her family physician in over two years.

Strengths: Briona is a talented artist and loves to sing. When she was younger the teachers would often hang up her drawings in the classroom as examples of excellent work. Briona's current Art teacher, Ms. Jones, really likes her and believes in her abilities as an artist.

Parent Strengths: Prior to meeting her current boyfriend, Jackie used to attend church weekly with her mother and her children. Jackie loves her children and is very attentive and able to set limits when she is not drinking. Jackie has worked at a local nursing home for two years.

Individual and Family Supports: Briona loves her grandmother and always does well at her house. But her grandmother is physically impaired due to complications following a stroke and diabetes. Her grandmother is a recovering alcoholic and is encouraging her daughter to get her act together and come to meetings with her. Religion plays a major role in her grandmother's life, and Briona used to attend church with her on Sundays when she stayed over. Briona was active in her church youth group when she was younger and did well assisting with the younger children at church. Briona also gets along well with her Aunt Tracey. Both have enjoyed spending time with each other in the past. But Aunt Tracey now has two young children and works full time and does not seem to have time for Briona.

Briona was positively linked with the community center in her neighborhood and had a mentor that she really bonded with and liked. But, because of the recent series of destabilizing events, Briona has not kept the appointments with her mentor and is too embarrassed to reinitiate contact.

This case study is fictitious and any resemblance to a real youth is coincidental.