

N4225 Cases

1 - INFANCY : The Abercrombies

Sherry and Mike Abercrombie have a 7 month old boy, Mike, Jr, their first child. Both parents are college educated; Mike is an account executive in training with a large advertising agency, and Sherry is a clinical chemist who worked at a local hospital until her 9th month of pregnancy. She has not returned to work since Mike Jr was born, preferring to stay at home with him, but she wonders from time to time about continuing her career. Both parents are in their early thirties and were excited about having their first, planned child. Mike Jr is a happy, inquisitive child who has doubled his birth weight, is breast-fed three times a day but is also eating baby foods and drinking from a cup. He has learned to sit up well by himself, reaches for objects, transfers from hand to hand and says 'DaDa,' but he doesn't crawl. Mike and Sherry are interested in doing all they can to encourage Mike Jr's healthy development : he visits his PNP regularly, and they read lots of books on child development. Mike Sr takes an active role in caring for the baby and has great expectations about what Mike Jr will be and do as he grows up. Sherry has noticed that other children the same age are different from Mike Jr. For example, Cindy, who lives next door, already crawls well and is pulling herself to a standing position. Sherry and Mike question whether or not they are doing all they can to be the best possible parents

2 - TODDLER/PRESCHOOLER : The Donovans

Barbara Donovan is a 26 yr. old divorced mother of two - 4 yr old Mary and 2 ½ yr old John. She has a good job as a computer programmer for a locally based multi-national corporation. Until recently, Barbara's mother looked after the children while Barbara worked. The divorce was a difficult one, and Barbara felt the children would be better off if they were with a familiar caretaker and in a familiar setting. Neither child has been to day care or pre-school programs. A month ago, Barbara's mother Eileen (who also did all the cooking) had a heart attack and feels she can no longer manage the children or the house. Barbara's friends have made several suggestions as to how to find care for the children - a live-in sitter, day care, nursery school or even trying to get on welfare - to name a few. One of Barbara's friends had two children of her own, close to John and Mary in age, and she is willing to take care of the kids in her own house while Barbara works - but only for 3 days a week. Mary is a fairly self-possessed little girl who can dress herself, plays reasonably well with other children, has been toilet trained but recently started wetting her pants during the day. John is a sturdy toddler whose Grandma Eileen classifies as a 'holy terror' - into everything, opinionated and very attached to his mother. Eileen thinks he's too attached to mom. Barbara seems paralyzed about how to make decisions and seeks help

3 - SCHOOL AGE : The Fosters

Henry 'Hank' Foster is an 8 year old who lives with his parents and older sister, Amisha (12) and younger twin brother and sister, Tom and Theresa (4 ½) . His dad is a mechanic in a local garage franchise and his mom works part time as a teacher's aid in the elementary school where Tom and Theresa have started kindergarten. Hank does not attend this school. He is in the 2nd grade and doing reasonably well, although he's better in math and sports than in reading and social studies. He has a lot of friends in the neighborhood and in school. Currently, he is the President of the Spider Club, which meets in an old garage on a vacant lot down the street. Hank's mom worries about him going there sometimes because the neighborhood isn't what it used to be. She does approve of his playing basketball for a church sponsored league for which his Uncle Harry (dad's older brother) is the coach. Hank loves basketball but prefers to play computer games with the neighborhood kids rather than play basketball on the church team. Uncle Harry tells Hank's dad that Hank has a lot of potential but often gets into arguments with other team members about the rules of the game. Hank's dad 'rides' him a lot about shaping up and threatens not to allow him to use the computer with his friends or to curtail his club activities. Hank' mom is a busy woman with managing four kids and a house and a job, but she thinks her husband is being too hard on Hank. She doesn't express an opinion too forcefully because it usually results in an argument. When that happens, Hank retreats to his room or to the Spider Clubhouse to read comic books

4 - ADOLESCENCE : The Warrens

Cassie Warren : she is 13 years old and lives with her mother and older brother Steve (17 yrs). Her parents are not together, but she sees her father, who lives near by, each week and sometimes goes on vacation with him in the summer. She is a popular girl who does well in her school studies, is active in several sports and belongs to several school and community clubs. She kind of admires her older brother (when he deigns to notice her) because he seems so sure of himself. Cassie isn't too sure how she feels about anything. She started dating when she was 11, at first in group activities. She is now in an exclusive relationship with Jim, who is 16. They usually go out with other couples or to parties, but recently they have started going out by themselves. Their sexual relationship has been somewhat tentative and exploratory, but lately Jim has started pushing for intercourse - he tells Cassie she drives him wild and he can't stop. Cassie knows all about sex, having gathered most of her information from friends and books, although her mother did tell her about menstruation when she was 10. She even knows about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. Both her parents have approved of her dating, saying they trust her to be a 'good girl.' All of Cassie's friends seem to be sexually active, enjoying it and taking about it. She finally, 'gives it up' but is bitterly disappointed with the experience, although she doesn't say anything to Jim about it. She now thinks she is pregnant.

5 - YOUNG ADULT : The Metzses

Gary Metz is 23 years old, the third son of Richard and Marcia Metz. His older brothers, George (28) and Gimble (25) both completed college, acquired good jobs, are married and seemingly independent and happy. Gary has completed two years of college and has dropped out because he isn't sure what he really wants to do with his life : he doesn't want to waste any more of his father's money. He is contemplating traveling or the Peace Corps/VISTA or something similar. In the meantime he is working in a local carwash, where he earns enough money for cigarettes, beer, clothes and dating. He lives at home; his mother makes all his meals and washes his clothes. His father is somewhat disgusted with him, occasionally wondering out loud why he can't be more like his brothers. However, Richard has not made too much of an issue about Gary's indecision. His current girlfriend is Sue (20). She has a steady job as an executive secretary. Sue loves Gary and is pushing him, mostly covertly, toward marriage. She would like the security of a husband and a family. She is more vocal in her concern about Gary's lack of a 'good job' or further education, and she convinces him that he should seek some help about making up his mind about what he will be 'when he grows up.' She also harps on him about his diet (beer and fast food = fat) and smoking.

6 - ADULT : The Madden's

Paul Madden is a 49 year old general surgeon. He has been married to Pat (age 51) for 26 years; they have two children Marcus and Melanie, both of whom are out of the house and on their own. Pat is quite artistic but spent the early years of their marriage raising the children and working to support the family while Paul completed medical school and residency. Recently she opened a needlework boutique, which is doing well. She is considering going back to school to pursue a master's degree in philosophy. The Maddens are well off financially, very social, belonging to several clubs and entertaining a wide circle of friends. Paul has been content with his life until recently. He finds his life incredibly busy, requiring much energy and hard work to maintain their position and life style. He has little time for himself : skips meals, doesn't exercise, is over-weight and tires more easily. His relationship with Pat seems predictable, despite the changes in her life style. He finds himself frequently too tired for sex and occasionally impotent. He yearns for a simpler life but finds it difficult to articulate his feelings - when he tries, it doesn't seem to add up to much. He has not spoken to Pat about how he feels, but he did attempt to talk to a trusted colleague who told him he was being silly. While he's trying to decide what to do, he sustains a myocardial infarction (MI).

7 - AGING : The Blanchards

Ned and Martha Blanchard are 70 and 65, respectively. They have three children, all of who are married, with their own families, and living in various parts of the country. Ned and Martha were childhood sweethearts and married upon graduation from high school. They've lived in the same northern NJ town for all of their married life. Ned has worked in an automobile service station since he was in high school, beginning as a gas pumper and moving up to owning and managing the station. Martha stayed home, raising the children and minding the house. In the last five years, after she got used to the children not being home, she began to volunteer at a local hospital as a 'foster grandma.' At times this is difficult because she says she has developed a touch arthritis and finds it hard to keep going. Ned has been in good health all his life. He hoped that one of his sons might come into the business with him, but since that didn't happen, he took on a partner about 10 years ago. He planned to retire when he was 65 and move with Martha to Florida. Martha is not too anxious to move, but she finds the winters difficult. Ned finds it difficult to actually retire. He's not sure his partner can manage without him. But he also likes to garden and go fishing and would welcome a chance to relax a little bit. He also thinks he and Martha could visit the children more often, since they rarely see them now. He's never had trouble reaching decisions before in his life and wonders why he's so confused. He thinks he's getting senile.

8 - OLD AGE : Wilma Jones and Alice Nelson

Wilma (82) and Alice (78) are sisters. Both have been married but both husbands have died, so they decided to live together for economy and companionship. Each of them has two children, all of whom live some distance away. Alice hardly ever sees or hears from her children except at holidays. Wilma's daughter wants Wilma to come live with her. The sisters get along reasonably well together. Wilma is in good health, other than not being able to do things as rapidly as she used to. She does most of the housekeeping and shopping, although Alice goes with her and helps with the cooking and clean up. Wilma walks to the paper store every morning to get the Daily Gazette and then reads it to Alice while they have a second cup of coffee. She also attends a Tai Chi class for seniors three times a week, is active in church affairs and is a volunteer at the local Girls Club. She doesn't like to leave Alice alone for too long. They both have an opportunity to go on a church sponsored trip to Williamsburg. Wilma is ready to go, planning what to take and what she will see. Alice is inclined not to go; she feels it is too much for her. She likes to look over the folder describing the trip and reminisce about trips she and her husband took. Alice has rather severe osteoarthritis in her hip and spends most of her time in a wheelchair. She says she's too old to do anything else. She rarely goes out of the house except to go shopping with Wilma and to go to church. Both these things she does quite well without her wheelchair. When Wilma reads the paper in the morning, Alice always wants her to read the obits - there always seems to be someone she knows who has died. When Wilma is out at her activities, Alice watches TV or sits at the window - she knows the neighborhood comings and goings quite well and likes to check out everything every day. Wilma is concerned about Alice and wonders why she can't get Alice 'mobilized.' She feels she won't be able to go on this trip if Alice doesn't go.