

MODULE 3 - VIGNETTE

Mother's Name: **Ginny** Stepfather's Name: **Harold**
Children's Names, Gender, Age: **Charles**, M-13; **Gina**, F-9; **Lester**, M-6
Child/Family Ethnicity: Caucasian

Family Description: Ginny (35) is recently married to Harold (42). She has three children from two previous relationships, including one man who was jailed for violence against her and the children. Charles, her 13-year-old son, is about to be discharged from a court-ordered 30-day evaluation placement at the state child psychiatric facility, which began after he set papers and objects on fire and threw them from a second story bedroom window in his family's apartment. Gina is 9, very quiet, appearing unremarkable in all ways. Lester is an exuberant 6-year-old, with boundless energy and insistent questions about how everything works.

Presenting Issues: When a court officer came to their home to talk with them about the imminent return of Charles to their home, the officer described both parents' behaviors as odd. Ginny seemed withdrawn and did not act particularly interested in her son, while Harold was defensive and threatening. He stated that Charles could and would not return to their home, while Ginny mostly averted her face. She did not respond to direct questions, which Harold answered or refused to answer. Charles was reported to have been exposed to extreme violence in his home as a small child, with one unsubstantiated report that one of Ginny's previous boyfriends once killed an animal in front of him, forcing him to watch. There were also reports of sexual abuse by a different boyfriend. In the past five years Charles has been hospitalized 15 times, for suicidal gestures, out-of-control behaviors and sexual acting out. Ginny says she has had very limited success in keeping him safe at home since he turned 10 and she worries about what he might do to her, her husband or younger children. Ginny reports that Harold has a better ability to control Charles than she does. There are no indications of difficulties with the younger children, except that Charles has occasionally terrorized them.

Treatment/Service/Support History: Very little is known about Harold. He won't answer personal questions and is often belligerent, although he says he only desires to protect his wife and family. Ginny has utilized domestic violence services on several occasions (and in several relationships) but has never appeared to follow through on the guidance or help that was provided. She has been diagnosed with both depression and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but she does not follow through on treatment. She has participated in groups at the shelter a few times, but facilitators say that she never did anything more than listen, mostly with her head down. The last time Charles came home after a hospitalization, the family was set up to receive mobile crisis services and time-limited family preservation services, and Charles had daily appointments with a treating psychiatrist for a few weeks, but the situation still escalated, resulting in Harold's demand that children's services "find out what is wrong with him and fix it!" Gina has not received any known services and is described as an average student. Lester has just begun school and Ginny said the school has already called once to ask her to come and calm him down or take him home.