



'Can Do' for Veterans

Alternate case stories for
'Can Do' for Young People Families and Carers

Unit two: how can we help?

Unit two - Vanessa: 23 year old Iraq veteran (voluntary discharge)

Case story

I did a pregnancy test and it was positive but I'm not sure what to do. My boyfriend Jake and I are fighting a lot. I wouldn't be the easiest person to live with. He says I'm always stressed out.

He's probably right. Everything annoys me at the moment. It's like I can't control it. I held it together a bit better while I was in the Navy but now that I'm out and no-one's watching the lid's off the box. Like not long ago, my Mum rang to say my old dog died and I just lost it when I heard. Like lost it in a scary way.

Being so tired doesn't help, I know that. I don't sleep great - there's the sweats and the nightmares. Most nights Jake ends up on the lounge. If I think about it, it's a miracle I got pregnant at all. We drink a bit but its speed that keeps me going. I'm taking a lot lately. I just lost my third job in six months. I'm not likely to get another now that I'm pregnant either. Besides I really don't feel like facing a whole set of new people again and having to explain to them all the time what Iraq was like. It brings back too much.

Jake reckons I've never been the same since Iraq. He says that he wants the old 'me' back. But I don't know where she is. I can't explain it to him either. I clam up. It's like I can shout at him but I can't talk to him. I don't know what's going on...

Points for discussion

1. If Vanessa told you this story, what would your response be and what could your service offer?
2. What are the risks to Vanessa's mental and physical health and to that of her unborn child?
3. Discuss the impact her drug use may have on her mental and physical health.
4. What kinds of assessment would be suitable to get a full picture of Vanessa?
5. What particular issues would you consider because Vanessa is an ex service woman who has been involved in conflict at an early age?
6. Describe the options open to Vanessa for her pregnancy – who can assist her in her decision?
7. How would you work with her to develop a care plan that can provide her with easy to access optimum health and community support?

Unit two: Facilitator's notes

Story Vignette – feedback session

- The points for discussion are to trigger group discussion.
- Use the whiteboard to write up main ideas.
- The facilitator's notes below are to direct discussion and prompt further explanation of important issues.
- Ensure only one participant speaks at a time and is heard by the entire group. Be aware of who is speaking and who is not.
- Invite participation from everyone.
- Reflect and if necessary rephrase the participant's comment to link its relevance to the topic.

Be sure to allow the different aspects of care on offer from the various service providers in the room. Encourage them to think about how these fit together. E.g. a youth service may be able to offer a number of services but how would they link up with a GP and put the family into contact with VVCS? Do they know what a GP can offer and how they can refer to specialist mental health services if necessary? Ask a GP participant to explain and to talk about the use of care plans and referral pathways when working with patients with mental health and substance use problems.

Facilitator's trigger questions

- Discuss Vanessa's story - what other history would participants want to find out?
- Ask participants to refer back to the use of the HEADSS assessment and how this would help them collect a full picture of Vanessa's health and wellbeing.
- Would they use other assessment tool in their services?
- What else should participants find out about Vanessa's mental health and drug use?
- Have participants clearly identified the main risks for Vanessa and her unborn child at this time?
- How could the stages of change model be linked to Vanessa's situation and how could participants use this model to engage with Vanessa?
- Do participants know what VVCS has on offer for women like Vanessa?
- Outline some immediate steps that you could work on with Vanessa and also longer term strategies.
- What other service in the area could you link her into or refer her to?