

PSY699: Master of Arts in Psychology Capstone

Week Four Discussion Case File

Case Summary

Client 1: Tina, a 36-year-old HIV-positive Latina woman

Client 2: Tina's daughter, 12-year-old Victoria (also HIV positive)

Tina became infected through a former boyfriend who had a history of intravenous drug use. Tina gave birth to an HIV-positive daughter, Victoria. Tina does not want Victoria to know that either of them has HIV.

Victoria is now 12 years old and has been told by her mother that she takes medications for “a problem in her blood.” Recently, Victoria stated that she does not like taking the medication and occasionally misses doses. The clinic staff has raised the issue of whether Victoria should be told about her diagnosis. They've warned Tina that in the near future, Victoria will be at an age at which girls often become more interested in boys or sexual behavior. The clinic's therapist feels that if Victoria knew her diagnosis she might be more adherent to her regimen of medications. However, Tina absolutely does not want her daughter to know. Tina believes Victoria is still too young and will be emotionally devastated. Tina believes that it is *her* responsibility — and only her responsibility as a mother — to “protect” her child, and that her daughter is “not ready” to know. Tina also believes that Victoria is “a good girl” and will not be sexually active until she is married.

The clinic's therapist thinks Tina's guilt about having transmitted the virus to her daughter is causing her to take this stance. Still, the clinic staff is concerned and wants Tina to reconsider. This situation presents several ethical dilemmas and requires further consultation.