

ABORIGINAL HEALTH VIGNETTE

The Story

Lorena is 23 years old. She has 2 kids, Joanie 6 and Billy 4. She also has one on the way (8 months). Lorena has lived in town all her life.

Lorena's mum, Jo, lives about 2 blocks away. She lives with her defacto and Lorena's teenage brother, 16. Lorena's 20 yr old brother has moved to Melbourne for work.

The father of Joanie & Billy lives & works in Queensland and comes home to see his Mum occasionally and sees the kids then

Her current partner Adam lives with her and kids. He is father of currently expected child. Adam is unemployed. They have been together less than a year. He moved in when she found out she was pregnant.

Lorena had postnatal depression when she had Billy. Lorena was referred to the Dr from the RFDS at the clinic, by the Primary Health Care Worker, and saw him once. She did not attend any follow up appointments or take the antidepressants she was prescribed. Her partner had left soon after Billy was born. She had no other history of depression.

Lorena has come into the health centre because she is worried about swollen ankles and feet, making it difficult to walk.

When Vicky, the PHCW is doing Lorena's observations, she notices fresh bruising on her upper arms and signs of old bruising on her legs when she helps put her legs up. When Vicky asks about the bruising, Lorena starts to cry. She says that Adam started to drink a bit more than usual about 6 months ago. She also said that sometimes he gets violent towards her. This started about 2 months ago.

She hasn't told her Mum or anyone else. Lorena says she is fed up with the kids and Adam and thinks that none of them really care about her.

What could/would/should Vicky do now?

Who else might need to be involved and what could/would/should they do now?

What happens if Lorena is having suicidal thoughts?

What happens if Adam's violence increases?

Get the RN involved.

Assess risk for children (including unborn child) - do you get Docs involved? What role does the school have if any and should you contact them

Assess risk for Lorena –do you get the women's refuge involved?

Assess Lorena's mental state- referrals to

? Doctor – What is the role??

? Mental Health Team – What is the role??

? Psychiatrist – What is the role??

? School – What is the role??

Reference: Verina Crawford, Clinical Leader, Aboriginal Mental Health GWAHS; Maria Tattersall, Aboriginal Health Education Officer, Broken Hill Dept of Rural Health & Elizabeth Martin, Mental Health Academic, NP Broken Hill Dept of Rural Health.