

TEST CASE # 2

Lawrence

Lawrence is a 16 year old boy who was arrested for vandalism and assault. He was convicted of breaking into his school with two friends and writing insulting slogans on the hallway walls. He was caught in the act by school security and turned over to the police. But he resisted arrest and fought with both the school security guard and the police. The security guard's arm was broken in the melee. This is Lawrence's third arrest. Eighteen months ago, he was convicted of assault for a domestic dispute with his sister in which he broke her jaw. Six months ago, he was convicted of a weapons charge when he was caught carrying a knife at school. He was put on probation both times.

Lawrence attends 10th grade at a local high school and states that he hates school. He reports currently failing nearly all of his classes. He reports that his math teacher is cool and that he is currently receiving a C in that class. Lawrence is frequently in trouble at school and was suspended one week ago because of a verbal argument with a teacher in which he called her 'a butt ugly bitch.' The argument started when Lawrence could not correctly answer a question in his English class. Mother reports that Lawrence has always had trouble in school and was classified as special education due to behavior and learning problems when he was in grade school. His IQ was tested at 75.

Lawrence lives with his mother and two older sisters in an apartment. One sister has a baby. Mother reports that Lawrence is kind to the baby and is often willing to baby sit while the sister works. Mother reports that while Lawrence sometimes talks back to her, 'like any teenager', that they have a reasonably good relationship. He does, however, frequently break her rules when it comes to curfew as he likes to hang out with his friends as long as possible. Mother works two jobs and is often not home. His sister with the child takes some responsibility for taking care of Lawrence's needs but the other sister is out of the house a lot. Mother reports that this sister has a problem with drugs and has been in and out of programs and jail. Lawrence has a very difficult relationship with this sister and including the domestic dispute that resulted in his first conviction.

Lawrence has a group of friends he with whom he hangs out. Mother blames the influence of these youth for most of Lawrence's trouble with the police. She states that they are a bad group and she believes some might even be gang members. Lawrence denies gang involvement but says that he knows some guys who are in a gang. Mother describes Lawrence as a follower who really wants to fit in but because he's 'not so smart', he gets himself into bad situations where he is the one that gets caught. Mother says Lawrence has no imagination and just follows what others are doing. Lawrence admits to smoking marijuana about once each week for the past 18 months. He doesn't think it's a problem for him as all of his friends do it more than that. In the past six weeks, mother reports that Lawrence has become increasingly irritable and withdrawn. He has become very sensitive to criticism and reacts with verbal aggression to even minor perceived slights. She noted that he is sleeping later and is harder to get out of bed to go to school. This has resulted in several tardy and a number of missed days. He has been managing to get to school about 4 out of 5 days.