

Case Study:
Trauma-Informed Application for the
Seven-Stage Crisis Intervention Model

Client: Sofia, 20 year-old trans gendered Latinx female, eldest with four younger siblings. From ages 6-9, she experienced sexual abuse from a close family friend. She has seen several counselors over the years who have helped her deal with her childhood trauma, but she is still triggered from time to time and has difficulty trusting men. She is a first generation college junior on full scholarship at Emory University in Atlanta (far from her home town of Chicago), who has been very successful double majoring in marketing and business analytics (statistics). Although her parents struggle with her transition, they consider her the successful academic and career role model for her siblings. She (preferred pronoun) self-refers and comes to counseling and shares the following:

A couple of weeks ago, her male cousin, Edward, 22 years-old from Chicago asked to crash in her Atlanta apartment for a couple of nights on his drive to and from Miami. Based on his past drug related activities, Sophia suspects that Edward has ulterior reason(s) to visit and stay with her; She believes he is picking up and/or delivering illegal drugs (cocaine, heroin, crack, etc.) with intent to sell. She firmly and clearly tells Edward that he is not welcome if his visit involves illegal drugs of any form or fashion. He emphatically assures Sophia that his visit will not involve any drugs and that his intent is strictly to stay with her to avoid hotel costs during the journey. Although she had reservations about allowing Edward to stay, Sophia feels obligated to help Edward because he's been supportive of her through her transition.

On his way to Miami, Edward spends two uneventful nights at Sophia's apartment. The first night upon his return trip from Miami, the Atlanta police raid Sophia's apartment and find 10 lbs. of marijuana, 6 blocks of cocaine, and various other illegal drugs in Edward's luggage. Edward and Sophia are arrested and police are deaf to Sophia's claims that she had no involvement with the drugs. After spending two horrific nights in jail confined with men who ridicule and threaten her, she is released on bail. She now faces illegal drug possession with intent to distribute. Sophia feels foolish, terrified, humiliated, distrustful, and a failure. Her scholarship at Emory is likely to be revoked, (and she may be dismissed from the university) her family is shocked and disappointed, and she is ashamed to have gotten herself in these dire circumstances. She is desperate and wants the situation and all the related feelings to end, now. She is sobbing as she relays this story to you, her counselor.