

Unit 2: Theories of Juvenile Delinquency

Throughout the weekly discussion board, we will be examining the life of Sarah Johnson. Each week, you will be given new developments in her life and asked to consider various scenarios and develop an analysis of each. As you read each of these stories, pay special attention to the various circumstances in Sarah's life that have an impact on her emotional responses and her subsequent behaviors.

Age 10

One of Sarah's teenage cousins is arrested for possession of a small amount of marijuana. While he is not incarcerated, he is given probation and community service. Emily and Fergus become extremely strict and the atmosphere in the household is strained.

Communication is extremely limited and Sarah begins to feel increasingly isolated.



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Age 11

Sarah continues to struggle in school, frequently falling behind her peer group in academic achievement. She also starts acting out emotionally in fits of anger or tears. She is sent to the school counselor who recommends she be placed in remedial courses. Her confidence in herself continues to decline. In addition, her poor grades, emotional outbursts, and poor communication skills make her the target of bullies.

Sarah starts to associate with a group of troublemakers who encourage her to shoplift and act out aggressively. She starts bullying younger kids at school.

Sarah's behavior troubles Emily who seeks more help from school officials.



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Age 13

Sarah continues her association with friends with whom she is now drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Emily catches Sarah and her friends doing this behind the house. Emily scolds Sarah and confiscates her cellphone and computer. Emily and Fergus, despite the protest of their children and Sarah, continue to increase the rigidity of the rules in the house.

