

Unit 3: Environmental Influences on 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 14

Sarah runs away from home, taking a bus to a nearby city where she meets slightly older kids in similar circumstances with whom she becomes friends. Sarah is homeless and devotes her time to finding places to stay and food to eat.



Unit 3: Environmental Influences on Delinquency

Age 15

In the city, Sarah is reported to the local police by a shop owner for shoplifting. The police call social services who meet with Sarah and determine that returning Sarah to her aunt and uncle is the best outcome for her.

After returning home, Sarah returns to school. She has missed close to a year of school and struggles to meet even minimum requirements.

She reconnects with her previous friends and returns to shoplifting and drinking alcohol, while adding vandalism and experimenting with various illicit drugs to her behavior. Sarah meets her new boyfriend, 18 year-old CC, through a mutual friend who regularly sells them the drugs.



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Age 16

Realizing the strict disciplinary regime has created a rift between themselves and their children and Sarah, Emily and Fergus begin to relax the rules in the house. While the bond among the family grows, Sarah still feels isolated and resentful of any control over her life. When home, Sarah spends most of her time in her room on her computer and texting CC.

