

Case Study 1 – Gabby

Background Information:

The student is a 10 year old Hispanic female who currently lives with grandmother because her mother is frequently incarcerated. She does not know her father and has no siblings. This is your first year to teach Gabby, although her reputation has preceded her. You know that the administrative staff has had difficulty with disciplining her for many years previous. As well, when you had a parent/teacher conference at the beginning of the year, her grandmother told you they have tried to “exorcise the demons” from her many times. Her grandmother seems fearful of Gabby at times and seems to tread very lightly in her interactions with her.

Presenting Problem:

Gabby has begun exhibiting bizarre behavior in your class. At times, she looks into “space” and becomes anxious and seems fearful. She also reaches out her hands as though she is going to stop something or someone but no one is around her. When you try to redirect her in class, it is very hard to regain her attention. You decide to take her to see the counselor (who sees her frequently) to see if there is something going on at the current time. Suddenly, she begins breathing very heavily and quickly, almost as though she is hyperventilating. As well, she begins looking toward the window, but will not go close to it. Soon she is talking and begging other people (who are not present) not to take her.

Questions to Consider:

- Using the information you have received today, what type of symptoms are you seeing?
- How should you physically respond to what is happening?
- What step(s), if any, would you take next?
- What type of documentation, if any, would be appropriate to use?
- Who else should know about the situation?