

# Non Accredited Training Program

Australian  
Childhood  
Foundation



## Case Study

Tammy moved into your residential care house two nights ago. There are three other young people living in the house. Two boys aged 11 and 12 as well as another girl aged 16.

## Background Information

### Protective Concerns

Tammy, aged 14, has a long history of abuse and neglect resulting in many moves between her mother, Jane, and her maternal grandmother, Lacy. Jane has a history of post natal depression and has attempted suicide on many occasions, some witnessed by Tammy.

At the age of 6, Tammy suffered a broken arm and bruised face as a result of physical abuse from her mother's ex-boyfriend.

At the time of the notification to child protection, Tammy had been living with her grandmother for 3 months, following another suicide attempt by her mother. Her grandmother, Lacy, contacted protective services, stating she could no longer care for Tammy as she could not manage her anger. She loves Tammy but feels that as she is getting older she can no longer manage her. Tammy's mother is currently in a psychiatric hospital. Her grandmother doubts her mother will ever be in a position to care for Tammy.

### Information provided about Tammy's care needs at the time of placement

You have been told by the case manager that Tammy seemed resigned to her grandmother's decision that she could not stay with her and left willingly with protective workers.

According to information provided by Lacy, Tammy does not have any allergies and eats most things. Lacy has had difficulty getting Tammy to get into any routines. When she has tried to discipline her or set rules Tammy gets very angry with her.

Tammy has changed schools 3 months ago when she moved to her grandmother's and can get to her school from the residential house.

Tammy likes to spend long periods of time alone, watching TV or roaming the streets. She doesn't seem to have any friends.

## Current Situation

When Tammy arrived at the house she seemed distant and quiet. She says she's OK when asked how she is and she tells you that she is in care because her mother keeps trying to kill herself and her grandmother can't look after her anymore.

Since arriving in your care you have noticed that Tammy often scratches her arms and legs and at times seems wheezy.

She is able to attend the school she has been attending for the last 3 months but she doesn't seem interested in going to school. The carers were worried about her last night because she came home from school two hours late. She got angry with carers when asked where she had been and stormed off to her room saying it was none of their business.

Tammy has had difficulty settling into bed in the two nights she has been with you, wanting to stay up late and watch TV. She wakes up before sunrise and puts on the TV loudly, waking the rest of the household.

Tammy seems to get on well with the other girl, sharing an interest in horses. There have been moments of conflict between Tammy and the boys, particularly over the use of the TV.

She has a good appetite and seems to be able to take care of her personal hygiene well. She had a phone call from her mother last night during which she seemed angry and upset.

When carers tried to speak to her about it she said her mum would be fine soon and she would be going home.

In her short period in placement she has shown a range of behaviours. She yells and argues with the boys and at times threatens to "bash" them. Other times she seems quiet and withdrawn, wanting to be by herself and staying in her room. She seems easily upset.

Her swearing and disrespect of others has become an issue at school. The school has contacted you to organise a meeting to talk about her behaviour.

Last night while watching TV, you noticed Tammy was digging marks with a pen into the wooden arm of the chair. When you asked her to stop she jumped up and screamed that she wasn't doing anything and stormed off to her room. Tammy proceeded to throw things all around her room.

The carers are struggling to connect with Tammy. They have tried to be lenient with her, feeling she needs some time to settle in after a difficult few months but they are feeling unsure if they are doing the right thing.

## Understanding Behaviour

Now you have read the case study consider and respond to the following questions: List 3 areas of development included in the 'trauma guide'

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you notice in this area of development with the child in the scenario? (e.g.,: emotional capacity: this child finds it hard to understand and tell people how she is feeling)

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### Behavioural Summary

List 3 behavioural concerns identified in the case scenario.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you understand these behaviours using the trauma 'lens'?

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### Strengths

List 3 strengths this child has or is demonstrating.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Needs Summary

Given all of the above, what do you think this child needs? Particularly think about their sense of connection and belonging (especially through relationships)

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