

Anthony

Anthony is a 14 year old youth presenting with angry outbursts in school and at home, a great deal of difficulty sleeping, significant irritability with parent and peers, and emotionally unresponsive. His behavior of threatening, hitting and physically injuring another youth, resulted in one school suspension about two weeks ago. His mother is bewildered as she says Anthony was a “good boy” until about six months ago when these problems began. Prior to the onset of these problems, he did well in school, had no significant behavior problems at home or school and seemed healthy and well-adjusted. She states that since there are just the two of them, she feels they have always had a good and close relationship and he usually confides in her when he has a problem. Anthony has always lived with his mother, a single parent who works full-time. Although the neighborhood is “rough” with gang issues and turf wars, they have lived in their current apartment for most of his life. Both Anthony and his mother are involved in their local church, but Anthony has refused to attend services or the youth group in recent months.

Anthony is difficult to talk to, but at one point in the interview with his case manager he states he witnessed a good friend get shot “like six times.” He stated that his friend subsequently died. He has not told his mother that his friend was shot and died for fear that she “won’t let me do anything” or “go anywhere no more.” He didn’t even tell her when he went to the funeral, just told her he was hanging out with friends that afternoon. When further prompted, he states that he “can’t sleep because I keep thinking of my friend getting shot over and over” and that he is disturbed by images of the event while awake at home and in school. He appears anxious and continuously twists his hat in his hands while talking to the case manager. He denies any drug or alcohol use as he reports seeing “how-messed-up” it makes people. Anthony believes his friend was shot as the result of a gang initiation gone wrong. When asked if he was afraid for his own safety, he first stated that he wasn’t because he didn’t want to be in a gang” and so he stayed away from “those dudes.” However, he went on to say that the same gang members had tried to recruit him so he wouldn’t “rat them out” about his friend’s murder. Lately they have left him alone because he told two of the members he “didn’t see nothing” to tell anyone about. When asked what he does for fun, or if he has any special interests like art or music, first he says “no, I’m not good at drawing or painting or that stuff” but then he says “it would be cool to know how to take some really good pictures, like be a photographer, but maybe that’s stupid.”