

Kathy

Kathy is 16. She was arrested with a group of other kids at midnight in a van driving 80 miles per hour on the freeway. All the kids had been drinking, and several marijuana joints were found in the van. Kathy insisted she didn't know there were drugs in the van. She had been standing on the corner with some kids from school when "this kid came by in a car and asked if we wanted to go for a ride". Kathy said she hesitated, but went along because she didn't want her friends to think she was weird. A Non-Abuse/Neglect (CINC-NAN) intake has been assigned.

History

Kathy lives with her parents and two younger brothers and a younger sister. Her father is a minister, her mother a homemaker who is active in the church as the minister's wife.

Kathy's mother is a quiet, unassuming woman. She has devoted her life to serving others. She spends several evenings a week with church-related activities. Kathy's father cares for the children these evenings, unless he too has church-related obligations. Kathy then has the responsibility of caring for the other children.

When Kathy was 12, her father began finding excuses to come into the bathroom when she was bathing and watch her out of the corner of his eye. Kathy would ask him to leave, but he repeatedly told her there was nothing wrong with his being there; after all, he was her father, and he'd seen her naked all her life. About six months later, he began going into her bedroom at night. He began by fondling her, moved to finger penetration, and finally began intercourse when Kathy was 14. Her father told her that God thought the human body was beautiful, and that the relationship between parents and children was the most sacred of all human relationships. However, he said, other people who weren't as close to God wouldn't understand, and if she ever said anything to anyone about their "special relationship," he would be banned from the church, and they would lose their home and the family would break apart.

Characteristics

Kathy didn't disclose the abuse until she was placed in detention overnight, and disclosed to one of the staff members there. Kathy began to cry and told the worker how ashamed she was. Despite what her father had told her, she knew that what they had been doing was wrong. She had seen a TV program on incest, and realized what was happening. She had wanted to tell her mother, but her mother had also watched the TV program and blamed the child in the program, indicating that the child was "a bad girl—she must have asked for trouble". Kathy knew her mother would think her bad and blame her, and she was ashamed that maybe her mother was right. After all, she didn't fight her father. She said she was afraid her father would lose his job if she told anyone. She was sure nobody would forgive her, now that she really had told. She guessed it didn't matter because nobody would ever want to date her now anyway.

Kathy appeared to be anxious and very depressed. She claimed not to be a chronic user of drugs or alcohol. She said she did go out a lot with her friends to get away from her father. It made her dad very angry, but she couldn't help it. She became "upset" when she stayed at home; her stomach ached, she had headaches and sometimes she threw up. She felt better if she was out of the house "where there is some fresh air".

She told the worker she wished things could be different; but felt it was hopeless. A check of police records showed that Kathy had been arrested twice previously with groups of teens who were out late drinking, but charges were never filed against her. Teachers reported occasional angry outbursts at school between Kathy and other students, with Kathy apparently starting arguments over minor issues. Her teachers liked her but felt her to be withdrawn and pensive. A school counselor said Kathy would "wander in" to chat frequently, but seemed reluctant to talk about her private life. Kathy also seemed to work hard to prove that she was a good student, apologizing profusely when she didn't do well on school tests.