

# Discussing a personal example of a child in unknown distress: depression, anxiety...

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If I had to guess what Cassie might be suffering from, I would say she has depression, anxiety, a language barrier, or a learning disability. The reason I would say that Cassie has adolescent depression is because she can't concentrate on her schoolwork and feels excluded from her peers. When children are depressed, they withdraw from all situations and are in a constant state of unhappiness. They are also completely unmotivated, which would explain why it is an increasing struggle to get Cassie to get in the car for school each morning. The sentence about Cassie being a loner led me to believe that she is depressed because she has nobody to talk to and feels unwanted. Another possible problem Cassie may be suffering from is anxiety. Children with anxiety tend to remove themselves from group situations to put their fears of rejection by their peers to rest. She also may work herself up with school to the point where she is unable to be successful in school.

In addition to having general anxiety, Cassie may have test anxiety as well. This would explain why she does not perform well on her standardized tests and why her grades aren't good. I could also see Cassie suffering from a language barrier or speech issue. This would result in Cassie not being able to establish a connection with the other children, which would lead to her feeling excluded and like a loner. A language barrier or speech issue may also be a setback for academics because if Cassie's English is not strong, she may not be able to understand what she is learning in school no matter how hard she studies. The final issue I think Cassie may be having is a learning disability. This would explain her poor performance in school and on tests, as well as some social issues and lack of motivation to come to school. Cassie's

learning disability may cause her to become discouraged and irritable in class, which would result in her wanting to give up on school.

If other children noticed that Cassie was having a hard time in school, they may want to stay away from her because they may consider her a freak or outcast for not being able to handle what is being taught. If given the opportunity to ask Cassie, or her mom and dad, questions, I would stand clear of asking Cassie questions directly because I would not want to make her feel bad about herself upon first meeting her. However, I would ask her parents how she interacts with others outside of school and what her attitude is about activities completely unrelated to school. My main goal would be to figure out when Cassie is most comfortable and happy and try to get to the bottom of how to help Cassie have the same attitude about school that she does about that activity. The initial advice I would give the classroom teacher to help Cassie feel successful would be to modify the assignments for her and give her practice problems in class to help her understand the material better. I would also advise doing more group assignments in class where the teacher picks the groups in order to encourage interaction between Cassie and the other kids. This way, they would realize that she is not so bad and would be more willing to play with her during a choice time.