# Case Study One: The Case of Mary

**Presenting Information**: Mary is a 29-year-old female who is divorced with 2 children, a 4-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son. She is currently in a relationship with John and they have been together for about a year. Mary presents to counseling with multiple concerns. She reports feeling the following: tired and lethargic most of the time and does not sleep well, decreased motivation in general, a discontent in her life, feeling like a dark cloud follows her around, and she does not enjoy her life as she once did. She states “I feel like every day is just a struggle and I don’t know where to turn.” She also reports having a lot of relationship problems and challenges with her son. In her relationship with John, she feels that he ignores her and puts everything else first, that he just stays with her because he has no where else to go, and that he doesn’t even want to talk to her about how she is feeling in her life. She said that she loves him but is not sure she wants to stay in the relationship. She states that she can not trust John even though she has no reason not to trust him. She also states that her oldest son is getting in trouble in school and she is at a loss for what to do. He has been sent home a few times in the past three months for fighting physically and verbally, and she feels like she is a bad mother because she does not know what to do to help him.

**Social History**: Mary was married at age 19, when she and her boyfriend found out she was pregnant. She was married to Mark for 6 years and got divorced just after having their daughter. She states her ex-husband was controlling and said “He kept me on a tight leash and never gave me any slack.” She reported that he had bouts of using drugs and had an affair early in their marriage. She said she tried to get over the affair but just couldn’t. She said “I could never get the image of catching them together in our bed out of my head.” She states the divorce was mutual but that he made it very difficult as he helped minimally with the kids. He is now seeing the kids twice a month and pays child support through the state, but she said that she worries what’s going on at his house when he has the kids. She said her son comes back angry and defiant after staying at his dad’s house for the weekend.

**Mental Health/Addictions History**: Mary states that she had used marijuana when she was in her early 20s but hasn’t used it in 5 years. She only drinks alcohol occasionally, once or twice a month she will have a few beers. She reports that she felt she was depressed while in her marriage but never sought counseling or treatment because her husband would have not let her.

**Family History**: Mary states that her mother and father were divorced when she was 14 and she feels like she never got over that. She says “I can just remember how they fought and yelled like I wasn’t even there. I hated that time in my life and I hated my parents.” She states her relationship with her mom is supportive now but she has little contact with her dad. Mary later found out that her dad was having affairs while he was married to her mom and Mary states that she just can not forgive him for putting them through that. Although Mary’s mom is supportive she lives about an hour away and works full time so Mary states “I don’t want to burden my mom with my problems or my kids.” Mary is an only child.

**Occupational/Educational History**: Mary was in college but dropped out when she got pregnant and married. She got a CNA license and started back to school a year ago to work toward getting a nursing degree. She works full time and lives paycheck to paycheck. She is worried about her job, saying, “I just can’t get the motivation to do a good job…and sometimes I can’t even get out of bed to go in.” She is also ambivalent about being a nurse. She states that she should since she has been a CNA, but that she has no motivation to go to school anymore and her grades have been dropping.