Relapse Scenario-Naela

Naela is a 35 year old African American woman who has been in intensive outpatient treatment (IOP) for two months. During the first month she had two relapses where she had drinks at home when feeling down which led to more throughout the evening. She has been able to attain 48 days clean since her last lapse. During this time she felt she was doing well at not drinking but she still felt miserable. However, she was able to begin establishing contact with her daughters by phone. This was going well until her daughters disclosed that their father was seeing someone and was “getting serious.” Naela began to question them about how they felt about the woman and they said they were looking forward to having her as a step-mom, that she was fun to be around and good to them. Naela had been successfully negotiating not going out with her old co-workers for drinks when they invited her by going to meetings and treatment groups instead. She told Nancy, one of her old co-workers, who called on occasion to invite her out that she was concentrating on getting healthy and had a new fitness routine. In fact, her brother did add her to his gym membership and she went a few times recently. She did not disclose that she was not drinking to Nancy or that she had a problem with alcohol.

The evening after Naela talked with her daughters she was very upset the next day. She was going to go to a meeting but couldn’t stop thinking that another woman was going to take her place in her daughter’s lives. She started to look on their Facebook pages and when she did she saw a picture of them with an adult woman biking and laughing in a park. She went to her ex-husband’s page and saw this same woman arm in arm with him. She felt like she was going to be sick and started sweating. It was Friday and she knew Nancy would most likely be going out tonight. She called her, telling herself that she needed someone to talk to and Nancy was always a good listener. In fact, Nancy was going out and said she would pick her up on the way. Naela started to get ready and her mood started to lift. She told herself that she deserved to have fun, after all they were all having fun biking and laughing. She was tired of feeling sad all the time with no energy to do anything.

Finally, Nancy arrived and they went to the bar. She started drinking and told herself she would only have a few. However, by midnight she was sloppy drunk and crying to Nancy and anyone else that would listen about her daughters and the new woman. The next morning she woke up at Nancy’s apartment. She didn’t remember how she got there. Nancy woke up and told her that she really tied one on. Naela asked if she did anything crazy. Nancy told her that she got very upset when Doug, the male co-worker, she use to have casual sex with wouldn’t “pay attention to her.” Nancy said, “You were so upset and kept saying you were always rejected and it wasn’t fair.” Naela was holding her head in her hands and Nancy tried to console her by saying it was his loss!

Naela spent the rest of the weekend in bed telling her brother she had the flu. He didn’t suspect anything because honestly she spent a lot of time sleeping so it wasn’t out of the ordinary anyway. On Monday she returned to IOP and told the group that she had relapsed. She said, “This was a bad one.” “I don’t know how to stop it when it gets started.” She disclosed to the group that she had just wanted to feel good and was so tired of feeling so sad all the time and tired. She said,”I’m not sure I can stay sober if I feel like this all the time.”