**This case study is based on the experiences of a real young person.**

Scene one

Sophia is 14 years old. She lives with her mother and her mother’s boyfriend

Linton. They have two children together: Sean, who is two, and Emma, who is seven months old. Sophia doesn’t get on at all with Linton and they often argue. She feels like her mum always takes Linton’s side, which really upsets her. Sophia used to be very close to her mum, but since Linton’s been around she feels like she can’t trust her anymore. Sophia’s mum seems to spend all her time with Linton, Sean and Emma. Sophia feels she is in the way. Sophia finds it hard to fit in at school. She is shy and doesn’t think she is as pretty as the other girls. Sophia feels like she has to work hard to impress people, so they’ll accept her. Sophia wishes boys fancied her like they do the other girls. Jake, who lives round the corner near the shops, often speaks to Sophia and is nice to her. He is 22 years old and good looking. Jake has a nice car and sometimes gives Sophia a lift, which really impresses the girls at school. Sophia finds Jake easy to talk to and feels he understands her when she tells him what’s going on at home. Jake tells Sophia she can listen to some of his music online on his profile and that he’d love to get her singing on some of his tracks. Jake invites Sophia to a club he is playing at and offers to put her name on the guest list.

1.Does Sophia go to the club with Jake? Why?

2. What are the possible risks?

Scene two

Sophia is surprised that her mum says she can go clubbing with Jake. Her mum has seen Jake around the shops and thinks he looks OK and that he’ll keep an eye on Sophia. The night goes well and Sophia loves being the centre of Jake’s attention. She is thrilled because he’s asked her to be his girlfriend. She can’t believe that such a good-looking older guy wants to be with her and she can’t wait to tell the girls at school. Jake keeps telling Sophia how beautiful and sexy she is and he buys her loads of new clothes and trainers. The other girls at school are jealous of her relationship with Jake and start bitching about her and ignoring her. Sophia doesn’t feel like going to school anymore.

When Jake and Sophia go clubbing, a lot of other young women come over and flirt with Jake. Sophia is always afraid that Jake will leave her for one of these girls – some of them are very pretty and confident. Jake tells Sophia not to worry, he loves her. Sophia feels so lucky, she would do anything to keep him happy. Jake tells Sophia he’d really like her to stay over for the night, so they can spend more time together. He says he wants their relationship to be more serious and it will be really special.

1. Does Sophia have sex with Jake? Why?

2. What are the possible risks?

Scene three

Sophia has been spending lots of time with Jake. Her mum doesn’t mind, because there are now fewer arguments at home. When she bumps into Sophia and Jake at the shops, he always makes her laugh. Sophia’s mum tells her how lucky she is to have such a nice boyfriend. Sophia has been having sex with Jake for a few weeks. At first Sophia wasn’t confident in bed with Jake, but he is gentle with her and is teaching her what men want. One night at his flat, Jake puts on a porn film and offers her some spliff to help her relax. He says the film will give her some ideas and he’d really like it if she’d act out some of his favourite scenes for him. Sophia feels a bit awkward, as she has never smoked weed and isn’t sure if she wants to watch the film. But she doesn’t want to look like a kid and really wants to please Jake after all he’s done for her. Sophia has been missing school. She thinks there is no point; all the girls have turned against her anyway and she feels too behind in her work to catch up. Her mum has received several letters saying Sophia has missed days from school without explanation, that she is behind on her course work and her behaviour has changed. Sophia’s mum asks her what’s going on and they get into a big fight. Linton joins in and has a go at Sophia too for being disrespectful and causing trouble. Sophia storms out and goes to Jake’s flat. He is really sweet and understanding. He tells her he wants them to be together forever and that he’s not interested in anyone else – he’s the only one who knows how special she is. Jake wants them to live together so he can take care of her like she deserves. He reckons they need a fresh start away from everything. He says he’ll sort them out a flat and it will be their new home together. He says there’s no point telling her mum or anyone else the address – Sophia will only get hassle from them and the school.

1. Does Sophia move in with Jake? Why?

2. What are the possible risks?

Scene four

Sophia and Jake have moved into their flat and Sophia spends nearly all her time there. Recently she has noticed that Jake doesn’t pay her as much attention. He doesn’t take her out like he used to. At night he often goes out and doesn’t tell her where he’s going. He says she’d better stay in, just in case anyone from school sees her. He locks her in the flat, so she will be safe. When he comes back, Jake seems ‘off his face’. He smokes weed all the time and Sophia has seen him take other stuff but she doesn’t know what it is. When Sophia asks him about it, he tells her to just grow up and try some. Sometimes Sophia likes the feeling she gets from the drugs, but she also notices that she gets anxious when the good feeling wears off. When she tells Jake he says she probably just needs to take a bit more and not to worry about it. When Jake is out, Sophia feels lonely and misses her mum. She wonders how her little brother and sister are and what’s been going on at school. Sophia asks Jake if she can call home to see how her family are. He says ‘no’ and calls her a ‘stupid bitch’. Jake shouts that he is the only person she can talk to now. Jake has become unpredictable. Sophia never knows where she stands. The day before, she tidied the flat to make him happy and cooked his favourite dinner to try to get the old Jake back. But when he got home, he just laughed at her efforts. He threw the plate of food at the wall and told her to clear it up. Then he told her he was going to teach her a lesson. He ripped up Sophia’s picture of her family and told her he didn’t know why she kept it, it’s not as if they care about her. Over the weeks, Jake gets more and more aggressive and starts hitting Sophia. Sophia doesn’t know what to do. Whatever she does to please him just makes him more angry. One night Jake tells Sophia he’s sorry for how he has been, he’s been really stressed because he owes a lot of money. He tells her it’s because of everything he’s spent on trying to make the flat nice for her. He says he’s behind on the rent and doesn’t want to lose their home. Sophia asks what she can do to help. Jake tells Sophia that one of his friends would pay good money to have sex with her. He says if she just does it once, then he can get them sorted and it will never happen again. He says he’ll make sure he gets her something extra strong to take, so it will be easier for her. Sophia is horrified and tells Jake she really doesn’t want to. Jake tells her that if she doesn’t, he’ll have to find someone else; that if she really loves him, she will help.

1. Will Sophia have sex with Jake’s friend? Why?

2. What are the possible risks?

Scene five

Sophia hasn’t seen her family now for about six weeks. She’s found out the drug that Jake has been giving her is crack. She is worried about this, but she can’t stop taking it. Jake says she must pay for her habit and, as she has no money, she has to have sex with Jake’s friends. Sophia knows that they are not really his friends and that Jake is making money from her sleeping with them. She feels totally ashamed and disgusted with herself. She also feels betrayed by Jake, but she can’t stop loving him, even though she also knows he is seeing other girls. When she challenges him about this, he says the crack has gone to her head and she is imagining things. He tells her that if she keeps going on he will leave her and no one will want to know her – she’s damaged goods. Sophia really wants to speak to her mum about what is going on, but she’s scared in case she gets angry or doesn’t believe her.

One night Jake brings Dave round to have sex with Sophia. She’s not met him before. Dave looks like he’s about 50 and seems to be drunk. Sophia indicates to Jake that she is scared but he ignores her and leaves the flat. Sophia tries to follow Jake out, but Dave overpowers her and beats her up. He says she’s not going anywhere until he’s got his money’s worth. Sophia is in agony and can’t stop crying. When Jake gets back he reluctantly takes Sophia to the hospital. He makes her swear that she’ll tell the hospital staff she got her injuries from being mugged in the street. At the hospital, Jake acts really nice and caring in front of the nurses. He says he has to go to make a phone call while Sophia is being treated. The nurse notices that Sophia looks a bit more relaxed as soon as Jake has left the room; she starts chatting to Sophia. Sophia tells her that she hasn’t had a period for about two months and is scared that she’s pregnant. The nurse looks worried and starts to ask her lots of questions.

1. Will Sophia tell the nurse what’s been happening? If not, why?

2. What are the possible risks?

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| Push Factors  | Pull Factors |
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| Push Factors  | Pull Factors |
| Children who have been the victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuseChildren from households where domestic violence and abuse has been a featureChildren of parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (e.g. drug and/or alcohol abuse,mental illness, learning disability, their own history of an abusive childhood)Family breakdown / disrupted family life / problematic parentingInsecure immigration statusChildren who have physical or learning impairments | Being liked by someone olderBeing liked/fancied enough that a stranger asks for their mobile numberMeeting someone who thinks they are special on the internetReceiving alcohol, drugs, money or giftsGetting a buzz and the excitement of risk taking/forbidden behaviourBeing offered somewhere to stay where there are no rules/boundariesBeing taken along to adult entertainment venuesBeing given lifts, taken to new places, and having adventures with a casualacquaintance |