





**Jonathan Diamond June 9, 2000 July/August Issue Family Therapy Networker**

When I first met 14-year-old Miranda, she had a full head of frizzy pink hair and a sassy, cooler-than-thou persona to match. She also had the physical symptoms


















of distorted connection with a critically important person who is already in their lives. When I first began working with 17-year-old Randy, a wary, uncommunicative high-school athlete, he was smoking pot daily and using cocaine on weekends. He hung out with a rough crowd and had serious problems at home, including a moody, violent stepfather and a mother who dealt drugs to pay the rent. In Randy's mind, I was just another adult he was forced to tolerate. His only motivation for joining my group for substance-abusing kids—the result of a school referral--was to keep from being kicked off the football team.

Several weeks into the group, Randy revealed that three years earlier, his father had died of AIDS from IV drug use. His public attitude about his dad's untimely death was stoic: "Shit happens." But he also told the group that his father



profound thing to do for another human being, and we don't forget the people

