

## Pitt Family Story

Red-Reason for Referral

Purple-System Contact

Yellow-1<sup>st</sup> noticed something wrong

Green-Family Story Tool-Vision, Strengths, Team, Culture/Traditions

Naomi "Nae" Pitt is a 15-year-old girl in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade living with her mother Sara Pitt on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. She was referred to Wraparound following a truancy court referral. Nae is stealing alcohol, drinking alone, skipping school, and reports thoughts of suicide. Nae is also funny and outgoing with a flair for fashion. Nae shows her personality through the way she styles her outfits and makeup. She is very creative and enjoys making her own clothing and jewelry. She shares this passion with her mom and aunt, Dory, who both enjoy crafting. Her mom enjoys painting, scrapbooking, and making vision boards. Aunt Dory has a degree in art and is a pet photographer. Zach, Nae's uncle, lives nearby and while he doesn't feel he is as artistic as his sisters and niece, he can fix anything. The family has always been super close, but the sibling group has really rallied around Nae and Sara lately. They lost their parents a few years ago but got through that time together. As a part of Nae's court order, she must be supervised 24/7 and the family has developed a schedule that accommodates work schedules, school, and being with Nae. Nae is annoyed at never having alone time and sometimes tries to isolate herself even more by locking herself in her room. She doesn't think alcohol is a big deal and thinks people are making a big deal over a small thing. Despite Sara and Nae having a super tight bond, Zach is who Nae really talks to and Zach can get her out of her room by making Nae laugh and singing to her.

Nae is currently involved with the Department of Juvenile Services but received her first charge in 9<sup>th</sup> grade after she skipped school, stole the keys to her uncle's car, and drove it into a fence while intoxicated. She was hospitalized after the incident due to the risk of harm and then sent to a diagnostic center for 60 days where she was diagnosed with Bipolar I. Her absence caused her mother a lot of anxiety as she and Nae are very close. Sara has been fearful of the increase in Nae's risky behaviors. The separation during Nae's diagnostic was very difficult as it was a court-ordered placement. Sara is not trusting of "the system" because her only other system contact was with the police several times when Nae was young due to domestic violence with Nae's father, Paul. During the time apart, Sara worked a lot to save money and keep herself busy. She also started making jewelry regularly to keep her mind off Nae being away. Nae asked for art supplies while in the diagnostic. She organized a fashion show and helped style hair to pass the time in addition to the sessions and school expectations. She really missed her mom and does not ever want to go back.

Sara graduated from high school and had dreams of becoming an artist. She moved to a big city and met Paul at a local bar where she was working in the kitchen. She became pregnant, unexpectedly, at 19 years old. They were married soon after they found out. Paul was older and Sara soon realized something wasn't right. He wanted her to stay at home and controlled her movements outside of the house, even going so far as to track her phone and car. She was determined to try and make it work and thought things might change. She grew up in a two-parent household and wanted the same for her child. She was a devoted mother and dreamed of having several children like how she grew up. She regularly talked with Dory and Zach, but they were really the only people Paul allowed her to speak with. Sara stated that those conversations are what help her keep it together. Paul inflicted verbal and emotional abuse on her and Nae, which later escalated to physical abuse. Nae would run and hide in a closet or under her bed under the screaming stopped. Nights after bad fights happened, Sara would sleep

with Naomi and sing to her, make bracelets, or let Nae brush her hair. She felt blamed by the system for not getting her daughter away faster and lived in fear for a long time. She stopped calling the police because they downplayed the abuse and told her she could leave if she wanted without offering any further support. Sara felt she couldn't make it on their own because she had no income. She was also afraid Paul would take Nae from her if she tried to leave because he was a well-respected dentist in their community. When Nae was in second grade, she witnessed her dad choking her mother and tried to intervene. Paul went after Nae and at that moment, Sara realized anything would be better than this. She moved out with Nae the next morning after Paul went to work. She was finally able to get a restraining order with the evidence of the bruises around her neck. They have had no contact with Paul since then and want no contact. Nae remembers being scared and has no interest in talking with her biological father. She knows her mom tried to be strong for her, but she saw Sara cry at times as well as the marks left on her body. They moved to the town where Sara grew up and lived with Sara's brother, Zach, until Sara was able to afford a place of her own by working at a local art supply store. Nae and Sara were both scared Paul would come look for them, but he never did. Sara is grateful to Zach for all he helped with and feels she could never repay him.

It was just Sara and Nae for a long time after that. They described themselves as "the dynamic duo." Money was tight but they had a lot of good memories. Uncle Zach and Aunt Dory both live nearby and have been very supportive. They usually have at least one meal a week altogether. Uncle Zach helps with transporting Nae to art classes and can fix anything. He has a great sense of humor and makes the family laugh all the time. Aunt Dory has a calming presence that puts Nae at ease.

Sara decided to get back into the dating game last year. This has been difficult for Nae who is distrustful of Sara's friends and is worried that history will repeat itself. She doesn't feel that the men Sara chooses are good enough and is often getting involved in Sara's personal affairs. Nae's car accident happened after Sara and Nae were in a large fight over this very issue. Sara backed off dating when Nae had the accident. She is worried all the time that something will happen to Nae.

Money is tight and this is a stressor for Sara. Sara tends to retreat to her bed and suffers from periods of depression herself. When she is feeling down, she likes to read mystery novels and enjoys trying to figure out "who done it" before the end of the book. Sara is now working as a waitress at night so she can attend Nae's appointments during the day and be available when she struggles to attend school. Sara prioritizes Nae over everyone else and makes sure she is present for her. Nae does well in school and teachers have always said she has a lot of potential. Nae was always well-behaved and got good grades until middle school. She tended to get "lost" in the hallways and often went to the nurse complaining of stomach pains and asking to go home. Sara picked her up most days and feels this contributed to the problem. Sara frequently offered therapy to Nae but she declined and Sara didn't push. Sara was always relieved that Nae wasn't getting into the typical teenage behavior but at the same time, she was concerned as she saw Nae losing bonds with friends. Nae skips school often because she is bored and has started drinking alone. At that time, Sara noticed that Nae had an interest in Rave Culture and this was something she was also interested in so they went to a few raves together. They dance and feel connected to a community that embraces diversity and creativity. This is where they both feel happiest, and Sara saw Nae feeling most comfortable in her own skin. In the weeks leading up to raves, Sara noticed that Nae's school attendance increased because she wanted to make sure she got to go to the rave. Since Nae's diagnostic stay, she has been skipping school almost daily because she is embarrassed about what happened. She feels people are treating her differently, so she continues to escape through alcohol. The school guidance counselor, Mr. Ron, has said that they are willing to support Nae, but she must start

attending school for that to happen. Mr. Ron is known for being tough but fair in his approach and is trusted by the students as they always know where they stand with Mr. Ron. Nae says Mr. Ron has never lectured her about her drinking. He lets her vent, and then tries to help her work through a solution which she says is different from other school staff.

Nae's DJS Worker, Meredith Williams, wants to see Nae stay with her mom but is concerned that she will be placed due to her repeated school truancy and alcohol use. Nae was mandated with therapy after she was discharged from the Diagnostic Unit. She has been referred to Farah Vance, a local trauma therapist. The relationship is new, but Nae likes Farah's "funky" office and was more hopeful after the initial meeting than she has been about therapy in the past. Farah uses art to help ease the stress of therapy and offers a different approach to self-expression. Aunt Dory watches Nae in the evenings while Sara is at work per the court order that Nae be always supervised, with a curfew of 9 pm. Dory, Nae, and their dog, Chug, are often cuddled on the couch at night laughing at videos or making up dance routines to show Sara when she comes home. The family describes their happiest times as celebrating the holidays. They love Halloween because they design their own costumes and watch scary movies. They also laugh a lot making funny videos online or doing anything "crafty." Nae would like to be a clothing designer when she grows up and Sara has dreams of opening her own Etsy store online so she can make money doing something she loves while staying home with Nae. Nae wants everyone off her back and is ready to go to somewhere she can design clothes. When Nae finishes high school, they are considering moving to Chicago because Nae wants to work at BellaNiecele and meet Niecele Nicolas, the head designer. Sara says they have to win the lottery because Dory and Zach would have to move to Chicago too and it's an expensive city, but she wants to support Nae to achieve her dreams and maybe a vacation to Chicago would be a good start.