

Case 2

Jane and Mary, two young women in their early twenties, have been close friends since they met during their second year of college. The now both live in the same city where each is pursuing her career, Mary as a teacher and Jane as a computer systems analyst. Jane's current boy friend Sam frequently borrows money from her. Jane has complained to Mary several times about not having enough money to buy things, but, as Mary observes, she (Jane) never presses Sam to pay her back. Last week Jane lent her car to Sam for a period of two weeks so that he could visit some college friends out of town. Jane doesn't need her car to get to work, but not having the car on weekends has meant she will have to put off several shopping trips to furnish her new apartment. It also seems to Mary, from what Jane told her, that Sam was a little vague to her about the identities of the people he plans to visit.

Jane has told Mary that she considers Sam one of the most intelligent and creative persons she has ever known. Mary has met Sam several times. He talks constantly about grandiose plans for different business ventures, but has yet to follow through on any of them. Sam has no steady job at this time, and, so far as Mary can determine, doesn't seem terribly concerned about this.

Mary recalls well that Jane also considered her boy friend in her junior year of college, Gary, a graduate student in biology, as exceptionally bright. Gary had a difficult relationship with his thesis adviser, about which he bitterly complained to Jane almost daily, often for well over an hour. Mary recalls that Jane endured Gary's non-stop venting of frustration, discouragement, and anger without ever saying anything to Gary about the emotional strain it caused her (about which she often complained to Mary). Mary also remembers that Gary proved completely unable, or unwilling, to extend emotional support to Jane, even in situations where she needed it badly. For example during a very tense period when Jane and her family feared that her mother might have cancer, and were awaiting test results (fortunately they turned out to be negative for cancer), Gary continued to go on about his adviser completely oblivious to Jane's situation. Eventually Gary ended the relationship and very shortly thereafter became involved with another young woman.

Mary has the highest regard for Jane. She considers her a superb friend, and a responsible, caring person. Mary believes that Jane is extremely bright, interesting, and capable. She also views Jane as very sensitive, however. During all the years of their friendship Mary has never said anything to Jane that Jane could understand as strongly critical of her.

Question: What should Mary do, and why?