

Module I

Case Example #1: The Irving Family; Mr. & Ms. Warren-Foster Parents; Karen Boniello-CW Worker

Background Information:

Mr. and Ms. Warren are a white couple aged 39 and 37 years old respectively who lost their family farm two years ago for economic reasons, resulting in their move to a small rural town about 100 miles away. Their two adult children live in California and Texas. Ms. Warren has chronic kidney disease; their move brought them closer to the metropolitan area where she receives medical care. She does not work outside the home. Mr. Warren is a hard worker who manages a service station in their new community. He is close to his German American family but they don't see his relatives as much since their move. The Warrens were active members of a fundamentalist church before they moved, which was the center of their religious and social life. The church teaches that many medical conditions like kidney disease happen when people are not faithful enough. This teaching has been hard for Ms. Warren to accept since her illness.

The Warrens embrace some church teachings such as "people become substance abusers because they don't want to face their problems". This teaching made it difficult when the Irving children were first placed with them 7 months ago. Carol Irving is a 28 year old African American with three children: 9 year old Kalop, 6 year old Retha, and 4 year old Kenton. She has been addicted to crack and alcohol for 7 years after being introduced to crack by her ex husband, Sam Irving, the father of Retha and Kenton. Kalop is biracial (African American and white), from Carol Irving's relationship with Kyle Douglas prior to her marriage. Carol is in her 3rd drug treatment program where she talks about the importance of African American women being strong and putting their children first. She feels a lot of shame about her children being in foster care. The Warrens did not trust Carol initially because of her drug addiction, but later Ms. Warren cooperated in arranging visits because she believes the children of single mothers need and deserve support. The children have adjusted fairly well except they don't like some of the food served and Ms. Warren has had problems with their hair care. Carol is concerned about these two issues but hasn't discussed them because of the Warren's initial distrust of her.

Karen Boniello is a 48 year old child welfare worker from an urban area who is assigned to the Irving children. She is annoyed with the Warrens' non acceptance of substance abusers because she has been in recovery for alcoholism for 10 years. As the oldest child in her Italian American family Karen is expected to mediate conflicts, especially now that her family is having conflicts about property left by her recently deceased grandmother. Karen thinks her mediator role spills over into her work. She has encouraged Ms. Warren to think about the needs of the Irving children instead of Carol Irving's addiction in supporting visitation arrangements. When Carol talks about racial discrimination as the reason she hasn't found employment Karen accuses her of making excuses. Karen encouraged the drug treatment counselor to refer Carol for work training and for help with some of the women's issues she assumes caused Carol's previous relapses. Carol feels Karen doesn't listen to her or respect her opinions, such as the reason she isn't working.

A Cultural Tuning In Tool:

Use to Prepare For Service Contacts between Child Welfare Staff and Culturally Diverse Families

CW Staff Member _____

Date _____

1) A Recent Service Contact Between You and A Culturally Diverse Family:	2) Your Cultural Filters	3) Potential Effects of Your Cultural Filters on the Service Contact
<p>List <u>two</u> cultural differences between you and the family that were important to you:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p>List the cultural filter you have about <u>one</u> of the cultural differences you identified (which is based on your cultural assumptions, values, or beliefs):</p>	<p>Explain the effects your cultural filter (about differences) had on your thoughts and preparation for this service contact:</p>
<p>List <u>at least one</u> cultural similarity between you and the family that was important to you:</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>	<p>List the cultural filter you have about <u>one</u> of the cultural similarities you identified (which is based on your cultural assumptions, values, or beliefs):</p>	<p>Speculate on the effects your cultural filter (about similarities) had on your thoughts and preparation for this service contact:</p>