

Module III

Case Example #3: The Monroe Family; and Lynn Kline, CW Worker

Background Information: The Monroes are a white family consisting of 29 year old James Sr., his 35 year old live-in girlfriend, Vickie Byers, James' five children, and Vickie's 11 year old son, Bryant. James Sr. has been separated from the children's mother, Sheila, for two years. Their children are 15 year old James Jr., 11 year old Ann, 8 year old Ben, 6 year old Marvin, and Mollie who is 3 years old. The children were placed with their father by Child Welfare almost 2 months ago after Ann and Ben were found walking alone at 11:00 pm on a secondary highway one mile from their home. They were cold, frightened, dirty and wet. When they were picked up by the police the children said they were running away from home because their mother's boyfriend, Charles, was drunk and high, and was tearing the house apart. All five children were placed in emergency protective custody and then in three different foster homes for the two month period before custody was granted to their father. CW's investigation of the home and family substantiated the children's physical neglect from a lack of food and supervision, and unsafe living conditions. Allegations by Marvin that Charles "does bad things" to Ann and Mollie have not been substantiated; Ann denies any abuse of any kind by Charles but says she doesn't like him. There was documented evidence that Sheila and her boyfriend used methamphetamines and marijuana and that the boyfriend has hit her in the face numerous times and locked the children out of the house. Sheila and her boyfriend are in jail awaiting trial on charges of criminal child abuse and neglect and drug possession.

Once weekly in-home therapy is being provided to the children to help them sort out what has happened to them, handle the stress of being separated from their mother, and adjust to their new living situation. In addition to sessions with the therapist, the children are being monitored by a pediatrician who saw evidence of their poor nutrition; they are often fed non nutritious meals at home. They are otherwise healthy except for Ben who is very thin, pale, and has dark circles under his eyes. He has a poor appetite and does not sleep well. He takes a great deal of responsibility for his siblings and is concerned about them. Although the children all miss their mother and worry about her, they say they're happy to be living with their father and he appears to have a close bond with them. Their paternal grandfather took them to visit Sheila in jail once since she has been incarcerated.

The family's current living conditions consist of a two bedroom ramshackle trailer on property owned by the grandfather, where the yard does not have grass and is full of discarded and broken machinery, chickens and roosters that roam around, an old unhealthy horse in a fenced area, and numerous dogs. The one bathroom is extremely dirty, and when the plumbing doesn't work the children use "outside" as a toilet. When the CW worker visits, up to fifteen dirty unkempt children are often playing in the yard including visiting neighbor children and relatives. The grandfather lives on the same property in another rundown mobile home. For summer recreation the family goes to a nearby river to swim and camp. The culture of this family involves a commune-like life style. They often "take in" friends and their children to stay awhile, adult friends visit almost daily and sometimes stay for extended periods of time, and neighbors and relatives assist in child care and providing meals for the children when James Sr. and Vickie are "between paydays" and low on food, and the reverse. These relationships with friends and family are fluid and highly valued. Friends, neighbors, and children enter the house without knocking. Little attention is given to personal hygiene, cleaning, household maintenance, or bedtime routines. The children often fall asleep in various places around the house and other children sometimes sleep

there too. James Sr. often greets the therapist and CW worker without a shirt, casually displaying his nipple rings and tattoos. Theirs is very much the culture of the working poor in Missouri.

James Sr. has been sober for sixteen months. He completed court ordered treatment after being arrested for possession of cocaine. He has worked at the same construction job for the past year, a job that he likes and wants to keep. He is open about needing assistance and support in raising his children after requesting that they be placed with him. He has become frustrated when the children don't "mind him"; his parenting style ranges from permissiveness for a period of time to the use of corporal punishment. James Sr. and Vickie have an on again-off again relationship. They have loud arguments often about their chronic lack of money to pay bills, which sometimes end when Vickie leaves for a few days although once she was gone for a month. The children call Vickie mom and appear to see her as a mother figure. They are noticeably distressed when she leaves.

The Child Welfare Worker: Lynn Kline is the CW worker assigned to this case. She is a 23 year old white woman who has a bachelor's degree in social work. She was raised in an upper middle class suburb in the Kansas City area. Her parents are both professionals. She moved to rural Missouri to take a job with the Children's Division eight months ago. She entered social work because she wanted to help people, but social work hasn't turned out like she expected. She feels overwhelmed and regrets moving to rural Missouri. Lynn admits she doesn't understand clients like the Monroes. She feels they have a hard time relating to her and her to them, and says she often does not know what to do when she visits the family. Lynn worries that the condition of the home is unfit and does not understand why this family passed a home study and was allowed to take these children. In addition, she really doesn't look forward to going out there and doesn't like driving her brand new car on all these gravel roads.

Treatment, Services, and Interventions Summary:

The CW worker visits the family once monthly and coordinates her services with those of the therapist. These visits focus on continued evaluation of safety in the home, family discipline and parenting skills, maintaining the behavioral charting and rewards system for the kids, housekeeping skills and physical hygiene of the kids and house, and anger management with the father. In addition to coordination, the CW worker:

- 1) Completed a family risk assessment, assessment of the patterns of behavior in the family, a genogram, and an ecomap.
- 2) Identified the family treatment goals and services based on these assessments
- 3) Referred the father for a psychological evaluation
- 4) Referred the father for a substance abuse evaluation. (Outcome: Recommended individual therapy, concluded the father didn't need substance abuse treatment)
- 5) Referred family to housing authority for low income housing; they are on a waiting list; recommend staying in present housing for the support.
- 6) Referred family for help in getting car seats for their younger children.

7) Referred children to a pediatrician for physicals and ongoing well child check ups to monitor their growth and development

The therapist has in-home sessions with James Sr. and Vickie in addition to sessions with the children. The adults have worked on the following four goals and related interventions:

- 1) Goal: Provide consistent and non corporal discipline. Interventions: a) Taught them to use behavioral charting with the kids on a large poster board with their names and a list of chores and responsibilities. b) Educated them on positive reinforcement using stickers and a reward system, and verbal feedback rather than punishment. (the family has really caught on to this and it has helped them more than anything)
- 2) Goal: Develop structure in the family so everyone knows their roles and responsibilities. Interventions: Coached them in having weekly family meetings to discuss these issues. (at first the environment was very chaotic; things have settled down a lot after their education on the importance of schedules and consistency).
- 3) Goal: Educate family about safety and supervision. Interventions: They worked out a plan for having someone supervise the kids at all times: the dad, step mother, or James Jr. as the oldest child (A recent hotline call was made because James Sr. wasn't using car seats or seat belts for the children. He wasn't aware of the need for seat belts and car seats but cooperated with CW in obtaining car seats for the younger children and responded positively to education on using seat belts, including alternatives to taking all the children in the car at once without sufficient seat belts).
- 4) Goal: Improve communication between James Sr. and Vickie. Interventions: a) Coached them in expressing feelings and in anger management. B) Provided individual counseling with each of them on family of origin issues and self-esteem, using structural and strategic family systems approaches, cognitive behavioral therapy, and psychodynamic theory. C) Processed with James Sr. each session how he is doing with his sobriety, although he isn't active in any formal substance abuse or 12 step program now.

Cultural Coaching and Debriefing Tool for Child Welfare Staff: Critical Incidents with Culturally Diverse Families

Case Presenter _____

Date _____

Background Information: Cultural Issues in the Case	Notes on the Ongoing Cultural Assessment in This Case: This process should be conducted with a supervisory or peer coaching group
Section 1: a) What happened in the client session(s) related to culture (the precipitating factors)? b) What are the CW worker's specific concerns about what happened?	
Section 2: What specific cultural issues from the family's background and experiences may have affected what happened?	<u>Related to the family's cultural strengths:</u> <u>Related to the family's cultural challenges:</u>
Section 3: What specific cultural issues from the CW worker's background and experiences may have affected what happened?	<u>Related to the CW worker's cultural strengths:</u> <u>Related to the CW worker's cultural challenges (including cultural filters or red flags):</u>

<p>lessons learned from this debriefing process?</p>	<p><u>Related to the CW worker’s cultural strengths and challenges:</u></p> <p><u>Related to enhancing this cultural coaching and debriefing process:</u></p>
<p><u>Section 7:</u> What <u>cultural lessons</u> were learned from this coaching and debriefing analysis: i.e., What changes have occurred in the CW worker’s or peer coaches’:</p>	<p><u>Cultural knowledge or level of understanding:</u></p> <p><u>Cultural filters related to assumptions, values, and/or beliefs:</u></p> <p><u>Culturally centered skills:</u></p>

Module III

Culturally Centered Interventions for Ongoing CW Services:

Apply to Sections 4 and 5 of the Cultural Coaching and Debriefing Tool

Help culturally diverse families by:

- Monitoring and analyzing the effects of the CW worker's cultural filters on the work
- Using sources of cultural esteem to support their ongoing motivation and work toward goals
- Addressing identified sources of cultural stigma and shame and the effects of those experiences on individuals
- Using solution focused cultural miracle questions to identify and monitor work toward their cultural goals
- Connecting with or expanding cultural/social/family networks for support and problem solving
- Brokering and gaining access to formal CW and other services to meet their cultural and other goals (intra and inter-systems)
- Using cultural psycho education to clarify and address cultural conflicts about parenting and other areas