



Breakout Discussion

Instructions

Review the case example with your group and answer the corresponding discussion questions. When we return from the breakout, we will invite volunteers to share out with the whole group. Please designate a spokesperson for your group who can share a brief summary of your discussion.

Case Example: Jane

Background: A mother, Jane, has been struggling with substance abuse, specifically opioids, for several years. She has a 7-year-old son, Alex, who lives with her. Jane's substance use has led to erratic behavior, job loss, financial instability, and neglect of household responsibilities.

Incident: A neighbor, Paula, reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) that Alex often appears unkempt and hungry and has been locked out of his house several times and has stayed with Paula several evenings until Jane comes looking for him. She also mentions seeing suspicious individuals frequently visiting Jane's home for short amounts of time.

Assessment: CPS conducts an assessment and finds the following:

- **Physical Environment:** The home is cluttered with drug paraphernalia, posing a physical danger to Alex.
- **Parental Behavior:** Jane exhibits signs of intoxication, such as slurred speech and unsteady movements.
- **Child's Condition:** Alex shows signs of neglect, including poor hygiene and malnutrition and is very lethargic.

Discussion Question: Is this a safety or a risk issue?

- If a safety issue, why?
- If a risk issue, why?
- What else might you want to know before deciding on in-home or out-of-home placement?

Case Example: Sarah and Tony

Background: Sarah and Tony, parents of 3-year-old twin boys, have been struggling with alcohol abuse for the past few years. Their substance use has led to inconsistent parenting, previous reports of child abuse, which were unfounded, and a chaotic and dirty home environment.

Incident: The twin's preschool reports to Child Protective Services (CPS) that the twins are often wearing dirty clothes, are always hungry and tired, and appear to be developmentally delayed. The preschool teacher mentions that Sarah and Tony seem hungover whenever one of them picks up or drops off the children. They have asked for assistance from the Center staff in getting the twins buckled into their car seats.

Assessment: CPS conducts an assessment and finds the following:

- **Physical Environment:** The home is cluttered with empty alcohol bottles, broken glass, and other hazards, posing a danger to the toddlers.
- **Parental Behavior:** Sarah is found to be intoxicated during the visit, with slurred speech and an inability to focus. Tony was "out", and Sarah has not seen him for a week.
- **Children's Condition:** The twins show signs of severe neglect (blistering diaper rash on one), had not been bathed in at least three days, no child appropriate food in the house, and showing signs of developmental delays as their language was very limited.

Discussion Question: Is this a safety or a risk issue?

- If a safety issue, why?
- If a risk issue, why?
- What else might you want to know before deciding on in-home or out-of-home placement?

Case Example: Jackie

Jackie is a single mother with three children, ages 3, 7, and 8; all the children were placed foster care three months ago because of physical abuse by Jackie's live-in boyfriend and Jackie's inability to provide a safe home for the children due to her substance use. Jackie admitted to an addiction to meth and has been in an intensive outpatient treatment for 30 days. She self-reports discontinuation of substance use and her negative UAs over the past four weeks corroborate this. She is set to be discharged next week.

The Case Plan calls for Jackie to begin to attend parenting classes, counseling for domestic violence, and to continue with outpatient treatment for 30 days. Jackie is questioning why she must attend parenting classes when she completed the parenting education in treatment. She is also facing eviction from her apartment for failure to pay rent while she was in rehab.

Discussion Question: What are your next steps with Jackie?

- What will happen next in this case?
- What must happen before Jackie can have her three children back in her home?

Case Example: John

John is the single father of Jason, age 6. A case was opened six weeks ago when Jason was found to have been left alone in their apartment for a period of 8 hours; John had left work at 5 p.m., had stopped off at a bar for a “drink or two”. Jason had become frightened by noises around 11 p.m. and had called 911. Police called CPS.

John was severely intoxicated when he came home at 1am and when interviewed by the police, became abusive and belligerent. Jason was taken into care that night and John agreed to treatment a week later after meeting with CPS. The assessment recommended inpatient treatment. John has completed treatment and wants to be reunited with his son.

Discussion Question: What is next for John and Jason?

- What will happen next in this case?

- What must happen before John can have Jason back in his home?