

Casework Teaming: Case Scenarios

Teams set the criteria regarding the characteristics of cases that they believe will benefit most from Teaming. For example,

- In CPS, that might mean lots of safety concerns, potential for removal - multiple children may need placement, transport, etc. There's a lot of work to do in a short period of time.
- In foster care or preventive cases, that might mean multiple children with high needs, parents and foster parents needing a lot of support with appointments, school issues; or cases that are stuck, such as lack of progress of with mom in her plan, not engaged, worker frustrated, absent Dad, ASFA clock is ticking, etc.

CPS New Case Scenario

Monday Supervisor Sue assigned report of inadequate guardianship, lack of food, clothing shelter to Caseworker Carlos. Carlos finds dangerous home conditions with three small children, 2 of whom have bad coughs. Parents say landlord is coming today to fix broken windows and non-working plumbing and they begin to clean up the animal waste that is throughout the apartment. Carlos and parents arrange for Grandma to take children to her apartment today and overnight, she is handicapped, but can manage them for a short time. He gives the parents and the grandma his business card that has all of the team's numbers and names on it and he tells them that he is part of a team and someone else may work with him to assist the family. Carlos tries to contact landlord, and arranges with parents for children to be seen at the clinic on Wednesday. Back at the office- enters case notes in the system. Tues morning at morning "muster" where all team members and the supervisor identify the issues and hot spots of the day, and provide info on significant specific case developments--Carlos explains the safety concerns to the supervisor and the other 4 caseworkers, alerting them to the potential need to place the children in foster care. Jenna is off rotation- having a "desk day"- she is assigned to contact the home finder and see what foster homes are available for 3 small children – just in case. Carlos is going out to the home again to assess the progress and the needs. He has all of the worker's desk and cell numbers with him. As he has to be in court later that morning he can't get across town to see grandma and the children. Tana has a follow up visit in that part of town, she volunteers to see grandma and assess the children's well-being. Carlos finds mom and dad just getting up, several empty wine boxes, no change at all in home conditions and they don't expect any as landlord is a "deadbeat". They said they need some time to get their act together and ask for assistance with alcohol use and housing. Parents say they have no family other than her disabled mom to care for the children and agree to a removal and placement. Carlos calls his supervisor, fills her in and supervisor calls Tana so she can explain the need for placement to grandma when she goes there. Meanwhile Jenna alerts the home finder that the placement is needed today and to put a hold on 3 car seats, and starts the court paper work. Later Tana enters her notes into the case record as each case worker has been assigned system's permission to enter information into the case record.

Open Foster Care Case Scenario

Tony 14, in foster care for 4 months due to truancy and Educational neglect, injuries resulting from physical fighting with his mother's live in boyfriend and mom and boyfriend's stated unwillingness to provide non-physical, non-injurious "discipline" and unwillingness to work with the school on issues related to truancy and disruptive behavior. This case had not been identified for Teaming when it opened as Caseworker Rita assessed it as fairly straightforward. Four months later, Rita told her supervisor that she "knows where this case is going", that she might well change Tony's permanency goal now as he is never going home. He is doing ok at his foster home but seems depressed, hardly talks to her or to his therapist, and that his mom and "step-dad" are never going to change. Supervisor recommends that she prepare the case for this week's group supervision to reassess the situation, family strengths, Tony's needs, the plan, what else might work better. Everyone knows the case as Rita briefed the team when Tony came into care, and other team members have helped out with transportation to appointments and supervised visits at times. Group supervision explored other sources of support for Tony- a paternal uncle and older cousins who while not in contact for several years could be a source for calls and some visits. They challenged Rita's thinking that "the apple does not fall far from the Tree" as Tony's dad was killed while in prison for robbery, and she agreed to find them and reach out to them. They also helped Rita identify a number of strengths the mom and her boyfriend did have that are places to build on. Sonia volunteered to go with Rita on her next visit with Tony's mom and the boyfriend as coming from an immigrant family herself, she might be able to engage the boyfriend, an immigrant from central America, around concerns with dealing with the school and government authorities and see if she can crack his stone wall a bit.