

“FAMILY, CULTURE and DISABILITY”

Scenarios

1. *Juan Carlos is a 17 year-old whose family recently moved into the area. His family migrated from their native Mexico to the United States 5 years ago. Juan Carlos heard about your agency through a friend and is interested in some of your programs. Juan Carlos also tells you that he has a 19 year-old brother with a severe physical disability, and that his parents, who still have difficulty reading and writing English, work different shifts so someone can always be at home with his brother. Repeated attempts to have his parents sign the appropriate paperwork fail.*

What could be some reasons why the family has not completed the proper intake paperwork?

How can you work with his family to make sure Juan Carlos gets the opportunity to take advantage of your program?

Why do you think Juan Carlos' parents are keeping his brother with a disability at home?

2. *Josh is a 15 year-old who is being referred into your program by his Probation Officer. His crimes are minor, but due to a turbulent home life he needs a smaller, more structured environment. Josh's father is currently serving time in the Workhouse for battery and his mother has been maintaining little contact with Josh. Josh's aunt is allowing him to stay with her, but she works nights and seems unwilling to make any formal decisions about Josh's future. Josh has poor reading and writing skills but has never been identified as having a disability. You recognize Josh's strengths and have a few program options that require parental consent.*

What strategies could you use to secure permission for Josh to participate in your program?

Other than employment, what types of things would you try to work with Josh on?

On a long-term basis, how could you insure that Josh has somebody to advocate for his needs?

3. *Stella is an 18 year-old Native American woman who is just starting employment you helped to secure. After her third day she arrives at your program and tells you that her boss yelled at her for being disrespectful. You are very concerned because Stella has a learning disability, her confidence level is low, and she is insecure about working. Stella's mother has also called and expressed her displeasure with the employer. You call Stella's workplace, a large discount retailer, and her boss tells you that Stella refuses to make eye-contact with customers and is slow behind the cash register. When confronted by her boss Stella claimed her culture was being disrespected and left work.*

What factors may be causing the problems between Stella and her employer?

How can you use your positive relationship with Stella's family to work with the employer?

How can you coach Stella about her culture and interacting with others?

4. *Marcus is a 17 year-old African American student who is interested in securing employment. He is very intelligent, yet has a habit of using a lot of swear words when he speaks. In the school setting, his teachers seem to tolerate his colorful vocabulary because of his otherwise satisfactory academic performance. You are worried, however, that it may hinder his ability to get or keep a job. During a scheduled meeting at Marcus' home you notice that all the adult males in the family frequently use swear words while his grandmother, who cares for Marcus, is well-respected and doesn't use such words. You have recently set up a job interview for Marcus with an employer you have a great relationship with and had success working with in the past.*

What strategies can you use to help Marcus use appropriate speech during the job interview?

How can you use Marcus' relationship with his grandmother to insure a positive outcome?

What misconceptions might you have had about Marcus prior to meeting his family?

5. *Bao is a 19 year-old Asian American student with severe learning and behavioral disabilities. Her performance in work skills classes and in school has been falling off as of late. You once thought her ready to find employment, but now you want to meet with the family to see if her program needs have changed. Upon meeting with the family you are surprised to find that the family is not worried about her performance. They tell you that they do not expect Bao to be able to work because of her disability and are planning for her to stay at home and care for younger siblings. This is contradictory to your belief that Bao can be successfully employed if given the right supports. You also learn that they have had some negative experiences with the school in the past.*

How can you advocate for Bao's employment future without being disrespectful to her family's values or wishes?

How can you work through the family's negative experiences with schools, and build a collaborative partnership with them?

How can you persuade the family that Bao is able to work despite their concerns?

- 6. Bee is a 16 year-old Asian American student who is getting in trouble with the law. His parents have remained traditional despite being in the country for 12 years and have developed only rudimentary language skills. Bee has been fully acculturated and is far more sophisticated regarding mainstream American culture than his parents, who feel that Bee uses this to manipulate them. You suspect that Bee has a disability that is keeping him from reaching his full academic potential, but his parents are unwilling to agree to an assessment because Bee is not doing "what is expected of a child". They have also assumed that since you are working with their son, you are taking responsibility for his progress. You fear that Bee will end up in jail, with no work skills if you don't get his parents to cooperate.*

How can you work together with Bee's parents to help get and keep Bee on the right track?

How do you operate in a situation where the child is more proficient in English and sophisticated about American society than his parents?