

Andy and Joy

Father: Andrew Allen, age 45, African American

Mother: Dora Allen, Deceased, African American

Children: Andy Allen, age 17, African American

Joy Allen, age 14, African American

Presenting Situation

Maternal grandmother, Mrs. Dees, called DHR on a Friday at 5:00 p.m. to request an investigation of her son-in-law's home. Mrs. Dees believes her granddaughter and grandson are being abused by their father. Grandson, Andy, is 17 and grand-daughter, Joy, is 14. Their mother (her daughter) is deceased.

Mrs. Dees reported her grandchildren spend one weekend a month in her home. They are currently with her, and she saw bruises on Joy's arms and legs. She is also concerned that Andy has bruises; however, he is wearing a long sleeved shirt and pants and will not allow her to look. Joy and Andy will not discuss what caused the bruises. Andy said his father did get upset with him and with Joy but would not say anything further.

Mrs. Dees did not want to send the children back home on Sunday afternoon. She said her son-in-law had developed a serious temper, and she is afraid he has begun to abuse the children. She said since her daughter died earlier this year, Andrew has become increasingly angry and verbally abusive toward the children even in her presence. She has not seen him hit the children, but she has heard him yelling at them.

After discussing the call with the supervisor, the on-call worker made a visit to Mrs. Dees' home. She met with Mrs. Dees, Andy and Joy. Joy was crying and refused to speak. Andy would only say his father's temper has gotten worse since Dora's death.

The worker observed several marks on Joy's arms and legs: two round shaped marks about 1 ½ inch in diameter on either side of her left upper arm and three marks on the back of her right calf, each about two inches in length and ½ inch in width. The worker said "You have several bruises, Joy. Can you tell me how you got them?" Joy cried harder and did not respond. The worker said, "Sometimes I talk with teenagers who are unsure about whether to talk to me.

They want their family to get help but they don't want anyone to get in trouble." Joy continued to bow her head and cry. Andy said "Look, just please stop asking questions; we can handle it and you're just going to make things worse." The worker explained that she and other social workers have been able to help other families before. She explained that she knew the children's mother has passed and expressed condolences. She said, "Sometimes when families are grieving, people need extra help. Maybe that is so for your family?" The children did not comment. Mrs. Dees tried to get her grandchildren to

discuss their home life but they continued to remain silent. Andy refused to show the worker his arms or legs.

The on-call worker spoke with her supervisor and concluded the children needed to stay with Mrs. Dees until the father could be interviewed. The on-call worker instructed Mrs. Dees to contact her immediately if Andrew called or came to pick up the children. Mrs. Dees stated she does not hear from Andrew when she has the children, and he does not respond when she calls. Mrs. Dees made a point to tell the worker she wants the children to be with their father but only if the children are treated well and remain safe.

After leaving Mrs. Dees, the on-call worker tried calling the father at his home but received no answer. The on-call worker called Andrew's cell phone number provided by Mrs. Dees. There was no answer, and the worker left multiple messages on the voice mail. The worker continued to attempt contact with Andrew over the weekend.

Current Situation

On Sunday morning, the on-call worker received a frantic call from Andrew. Dora wanted to know why the worker was calling and asking if Andy and Joy were safe. The worker explained the children were safe and with Mrs. Dees. The worker further explained that a report was made alleging abuse of Andy and Joy. She stated that she had seen the children and need to talk with him about them. Andrew became angry and stated he could not "handle the children" since his wife's death. He stated they were "ungrateful" and could just stay with his mother-in-law "forever". The worker explained that someone needed to speak with Andrew as soon as possible. Andrew stated we would be available after work on Monday and did not want the children at home. The worker asked if Mrs. Dees agreed could the children stay there. Andrew agreed stating, "She can have them." The worker told Andrew someone would be in touch with him Monday afternoon. The worker contacted Mrs. Dees, and she agreed to keep the children as long as necessary.

Background Summary

Andrew grew up in a middle-class home with both his parents and two older brothers. His father was a funeral home director and his mother taught school. Andrew was a good student but preferred the band to athletics. His father and brothers were great athletes and often teased Andrew about his lack of athletic skills. His mother was his greatest supporter and encouraged his music interest.

Andrew worked his way through college and received a lot of help from his mother but minimal support from his father. After college he returned home with a degree in Business Administration but refused to go into the funeral home business with his father and brothers. He got a job at a local bank as a teller and has worked his way up to chief loan officer.

Andrew's deceased wife, Dora, was an only child whose father worked on a train. He died in a train accident when she was four years old. She was raised in a middle-class home by her school teacher mother who never remarried. Dora was an excellent student in high school and college. She majored in social work and worked as a social worker until her health caused her to retire on disability.

Andrew and Dora started dating in the 10th grade and became inseparable. They were both in the band, had a large group of friends and were both very outgoing and charismatic. Andrew felt he could tell Dora his inner feelings and thoughts. After high school, they went to the same college and had a very lavish wedding a year after they graduated. Andy was born two years later. Joy was born just after Andy's third birthday.

Dora was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer two years ago. Andrew became increasingly angry and withdrawn as Dora's illness progressed. He made sure she had excellent health care and spent a lot of time at her bedside. He resented Mrs. Dees' over protective attitude toward Dora and felt Mrs. Dees did not trust him to take good care of Dora. Andrew reluctantly allowed Mrs. Dees to assist with his wife's care because he knew how close they had always been. Even after their marriage, Mrs. Dees and Dora did their grocery shopping together and participated in many church activities together.

Dora had been the primary disciplinarian and did not believe in physical punishment. She spent a lot of time with her children, attending their many activities. Andy was a natural athlete like his grandfather and uncles. Joy took piano lessons and dance. Both children sang in the church choir. The children attended church with their mother. Andrew continued to belong to the church he grew up in but seldom attended.

Andrew admits when Dora died his anger and withdrawn behavior grew worse. He says he lost the one person who was "always on his side". He says the children talk back to him and do not obey. He does not feel he knows them because he has spent so much time working. He further feels they do not appreciate him or understand how much he misses their mother.

Andrew admits both his mother and Mrs. Dees have been trying to talk to him about the children's needs but he just cannot seem to think about them right now. He states his work is the only thing he can manage at this point. He states, "It is all I can do to maintain my performance at work. I need Andy and Joy to just do what I say and not talk back."

Safety Issues

- Andrew's anger management issues

Strengths

- Andrew has steady income and is able to financially support his family
- Andrew provides for children's basic needs (food, clothing, shelter)
- Mrs. Dees and Andrew's mother are supportive
- Both children are in school and other activities
- Andrew wants his children to respect authority

Needs

- Children need to feel safe in their own home
- Andy and Joy need to respect household rules
- All family members need to cope with grief
- Andrew needs to manage his anger

- Andrew needs to find ways to balance the pressures of work, parenting and experiencing grief
- Andrew and the children need to improve communication
- Family needs to establish joint expectations about chores, cleanliness of the home, children's behavior, etc.

Available Resources

Andrew, the children and both extended families live in a small city with a population of 40,000 - 50,000 people. There is a small hospital, a health clinic, a part-time mental health center, a very active YMCA and an old but well used golf course. There is a two- year community college. There are several churches representing nearly every denomination. Andrew's home is in a relatively new subdivision with families whose children's ages are nearly the same as Joy and Andy. Both Joy and Andy are involved in activities with the other children in their neighborhood. The maternal and paternal grandparents live nearby and are active in their community.

Child Welfare Competency One Knowledge of Human Development

Case Scenarios

- A. Andrew and the children agree to pastoral counseling. In one session, Andrew says, "The only way for us to make it is to pull together, but that is not happening. Joy is on the phone every night with her friends, and I have to yell at her to get the dishes done. Andy is constantly badgering me for the car keys to do errands and see his buddies. We live in the same house, but we pass each other in the night. Their mother would be sick if she saw this."

Teaching Tools

- Study the "Ladder of Inference" (Chris Argyris) and the milestones of adolescence and discuss how age-stage behaviors can contribute to perceptions that increase conflict, misunderstanding, and family impasse. (CWCD 1)
- Develop a resource booklet for Andrew designed to expand his understanding of adolescent development and grief. (CWCD 1)
- Suggested Resources "Ladder of Inference" - Chris Argyris www.thehealingplaceinfo.org

Child Welfare Competency Two Knowledge of Abuse and Neglect

Case Scenarios

- A. During the initial home visit, the worker notices pamphlets about anger management, depression and grief on Andrew's coffee table.
- B. During the initial interview by the investigation worker, Andrew states he has not been a good father and says he really wants to be great father but does not know how to get close to his children.
- C. During the interview, Andrew indicates he belongs to a local Methodist Church where his family also attends. He has never attended regularly and has not been at all since his wife's death.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, role play a conversation between the worker and Andrew engaging Andrew in a discussion regarding the connection between grief, his anger and the allegation of abuse. (CWCD 2.2, 2.3)
- Based on Case Scenario B and the case study, list factors that indicate the presence of abuse and/or neglect. (CWCD 2.1)
- Based on Case Scenario C, discuss how informal support systems can help this family. (CWCD 2.3)

Child Welfare Competency Three Knowledge of Services

Case Scenario

- A. During the interview with Andrew, he indicated he knows he has a problem and asked how he can get help with his anger and with the grief he and his children are experiencing.
- B. During on-call worker's interview with Mrs. Dees, the grandmother indicated she took a chance calling DHR but was praying they could help her grandchildren and their father. She knows DHR takes children from their families but that is not what she wants. She just wants help.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, identify at least 5 possible resources that can provide assistance for Andrew, Joy and Andy either as individuals or as a family. The resources can be formal or informal. Have the students/trainees choose one of the resources and interview a representative from that resource. Students should present an overview of their research and interview to the class. (CWCD 3)
- Based on scenario C, write a one page paper discussing (CWCD 3)

Child Welfare Competency Four Knowledge of Policy

Case Scenario

- A. As the on-call worker who received the initial report, you served as the intake worker by taking the initial report and making an assessment regarding investigation of the allegation.
- B. Andrew expresses outrage that his mother-in-law would call DHR and not talk to him.
- C. The on-call worker interviewed Andrew by phone and talked with Andy, Joy and Ms. Dees together. The investigative worker is required to conduct certain interviews in order to complete the assessment.
- D. When interviewing Joy, she tells you that her best friend often has bruises and injuries as a result of discipline.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, utilize DHR policy to determine whether the allegation meets the criteria for an abuse/neglect report. If so, what child/abuse definition would best describe this report? What factors would you consider to decide if immediate response by the agency is needed for child protection? (CWCD 4)
- Based on Case Scenario B utilize policy to determine whether policy regarding confidentiality of reporters has been followed. Assuming that the policy was followed, how might you respond to the father's statement? (CWCD 4)
- Based on Case Scenario C, utilize DHR policy (information collection protocol) to identify the investigative worker's next steps. (CWCD 4) Based on Case Scenario D, what would you do with this information? (CWCD 4)

Child Welfare Competency Five Knowledge of Systems Theory

Case Scenario

- A. Andrew talks about how he and Dora had a traditional marriage and family life. He indicated that he was the breadwinner, and she was the homemaker and primary parent. He said, "Our family was in many ways, the same as how I grew up, although in my family my dad was the disciplinarian. Dora did that in our family so maybe now I am disciplining like I remember my dad doing."

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, discuss how our own experiences as children inform our parenting and how a change in family composition means that roles shift and change. (CWCD 5)
- Based on Case Scenario A, role play a family meeting in which the family counselor helps the family sculpt the way their family used to be, then with them analyzes what they liked best about it. Brainstorm how the family can keep some of those good things even though their mother is now a memory instead of a person. (CWCD 5)
- Based on Case Scenario A and case information, list the interaction issues that have become more conflict ridden between Mrs. Dees and Andrew. How might these issues affect Andrew's relationship with Andy and Joy? (CWCD 5)

Suggested resources

- Satire, Virginia. Conjoint Family Therapy, Third Edition. 2000

Child Welfare Competency Six Knowledge of Strengths Based Perspective

Case Scenario

- A. During an interview, Andrew acknowledges that his grief and anger have contributed to the current family crisis.
- B. Andy states, during a discussion with the worker, that he "blames himself for Joy's bruises". After exploring Andy's statements, the worker learns that Andy told his father that Joy was always on the phone and never did the dishes prior to Andrew injuring Joy.
- C. Mrs. Dees is opposed to the children returning home with Andrew.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, the worker understands that recognition of the need to change is the first step of change, how would the worker assist Andrew in utilizing his strengths to stabilize the family? (CWCD 6.1)
- Based on Case Scenario B, write examples of strengths based reframes of Andy's self-blame. Share and discuss as a group. (CWCD 6.1)
- Based on Case Scenario C, using a strengths based perspective, list, as a class, ways in which the worker can involve the grandmother in supporting Andy, Joy and Andrew. (CWCD 6.1)

Child Welfare Competency Seven Knowledge of Role of Social Work

Case Scenario

- A. The social worker visits Andy and Joy at Mrs. Dees' home. Mrs. Dees answers the door with tears in her eyes and is visibly upset. Upon inquiry, Mrs. Dees states she was cleaning out a cabinet and found a card Dora had given her for Mother's Day. Mrs. Dees states, "I often find myself crying for no reason and do not want to upset the children. They have been through enough."
- B. Mrs. Dees continues as the primary caretaker of Andy and Joy. The social worker is concerned about Mrs. Dees' on-going grief regarding Dora's death. The social worker is concerned that Mrs. Dees is on the verge of depression. The worker talked to her supervisor regarding the concerns. The supervisor states the agency's only concern is the children and services cannot be provided for Mrs. Dees.

Teaching Tool

- Based on Case Scenario A, discuss, as a group, the social worker's role in assisting Mrs. Dees with her grief. Questions for discussion include: Could most agencies pay for services for Mrs. Dees? How could Mrs. Dees' grief issues affect Andy and Joy? (CWCD 7.2)
- Based on Case Scenario A and B, have each student write a plan of advocacy addressing concerns for Mrs. Dees. The plan should include an outline of concerns, how issues could impact the children, three available resources, and the benefits and limitations of each. (CWCD 7.1)

Child Welfare Competency Eight Knowledge and Application of Evidence Based Practice

Case Scenarios

- A. Andy admits to using marijuana and drinking to excess several times per week.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, develop a literature review focusing on programs that work with adolescents and substance abuse treatment. Evidence-based outcomes should be highlighted in the review. (CWCD 8)
- Based on case study, small groups will research a different evidence-based anger management program and list the benefits and limitations of that program in relation to Andrew. Findings will be presented to the class. (CWCD 8)

Child Welfare Competency Nine Understanding of Cultural Competence

Case Scenario

- A. During an interview, the worker learns that throughout Andrew's life he has been surrounded by strong female models (his mother, Dora's mother and Dora - his wife).
- B. The worker recognizes that Andrew has never been directly involved in rearing of his children, including discipline.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, discuss how the worker would convey to Andrew that, as a loving and caring father, he can show his children that he loves them not just through providing for their material needs, but also their emotional needs. (CWCD 9)
- Based on Case Scenario B, what resources could be used to help Andrew learn appropriate skills in disciplining his children and providing for their developmental needs? (CWCD 9.2)

Child Welfare Competency Ten Understanding of Crisis Intervention

Case Scenario

- A. Sunday night after the initial report was made to DHR, Mrs. Dees calls the on-call worker stating that Andrew has called the house and threatened to come over and take the children.
- B. Andy and Joy have been living with Mrs. Dees for several weeks. Mrs. Dees contacts the social worker after hours stating Andy has arrived at her home obviously intoxicated and is demanding money from her.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, define the role of the social worker in this situation. List the information the social worker will need to know to make a decision regarding Andy and Joy's safety. Role play the development of a safety plan with Mrs. Dees, Andrew, Andy, and Joy. (CWCD 10)
- Based on Case Scenario B, identify the immediate and non-immediate concerns in this scenario. Brainstorm possible solutions to the different concerns. (CWCD 10)

Child Welfare Competency Eleven Knowledge of Social Work Values and Ethics

Case Scenario

- A. During a telephone conversation between the social worker and Andrews, Andrew becomes very irate using a loud tone of voice, foul language, and hanging up on the social worker. The social worker discusses the situation with her supervisor who tells her "to give it right back to him". The supervisor is not a social worker and is not familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- B. This case was open in June. When school begins in August, the social worker learns that Joy and the worker's daughter are assigned to the same class.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, read the NASW Code of Ethics. Discuss the implications of a social worker reporting to a non-social worker. Role play a conversation between the worker and supervisor discussing Andrew's behavior and responding within the Code of Ethics. (CWCD 11)
- Based on Case Scenario B, discuss the ethical implications of this situation. What action should the worker take, if any? (CWCD 11)

Child Welfare Competency Twelve Communication Skills

Case Scenario

- A. Andrew discloses to the worker that he has begun dating a coworker. He wants to introduce her to Andy and Joy.
- B. Andy often talked with his mother regarding activities going on in his life and relationships with peers. Andy has verbalized that he does not feel he can talk with his father about these issues.

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, role play a conversation between the worker and Andrew. Have the worker model active listening as Andrew explores the implications of his new relationship. (CWCD 12.1, 12.2, 12.3)
- Based on Case Scenario Band case information, write a focused statement identifying the communication strengths and needs between Andrew and Andy. Provide a written description of what good communication between Andrew and Andy would entail and what specific actions should be taken to enhance communication. Describe ways in which this written plan could be used in working with Andrew, Andy, and Joy. (CWCD 12.4)

Child Welfare Competency Thirteen Assessment Skills

Case Scenario

- A. After further interviews and assessment, Joy acknowledges that she is concerned about her brother and father's relationship. She reveals that Andy has been sneaking out at night with some friends that he did not have before his mother's death. While talking with both children and the father together, the worker notices that the father looks to Joy and depends on her to answer questions regarding the family.
- B. During this same interview process, it becomes clear that, although there are difficulties within this family, they have numerous strengths. The children are involved in extracurricular activities, and Joy was instrumental in starting a grief support group for teens in her local church. Andrew has written a journal describing his thoughts and feelings regarding the loss of his wife. Andy has taken on the responsibility of doing most of the household chores.

Teaching Tools

- Based on the Cased Scenarios, determine the relationship patterns by drawing a genogram. Based on the scenario and genogram, describe what underlying issues may be occurring in the lives of each individual family member. (CWCD 13)
- Based, on Case Scenario B, identify strengths and underlying needs within this family. Identify how the strengths will provide support in meeting underlying needs. Write a beginning plan of intervention based on the identified strengths and underlying needs. Also identify any barriers to the solutions based on the strengths and needs of the family. (CWCD 13)

Suggested Resource

- DeMaria, Rita, Weeks, Gerald, Hof, Larry. Focused Genograms, 1999.

Child Welfare Competency Fourteen Organizational and Technology Skills

Case Scenario

- A. After the assessment of this family, the worker writes letters to the team members with the date of the ISP. The worker also uses email to invite school personnel.
- B. After the assessment of this family, an ISP is scheduled and held. The worker has 10 working days to type the ISP and distribute to team members. In the meantime, the worker has received 6 new crisis investigations, 2 of which require an "immediate within 12 hour response".

Teaching Tools

- Based on Case Scenario A, review DHR child welfare policy in regards to scheduling an ISP with the family, with a focus on preparation of the family. Also, discuss whether email is an appropriate tool to communicate with team. List the benefits and risks. (CWCD 14)
- Based on Case Scenario B, discuss the necessity of critical time management based on the type of work in a child welfare agency. Develop a list of how participants use time management skills and a list of barriers that inhibit effective time management. (CWCD 14.2)

CASE DEVELOPED BY:
PHYLLIS ALSTON, LCSW, PIP
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
PATSY KINSAUL, LCSW, PIP
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES