

Case Study I Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Yolanda is sixteen years old. The town where she is staying has 3 schools, an elementary, middle, and high school. There are about 1200 total students enrolled district-wide and about 300 in her high school. She has been living with various friends for almost a year. She is now about 4 months pregnant and finding it hard to find friends who will let her stay at their house. Her mom (and the Mom's current male friend) live in a town about 30 miles away. Yolanda's Mom receives social security from a deceased husband. She has another child, an 11-year-old son, who also receives his Dad's social security benefit. Yolanda's check has been going to her mom and her friend, as well. Yolanda has decided that she wants to use her check, along with her job, which is at a fast food eating facility, to pay rent on a small garage apartment in the back of a house. Her mother found out her plan when Yolanda and her boyfriend went to the social security office and changed the address on the check to the boyfriend's house. The mom insisted that Yolanda move back home with them, and Yolanda feels it is totally because she feels she needs Yolanda's check. The secretary calls you as Yolanda's mom is in the office and is insisting that you withdraw Yolanda from school and send her back to her mother's town to live.

Yolanda has been struggling in school. She misses a lot of days, but she tells the counselor it is due to nausea and feeling tired, along with not having the right kinds of foods to eat. Currently, she is failing one class and has one B, 2 Cs and a D in one. Her boyfriend is a high school drop out who works rather sporadically in construction.

- 1) Does Yolanda meet the definition of homeless? Why or why not?
- 2) Does the mother have a right to withdraw her from school?
- 3) If the mother takes Yolanda back to the town where she lives, but Yolanda wants to continue in school where she is, what should your district do about the transportation?
- 4) If Yolanda were to succeed with her plan to keep her social security check and rent the garage apartment, would she still be homeless?
- 5) What resources would you refer Yolanda to?
- 6) What recommendations would you have for Yolanda to help her do better in school?
- 7) What recommendations would you make regarding Yolanda's food intake?

Case Study 2

Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Andre is 8 years old and his sister Cassie is 6. When school started, they went to Creekside elementary school, where Cassie is a first grader and Andre is in third grade. They lived with their mother and their stepfather. One day their mother picked them up from school and told them they would be staying at a different place for a while. They went to a place called "Safe Shelter," which was for victims of domestic violence. Andre pleaded to continue going to school at Creekside. He is involved in a "gifted and talented" program which he loves and has several good friends. Cassie is afraid of her stepfather, and she is willing to go to a different elementary school, Maple Grove, because she wants her mother to walk with her to school and pick her up every day. However, when shelter personnel called Creekside's principal to arrange transportation, he said that the shelter was outside of the boundaries, and it would not be possible to get Andre to Creekside. The receptionist at the shelter called the district to get additional information, and she was referred to you as the homeless liaison.

1. List, in order of priority, the steps you would take to get Andre to his school of choice.
2. Assume that the transportation department has no information about the McKinney Vento law. They are skeptical about your attempts to "tell them what to do." Brainstorm about the most appropriate ways to deal with this situation.
3. When you called transportation to arrange for a bus to come to the shelter, the secretary insisted on knowing the child's name, teacher, and grade. The shelter's receptionist was hesitant to give out this information, as this violates the confidentiality clause at the shelter. Again, Safe Shelter called you (as the homeless liaison) to intervene.
4. When Cassie began first grade at her new school, her teacher made her feel uncomfortable by asking questions about where she lives and why they have moved. Cassie has responded by not answering any questions. Her mother is concerned that the staff is not knowledgeable about the emotional needs of children who are being housed in a domestic violence shelter. What are your recommendations?

Case Study 3

Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Kalisa is 10 years old and in the fifth grade. Her brother Montford is 9 and in the fourth grade. They have just moved with their Mom, who is single, to New Hope Homeless Shelter. The counselor at their elementary school has just called you, because both children are struggling in school. Montford is not even reading at a second grade level. Teachers have indicated they think he might have ADD and might do better on medication. He is impulsive and tends to respond inappropriately to other students, especially verbally. He does not finish many assignments in school and rarely brings them back completed the next day. His work tends to be sloppy with many mistakes. Kalisa is quiet and day dreams a lot. Her math skills are extremely poor. She seems fragile and appears to fight back tears when she receives criticism or correction. The standardized test is coming up in a two months, and both teachers have expressed their concerns about the effect these children will have on the class average.

You call New Hope and arrange to speak with the director and have a tour of the shelter. You find that the three people in this family share a small room with a double bed. Andre sleeps on a pallet in the same room. There is a small bathroom with commode and sink, a small table (no chair), and a chest with two drawers in the room. Showers, eating facilities, and lounge areas are shared with everyone at the shelter, which houses up to 50 people. No tutoring is held at the facility at present.

1. In order of priority, list the steps you would take to help these students be able to have more academic success in school.
2. The mother has recently obtained a job as a cook in a nursing home, working the afternoon shift and the weekend shift. No transportation is available for the children unless they ride the bus to shelter to and from school each day. The mother feels fortunate that a friend at the shelter has agreed to keep the children in her care while the mother works. Otherwise, shelter rules would prohibit the mother from leaving her children unattended.
3. The mother is especially concerned about the children's situation during the summer, as she will continue working, and there is very little for the children to do in the summer. The teachers feel that one or both children might need to attend summer school.
4. The counselor has noticed that the students seem to have need for more and better clothing. Montford did not appear to have anything but a light-weight fleece jacket to wear on very cold days.
5. Since you are an excellent homeless liaison, you check with the school cafeteria where the students attend school. It seems that they do not eat breakfast at school on a regular basis, even though they are both eligible for free meals. What recommendations do you have to address these issues?

Case Study 4

Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Mrs. Atkins is a junior high principal and has been named as the homeless liaison for a small rural district. The junior high (7, 8, 9th grade) has about 125 students, and the high school has about 135, although it contains one more grade. The district is very concerned about their high drop out rate. Mrs. Atkins calls you, because you are in a neighboring district, and she knows you have had more experience with homeless situations. One of her ninth grade students, Alli, stopped attending classes after the first three weeks of school. It is now November, and attempts by Mrs. Atkins to contact Alli or her parents have been unsuccessful. Based on a tip from a fellow student, Mrs. Atkins made a surprise visit to a mobile home park where she found Alli, who looks pregnant again (Alli's grandmother keeps her 15 month old son), looking bleary eyed at 11:00 a.m. as she staggered to answer the door. Apparently there are several high school dropouts who live in the mobile home, along with another high school male student, Bently, who is Alli's boyfriend. Mrs. Atkins suspects there is drug use and dealing involved, as only Alli's boyfriend has a regular job at an auto body shop. Certainly Alli was guarded in her responses to Mrs. Atkins, but she indicated she was interested in continuing her schooling but was not interested in attending a traditional classroom. She has been a good student and seems aware of the need to continue her studies if she is going to make a good life for her child and the one on-the-way.

As there is no alternative education in the rural school, what suggestions do you have for Mrs. Atkins to help her to save Alli from dropping out and from continuing in this homeless pattern?

There is an alternative school in a neighboring district. When you call them, they refuse to take Alli as a student, because their rule is that a student must attend one semester as a regular student in their school before they can be enrolled in the alternative school. Would you continue to pursue this as an option? Why or why not?

Alli has indicated she would be willing to consider the alternative school in the neighboring district. What resources would you use to determine if

- 1) Alli could live in the neighboring district and thus use their transportation?
- 2) there is a possible way to work out the transportation issues so that Alli could travel from her district to the alternative school?
- 3) you would recommend GED preparation for Alli? Why or why not?

Case Study 5

Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Samantha is an acquaintance of yours who works at the Salvation Army. She knows you are the homeless liaison for your school district. One quiet Friday, when everyone in your district is looking forward to the play-off football game, you get a call from her. It seems like a family has arrived in town and checked in at the Salvation Army. They arrive in an older, abused-looking van with all of their worldly possessions. They have come from Philadelphia and want to start a new life in your community. There is a Mom and Dad, and 5 children. Tessa is 15 and is pregnant. Bonner is 13, Justin is 11, Corrine is 7 and Bonita is 1 ½. They have shelter and food for three nights, but since the shelter is not appropriate for families, they will need to have other accommodations by that time.

1. What information will you need from the family, and how will you obtain it?
2. Your community has 10 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school. How will you decide what schools the students should attend? What contacts will you make with your administration and the schools?
3. What resources will you contact to obtain housing, clothing, and other help for this family?
4. Where will you refer the Dad to look for work?
5. How will you assist the schools in determining the correct grade placement for each child?
6. What resources will you suggest to the parents to help their children succeed academically?

Case Study 6

Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Mr. Adkins is a homeless liaison for Cornerville School District. He is also the High School counselor. Students know he really is interested in their well being and their welfare. Deidra (age 14) was referred to Mr. Adkins, because she was a new student, and she needed help with her schedule. Cornerville is a small school, and they do not have band as a option for high school students. Deidra was very disappointed with this, because she was first chair flute in her band at Midville, which is 25 miles from Cornerville. Mr. Adkins found out that Deidra moved to Cornerville to live with her grandmother, who is elderly and partially disabled. However, the grandmother lives in a nice house and has home health care. The grandfather (now deceased) was a businessman in the community, so it is thought there is adequate funding for Deidra's needs. Deidra's mother is in a drug rehabilitation center, so there is not an option for Deidra to stay in Midville. Mr. Adkins calls you to see if you will arrange transportation, so that Deidra can attend school in her former school district while she is staying with her grandmother.

1. Is Deidra truly homeless, since she is staying with her grandmother, who appears to be economically stable? Does she meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless for the purpose of transportation?
2. Assume you decide she is homeless and you contact your district to try to arrange transportation. The district is aware they have to provide busing for those students within the district, but they say there is no way they have to for a student outside the district. What is your response?
3. Suppose the district says they would like to help, but they only put \$15.00 in the "Title I set-aside" budget for homeless students, and this will not cover the cost of providing transportation from a neighboring district. What would be your approach?

Case Study 7

Homeless Liaison Networking Session

Mrs. Ludlum, like Mr. Atkins, is a concerned High School Counselor and Homeless Liaison. One morning, she received a call from the truant officer to try to locate Duvant, a 16 year old who had not been in school for 4 days. There had been no contact from Duvant or his parents. As she was trying to determine the best course of action, Duvant showed up. As he talked with Mrs. Ludlum, she asked him where he had been the last few days. It turns out he had left home and had been wandering around, trying to find a place to “hang out.” He would not give many details, but his mother lives with her common-law husband, and there have been numerous incidents of family violence. Duvant has been a fairly decent student, overall. He has been enrolled in a work-study co-op and doing a reasonably good job as a stacker for a grocery store. However, he hasn’t shown up for work in about a week, so his future at that job is not secure.

1. What would you do to try to obtain housing for Duvant?
2. How would you find out if Duvant needs tutoring or other help to avoid failing his classes?
3. What resources could you recommend to help him succeed academically?