

# THE FORRESTER FAMILY VIDEOTAPE

## SCRIPT

0:00:00 SATTRN Logo (STILL)

### **Part I:**

### **Child Protective Services Intake Interview**

0:00:26 **OPENING TEXT**

This videotape demonstrates a family-centered approach to child protection in a case of physical abuse of a nine-year old boy, Jon Forrester. The five-tape interview segment illustrate how the caseworker assures the child's safety, engages and supports the parent, involves the parent in the family assessment, and develops an effective intervention plan.

The ideal approach to child protection emphasizes the use of family centered casework, without compromising the appropriate use of authority. This requires a flexible, individualized approach that can respond to each family's needs and strengths, while assuring protection of the child.

This taped segment compares three different approaches to an initial family contact in a referral of alleged physical abuse.

0:01:22 **NARRATOR**

There are many practice dilemmas in the field of child welfare. One of the most significant is how to balance the use of protective authority with an approach that engages, involves, and strengthens families.

Clearly, the primary goal of child welfare is to protect children from maltreatment. But, we must also try to prevent the serious trauma associated with separation, placement, and impermanence. This is the underlying rationale for a "family centered" approach to child welfare. If we can strengthen and enable families, children can remain permanently at home, and still be safe from harm.

Herein lies the caseworker's dilemma. Workers must have the authority to intervene – without parental consent – if this is necessary to protect children. But, the exercise of this authority can interfere with a collaborative and trusting casework relationship, which is necessary for effective and constructive change.

This videotape illustrates how intake caseworkers use these two, very different intervention strategies – engaging and supporting families, and using authority to protect children. Our goal is to achieve an effective integration of these strategies, so we can protect children and engage families at the same time.

First, here's the situation.

Susan Forrester is a divorced, 29-year-old mother who lives alone with her two children – Jon, age nine, and Wendy, age four.

Jon goes to public school. Wendy stays with a child care provider while Ms. Forrester attends job training.

The school nurse referred Jon to the child welfare agency. She reported that Jon came to school with a large bruise on his forehead, and the beginnings of a serious black eye. He told the nurse he had fallen off his bike.

The nurse found several other bruises – on his buttocks, legs, shoulders, chest, and back. Some of them were almost healed. But the

nurse told Jon he couldn't have gotten them all from a single fall off his bike. She asked him to tell her the truth about how they happened. Jon began to cry. He said, "My mom got mad, 'cause I don't like fish, and she threw a frying pan at me." Jon also said, "She hits me when she's mad. She says if she doesn't make me mind, I'll just grow up just like my dad."

That's the situation. Now let's see how our three child welfare workers handle it. First, Pamela, whose approach is to use her authority to gain entry to the family, and to force their compliance.

Pamela arrived at the school within a half-hour of the referral from the school nurse. She interviewed Jon and looked at Jon's injuries.

0:03:57 **NURSE**

Jon told me that he fell from his bike last night, but then he finally told me that his mom got mad at him, because he didn't want to have fish for dinner.

0:04:12 **PAMELA**

Umm. Let me look. That looks pretty bad. I don't know, I don't think this is accidental. Do you think this head injury could be a serious problem?

0:04:22 **NURSE**

Well, he's not showing any signs of concussion, but I would feel better if he could see a doctor within the next few hours.

0:04:29 **PAMELA**

I'm going to go call the police.

0:04:31 **NURSE**

I'll stay with Jon.

0:04:33 **NARRATOR**

Pamela then called the police. When they arrived at the school, they placed Jon in emergency custody. The officer left with Jon, and Pamela went to the Forrester home, unannounced.

0:04:52 **PAMELA**

Ms. Forrester? I'm Pamela Jones from Child Welfare Services. I've just come from Jon's school, and I'd like to speak with you about the possibility that Jon has been abused. Can we talk inside?

0:05:02 **MS. FORRESTER**

Abused? I'm not a child abuser. Who told you such a thing?

0:05:07 **PAMELA**

Look, can we please talk inside?

0:05:09 **MS. FORRESTER**

No. Look, this is ridiculous. I want to know who called you.

0:05:12 **PAMELA**

I'm sorry, I can't tell you that. It's confidential. Now, Jon has a big bruise on his head, and I'd like to know what happened.

0:05:19 **MS. FORRESTER**

You have some nerve coming here and accusing me. I want to know who called you!

0:05:24 **PAMELA**

I can't tell you that. Now, Jon has bruises over the rest of his body, and I'd like to know what happened.

0:05:30 **MS. FORRESTER**

It's really none of your business, but I have nothing to hide. Jon fell off his bike last night and banged his head on the concrete. As far as any

other bruises are concerned, I haven't seen them. It must have happened on the playground. He plays rough and he bruises easily.

0:05:47 **PAMELA**

Children don't get bruises all over their bodies from playing on the playground.

0:05:52 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I guess my child would just be the first then! Look, Ms. whatever-your-name-is, Jon hasn't been abused by anyone, especially not by me. I've seen pictures of abused kids on TV, and Jon's not like that, so there's really nothing more to discuss here. You can leave.

0:06:08 **PAMELA**

Ms. Forrester, we have a responsibility to be involved. You see, Jon told us you had hurt him, more than once. Now Jon has been placed in emergency custody by the police, and is on his way to the hospital for x-rays. I'm going to meet them there in half an hour. You can go with me if you like.

0:06:25 **MS. FORRESTER**

Jon doesn't need to go to any hospital. He was fine when he left for school this morning, and I assure you he's fine now.

0:06:32 **PAMELA**

Ms. Forrester, I can go to the hospital with you or without you. Now, if you don't cooperate, I may have to place Jon in a foster home. I would develop a case plan that would protect Jon and help you. Maybe you'd have to take some parenting classes and get some counseling, and if you cooperate, Jon can come back here to live in the future.

0:06:55 **MS. FORRESTER**

I'm not crazy, I don't need any counseling, and I sure don't need any classes! But I'll tell you what, though. I'll get a lawyer and I'll fight you. We'll see about my rights!

0:07:06 **PAMELA**

That's your decision, Ms. Forrester. But I can assure you, if you don't cooperate, the court is not going to look very kindly on letting Jon come back here to live.

0:07:16 **NARRATOR**

That was how Pamela handled the situation. While she was correct to stress the seriousness of the situation, her exclusive use of authority completely alienated Ms. Forrester. Pamela showed no empathy, and she all but accused Ms. Forrester of abuse. Her manner was also very defensive. This increased Ms. Forrester's anger and hostility. In the end, Pamela had no choice but to go to the hospital without Ms. Forrester.

Now, let's take the same set of circumstances and see how another worker, Scott, handles the situation. Scott relies exclusively on an approach that engages and supports Ms. Forrester.

Scott arrived at the school within a half-hour of the referral from the school nurse. Scott interviewed Jon, and the nurse showed him Jon's bruises.

0:08:04 **NURSE**

He told me that he fell off his bike last night, but then, after we talked awhile, he said his mom got mad at him because he didn't want fish for dinner.

0:08:15 **SCOTT**

Hum, well, they look inflicted, don't they? I'm worried about this. Does his head injury pose any kind of health risk?

0:08:22 **NURSE**

Well, he doesn't show any signs of concussion, but he ought to see a doctor within the next few hours, just to be sure.

0:08:28 **SCOTT**

Yeah, I think you're right. I'm going to call his mother. Do you have her number?

0:08:32 **NURSE**

I have the address info right here.

0:08:33 **SCOTT**

Thank you.

0:08:41 **SCOTT**

Hi, Ms. Forrester? Yes, my name is Scott Smith, and I work with an agency that helps parents with their kids, and I just received a phone call, and I thought I might be able to help you with Jon. Well, I understand that you don't think you need any help, but I need to come see you anyway. Umm. Jon's been hurt and he needs to see a doctor. All right, well I appreciate that, thank you. I'll see you in about half an hour. Bye-bye.

Can you keep a watch on him while I talk to his mother? I'll be back in touch in just a little while.

0:09:15 **NURSE**

Sure, that's not a problem at all.

0:09:17 **SCOTT**

Thank you.

0:09:20 **NURSE**

Thank you Scott.

0:09:21 **SCOTT**

Take care Jon.

0:09:28 **MS. FORRESTER**

Oh, hi.

0:09:30 **SCOTT:**

Hi, Ms. Forrester, I'm Scott.

0:09:31 **MS. FORRESTER**

Have a seat.

0:09:32 **SCOTT**

Oh, thank you. Well, thanks for agreeing to talk with me, Ms. Forrester. Now, as I told you on the phone I work for an agency that helps families with their children.

0:09:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yes, I know, you told me. But I don't have any problem with my children. My family is fine.

0:09:49 **SCOTT**

I just came from Jon's school, Ms. Forrester and, he's got some pretty bad bruises, a very serious one on his forehead. He needs to see a doctor to make sure he doesn't have a concussion.

0:09:59 **MS. FORRESTER**

You're kidding. Why didn't they call me?

0:10:01 **SCOTT**

Oh, they called me. It's my job to help families. Now, I understand about the frying pan. You must have been very angry and frustrated to hit him like that. What about the other bruises? Can you tell me what happened?

0:10:16 **MS. FORRESTER**

I don't know what you're talking about. Jon took a pretty bad spill on his bike last night, and he banged his head pretty bad. As far as any other bruises, I haven't seen any. But, he's always falling down, and he bruises real easily. He probably got them just from rough housing around with his friends, I'm sure.

0:10:35 **SCOTT**

How do you discipline Jon.

0:10:38 **MS. FORRESTER**

Discipline? You mean make him mind? Well, I typically don't have to do it too often. He's usually pretty good. I'll send him to his room from time to time, or I'd spank him when he was younger, but that's pretty much it. You'd better not be saying that I hurt him!

0:10:56 **SCOTT**

Oh, I'm not accusing you of anything, Ms. Forrester. It's just that sometimes children get hurt when their parents discipline them too forcefully when they're mad. It's my job to help parents learn ways to discipline their children so they don't hurt them.

0:11:10 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I don't need your help. Jon's not like one of those kids that you see on television.

0:11:16 **SCOTT**

Well, however Jon got hurt, he needs to see a doctor. Now I can take you and Jon to the to the emergency clinic. I'll be glad to do that.

0:11:23 **MS. FORRESTER:**

No, no, that won't be necessary. I mean if he really needs to go, I'll take him when he gets home from school. He can go to the family doctor. He's known Jon since he was a baby.

0:11:33 **SCOTT**

May I go along with you? Maybe I can help.

0:11:37 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, thank you. There's really no need for that. You can just go. I'll take care of it myself.

0:11:42 **SCOTT**

You sure?

0:11:43 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yes. There's no need for that, thank you.

0:11:47 **SCOTT**

All right. Well, I'll call tomorrow and see what the doctor said. And I'd like to bring over some reading material on parenting and alternative discipline. I think you might find it useful.

Oh, and, here's my phone number. Now, I'll be glad to help in any way I can. You call me anytime.

0:12:04 **MS. FORRESTER**

I will. Thank you. Good-bye.

0:12:09 **NARRATOR**

Scott was very supportive and sympathetic to Ms. Forrester. But, he exerted no authority – he simply abdicated his responsibility to protect Jon. He was quite understanding, even about the possibility of serious abuse. But, he was powerless to assure Jon's protection. He did all he could using persuasion, but he couldn't even assure that Ms. Forrester

would get Jon to the hospital! Therefore, Jon remained at high risk of further harm.

Now let's see how our third worker, Carol, handles this situation. Carol uses her casework skills to engage Ms. Forrester, but she effectively uses authority to assure that Jon is protected. Let's see how she does it.

Carol arrived at the school within a half-hour of the referral from the school nurse. Carol interviewed Jon, and the nurse showed her Jon's bruises.

0:13:01 **NURSE**

John told me that he fell off his bike last night. But, after we talked awhile, he told me that his mother got mad at him because he didn't want to eat fish for dinner.

0:13:13 **CAROL**

Well, that looks serious to me, and it doesn't look like an accident.

0:13:19 **NURSE**

No, it doesn't.

0:13:20 **CAROL**

Do you think he has a concussion from this head injury?

0:13:23 **NURSE**

No, there's no signs of it, but he really should see a doctor within the next few hours.

0:13:29 **CAROL**

Well, I am going to call the police to report this situation, and go talk to his mother. Jon, I don't want you to be afraid, okay? I am going to go talk to the police, and you haven't done anything wrong. We're here to help you and your mother.

0:13:45 **NURSE**

I'll watch him for you.

0:13:46 **CAROL**

Okay, I'll be right back.

0:13:48 **NARRATOR**

A police officer came to the school and placed Jon in emergency custody. The police officer said he would meet Carol at the hospital. Carol said she would call Jon's mother, and then go to the Forrester home. She hoped to bring Jon's mother with her to the hospital. The officer agreed.

0:14:11 **CAROL**

Hi, Ms. Forrester.

0:14:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yes?

0:14:13 **CAROL**

I'm Carol Johnson. I am with DHS. Can I come in for just a minute? Thank you. Is there somewhere where we can talk?

0:14:25 **MS. FORRESTER**

Wherever. Here is fine.

0:14:28 **CAROL**

Okay, I'm with child welfare, and I'm here because I got a phone call about Jon. He has a head injury and bruises all over his body, and he's going to need some doctor's assistance. Before I talk about this any further, is there any way you can tell me about what happened?

0:14:43 **MS. FORRESTER**

I know all about Child Welfare Services. I don't need your kind of help. I don't have that type of problem. I've seen abused kids on TV, and Jon's not like that. I love him and I take good care of him.

0:14:55 **CAROL**

And I believe that you do.

0:14:58 **MS. FORRESTER**

And, I know all about how you people take children from their families and put them into foster homes.

0:15:02 **CAROL**

Ms. Forrester, we don't take children from their families unless they are at a very high risk of being hurt, okay? Our job is to make sure that children are safe.

0:15:11 **MS. FORRESTER**

I protect both my children. I watch when they're outside playing, I make sure they have plenty of food to eat, and I make sure they wear warm clothes in the winter.

0:15:20 **CAROL**

I can see that you do a lot for your children.

0:15:22 **MS. FORRESTER**

I certainly do, so you can leave. We don't need your help.

0:15:25 **CAROL**

Ms. Forrester, I can't leave exactly yet. Now, I know that Jon is hurt, and I still don't quite understand how that happened. I was hoping that maybe we could talk a little bit about this.

0:15:37 **MS. FORRESTER**

Now, I don't know who called Child Welfare Services, but Jon fell off his bike and hit his head. I haven't seen any other bruises. But he plays rough, and he bruises easily. Anyway, it's no big deal, so why not just go help some other family who really needs it.

0:15:52 **CAROL**

Ms. Forrester, I know that this is very hard for you, but I need you to understand the seriousness of the situation. Now, I saw Jon. He has a bad bruise on his head, and bruises all over his body. The police have placed him in protective custody, and he is on his way to the hospital because he needs medical attention. Now, I would like it if you would go with me to the hospital.

0:16:13 **MS. FORRESTER**

You have no right to go sneaking around seeing my children at school!

0:16:17 **CAROL**

Sometimes children are abused and neglected, and many are at a very serious risk. Our agency has to act quickly, or those children could be permanently injured, or they could die. Now, I'm concerned about Jon's head injury. He could have a concussion, and he needs appropriate care right away, or he could have long-term harm. Now, I admit children do get bruised when they are playing outside, but usually that's on the elbows and the knees. They don't usually get bruises on the back, the thighs or the belly. Those types of bruises mean that they've probably been hit by someone. Now, however Jon got his bruises, he still needs medical care, and I would really like it if you go with me.

0:17:01 **MS. FORRESTER**

I will not have you accusing me of hurting my child.

0:17:06 **CAROL**

Ms. Forrester, I know that you're angry. But I'm not accusing you, and I'm not blaming you. I'm asking you to go with me so we can clear up exactly what happened to Jon, and also so that you can get the proper help so that it doesn't happen again. Now, I think that you may know what happened, and I also think that you're afraid to tell me. I know that you don't trust me. But I also want you to understand that I know that parents get stressed out, and I know that children get hurt, and I'm concerned about Jon, but I'm also concerned about this family. Now, despite what you've heard about Child Welfare Services, we are here to help, and we have helped in some pretty tough situations. But right now, we need to go to the hospital.

0:17:50 **MS. FORRESTER**

All right, I'll go, but you don't need to come with me. I'll make sure he sees a doctor. Where did they take him?

0:17:57 **CAROL**

They took him Children's Hospital, and I'm glad that you want to go, but it's important that I go with you.

0:18:02 **MS. FORRESTER**

That's what I thought. I don't have much to say about this at all, do I? You're going to do what you want to do anyway.

0:18:07 **CAROL**

No, you do have a choice. You can go with me – you're his mother, and he's going to want you there. He's going to be afraid if he's there all alone, at the hospital. But, it would be better if we work together. Now, I have to go, regardless of what you do.

0:18:22 **MS. FORRESTER**

Are you threatening me?

0:18:24 **CAROL**

No, I'm trying to help you understand the reality of this situation. Jon has been hurt, and I'm going to do everything I can to make sure he's not hurt again. But, if you help me, we can work on this together, and we can probably resolve this together.

0:18:41 **MS. FORRESTER**

Why should I trust you ?

0:18:43 **CAROL**

Because I believe you when you say you work hard to give Jon good care, and I believe he belongs at home with you. That's why I want to work on this problem now. Now, I know that you've only just met me, and I understand that you don't trust me. But we need to work on one thing at a time. So, let's go to the hospital, and then we can talk about things, and we can start working on resolving this. I know that you don't believe me, but believe it or not, I have kids too, and I think you'd be surprised at how much I understand.

0:19:20 **MS. FORRESTER**

Okay, I'll get my coat.

0:19:36 **NARRATOR**

Carol engaged Ms. Forrester to work with her. But, she also made sure Ms. Forrester understood the seriousness of the situation, and Carol's role to protect Jon. Carol clearly explained how and when she would use her authority. She also stressed that she wanted Ms. Forrester to work with her to resolve the problem. Carol communicated this in a kind, matter-of-fact manner, without accusation or blame. She did not press Ms. Forrester regarding how the abuse had occurred, nor did she mention the frying pan. There would be a more appropriate time and place for these discussions. Further, Carol did not want Jon to be punished for disclosing the abuse.

Carol hoped that after their relationship was stronger, Ms. Forrester would voluntarily tell her how Jon had been injured. There would be another opportunity to talk about it when the doctor at the hospital confirmed the abuse.

Carol also supported Ms. Forrester's role as Jon's mother. She also knew it would be important to Jon to have his mother present in a frightening situation, so she suggested Ms. Forrester take the lead at the hospital. Carol also communicated that she could understand Ms. Forrester's frustration, and that she would like to earn Ms. Forrester's trust.

Carol's strategy in this first contact was to engage Jon's mother, but also to use her authority as a back up. This approach to families is always our first choice. The message to Ms. Forrester was that Carol was going to protect Jon, but that she preferred doing so by working together with Ms. Forrester.

However, if Ms. Forrester had continued to refuse assistance, in spite of Carol's attempts to engage her, it would have left Carol no choice but to use her authority to protect Jon. Even so, she would have continued to work to engage his mother and keep her involved. Sometimes it takes several contacts before a parent develops enough trust in the caseworker – and the agency – to be comfortable working together.

0:21:37 [ FADE TO BLACK]

## **PART II - Development of Relationship**

### **0:21:41 OPENING TEXT**

The casework relationship is the foundation of family centered child protection. It promotes the development of trust, fosters open and honest communication, and makes collaborative assessment and planning possible. Family members who are engaged and invested in the casework relationship are less fearful and resistant, and are more willing to partner with the worker to achieve constructive change. The caseworker must take the first steps to establish this relationship, and must strengthen and nurture it throughout the life of the case.

This videotape segment illustrates how the worker uses her early contacts with the family to begin to develop this relationship, even while she is assessing risk and assuring the child's immediate safety.

### **0:22:34 NARRATOR**

Jon was referred to the child welfare agency by his school nurse, when he came to school with a large bruise on his forehead, and several bruises on other parts of his body.

The case was assigned to Carol Johnson. After she saw Jon at school and talked with the nurse, Carol met with Jon's mother. Carol encouraged her to go with her to the hospital, where Jon was being treated. Despite Ms. Forrester's initial anger and resistance, Carol had succeeded in getting her to go.

Carol knows that the way she handles the next few hours will be critical in laying the groundwork for her ongoing work with the Forresters. Carol sees the hospital visit as a valuable opportunity to begin building a relationship with Jon's mother. Carol wants to

involve Ms. Forrester as a collaborator in family assessment and case planning. A trusting relationship is the first step.

Carol's strategies in this interview illustrate her high level of skill in protecting Jon by engaging, involving, and supporting his mother. Throughout this interaction, Carol looks for opportunities to build rapport, and to identify - and build on - Ms. Forrester's strengths.

0:23:41 **CAROL**

Thank you for coming along. We're going directly to Children's Hospital because Jon's already there. The police brought him over from school. The doctors and nurses at Children's specialize in treating these type of injuries. We're having Jon checked for a concussion, which sometimes happens with blows to the head. He may need special care.

0:24:06 **MS. FORRESTER**

Don't try to whitewash it. I know you're taking me to the abuse clinic.

0:24:11 **CAROL**

Yes, it's sometimes called that. It sounds as if that bothers you.

I won't understand how you feel about it, unless you tell me - and I really would like to know.

Well, I would guess that you're pretty upset because you think we're going to accuse you of abuse. I'll tell you, again, we're not here to punish people. We're here to help them so that their children don't get hurt again. Believe it or not, very few parents hurt their children on purpose. We believe that it's the result of, well a lot of different stresses. We really are here to help.

When we get inside, I'd like for you to take the lead. I mean, you know your son better than I do, and he'll be reassured just knowing that you're there. Just be sure and ask the nurse where we need to go, and remember, I'm here to help. Are you okay with that?

0:25:35 **MS. FORRESTER**

I guess so.

0:25:52 **MS. FORRESTER**

I'm Susan Forrester. My son Jon is here. I'd like to see him.

0:25:57 **ER RECEPTIONIST**

Okay, Forrester - F o r r e s t e r.... Jon, okay, he's been taken to X-ray. If you'd like to have a seat, I can let you know when he's finished, and then you can see him.

0:26:20 **NARRATOR**

While they waited, Carol involved Ms. Forrester in casual conversation about her daughter, Wendy, her training program, and her interests. They chatted about computers, and how hard it was, at first, to learn to use one. Carol praised Ms. Forrester for going back to school for career training. She tried to take the pressure off Ms. Forrester and help her relax. Carol was also expressing her interest in Ms. Forrester as a person, and showing that she could be a good listener.

0:26:48 **ER RECEPTIONIST**

Ms. Forrester? The doctor would like to see you now.

0:27:07 **DOCTOR**

Ms. Forrester, thanks for coming. We've looked over Jon very carefully. Luckily, there's no concussion, but there's a very bad bruise on his forehead. Now, we're also concerned about the bruises we found on his chest and stomach. Can you tell me how that happened?

0:27:34 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, Jon fell off his bike last night, and hit his head on the pavement. He plays rough and he bruises easy. I'm sure that's how he got so banged up. I haven't seen any other bruises.

0:27:45 **DOCTOR**

Ms. Forrester, in our experience, the type of bruising Jon has is not generally caused by accident. Now, you're right - children do bruise while playing, but those bruises are usually on the knees, and shins, the elbow or other bony areas, not to their back, their buttocks, chest, and stomach. It's important that you understand this. It's also important for you to understand the seriousness of Jon's injuries. If his head had been hit a little harder, or in a slightly different place, he could have been blinded, or he could have had permanent brain damage. The blows to his stomach and chest could cause permanent organ damage. Now, even though he has no concussion, I'm still worried about him. I'd like to keep him in the hospital overnight and run some more tests. Is that okay with you?

0:28:55 **MS. FORRESTER**

I guess so, but when can he come home?

0:28:58 **CAROL**

Well, you and I will have to figure that out. But first we need to understand how Jon got hurt. We can't protect him unless you and I both understand what happened.

0:29:08 **MS. FORRESTER**

I already told you what I know.

0:29:10 **DOCTOR**

Ms. Forrester, Jon is a very lucky boy this time. You don't want to see him hurt again, do you?

0:29:17 **MS. FORRESTER**

No.

0:29:21 **CAROL**

I know this is probably one of the hardest things you've ever done. But if you tell us the truth, we'll be better able to help you and Jon.

0:29:31 **MS. FORRESTER**

I never meant to hurt him. I really didn't. I love my son.

0:29:36 **CAROL**

Can you tell us how it happened?

0:29:39 **MS. FORRESTER**

I just got mad. I just want him to mind, but he never does. I don't mean to hurt him. I really don't.

0:29:48 **DOCTOR**

Ms. Forrester. I know how difficult this is for you. We'll do everything we can to help Jon. But right now, I need to go and check on his lab results. Both of you may remain here, if you like.

0:30:01 **MS. FORRESTER**

You're going to take him from me, aren't you?

0:30:04 **CAROL**

I hope not.

0:30:07 **MS. FORRESTER**

What do you mean, you hope not?

0:30:10 **CAROL**

Well, a lot depends on you. Remember when I told you earlier that I wanted to work with you, not against you? Well, now's the time to begin. Right now we have to develop a "safety plan." It's a plan that assures that Jon will be safe, and that he won't be hurt again, while we work together. Is there anyone that Jon can stay with, maybe a member of your family, just over the weekend? We'll get back together again on Monday, and we'll start working on this together.

0:30:40 **MS. FORRESTER**

Please, let him come home. I promise I won't hurt him.

0:30:44 **CAROL**

I know that you mean that sincerely. But you told me before that you didn't mean to hurt him. I think what happens is that everything gets out of control pretty quickly, and then you react a little more forcefully than you intend to. So, until we can understand what happens, and we can help you control it, I think that it might happen again, even if you don't mean for it to.

0:31:13 **MS. FORRESTER**

I suppose he could stay with my sister. He gets along really well with his cousins.

0:31:19 **CAROL**

Let's arrange that then... but, if he stays with your sister, you can't take him from there. Now, you can go visit him, but she has to be there. I'll help explain all that to her when I talk with her, and I will have to meet with her to make sure that everything is going to be okay.

0:31:35 **MS. FORRESTER**

Oh Lord, how can I ever face my sister? She's never going to forgive me for this. She already thinks I'm a terrible mother.

0:31:44 **CAROL**

Well, we can explain to her that you're trying to become a better one. Now, I think it took guts to do what you did. I mean, you faced the truth, and you made a plan for Jon, even though it was painful and embarrassing for you. Now, in my mind, that's being a good parent, and I think it shows that you can make good choices for Jon. Shall we call your sister while we're waiting for the doctor?

0:32:16 **NARRATOR**

Several things happened in this interview. First, Carol successfully involved Ms. Forrester in developing a safety plan for Jon. This strengthened Ms. Forrester's role as Jon's mother. Second, Carol voiced her suspicions about the possible dynamics of the abuse. She suggested that personal factors, including Ms. Forrester's uncontrollable anger, may have contributed to the abuse. Yet, she said this in a factual and nonjudgmental manner. Finally, Carol commended Ms. Forrester for being able to face the truth. She saw this as a significant strength, when Ms. Forrester would probably have seen the situation as evidence of personal failure.

Throughout this interview, Carol worked to build and strengthen a casework relationship with Ms. Forrester. Carol was honest and direct, but nonjudgmental in her approach. She had told Ms. Forrester previously that she wanted to be collaborative, and that she believed in building on strengths. Carol acted on these beliefs during the interview. She also involved Ms. Forrester in making the important decisions about Jon's welfare. In doing so, Carol demonstrated that she considered Ms. Forrester a valued and important contributor.

While their relationship is still fragile, Carol has assured Jon's immediate safety without alienating his mother. Carol has also developed an initial agreement with Ms. Forrester that paves the way

for the next steps – that is, understanding how and why the abuse occurred, and developing a plan to prevent further maltreatment.

0:33:45 [FADE TO BLACK]

## Part III: First Family Assessment Interview

### 0:33:50 OPENING TEXT

An individualized family assessment is the cornerstone of family centered child protection. Without a complete and accurate assessment of family needs, contributing factors to maltreatment, and family resources and strengths, the service plan will not solve the immediate problems, much less generate positive and lasting family change. The family assessment is most effective when conducted jointly by the worker and family members in the context of a supportive and enabling casework relationship. The following videotape segment illustrates casework strategies that promote the parent's involvement in the assessment process, and generate critical information to be used in developing a relevant case plan.

### 0:34:40 NARRATOR

Jon was referred to Child Welfare by his school nurse. He had come to school with a large bruise on his forehead, and several bruises on other parts of his body.

Carol Johnson was assigned the case. She saw Jon at his school, and agreed that his bruises were probably inflicted. Carol and the school nurse also agreed that Jon needed immediate medical attention for his head injury.

Carol met with Jon's mother, Ms. Forrester. Despite Ms. Forrester's initial resistance, Carol engaged Ms. Forrester to accompany her to the hospital emergency clinic, where the police had taken Jon. Carol had used the time at the hospital to begin to develop a relationship with Ms. Forrester. Carol had also involved Jon's mother in developing a safety plan.

Jon was placed in Emergency Custody, and he stayed at the hospital overnight. The next day, Carol and Ms. Forrester agreed that Jon could stay temporarily with Ms. Forrester's sister as a kinship placement. Carol had determined that Wendy, Ms. Forrester's four-year-old daughter, was at no risk of imminent harm. Carol and Ms. Forrester also agreed that they would meet again on Monday.

Carol had arranged to meet Ms. Forrester at her home, after her job training class, but Carol offered to pick Ms. Forrester up, when she learned it would save Ms. Forrester an hour on the bus.

The purpose of this interview was to strengthen the casework relationship, and to begin the family assessment.

0:36:29 **CAROL**

Hi. How are you?

0:36:32 **MS. FORRESTER**

Okay.

0:36:34 **CAROL**

So, how was job training today?

0:36:37 **MS. FORRESTER**

Okay.

0:36:40 **CAROL**

Well, did you enjoy it?

0:36:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

I said it was okay.

0:36:51 **NARRATOR**

Carol noted Ms. Forrester's stiff posture and her unwillingness to talk. Carol thought Ms. Forrester might be angry - and she made a mental

note to explore it later, if it continued. They continued driving in silence to the day care center to pick up Wendy.

0:37:14 **CAROL**

I'll wait here while you go get Wendy.

0:37:17 **MS. FORRESTER**

Whatever.

You ready to go...you all ready? All right, let me take your blanket for you, sweetie. Oh, strong girl! You're just getting so big! Get you strapped in nice and tight. There you go. Did you have a lot of fun at the zoo today? Good. Did you like the lions and tigers?

All ready to go? Let's just grab your stuff here. Did you have a good day at school? I'm glad.

Come on sweetie. Come on, let's take your stuff upstairs. Here you go baby. You're welcome.

0:39:14 **CAROL**

So, where do you want to talk?

0:39:16 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, Wendy's upstairs playing, so the kitchen's fine.

0:39:20 **CAROL**

Okay, so how was your weekend?

0:39:28 **MS. FORRESTER**

Fine.

0:39:30 **CAROL**

Did you get a chance to see Jon?

0:39:33 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yes.

0:39:34 **CAROL**

If it's okay, I'm just going to take a few notes.

0:39:40 **MS. FORRESTER**

What's going to be in there?

0:39:41 **CAROL**

They're just for me. I mean, it's just to kind of remind me what it was that we talked about. You can look at them any time that you want to. Okay?

0:39:49 **MS. FORRESTER**

I suppose.

0:39:50 **CAROL**

When did you get a chance to see Jon?

0:39:52 **MS. FORRESTER**

Sunday afternoon.

0:39:54 **CAROL**

How did that visit go?

Okay, I'm sensing that you really don't want to talk.

0:40:04 **MS. FORRESTER**

Just what is it that you want me to say?

0:40:07 **NARRATOR**

Carol realized that beneath the controlled tension, Ms. Forrester was very angry. Carol decided to acknowledge and try to understand the anger, rather than ignore it, or pretend it wasn't important.

0:40:19 **CAROL**

I sense that you're pretty angry or upset.

0:40:22 **MS. FORRESTER**

So, what of it?

0:40:23 **CAROL**

Well, I'd like to hear what you're angry about.

0:40:26 **MS. FORRESTER**

Like you don't know.

0:40:28 **CAROL**

Okay, I can see that it's directed at me, so I am going to guess that it's got something to do with what happened on Friday.

Look, I meant what I said about honesty being important, and that includes honesty if you're angry. Can you tell me what you're so angry about?

0:40:49 **MS. FORRESTER**

You suckered me.

0:40:52 **CAROL**

Tell me what you mean.

0:40:55 **MS. FORRESTER**

You come in here and act so nice, and the next thing I know, you're showing me a court order placing my child in DHS custody, and then

you try to make me give him to my sister. I don't know how you did it, but I know I'll never see him now.

0:41:10 **NARRATOR**

Carol knew this delayed anger was normal and expectable, considering the situation. Carol understood Ms. Forrester might be feeling embarrassed, threatened, or ashamed. Carol also knew her relationship with Ms. Forrester was still tenuous. Ms. Forrester might not yet trust her, or the agency. Carol also wondered if Ms. Forrester expected to be hurt. But, Carol couldn't be sure what had prompted Ms. Forrester's anger – she needed more information.

Her strategy was to, first, respond to Ms. Forrester's statement about "never getting Jon back." Carol stressed her intent – and her commitment – to work with Ms. Forrester to help Jon come home. Then, she used an open-ended question to encourage Ms. Forrester to explain why she was still angry and suspicious.

0:41:54 **CAROL**

Okay, well, as I told you on Friday, I want Jon to be with you. My job is to assist you so that we can make sure that Jon lives with you without risk of being hurt. But, I need you to work with me on this. The decisions will be better if you are involved in making them. Now I know that I've said all this before, but I don't think that you're entirely convinced. Why is that?

0:42:21 **MS. FORRESTER**

I just don't trust you or your damned agency. Everyone I know says you take kids from their families, and they're never to be seen again for months. Even my neighbor said I was a fool for talking to you. I should have just waited for my lawyer. None of you can be trusted. I don't know why I should be able to trust you.

0:42:38 **CAROL**

Okay, it sounds as if you don't really believe that I'm here to help you get Jon back. But, I assure you, that's my intent. Now, I know that I will have to prove it to you through my actions. But I can't promise you that Jon's going to come back no matter what, because I can't let him come back if he's going to be hurt. Now, we need to work together, and I think we had a good start on Friday. If we can understand what leads to Jon being hurt, then we can prevent it. As soon as Jon can live safely with you, he can come home.

So the issue here is if we can work together to make sure that Jon's not hurt again. Now, I need to be sure that we're on the same page. Can you tell me what your understanding is of what I just said?

0:43:29 **MS. FORRESTER**

So, if I can figure out what it is that makes Jon get hurt, and stop it from happening, then he can come home.

0:43:35 **CAROL**

Yes, basically that's it.

0:43:38 **NARRATOR**

Carol doubted the issue was fully settled. She had re-engaged Ms. Forrester and re-stated her contract - but she knew they would have to revisit the issue, perhaps many more times. Carol then began discussion of Ms. Forrester's feelings about social workers, since that, too, seemed to be a barrier to their working together.

0:43:55 **CAROL**

Okay, now I want to talk about the second thing I heard, about me being "like all the other social workers." What's your experience with social workers?

0:44:08 **MS. FORRESTER**

When I was younger, I had to see a social worker down at the courthouse. You can't be trusted, none of you can be trusted. Looks like I don't have much choice in the matter now, do I.

0:44:23 **CAROL**

Okay, trust is very important to me, and I work hard to be worthy of trust. And I understand that you don't know me well enough yet to trust me, but it sounds like you've been let down by a lot of other social workers.

0:44:37 **MS. FORRESTER**

You got that one right!

0:44:38 **CAROL**

Well, I'd like to hear about it.

0:44:40 **MS. FORRESTER**

What business is it of yours?

0:44:41 **CAROL**

Look, I'm not just being nosy. I need to understand. I want you to feel comfortable telling me anything, so I need to know if there's something I say that you don't like.

0:44:52 **NARRATOR**

Carol knows her being a social worker could become a significant barrier, if they don't deal with it openly. So, rather than becoming angry or defensive, Carol shows her support and acceptance of Ms. Forrester's feelings. She encourages Ms. Forrester to discuss this issue. Carol also gives Ms. Forrester permission to be honest – even if that means confronting Carol. This helps define their relationship – and also strengthens it.

Carol then decides to use this opening to explore Ms. Forrester's feelings about people and relationships in general. Both of these topics are important to the family assessment.

0:45:30 **CAROL**

I'm ready to hear about your past experiences.

0:45:35 **MS. FORRESTER**

They all sucker you. It doesn't matter who they are. The welfare people are the worst, unless it's the court people. I saw it all the time. The juvenile detention center, they always said they wanted to help, but all they did was harass us all.

0:45:53 **CAROL**

Well, it seems like you've had some pretty bad experiences with "helpers." Can you tell me about people in general?

0:46:02 **MS. FORRESTER**

I've learned the hard way, that you can't trust anybody or it just comes back to haunt you.

0:46:08 **NARRATOR**

Carol saw this as an opening to discuss trust. Parents who trust others have a valuable resource to prevent future maltreatment. But, a lack of trust in others often leads to isolation, and a lack of emotional support. This increases the risk of future maltreatment.

Carol knew it was important to understand Ms. Forrester's ability to trust others. But, talking about it could also be threatening to Ms. Forrester. Carol felt it was too early in their relationship to press the issue, and instead, she encouraged Ms. Forrester to talk about her past. Carol would listen carefully, to see what else she might learn.

0:46:43 **CAROL**

Is there anyone you can trust?

0:46:45 **MS. FORRESTER**

The only people you can trust are small children, and as soon as they get grown up, they're corrupt and devious. I've had plenty of experiences ... my ex-boyfriends ... my ex-husband. He always said he'd take care of us. He had a good job. He ran off with another woman, but he drank a lot, so he was always starting fights with me. I know he was just doing it to hurt me. And Jon would get all upset and Wendy would be crying. Then he'd go off with his buddies and drink, like nothing ever happened, having a good time. Jon's a lot like him.

0:47:25 **CAROL**

How so?

0:47:29 **MS. FORRESTER**

One minute he's just so nice, and the next minute he's doing something behind your back, or not doing what he's supposed to be doing...or just lying for no reason.

0:47:38 **NARRATOR**

Carol made a mental note that Ms. Forrester thought Jon was "a lot like his father." Carol wondered whether this might contribute to Ms. Forrester's feelings about Jon, including the high degree of anger at his behavior. But, it was still too early in their relationship to deal with this topic directly. Carol continued to promote discussion of trust issues from a broader perspective.

0:47:58 **CAROL**

I want to hear more about that, but right now, I want to get back to trust. Is there anyone you trust? Anyone you confide in?

0:48:05 **MS. FORRESTER**  
Yea, I have one friend. She listens, she tries to help whenever she can.

0:48:10 **CAROL**  
Where does she live?

0:48:12 **MS. FORRESTER**  
I don't know. I see her at school.

0:48:17 **CAROL**  
Well, what about your family? Can you tell me anything about them?

0:48:20 **MS. FORRESTER**  
Family? Yeah, I have a mother and an older sister. But all they can do is criticize me. They take pleasure in seeing my "failures in life."

0:48:30 **CAROL**  
Well, how often do you see them?

0:48:33 **MS. FORRESTER**  
More than I want to!

0:48:37 **CAROL**  
Well, what about your father? When was the last time you saw him?

0:48:42 **MS. FORRESTER**  
It's been a long time. Another one of his broken promises.

0:48:47 **CAROL**

What kind of promises did he make?

0:48:50 **MS. FORRESTER**

He said he'd come back and take care of us. He never did. I never saw him again. I never could believe anything he'd say.

0:49:05 **CAROL**

What about school? How did that go?

0:49:08 **MS. FORRESTER**

I wasn't so good at school either. I was always getting in trouble, getting detention or suspended. So, I finally just quit, I couldn't take it anymore. My mother used to always say that quitting school would be like the end of my life, I'd never amount to anything ... that talking to me was like talking to a brick wall. But she tried - she even tried to beat it out of me.

0:49:38 **CAROL**

And then what happened?

0:49:41 **MS. FORRESTER**

I tried working, but I couldn't keep a job past a few weeks. I'd get mad and fly off at the handle at the boss, or I'd just quit.

0:49:53 **CAROL**

You talked about social workers at juvenile detention, how did you get there ?

0:49:58 **MS. FORRESTER**

Oh, I used some drugs - like a lot of kids. Got caught for shoplifting, stole a car with my ex-boyfriend.

0:50:07 **CAROL**

Then what?

0:50:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

I was out in about 6 months. I hit the streets the next day. That's when I got pregnant. My mother made me give the child to my aunt. They live in another state. Now my kid won't even know that I'm her mother. Now you welfare people are trying to take another one of my children.

0:50:38 **CAROL**

You sound really angry, and you sound really sad. I can see it seems like you've had a lifetime of disappointments, and I'm beginning to understand how having Children's Services involved might be a problem for you. I mean, I'm sure it seems like just one more thing on top of all these other problems.

0:51:06 **MS. FORRESTER**

There's no problem I can't handle! I mean, life is supposed to be tough, and I think I've done pretty good with what I've been handed.

0:51:13 **NARRATOR**

Carol saw considerable hurt beneath Ms. Forrester's statements, but Ms. Forrester was defensive about acknowledging it. This was expected at this stage of their relationship. Carol also heard defensiveness in Ms. Forrester's comment about "there not being anything she couldn't handle." But, in many respects, she had done well. Carol thought it important to communicate this.

0:51:34 **CAROL**

Well, I have to agree with you. I mean, you seem to have been handed a lot, and have done pretty well. I think you have a lot of strengths that can help you get Jon back. Actually, I'd be pretty interested in knowing what you think your strengths are.

0:51:52 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I've never thought about it. I'm a survivor. I've been through a lot.

0:52:01 **CAROL**

Well, I think so too.

0:52:03 **NARRATOR**

Carol noted that Ms. Forrester had a hard time articulating any personal strengths, other than survival. Carol concluded that Ms. Forrester wasn't aware of her strengths – or at least, couldn't communicate them. Carol took the lead in identifying and describing what she had observed to be Ms. Forrester's strengths.

0:52:20 **CAROL**

Surviving is only a small part of it. I mean, you live on a very limited income, and your house is comfortable, you have nice furnishings. You do a lot of things for your children, and you already know that I admire you for going back to school. I mean, that had to take guts, the way you dropped out. Wasn't that hard?

0:52:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah. Yeah, I was pretty scared at first, but I think I can handle it now. I mean, I figured if anyone else could do it, I could do it.

0:52:55 **CAROL**

What do you think you do well as a parent?

0:52:59 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I don't know. I make sure my kids are fed, and heaven help them if they leave here with dirty clothes. And I try to teach them to be kind and respectful and to do good in school. I try my best.

Why do you want to know all this?

0:53:18 **CAROL**

Why do you think?

0:53:20 **MS. FORRESTER**

It's like you're trying to get me to tell you things to figure out if I'm a fit parent or not.

0:53:25 **CAROL**

I'm trying to understand you better. I'm trying to understand what your strengths are, maybe help you see some areas that maybe you need to change. I mean we need to consider both, if you're going to get Jon back.

0:53:37 **NARRATOR**

Ms. Forrester seems suspicious of Carol's motives. This is not unusual this early in their relationship. It is also common for people who are, by nature, cautious and suspicious of other people. Ms. Forrester seems to expect other people to be devious. Carol deals with this issue honestly, and acts on her verbal commitment to be direct and straightforward.

0:53:57 **CAROL**

Since you brought it up, what kind of parent do you think you are with Jon?

0:54:00 **MS. FORRESTER**

A good one. I mean I put up with his crap. I could have put him out on the street with his father, but I believe that the Lord put us all on this earth to do good for others, and if it's the last thing I do, I'm going to make sure that he mind. I just want to make him a good person for it. But of course, he doesn't see it that way. He just whines all the time and complains for no good reason.

0:54:24 **NARRATOR**

Carol is beginning to understand the possible dynamics of abuse in this family. First, Ms. Forrester and Jon seem to be locked in a power struggle. Ms. Forrester has said that she will get Jon to mind her, "if it's the last thing I do." She also seems to think that Jon's willful and oppositional behavior is a direct challenge to her authority, which is a common dynamic in abusing families. The more the child thwarts the parent, the stronger the parent's determination to regain control. This escalates the struggle, and abuse may result.

Second, Ms. Forrester believes that Jon should be grateful for the care she's given him. After all, she could have thrown him out with his father, but she didn't. Ms. Forrester seems angry, and perhaps hurt that Jon doesn't recognize or appreciate all her care and effort on his behalf. His lack of appreciation is not just inconsiderate – it's a personal affront.

Finally, Ms. Forrester sees Jon as a child with emotional or behavioral problems. She seems unaware that her behavior toward Jon may help dictate his behavior toward her. Jon's teacher told Carol that he can be willful, but he responds well to firm but gentle guidance. This suggests to Carol that if Ms. Forrester can learn a different way to deal with Jon, his behavior in response to her will also change.

Carol knows the interview could go two directions from here. If she asks Ms. Forrester to further describe Jon's behavior, she would probably hear a long list of all Jon's faults. This would not be productive, and would reinforce Ms. Forrester's perception of Jon as the primary problem. Carol knows that a psychological assessment of Jon would be a better way to confirm or rule out serious emotional or behavioral problems.

Instead, Carol decides to help Ms. Forrester explore her relationship with Jon, how she deals with him, and more important, how she feels when she tries to parent him. Carol wants to keep the assessment

focused on Ms. Forrester's beliefs, feelings and actions, rather than on Jon's misbehavior. But this will take more time than is left in an interview, so Carol summarizes and contracts with Ms. Forrester to continue this discussion at their next meeting.

0:56:40 **[FADE TO BLACK]**

## Part IV: Second Family Assessment Interview

0:56:46 **OPENING TEXT**

An individualized family assessment is the cornerstone of family centered child protection. Without a complete and accurate assessment of family needs, contributing factors to maltreatment, and family resources and strengths, the service plan will not solve the immediate problems, much less generate positive and lasting family change. The family assessment is most effective when conducted jointly by the worker and family members in the context of a supportive and enabling casework relationship. The following videotape segment illustrates casework strategies that promote the parent's involvement in the assessment process, and generate critical information to be used in developing a relevant case plan.

0:57:35 **NARRATOR**

Carol arrived at Ms. Forrester's, as planned, on the following Thursday. She did not get a very warm welcome. It was obvious Ms. Forrester was upset about something.

0:57:45 **CAROL**

Oh no, you seem upset.

0:57:48 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah, I failed a test today at job training.

0:57:50 **CAROL**

Oh, no. No wonder you're upset. Why do you think you failed?

0:57:56 **MS. FORRESTER**  
A lot of things. Especially you being on my case. And Jon being at my sister's. It's just too much.

0:58:05 **CAROL**  
Well, I'm not surprised. I mean, you have been under a lot of stress lately. What happens when you fail a test?

0:58:13 **MS. FORRESTER**  
They'll probably kick me out.

0:58:15 **CAROL**  
Why would you think that?

0:58:17 **MS. FORRESTER**  
Because that's the way things usually work out.

0:58:19 **CAROL**  
No, that's not usually the way things work out. Look, why don't you call your advisor? Explain to him that you've been under a lot of stress lately, and see if they'll let you take a make up test. I mean, is there anything I can do? I'd be happy to talk to your advisor.

0:58:35 **MS. FORRESTER**  
No. I'll do it myself. Believe me, I'm not incompetent.

0:58:39 **CAROL**  
I know you're not. Do you want to take a minute and call right now, before we get started talking?

0:58:46 **MS. FORRESTER**  
Yeah, I guess so.

0:58:51 **CAROL**

So, what did they say?

0:58:53 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, they said okay. But just this once.

0:58:55 **CAROL**

See, that's good! That's good news. Okay. Do you have enough time to study?

0:59:00 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah, but I really don't feel much like it.

0:59:03 **CAROL**

Well, I can completely understand. You've got a lot of stuff weighing heavily on your mind right now, so why don't we go ahead and get started, okay?

0:59:10 **MS. FORRESTER**

Okay.

0:59:12 **NARRATOR**

Carol helped eliminate a source of stress for Ms. Forrester. By doing this, Carol demonstrated that she really was there to help, that her suggestions were useful, and that she could empathize without being critical. Carol then reminded Ms. Forrester that resolving the issue with Jon would also alleviate considerable stress.

Carol knows that before she and Ms. Forrester can identify solutions, they must fully assess the scope of the problem, and its causal factors. Carol decides to share her thoughts with Ms. Forrester. She also summarizes the agreement they reached during the previous interview, and then reviews the next steps.

0:59:48 **CAROL**

First we have to understand how Jon gets hurt, and why that happens. Every family is different, and until we both understand exactly what happens in your family, we can't really choose the best possible solution. So, let's talk about what happened this last time.

You seem really anxious. Are you worried about talking about this?

1:00:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, I haven't done anything wrong. I was just trying to protect him.

1:00:17 **CAROL**

Okay, and I want to know about that. I mean, how you do that and then what happens. And I know this isn't going to be easy for you, so kind of tell me in your own way.

1:00:29 **NARRATOR**

Carol has clarified the purpose of the interview. Carol also notes Ms. Forrester's anxiety about disclosing personal information, and reassures her. She knows if she pushes too hard, Ms. Forrester will resist - and possibly withdraw. Instead, Carol gives Ms. Forrester more control by letting her tell her own story, in her own way. Carol will use clarifying and supportive interviewing methods to help get to the underlying issues.

1:00:57 **MS. FORRESTER**

I've just been really stressed.

1:01:00 **CAROL**

What causes that stress?

1:01:03 **MS. FORRESTER**

A lot of things. I mean, I think that the divorce still really bothers me, and constant badgering from my mother, worrying about whether or not I'll pass the job training class, and if I'll get a job even if I do pass. Just trying to survive the day is hard.

1:01:23 **CAROL**

I know, just trying to get by is really hard. Okay, what happens when you get stressed?

1:01:29 **MS. FORRESTER**

I get mad.

1:01:30 **CAROL**

And you told me about that. You told me that you have a temper, and how easily it flares up. What happens when you get mad?

1:01:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

I don't know, sometimes I just yell and scream and curse. I don't know, if people get in my face, I normally shove them away, and every now and then, I'm even known to take a swing. I don't mean to, I just lose it.

1:01:56 **NARRATOR**

Ms. Forrester began talking about stress. Carol did not say, "Let's not talk about stress. Let's talk about the relationship with Jon." Instead, she used open ended and clarifying questions to help Ms. Forrester consider how she felt and acted when she felt stressed. Carol then helped her relate these feelings to her temper outbursts.

Carol knows if Ms. Forrester can understand this connection, she has the capacity for insight. If Ms. Forrester can eventually see the connection between her feelings about Jon and her behavior toward him, she'll have a valuable tool in preventing future abuse.

1:02:32 **CAROL**

What kind of things make you so mad that you lose it?

1:02:36 **MS. FORRESTER**

I don't know, when people act badly. When they're rude, and they take advantage of you and walk right over you. When people don't care who they hurt, they do whatever they want, it doesn't matter. I mean, you try really hard, and you do your very best, and your best just isn't good enough.

1:03:00 **CAROL**

Okay, you seem to feel like someone isn't satisfied with you. Who do you think isn't satisfied with you?

1:03:07 **MS. FORRESTER**

Nobody ever is. I mean, take my mother, for example. I don't even bother talking to her about my job training class anymore. All she ever says is 'it's about time. You're only about ten years late!'

1:03:19 **CAROL**

When this happens, what do you feel?

1:03:22 **MS. FORRESTER**

Like I just get mad.

1:03:24 **CAROL**

Okay, anything else?

1:03:31 **MS. FORRESTER**

It's like... its hopeless. It's like nobody gives a damn. Like you're just out for yourself.

1:03:40 **CAROL**

See, there's that issue again. It seems like you feel like you're out there alone. Like you can't depend on anybody, and that really has to make you feel pretty lonely. I mean, like you're completely out on your own.

1:03:54 **NARRATOR**

Ms. Forrester has implied that disappointments in interpersonal relationships make her angry. Carol wonders if Ms. Forrester feels disappointment in Jon - and whether this contributes to her anger toward him. Carol has learned that Ms. Forrester can identify her own feelings - and talk about them. This is an important strength. Carol gives her this feedback - both to point out the underlying issues, and to help Ms. Forrester pay attention to them.

1:04:18 **CAROL**

Okay, I want to point out something that I feel is important. I asked you how you felt, and you were able to tell me that. You were also able to tell me exactly what causes that, and not a lot of people are able to do that. That's a valuable tool in being able to solve problems, and that's a strength.

Now I want to also make sure that I understood you. It seems that a lot of your anger is coming from feeling disappointment, and maybe a hurt from other people, especially your mom and your ex-husband. Is that right...someone hurts you, I mean really hurts you, and that makes you angry?

1:05:02 **NARRATOR**

Ms. Forrester already understands the connection between other people's behavior and her anger. But, there's a more subtle connection between her feelings of hurt and her anger. Carol uses summarization and clarification to help Ms. Forrester make this connection, and to understand that feelings of hurt are actually what sparks her anger.

1:05:21 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, they can't hurt me any more. I learned a long time ago not to let people hurt you, or you won't survive.

1:05:28 **NARRATOR**

Carol realizes Ms. Forrester is not ready to fully acknowledge her hurt - and it's too soon to confront this directly. But, Carol lets Ms. Forrester know she believes Ms. Forrester is hurting, and that she'll continue to support her.

1:05:41 **CAROL**

Sounds like you're saying that it hurts too much to hurt. It seems that you get tough to protect yourself, only that just makes you feel stronger for a little while. It doesn't really make the pain go away.

1:05:58 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, it doesn't.

1:06:01 **CAROL**

Can you tell me anything else that will help us understand exactly how Jon gets hurt?

1:06:08 **MS. FORRESTER**

I guess I get mad more than I should. But, Jon asks for it! He really deserves what he gets sometimes!

1:06:19 **CAROL**

Okay, tell me a little bit more about that.

1:06:24 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, it's like he does these things to make me mad. He does it on purpose, and I yell at him. It's like he looks through me, like I'm a brick wall. I mean I say red, he says blue. I say sit, he says run. It's a losing battle with him. I think it's in his blood. Jon's a lot like his father. I don't know. I thought after his dad left, that he'd listen to me more, things would get better. You know, they say how you treat a child is important. It helps them grow up better. I don't think it matters. I really don't think that it matters. I sound just like my mother now. She always used to say, "You're too much like your own father for your own good."

1:07:15 **NARRATOR**

There's a similarity between Ms. Forrester's experiences as a child and her perceptions of Jon. However, Carol thinks that exploring this issue would divert discussion away from Ms. Forrester's feelings about Jon. So, she continues to gently push Ms. Forrester to explore these feelings in more depth.

1:07:33 **CAROL**

What's it like for you when Jon acts that way toward you?

Let me tell you what it's like for other parents when they're in that same situation. It's like your child doesn't really respect you, or that they don't care what you have to say, or they're not really listening to you. How does it feel for you?

1:07:53 **MS. FORRESTER**

All of that.

1:07:55 **NARRATOR**

Carol knows that all children are obstinate at times, and that this is normal childhood behavior. But Ms. Forrester seems to believe that Jon's behavior is deliberate, and intended to thwart her. She also believes his behavior may be inborn – and therefore, not affected by his environment. Carol concludes that Ms. Forrester seems to feel powerless to control or guide Jon. This supports Carol's earlier suspicion that Jon does not live up to Ms. Forrester's expectations – she sees him as a "problem child."

Carol could explain that all children are belligerent at times, and that the right parenting can make a difference. But Carol also understands she can't simply argue away Ms. Forrester's misperceptions. The issue is not one of logic, or lack of knowledge. Ms. Forrester's beliefs are defensive. Most likely, if she sees Jon to be at fault, she can avoid feeling blame herself.

The discussion also confirms Carol's suspicion that Jon and his mother are locked in a battle of wills. She tries to help Ms. Forrester explore this further.

1:08:57 **CAROL**

Well, it sounds as if it's difficult to handle Jon, like you get really frustrated. Actually it sounds like you feel pretty helpless when you have to deal with him... I mean, like nothing you do really works.

1:09:10 **MS. FORRESTER**

That's about it.

1:09:11 **CAROL**

Tell me what you can about how Jon gets hurt.

1:09:15 **NARRATOR**

Carol knows they are at a turning point. She has shown empathy and support. She's helped Ms. Forrester admit her anger at Jon, and how hard it is for her to manage him. The next logical step is to understand how her feelings prompt her behavior. If she can acknowledge her role in Jon's abuse, Carol knows she can be helped. However, if she continues to defensively deny her role in the maltreatment, Carol will have to reconsider her strategies.

1:09:43 **CAROL**

I'd like to say something first. If we understand what leads to Jon being hurt, then we have a little more control to stop it, and that's our goal - stop Jon from being hurt. Okay?

The other thing I want to say is, I want to remind you my job is to help you change so that we can get Jon back home. I guarantee that I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that happens, but I can't do it alone. You need to help me. We have to work on this together. Now, you're a very strong lady, and you have survived a lot. You know how you feel, you're able to talk about your feelings. But I want you to know that, no matter how much you're hurting, I need you to know that no matter what you've done, no matter what's happened, I believe that you have the ability to be different, to make things different.

1:10:48 **MS. FORRESTER**

How can you know that?

1:10:50 **CAROL**

Just from what we've talked about, and how we've worked together. I mean, I've already told you, you have a lot of strengths. But we still need to understand exactly what happens and how Jon gets hurt. So, please tell me how that happens.

1:11:09 **MS. FORRESTER**

I guess I just get mad and give him too many whippings. I hit him too hard.

1:11:15 **NARRATOR**

Carol breathes a sigh of relief at this point. She has apparently earned Ms. Forrester's trust and confidence to allow this admission.

1:11:23 **CAROL**

That makes sense. That explains the bruises. Can you tell me about Jon's head injury?

1:11:29 **MS. FORRESTER**

I already told you, he fell off his bike.

1:11:32 **CAROL**

I need you to be completely honest with me about that too. We can't work together unless you do.

1:11:45 **MS. FORRESTER**

He'd been on my nerves all day long, and nothing had gone right all day. I made fish sticks for dinner because they're easy...and as soon as he say them, he started in on me. "Fish sticks! Why do we have to have fish sticks? Why can't you ever cook any real, food?" That's when I lost it. I mean I just lost it. I hit him right there with the frying pan. I didn't mean to hurt him. I just lost it.

1:12:26 **CAROL**

It sounds like what happens is Jon says and does things that set off your anger, and you kind of lose control.

1:12:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

That's why I think you're wrong about me. I've been like this all my life, and I've never been able to change.

1:12:48 **CAROL**

Nobody can change something all by themselves. And you're not the first person in the world to get angry. I mean, that's why we're here. We can help you.

I'm sure that you're pretty mixed up about how you feel about Jon right now.

1:13:11 **MS. FORRESTER**

I get so mad sometimes, I think I hate him. But can you hate your own child? I don't know. I remember I wanted him so bad and when he was little, he was so sweet. I love him, I just....I don't know how things ended up like this.

1:13:31 **NARRATOR**

Carol feels Ms. Forrester has been through enough for this interview. They have enough information to develop a case plan. Carol knows Ms. Forrester needs considerable support, and that she'll probably worry after Carol leaves. She decides to reaffirm her confidence in Ms. Forrester, and to outline the next steps. Carol also wants Ms. Forrester to call her, if she has any worries, or decides to change her mind.

1:13:55 **CAROL**

As rough as that was for you, I know it took a lot of courage. I mean, admitting it is the hardest part, I promise. You have been a very strong and responsible parent through all of this. You didn't try to run away, you didn't make a million excuses. And you've put up with me.

The next time we get together, I want to try and talk about a plan to get Jon back to a safe home with you. I also would like you to think about whatever it is that you need, to help you parent Jon. Will you do that for me?

Also, the other thing is, the last time when I left, you started feeling really angry, and you said you felt suckered. I don't want you to feel

like that again, okay? And I'm worried that when I leave you – I mean, you've confided a whole lot more in me this time – I'm worried that you might start to feel like that again. Now, I'm serious, okay? You have my number. If you need to call me for any reason, please call me. If you start feeling the least bit angry or upset, call me. I don't want to come back, and you feel angry or upset about anything.

Do you want to meet again on Tuesday, same time?

1:15:11 **MS. FORRESTER**

Sounds good.

1:15:12 **CAROL**

Okay, well, I guess that's it then.

1:15:16 **MS. FORRESTER**

All right then. Thank you.

1:15:18 **CAROL**

You're welcome.

1:15:19 **[FADE TO BLACK]**

## Part V: Case Plan Development

1:15:26 **OPENING TEXT**

Case planning is essential to family-centered child protection. Without a well-developed plan, casework activities lack direction, are poorly coordinated, may not address individual family needs, and may expend considerable resources and effort without ever achieving desired goals.

This videotaped segment illustrates how the worker and parent jointly develop a plan that uses both family strengths and community resources to help resolve the conditions that led to the abuse, thus making it possible for the child to return safely to his mother's care.

1:16:08 **NARRATOR**

Carol came to the Forrester home, as scheduled, to review the family assessment and to begin to develop the case plan.

1:16:14 **MS. FORRESTER**

Come on in and have a seat.

1:16:16 **CAROL**

Thanks.

1:16:18 **MS. FORRESTER**

I passed my make up test!

1:16:21 **CAROL**

Congratulations!

1:16:21 **MS. FORRESTER**

I just found out.

1:16:22 **CAROL**

That's terrific!

1:16:24 **MS. FORRESTER**

Thanks. I didn't think I'd do it. I'm going to make some tea. Would you like some?

1:16:28 **CAROL**

Yes, thanks. Oh, and Ms. Forrester, some sugar, if you don't mind.

1:16:33 **MS. FORRESTER**

Call me Susan. Everyone else does.

1:16:35 **CAROL**

Thanks Susan.

1:16:39 **NARRATOR**

Carol is pleased. Ms. Forrester's behavior suggests she feels more comfortable and has more confidence in Carol. Even so, Carol knows the relationship is still new, and will be renegotiated often during their work together, because of Ms. Forrester's history of suspiciousness and mistrust.

1:16:56 **CAROL**

Thank you. So, how are things going?

1:17:01 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I've had a rough past few days, but I've been thinking a lot about our last meeting. I know there's problems there. I just don't know what to do about them.

1:17:10 **CAROL**

That's what we're going to figure out today, okay? We'll think through what needs to be done to get Jon safely back home with you. We're going to develop a plan together.

So, let's talk about how we're going to do this. First, we're going to need to review the conditions that put Jon at risk of being hurt, and then we'll decide what we're going to do – how we're going to get there – and, how we'll know when we are finished. And, if we write all this down, it will be a little clearer to both of us when we've succeeded. Are you with me so far?

1:17:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

I think so.

1:17:43 **CAROL**

Okay, we'll go back through this one at a time. I just kind of wanted to make sure you get the big picture first.

The next thing we do is consider your strengths, and how we can use that to address the risks. Now, we've already talked about your strengths, so we'll build on that assessment. You know, what you might find as we work together, is you really already have an idea of what you want to do.

1:18:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

That would be a change. Nothing's ever that easy.

1:18:14 **CAROL**

Well, I didn't say it's going to be easy. But if we use your strengths, it might be easier, okay?

Well, let's see. I guess the last part of this is putting all this together into a treatment plan. It makes clear exactly what needs to be done, who needs to do what, and then, when it's going to happen. The treatment plan is like a contract between both of us. It makes sure that

we're working together basically to solve the problems that are most important, in the most organized way. Now, what I'll do is take all this, after we've agreed on everything, basically write it all up on the proper forms. Then I'll give it to you, and you can review it. Then we'll both sign it, and that's what I'll take to the court for the disposition hearing.

1:19:10 **MS. FORRESTER**

Do you really think we're going to get that all done today?

1:19:13 **CAROL**

I don't know. The good thing is we don't have to today. I just have to have it for the court hearing. Are you ready?

First we need to agree on a goal. I think we've already done that - to get Jon home, make sure he stays home, and make sure he's safe while he's here. Okay? Does that sound like what you want?

1:19:37 **MS. FORRESTER**

Oh, absolutely!

1:19:40 **CAROL**

Let's review the risks and issues that we discussed the last time we talked. Why don't you tell me, in your own words, what you feel is the most important factor that puts Jon at risk.

1:19:52 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I get mad, and I guess I hit Jon too hard.

1:19:57 **CAROL**

There may be several different things that lead you to hit Jon. So, why don't we go over those one at a time? Let's start with when you get angry. Can you help me describe that?

1:20:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I just get really, really mad. I do things I don't mean to do.

1:20:18 **CAROL**

Let me write that down. "Susan gets really angry, and when she gets angry, she does things she doesn't mean to do." Does that sound right to you?

1:20:35 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah. I just hate to see it in writing, though. It makes me out to be awful.

1:20:39 **CAROL**

Now, remember Susan, all this information is confidential. Only the court sees it. And, we have to have your permission to show it to anyone else. Now, your sister will have to understand the plan, but that's because she's taking care of Jon. But we can do that together. Do you think its okay the way I've written it so far?

Anything else?

1:21:03 **MS. FORRESTER**

Nope.

1:21:05 **CAROL**

The next part. What happens when you're angry that creates a problem for Jon?

1:21:12 **MS. FORRESTER**

Jon gets hurt.

1:21:14 **CAROL**

Okay, have you considered that there might be ways to discipline him, other than hitting?

1:21:21 **MS. FORRESTER**

I've heard about sitting him in a corner and all that. But, honestly, I think hitting is the only thing that gets through to Jon. I mean, I'm open to any other suggestions, but I just don't think anything else will work.

1:21:33 **CAROL**

Okay, well, I mean I know there are no magic solutions or anything like that, but there are other ways to manage Jon other than hitting or yelling. Why don't we do this? Why don't we say that Susan needs to learn other ways of managing Jon, other than hitting and yelling. Does that sound okay?

1:21:54 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I was whipped most of my life when I did something wrong.

1:21:58 **CAROL**

Well how did that make you feel?

1:22:00 **MS. FORRESTER**

I may have been whipped too hard, and a little too often, and I didn't like it, but I probably deserved it most of the time.

1:22:06 **CAROL**

Well you didn't like it, and we've already agreed that puts Jon at risk of being hurt. So, why don't we write that down as a risk on the assessment, okay? "Susan uses only physical discipline, like spanking and hitting, to manage Jon's behavior." Okay, now let's think about the things that make you feel angry and upset.

1:22:38 **MS. FORRESTER**

You mean like stress?

1:22:40 **CAROL**

And why you feel stressed.

Let me tell you what I remember you saying. First, you said that people had often made you feel disappointed and had let you down, and that you were left basically to handle things on your own.

1:23:01 **MS. FORRESTER**

That sounds right.

1:23:02 **CAROL**

And then you said that handling these problems all by yourself was really hard on you. Do you think maybe if you had more support, and you felt less stressed, maybe you wouldn't feel so angry?

1:23:16 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I do. I just get tired of having to do everything on my own. I mean, I'd ask my family for help, but all they do is criticize. I don't even ask them for anything unless I'm ready for a sermon.

1:23:28 **CAROL**

I think another risk then is, "Susan has no reliable support from other people and," let's see... , "she has to handle most of the stresses by herself."

Okay, let's summarize here. Do you think if you learned how to discipline Jon, and if you had some type of emotional support, and if you learned how to control your anger and your temper, that Jon would be at less risk?

1:24:10 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah, but what about Jon?

1:24:13 **CAROL**

What about him?

1:24:14 **MS. FORRESTER**

Doesn't he need help in solving his problems, too?

1:24:19 **CAROL**

Tell me what you mean.

1:24:20 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, he's stubborn and he's selfish, and I don't deserve it. He's just plain mean sometimes. I just don't know what to do about it. And he knows it too, like he's just going to get me, I don't know, whatever it takes. I mean, he just needs to learn to act better.

1:24:38 **CAROL**

Tell me, how do you think that will happen?

1:24:41 **MS. FORRESTER**

I don't know, maybe counseling.

1:24:44 **CAROL**

Okay, well you might be right. But I don't think we know right now. Children's behavior is usually in response to the way a parent acts to them, you know. Once their behavior changes, the child's behavior changes in response to that.

1:25:04 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I don't agree. I think he needs help in solving his problems too. I mean besides, I can't do all the changing myself. He's got to meet me halfway.

1:25:14 **NARRATOR**

Carol has a dilemma. Ms. Forrester has said she expects Jon to "meet her halfway." This again shows that she has somewhat unrealistic expectations for Jon's behavior. The reciprocity she wants is appropriate in relationships with other adults, but not with children.

Jon cannot be responsible to do things to make his mother happy. Rather, as the parent, it is her responsibility to create an environment in which he can grow and thrive. This is an issue that Ms. Forrester will need to consider during counseling. But – even though Jon is in no way responsible for the abuse, he may have intrinsic behavior problems that need to be addressed.

Here's Carol's dilemma. She wants to help Ms. Forrester understand her role in Jon's misbehavior. But, if Carol rejects her suggestions of getting help for Jon, the case plan will not be a mutually developed document, and Ms. Forrester will feel that her suggestions aren't valid or important. Carol understands they must negotiate a solution that will not lay the blame on Jon, yet will still validate Ms. Forrester's concern. Here's how Carol does it.

1:26:18 **CAROL**

Jon may be reacting to your actions, or he may have some underlying problems. We could see if his behavior changes as you change. Or, we could do a psychological assessment, and see if he needs some help, and then what kind of help he needs. Would you agree with that strategy?

1:26:36 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I suppose so. But I know he starts it sometimes, when I'm not anywhere near him. He comes busting in the door, yelling and screaming and carrying on and throwing things, talking about something that I did or didn't do. I'm not anywhere near him, he does that on his own.

1:26:54 **CAROL**

Well, okay, I agree. I mean, he might have some problems. But, on the other hand, he might just be doing what all children do. I mean, not every child is always satisfied with what their parents do. My own kids for instance, they whine and they gripe and groan, "You didn't get that for me, you didn't do this for me." I just say "You're right, I didn't. Now go put your clothes away." But I just ignore it. In a few

minutes they're off doing something else, and they've kind of forgotten what happened.

1:27:23 **MS. FORRESTER**

Doesn't that make you mad?

1:27:25 **CAROL**

It makes me feel a little unappreciated sometimes, but then I have to remind myself that children don't always have the capability of being able to appreciate me in the way that I would expect an adult to.

1:27:36 **MS. FORRESTER**

I can't let it go that easily. I think children should appreciate what their parents do for them.

1:27:41 **CAROL**

Well, now, I agree with you, and I teach my kids to be appreciative. It's just that well, you know, sometimes they forget. They're going to be selfish, and they're going to only think of themselves. But, that doesn't mean they don't appreciate me, or care about me, or respect me.

Does Wendy always appreciate everything you do?

1:28:06 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I guess not, but it just doesn't bother me as much.

1:28:10 **CAROL**

Well, we might want to take a look at that later. I think it might help you understand exactly how your relationship is with Jon.

1:28:19 **NARRATOR**

Carol has used this case plan discussion to model a different way of thinking and looking at things. She suggested to Ms. Forrester that parents can't expect their children to behave like adults - yet she has

neither lectured Ms. Forrester, nor imposed her own views. She uses herself as an example to help make her point. In this way, she relates to Ms. Forrester's feelings, affirms that these feelings are valid, and then offers a different way for a parent to respond.

Carol also helps Ms. Forrester understand that parents can't expect their children to always be well behaved. Ms. Forrester may not fully relate this to her parenting of Jon, but it brings the issue to her awareness, to be dealt with later. It also helps her to become aware of the differences in her feelings toward Jon and Wendy.

1:29:04 **CAROL**

Okay, we're back to the plan. Would you agree, then, another risk factor is that "Jon can be stubborn, obstinate, and difficult to manage?"

But we haven't agreed what to do about it.

Maybe we need some more information, so our desired result should be to get that information. Then, if we see that Jon does need special services, we can always add them to the plan later. Does that make sense to you?

1:29:32 **MS. FORRESTER**

Okay, but I still want him to get counseling if he needs it.

1:29:35 **CAROL**

I agree, I agree. Now, are there any other problems we need to work on?

1:29:42 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, I don't think there's anything else.

1:29:44 **CAROL**

Okay, we can always add things as they come up. Now, we've already agreed on some of our desired results. So, let's see if we can write them down, okay?

One: Susan will learn and use nonphysical and nonviolent ways to discipline Jon, and to manage his behavior.

Two: Susan will control and express her anger in nonviolent ways that do not harm Jon.

Three: Susan will have dependable sources of emotional and physical support to help reduce her feelings of stress.

Four: Susan and Carol will better understand Jon's needs, and the causes of his behavior, and use this information to develop the best ways to manage Jon.

1:32:05 **MS. FORRESTER**

Yeah, that's okay to me.

1:32:08 **CAROL**

Now it's time to consider your strengths. What do you already know, or do well, that could help us achieve the desired results? Let's start with number one: learning to use nonviolent and nonphysical discipline. Can you tell me what strengths you might have that could help there?

1:32:26 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I can learn.

1:32:28 **CAROL**

Yes. Not only can you learn, but you're motivated to learn. Your taking your job training class proved that. Okay, "Susan is a good learner and is motivated to learn." What else?

1:32:48 **MS. FORRESTER**

I really want to be a better parent to Jon.

1:32:53 **CAROL**

What else?

1:32:56 **MS. FORRESTER**

I can't think of anything else.

1:33:02 **CAROL**

Okay, well then, let's go to number two, managing and controlling anger. What strengths do you have that could help you with that?

1:33:13 **MS. FORRESTER**

Wow. I don't know about that one.

1:33:18 **CAROL**

No? Let me put one in, if you don't mind. Remember when I talked about how not everyone could understand and talk about their feelings, and how it affects their actions?

1:33:30 **MS. FORRESTER**

I think so.

1:33:31 **CAROL**

Well, it's called insight, and it's a real strength. It means you can probably learn how your feelings are connected to your angry outbursts. That will make it much easier for you to learn how to handle them.

1:33:45 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I'm not sure about that one, but I guess you can put it down.

1:33:50 **CAROL**

Okay. Well, you've solved a lot of problems on your own, and I think you have good problem solving abilities.

1:33:56 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, I don't know if that's a strength.

1:34:01 **CAROL**

Now, how about your strengths relating to number three, having dependable sources of emotional support.

1:34:08 **MS. FORRESTER**

I can't think of any.

1:34:11 **CAROL**

Well, I think it's a strength that, despite all the negative experiences that you've had with people, that you that were still willing to let someone like me come in to help.

1:34:20 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, you're not like any other social worker I've ever worked with.

1:34:24 **CAROL**

Well, I'm really not that unusual. I mean, there are a lot of trustworthy people out in the world. I think you just need to learn how to evaluate who to trust and who not to trust. One of your strengths is "willing to help" - or, "willing to accept help." How's that.

Let's think about services or resources that can help us solve the problems. Okay, any ideas?

1:35:01 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, my church has some parenting programs I'd like to look into.

1:35:04 **CAROL**

That's a good idea. The church can be a really good source of support in other ways too. You know, another thing that I'd like you to think about is maybe going back to the Children's Hospital clinic. They have some really good programs there, and parent support groups.

1:35:24 **MS. FORRESTER**

No, no, I'd be way too embarrassed to go back there. They must think I'm a really terrible parent!

1:35:29 **CAROL**

No, now all parents think that at first. I'll tell you what, just go back there with me once, and then make the decision.

1:35:38 **MS. FORRESTER**

I'll think about it.

1:35:40 **CAROL**

It's very important for you to work with a really good professional counselor. A good counselor can basically help you understand the feelings behind your anger, and how those feelings might actually affect your treatment of Jon. So, helping you control your temper should really be addressed first. Once you can control your anger, you can have Jon come home, and then you can work on other things.

1:36:05 **MS. FORRESTER**

All right.

1:36:07 **CAROL**

I want you to work with somebody competent. I don't want you to waste your time.

1:36:10 **MS. FORRESTER**

I agree with that.

1:36:12 **CAROL**

Well, I know the staff at the clinic is competent, but if you decide you really don't want to go back there, we do have some other options. I also want you to get really good emotional support. Susan, do you think if maybe we let your sister and mother in on the case plan, maybe that would help them understand how they can help you?

1:36:37 **MS. FORRESTER**

I don't know about that. They've never been any help in the past.

1:36:41 **CAROL**

Well, you can think about it, but remember that your sister was there to help you this time, and we don't really have to make that decision right now. As a matter of fact, the counselor could probably help you out better with that.

1:36:54 **MS. FORRESTER**

Why can't you just help me with all this?

1:36:57 **CAROL**

Well, I can help with some things, but some people have a little more training and experience in these important areas than I do. But I do want to be there for you. If there's anything you want to practice after you've learned these new skills, I'll be there, okay?

1:37:15 **MS. FORRESTER**

Well, you've been a big help to me. I'll have to see what this new person's like before I let you go completely.

1:37:21 **CAROL**

I'm not going that far! I'm here to see this thing through with you.

1:37:25 **NARRATOR**

Carol and Ms. Forrester agreed they would reevaluate Ms. Forrester's progress weekly. Together, with Ms. Forrester's counselor, they would also develop a visitation plan. Jon would come home for short visits, which would increase in length as Ms. Forrester becomes more able to handle him. Carol strongly advised that Ms. Forrester visit Jon often at her sister's. Carol also suggested that they meet with her sister and Jon to inform them of the case plan, and to enlist the sister's help in achieving it.

1:37:53 **CAROL**

Well, I'll see you in a few days with the written treatment plan. Thanks for helping complete it. Call me if you need anything. Okay?

1:38:01 **MS. FORRESTER**

Okay ... Thanks for all your help.

1:38:03 **CAROL**

You bet. Well, when does Wendy get home from school?

1:38:07 **MS. FORRESTER**

Actually, she should be coming home real soon.

<END>