



Case Study



M1 Basic MAB: **PE: A Call for Help...**

Situation:

- Veronica is a monolingual mother of seven bilingual children, ranging in age from 5 to 17. She has been under CSW supervision for the past year following her reluctant separation from a physically abusive partner—a decision she made only after facing the threat of losing custody. Since then, Veronica has struggled to maintain stability, juggling the demands of parenting, trauma recovery, and economic hardship with limited support.
- Shortly after arriving at the office, the CSW received a call from the eldest daughter, who said that her mother had gone out drinking last night and had not come home. The youth then explains to the worker that she can't afford to miss school today, as she is a senior with a final exam that she must pass to graduate and needs to look after her six younger siblings. The CSW asked an intern to accompany her to make a home visit and assess the situation. When they arrived at around 8:30 AM, they found the mother in the kitchen, hurriedly chopping apples for the children's lunches. They asked Veronica if they could have a word, but she didn't reply; instead, she yelled at the children to grab their backpacks and get in the van. She then turns to the CSW and tells the CSW that she has to get her kids off to school, tells the CSW, "You just don't understand, you don't have as many kids as I do, I can't deal with you right now. I need to take care of my kid!"



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Situation:

- The mother is frantically making lunches and looks up at the CSW and asks, “who do you think you are coming in here at the busiest time of day? Can’t you see I am trying to provide? What do you think I am going to do? Just stop everything to talk to you?”
- “There is no way I am going to speak with you right now. I have to get my kids off to school!” The mother then walks back into the kitchen to finish the lunches.
- The intern asked the CSW (in English in a hushed tone) can you smell the odor of alcohol coming from the kitchen? The CSW replies yes and says softly in English, I think we may have to detain these kids. Suddenly Jennifer comes flying out of the kitchen with the knife still in her hand.
- After keeping a safe distance, Jennifer demands the CSW to repeat what was said in her native tongue.



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Presenting Issues:

- Her days begin before sunrise and rarely slow down. Veronica prepares meals, coordinates school drop-offs, and manages behavioral challenges across multiple developmental stages. She has no consistent childcare, no extended family nearby, and limited access to mental health services. Her coping strategies often include avoidance, hyperactivity, and emotional outbursts—especially when she feels judged or cornered.
- The night before the incident, Veronica reportedly went out drinking and did not return home. Her eldest daughter, a high school senior, was left to manage the household and care for her six younger siblings.
- Veronica’s behavior is not simply noncompliance—it’s a trauma response. Her need to “get the kids off to school” is both a protective instinct and a desperate attempt to maintain normalcy. Her outburst may stem from fear of losing her children, compounded by systemic fatigue and a history of being misunderstood by professionals.
- Despite her challenges, Veronica shows signs of resilience. She continues to provide for her children, however imperfectly, and resists interventions that feel punitive or intrusive. Her story calls for trauma-informed engagement, cultural humility, and a response strategy that balances child safety with dignity and empathy.



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