



Case Study



M1 Basic MAB:

PE: The Custody Crisis

Situation:

- Jason Rivera is a 38-year-old Latino man living in a mid-sized urban area in California. He works as a forklift operator at a local distribution center and has held the job for over 10 years. Jason is divorced and shares joint custody of his two children—Maya (12) and Lucas (9).
- He has missed two scheduled visits and is hostile towards his ex-wife. The visits are often volatile, with each of us yelling at the other during child exchanges.
- Jason was referred to social services by his employer after a series of unexplained absences and a workplace incident where he angrily lashed out at a supervisor. The company offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and Jason reluctantly agreed to meet with a social worker.



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Presenting Issues:

- **Mental Health:** Jason reports chronic fatigue, difficulty sleeping, and frequent headaches. He denies depression but admits to feeling “numb” and “disconnected.”
- **Emotional Expression:** He struggles to articulate feelings and often deflects with humor or silence. He says, “Men don’t talk about this stuff.”
- **Parenting Stress:** Jason feels guilty about not being more present for his kids. He worries they’re “slipping away” but doesn’t know how to reconnect.
- **Cultural Expectations:** Raised in a traditional household, Jason believes men should be providers and protectors. He views asking for help as weakness.
- **Financial Pressure:** He’s behind on child support payments and fears legal consequences. He’s also supporting his aging mother, who lives with him.



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Intervention Challenges:

- Engagement: Jason is skeptical of therapy and views social workers as “just checking boxes.”
- Trust: He’s wary of systems due to past experiences with family court and child support enforcement.
- Masculinity Norms: His internalized beliefs about manhood may hinder emotional openness.
- Time Constraints: His work schedule and caregiving duties limit availability for sessions.



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