

Session 5



TEXASCASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN



OVERVIEW

This is a 3½-hour session. Although times may vary based on the number of participants, we have created a sample timeline based on an evening class beginning at 6:00 p.m. and ending at 9:30 p.m. Please adjust the timeline as needed to fit your training and class size.

This session addresses substance abuse and how it can affect a parent's ability to care for a child. Make connections between the information and CASA/GAL volunteer work. Why do participants need to know about this subject? Why do they need to be aware of their personal values about substance use and abuse? Look for ways to help volunteers set aside their own values in order to consider what's best for a child.

This session introduces the concepts of culture, diversity, disproportionality and cultural competence. Session 6 will delve further into these issues, addressing bias, stereotyping, institutional racism, and allowing participants the opportunity to create a plan for increasing their cultural competence.

Issues of cultural competence and diversity may be sensitive subjects for volunteers to discuss. In this training session, create a safe environment where volunteers can explore these often emotionally laden issues in a productive, respectful and child-focused way. Responding to differences with sensitivity and an open mind can be difficult but can also greatly enrich our lives. Your goal as the facilitator is to engage the participants in a process of change to better serve children and families. It may be helpful to review your group agreements at the beginning of this session.

SUPPLIES AND CHECKLIST

Supplies:

- Name tents from previous class

Flip charts:

- Your “parking lot”
- Your expectations
- Your group agreements
- A flip chart for each group to use during the Bass case study exercise

Handouts:

- Culture Iceberg handout
- Make enough copies of the Culture Puzzle handout for each pair in the class to have one. You will need to cut the puzzle pieces apart along the dotted lines in preparation for this activity.
- Copies of the Bass case study materials
- Copies of the Session 5 Evaluation

Videos:

- News clip video, “Saving Kids: Children of Addicts”

Additional information:

- Prior to facilitating this session, find out which drugs are commonly abused in your community by researching the topic online or talking to caseworkers about the drugs they see most often in their work with families. Be ready to share this information in class by creating a handout about locally abused drugs or adding the information to the Chapter 5 PowerPoint presentation. If your program doesn’t already have a list of substance abuse treatment resources in your community, consider preparing a handout with organizations’ names, contact information and details about the services they provide.
- Prior to facilitating this session, research local statistics about the demographics of children in care to determine whether disproportionality exists in the child protective services system where you live. Consider checking with your local child protective services agency to see if they have demographic information for children in care in your local area. Be ready to share the information you found about disproportionality in your state and local area in class.

Slide 1



- Greet participants with enthusiasm as they arrive and invite them to grab their name tents.
- Once participants have found a seat, fade your background music out and welcome your class back for session 5!

- Lead everyone in an opener exercise.

INTRODUCE TRAINING GOALS

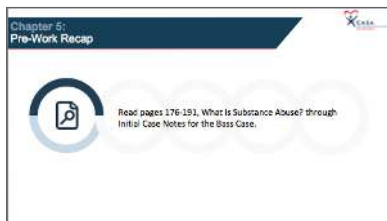
Advance to slide 2



- Briefly go over the training topics for this session to help learners feel oriented to the day’s agenda, including when they can anticipate a break.

PREWORK RECAP

Advance to slide 3



- Celebrate and thank your trainees for the time they invested in completing their Pre-Work. Invite any questions learners have in response to their Pre-Work, and capture any questions that will be covered later on the parking lot.

Advance to slide 4

Chapter 5: Competencies	
Competency Category	Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Development in Chapter 5
Foundation of Knowledge	Understands the ways substance abuse can affect children and families. Knows the importance of being aware of resources in the community that assist with substance abuse.
Cultural Competency	Knows strategies and steps to increase cultural competency skills and demonstrate culturally competent child advocacy. Understands the root causes of disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system and the disparate outcomes children of color experience.
Communication	Understands the importance of speaking and writing clearly and concisely.

- Review this slide showing which topics from the Competencies Checklist they’ll be tackling together today.

Advance to slides 5 and 6



- During this activity, keep in mind that some participants may have personal experience with individuals who have struggled with substance abuse. Be sensitive to this possibility and support volunteers in assessing their readiness to practice non-judgment and compassion on their case.
- Ask participants to take three minutes to think of people they know who have experienced substance abuse and create two lists:
 - What are their strengths?
 - How does/did their substance abuse impact their lives?
- Ask participants to recall the information about substance abuse they reviewed in their Pre-Work, and discuss any questions they may have. Share the information you gathered about commonly abused substances in your local community, as well as treatment resources in your area (e.g. inpatient, outpatient, sober living, 12-step programs and therapy). Help participants understand the difference between types of testing for substance use in your area (for example, urinalysis, hair strand and nail scrape).

Note: If a participant raises a question about the current research into alternatives to the abstinence model of treatment, acknowledge that while these models are being tried in some places, most court systems will not allow anything other than abstinence for parents with substance abuse issues.

ACTIVITY 5B: SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND PARENTING

6:35 – 6:45

Advance to slide 7



- Using a flip chart or whiteboard ask class to brainstorm how substance abuse affects parenting. Once the class has created a list, ask them to briefly look over the list on page 192 of their manual to see more ideas.

Advance to slide 8



- Show the clip of the news story, “Saving Kids: Children of Addicts.” As they watch the video, ask participants to think about advocating for a similar family as a CASA/GAL volunteer. After the clip, ask the participants to share the challenges of advocating for a family with parental substance abuse, as well as their reactions to this family’s story.

Advance to slide 9



- Go over key points to consider when deciding whether to recommend a child return home. Emphasize that they are looking for the parent to make progress towards demonstrating an ability to meet the MSL for their child. Relapse is often part of a successful recovery process, and a relapse does not mean that the parent has failed in their recovery efforts.
- This is a great opportunity to emphasize that volunteers may never use or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while doing their CASA work, and to highlight any other policies your program has around substance use.

Advance to slides 10 and 11



- Have class read the short “Shannon’s Story” section in their manual, starting on page 193. Use slides 10 and 11 to provide a quick summary.
- Divide participants into two groups: one to argue for termination of parental rights so that Shannon can be adopted by Natalia and Marie; the other to argue for additional time for the mother to show she can safely parent. Emphasize to participants that they need to use information from this unit to support their position each time they argue

for a specific recommendation. Highlight how important it is for CASA/GAL volunteers to think about both the short-term and the long-term consequences of their recommendations and to consider the individual needs of each child.

- Be ready to tackle the issue of homophobia if it arises in the discussions. If a participant expresses that Shannon should not be adopted by Natalia and Marie because they are a same-sex couple, be very clear that this is a biased belief and not appropriate to use in evaluation. Follow up later.
- Allot five minutes for the groups to prepare their arguments, using a flip chart to outline their position. Bring the groups back together and ask each group to present its arguments. Each group will have two minutes to present. When they are finished, note that there were valid points made on both sides. Then, briefly highlight the information in the section “What a CASA/GAL Volunteer Can Do.”

ACTIVITY 5E: UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

7:25 – 7:45

Advance to slide 12



- Give an overview of the material about culture that appears in the Volunteer Manual, including the definitions of culture, diversity and cultural competence.

Advance through slides 13 and 14 to show definitions.



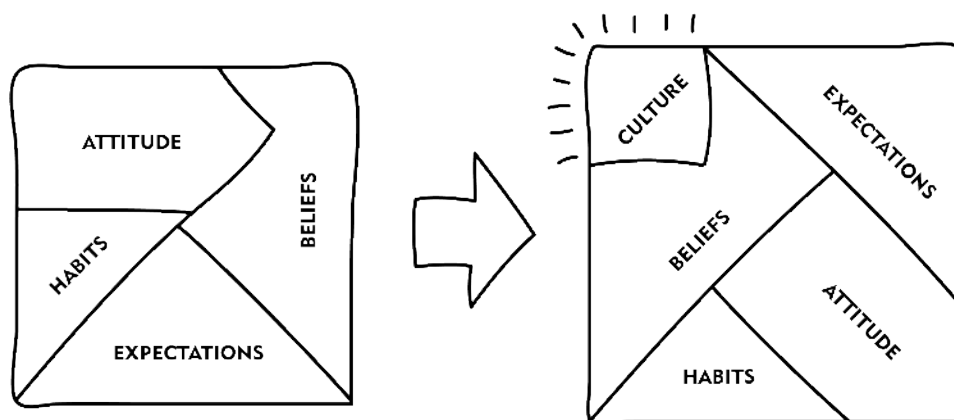
Advance to slide 15



- Distribute the Culture Iceberg handout, and quickly walk participants through this analogy. There are parts of culture we can see and parts we can't see but know are there, below the surface. The part above the waterline makes up only about ten percent of an iceberg's entirety.

The visible parts of culture might include dress, music, food and games. Those that we can't see but know are there include unwritten rules guiding patterns of speech, concepts of time and the meanings of body language.

- Ask participants to find a partner, choose one component found below the waterline of the culture iceberg and take a total of five minutes to each explain an unseen rule of their culture. Although a pair of participants may be of the same race or ethnicity, chances are they will find slight variations in their culture's rules, expectations or customs. The pairs won't need to share with the larger group.
- Be aware that sometimes people have a difficult time identifying their culture. For example, white people who do not have a strong sense of their ethnicity may feel like they do not have a culture. Help participants understand that it is often members of the dominant culture who have a harder time identifying aspects of their culture, because it has come to feel like the norm rather than a part of their personal identity. In this case, recommend that for this activity, people think about culture—rules, expectations and guidelines—in terms of their family, their workplace or their geographic region. If there are many people struggling with this issue, you may want to consider offering additional training and/or resources during the year on cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion.
- Part two of the activity challenges participants to consider rethinking the way they approach a task while being conscious of differences in culture. Distribute pieces one through four of the puzzle, withholding piece five, labeled "culture." Ask the pairs to use all four pieces to construct a square. This should take about 5 minutes.
- After they finish, distribute piece five to each pair. Tell them they must now construct a new square using all five pieces. This will be more challenging. They will want to revert to what they know from building the first square and may find it difficult to set this knowledge aside. The finished puzzles look like this:



- Take five minutes to discuss the following questions after the pairs have completed the second square:
 - What was it like having to make a new puzzle after receiving an additional piece?
 - How is this activity similar to advocating for a child from another culture?
 - Possible answers to the second question include the following:
 - ◆ What worked the first time didn't necessarily work the same way the second time.
 - ◆ They had to start all over again without any preconceived notions.
 - ◆ They had to forget what they did before and think of completing a square in a whole new way.
 - This can be what it's like working with children, youth and families from different cultures. What worked well with one family might work very differently with another. That one small piece made a drastic change in constructing a new square.



Share a case story that illustrates the importance of cultural awareness and how a CASA volunteer can advocate for a child's cultural needs to be met.

ACTIVITY 5F: THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY

7:45 – 7:50

Advance to slide 16

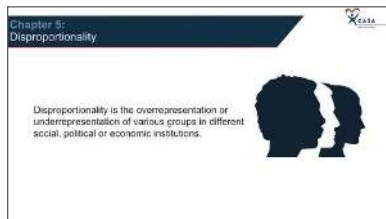


- Ask the participants to recall the information they read in their Pre-Work about diversity, the National CASA Vision Statement and guiding principles. Discuss any questions they may have.
- In the large group, ask participants to briefly share which principle they found most important and why.
- Ask if there were any principles people struggled with, and help to clarify the spirit of the principle. Point out that principle #11 means that a program's volunteer pool should match community demographics, not necessarily that each volunteer should "match" the child they are advocating for.
- If your program has a non-discrimination statement emphasizing that CASA volunteers will not discriminate against any individual based on their sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, immigration status, gender identity or expression, or socioeconomic status when advocating for a child's best interest, introduce this here.

ACTIVITY 5G: DISPROPORTIONALITY AND DISPARATE OUTCOMES

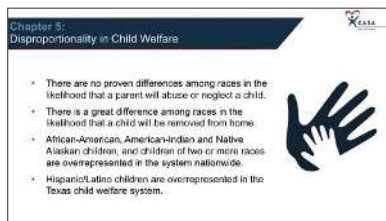
8:00 – 8:10

Advance to slide 17



- Prior to this training session, research your local statistics about the demographics of children in care to determine whether disproportionality exists in the child protective services system where you live. Share the information you found about disproportionality in your area with the class.

Advance to slide 18



- Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the meaning of disproportionality and how it manifests in the child welfare system.
- This discussion is intended to help participants see how institutional racism and lack of cultural competence on the

part of professionals and volunteers can affect the children they serve. Be sensitive to the fact that disproportionality may be a new concept for many participants. As a large group, lead the class in a discussion of the following questions:

- Why do you think disproportionality exists in the child welfare system? What factors might contribute to it?
- What other systems impact the lives of the children and families you will work with as a CASA/GAL volunteer? What are some examples of disproportionality in those systems?
- What is one thing you can do to become aware of unconscious racial bias in your role as a CASA/GAL volunteer?

Other systems that affect the lives of the children and families in the child welfare system include education, health care, housing and criminal justice. Disproportionality in these systems includes overrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos/as in disciplinary actions and special education; underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos/as in gifted and talented programs; health disparities among people of color even when there is no difference in income and education; overrepresentation of people of color in the

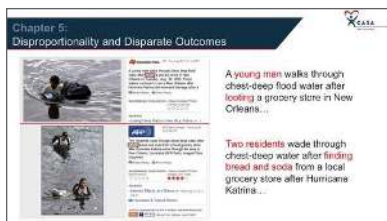
juvenile justice system; and racial profiling of African American males. The fact that disproportionality exists for the same populations across all these systems further reinforces that the problem is due to systemic factors rather than individual factors. Well-meaning individuals are often unaware of their racial or cultural biases, but these biases are barriers to eliminating disproportionality. Some things CASA/GAL volunteers can do to become aware of their biases include:

- Learn more about the history of racism and oppression in the United States.
- Develop relationships with people from different racial and cultural backgrounds.
- Consider what might have happened to a family in their interactions with various systems rather than assuming something is wrong with the family.
- Examine their attitudes and assumptions about people living in poverty.

ACTIVITY 5H: RACE IN THE MEDIA

8:10 – 8:20

Advance to slide 19



- Review and comment on the Associated Press photos and captions below following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
- Ask the class to consider the following questions:
- How does the media negatively impact the public perception of poor people?
- How does the media's portrayal of poor communities and communities of color impact the response of the child welfare system?
- How does understanding this help us in our advocacy?

ACTIVITY 5I: THE BASS CASE

8:20 – 9:05

Advance to slides 20 and 21



- Have the class open their manuals to the initial file for the Bass case, which they read for Pre-Work. *Use slides 22 and 23 to briefly re-familiarize participants with the information in the case file.*

Advance to slides 22 and 23

Chapter 5:
The Bass Case

- Three weeks ago, Lavender Bass, age 6, came into care following a complaint.
- The CPS investigator located the mother and child behind the bar where mother is employed.
- Mother, Susan Mailer, was passed out drunk and sleeping in her car.
- Lavender was sitting in the shade of a nearby tree waiting for her mom to wake up and take her home.
- The police were called and the mother arrested for public drunkenness.

Chapter 5:
The Bass Case

- Lavender was placed in foster care with Bonnie Matthews.
- Susan Mailer's criminal record reflected a tendency toward violence.
- She has been in a couple of physical fights in the bar where she's employed.
- She has also been arrested for dealing marijuana and was once found using inhalants.

- Quickly recap how case studies work and remind participants about the four roles: Runner, Scribe, Moderator and Questioner. After they review the initial case file, they can send their Runner to the facilitator to request an additional interview transcript from a key player they'd like to speak with. As they collect information they should be synthesizing that info to make recommendations to the court. Give each group a copy of the Questioner's List to help keep them on track as they review documents and determine their recommendations. After 30 minutes, each team's Scribe should legibly write on the flip chart that group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions.

Interviews available for the Bass case:


(This list is for your use only. Groups must decide on their own who they want to interview.)

- CPS Caseworker: Lisa Kelly
- Attorney for the Program and Volunteer Supervisor
- Lavender Bass and Foster Mother: Bonnie Matthews
- Father: John Bass
- Maternal Aunt and Grandmother: Leah Mailer and Rebecca Mailer (First Contact)
- Maternal Aunt and Grandmother: Leah Mailer and Rebecca Mailer (Second Contact)
- Mother: Susan Mailer

Advance to slide 24

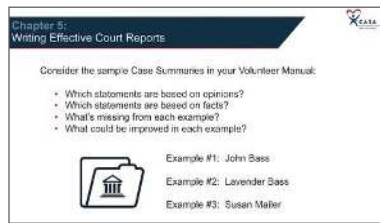
Chapter 5:
The Bass Case

It's time to
work the case!



- Start the activity and give each group about 30 minutes for interviews and an extra five minutes to discuss recommendations, and ensure that each group has a flip chart to capture its recommendations.
- After 35 minutes, invite the groups to stand, stretch and read the recommendations of the other groups around the room.
- In the large group, discuss the debrief questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Advance to slides 26 and 27



- This activity focuses on developing clear written communication skills. Ask the participants to recall the sample court report summaries that they read on page 190 of their Pre-Work. Discuss the following questions:
 - Which statements are based on opinions?
 - Which statements are based on facts?
 - What's missing from each example?
 - What could be improved in each example?
- Review the examples with participants, and point out how they can be improved using the information below and any other insights you can offer based on your program's expectations for writing effective reports.

Example 1: John Bass

- *"He was busted for pot..."* Avoid use of slang.
- *"Mr. Bass has never been a father to Lavender..."*: State objectively.
- *"He admits to a history of using inhalants..."* Be more specific to avoid implying continued or current use of inhalants.
- *"Mr. Bass claims..."* Use of specific words can imply alternative meaning. Use "states" instead of "claims."

Example 2: Lavender Bass

- *"Lavender spends a lot of time in the yard and is not very engaged..."* Provide more specificity about significant child behaviors. Engaged with others? With only foster parents? When engaged in developmentally appropriate activities?
- *"Lavender sometimes ignores the foster mother and doesn't listen to her when she is talking. The foster mother states she has to call her time after time to get her attention..."* The first sentence is an individual interpretation of the situation. The second sentence provides more specifics.
- *"This is not the best foster placement for Lavender..."* Avoid statements without any explanation of what led to a conclusion.

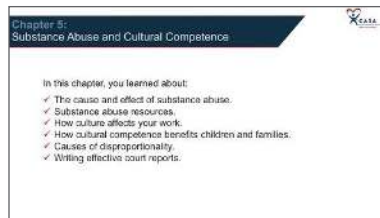
Example 3: Susan Mailer

- “A criminal records check confirmed Ms. Mailer has a tendency toward violent behavior...” Include specifics on history if relevant to the parental ability and child’s protection.
- “CASA/GAL volunteer feels like drugs are being done at the home of the maternal aunt and grandmother. The children are also fearful of them...” Statements should be fact based without assumptions, which might represent cultural misinterpretations.

REVIEW, EVALUATION AND PRE-WORK ASSIGNMENT

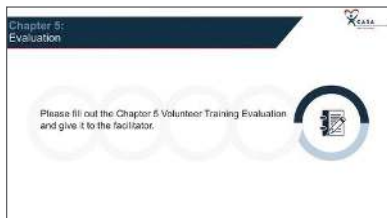
9:20 – 9:30

Advance to slides 27 and 28



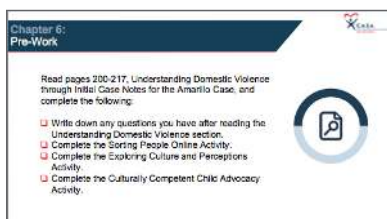
- In summary, briefly review the objectives found at the beginning of the chapter to check in about volunteers’ comfort level with the content. Answer any remaining questions.

Advance to slide 29



- Hand out copies of the Session 5 Evaluation and collect them before participants leave.

Advance to slide 30



- Go over assigned Pre-Work for session 6 and ensure everyone has a clear understanding about what to tackle before the next session. Clarify that the Amarillo case is pronounced “Am-uh-ree-yo.”
- Lead everyone in a closing activity.

