

Session 8



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 wraps up the Pre-Service training program! As participants prepare to launch into their real-world role as CASA/GAL volunteers, help them review what they have learned in training, evaluate their strengths and challenges, and identify their support systems.

Emphasize the supervisory role of the CASA/GAL program staff. Volunteers now have the essential information and skills to do CASA/GAL volunteer work, but they can—and should—rely on staff for assistance, consultation and support.

Consider inviting participants to make this final session a potluck! Everyone can bring snacks to share in celebration of their completion of training together. If you choose to do this, build in extra time at the beginning of the session for people to share food and connect. If facilitating a potluck isn't feasible, consider finding another way to applaud the participants' hard work and create a spirit of celebration, such as a cake or ending with a short dance party.

SUPPLIES AND CHECKLIST

Supplies:

- Name tents from previous class
- Sticky notes

Flip charts:

- Your “parking lot”
- Your expectations
- Your group agreements
- Create flip charts with the following headings and hang them around the training room for activity 8B: CASA/GAL Volunteer Role, Child Welfare System and Laws, Cultural Competence, Working with Children, Working with Families, Communication Skills, and Working a Case.

Handouts:

- Copies of the Session 8 evaluation

Additional preparation:

- To help trainees get a full picture of the CASA volunteer experience, consider inviting a panel of experienced volunteers to share their perspectives during Activity 8D of this final session. Be sure to prepare the guest speakers ahead of time with the specific topics you would like them to cover, including:
 - Receiving a case assignment.
 - Meeting a child.
 - Assessing a child’s needs.
 - Building a relationship with caseworkers, attorneys and other professionals.
 - Working with parents and engaging family members.
 - Following a case as it progresses.
 - Making recommendations in court (or, generally, how to act/speak up in court).
 - How to persevere when times get tough.
 - How to stay on top of documentation.
 - How to maintain emotional boundaries and practice self-care.

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 8!
- Lead everyone in an opener exercise.

INTRODUCE TRAINING GOALS

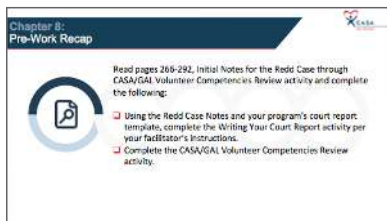
Advance to slide 2



- 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



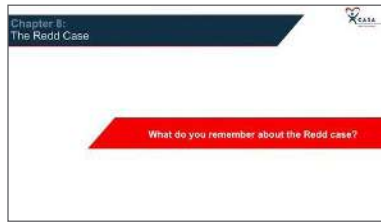
- Celebrate and thank your trainees for the time they invested in completing their Pre-Work. Invite any questions learners have in response to their Pre-Work, and capture any questions that will be covered later on the parking lot.

Advance to slide 4



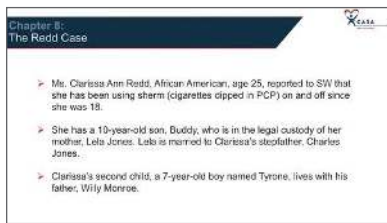
- Explain, "This slide shows which topics from the Competencies Checklist we'll be tackling together today."

Advance to slides 5 and 6



- Ask participants to recall the Redd Case Interviews that they reviewed as part of their Pre-Work. *Click through slides 7 through 9 to review the initial case information.* Discuss any concerns or questions about the case.

Slides 7, 8 and 9



Advance to slide 10



- Assuming trainees have already completed their court report writing assignment, provide an overview of the elements of a strong court report for this case. Briefly go over each section and highlight key points that should be included for the judge. Allow time for questions and clarifications.

Advance to slides 11 and 12



Provide participants with sticky notes. Ask them to take a few minutes to think about what questions they have about each of the following topics: the CASA/GAL volunteer role, the child welfare system and laws, cultural competence, working with children, working with families, communication skills and working a case. Instruct them to brainstorm one question for at least four of the topics, each on a separate sticky note. Once they have written their questions, have them post the questions on the corresponding flip charts around the room.

- Once all the participants have posted their questions, ask them to take 15 minutes to walk around the room and visit each flipchart. If there are questions that they know the answers to, they can jot down the answer on sticky notes and stick it next to the corresponding question on the flipchart. They may continue to walk around the room to see if the questions they posted have been answered, and to see what other questions and answers their fellow training participants posted.
- In the large group, discuss any unanswered questions.

Advance to slide 13

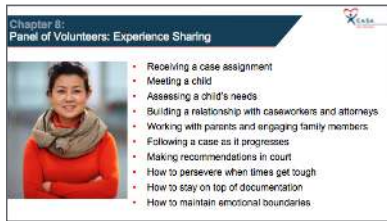


- Share a brief overview of what volunteers can expect when they present in court. Explain that volunteers carefully prepare and practice with their supervisors before presenting in court. Address the information that volunteers typically include in their verbal updates to the court, how long they usually speak, and the importance of formality and titles (for example, using “Your Honor” to speak to the judge, referring to other parties by “Ms. [Last Name]” rather than addressing them by first name in court, and speaking from the perspective of the organization, e.g., “CASA believes” rather than “I believe”).

Advance to slide 14



Advance to slide 15



- Introduce a panel of experienced volunteers. Let participants know that there will be time for questions at the end of the presentation. If the panel does not cover key areas, ask questions that will lead to that information.

BREAK

8:00 – 8:10

ACTIVITY 8E: FINDING SUPPORT

8:10 – 8:25

Advance to slide 16



- Have participants describe to a partner what kinds of support they think they'll need as a CASA/GAL volunteer.
- Ask participants to recall the activity in their Competencies Review from Pre-Work, in which they created a plan to strengthen specific competencies.

Acknowledge that they can't do it alone (none of us can), that everyone is here to support one another and that they will need support to implement these plans. Ask for a few volunteers to share the types of support they think they'll need and seek, and where they might find it. Then describe the types of support volunteers can expect from your program. Suggest any other ways they can support themselves and each other.

- Remind participants they are required to take 12 in-service training hours per year to continue to expand their advocacy skills and knowledge. Tell them about opportunities your program offers for these trainings, as well as the courses they can take on the Texas CASA Learning Center.

- Emphasize the importance of self-care in this work. Because of the time demands, stress and frustration that can sometimes be a part of CASA/GAL volunteer experience, it's key that volunteers actively work to take care of their emotional well-being. Share the metaphor of remembering to put on your own oxygen mask first. So often, people deplete themselves for the sake of others, but if we remember to take care of our own essential needs first we will actually be able to serve better. We cannot feed anyone else if our own plate is empty.

ACTIVITY 8F: EXPECTATIONS REVIEW

8:25 – 8:35

Advance to slide 17

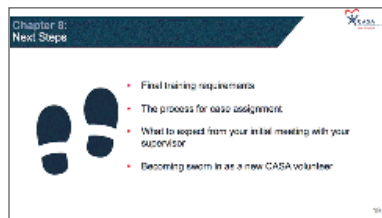


- Remind participants about the expectations regarding what they hoped to gain from the training process that they captured on sticky notes during the first class session. Invite volunteers to come to the expectations flip chart in the front of the classroom and to review what they wrote. Ask them to remove the sticky note if they feel that their expectation was met, leave their sticky note in place if they feel their expectations have not been met, and to write new sticky notes sharing their thoughts and feelings about what they learned, if they wish. Let them know that this is helpful feedback.

ACTIVITY 8G: LOOKING AHEAD

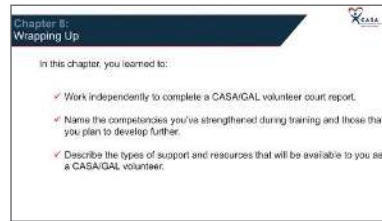
8:35 – 8:50

Advance to slides 18 and 19



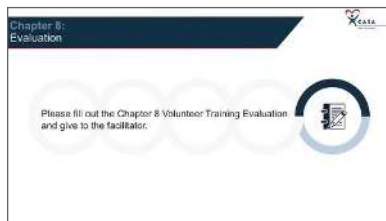
- Share the following with participants:
 - Any other requirements they need to complete to finish training.
 - The process and timeline for matching volunteers to a case.
 - What to expect from their initial meeting with their volunteer supervisor.
 - The swearing-in process.
 - Any other relevant program-specific information.

Advance to slides 20 and 21



- In summary, you may review the objectives found at the beginning of the session to check in about volunteers' comfort level with the content. Answer any remaining questions.

Advance to slide 22



- Allow time for participants to complete the Session 8 Volunteer Training Evaluation and the Post-Training Assessment, and let them know their feedback will help your program strengthen future trainings.
- End the session with a closing exercise. Plan to stay after class to answer any additional questions participants may have one-on-one.