Culturally-Responsive EI/ECSE Teams

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Handout with Scenarios and Cases

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Specific Scenarios (one dimension of diversity)

FAMILY DIVERSITY PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. Your team is working with a family who has joint custody. The father has the child for a week and the mother has him for the next week. Their goals for the child are contradictory and each parent does NOT want the team to work on the goals of the other family. What would your team do?

2. Your team is working with a child with lesbian parents. The child attends Aunt Sally’s Preschool. Aunt Sally does a unit called, “All About Me,” and wants the family to send pictures of the parents, grandparents, etc. The parents do NOT want their family structure revealed to Aunt Sally or the other families. The parents have asked you to make suggestions. What would you do?

3. Your team is working with a child who lives with the grandmother. The grandmother has 6 other grandchildren to care for in a two-room apartment. Her goal is to survive and keep everybody alive. How would you work with this 90-year-old grandmother?

4. Your team is working with a foster family. The child has been adopted. The parents live in another state. The team believes they have made great progress with the child. The team does not want the early intervention services to be stopped. What can the team do to help the child receive services in her new environment (another state)?

5. Your team is working with a single parent who has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The consistency of experiences the child receives varies tremendously, depending on how the mother is doing. Further, there appears to be no relationship between what the child does and how the parent reacts because of the bipolar disorder. Can the team do anything to improve consistency of care? If so, what can they do?

6. Your team is working with a family that continually moves from one location to another. However, most of the moves are within the same community. How should the team navigate this disruption in service to the family?

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. The transdisciplinary team is working with a two-year-old from the Hmong culture. You notice that the child has red marks all over her body. What is happening here? What should the team do? Why?

(An analogous example of this is found in the Irish and other cultures.)

2. The team is working with a three-year-old who attends Miss Sally’s Preschool. Miss Sally’s curriculum and classroom revolve around the “seasonal curriculum.” Every month the children have some type of party or celebration. For example, in October, it is Halloween; in February, it is Valentine’s Day. For religious reasons, the child cannot participate in any of these parties. The parents and all other relatives and friends work and cannot come to preschool to pick the child up. The parents have asked the team to intervene on their behalf. However, Miss Sally will not budge and modify her curriculum. What would your team do? Why?

3. Your team is working with a two-year-old whose family members are practicing Christian Scientists. The team is concerned that the child, who has cerebral palsy, has contractures that are negatively influencing motor development. The parents do not believe in traditional medicine and do not want to take the child to the MD. What should the team do? Why?

4. Your team works with a family who practices the Sikh faith. The three-year-old daughter is also in Miss Sally’s Preschool. Miss Sally plans an Easter egg hunt. The parents do not mind the child participating in other celebrations, even the religious ones such as Christmas. What is their objection to the Easter egg hunt? What suggestions would you make to Miss Sally to accommodate this child?

5. The mother of one of the families you work with is a fundamentalist Christian. However, during high school she was not religious and described herself as promiscuous at that time. She believes that her child’s disability is God’s punishment. Because of this belief, her goals for the child are to make him happy and for her to do everything for the child to fulfill her punishment. What would your team do? Why?

6. This family is a member of a charismatic Catholic community. The major goal for their child is to take him to a sacred place in Mexico for healing. How would your team work with the family on goals for the child? Why?

ETHNIC DIVERSITY PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. Your team is working with a family from Japan. The family is highly resistant to meeting in the home. How (and where) would the team work with the child and family? Why?

2. Your team is working with a family from Kenya. Sometimes when a team member is at the house, the grandmother will open the team member’s purse and take things out. Why does she do this? What would you do if you were the team member? Why?

3. Your team is working with a Native American family. Every time a team member asks the mother a question, she does not seem to respond. What is happening here? If you don’t know what is happening, how would you find out?

4. Your team is working with a family from Sweden. The parents want the child to attend Miss Sally’s Preschool. However, Miss Sally will not take children who are not potty trained. The child is four, and the team is sure that the child could be trained. However, the parents are highly resistant? Why? How would you problem solve with the parents?

5. Your team is working with a family from Indonesia. Any time a team member asks the parent a “yes/no” question, the answer is always “yes.” Why? How would your team work with this?

6. Your team is working with a family from Guatemala. The family does not want to encourage independence in the child. How would your team work with this family?

Complex Cases for Problem-Solving (multiple dimensions of diversity)

Case 1

* Sara and Jamal (male) are 3-year-old fraternal twins who were born prematurely.
* Both have mild cerebral palsy. However, Sara is more “involved” in terms of gross and fine motor functioning.
* Their parents come from a country/culture in which men are revered more than women.
* An occupational therapist works with several children at the preschool the children attend. The occupational therapist and teacher have referred both Jamal and Sara for evaluation. They believe that both might benefit from occupational and/or physical therapy.
* The father has agreed for Jamal, the son, to be evaluated. He does not agree to have Sara tested.
* What would you do in this situation?

Case 2 (variation)

* Sara and Jamal (male) are 33-month-old fraternal twins who were born prematurely. Both are developmentally delayed with indications of cerebral palsy. Sara is the more “involved” child in terms of language, cognitive, and physical development.
* The parents are from Yemen and are devout Muslims.
* At the first team meeting the father is clearly the spokesman for the family. He reports that he does not talk to women about his children’s development or future education. However, there are no men on the team.
* His goals for Jamal are also clear. He wants support for Jamal to request what he wants in Arabic. He also wants Jamal to learn his colors. Finally, he wants Jamal to receive occupational therapy to help him learn to feed himself and physical therapy to “learn to walk”.
* Even though Sara is more involved, he does not want any services for her because she is a girl.
* What would your team do in this situation?

Case 2

* Maria is a child from Mexico attending a preschool in a public school located in a rural area of the United States.
* The teacher is a constructivist who works toward developing autonomy, as quickly as possible, for the children in her classroom.
* Maria has Arthrogryposis, which is a condition in which she was born with multiple joint contractures in all her limbs.
* The occupational therapist has worked diligently to develop an assistive devise to help Maria during mealtime.
* Maria's mother comes to school during lunch time several days a week and insists on feeding her. She believes that adults should feed Maria until she is older.
* What would your team do? Why?

Case 3

* Jabbo is an 18-month-old infant born into poverty to a single mother with a substance abuse problem and is currently in foster care placement.
* The foster mother is a public school teacher who is also working on her Ph.D. in education.
* Medical records indicate Jabbo suffered a cerebral hemorrhage perinatally.
* The foster mother is concerned that Jabbo extends his left lower extremity and holds his left upper extremity in flexion while creeping. He does not pull to stand, cruise along furniture, or walk independently.
* Jabbo’s only intelligible word is “mama”. Jabbo is “still on the bottle”.
* His foster mothers’ major concern is that Jabbo be as independent as possible since she is going to accept another child (neonate) for foster care.
* Jabbo is in child care from 7:00 am until 5:00 pm and the highest educational level of the staff at child care is high school diploma.
* How would your team address this situation?

Case 4

* Kim is a single mother from Korea who is not yet documented.
* Her only child, Chung-he, is a 4-year-old who attends as public pre-kindergarten class.
* Chung-he has spina bifida. However, the lesion is low enough that Chung-he has some feeling in his lower extremities and could move toward independent mobility.
* The preschool teacher is “exasperated” with Kim because she is in the classroom most of the time. She breastfeeds Chung-he in front of the other children and insists on doing as much for Chung-he as possible.
* In discussions with the team, Kim indicates that her goal for Chung-he is to “take care of all of his needs”. She believes she is being punished for her past sins and believes it is her lot in life to take care of Chung-he.
* To exacerbate the issue, her husband was deported to Korea. She is fearful, paranoid, and suspicious of team members and is afraid they want to take Chung-he away from her.
* How would your team address this situation?

Case 5

* Mrs. Vance is a speech-language pathologist and Ms. Katz is a physical therapist.
* They are both near retirement and were educated in their respective disciplines over 30 years ago.
* The preschool programs in which they work strongly encourage full inclusion. However, Mrs. Vance and Ms. Katz have been resistant.
* Both believe they are quite reasonable and inclusive by providing services within the classrooms, but pulling each child away from the other children to administer therapy in isolation.
* If you were the teacher and a member of this team, what would you do?

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