

## Motivational Interviewing Case Scenarios: Scenario 3 of 4

(Note: A narrated PowerPoint accompanies this handout.)



**Scenario 3:** The CPI investigates an allegation of possible child neglect (e.g., unsanitary living conditions and poor nutrition) and meets with the parent, Tanya Lopez, in her living room which is dirty and in complete disarray. Ms. Lopez has a 2-year old son, Alejandro.

This conversation should assume the following:

- The house is very dirty.
- A toddler is running around the house.

### **MI Script:**

CPI: Hi Ms. Lopez, I'm Nina Karas from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) here today to follow up on a report. Would it be okay to take a few minutes to visit?

PARENT: Well...you're here. What's the problem?

CPI: The report is specific about a concern about housekeeping.

PARENT: Yeah, well what's new - I can't get anything done since Alejandro started walking cause he's so active. I was just going to start cleaning then I got sick with this sinus infection and I've been really sick.

CPI: You are not surprised at all about the report. You have a lot going on with being sick and keeping Alejandro out of trouble.

PARENT: Right...and what's the problem with the mess if I'm making sure he is not in trouble.

CPI: I would like to share something with you if that is okay.

PARENT: Fine.

CPI: What do you know about the process for a call to check out a child neglect concern?

PARENT: Well I know that some people – the nosy ones - have too much time on their hands.

CPI: You're not sure this is warranted.

PARENT: Who does this crap anyway?

CPI: What I can tell you is someone who cares usually shares a concern with our office and we are required to follow up to see if there is a problem.

PARENT: Oh.

CPI: Now that you know that, what is your reaction?

PARENT: Who made the call?

CPI: I can't give out that information. I can tell you that this should take about 30 minutes. Would it be okay to get started?

PARENT: Sure, let's get this over with, I gotta get busy to get lunch.

CPI: So, my observation is that the housekeeping concern is significant, and it looks like you may need some help getting things back in shape. I believe we can help in that if you would like. In addition, I notice a spoon, a cap, and a dirty cotton ball on the living room end table. What can you tell me about that?

PARENT: Oh - my cousin was here yesterday, and those are hers.

CPI: What concerns would you have about that?

PARENT: She took off her makeup there and left the cotton, and the spoon was from her ice cream and the cap, well I'm not sure I know what to say about that.



CPI: When I see these items together, my concern goes towards heroin use, especially with the spoon being charred a bit. We are seeing a rise in opioid use in this area. What do you make of that?

PARENT: Well, I guess the spoon could be old or have been near the grill.

CPI: May I share my thoughts?

Parent: I guess (quietly).

CPI: I want to make sure you and Alejandro are safe and healthy. Having the charred spoon, cap, and cotton indicates something dangerous in your home.

PARENT: I know why you said that. You think that stuff belongs to me. It definitely doesn't as I used to have a drug problem a long time ago, but I saw what it did to my friends, so I quit using.

CPI: Sounds like you know a lot about this and that you understand the connection between drugs and problems. I'd like to hear more about how you were able to stop.

PARENT: I went to treatment and it was a really cool residential program, but they detoxed me and then made me go to all these counseling sessions and I did not feel well at all- I was really sick and I couldn't focus on my recovery. I kept thinking about using all the time. I finally bounced and now I can't go back.

CPI: You were very strong to recognize you had a problem and go to treatment. It must have been hard to try to do everything right but not feel well. Were you using opioids at the time?

PARENT: Yeah, mostly heroin.

CPI: What do you know about people who are not able to finish treatment?

PARENT: Not much except for my friend Elena who was here yesterday.

CPI: A high percentage often experience craving and it becomes difficult to not end up using again. What worries do you have about this happening to you?

PARENT: I have Alejandro now and I can't risk losing him to go back to treatment.

CPI: You love your son very much and you don't want to be separated from him, on the other hand, not going to treatment carries risks as well. What do you see as some of the possible risks for you?

PARENT: (Nodding) Living like this is not safe.

CPI: You are concerned about safety if nothing changes and you and Alejandro continue to live here. Actually because of the opioid drug crisis there are new programs available that will provide special medication that helps people with opioid addictions both feel better AND not have so many cravings. The treatment has a very high success rate, especially when it is combined with counseling and recovery support. Can I tell you more about this?

PARENT: You might as well. In case I need it again someday.

CPI: The fact that you are taking an interest in making sure you are healthy and also, so you can be a good parent to Alejandro is remarkable. (NOTE - CPI then describes the treatment opportunities in detail and that the recovery support component helps parents with everyday needs like safe housing).

PARENT: Well, what about Alejandro?

CPI: There are even some programs that parents can come to with their children if you are interested.

PARENT: Okay, that sounds good.

CPI: To get started we will set up an assessment so we can make sure we have the best match for you and Alejandro. If it's okay with you, I would like to start there.

PARENT: Yeah...

CPI: Setting up a meeting with a case manager this afternoon would be the first step.

PARENT: I guess so, especially if they can help me get out of this dump and scary neighborhood. It's hard to stay clean in this place.

CPI: You want what's best and you believe in yourself to do this again. I will do everything I can to support you. This time the program might be better able to help you with the discomfort that goes with opioid use, so you can focus on your recovery.



### **Individual or Staff Meeting Exercise**

With this case study in mind, individually or as a group, continue to “walk-through” a process that might continue where this one temporarily left off. Consider including how to use MI processes and skills to talk through the following:

- Discrepancies between the background and collateral information gathered/reviewed by the CPI and the parent’s account of the situation, if any.
- How to introduce the potential need for a parent to get a SUD assessment and overdose prevention education/support.
- Options for ensuring child safety while the parent(s) is in the assessment process and treatment.

The correct answers are provided in the narrated PowerPoint that accompanies this handout.

