



THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION

Flex-Learning Edition 2018 Version 2

Volunteer Manual

**SESSION 4: IN PERSON:
ACHIEVING PERMANENCE — THE AMARILLO CASE**

SESSION 4:

**Achieving Permanence—
The AmarilloCase**

CONTENTS

Advance Prep

Welcome

Activity 4.13: Understanding Culture

Duration: 10 Minutes

Use flipcharts to record the following information from the participants.

- One reason they want to become a CASA/GAL volunteer
- One thing that stood out for them during the online portion of Session 1
- One thing they're most excited about as you begin training
- One concern that they have about volunteering

Activity 1.9: Expectations / Housekeeping / Parking Lot

Duration: 10 Minutes

Introduce the Parking Lot, a flipchart page where you can note (or “park”) issues unrelated to the current chapter and make a plan to address them later. Post this flipchart at the front of the room. Inform participants that some items that carry over from the online discussion may also make their way to the in-class Parking Lot.

Activity 1.10: The Volunteer Child Relationship

Duration: 30 Minutes

Take Print-out of handouts. The Volunteer- Child Relationship Dilemmas are located in the handouts.

Activity 1.11: CASA/GAL Volunteer Tasks

Duration: 20 Minutes

Developing Competencies for CASA/GAL Volunteer Work is located in Handouts

Activity 4.13: Understanding Culture

Step 1: The facilitator will distribute a four-piece puzzle to you and a partner. Working with your partner, construct a square using all four pieces without overlapping any sections. When everyone has finished, the facilitator will distribute an additional piece labeled “culture.” Make a new square using all five pieces. Again, no pieces can overlap.

In the large group, answer the following questions:

Describe your experience of having to make a new puzzle after receiving the new piece.

How is this activity similar to advocating for a child from another culture?

National CASA Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

As a general term “diversity” refers to difference or variety. In the context of CASAGAL volunteer work, “diversity” refers to differences or variety in people’s identities or experiences: ethnicity, race, national origin, language, gender, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class and so on.

The term “cultural competence” refers to the ability to work effectively with people from a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints. The United States is becoming increasingly multicultural.

According to the 2010 US Census, approximately 36.3% of the population currently belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group. The Census Bureau projects that by the year 2100, non-Hispanic whites will make up only 40% of the US population.

As you work through the activities in this chapter, keep in mind the particular cultural groups you will work with as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Keep in mind that “culture” is not limited to race and ethnicity. According to the Pew Research Center, Americans are more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past, and the U.S. is projected to be even more diverse in the coming decades.

By 2055, the United States will not have a single racial or ethnic majority. *Time Magazine* reports that the country’s minority population increased from 32.9% of U.S. residents in 2004 to 37.9% in 2014, according to the Census, and four states—Hawaii, California, New Mexico and Texas—along with Washington, D.C., are now majority-minority.

As you work through the activities in this chapter, keep in mind the particular cultural groups you will work with as a CASA/GAL volunteer. Keep in mind that “culture” is not limited to race and ethnicity. Understanding issues related to diversity and culturally competent child advocacy is critical to your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. It can enhance your ability to see things from new and different perspectives and to respond to each child’s unique needs. Developing cultural competence is a lifelong process.

(<http://time.com/3934092/us-population-diversity-census>)

National CASA Association Vision

National CASA Association Vision

A world where every abused or neglected child is given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

Guiding Principles for Achieving a Diverse CASA/GAL Network

1. Ethnic and cultural background influences an individual's attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.
2. Each family's characteristics reflect adaptations to its primary culture and the majority culture, the family's unique environment and the composite of the people and needs within it.
3. A child can be best served by a CASA/GAL volunteer who is culturally competent and who has personal experience and work experience in the child's own culture(s).
4. To understand a child, a person should understand cultural differences and the impact they have on family dynamics.
5. No cultural group is homogeneous; within every group there is great diversity.
6. Families have similarities yet are all unique.
7. In order to be culturally sensitive to another person or group, it is necessary to evaluate how each person's culture impacts his/her behavior.
8. As a person learns about the characteristic traits of another cultural group, he/she should remember to view each person as an individual.
9. Most people like to feel that they have compassion for others and that there are new things they can learn.
10. Value judgments should not be made about another person's culture.
11. It is in the best interest of children to have volunteers who reflect the characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, national origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability and socioeconomic status) of the population served.

4.14: The Value of Diversity

After reviewing the vision statement and guiding principles, choose which principles seem most important to you. Your facilitator will lead a discussion where you can share your perspective and learn from others. You are encouraged to ask questions and challenge ideas

Working the Case

Activity 4.15: The Amarillo Case

Step 1: Your group will receive a hard copy of the initial case file for the Amarillo case. Take several minutes to begin digesting the information in this case file. Then send your Runner to the facilitator to request an additional document (either an interview transcript from a key player you'd like to speak with or another important document you'd find during a case). You may continue to request additional interviews and documents one at a time over the course of 35 minutes in order to complete your investigation of the case at this stage. After 35 minutes, your Scribe should legibly write on the flipchart your group's recommendations to the court regarding services for the child, services for the parent and placement decisions. A large group debrief will follow.

Step 2: Take a few minutes to view other groups' recommendations, and then briefly discuss the debrief questions that the facilitator distributes. In the large group, discuss these questions and any others that arose during the activity.

Court Report Writing

Activity 4.16 Taking Case Notes

Taking clear and detailed notes is essential to your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer, as these notes will form the basis for your volunteer court report. Each time you meet with or speak to someone regarding a case or review records pertinent to a case, you will need to document what you learned. Your notes should include what was said and what you observed.

Working in the same small groups you were in for the Amarillo case study activity, have one member of your group read aloud the interview with Maria's case worker. Then, working individually, summarize the interview into a paragraph for your case notes.

The facilitator will ask for volunteers to share their summaries in the large group.

Educational Advocacy

Activity 4.17 Educational Needs Assessment

Education Challenges for Children

Chaos in a child's life often results in the neglect of educational concerns. Children in care may change schools frequently, and are not given the chance to engage in the school community.

Parents or caregivers may not be available to help with homework, attend school conferences or make referrals for evaluation when concerns arise.

Children entering foster care often have pre-existing school issues. Addressing these issues can allow a more positive experience for a child who hasn't known the rewards of success in school.

Activity 4.17 Educational Needs Assessment

Step 1: Fill out the form below as if you were the CASA/GAL volunteer for Maria.

Step 2: Discuss the following questions in the large group.

- How might a tool like this be helpful in a case with an older youth?
- How might it be helpful in a case with a younger or even preschool-aged child?

Educational Advocacy Quick Assessment Form	
School Name	
Grade	
Special Needs/IEP Requirements	
Evidence of Behavioral Problems/ Excessive Absence	
Grade Point Average	
Seeing School Social Worker?	
Extracurricular Activities	
Need for Tutoring?	
Other Pertinent Info.	

Activity 4.18 Advocating for Older Youth

Consider what the outcome for Maria would be if she remained in foster care until emancipation and did not receive help navigating through the systems indicated below. In the space provided, list what issues Maria might face in the various systems an older youth encounters:

Education

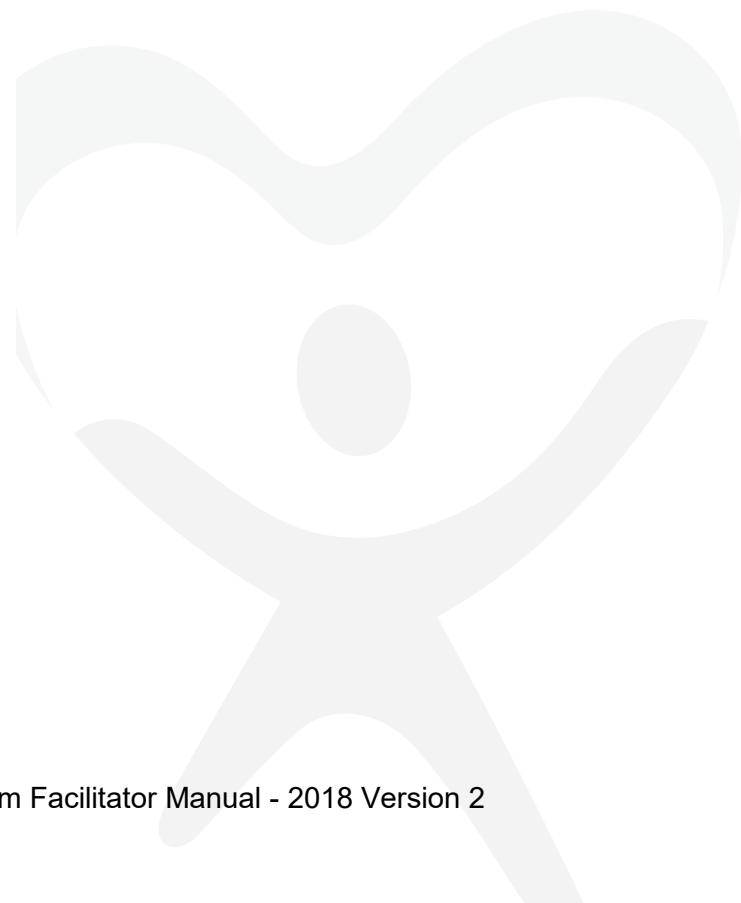
Living Situation

Mental Health

Employment

Finance

Share what you wrote in the large group.



Activity 4.19 Transferring Skills from the Case Studies

Each of the case studies focused on specific families, age ranges and circumstances; however, the skills and knowledge you applied to these cases will be transferable to other situations. In small groups, use the chart below to briefly describe how the skills you used while working on these cases will be transferable to other circumstances such as working on a case that may involve multiple siblings, serious mental health needs on the part of the child, attending to physical health needs of a child with HIV or fetal alcohol syndrome, etc.

	Greene	Lavender	Amarillo	Bleux
Child Welfare Laws				
Cultural Competence				
Communication Skills				
Working with Children & Families				

