

MODULE 6 - VIGNETTE

Mother's Name: **Lora** (32) Father's Name: **Michael** (37)
Children's Names, Gender and Age: **Freddie**, M-5; **Rita**, F-8; **James**, M-10
Child/Family Ethnicity: Caucasian

Family Description: Freddie is a smallish 5 year old, currently placed in a state child psychiatric facility for assessment and service planning. In spite of his age, he has already experienced several psychiatric hospitalizations, placement in several residential facilities, and foster care. Freddie is an extremely active child, responding poorly to environmental controls and aggressively acting out against anyone and everyone in his environment. His family background is chaotic, with both parents, now divorced, accusing each other of abusing him. He did succeed in one specialized foster placement for almost 18 months. Two siblings, Rita (8) and James (10) have required multiple foster placements since removal from Lora's home, and both are described as difficult children.

Presenting Issues: Freddie and two siblings were removed from Lora's home after abuse allegations, Freddie having burns on his legs no one could explain. He was placed with an experienced specialized foster care mother, Winnie, who managed him well for 18 months with a variety of in-home services to support the placement. Michael, his father, then successfully petitioned the court to have custody of Freddie returned to him, although he has not expressed interest in having custody of the two older children. Following placement with his father 5 months ago, Freddie has been hospitalized three times for a total of 3½ months. Michael has participated actively in all service planning over the past year, he and his girlfriend, Joy (primary caretaker when Freddie is in their home), have successfully completed parenting skills class, and Michael has participated in personal counseling through the mental health center, at the request of child welfare. He reportedly attempted suicide two years ago (Lora reported that he slashed his wrists in front of their children, but he denied involving them in any way), but his counselor has indicated that he has participated actively and successfully and is no longer in need of treatment.

Lora has been diagnosed with a borderline personality disorder, while Michael was diagnosed with depression following his suicide attempt two years ago. Lora has been enrolled in several treatment programs through the mental health center but does not consistently participate. Most recently, she has refused to give consent for the mental health center to send mandatory reports to child welfare. Michael appears to have made excellent progress in treatment, although no one is sure why he only sought custody of his youngest child. Freddie's behavior has been described as so wild that no one besides his father can identify any strengths or positive skills; it is clear that some type of bond exists between father and son.

Treatment/Service/Support History: Freddie has experienced multiple placements in treatment facilities, multiple psychotropic medications, including many medication changes, and a chaotic home life in his few years. His most stable living arrangement was with a specialized foster mother who also received substantial in-home supports, but that placement ended when his father was awarded custody of him. Physical abuse has been confirmed, sexual abuse has been ruled out, and he has never received a definitive diagnosis. Lora has received sporadic services through the mental health center, but generally appears uninterested in caring for her children. Michael has participated actively in all services, including personal treatment, and describes a very strong desire to care successfully for Freddie.