
Social Work Interview with Emilia Sanchez

Initial Social Work Interview with Emilia Sanchez

SOCIAL WORKER: Hi! How are you today?

EMILIA: Fine.

SOCIAL WORKER: Good, good. Thanks for coming in today. What we're going to do is I'm going to ask you some nosy questions, and whatever you're not comfortable with answering, just let me know and we can move on. But before we get started, I just wanted to let you know that there are a couple of rules of confidentiality. The first one is that if you are a danger to yourself or to anybody else and if there's any—if you report to me any child abuse, I will have to do something about that. So I just want to let you know those things upfront so you can decide how you want to proceed with your answers. Okay?

EMILIA: Okay.

SOCIAL WORKER: Do you feel comfortable?

EMILIA: Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Great. Why don't we start with telling me why you're here today?

EMILIA: Well, my parents want to adopt my son who's been staying with them and I don't want that to happen.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. How long has your son been staying with your parents?

EMILIA: Since he was born.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. And how—?

EMILIA: And he was in foster care.

SOCIAL WORKER: And how old is he?

EMILIA: He's four.

SOCIAL WORKER: He's four. Okay. So, your parents have had custody of him pretty much from the beginning?

EMILIA: Yeah.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. How did they come to have custody of your son?

EMILIA: When he was born, he was tested positive for drugs and so they took him away.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. When you say they took him away, was that DFS that took him or your parents?

EMILIA: DFS.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. And so that's why you're here is to look at how you can get your son back?

EMILIA: Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Great. Tell me about your relationship with your parents right now?

EMILIA: They are not very happy with me.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay.

EMILIA: They are angry because I got an abortion a few years ago and they don't believe in that.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. That sounds like that was a really difficult situation that you were in.

EMILIA: Yeah.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Do you feel comfortable talking about the circumstances that led up to you making the decision to have the abortion?

EMILIA: Sure.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Tell me what was happening with you and your parents at that time.

EMILIA: Well, I was pregnant and they wanted me to keep the child because they don't believe in abortions and I refused to do that.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. What was your support like outside of your parents during that period?

EMILIA: Well, I mean, I have friends that I'm staying with right now.

SOCIAL WORKER: Were they supportive of you keeping the baby or were they wanting you to have an abortion, too?

EMILIA: They told me it was my decision.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. And how did you feel having that type of support?

EMILIA: I thought it was good because they're letting me do what I think is best for me...

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay.

EMILIA: ...and not trying to influence me.

SOCIAL WORKER: So it sounds like even though your parents weren't very supportive of you having an abortion that you were able to find other people in your life who accepted you and made you feel like what you were doing was what was best for you.

EMILIA: Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER: Good, okay. You had mentioned earlier that your son had been removed from your custody due to substance use on your part. Tell me about your substance abuse history.

EMILIA: Well, I started in high school and I got addicted, and so I've been trying to stop.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay, good. How have you tried to stop?

EMILIA: Well, right after Joey was born, they put me in rehab but I wasn't able to finish, and so now I've just been trying to stay sober.

SOCIAL WORKER: On your own?

EMILIA: Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. What are some of the skills that you learned when you were in rehab that you've been able to use to stay sober?

EMILIA: Things like going to meetings, trying to spend time with the people who aren't using.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. You mentioned that you learned that you need to change your social situation. Are these the same folks that you kind of depend on to support you when your family is not around?

EMILIA: The people I'm staying with right now don't use drugs.

SOCIAL WORKER: That's great. That's really a helpful tool that you—make sure you keep yourself in a safe environment. The people that you're living with now, it sounds like they're supportive of you as a person and I'm wondering how supportive they are of you with getting your son back.

EMILIA: Then they told me that I probably won't be able to live with them with my son.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay.

EMILIA: So they said if I'm going to be living with him, I'm going to have to find somewhere else to stay.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. How do you feel about that?

EMILIA: I think it's a good thing because if I'm going to get him back, I'm going to need to get my life together and hopefully have my own place I anyways.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. So it sounds like what you're saying is that even if these folks have been really supportive of you and your sobriety, they know their limits and that they can't have you and a baby living in their home. Okay. So that could be kind of scary.

EMILIA: Uh-huh.

SOCIAL WORKER: To have to go out on your own with you and your son without the support that you've been counting on. Who else do you find to be supportive of you in your life?

EMILIA: Some of my siblings support me. Some of them are on my parents' side but there are a couple who still talk to me.

SOCIAL WORKER: Oh, good. Okay. Okay. Let's talk a little bit more about what was happening in your early high school years when it sounded like things were starting to get out of control with starting to use drugs and having problems in school. Tell me about your relationship with your parents back then.

EMILIA: Well, right, I had always been like the nice quiet one and I got tired of being that person, so I started changing and my parents didn't really know what was happening so it was kind of hard for them, I guess.

SOCIAL WORKER: And how did they respond when you started maybe hanging out with different people or doing things that they weren't used to you doing?

EMILIA: Well, they didn't really notice at first because they were—they have all the other stuff like to take care of and I never had done any trouble before. And then after they noticed, they tried to punish me, things like that, so that I ran away from home.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Let me just make sure that I'm understanding what you're saying is that up until early high school, you'd been a really good kid in your parents' eye, didn't cause any trouble, did everything that you were supposed to do. And then something happened during that period and you started to rebel. And at first they didn't really notice and then they didn't know what to do with you, and so they tried to punish you, and instead of kind of working things out, you decided that it was better just to get away. Is that correct?

EMILIA: Yeah.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Okay. It sounds like that was a really difficulty period for your whole family.

EMILIA: Uh-huh.

SOCIAL WORKER: Would you say that you feel like maybe you got lost in the mix there with all the kids at home?

EMILIA: Yeah. I mean, nobody ever really paid that much attention to me, so.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. But it sounds like once you started using drugs and alcohol and hanging out with the different group of people, they really started to pay attention to you.

EMILIA: Yeah.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Yeah. So tell me more about what led up to you having Joey?

EMILIA: Well, I mean, his father and I were never—I didn't even know him. And then he got me pregnant and then I had Joey.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. How did your parents respond when you told them that you were pregnant?

EMILIA: Oh, they were disappointed in me but they knew they wanted me to keep the baby, so they were pretty supportive.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. So it sounds like they were supportive of you until you actually had the baby and then they took him from you.

EMILIA: Well, he—I mean, the government took him and my parents decided that it would be better for him to stay with them than just another foster family.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. So they stepped in to help out?

EMILIA: Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. But they've been reluctant to return him to you?

EMILIA: Yes.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. And so that's what being here today is about is figuring out ways to get him back. Is that correct?

EMILIA: Yeah.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay, good. So what are some things that you feel like you want to accomplish in order to get Joey back?

EMILIA: Well, I don't want my parents to adopt him because I feel like once they do that, I'll never be able to get him back.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Why do you want your son back?

EMILIA: Because he's my son and I want to be able to support him.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay.

EMILIA: And I don't want him to feel like I've abandoned him.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. So it sounds like being a parent and being responsible is really important to you. The next part of the assessment is that I need to do what's called a Risk Assessment and basically what that means is I just need to make sure that you are safe and that your environment is safe at this point, okay? Do you have any questions about that?

EMILIA: No.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. So I'm going to ask you just some real direct questions. The first thing is in the past 24 hours have you had any thoughts of wanting to hurt yourself or anybody else?

EMILIA: No.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Is there any danger of you returning home at this point?

EMILIA: Danger?

SOCIAL WORKER: Is there anything going on at home that might be a safety issue for you at this point?

EMILIA: Oh. No.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Have you ever been accused of or perpetrated any type of child abuse?

EMILIA: No.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay. Thank you. Have you been hospitalized in the past year for any type of psychiatric issues?

EMILIA: No.

SOCIAL WORKER: Okay, good. Finally, let's just kind of look at where we're going to go from here, and you had said before that you want to get your son back and I think at this point we just kind of need to figure out what our plan is going to be. So tell me a little bit about what you think you need to do in order to get Joey back.

EMILIA: I think I need to get sober and get a job, maybe go back to school. So can you help me with that?

[END SCENE]