

Vignette thirteen

When I picked her up she'd just come out of prison, she has three children, she moved back just down the road from her mother. I picked her up earlier on this year and the father of her children had just died and he was in a mental institution when he passed away and she met him when she was in the institution as well. After the father passed away, her son started converting cars – he's actually in prison now. The middle daughter has come to the attention of the police, so the police are at the grandmother's place quite a lot, and the younger daughter was in the newspaper. The family has a history of drug and alcohol abuse and gambling. So she's in an environment that is absolutely detrimental to her recovery. Having said all that, the support we've given her has kept her stable. Just the fact that we are there, the family dynamics are unbelievable, the drinking alone is ... there are smashed windows after a weekend of drinking, after a drinking binge there's no food in the house, it's not really our job to make people ... like we're having to come in and pay for costs for smashed windows because they'd been fighting. We've had to pay for food because the family are coming in and eating all her food and she doesn't know how to say "I don't have any food for you, can you please come in here and bring your own". I've been working with her for about six months and my team leader (and this is the beauty of having such a good team - my team leader has kept me on track because its so easy to dive in and pay for the food and pay for the power that hasn't been paid because she's gone out binge drinking and pay for the repairs because the family's come in and had a big fight and smashed the glass and door – with all the other dynamics, you could quite easily get into that, not teaching them how, but giving). My team leader's seen that pattern and sat me down and had a talk to me and supervision and said we really have to start moving her along, looking at budgeting and things like that to try and help her. So, that's forced me to come up with a few plans, so we might be looking to move her out of her area, away from her family and perhaps closer to where we are. We are possibly also looking at Family Support for the youngest daughter – she's 12 – I had a talk to my team leader and she said the other two children - the boy in prison and the other girl – are too old for us to do anything effective for, so we'll try and help the 12 year old. Her partner at the moment is in prison –she has said to the probation people, her name is the name that when he comes out, he'll be staying with her. Something we will look at – how that will work. So that's a huge complex case. Really the thing with this one is that you can't get bogged down with every little ... it would be so easy... And even if your list is getting bigger I realize you don't panic, you just add it to the bottom and keep going through it.