



CASA of Southeast Missouri, Inc.

Newsletter for May 2009

May Monthly Meeting

The May monthly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 28th 6:30pm. We will have a presenter from SADI (SEMO Alliance for Disability Independence), Wayne Elfrink with us this evening. He will be speaking on the services that SADI provides and disability etiquette. His presentation is about 45 minutes therefore we expect this to be an hour-long meeting. Please make every effort to attend especially if you are falling behind in your in-service hours. Thank so much!

Summer Fun is upon us!

We compiled several pieces of information for you at the last meeting and mailed out to those of you not in attendance. We hope those resources help you to provide activity for your CASA child or children during the long summer months. We may still hear from other places and of course, that information will be sent on to you. If you have an activity you would like to share with us please send it in and we will make sure everyone sees it. Here are a few websites to view for possible summer fun!

Cape County Park Conservation Center – ongoing activities see website <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/cape/>

Day Springs Camp – This camp fee is \$25 (YES THAT IS ALL!!) although it requires getting a ride to and from camp. It is a weeklong camp in Ironton and is Christian based. Check it out. If getting a ride is difficult, we can probably get something organized. This looks like a wonderful opportunity for many kids to benefit from. We have a contact that may be able to provide you specific information if you would like to contact her. Visit the website. <http://www.dayspringbiblecamp.org/index.htm>

Reminder

Paperwork should be turned in monthly regardless of whether or not you have an active case. The Monthly Activity Sheet reflects **all** CASA related activity. Don't forget to include in-service hours and phone calls, even those calls to the CASA office. Record any and all time you have spent on your case including going to and from your visits.

CASA Training coming soon!

Training will begin in June – if there is anyone you know that is interested please send them our way!

Welcome to:

Sheryl Dunavan, Andrew Green, Elizabeth (Boots) Jessup and Kathern McCraven-Thurman. Our four new CASA volunteers! Look for the new faces at upcoming meetings!

Many Thanks go to:

- **BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse) and the National Guard** for making our first ever Children's Fair (April 4th) a successful event!
- **Jackson Middle School "Making the Best Better" 4-H Club** for donations to our resource room!

Feel free to contact our office:

Revonda Kirby, Director
Pam Jenkins, Case Supervisor
573-335-1726 office
573-335-8407 FAX

937 Broadway, Suite 201
P.O. Box 1131
Cape Girardeau, MO
63702

A Message from the CASA Director – Revonda Kirby

Why are communication skills important?

- Effective communication skills are essential to the work of a CASA. You must be able to:
 - Conduct effective interviews
 - Document case contacts accurately
 - Prepare written reports that are clear and concise
 - Discuss case information and concerns with others as appropriate

Four Common Problems In Interviewing

- Freezing
- Talking too much (especially about yourself and your personal issues)
- Not noticing
- Imagining things

How to avoid some of these problems!

1. Every interview should have a clear and defined purpose. (You should discuss this ahead of time with Pam – Supervisor to make sure you are on target.)
2. The person you are talking to is the primary source of information. Listen, much, much more than you talk and you will gain information in abundance.
3. Thoughts and feelings of troubled people are often different from what they say. (Look for conflicting body language and at the very least, realize that their words may NOT convey the full extent of their emotions.)
4. You have the primary responsibility for directing the interview –to keep it moving and make it productive. However, do not feel that you have to follow a script.
5. You set the tone, the climate and the attitude in which the interview is conducted.
6. Questions should always have a purpose and relate to the needs of the child.
7. Confidentiality must be respected.
8. Mutual trust, respect and acceptance are at the heart of a successful interview – to show respect one must feel respected.

Building Rapport

“Rapport is the foundation for the helping relationship and, consequently for the helping process.”

- To establish rapport, these conditions must exist—
 - Empathy
 - Warmth and respect
 - Genuineness
 - Concreteness
- **Communicating empathy** involves trying to reflect back to the person that you perceive how he/she is feeling about his/her situation.
- **Communication of warmth** involves communicating concern, respect and hope for the person.
- **Communication of genuineness** involves you trying to be constructive, remaining honest, yet always trying to meet the other person’s needs. (as much as we actually can)
- **Communication of Concreteness** involves staying with specifics and not being bogged down in vague generalities.

Tips for Active Listening

- Try to figure out what the other person is “getting at”.
- Do not form conclusions or begin to construct your reply until you **have first understood the other person’s position.**
- Listen between the lines. Try to pick up on the content and how the person feels about his position.
- **Pause and consider what you just heard before replying.**
- Assume you probably DON’T understand completely and ask for feedback on what you think you heard.
REFLECT!

Reflection

- Restating in your own words, what you understand the other person to have just said –in both content and feeling.
- Do not judge!
- Do not question!
- Do not argue!
- Do not evaluate!
- Simply repeat what you understand and encourage the person to continue talking.

Guidelines for Effective Interviews

- Begin with broad general questions and move to more specific.
 - Tell me how you think the family came to the attention of the court system.
 - What about James’ injuries? (more specific question)
- Avoid leading questions and emotional remarks.
 - Watch your tone of voice
 - Watch your wording
 - Don’t let your moral views and bias slip into the conversation
 - These things can hamper building rapport.
 - Examples: Surely, you agree with that.
 - Aren’t you afraid to be here at night!
- Use **closed** questions to “zero-in” on a topic.
 - *A closed question can be answered with either a single word or a short phrase.*
 - Thus 'How old are you?' and 'Where do you live?' are closed questions.
- Use reinforcement to encourage the respondent to continue talking.
 - Examples: “I see.” “Uhha”.
 - Repetition of one or two of the respondent’s words, head nodding, leaning forward.
 - (Be careful of nodding head affirmatively, though. You don’t want them to think that you are saying that you agree with them on everything.)
- Use silence to encourage interviewee to talk.
- Use transitional phrases to purposefully guide the interview.
 - For example: “You mentioned that...”
 - “Let’s talk about that a little more.”

Interview Stages

- Greeting
 - Identify yourself and clarify or confirm the role of the CASA
 - Create a pleasant, relaxed environment. (ICEBREAKER) –You have a lovely house. Nice weather. So on.

Opening

- Provides the interviewee with a clear understanding of what to expect.
 - Explain the reason for the interview.
 - Tell the interviewee how much time the interview will take.
 - Give the interviewee some idea of what information you already have.
 - Example: “I have reviewed the records at CD and the Juvenile Court.”
 - Summarize what you hope to learn during the interview.

Body

Dialogue and Questioning

- Ask the interviewee to discuss what he/she feels is important to be covered.
- Begin with broad, general questions and move to questions that are more specific.
- Avoid leading questions and bombarding.
- Used closed questions to zero-in on a topic.

Closing

- When closing, tell the interviewee when he/she may expect to hear from your again.
- Refer back to the matter discussed with a concluding statement.
- Recap plans or decisions made.
 - For example: “As you see it, what are the things you are going to look into before our next meeting?”

Maintain confidentiality!! Do not discuss details of the case with anyone (relatives, friends, etc.) Remember that you do not have to talk about and really should not talk about your personal life. Do not feel obligated to tell anyone what your personal schedule is or why you can't meet with them at a certain time, etc. Be cordial, but you are the one in charge of the interview!



CASA FUNDRAISERS –

CASA RUN is scheduled for June 27, 2009 Please let us know if you can volunteer for this activity!! The run will be on Cape La Croix Trail this year beginning at the Osage Center. More information will be available at our May meeting.

CASA BBQ –

This year our BBQ Fundraiser will be on **October 23, 2009**. The location has changed too and we are very excited about it! We will be at “**The Venue**”, a new place that is centrally located in Cape and new to the area! When more information is available, we will pass it along.

Words of Inspiration...

A wise person once said, “***There is a time in your life when you will realize who matters, who never did, and who always will.***” May we take account of what and who really matters in our lives. It is at that time we find ourselves living, as we should.

Newsletter information – If you have any items or topics you would like to see covered in the newsletter please send them in to the CASA Office to Lori Schutte. As always - thank you all very much for the work you do with our CASA children!!