

CASE STUDY

Lisa Camper is a fairly new hire at the Icuza Juvenile Probation Office. She is 27 years old and a single mom. Her duties at the probation office are to work with male and female youth who have been abused or neglected. She works closely with the parents of the youth to reunite them with their children and with the Division of Family and Youth Services to ensure that the children are well cared for while under the court's supervision.

Camper has done well in the 14 months she has been employed by the department. She gets along with other probation officers and with the detention and family services workers. Her work has been exemplary in court, and it appears that she has helped several children return home to safer environments.

Camper has stated in conversations that she is interested in adopting another child. She doesn't want to remarry but would like a sibling for her current child.

Today, Camper came into your office. She informed you that there was an impending case scheduled for termination of parental rights. She stated that she has been talking to child protective services about fostering and then, potentially, adopting the child in the case. She said that she feels a real connection to the child and wants to provide him a permanent

home. She went on to say that she isn't pursuing a termination of parental rights for this reason but truly believes she would be a better parent to the child than his biological parents.

Once Camper was finished, you asked her for the case file and decided to further investigate the information. Upon review of the case in question, you found that Camper has not followed all policies leading to termination of parent rights. The child was having supervised visitation with the biological parents three times a week until five months ago. Camper recommended that the visitation be reduced to once a week. Additionally, the biological mother was attending drug rehabilitation but had missed a few appointments. Rather than meet with the mother and CPS worker, Camper held a hearing with the judge to report the missed appointments and to recommend reduced contact with the child. You also noticed a letter to the CPS worker from Camper seven months ago that discussed termination of parental rights. By law, a termination of parental rights cannot be recommended until after the 13th month of continued custody. It appears to you that Camper has been attempting to sabotage the reunification of the child with the biological parents.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In your opinion, has Camper's behavior jeopardized her case or the reputation of the Icuza Juvenile Probation Office? Why or why not?
2. Have Camper's actions been ethical? Defend your answer.
3. If you believe that Camper was unethical, identify the point at which she crossed the line. How might this type of behavior impact the delivery of services to both the current client and his mother, as well as to Camper's other clients?
4. What should the manager do in this situation?
5. What steps should be taken to ensure this does not happen in the future?
6. Why are ethics so important in criminal justice? How should managers ensure that employees understand and exhibit ethical behaviors?

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