



## **Strategies for Supporting CSEC and Dual Jurisdiction Youth: Using CASAs**

Beyond the Bench  
December 18, 2019

JJ Case Example and Hypothetical

**Shawna, Age: 15**

**Petition:**

**P.C. section 594:** Destroyed personal property of another;

**P.C. section 368:** Elder abuse-not likely to lead to great bodily harm or death.

Shawna came home intoxicated and was hospitalized for alcohol poisoning. After her release from the hospital, as a consequence for her actions, Shawna’s grandfather took away her cell phone.

She became enraged and attacked him with her fists, causing serious bruising. She then threw a remote at the TV, destroying a \$1500 set. The grandparents called the police—not the first time—declaring that their home had become a “war zone” and that they couldn’t control Shawna. The District Attorney filed a 602 Petition with the charges listed above.

Shawna has no prior Juvenile Court history.

## **Current:**

Shawna spent about 30 days in a girls' residential treatment facility. While in custody, she was seen by a psychiatrist, and medication was prescribed to deal with her depression and anger. She returned home to her grandparents about a month ago.

Staff described Shawna as a model for the other girls during her placement. She was compliant, attended school on site, demonstrating a willingness to learn and good intelligence. When talking about her history and her grandparents, she became weepy and said how hopeless and dumb she feels.

While in custody, she revealed to staff that she has a boyfriend "who is a little older" and asked if he could visit her at her placement. Staff noted a late model Escalade parked outside the facility on one occasion when the girls were leaving with staff for an outing in the community.

Shawna was released from custody on the condition that she remain in compliance with probation conditions that include enrollment in a day treatment program/school and home supervision. She is allowed out of the home only to attend the treatment program and other services and for outings with her CASA.

She is to have no access to electronic devices, except a computer to do homework, under the grandparents' supervision.

According to the grandparents, Shawna has attended school and been in a relatively stable mood. She says that she wants to get back to her old school, talks of plans to go to college and become a social worker or a lawyer—or, maybe, a veterinarian.

The grandparents love Shawna and but are quick to say that the last years have been very difficult. On the one hand, they say they want to do all they can for her and want her placed with them; on the other hand, they are realistic and uncertain that Shawna will be able to "stay on the straight and narrow," according to the grandfather.

## **History:**

At age 3, Shawna was placed with and then adopted by her grandparents after removal from her mother by CPS. Shawna's biological mother was unable to reunify with Shawna, failing to participate in substance abuse and domestic violence services.

For the first years of her life, Shawna was exposed to the mother's erratic behavior because of alcohol and substance addictions and continual domestic violence between the mother and a series of boyfriends who also were emotionally and physically abusive to Shawna.

Shawna was a good student in middle school. She was a soccer player, loved music and presented no serious problems at home, although the grandparents indicated that she'd been in individual therapy since age 12 or 13, off and on, because of depression and "anger issues." After beginning high school about two years ago, she seemed to change, according to the grandparents. She ran away twice during the year before the 602 Petition. She had dramatic mood swings—"normal, old Shawna" for a brief period and then hostile, defiant and depressed.

Shawna reportedly was raped at age 14, at the end of her freshman year in high school, by a 19-year-old brother of a friend. The grandparents did not know of this until very recently. After the rape, her behavior deteriorated even more—she began skipping school and became hostile when challenged or questioned.

The grandparents recently expressed concern, as, prior to the recent events, Shawna seemed to have had more money than they give her. She told the grandparents that her mother gives her cash occasionally and that a friend gave her money for helping with her baby.

Shawna admits to frequent past alcohol use with friends and to trying various drugs. She has been vague and relatively uncommunicative about the extent of her use of other substances.

## **Hypothetical:**

The CASA has been meeting regularly with Shawna for a number of weeks. At an after-school meeting recently, Shawna kept yawning, and the CASA commented that she seemed tired. Shawna revealed that she had snuck out of her grandparents' home the previous night, returning about 3 A.M. The grandparents are unaware. She says that her friend's baby was sick and that she was helping her.

Role play Shawna and the CASA to present a picture of how this meeting might be handled.