

# Session 5: Wrapping Up—The Redd Case

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Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED  
SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION**

American Legion  
Child Welfare Foundation



## **Session Overview**

During this session, you will participate in an online case study that will closely mirror your experience as a future CASA/GAL volunteer and will test what you learned during this training. You will also learn more about your CASA/GAL program's policies and procedures and hear from a current volunteer.

## **Objectives**

By the end of this session, you will be able to...

- Explain what went right and what went wrong in the Redd case
- Understand how to complete a court report
- Identify any of your expectations that were not met in training and address—or make a plan to address—any remaining expectations
- Explain local CASA/GAL program office procedures for case assignment, obtaining records, submitting court reports and documenting hours and expenses
- Describe the types of support and resources that will be available to you as a CASA/GAL volunteer

## Online Learning

### Learning with Case Studies

#### Activity 5.1: The Redd Case

You will now have the chance to use all of the information, skills and knowledge you have gained throughout the volunteer training program to complete an online case study. By the end of this activity, you will have:

- Developed a genogram for the family members involved in this case
- Taken case notes based on the information gathered from various interviews you conducted
- Developed a set of recommendations that you believe are in the child's best interest based on your investigation of the factors involved in this case
- Begun preparing a court report for the case

**Part 1:** Click on the link to Part 1 of Activity 5.1 to begin the Redd case. The facilitator will provide login information to access the case study activity. The case will take you approximately two hours to complete.

**Part 2:** Using the local court report template your facilitator provides, prepare a CASA/GAL court report for the Redd case. The facilitator will tell you which sections of the report to focus on, how much time to spend on the report and when it is due.

## **Looking Ahead**

### **Activity 5.2: What Do You Want to Know?**

During the in-person portion of Session 5, you will have an opportunity to meet a current CASA/GAL volunteer. Using the online discussion forum, post a question or two you'd like the guest speaker to answer as he or she speaks about the experience of being a volunteer advocate.

## In-Person Training

### Learning with Case Studies

#### Activity 5.3: Redd Case Debrief

The Redd case serves as the culminating opportunity for you to independently apply what you've learned throughout the course of this training.

**Part 1:** Having completed the interactive online case study, come together in small groups to talk about your experience. The following questions are designed to assist your small group in structuring conversations around your experiences on the Redd case:

- What were two or three of the top issues that needed to be addressed in the Redd case?
- What were some of the major challenges you faced as you made your way through this case on your own?
- What are some additional questions you might have posed to some of the key players you met? How would these questions have helped your investigation of this case?
- What recommendations did you make for this case? Did anyone in your group have recommendations that you didn't make? Why do you think different people looking at the same case might make different recommendations?
- Did anything surprise you about this case?
- If you were to go through this case again, what (if anything) might you do differently?

**Part 2:** In the large group, continue to discuss these questions and address how you applied the skills and knowledge you learned throughout training to the Redd case. Then listen as the facilitator shares information pertinent to working cases in your local area.

**Part 3:** The facilitator will return your court report for the Redd case with feedback. Take a few moments to review these comments. Then, in the large group, discuss the following questions about court report writing:

- Why is it important to ask the right questions?
- What are some of the key elements of a court report?
- Why is it important to use fact-based statements in a court report?
- What is the difference between concerns/issues and recommendations?
- How do recommendations need to tie back into the body of the report?

## Review and Next Steps

### Activity 5.4: General Review

**Part 1:** On the Post-it notes provided, write one question you have about each of the following topics: the CASA/GAL volunteer role, child welfare laws, cultural competence, working with children and families, communication skills and administrative policies and procedures. Once you've written your questions, post them on the corresponding flipcharts.

**Part 2:** Walk around the room, visiting each flipchart. If there are questions that you know the answers to based on your experience or based on this training, jot the answer down on a Post-it and stick it next to the corresponding question on the flipchart. Continue to walk around the room to see if the question you posted has an answer to it; see what other questions and answers your fellow training participants posted. Then, in the large group, discuss any unanswered questions.

### Activity 5.5: Expectations Review

Review the Expectations chart that you created during the first session. The facilitator will cross out each expectation that the class believes was met during the course of this training program. The facilitator will address—or make a plan to address—any remaining expectations.

## **Activity 5.6: Guest Speaker—Current Volunteer**

Listen as a current CASA/GAL volunteer describes his/her experiences:

- Receiving a court order or assignment
- Meeting a child
- Assessing a child's needs
- Building a relationship with CPS caseworkers
- Building a relationship with attorneys
- Following a case as it progresses
- Making recommendations in court (or, generally, how to act/speak up in court)
- How to persevere when times get tough
- How to organize materials
- How not to get too emotionally attached

## **Activity 5.7: Finding Support**

Listen as the facilitator describes the various sources of support you can expect.

### **Support for CASA/GAL Volunteers**

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you need support in the work you do. Your work touches many disciplines—child abuse and neglect, criminal justice, child growth and development, family systems, social services and child welfare law. Few people are experts in all these fields. As CASA/GAL volunteers, you come from all walks of life and have various work and educational backgrounds. You are effective advocates because you work energetically and creatively to improve the lives of abused and neglected children. You need support and encouragement as you make recommendations to the court about what is in the best interests of the children for whom you advocate.

#### *Program Staff Support*

A strong relationship with program staff is vital; they will assign cases, monitor case progress, review reports and records and help solve problems. They can offer resources, answer questions and support you in your work.

### *In-Service Training*

In-service training allows you to take advantage of opportunities for additional learning about the many facets of CASA/GAL volunteer work that are introduced in this core training curriculum. National CASA standards require 12 hours per year of in-service training. Local program staff will outline the resources available for in-service training.

### *Peer Relationships*

Within program guidelines, working with other CASA/GAL volunteers is an effective way to strategize, problem-solve and get moral support in this work.

### *Self-Care/Personal Support Networks*

Because of the time demands, stress and frustrations that can be part of CASA/GAL volunteer work, it is important to have social and emotional support and to take care of yourself so you don't burn out.

Following is a list of additional resources you can use to continue your education:

- Local, state and national website/newsletter/e-news
- Local resource list
- National CASA website
  - Advocacy library
  - CASA Connection
  - E-learning opportunities
  - Podcasts
- National CASA Facebook page
- Annual National CASA conference

### **Activity 5.8: Next Steps**

Listen as the facilitator and local program staff explain additional logistical information regarding your program and what to expect as you begin your service as a CASA/GAL volunteer. You'll also find out when and how you'll be sworn in as CASA/GAL volunteers!

## **Wrap Up**

Take a few moments to complete the Session 5 Training Evaluation and the Post-Training Assessment.

Congratulations! And thanks for participating in this training!