

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **SUPPORTING AND UNDERSTANDING THE MENTALLY ILL PARENT**

#### Course Description

Child welfare workers are in a unique position to identify and help families stabilize and access resources. This class explores the best way to work with families in which a parent is mentally ill. In order to do this, this course identifies several skills that are necessary. First, welfare workers must have some knowledge and experience of different DSM IV diagnoses. Second, workers need practice in rapport building and reflective listening as part of the assessment process. Third, workers need expertise in culturally sensitive interviewing skills that include a variant of a good mental status examination. Fourth, knowing how to respond in mental health crisis can be crucial to working with these families. Last, this class also explores what barriers there are to mentally ill parents getting the help they need. This course addresses these skills, allowing for practice in a multi-media format. A more detailed course description can be found in the syllabus.

#### Target Audience

This class is ideally suited for experienced child welfare workers. These cases can often be very challenging. Workers who have some idea of the complexity of these cases and have triaged these cases will be able to add new skills to their skill set. Workers will have the opportunity to problem solve as a group in order to share the wealth of knowledge amongst the members.

#### Outcome Objectives

1. Workers will be able to describe how the more severe diagnoses typically impact parenting.
2. Workers will be able to identify “red flags” for intervention.
3. Practice interviewing and reflective listening in a culturally sensitive manner.
4. Discuss emergency situations and think through safety plans.
5. Become familiar with special issues facing children of mentally ill parents.
6. Gain Knowledge about the resources often needed to stabilize the parent and family.

#### Ways that Supervisors can support the transfer of learning Before the training

Supervisors should think through any recent cases that fit this course. Discussing as a group what worked and did not work with these families would be helpful. Also outlining what if any blockades there were to implementing the plan will also allow workers to be primed for this class. Supervisors should have participants think through any of these case examples which they could share with our class as part of a group consultation.

### After the training

The supervisor should review with the participants the training manual and perhaps assign other suggested reading from the bibliography. In addition, a member of the team who attended the class could give an informal review of this course to those that did not attend. Case reviews should be scheduled periodically to go over these challenging cases.