

Case 1:

R, a 17 year old and his sister, V, a 16 year old approached the CWC on their own, asking for assistance. They reported that they had been out of school for the past two years because the mother said she was having financial problems; the mother had a male friend who visited frequently and there were parties nearly daily at home, wherein alcohol was consumed—R particularly feared for his sister's safety at these times. Their father who had separated from their mother some years back had returned to be economically supported by the mother; he had daily conflicts with the children, repeatedly throwing them out of the house. There was also the children's step-father (through mother's second marriage), whom the children said they loved as he was very good to them.

R and V were admitted to the boys' home and girls' home respectively. When the mother was called, she said that the children's reports were false and that theirs' was a happy home/ that she loved her children etc. She pleaded with CWC to release them, saying she had now made arrangements for regular school. The case worker whom CWC sent to the home was received by the mother...and the worker said there was nothing wrong with the home. The CWC then decided to release the children.

- Do you agree with the CWC's decision? Why/ why not?
- What are the risks that CWC took in taking the decision that they did?
- What might you have done in such a case?

Case 2:

M was a 17 year old girl who had been living in children's institution since age 8. She loved the institution and the caregivers, saying it had been her home and that she had every facility there; in fact, the institution was now supporting her college education in journalism.

Over the last 10 days, M is in the girls' home. Her mother, who had severely physically abused her/ discriminated against her for being a girl and put her in the institution had returned and wanted custody of her. M was crying and pleading to return to her institution, saying that she could not go back home to her mother, given her past experiences. The institution requested that the girl be released and sent back to them so she could continue her life/ education.

The CWC said that they must consider the mother's request as 'after all, she was the girl's mother...and how wrong could mothers be? All mothers love their children and do the best for them...' They insisted that M receive counselling and reconcile with her mother.

- Do you agree with the CWC's decision? Why/ why not?
- What are the risks that CWC took in taking the decision that they did?
- What might you have done in such a case?

Case 3:

A sexually abused adolescent girl comes to the girls home late at night. She is much disturbed, very restless, crying all the time and refuses to eat or sleep. The superintendent is very concerned and makes an emergency referral to a government child psychiatry facility.

The CWC, who were not in sitting on that day, were informed by phone and a note was made in the girl's file. When the CWC came into session, they blamed the superintendent for 'breaking the rules', saying that no child can be referred for help/ treatment without their permission and order; they said that they need to first see and talk to the child...and then they will make a decision about what is necessary for the child (including medical treatment). Following this, the superintendent makes no decisions regarding the children, as she is too afraid.

- Do you agree with the CWC's decision? Why/ why not?
- What are the risks that CWC took in taking the decision that they did?
- What might you have done in such a case?

Case 4:

It is brought to your notice by counsellors and doctors that the home for 0 to 6 year olds is not running satisfactorily. During their work in the home, they have observed the following:

- Children with disability are treated roughly; in fact, one child's shoulder got dislocated because of this.
 - Children with disability are offered less food so that they go to the toilet less frequently & don't need to be cleaned up.
 - That the children are physically abused by the staff, who justify this as 'discipline'.
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- As CWC, what might your actions be if such issues were brought to your notice?
 - How would you approach the issue and with whom/ how?

Case 5:

P is a 17 year old boy who has been rescued from child labour—he was working for a family who had deprived him of food and severely physically abused him daily. A counsellor/ psychiatrist from a psychiatric facility who assessed him said that he had severe post-traumatic stress disorder and prescribed medication—which the institution was responsible for giving him. A few days later, on a follow-up visit on the counsellor, it was found that the institution staff had not given the boy the prescribed medicine, saying that there was nothing wrong with him and that he should just go home. Conversations with the superintendent were of no use as her focus was to get an age determination test done. She believed that the boy was 18 years old and so she need not keep him in this institution. The issue is brought to CWC's notice.

- What do you think of the institution/ superintendent's decision?
- What actions would you take?

Case 6:

S was a 13 year old boy who was sexually abused by a caretaker in his institution. He reported this during the course of a hospital admission in a psychiatric facility (where he was being treated for anger-aggression problems). The hospital brought the matter to the notice of CWC. The CWC did all that was necessary for the child, assisting with police FIR registration/ magistrate's statement etc. They were very supportive of continued psychosocial support to the child and ensure that he was placed in another institution.

- Was there anything else that the CWC should have considered?
- What else should they have done and how?