

Maria, who was 14, came to our office having run away from her father who had been physically and emotionally abusive. She was very clear that she did not want to return to her father. She appeared very anxious about the idea of having to return home. She wanted to pursue guardianship with an ex-girlfriend of her father's, Marleen. After an attorney and a social worker from our office met this potential guardian they became very concerned. Marleen appeared to be extremely mentally unstable. She also made many comments that indicated that she was interested in reuniting with Maria's father and that she wanted the whole family to ultimately be together. When Marleen was in the office she often interrupted Maria and spoke for her about the problems with her father. Marleen also had had past reports made on her to Child Protective Services.

- 1) How can you interview your client in such a way to ensure you are getting their perspective, not that of an adult?
- 2) How can you counsel your client to help them achieve their goal even if their immediate request is not realistic?

Toby, 8, and Alan, 5, have been referred for representation in a foster care matter. The two boys were removed from their parents' care due to general neglect including medical neglect for Alan. Alan was born with orthopedic impairments to his limbs and he has been diagnosed with a pervasive developmental disorder, autism. Toby presents no special needs other than anxiety related to his separation from his parents. The siblings reside with their maternal grandparents in kinship foster care. At issue are visitation arrangements with the parents and long-term reunification.

- 1) What special considerations should be made when initially interviewing the minors?
- 2) How can the concepts of visitation and reunification be broached with the minors to elicit their respective perspectives on these matters.