

Derek: Hey Kate, how is it going today?

Kate: Hi Derek, so good to see you. How are you doing?

Derek: Well, I'm okay, but somebody that we're working with has been better. I appreciate you meeting with me on such short notice-

Kate: Sure. Of course.

Derek: As a supervisor I know your time is really ... Very well-structured and busy, but this is an emergency kind of crisis situation, so.

Kate: Yeah. I could tell by the voicemail that you left. Your voice sounded you really needed some time so I'm happy to talk with you, sure.

Derek: So it involves this person I've been working with, Michela, she ... I don't know. Have you ever met her?

Kate: Sounds familiar. I think so. I do remember our discussion and I think I can put a face with a name, yes.

Derek: Okay. So let me give you a brief update on what we've been doing with her. She came to us ... She was referred to us about five months ago by one of the local area hospitals. Social workers there that she was getting discharged, and they thought she could use some case management type of resource linkage services. She's living with her mom and that is one of the emerging situations, so initially she never followed up. I was trying to outreach her and she didn't respond and then her mom got involved and started calling me and I kind of forged a relationship with her mom and partnered with her and got Michela to start meeting with me.

And we did some really good stuff. We've made some good progress. We applied for social security benefits a while back, and sitting through that process as you know is trying.

Kate: Oh yes.

Derek: But it was good because we got to talk a lot and start to develop a relationship and I got to know her. And we applied for general assistance, welfare benefits, and she got those, so she has a little bit of income right now. And things started to get much better after that. She had this boyfriend that was kind of a bad influence and she recently broke it off with him and she told me she got some sobriety under her belt. She had seven or eight days at one point.

And that was a big improvement on things, how things had been. The ... She even actually had gotten into school. She told me in our last meeting, she enrolled in the county college here. It was a little surprising, a little quick to happen. Like it all came together rather quickly, but it just is ... There's an issue in the background that just

seems to be hanging over her head, that I've been trying to work with her on and that's the housing piece.

So the mom, and the reason the mom is so heavily involved, other than that she's been a pretty good support in Michela's life, is that she is living with Michela and cannot continue to do so. Her mom is ... They foreclosed on the house, so she's losing the house. The mom has found alternate living arrangements for herself but she's let Michela know numerous times, from a long time ago that she can't support her anymore and that's why she's been really pushing, helping us, or letting us help her.

So it's been going well except for that housing thing because every time I try and bring it up with her, she's dismissive and you know, she'll just kind of say I'll figure something out and kind of minimizes it, I think, a little bit.

Kate: Not able to, not ready to ... Oh boy.

Derek: Yeah.

Kate: This is a big issue.

Derek: It's a very stressful issue, I can tell. It would be on me too, if I didn't know where I was going to be. And now it's like sort of at the end of this month, which she has to figure something out.

Kate: Okay.

Derek: We met ... What was it. Today is Friday. I think we met on Tuesday this week to talk about a few things and that's where she told me she enrolled in school and I was really happy to hear although it sounded a little bit impulsive given some of the warning signs. She had missed a meeting with me and left this voicemail about having a new boyfriend that really didn't seem ... Well, I mean, she was telling me this because she wants to, apparently, sign a release for us to talk with him and I know she had just ditched the last boyfriend a week or two ago so to meet someone and have them be at that level that quickly was ... I guess I was happy for her but-

Kate: You were seeing some red flags there?

Derek: Yeah.

Kate: Okay.

Derek: For sure. So we met on Tuesday and we were talking about the school and that was fine. And then I brought up if she had made any ... Given any thought to decisions on housing. I had given her some options. And she kind of flipped on me and said, these are all crap. There's not great options.

Kate: Right, right.

Derek: I thought the supportive housing option may have been the best one for her given the needs and I think she's talked about wanting to live in her own apartment. But I don't know, maybe she's just a little nervous about that whole process.

Kate: Relationship with her mom. Yeah.

Derek: Yeah, the fact that she won't be living with her anymore. I don't know. She flipped out. I actually, when we were going back and forth, mentioned the phone call about the boyfriend and she apparently didn't remember she left that voicemail because she didn't ... She didn't know why I knew his name. And I said, "Well, you left me a voicemail". She said, "I didn't do that."

Kate: That was kind of another big red flag for you.

Derek: That was when she stormed off. She walked out of my office and just-

Kate: Really?

Derek: Yeah.

Kate: Just this past Tuesday now? This was just several days ago?

Derek: Yeah.

Kate: Okay.

Derek: So Wednesday and Thursday I've tried to reach her, outreach her, and I haven't gotten anywhere with her. She's not returning my calls. And then this morning, the call from the police department.

Kate: Okay.

Derek: So, it seems like ... Oh and then there's another tidbit. The boyfriend that-

Kate: The new boyfriend?

Derek: Yes. Was in the car. She was driving his car. She was drunk and he has a bunch of drugs on him.

Kate: Oh no.

Derek: So he is locked up too. Apparently in much more serious charges on him. Apparently, Michela did not have any drugs on her. So she's looking at some kind of driving while intoxicated charge, though, and ... So, wondering what you think I should do here as far as [crosstalk 00:06:58].

Kate: Oh wow. Boy. So you've really forged a great relationship with her it seems, although this past week it's been kind of testy, but sounds like you're ... The fact that she called you, she's really reaching out and trusting that relationship. Yeah.

Derek: Yeah. I guess so. The fact that she didn't want to ... She didn't give the police her mom's phone number is ... I guess a little surprising that she wanted to reach out to me of all people, given what happened on Tuesday.

Kate: Right, right. Yeah. Boy. So what are your thoughts? What are you thinking that the actions that you may take? What are the options here, you think?

Derek: Well, I have this relationship with the mom. We talk pretty regularly. It's been a few weeks. I actually left her a message earlier in the week when the warning signs kind of came out and she didn't reach out, but I know she's really busy with the move.

Kate: The move and everything, yeah.

Derek: So, I perhaps should maybe reach out to her. We have release to talk to her.

Kate: Okay, okay.

Derek: So I can update her. I don't know if I should do that though before going to see Michela. Maybe she doesn't want her mom to know for a reason.

Kate: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Keeping that in the back of your mind, but it seems like your gut's kind of telling you to make the connection with Michela first.

Derek: Yeah.

Kate: And kind of respond to her call and ... Yeah. Going down there. How can you imagine that Michela's sort of feeling or dealing at this point? What are you sort of expecting?

Derek: Well, she's probably ... She's probably hung over. So physically she's probably not feeling very well.

Kate: Yeah.

Derek: She probably hasn't had her medication. Emotionally she's probably going to be feeling pretty low. I don't know if she has any kind of criminal background off hand. She's got a number of hospitalizations so if that's the first time she's ever been in jail that could be pretty scary and potentially traumatizing for her.

Kate: Yes. Yes. I imagine seeing you, someone that knows her, for a good bit of time and can be there for her might be a good course of action to start anyway. Yeah, just knowing Michela as you do, what do you see as kind of her strengths in coping with this situation and moving forward?

Derek: Well, I have seen her be a good advocate for herself at times in these appointments that we've had. Sometimes she has kind of deferred back because she seems a little unsure, but I like that she's always tried to take the lead and I hope that she's ... I think she's going to be able to advocate for herself when she's in the proper state of mind. I'm just worried that right now she may not be able to, and that's why she might be calling for me. I guess I'll see what the policy is to go and visit her down at the jail and see what ... Get some more information on the charges and what it's going to take to get her out of there.

Kate: Right. Yeah. Getting the information and sharing the information with her, but I think, don't underestimate just the power of you, someone that she obviously trusts, and trusts enough to even have gotten very angry with you earlier in the week. Letting her know that you're continuing to be there for her, and that as again, as before, you'll partner with her to empower her and collaborate with her as she ... That there is a future and that she can move forward from this.

Derek: Yeah, I think it's ... I appreciate the way you said that because I was really feeling kind of down after she kind of blew me off after that last meeting because I had been seeing such successes in her and the relationship and blossoming and then to have it just kind of deteriorate so quickly, it was kind of a blow to the ego, you know-

Kate: Well, she got angry but that doesn't mean the relationship is over. To me that shows a certain level of trust that she can get angry, and I was even thinking that ... So this whole episode is a continuation of that you were really touching something that was really hard for her to move forward with the housing situation and the relationship, so that issue is going to be coming right to her again along with the current issue, so seems that she has chosen you to partner with and to go forward.

Derek: Yeah. I appreciate that perspective that it's actually a complement to our relationship that she was able to flip out on me. Because if she wasn't as trusting, she probably wouldn't have even showed up to meet with me.

Kate: Right. I would agree. I would definitely say that you're moving in the right direction as a partner with her and helping to help her look at her strengths and begin to move forward even with this, whereas right now she's probably feeling like she's hit a pretty big obstacle, but I'm sure you can partner with her to help her see that there can be a future here. That she can move forward.

Derek: Yeah. So I think I'll just kind of frame it as this is in terms of the stages of change. I have to think about it as, this is a relapse. She may have been going back into contemplation and pre-contemplation there and I just wasn't expecting it given how things, the momentum and she had really been in action there for a while. Hopefully it's just temporary and if I can see her today, and reassure her that we will work to help her out as best we can and get some more info, and also I guess I'll find out if she wants to involve her mother. And to what extent. Depending on what she says, I'll reach out to her mom again.

Kate: Yeah, and I assume that she will be assigned a legal person that would be able to partner with her?

Derek: Yeah. I have to see what's going on and what other crisis type services might be available in the community for her. So that's another good thing I'll look into as well and maybe some of my colleagues can help me out as well.

Kate: Yes. Yeah.

Derek: Alright, thanks Kate. I appreciate you spending some time and processing this situation with me. I think I have a good plan and a good place now.

Kate: Okay good. Okay. I have a lot of confidence in you, Derek. And remember, a couple of steps backward, a step forward and sometimes things are cyclical like that but it looks like you've been ... You're seeing forward movement with Michela and I would encourage you to continue along and have the confidence in yourself. Thank you for your good work.

Derek: Thank you. I will keep you posted on what goes on.

Kate: Okay, okay. Have a good weekend.

Derek: See you later, thanks.

Kate: Bye.

Derek: Hey there guys. I just wanted to give a quick update. I did go down to the local police department to see if I could talk to Michela, and unfortunately, I was unable to speak with her. When I got there the officer on duty informed that while in the jail cell, Michela became suicidal and was threatening to hang herself in the cell. And so the police responded by having her transported to the psychiatric screening department of our county.

She's no longer at the local jail here, so now I have to go and find out where she is and what the next steps are in her getting, apparently, psychiatrically screened as a result of voicing some suicidal ideation while in the jail cell. So I will give you guys updates as I hear them but this was an unfortunate turn of events that I wanted to let you guys, my colleagues, know about. So, stay tuned. Hopefully we'll hear a good, positive, resolution to this unfortunate situation.