**Running Head: THE FAMILIES WE MAY MEET 1**

**The Families We Meet Assignment**

**ECC 163 / CVS3 & CVS4**

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**THE FAMILIES WE MAY MEET 2**

**Family Scenario - Part One:**

Saturday February 15th, 2019. Tonight is party night for the “Cortez” family. Melanie (22 years old), Malcolm (18 years old), and Mason (3 years old) accompany their Mom – Katie (44 years old, the oldest of 6 children, born in Victoria, BC, Canada) and Dad – Carlos (49 years old and an only child, born in Merida, Mexico) to Aunty Alicia’s home. Aunty Alicia (mom’s younger sister) is having a birthday party to celebrate her 30th birthday. Aunty Alicia lives alone and is focused on her graphic design company. She is excited to have her home filled with her family (including older brothers Sean (41 years old), Tim (38 years old), Noah (36 years old) and Carter (33 years old), friends, and employees to help celebrate her special evening. Her home is elegantly decorated and the carters along with the bar staff are ready for the festivities.

As the Cortez family arrives to the party, instantly Carlos makes uncalled for comments about how Aunty Alicia is showing off how successful her company is by having a big fancy birthday party. The rest of the family ignored his comment and excitedly entre the home. Music playing, guests smiling and laughing little Mason decide to go to the dance floor area to boogie. His Mom, sister and brother joined him after they said hello to Alicia. Carlos finds a comfy sit by the bar.

As the evening unfolds, Melanie continuously keeps an eye on her Dad. A couple of weeks ago he had lost his job from the supermarket with an instant dismissal as he arrived to the bakery department drunk. Melanie can see her Dad having one drink after another and decides to take him a place of food.

“What do I need that for?” Carlos says to Melanie as she places the food on the table next to him. Melanie replies calmly “Thought you might be hungry Dad!” Carlos with a snarky voice tone says “I am not hungry. Get me another beer.” Melanie tries hard to stay calm “Come dance with the family and then we can have a beer after. Come on!” “No!!!” Carlos shouts loudly. Melanie knows not to push it with her Dad to make a scene, as he gets anger with his family when they try to move him away from the comfits of drinking. (Carlso was a recovering alcoholic from 10 years ago when they lived in Seattle, Washington, USA. The family moved to Victoria BC, Canada, 2015, to be close to Katie’s siblings.). It remembered Melanie of the trauma her and Malcolm went through. An experience they don’t want Mason to be exposed to.

Melanie returns to the dance floor area and lets your Mom and Malcolm know about the conversation she just had with her Dad. Malcolm makes a comment to them both “Well, I say it is going to be a “Code M” night tonight”. Code M was their way to express to each other that it is going to be a night to look after Mason as they are aware that Dad/Carlos may get out of control with his drinking. This situation always made Katie feel embarrassed and weak.

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Katie could see Mason enjoying all the festivities, dancing, eating, drinking pop, and staying up late. He was having a super fun evening. Carlos staggered over to Katie and almost fell into her. Sharply he said to Katie “Gather everyone I am ready to drive us home NOW!” Melanie over heard the conversation and quickly goes to find Malcolm. When she found him, Malcolm could tell with the panic look in her eyes sometime was wrong. “What’s up Melanie.” asks Malcolm. Out of breathe she says “Dad is straggling and almost felling down. He is so drunk already. He’s told Mom it is time for him to drive us home and he is about to lose his cool with Mom.” Malcolm replies as the two of them are looking for Mason “Oh boy he is going to go on and on about he is capable of driving home too. No worries Sis, I will use my N plate excuse to get us safety home. Let’s find Mason before Dad does!”

Melanie quietly and calmly scoops Mason up from the dance floor to fly like an airplane and whispers in his ear it is time to go home to have hot chocolate and marshmallows. Aunty Alicia recognizers the airplane queue. Quickly and quietly she makes her way to Melanie as she knows something is up. Melanie whispers to her “Code M”. Aunty Alicia gives Mason a quick kiss goodbye and then helps Malcolm and Katie to walk Carlos to the front door to leave. Malcolm mentions to his Mum “Code M”. His Dad asks “What did you say?” Malcolm replied back “Come on (replaced Code M) Dad I am going to drive us home as I need more driving practice.” Carlos clumsily gets in the car saying “That a boy. It is a man’s job to look after his family.”

**Family Types:**

The Cortez Family belong to multiple family types.

* Multiracial Family
* Older Family
* Family in which there is Substance Abuse – Alcoholism and Anger

Multiracial Family:

Canadian Katie Lee-Cortez (maiden and surname) and Mexican Carlos Cortez have experienced with their older children the “pressure to identify with one racial group over another in order to demonstrate a sense of belonging creating challenges for the family unit” (L.Wilson, 2018, p.318). With the help of Carlos parents, Melanie and Malcolm were able to “recognize the benefits of their rich cultural background” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 318).

Older Family:

2015, Katie and Carlos were surprised with the news that they were going to be parents for a third time. They had just moved from Seattle to Victoria as Melanie had been accepted to attend the University of Victoria. Katie and Carlos realized their future lifestyle was going to be changed in many ways. Their children, Melanie (18 years old) and Malcolm (14 years old) were

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on their pathway to adulthood and teenage hood. With baby on the way, the family of four would grow to be a family of 5. From Katie and Carlos’s own experiences with raising their older children, their marital challenges they had overcome with regards to Carlos drinking and anger problems, along with financially stability they felt they would be great older parents.

Families in which there is Substance Abuse – Alcohol and Anger:

2009 - Carlos was an only child in his family. At the age of 39 years old he learnt the reason why he was an only child when his Mother Maria visited him in the “A Positive Alternative” addiction treatment centre in Seattle. When Carlos was 2 years old, his Father had hit his Mother so hard in the lower abdomen which prevented her from having any more children. Maria shared this story with her son as she did not want him to follow the some alcoholic pathway like his Father. Carlos’s Father passed in 2006 which was the begging’s of Carlos’s troubles with drinking and controlling his anger. Carlos had witness many incidents between his Mother and Father. The trauma from his childhood slowly crept up on him after suppressing it for so long. Unfortunately Carlos turned to alcohol and anger to num his pain which sadly hurt his own family.

With the shocking news from his Mother, as to why he was an only child, Carlos knew he had to change his ways for his own children, Melanie (12 years old) and Malcolm (8 years old). And he did!

2019 – Carlos had been struggling with their move to Victoria. He was not getting along with Katie’s family members, he had not formed any solid friendships, his managers job at the “Thrifty Foods” supermarket was repetitive and boring (but paid well), and life with a 3 year old was challenging and exhausting. For 10 years Carlos had been alcohol and anger free, but he thought if he had a very small nip of vodka in his mornings orange juice it would help him get through his day. Eventually the nip turned into a few, which turned into a good stiff pour, along with mood and anger problems developing. His behavioural changes were now effecting is family, tension, arguing, doors slamming, toddler crying more and more. It was like a hurricane had hit, a feeling Katie, Melanie, and Malcolm were too familiar with from the past. Within 2 months of secretly drinking life changed for Carlos and his family. Now it was time for Carlos, with his family be his side to help support him, to stop drinking. But it was too late, on February 1st Carlos was instantly dismissed from his work place due to arriving to work drunk. At home the drinking became more visible and the anger continued to get worse.

**Family Scenario - Part Two:**

Monday February 17th, 2019. Katie and Mason arrived to Mason’s daycare centre later than normal. Emma the ECE teacher noticed Mason was crying which was unusual and Mason was extremely clingy to Katie’s leg. Emma went over to Katie and Mason and with a bright smile

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said “Good morning Mason and Katie.” Emma was just about to ask if she could help, when Katie, who was trying to tie up Masons in door shoelaces, looked up at Emma and uncontrollable busted into tears. Claire the other ECE teacher calmly supports Mason and redirects him to the colouring table, while Emma assisted Katie to another room to give her privacy. “In situations where strong bonds exist between families and teachers, teachers can play a significant role in the extended family” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 72). Emma and Katie over the last year have developed a strong bond which allows Katie to be open about her situation of her home life with Emma. Emma listens, asked open ended questions, and let her know she is there for her when she is ready to talk. Today Katie is feeling so over whelmed with the terrifying thought that Carlos is going to trap himself in this alcohol hurricane again. She fears for Masons emotional well being and does not want him to experience what Melanie and Malcolm went through when they were younger. Emma reassures Katie that she is not alone, and that Mason’s daycare family is here for them all.

**Analyze:**

**What could your ideal centre do to recognize and support the strengths and needs of families in this situation?**

“Problematic substance abuse affects many individuals and families across our country, Is is hoped that as educators become more informed, they will understand that substance abuse is a disease that has physical, psychological, and social repercussions, leading them to respond with sensitivity to those who are affected. Each member of the family is uniquely impacted by problematic substance abuse. The effects may include attachment issues, regressive behaviours, economic hardship, emotional stress, anxiety, neglect, depression, legal issues, and violence that may have devastating results” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 391).

Support for the concerned parent:

* Provide a safe place for the parent to talk
* Have a non-judgemental mind
* Listen attentively
* Have eye contact
* Ask open ended questions
* Be patient with parents response time
* Reassure the parent they are not alone
* Remind the parent “the child’s well-being is the most important consideration and from both an ethical and legal perspective, educators cannot release a child to someone who could cause the child harm – eg. drunk driver

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* Suggest and provide information, and of professionals in the community who can help
* Always remember it is up to the family and individuals to act on these suggests
* Alcohol and You leaflet

[www.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp](http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp)

(and available from the Mental Health & Addictions Services)

Leaflet provides:

* “This leaflet if for people who want to know more about drinking alcohol or people who think they might have a problem with drinking.
* It will tell you about different types of drinking and help you decide what type of drinker you are” (Northumberland, Tyne, and Wear, 2019, p.2).
* Alcohol Anonymous Support Line

Comox Valley

(250) 338-8042

Support Line provides:

* Supportive listening ear for people in emotional distress
* Connection to emergency mental health services
* BC Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service

1-800-663-1441

[www.2.gov.bc.ca](http://www.2.gov.bc.ca)

Program provides:

* Provide community services and support
* Help and information lines
* Substance withdrawal information

* Comox Valley Intensive Case Management Team (ICMT) (Help for extreme situations)

101-1742 Cliffe Ave, Courtenay, BC. V9N 2K8

(250) 331-8538

[www.islandhealth.ca](http://www.islandhealth.ca)

Program provides:

* “High level of substance use as the primary presenting issue
* May or may not have co-occurring mental illness and/or developmental disabilities

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* Homeless or at risk of homelessness
* Barriers to accessing health care
* Difficulties connecting to traditional community mental health and substance use services
* “I Wish Daddy Didn’t Drink So Much.”

Children book.

Author – Judith Vigna

Book provides:

* To help a young child to understand their emotions when balancing a life with a parents sickness of alcoholism
* Mental Health & Addictions Services

941 England Avenue, Courtenay, B.C V9N 2N7,

 (250) 331-8524

Open Monday – Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

Program will provide

* Individualized planning services
* Outreach services
* Individual and family counselling services
* Withdrawal management services
* Education and information about alcohol and other substances
* Metal Health & Substance Use 24 hour line

310-6789 (no area code needed)

[www.2.gov.bc.ca](http://www.2.gov.bc.ca)

24 hour line provides:

* Support and a listening ear available 24/7
* Resources to help with the crisis at the time of call
* Kids Help Phone Line Use 24 hour line

1-800-668-6868

[www.2.gov.bc.ca](http://www.2.gov.bc.ca)

24 hour line provides:

* Support and a listening ear available 24/7
* Resources to help with the crisis at the time of call

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* RCMP

911

RCMP provides:

* ALL resources available 24/7 to help with the crisis at the time of call.

Along with your support, the most important advice and support you can give a family is to encourage them to seek professional help. “Remember that educators are neither social workers nor professionals who are trained to deal with these difficult issues” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 393). As an educator we can always follow up privately with the concerned parent, to see how their progress is going.

Support for the child in care:

* “Listen carefully to children who want to express their concerns. One-on one time is very important. When children share information with the educator, they feel less alone” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 392).
* Have a non-judgemental mind
* Have eye contact
* Ask open ended questions
* Do not influence the child with your own feeling, assumptions or words
* Be patient with the child’s response time
* Reassure the child they are not alone
* Help the child to make sense of a loving sober parent and to help understand a parent needing help to get better when they are sick. (J, Vina, 1988).
* “Help children to understand that there are safe people in their lives that they can confide in and these people will always provide support (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 392).
* Provide normality and routines in their daycare day
* “Set clear and consistent limits (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 393)” and boundaries so there is consistence for the child in care
* “Increase opportunities for creative expression through dramatic play: soothing experiences with clay, sand, and water; and a variety of art materials” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 393).

“The impact on teachers when dealing with these issues can be both challenging and heartbreaking (L.Wislon, 2018, p. 393).

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**The Challenges a Family Faces with Substance Abuse**

There are many challenges a family faces when there is a family member present with alcoholism. Not only does the alcoholism affect the individual directly it also affects the family and friends who have a close relationship with the individual.

* A loving family and caring friends can try hard to be supportive, understanding, and provide helpful information as you’re willing to do whatever it takes to help them get better.
* The hardest step to recovery is for the addict to accept help and accountability for their actions. This can be a long process and extremely difficult on all relationships especially for young children.
* Alcoholism becomes a safety concern to the individual.
* Injures from falling over
* Drinking and driving
* Long lasting hangovers
* Poor performance at work
* Become less reliable and less reasonable
* Develop a craving for alcohol when not drinking it
* Coping with withdrawal symptoms when not drinking.
* Alcohol is cheap, legal and socially acceptable which creates the hurricane of the circular cycle it becomes. It can also affect the financial income for a family and stress with an alcoholic who will to do anything financial to support their addiction needs.

Alcohol being socially accepted and temptations of special events and celebrations add converging winds to the hurricane and increases the difficulty of alcoholism.

* Educating your loved one of the true consequences they create is more important than allowing your loved one to hit rock bottom.
* Is your loved one a binge drinking, an alcohol abuser, or alcohol dependent (alcoholism)
* Your loved one needs your help whether they want it or not. Seeking a professional interventionist will be a positive step to helping your Family. They are a neutral third party with experience, resources, and they can also communicate with your loved one without becoming affected emotionally them.

“The hardest part about intervention is that alcoholics think they are different from drug addicts” – Mike Loverde.

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**Conclusion**

Learning the process of what a family goes through, in the moment with alcoholism, along with what they have to accomplish to recovery is an incredible story of love, courage, and commitment.

Through our small class group work I was able to engage in discussion of different family scenarios. Here I was able to observe how different scenarios affected my class mates. Some class mates were emotional, some very knowledgeable, some were unsure, and some were surprised about the scenario. As we all have a different lens prospective of how we see the world around us. This opened and enlarged my sight and mind to be more mindful when the time arrives for me to help a family in need. Also through our group discussions, together we learnt from one another of many positive support systems and resources that are available either from our daycare centre or community for our families. From this assignment I have support and resources available to me through class mates, co-workers and community staff. I have also developed skills and gained more confidence to help families in difficult situations. As we all know “It takes a village to raise a child” (L.Wilson, 2018, p. 293).

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