

Loss

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This quilt was designed to represent an encounter I experienced while working with Child, Youth, and Family Services (CYFS) that involved the removal of a child. The left side of the quilt symbolizes this baby's life when she was living with her family. This was a happy time where she was with the people with whom she was most familiar. The right side of the quilt symbolizes loss. I chose dark colors for this side because this represents sadness and fear, in some cultures.

The center of the quilt represents my emotions during the child's removal from home. I specifically chose these different patterns, because they best represent how I felt during this time. I felt sadness; for the baby, for her grandmother who had to make the decision to grant custody to CYFS, and for her parents because they were unable to care for her. I felt guilt and I felt anger that CYFS could not get help for this grandmother so she could continue caring for her.

Self-awareness is critical as a social worker, and it was especially important for me in this encounter. During this situation, I consciously discussed the biases I was feeling to ensure I was able to keep an open mind throughout the process. As students, we ought to be taught early in our careers how to become aware of our own feelings. If we are struggling, we may set ourselves up to encounter boundary violations (Urdang, 2010). During the encounter of removing this child, I noticed one of my first thoughts were that I would love to provide a nurturing and loving home for this baby. However, I quickly told myself that while these thoughts may be normal, it is inappropriate and I would be setting myself up for failure and heartache if I thought this about every child I will encounter in my career.

All of the people in this child's life were fighting their own battles; both her mother and father were struggling with drug addiction. Moreover, I assessed this situation with an open mind, considered and recognized the strengths everyone had, and realized just how difficult this must have been for everyone. It was an unfortunate situation, but hopefully she will have the chance to grow up in a loving and caring home with people who are able to provide the nurturance and care she deserves.

References

- Urdang, E. (2010). Awareness of Self-A Critical Tool. *Social Work Education*, 29(5), 523-538.
<http://www.bu.edu/ssw/files/2010/10/Awareness-of-Self-A-Critical-Tool.pdf>