**For GAL Training, October 2014**

***“A GAL’s 1st Visit – Revisited”***

*"The initial interview between the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and the Alleged Incapacitated Person (AIP) and the GAL’s first impression from that interview are vital to the GAL's investigation and assessment of the AIP's needs.  Those needs are allegations in the Petition for Guardianship but they may be incomplete or even inaccurate.*

*Understanding differences in communication styles and techniques between generations is crucial to the GAL's assessment based on observations during that initial interview.*

*This skit will demonstrate two very different scenarios to raise awareness of factors to consider when assessing the AIP after that initial interview."*

**ACT 1:**

***This ACT demonstrates two very different styles. Brittany Quinn plays “the distracted” GAL. Paige plays the opposite role – focused, patient, caring, authentic interest. Larry will play the AIP with Brittany and be mostly dazed by her level of activity, pace, and lack of connection with him. Marv will play the AIP with Paige who responds to her connection in a positive way.***

***Brittany and Larry will set up on Stage left. Paige and Marv will set up on Stage right.***

***Brittany and Larry go first. Brittany has file but does not take any notes.***

***Brittany approaches Larry quickly, cell phone in hand. Acts hurried. Pulls out documents. Gives copies to Larry. Introduces self. Interrupted by call that she takes. Finishes call. Larry stares ahead. Brittany does all talking. Ends with “Do you understand? Any questions?” Larry nods. Brittany leaves.***

**ACT 1, Scene 1 5 minutes**

Brittany approaches quickly from the door. Walks up to Larry.

Brittany:

“Hi, my name is Brittany Jones. I’m your GAL (says the letters G – A – L). (her phone rings) “Oh, sorry, I was expecting a call.” “Hi, this is Brittany.” “Oh, Hi, Susan. [Turns to Larry and says “Gotta take this call – stands and walks off to the side and continues conversation on phone] “What do you mean my car won’t be ready by 3? I need it! [raises voice almost to yelling]. “OK, listen, let me call you right back. Only take about 10-15 minutes. Thanks. Talk to you then. Bye.”

“OK. I’m back, sorry”

[Larry is sitting quietly and patiently. Looking at Brittany. Then looking away then back at Brittany, slowly. Sits very still.]

“As I was saying, I’m your GAL. I’m here because a petition for guardianship has been filed in the court and I need to meet you and see whether you need a guardian.” Can you hear me?

Larry:

“I can hear you. What was your name again?”

Brittany:

“Brittany Jones.”

Larry:

“You’re my GAL (says GAL like the word “gal”)? I don’t have a GAL since my wife died. What do you want? Do I have to go to court? Last time I was in court was when my grandson got a DUI and I had to go be a witness for him. He ended up in jail for 30 days. I have bad memories of court.”

Brittany:

“Well, I’m sorry to hear that. How long have you been here and how did you get here? Do you have anyone who visits you? What are their names?”

Larry:

“I used to live on my own.

Brittany:

“Who is your doctor? Are you taking any medication? When did you last see your doctor? Oops, sorry, another phone call.”

Brittany takes call. Larry sits and stares at her. Brittany hangs up.

Larry:

“I don’t feel well and nobody does anything about it for me. The little nurses come in to check on me and take my pulse but they are in such a hurry, like you.”

Brittany:

“Well, don’t you worry, I’ll be in touch with your doctor. Here are the papers from the court file. I’ll leave them with you to read. Can you read? I’ll be back in a few days to go over them with you. Do you have any questions before I go?”

“Goodbye. See you in a few days.”

Brittany leaves.

**ACT 1, Scene 2** **10 minutes**

***Paige approaches Marv cautiously. Gentle voice. No phone. No documents at first. Introduces self. Shakes hand. Asks if it is OK to talk. Marv nods. Acknowledges that might be odd to have visitor who is unknown and unexpected. Marv nods. Asks how things are. Asks family, meals, comfort questions. Explains why visiting. Explains concerns from petition allegations. Explains guardianship. Explains GAL role. Pulls out documents. Goes over Notice slowly and carefully. Marv nods. Asks for understanding / questions all along. Explains will visit again soon. Marv shakes head. Paige leaves.***

Paige:

“Hi, my name is Paige Smith. May I talk with you for a few minutes? Thank you. We have not met before so it may seem odd to you that I just show up at your door. So thank you for letting me in and taking the time to talk with me.

I am here because some of the people who know you have been concerned that you may need some help getting along. I mean with paying your bills and things like that. They filed some papers in court listing the things they are concerned about and I was appointed to meet you and see if they are right in their concerns.

Do you understand me so far? [Marv nods]

Good, thank you for listening so carefully.

I am called a Guardian ad Litem, or GAL for short. That means I am sort of like a temporary guardian for a couple of months. Actually I am visiting with you for the Court. My job is to meet you, like we’re doing today, talk to your doctor, talk to the staff here, talk to your family members, and review your finances with you.

Are you able to hear me OK? Do you have any questions about what I’ve said so far?”

Marv:

“I can hear you just fine. What was your name again?”

Paige:

“Paige Smith. Good. I see you have some photographs over there. Are those your family?

Marv:

“No, I don’t have any family, at least no one that is still alive. Those are my Navy buddies’ kids. I was in the Navy during WWII. We used to keep in touch but most of my Shipmates are gone now.”

Paige:

“I understand. Do you keep in touch with the kids?”

Marv:

“No, I haven’t heard from them in years. There isn’t anyone who calls on me anymore. I’m pretty much all alone.”

Paige:

“You’ve had an active life; it must be hard to be all alone now.”

Marv:

“You are young. You can’t imagine what it’s like to be this old and all alone. I used to be able to do anything. Now I have to live here in this box. This is an OK place, mind you. I’m not complaining. But I need a walker and they give me pills three times a day.

The food ain’t that great. And, I hate TV. So, I pretty much sit here alone all day. Sometimes they tell me I’ve missed an appointment or bounced a check and I don’t remember any appointment and can’t find my checkbook anywhere. There’s a pile of mail over there.

They’re changing my pills a lot. Sometimes they make my stomach upset so I can’t eat for a while. I never know why they get changed. Some of them really make me loopy.

You can look at it if you want.”

Paige:

“OK, thank you, I will next time, if that’s OK with you.

May I talk with you about the court papers? They ask the court to appoint a guardian to help you with things like medical decisions and where you should live. They also want a guardian to help you with your bills and finances, things like that. Would you like help with those things?”

Marv:

“That would be OK. Who is the guardian?”

Paige:

“Well, you may not know her. She is a professional guardian. She has a company that works with elder people to help them in their daily affairs. If we get to that point, I’ll be sure to bring her here to meet you. Is that alright?”

Marv:

“Sure.”

Paige:

“Good, thank you. I’d like to go over the papers with you, if you have time.”

Marv:

“Sure.”

***Paige brings out papers and begins to go over them with Marv. She starts with the Notice of Guardianship and says “This is a list of the things that may be at issue for you in a guardianship. The first one is your right to marry or divorce.”***

***Marv laughs and says “Like that’s an issue.”***

***Paige continues but the conversation fades to end the Scene.***

***She gets up and leaves papers with Marv, shakes hand, smiles, and leaves.***

**ACT 2** **10 minutes**

***Paige gets up from sitting with Marv and crosses over to where Brittany is walking towards her. They meet at stage left, forward and begin this conversation:***

Brittany:

“I got a new GAL case today. County pay. I visited the AIP at the nursing home. Crowded and smelly – you know the one. Staff always in a hurry and young.

Staff gave me a hard time about seeing the file even with GAL Order. What is it with these people? Maybe it’s just me they give a hard time to.

AIP just stared at me whole time. Didn’t look at documents. Didn’t ask any questions. My cell kept ringing. He didn’t say anything when I answered the calls.

Petition says he’s withdrawn, uncommunicative, isolated, doesn’t eat meals with others anymore, when he does talk you can hardly hear him, etc. I totally agree – that was my experience, too. Left him docs and will review chart later.

Should be straightforward – pretty clear he needs guardian.”

Paige:

“That’s weird; I got new GAL case today, too. County pay. Visited AIP at nursing home. Seemed chaotic as usual – bells going off, lots of wheelchairs in the hallway. I really feel for those residents – some seem so hopeless and alone.

I met AIP in his room. I sat with him and as I always do, just shook his hand and looked around the room. Introduced myself but had to explain why I was there several times – he seemed to understand.

He asked if I was his new doctor. I told him I was not his new doctor but that I would be talking to his doctor. Then asked how he got there. He couldn’t remember.

He likes his nurses because they are very kind and gentle. I asked him about his work – career. He remembered a lot of details about working as an Accountant. I’ll have to verify that.

I’ll review the chart for intake family information. He didn’t know who pays for his meals and everything. He used to have money at Wells Fargo bank on East Sprague. He was in the Navy but only 4 years at end of WWII. He has one friend from the Navy who died last year. He used to get cards from the Shipmate’s son but H didn’t know where the cards are.

He took some time to read the Notice and asked about voting. He looks forward to voting but needs help with ballot language.

He doesn’t dislike where he is but wished he could go back home and get some help at home like before. He had someone from DSHS who helped him at home.

I thanked him for letting me talk with him and explained that I would be talking to his doctor and looking at his chart. I would try to find the DSHS person and talk to his neighbors, too.

I left the documents and promised to return soon. He smiled and said he’d like that.”

Brittany and Paige remain at stage left. Larry gets up from where he’s been sitting since Brittany left and walks to Marv, sits down next to Marv.

**ACT 3** **5 minutes**

Larry:

“Got a visitor today. Young and in a hurry. Gave me some papers. Didn’t understand. Interrupted by cell phone. Those gadgets! Left before had chance to ask questions. Don’t know where the papers are. Don’t know why she visited. Hate meatloaf. Wish the kids would call. …

Marv:

“Funny, I got a visitor today, too. Real nice lady. She seemed concerned about me. Not sure why. We had a nice talk. She asked me about my family. She asked me about my career. She was real nice. She gave me papers about court. She explained things very slowly and clearly. I told her I’d like to leave here but not sure how. She left the papers and said she would be back to visit soon. She said she was going to talk to my doctors. I liked her. It was nice to have a visitor.”