

Situation #4

Situation #4: A family literacy volunteer is driving a family to and from program, giving advice and counseling them on different topics, maybe even giving them money to help them out. What do you do?

Situation #4 – What the Organization Did...

It is sometimes hard for volunteers (and ourselves) to remember boundaries when working with people who have so many barriers in their lives. Everything this volunteer did was motivated by a want to help, but were clearly explained in our policies as things we do cannot do.

We asked them to come in to talk with us and we re-visited the policies together, explained why they were in place, and showed the documentation we had once our staff person realized what was happening. We talked about boundaries, especially since they were not a trained psychologist, and during the conversation we could see that they were convinced they were right in everything they were doing. We ended up having to dismiss them.

We thanked them for the work they did, how caring they were about the family's situation, but we were not able to retain volunteers that did not follow policies that were laid out to protect them personally, as well as the organization. We suggested a few other organizations they might be more suited to. It was not an easy conversation and not a happy parting, but we had to make the decision we did.