

Service Dialogue for
Allison Baker

Description of Family:

Ava is a 10-year-old Caucasian female from Houston, Texas. She is an only child and lives with her Mother grandmother. Due to her mother's demanding full-time job, Ava is primarily cared for by her grandmother. Over the past few weeks, Ava has developed multiple new bruises on her body and experienced occasional nosebleeds. Although Ava does not have access to health insurance, her grandmother insisted on bringing her to their local children's pediatric clinic when Ava developed a high fever. After ruling out influenza and mononucleosis, the clinic referred Ava to the nearest children's hospital for further evaluation. When Ava arrived at the hospital, members from the CPS team asked Ava and her grandmother a few questions regarding the bruises on her body. CPS wasn't concerned about any child abuse being involved so the hospital continued running tests. After examination, Ava was diagnosed with stage one Leukemia. She is hospitalized to begin immediate blood tests. Ava is receiving support from her mother, grandmother, and their close-knit community at their synagogue. In the hospital room with Ava, is her grandmother.

Description of Setting:

Inpatient at Texas Children's Hospital.

Service Dialogue:

CCLS is speaking to both Ava and her grandmother in the patient's hospital room.

CCLS: Hello Ava and Mrs. Johnson, it is nice to meet you both! My name is Allison, and I am one of the Certified Child Life Specialists here at Texas Children's. My job is to support Ava and her family ensuring you both feel as comfortable as possible during your time here. I understand that today has been stressful and that there is a lot of information to take it. That is perfectly normal. I am here to answer any questions you may have and to help explain things in a way that's easy for both of you to understand. How are you feeling right now?

Grandmother: Ava's mom is coming up here right after work so she can be here to discuss treatment options. This is all extremely overwhelming. We had CPS question us right when we got here because of the bruising on her body. I would never let anything bad happen to Ava! I also don't know anything about Leukemia. How in the world are we going to be able to afford all of this?

CCLS: I am sure meeting with CPS was both frustration and scary for you. I am happy to connect you with one of our counseling services we provide here at the hospital if you need any extra support during this time. While we wait for Ava's mom to arrive, I am happy to bring you some pamphlets with information about Leukemia and various financial support plans. I can help walk you through all of the information they provide to help you understand everything and make sure I am there to answer any questions that might pop up. It's important

we go through this process together to provide the best experience for Ava and your family. I am here to support both you and Ava.

CCLS: Ava how are you feeling right now?

Ava: I feel really scared here, and I want my mom.

CCLS: It's completely normal to feel scared in a new place like this. I want to assure you that you are safe here, and I'm here to help you feel more comfortable. While we wait for your mom, I thought you might like to have a stuffed animal to hold onto. Would you like that?

Ava: Yes, please. Am I going to lose all of my hair? I heard everyone with cancer loses their hair.

CCLS: Mrs. Johnson, in order to make sure we are all on the same page, do you consent me speaking with Ava to address the concerns she has about her diagnosis?

Grandmother: You are welcome to answer any questions she has.

CCLS: Well Ava, there are many different types of cancer and treatments. Some treatments can cause hair loss, which can be a sign that the medicine is working. Once you and your family meet with the doctor, he will help determine the best plan of treatment for you and I will be there to walk you through the whole process.

Grandmother: We were told that Ava would need to undergo more blood tests. When will that happen? Ava is very nervous to get her blood drawn so we want to have some time to prepare for it.

CCLS: Thank you for letting me know this information about Ava being nervous. I will make sure to alert the nurse of this. In order to help you feel less nervous Ava, I wanted to suggest using medical play. Your grandma and I can help walk you through the process by performing the blood work on a stuffed animal first so you know exactly how it will happen to you. I will also have your nurse come into the room while we do this so she can answer any questions you may have.

Grandmother: That would be great, we would love to do that.

Ava: Can I use the stuffed animal you gave me?

CCLS: Of course you can, Ava! I also wanted to show you my special toy that I like to call Buzzy. Buzzy is a vibrating bee that we love to use on people who are nervous to get their blood drawn. His vibrations make it to where you can't feel anything! We can use Buzzy on our stuffed animal while we practice. I will be back in about 30 minutes with the supplies for medical play. Before I go, are there any other questions you have for me? Can I turn on a movie for you?

Grandmother: I don't think I have any more questions right now.

Ava: I would like to watch my favorite movie, Nemo.

CCLS: I'd be happy to turn that on for you. Nemo is one of my favorite movies too! I will be back in just a little bit. If there's anything you need in the meantime, let me know!