

A Family Tale (Continued)



- On Sunday, Jane didn't show up for the visit.
- Joey threw a tantrum, insisting his mother would come.
- Sandy became upset and angry, tried to protect Joey, and lashed out at Thelma and Rana.
- John acted withdrawn and disinterested, but lashed out at Rana and Sandy in the car on the way home.

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A Family Tale (Continued)

- Ⓜ On Sunday, Jane didn't show up for the scheduled visit.
- Ⓜ After waiting for half an hour, Rana and Thelma prepared to leave. Joey began screaming and crying: "She's coming. I have a present for her . . . she has to come. Mommy! Mommy!" Thelma became more and more upset as Joey kicked and shrieked. She spent a long time trying to convince Joey to get into the car, and then lost patience and carried him out howling.
- Ⓜ As Thelma struggled to put Joey in his car seat, Sandy tried to comfort him. Thelma pushed her out of the way. Sandy started to sob, and yelled at her grandmother, "Joey should be with me. I'm the one who knows how to take care of him!"

On the way home in the car, Sandy screamed at her foster mom, "Why did you make me come on this visit?"

Rana said, "I made you come on this visit because I know it's important to you to see your mom."

Sandy snapped back, "I didn't want to see my mom. You made me. If my mom really loved us, she'd get off drugs so we could all be together."

Rana, exasperated, agreed. "You're right; she would."

This only made Sandy angrier. "You don't know anything about our family!" she shouted. "My mom loves us a lot. And you don't know what it's like to be the only foster child in my whole school! You don't know anything about me!"

- Ⓜ Suddenly John—who had been listening to his iPod®—stomped his foot. "Shut up!" he yelled. "I wish I'd never been born into this family!"

What can be done? (Group Activity)

- How can Rana and Thelma help the children cope with Jane's behavior and maintain healthy connections?
- How can they help themselves?

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What can be done? (Group Activity)

Please take 10 minutes within your groups to consider the following questions:

- What can Rana and Thelma do to help each child cope with Jane's behavior and maintain healthy connections?
- What can they do to help themselves?



Allow 10 minutes for brainstorming, and then ask each group to report their answers.

Allow 15 minutes for discussion. One facilitator should make notes on the whiteboard or easel while the other facilitates the discussion. Consider raising some of the key points below:

*For **Joey**, Thelma should:*

- *Reassure Joey that what happened was not his fault.*
- *When Joey is calmer, talk with him in simple language and encourage him to express his feelings in words or pictures.*
- *Be consistent, so Joey (and his siblings) learn that they can trust and depend on her for safety and nurturance.*
- *Avoid making promises about things she can't control. While it's natural to want to say, "It's okay, she'll be there next time," that could backfire if Jane fails to show up again.*
- *Arrange regular visits for Joey with Sandy. Help them stay in touch when they cannot be together.*

*For **Sandy**, Rana should:*

- *Allow Sandy to share all her feelings about her mother without agreeing or disagreeing.*
- *Set limits. Let Sandy know that she understands how frustrated and alone Sandy feels, but that it is not okay to scream and yell.*