

September 30, 2020

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Reason for Referral

Layla Morgan was referred to the Supporting Healthy Families therapeutic foster care program by Brooke Tillman, Department of Children and Families Services, after Layla was disrupted from her foster care placement and placed with us. Her sisters are currently living in a nearby foster home.

Background Information

Layla Morgan is an 8-year-old, Caucasian female. She is the second oldest of three children. She, along with her two siblings, came into foster care in July 2020 because of neglect that resulted from parental substance abuse. Prior to coming into foster care, Layla lived with her mother, Janet Morgan, and her sisters, Jessica and Kerry, in a modest home in Jacksonville, Mock State. By report, Layla's older sister, Kerry (age 10) assumed a significant amount of caregiving responsibilities for Layla and her younger sister. The family appears to have been somewhat isolated with few social supports.

Layla is in the 4th grade and recently began attending the Franklin Elementary School. She receives special education services for delays in communication; social and emotional development; and physical development, specifically fine motor skills. She is on medication to control seizures.

The child's mother was not married to the children's fathers. Layla has little memory of her stepor biological father. Her stepfather is currently incarcerated at the Mock State Correctional Facility. The location of both of Layla's biological parents is currently unknown

Treatment Plan/Team:

To comprehensively address Layla's therapeutic needs and preserve the sibling unit, the following team members will provide recommended supports and services:

- Carol Peilter, Ph.D. Individual and Family Therapy
- Joy Sanders, MSW Behavioral Management Services (to include supportive services to the therapeutic foster parents)
- Elizabeth Randall, LICSW Case management

Each team member will provide requisite services on a monthly basis and report accordingly.

Individual Therapy Initial Summary/Progress

During the initial session, Layla was found to be somewhat shy. Given the recommendation of Layla's psychological evaluation to address potential trauma, an additional assessment was conducted to determine the level of trauma and to what extent the trauma is affecting Layla's ability to cope in the home and school environments. Layla was noted as experiencing a high level of trauma, as evidenced by removal from her home and primary caregiver, separation from

her siblings due to a placement disruption, and difficulty adjusting to the foster homes. She also exhibited some anxiety regarding her older sister's concerns for her seizure condition.

Layla reports liking her current foster parents but misses her sisters. She wishes they could all be together. She also notes worrying about her mother.

Layla noted that her current foster parents and behavioral specialist are helpful and "nice."

Layla will continue to receive monthly cognitive therapy to address the areas noted above, as well as age-appropriate skills to help with general coping and the challenges associated with adjusting to her new home and school environments.

Family Therapy Initial Summary/Progress

Layla is a member of a sibling unit of three. Kerry Morgan is age 10, and Jessica Morgan is age 6. Kerry is observably parentified and presents as a caretaker for her younger sisters. Prior to placement in foster care, Kerry assumed daily responsibility for the girls, while also trying to be of assistance to her mother, who suffered from chronic back pain and suspected drug use.

During this initial session, areas of focus included feelings about being separated and placed in different foster homes, Kerry's need to "parent," and how to ensure that visitations with Layla are meaningful. To date, the Skype visitations are of great benefit and seem to allow for sibling cohesion despite separate placements. Of note, Kerry mentioned sharing information with her caseworker regarding her maternal aunt, Patricia Pepper, and maternal grandmother, Jesse Morgan.

Moving forward, sessions will continue to focus on strengthening sibling ties through ongoing visitations; understanding family dynamics, even in the absence of both biological parents; and developing social and emotional, peer and relationship-building, and coping skills.

Behavioral Management Services Initial Summary/Progress

Layla has reportedly demonstrated poor anger management, which, in large part, prompted the initial placement removal from the foster home of Keith and Paula Jackson. Layla is known to throw tantrums and, in some cases, withdraw and succumb to episodes of tearfulness.

This treatment team continues to work with the Shanihans to provide ongoing support and skill building in the areas of de-escalation and managing difficult behaviors. We have also provided literary resources and connections with other therapeutic foster parents for more information sharing and skill building. We will also continue to observe Layla at school and provide feedback to the teacher/IEP team on Layla's progress on managing her challenging behavior.

Case Management Initial Summary

The treatment team will continue to remain connected with the ongoing caseworker for periodic case updates. These updates will be shared with the team to ensure continuity and comprehensiveness of services provided.

Carol Peilter, Ph.D. Clinical Director

Carol Peilter

Supporting Healthy Families



October 30, 2020

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management Summary/Progress

We remain in contact with DCFS caseworker, Brooke Tillman, who provides case updates as appropriate. These updates are shared with the treatment team to ensure continuity and comprehensiveness in therapeutic care.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

During this month's session, Layla was still found to exhibit some sadness about not being with her sisters and expressed worry about her mother. She does like seeing her sisters at school and reports that they sometimes have lunch together. Layla noted that she has made a new friend at school and sometimes has lunch with her.

While residual sadness remains regarding the sibling separation and concerns regarding her absent mother, Layla continues to report liking her foster home and various activities she is now involved in, including gymnastics.

Layla and I discussed the court hearing that took place on 9/21/20. She noted having met with the GAL before the hearing and agreeing with her sisters that they wished to be placed together. Layla and I continue to work through her feelings of being separated from her siblings and mother. She is willing and more able to communicate her thoughts and feelings. This is a positive step in developing stronger coping mechanisms, particularly as this case progresses.

Layla noted having visited with her maternal aunt via Skype on 10/6/2020. She said that she and her sisters were happy to see their aunt as it had been a long time since they had seen one another. Layla appeared to be excited at the prospects of possibly meeting her aunt in person.

Socialization skills appear to be improving for Layla as she reports making new friends at school and participating in seasonal activities.

We will continue to encourage Layla to express her concerns and understanding of her foster care involvement, as this gives her an outlet and opportunity to process the issues as she understands them.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I also met with the girls collectively. They continue to echo sentiments of sadness due to their separation but appear to be happy when in each other's company. We processed the court hearing held in September. Each child noted her desire to be with the others and how it made them feel to be together. The girls seem to be an excellent support for one another and demonstrate a reasonable understanding of their current circumstance.

We also processed what it was like to meet their maternal aunt and grandmother via Skype. They noted feeling happy about this experience and grateful that the Shanihans allowed them to Skype. The Shanihans and Valencias are to be commended for their continued efforts in supporting family connections and normalcy for these girls. It is recommended that continued resources and supports be offered to them to foster stabilization of this placement.

We also addressed Jessica's interactions with her father in prison. It should be noted that, while Jessica is only 6, she is insightful and understands that her father is incarcerated. She is appropriately articulate in expressing their interactions and noted having sent him a card. The other siblings seem to support this relationship, but Kerry does ask me to ensure that Jessica will remain safe and connected to her.

We will continue to meet with the girls on a monthly basis to address presented concerns and issues, as well as those inherently associated with foster care and removal from their mother.

Behavioral Management Services Summary/Progress

We observed Layla in the foster home, as well as interactions with the Shanihans. Layla appeared calm and moved comfortably within the home and with the foster parents. The Shanihans report that gymnastics has proven to be an added social outlet for Layla. It also appears to be helping with motor skills and concentration. The Shanihans report that use of their de-escalation training is minimal as Layla makes good efforts to verbalize her feelings and concerns. Recent contact with Layla's teachers indicates that behavioral challenges have been minimal.

Carol Peilter



Supporting nearing ranning

Monthly Progress Report

November 30, 2020

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management Summary

We are continuing to work with Ms. Tillman, DCFS caseworker, to remain abreast of case particulars. She has noted that Mr. Capa has resurfaced. She also shared that adoption has been added as a concurrent permanency goal. This will be shared with the team as it has significant implications for Layla and the sibling unit. We will remain connected with Ms. Tillman for updates. This month's team summaries will be shared with Ms. Tillman to understand how the girls are relating and processing his introduction.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

Mr. Raymond Capa, father of Layla and Kerry, has reappeared. He participated in two therapeutic visitations with Layla and Kerry. I provided oversight for both visits.

Following the first session with Mr. Capa, Layla and I processed her feelings and interactions with him. She noted feeling shy and somewhat angry at him. She indicated not having much to say because she does not feel as though she knows him. We talked through her anger. She was not quite clear as to why she was angry but simply noted feeling that way. Interestingly, she did draw reference to experiencing those similar feelings when she observed her new friends with their fathers. I encouraged Layla to begin journaling her feelings. I noted that if words were not available to her, then simply create a piece of art, such as a drawing or playdough sculpture, that reflected her feelings. Layla agreed.

Following the second session with Mr. Capa, Layla was notably more irritable and withdrawn than from the previous session. When asked to share her journal entries, I found them to artistically represent Mr. Capa negatively. When asked to share her thoughts, Layla became tearful and more withdrawn. She noted feeling sadder than usual and wished that he had not come back into the picture.

Given the outcome of these visits, we plan to recommend that visits be suspended for both Layla and Kerry (See Family Therapy Summary/Progress notes).

While it is understood that maintaining family ties is fundamental, the adverse impact of these visits on Layla's social/emotional growth and progress far outweighs the benefit. Layla is noted as reasonably thriving in her foster home. This added component of visitation with Mr. Capa is a stressor that is counterproductive.

Follow-Up Individual Therapy Session

Due to Layla's absence seizures and the clinical possibility that stress can increase seizure activity, I met with Layla for an additional session to discuss her seizures. Layla demonstrated a limited understanding of her condition. I explained her condition in age-appropriate terms and

the importance of taking the medications to prevent activity. We also talked about signs of seizures and what to report to her foster parents and/or teachers should she experience one. Layla was made aware that this is not a unique condition and that there are many children her age and younger who experience and manage them.

We had a brief discussion about Layla's' understanding of the long-term goals for her and her sisters. She was able to articulate some understanding of the reunification goal but did not seem equally knowledgeable about the concurrent adoption goal. This is an area that will be explored in future sessions, especially given the parents' instability relating to visitation and substance use.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I provided oversight for both visits with Mr. Capa and Kerry and Layla.

Following the first session, Kerry and Layla collectively expressed feelings of uncertainty and sadness. Kerry was particularly verbal in sharing that he had not been there for them, and trying to be a part of their lives now felt "after the fact." Kerry also continued to present her parenting posture to ensure that Layla felt safe.

Following the second session, Kerry presented even more irritable. It should be noted that, during the actual visitation, Mr. Capa was visibly uncomfortable and seemingly distant. It is suspected that Mr. Capa may have been inebriated. Midway through the visit, Kerry asked Mr. Capa a number of pointed questions, to include, "Where have you been? Do you even know what it means to be a dad?" As Mr. Capa proceeded to respond, Kerry sharply interrupted and said, "Thanks for nothing." It was at that point I concluded the session to allow the girls time to process the visit without further stress. Mr. Capa agreed to leave. It was noted that he did not attempt to say good bye.

Kerry continued to voice her anger. I encouraged her to continue to process her anger via journaling. She agreed but noted that she wouldn't have much more to say about "Raymond" other than no desire to see him.

As noted in the summary for Layla, it is also strongly recommended that visitations be suspended with Kerry as well.

Behavioral Management Services Summary/Progress

Her foster parents report that Layla has become progressively agitated, aggressive, and moody. She is not willing to participate in family time. She has exhibited unexplained episodes of tearfulness and belligerence. The school also reported similar behaviors and moodiness. We have increased visits to the home and school to reiterate de-escalation techniques taught during foster parent in service training.

We have also worked with Layla to develop internal coping skills to better manage feelings of anger. We have talked through breathing techniques, positive visualizations, and "happy thoughts." We also revisited the importance of communicating in a way that allows others to understand and, therefore, assist.

Carol Peilter, Ph.D. Clinical Director

Carol Peilter

Supporting Healthy Families



Supporting Healthy Families

Monthly Progress Report

December 31, 2020

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management Summary

I was contacted by Ms. Tillman, who relayed that Ms. Morgan had been found. It is reported that Ms. Morgan had been in a drug treatment facility. Ms. Morgan has been informed that her children remain in care, with a concurrent plan of adoption. She is notably upset about this plan and equally upset about her sister being considered as an option for adoption. She has requested to meet with her children. The treatment team participated in a conference call with the GAL (Lucas Stephens), Shanihans, and Valencias regarding this request. The team expressed that, while they will prepare the girls to resume visitation with their mother, it was noted that, at least for Layla, having both parents back in her life is a lot to process.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

Following the treatment team conference call on 12/10/20, I shared with Layla that her mother had been found and would like to visit with her and her sisters on 12/23/20. Initially, Layla was quiet and seemingly pensive. When asked to share her thoughts, she queried whether the visits would be joint with Mr. Capa. I assured her that the visits would be solely with her mother and sisters. After a thoughtful pause, Layla expressed being excited and nervous to see her mother. Layla's demeanor noticeably brightened.

We further processed those feelings, and I encouraged Layla to continue writing and drawing in her journal to better process them.

There was no mention of Mr. Capa during our session.

Follow-Up Individual Therapy Session

I met with Layla following the visit with her mother on 12/23/20. Layla articulated that she was aware that her mother was in a drug treatment facility because she needed help. Layla shared that there was someone there while they visited (parenting coach), as well as her caseworker, Ms. Tillman. Layla said she was happy to see her mom.

Ms. Tillman reported that these visits will occur weekly. Processing these visits will become an ongoing focus in individual therapy.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with all three girls. Kerry and Jessica continue to express being happy in their foster home. Kerry has joined Girl Scouts and is loving it. Jessica has joined karate and appears to be enjoying it.

The girls expressed looking forward to Christmas. Jessica innocently noted having made a Christmas card for her mother and looks forward to seeing her so that she can give it to her. Of

note, Jessica did query whether she would have to leave the Valencia household. We processed Jessica's question as a group.

Kerry was not as excited for the upcoming visit and questioned if she would even go on the 23rd. She further reiterated that she was happy to not visit with "Raymond."

Follow-Up Family Therapy Session

The girls also noted having gone to the treatment facility and visiting with their mother. Jessica maintained her exuberance. Kerry was notably quiet but later expressed that the visit was okay.

Behavior Management Services Summary/Progress

We have been maintaining contact with the Shanihans to continue monitoring of Layla's behavior. This is particularly important given recent negative encounters with Mr. Capa. It is noted that Layla visited with her mother on 12/23/20. Follow-up contact was made to provide support and monitoring as biological parents are reintroduced to Layla.

Carol Peilter, Ph.D.

Carol Peilter

Clinical Director Supporting Healthy Families



January 29, 2021

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management Summary

We were contacted by Ms. Tillman, who said that Mr. Capa had resurfaced again. She reported that he has resumed taking his medication and was no longer drinking. Ms. Tillman noted that Mr. Capa presented as remorseful and requested to see his children. She shared that Mr. Capa was informed that visitations with his daughters had been suspended due to the ill effects from the previous visits.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with Layla. We processed her feelings and thoughts about possibly meeting her paternal grandmother and aunt. Layla was a bit apprehensive about discussing this. When probed for further understanding, it became evident that Layla equated paternal family members with seeing Mr. Capa on a regular basis. Layla and I discussed this more in depth. She was able to verbalize that if meeting paternal relatives was as positive as Skyping with her maternal aunt, then it "wouldn't be so bad."

Layla's reservations are carefully noted and will be shared with Ms. Tillman to ensure that ample opportunity is given to process any prospective meetings and visitations should they occur.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with all three girls and broached the prospects of meeting paternal relatives with Kerry. It became immediately evident that Kerry was not prepared to discuss this. If visitations would become an option, it is advised that Kerry also be given time to process feelings and perceptions of what such interactions would look like.

Jessica presented as observant during the discussion about Mr. Capa but had little to add with regard to her feelings.

Given that there are two fathers, it is important to equally address the concerns of the children. This attention serves to address family dynamics and remain a focal point in family therapy.

Behavior Management Services Summary Progress

We are maintaining contact with the Shanihans to continue monitoring of Layla's behavior. They report that she has been behaviorally appropriate and stable within the home. School reports indicate the same.

Will continue to provide services and supports as appropriate.

Carol Peilter



Supporting Healthy Families

Monthly Progress Report

February 26, 2021

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management

Summary

Ms. Tillman shared that the Judicial Hearing was held on 2/15/21. She also noted that Mr. Capa has been in contact and is living with his mother to support her as she is undergoing chemotherapy. This information will be shared with the treatment team as appropriate.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with Layla. While Ms. Tillman shared information regarding Mr. Capa's resurfacing and care for his mother, I have determined that processing this with Layla is not in her best interest at this time. Instead, our session focused on her feelings regarding the court hearing. We also focused on her social and emotional progress.

Layla opened our session with an unsolicited bubbly report on how much she was enjoying gymnastics. She also shared that she had been invited to a birthday party for one of the girls in her class. When asked how this made her feel, she noted "excited" and "feeling just like the other kids." We further processed appropriate socializations skills and peer relations. Layla was encouraged to journal her thoughts after the birthday party.

Layla and I processed her thoughts on the court hearing. Layla maturely noted that she shared with her caseworker that she was happy that her mother was getting help and doing better. She also shared that she was happy to see her during visits but didn't want to live with her just yet. Layla said that she hoped that the judge agreed.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with all three girls and broached the court hearing with them collectively. Kerry presented as the speaker for all three and strongly indicated that she felt her mother needed more time getting herself together before they could return home. Layla and Jessica agreed. It was noted that the girls expressed feeling empowered and listened to by being asked their thoughts and desires on the hearing. All three girls indicated that they were told by Ms. Tillman that adoption was "the back-up" plan if their mom isn't able to take care of them, although their understanding of what that actually means is unclear.

Behavior Management Services Summary Progress

We are maintaining contact with the Shanihans to continue monitoring of Layla's behavior. They report that she has been behaviorally appropriate and stable within the home. School reports indicate the same. Additional contact was made with the Shanihans to address any concerns or brewing behaviors resulting from the court hearing.

Carol Peilter



Supporting Healthy Families Monthly Progress Report

March 30, 2021

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management Summary/Progress

Ms. Tillman contacted me to share that Ms. Morgan had been successfully discharged from her inpatient substance abuse treatment facility. Visitations will continue. The treatment team has been made aware and will adjust treatment modalities to ensure adequate attention to all implications of Mom being reintroduced.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

Layla continues to be making progress in her home and school environments. During our most recent session, we processed her awareness that her mother had been discharged from the inpatient drug treatment facility. We also discussed her feelings regarding the visit on 3/8/2021. Layla animatedly shared that the visit was fun. She noted feeling happy to see her mother and even wrote in her journal that her mother remembered to bring one of her favorite snacks—popcorn. She noted sharing with her mom that she was in gymnastics and enjoying it. She said her mother was happy for her. Layla also spoke fondly of her foster parents and how they attend all of her gymnastics meets.

It is recommended that visits with her mother continue as long as the normalcy established in the Shanihan home is maintained. The support and services received in the foster home have proven to be of great benefit to Layla. Her journal entries are less angry, and her outlook on family and school are notably more positive.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I processed the visitation and extracurricular activities with all three girls. In addition, we discussed Jessica's phone calls with her father, Justin Rogers. Her excitement was noted, and we talked about the implications of his being incarcerated and how that will affect her communication with him until he is released. Jessica appears to understand, but this will remain a focal area in therapy. I will continue working with all three girls to understand and support Jessica's interactions with her father.

All three girls expressed happiness about visiting with their mother. Jessica expressed excitement about the books and popcorn snack brought by her mother. It is interesting to note that, while the girls were happily expressive and articulate about their visit with their mother, their unanimous voice to not yet return home just yet was telling.

Behavioral Management Services Summary/Progress

We met with the Shanihans. They reported that Layla is doing well and that de-escalation techniques are not needed as much.

School reports indicate that Layla is behaviorally appropriate in the classroom and with her peers.

We will continue to monitor and offer supportive services as appropriate.

Carol Peilter



April 30, 2021

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Case Management Summary/Progress

I was informed by Ms. Tillman that a new visitation plan had been established for unsupervised visits with the girls' mother, which allowed for Ms. Morgan to pick up the girls at the office and spend 1½ hours with them twice weekly. This information was shared with the treatment team for monitoring and impact on Layla and her siblings.

Individual Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with Layla. Her affect was bubbly and upbeat. Layla shared that her caseworker allowed her and her sisters to visit with their mother in an unsupervised setting, a nearby park.

Layla shared her observations of her mother being happy and attentive. We processed how that made her feel. She noted being hopeful that her mother continues to do well so that visits can continue.

Layla also reiterated that she looks forward to seeing her sisters. They often do their homework together or just do "fun stuff," like sleepovers and weekend visits. Layla continues to show remarkable progress in this environment and seems to look forward to visitation with her mother.

Given Layla's progress and ability to tap into sound coping mechanisms as it relates to experienced trauma, it is recommended that Layla be re-evaluated to determine further need of individual therapy.

Family Therapy Summary/Progress

I met with all three girls. Continued excitement was noted about unsupervised visitation with mother. Visits appear to be going well, and interactions seem appropriate.

I addressed Jessica's recent call with her father on 4/19/2021. Jessica said it was "nice" and that she liked talking with her dad.

The girls appear to be making great strides.

Behavioral Management Services Summary/Progress

The Shanihans continue to report that Layla is behaving appropriately. No anger outbursts, tantrums, or tearful episodes have been noted.

Carol Peilter



Discharge Summary

May 31, 2021

Client: Layla Morgan

Family: Kerry Morgan, Layla Morgan, and Jessica Morgan

Reason for Referral

Layla Morgan was referred to the Supporting Healthy Families therapeutic foster care program by Brooke Tillman, Department of Children and Families Services, after Layla was disrupted from her original foster care placement.

Summary

As part of her treatment plan, Layla received individual therapy, behavioral management services, and participated in family therapy with her sisters Kerry and Jessica. SHF also provided therapeutic visitation services for a short period of time to support Layla and Kerry Morgan's visitation with their biological father, Raymond Capa. The treatment team worked with Layla's foster family, the Shanihans, and provided behavioral management services in both the foster home and school setting.

Layla Morgan has benefited from the support and services that she has received. Foster parents, child, and school report significant reduction in disruptive behaviors, and child routinely demonstrates appropriate coping skills. Child also demonstrates improved socialization skills and appears to be able to develop and maintain appropriate relationships with peers and adults. Recent utilization review indicates that Layla no longer qualifies for higher level of care and behavioral management services. However, given that Layla Morgan remains in the custody of the state and the resolution of her case is not yet certain, Layla and her sisters would continue to benefit from ongoing therapeutic support, especially to provide support if reunification with their mother is not able to occur.

Recommendation

- 1. Layla Morgan be discharged from the rapeutic foster care program
- 2. Discontinue behavioral management services
- 3. Continue with outpatient family therapy

Carol Peilter, Ph.D. Clinical Director

Carol Poilton

Supporting Healthy Families