

Case 4 The Awang Family

Brief Background

Sarah was referred by MUIS in 1993 for the Rent and Utilities Assistance Scheme. Her husband Osman was imprisoned for raping their eldest daughter Tuminah and she was the sole provider.

Rashid, her son had just been released from detention for house-breaking and her daughters Zarinah and Lynn were still in school. Tuminah was unemployed and Sarah sought Anna's assistance to find her a job. She also confided in Anna about her daughter's rape and felt that it may be helpful for Anna to speak to Tuminah as she may not have got over the trauma.

Tuminah told Anna that she felt much pain over her past and her mother did not quite understand what she was going through. She felt that Sarah was too strict and would not listen to her views or explanations. Tuminah tried out a job recommended by the Centre but dropped out soon after. To avoid her mother's nagging, she stayed out late and occasionally did not return home. She hung out with a group of drug users and became addicted herself. During this period, she had an abortion.

Sarah reported the group to the Central Narcotics Bureau and Tuminah was detained at a drug rehabilitation centre for 6 months. Soon after Tuminah's detention, Rashid was also arrested and detained for drug abuse.

Tuminah and Rashid were released around the same time. Both worked and contributed to the family income. After work Rashid spent time with his girlfriend and Tuminah met someone new. However, she was devastated when her boyfriend was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment for housebreaking. She stopped working and turned to alcohol and drugs. Family relationships also took a turn for the worse and the hostility between Sarah and Tuminah affected her siblings. Zarinah could not tolerate the commotion at home and expressed that it affected her studies. Soon she too stayed out late and this added to Sarah's stress.

Tuminah slept in the day and stayed out the whole night. Sarah approached her brothers for help in disciplining her daughter but they failed and later advised her to send Tuminah for counselling at a Muslim welfare centre. Tuminah did not keep any appointments for counselling because she was convinced that her behaviour would not be accepted by a religious organisation.

In May 1995, Tuminah and Rashid were arrested again and were sentenced to 18 months in a drug rehabilitation centre. During detention, Tuminah discovered that she was pregnant but the pregnancy was aborted because of medical complications. This time Tuminah had intended to go through the entire pregnancy.

Sarah visited Tuminah and Rashid monthly and devoted herself to being a mother. She worked part-time and felt strongly that she should remain at home to supervise her younger children. Alas, her children resented her protective instincts and Zarinah was often at loggerheads with her.

Sarah feared that Zarinah would follow Tuminah's footsteps and blew her top when she learnt that her daughter smoked. So when Zarinah's school complained about her absence, Sarah decided to place her daughter into a hostel for girls. However, the situation improved after Zarinah attended pre-intake counselling sessions and she changed her mind. Zarinah had expressed that she felt she was never listened to by her mother and she did not like her mother's suspicious attitude towards her.

Tuminah and Rashid were released in November 1996. Rashid is working for a family friend and Tuminah is looking for a job. She had expressed that a job would keep her mind off drugs as she lacked the confidence to stay clean. Also, she hoped that her family could support her as she steers away from her drug-using friends.

Apart from the lure of drugs, Tuminah told Anna that she is still very much affected by her past. She still experiences much guilt and blames herself for not stopping her rape. Moreover, there is much disquiet on the matter among her family. Her ordeal is no secret but her mother and siblings avoid talking about it for fear of hurting one another.

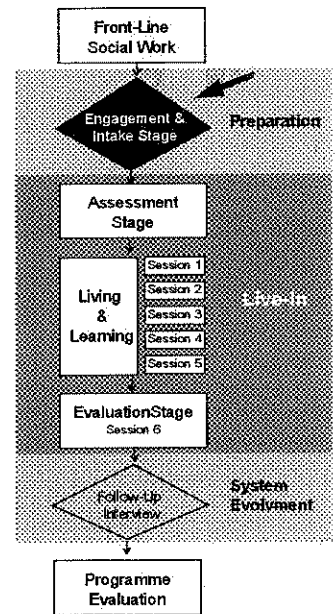
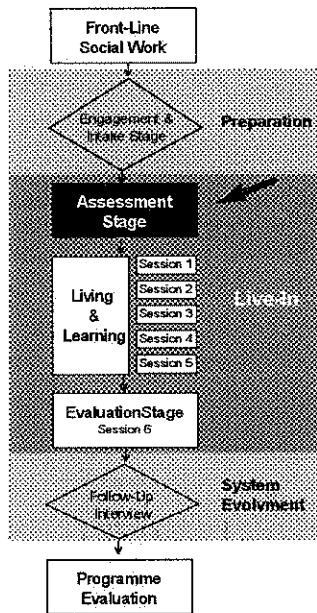
Tuminah is also troubled by accusations from her father's family that she fabricated the whole ordeal and a rumour that she is the daughter of another man. The rumour rationalises her father's wrong doing as revenge and explains away his brutality. Lastly, Tuminah feels very bleakly about her future. She does not think that any man would marry her if they knew of her past.

Live-in therapy was suggested to the family as it was felt that the experience would be beneficial in helping them function as a unit again after 19 months. It would also help re-establish their diffused lines of communication. When live-in therapy was suggested, Tuminah and Sarah were keen. Tuminah hoped that therapy would help her regain her mother's trust and support while Sarah desired for the family to live peacefully together.

Case 1 at a Glance

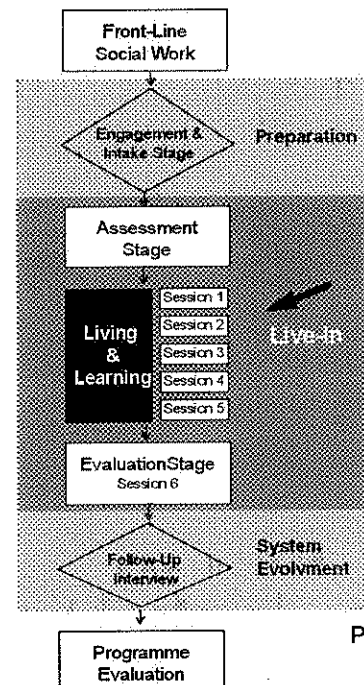
No of persons served	5	Language used in Therapy	Malay
Type of Housing	2 room rental flat	No. of live-in days	4 days 3 nights
Ethnicity	Malay		

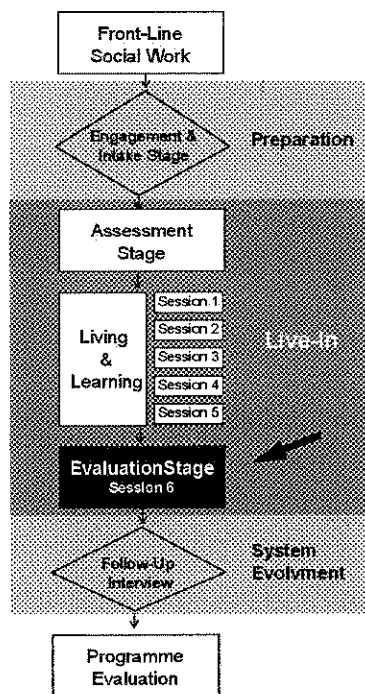
STAGES 1 & 2			
s/no	Date	Activity	Time
1.	261196	Pre-intake Assessment	1 hr
2.	301196	Intake Interview	1 hr
Sub Total			3.5 hr



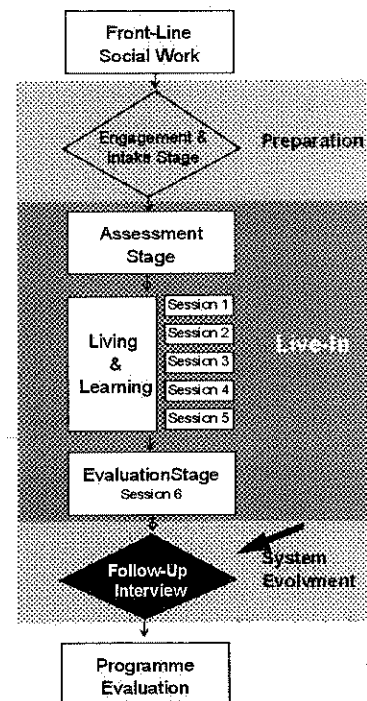
STAGE 3			
s/no	Date	Activity	Time
1.	021296	Pre-therapy Assessment	5 hr
Sub Total			5 hr

STAGE 4			
s/no	Date	Activity	Time
1.	031296	Session 1	1 hr
2.	041296	Session 2	1.5 hr
3.	041296	Session 3	1.5 hr
4.	031296	Incidental Session 1	1.5 hr
5.	041296	Incidental Session 2	1.5 hr
6.	051296	Accompanying Client	1.5 hr
7.	051296	Family Outing to P Ubin	4 hr
8.	051296	Closing Activity	2 hr
Sub Total		Sessions	7 hr
		Others	7.5 hr





STAGE 5			
s/no	Date	Activity	Time
1.	051296	Evaluation Session	1 hr
Sub Total			1 hr



STAGE 6			
s/no	Date	Activity	Time
1.	120197	Follow-up Interview	0.5hr
2.		Staff Discussion	1 hr
Sub Total			1.5 hr

Programme at a Glance
Date: Tuesday, 3 December - Friday, 6 December 96
Venue: NTUC Changi Holiday Flat

Time	Day	3 Dec 96	4 Dec 96	5 Dec 96	6 Dec 96
Morning			10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. • Urine test for Tuminah Incidental Session 2	• Accompanying Zarinah back to school	• Check out
	Afternoon	12.00 p.m. • Family picked up from flat	3.15 - 4.30 p.m. • Session 2 • Family time	12.00 - 4.00 p.m. • Trip to Pulau Ubin	
1.00 p.m. • Welcome lunch at Changi Point • Orientation of Changi Village		5.00 - 6.00 p.m. • Session 4			
Evening	2.30 p.m. • Check-in • Assessment Stage Canoeing Incidental Session 1	8.15 p.m. • Session 3	7.00 p.m. • Closing Activity BBQ with Staff		
	8.00 p.m. • Session 1 9.00 p.m. • End of Day	9.30 p.m. • End of Day	10.00 p.m. • End of Day		

The Key Players

The Family

The Awang family comprises a divorced mother and 4 children. They lived in a 2 room rental flat.

Sarah

A reserved person who does not reveal much about her experiences or feelings. She is very concerned about her children and enjoys a very close relationship with her youngest daughter Lynn. Where family problems are concerned, Sarah would take the initiative to seek help from professionals or relatives.

Since her husband's imprisonment, Sarah has been unable to work on a full-time basis. On and off she worked as a baby-sitter and a production operator. Her family's main source of financial support is a family friend whom her children refer to as Uncle Azman. Azman was introduced to the family by Tuminah and is now an important source of emotional and financial support for Sarah.

Tuminah

An attractive young lady with gentle and polite mannerisms that exude charm. She seeks understanding from her family for the pain of her trauma. Tuminah values her family and is very close to her siblings. She is currently looking for a job but her options are hindered by mandatory urine-testing 3 times a week.

Rashid

A shy person that spent most of his childhood and teenage years in institutions. During his latest detention, he took up body building and is now very conscious about his health. He has stopped smoking and continues with his daily exercise regime. Rashid reports for urine-testing once a week and is presently working as a labourer with Azman.

Zarinah

The most outspoken person in the family who is described as stubborn by her mother. Like most others her age, she has a large circle of friends and spends a lot of time out of the house. Her active social life is a constant source of conflict between her mother and her. Zarinah is in Secondary 2 and is struggling with her studies.

Lynn

A very quiet girl who is her mother's constant companion. While she smiles easily, she seems to worry a lot about her mother. Unlike her siblings, Lynn is physically less active and on the plump side. Lynn will begin Secondary education next year and hopes to continue doing well in her studies.

The Staff

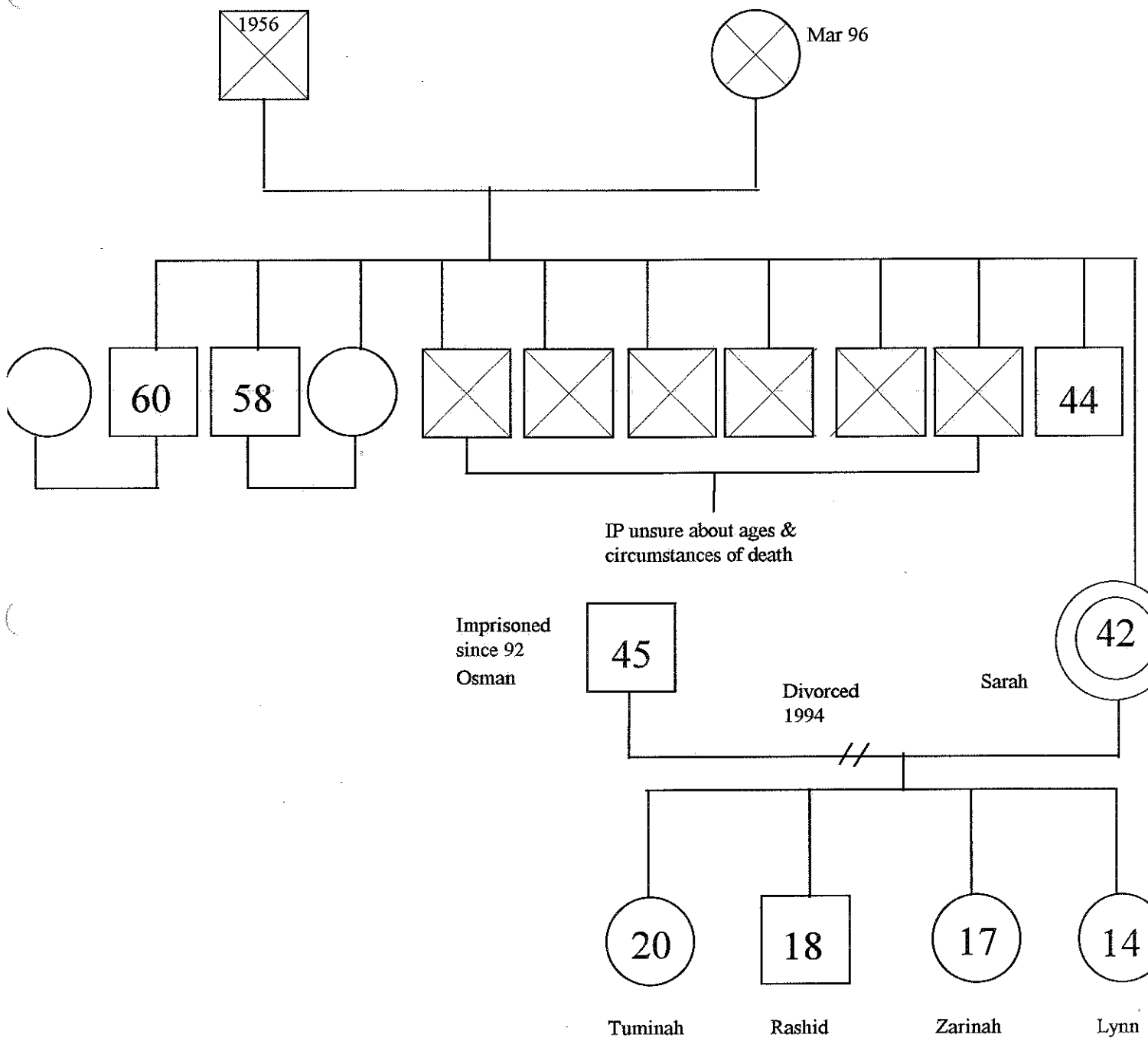
The Therapy Team

- Anna Tee
- Juliana Toh

The Discussion Team

- Ng Bee Leng
- Gerard Ee

Genogram



Pre-Intake Assessment

Tuesday, 26 November 1996, 10.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.

Present

- Anna
- Bee Leng
- Gerard
- Juliana

The symptom(s)/presenting problem(s)

- Sarah has a high level of anxiety about her children Tuminah and Rashid. Both have been recently released from a drug rehabilitation centre for a second time and she is worried that they may relapse.
- Prior to Tuminah's detention, there was a lot of conflict between Sarah and Tuminah and their relationship was very strained. As a result, Sarah has lost all trust in her daughter.
- Tuminah is not confident that she will be able to keep herself drug-free without the support of her family. However, she feels that family support is not forthcoming.
- Tuminah is still very much traumatised by her ordeal and cannot seem to move on with her life.
- Sarah's children are unhappy with her parental supervision and this is a source of conflict in the parent-child relationships.

The client's explanation for the problem

- Poor lines of communication make it difficult for family members to understand each other thus drawing them apart.
- The strong external peer pressure and drug environment are strong factors that will pull Tuminah and Rashid back to drugs.
- Sarah feels that Tuminah is too sensitive and she should just put her trauma behind and discontinue being affected by it.
- Tuminah feels that she is unable to communicate with her mother because there is a lack of trust. She also feels that her mother does not want to communicate because she does not want to acknowledge her struggles and fears.

The client's attempted solutions

- Sarah sought assistance from her brothers, Tuminah's godfather and a counsellor from a Muslim organisation to change Tuminah and help her get on with her life.
- Sarah tried to show more support to Rashid and Tuminah by visiting them regularly during their detention. She even tried to get Anna (caseworker) to appeal for Tuminah's early release when she was in poor health during detention.
- While Tuminah and Rashid were in detention, Sarah shifted to another housing estate so as to help her children avoid the negative peer pressure and drug culture upon their release.

- Another reason for shifting was to acquire a slightly larger flat so that Rashid, Tuminah and her other children can live a little more comfortably.
- Tuminah had tried to communicate her feelings to her mother but often her attempts escalated their conflict.

The client's observation of consequences

- Sarah feels that without any external support or effort from the family, it is likely that Tuminah and Rashid will relapse.
- Sarah feels that if Zarinah is not sufficiently supervised, she will follow the footsteps of her elder siblings.
- Tuminah feels that without family support to deal with her past trauma, it is likely she will go back to drugs to cope with her pain.
- Tuminah feels that if poor lines of communication continue to exist in the family, conflicts will arise and they will not be able to support each other.

The social worker's explanation for the problem(s) :

- **Relationship perspective**

☞ Poor lines of communication sustain the troubled relationships but Tuminah is usually identified as the cause of conflict.

☞ Tuminah's trauma has never been worked through by the family. It is acknowledged but the family has difficulty addressing the issue, causing Tuminah to feel that they do not understand. Also, this isolates Tuminah and leaves her alone in her struggles.

☞ Sarah's efforts at discipline have a negative effect on parent-child relationships as they cause resentment among her children.

- **Family background perspective**

☞ The entire family suffered tremendously from Osman's brutality. With the ceasing of the violence, the situation is deemed much improved and perhaps Sarah and some other family members feel that they should no longer be complaining. In a sense, Tuminah's current complaints may even appear trivial.

- **Cultural background perspective**

☞ The drug culture can be an overwhelming pull-factor that will continue to affect Tuminah's and Rashid's attempts to strengthen family relationships. There is no easy solution and an improved family situation will be an uphill task.

☞ Incest is a difficult issue to address within any culture. It is also likely that incest plays a crucial part in the dynamics between Tuminah and Sarah. Both probably feel blamed and are personally troubled for different reasons. Though not articulated, Sarah may doubt her roles as a mother and a wife while Tuminah may feel that she had betrayed her mother. This situation is complex and probably causes much confusion for the entire family.

- **Client's background perspective**

☞ Sarah too suffered much abuse during her marriage but has been able to move on with her life. As such, she expects Tuminah to do the same.

☞ By nature, Sarah is a very quiet person who keeps to herself. Tuminah's request for more dialogue may be a difficult request for her to comply with.

- **Socio-economic perspective**

☞ Sarah was the sole breadwinner in the family and this led her to work the night-shift for extra income. She may be feeling that she contributed to Tuminah being abused.

☞ The family is not well off and receives financial assistance; immediate basic needs take priority over the emotional and psychological well being of the family.

The function of the problem/symptom in the family

- By focusing on the drug issue, the family is distracted from talking about their inter-personal difficulties.
- Because of her ordeal, Sarah does not expect Tuminah to shoulder too many responsibilities and Tuminah may be comfortable with the situation. Also, Tuminah's inability to overcome her trauma organises Sarah to worry about her daughter and this perpetuates interaction. Perhaps without this interaction, unpleasant as it may be, Tuminah would lose all hope that her family can be a source of support for her and she will return to drugs earlier.

What maintains the problem/symptom

- Sarah has always been responsible for change within the family and although her children often resent her efforts, it gives her a sense of purpose. Perhaps too, Sarah's overwhelming efforts weaken her children's innate ability to assume personal responsibility.
- The family appears stuck in a problematic inter-personal pattern of interaction that has been shaped by a family history of trauma and crisis. Thus, they may be unaccustomed to a crisis-free existence.

The social worker's observations of consequences of the problem

When the effects of rehabilitation wear out, the family will revert to their previous conflictual pattern of interaction. Tuminah and Rashid will relapse and the rest of the family will continue to experience problems associated with poverty.

Intake Interview
Saturday, 30 November 1996, 7.30 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.
Let Us Trust Again

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid
- Lynn

Staff

- Anna
- Bee Leng
- Juliana

Pre-Session Information

A prior appointment on Wednesday, 27 November was cancelled as Sarah was not feeling well. It was reported that the rest of the family were dressed up and ready to leave the house when their mother decided to stay at home. Tuminah felt bad and apologised profusely for the cancellation.

The family was late for the appointment but they called to inform the staff about their delay. Zarinah did not attend the interview because she was away at a school camp.

Goal

- i. To reach mutually agreed objectives for the live-in.

Post-Session Findings

- i. Sarah wanted the family to be able to live together peacefully while Tuminah wanted Sarah to be more understanding of her feelings and to be more caring towards her. Tuminah also wanted more trust and better communication from her mother and Sarah wanted her to move on with her life instead of being continually affected by her traumatic past. Family members expressed their goals differently but the common theme was improved family relationships. Thus, the goal of the live-in was *to improve mutual understanding and trust among family members*.
- ii. Rashid seemed to have attended the interview out of respect for his mother. Rashid appeared rather uncomfortable and staff thought a good way of making him feel more at ease would be to bring some weight training equipment to the live-in. Rashid had a keen interest in body building.
- iii. Rashid is referred to as 'Abang' by Sarah and Tuminah even though he is the second in the hierarchy of children. There may be an expectation that he is required to be the male head of the household. Perhaps drug taking is a way of getting out of the heavy responsibility.
- iv. Tuminah appeared to be in pain seeking resolution and understanding regarding her past. She is unsure if family members have absolved her of all blame.

Process Recording

Tuminah smiled warmly as she met the staff. As the family took their seats, Sarah, Rashid and Lynn sat opposite Tuminah as though in preparation for a negotiation between two camps. Tuminah appeared to be isolated from her family but she maintained a very pleasant presence; speaking softly but clearly displaying the cultural characteristic of a well-brought up Malay young lady. The rest of the family too displayed much decorum when relating with each other and the staff.

Tuminah turned to her mother and sought her affirmation every time she said something. However, she was very clear about what she wanted for the live-in. She hoped the live-in would help her communicate better with her mother and as a result, her mother would show more understanding and concern towards her. In short, she longed for a more trusting and positive relationship with her mother. Tuminah was earnest about her hopes and at one point cried when she related a hurtful moment between Sarah and her.

Sarah appeared a little uncomfortable with Tuminah's goals for the live-in. Perhaps, she was embarrassed that she had contributed to the poor inter-personal relationships. Moreover, Sarah being quiet by nature was unaccustomed to having dirty linen being aired and her efforts as a mother criticised. She turned towards Lynn each time Tuminah mentioned something about her warding off the verbal blows.

Rashid was apprehensive throughout the session, keeping quiet and preferring to let Tuminah do most of the talking. Whenever Anna spoke to him, he replied politely but kept his head down prompting Sarah to urge him to look up. Head down, he remained and Sarah explained that he was probably shy because he did not speak English. Most of the session was in Malay, but the staff did not pressure Rashid as they appreciated the fact that he was the only male in a room of women.

As for Lynn, she looked like she was there for mother. She did not seek any specific goals for the live-in but agreed with her mother that there could be more peace within the family. Despite Sarah and Tuminah having their differences, they both expressed much concern about Zarinah who was absent. They felt that she was headstrong and if she refused family support, she might run astray and end up doing drugs or be in some other trouble.

Tuminah showed the most interest towards the live-in and asked many questions about it. She showed some reservation when asked if it was all right for Gerard, a male staff to be present. She agreed after briefly consulting with her mother. The session ended after the amount of subsidies and other practicalities were discussed with the family.

The Initial Live-in Assessment
Tuesday, 2 December 1996, 12.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.
We Are Organised

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid
- Lynn
- Zarinah

Staff

- Anna
- Gerard

Pre-session Information

Hypotheses

During the intake interview, it was only Tuminah who appeared most excited and motivated about the live-in. The commitment and motivation of the other family members are uncertain and the quality of their inter-personal relationships with each other is also unclear.

Goal

- i. To assess family functioning and to seek possible entry points for therapy.
- ii. To develop rapport with the family especially Rashid, Zarinah and Lynn

Summary of the Session

Besides the usual checking in procedures, canoeing was offered to the siblings. This activity contributed positively to the time spent. It was the first time for them and the activity became a shared family experience.

Programme At A Glance

- i. Despite the articulated difficulties, the family appeared rather close-knit. This closeness could be further developed as a resource for the family to draw on in sorting out their difficulties. Also, their consideration for each other appeared to translate into a highly orderly household.
- ii. Tuminah appeared as a resourceful and filial daughter. She would demonstrate her concern for her mother and her siblings by little acts of courtesy. She seemed to ensure that her presence had a harmonising effect within the family. As an individual, she seemed well-balanced, reacting to stressful situations in a measured way.
- iii. Despite being the only male, Rashid did not seem isolated from the family and participated in family activities effortlessly.
- iv. Lynn seemed more connected with her mother rather than her siblings. How this affects the overall family dynamics will need further assessment.

Process Recording

The family was ready when the staff arrived in two cars to pick them up. They had a lot of luggage and Lynn brought along her favourite pillow while Tuminah had a bag of video tapes. Tuminah put Sarah, Zarinah and herself in one car and her other two siblings in the other.

In Sarah's car, there was much banter among the family while Lynn and Rashid in the other car were quiet. Gerard who was with them eased them into small talk as it was the first time he was meeting them. When everyone got off at Changi, Sarah teased Lynn about slowing down Gerard's car which was the smaller of the two, with her large built and weight. Lynn smiled demurely at her mother's teasing and the family proceeded to the hawker centre.

Tuminah, Lynn and Sarah were holding hands as they walked. They appeared very close. Anna and the family were on one table while the rest of the staff were on another. Rashid appeared rather relaxed and commented on how much Changi had changed since he last visited. Tuminah joined in the conversation and soon they were both speaking candidly about some of their experiences in the drug rehabilitation centres.

During his detention and since his release, Rashid had been keeping fit by pumping iron so he was rather taken up by the gym equipment at NC. He enquired if he could make use of the equipment. Unlike the intake interview, Rashid was friendly and politely chatty. In fact, the entire family seemed relaxed and again Lynn was ribbed good-naturedly by Sarah, this time about her enormous appetite. There was a holiday feel as the family downed their food heartily and spoke excitedly about the possibility of visiting Pulau Ubin. Zarinah had visited the island on school activities and had told the family how much fun she has had.

After lunch, the family was left to check the inventory of furniture at the flat by themselves. They were super efficient and settled in very quickly. When Anna and Gerard went over to pass Sarah the subsidy, they could not help noticing the neatness and organisation. Sleeping arrangements were settled and Sarah's clothes were already out of the bag and hanging in the wardrobe. Tuminah had helped her mother arrange her belongings and Sarah had changed into her usual home clothes. Towels were in their place and Rashid's weight training equipment was placed unobtrusively in his room. Near the entrance, the footwear was arranged neatly in a line. A Malay movie was already running on the video player and Rashid, Zarinah and Lynn were perched comfortably on the sofa.

Rashid and Zarinah looked expectantly as Anna and Gerard entered the flat. 'So what's up? What do we do now?' their looks revealed. Gerard then offered to take the siblings canoeing. This got them excited and after quickly consulting with each other they got changed. Lynn decided to stay back to accompany her mother while the rest were out of the flat in a jiffy. Later, Anna learnt from Sarah that Lynn was a little worried that she would not be able to manage the activity. At the beach, Rashid teamed up with Zarinah while Gerard paddled with Tuminah. None of them could swim but Rashid felt more secure with Zarinah as he thought she was more sporty. It was a new experience and the siblings took to the water apprehensively but yet willingly. After paddling about 50 metres away from shore, Rashid commented that the sea was peaceful and relaxing. His sisters nodded and they let their canoes float aimlessly quietly enjoying the sound of the sea.

The session ended on a slightly chaotic note. Nearing the shore, Gerard asked Tuminah if she wanted to dip in the water before going back. She thought it would be nice to stay for a little longer and her siblings agreed to follow suit. Gerard then asked her if it was okay to turn the canoe over as it was the quickest way into the water. She replied cheerfully that she was game and even when Gerard checked with her again. When the canoe capsized, Tuminah was panicking and shouting for help and Gerard had to pull her ashore. Her siblings looked on worriedly but approached when Gerard called them for assistance.

Gerard apologised profusely but when composed, Tuminah laughed her head off explaining that she did not realise that Gerard meant to capsized the canoe when he said 'turn.' Soon the siblings laughed along although they admitted that they were quite scared.

Children Versus Mum

Tuesday, 3 December 1996, 8.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid
- Lynn
- Zarinah

Staff

- Anna
- Bee Leng
- Gerard
- Juliana

Pre-session Information

Hypotheses

During the assessment stage, family members demonstrated much independence. While this is a strength, it implies that mutual support may not be forthcoming when needed. Also, the respectful decorum in which the family conducts itself may hinder the raising of taboo or sensitive issues which may be difficult to handle. Thus, Tuminah may use the session as a hearing out for her and as an opportunity to communicate with her mother.

Tuminah harbours feelings of blame for her ordeal and the conflicts with her mother deprives her of the emotional dependence she desires from her mother. A positive relationship between Sarah and Tuminah will play an important part in helping Tuminah overcome her confusion.

Goals

- i. To provide the family a chance to hear Tuminah's concerns and grievances so as to facilitate lines of communication.
- ii. To check out the needs and goals of Rashid and Zarinah.
- iii. To establish the desired end result the family would like for the live-in.

Summary of the Session

The session highlighted the lack of trust between Sarah and her children, especially Tuminah. Often Rashid, Zarinah and Lynn identified with Tuminah which resulted in Sarah feeling implicated. While the session was not able to dwell deeper into the issue of trust, the family appeared to benefit from the information shared. It provided family members a difference in their experience of each other.

Post Session Findings

- i. The siblings appear in alliance over their mother's 'old fashion ways' and Sarah may have felt blamed or attacked. There is a need for Sarah to feel understood and supported by her children.
- ii. Tuminah was the spokesperson for her siblings and Sarah may have felt that Tuminah was venting her frustrations with her.
- iii. Sarah organises her family according to righteous principles and practices and over time her children may find it difficult to keep up with her expectations. Thus, they may distance themselves from her.
- iv. Tuminah seeks understanding from her mother in general and not just about her ordeal. Also, the session did not seem to enable Tuminah to feel that her mother understood her.
- v. The family was unable to pin-point their concerns exactly, preferring to offer nebulous issues and pat answers. They appear to be experiencing difficulties addressing conflicts preferring to maintain harmony despite their discomfort.

Process Recording

Tuminah seated herself next to her mother but reluctantly moved to be with her sisters as the camera could not capture her. The family appeared relaxed and joked that the presence of the camera made them feel like the family in the popular television sitcom 'Under One Roof.'

Tuminah began by thanking the staff for arranging the live-in. 'The family really appreciates the effort, the comfortable flat, the canoeing, everything.' The rest nodded in agreement and the staff acknowledged their thanks. It was a little early for thanks but this decorum was characteristic.

Anna then clarified the roles of the staff present differentiating between the therapists and the discussion team. She also told the family that the number of therapy sessions will depend on how the live-in develops. The family listened and responded that they would have no problem with the scenario described.

All this while Sarah glanced at Tuminah every now and then. She appeared to be seeking her bearings from Tuminah's responses. Both Sarah and her Tuminah were obviously making efforts to remain on pleasant terms treading very carefully with each other. When Anna asked the family to describe what was troubling them, Sarah immediately proclaimed 'I know I am wrong and I have to change.'

The underlying strain was beginning to seep through the decorum. Sarah chose not to elaborate and Zarinah shared her difficulties 'I am so bored at home - no activities to do. Also financial problem. When I go out with classmates I don't have enough money.' Zarinah spoke with a tinge of resentment but her deprivation rang through genuinely striking a chord within her siblings.

Tuminah laughed nervously when it was her turn to speak. 'Mum is unreasonable, she don't like my friends' Tuminah felt she had betrayed her mother and laughed awkwardly to cover her embarrassment. Anna turned to Sarah and asked her how did she determine that Tuminah's friends were bad. 'Because her friends are drug addicts and she went in twice' was Sarah's immediate response. Lynn was the next to speak. She said she felt sympathy for Tuminah who must be still troubled by her ordeal and to make matters worse, did not seem to get the understanding she needed from mother. As for herself, she did not have any serious difficulties. 'No problem' Rashid echoed his sister. Rashid had been sitting quietly with his arms folded most of the time. He was rather tense and uncomfortable when he had to speak. However, just like Lynn, Tuminah had his sympathy. Tuminah felt that Sarah was probably unhappy about many things happening in the family but

preferred to keep these matters to herself. This created much discomfort among the children and she expressed 'it is better to talk, if family can share problems, more happy.'

The children had spoken and Sarah was left to defend herself. She explained that she did not like her children's friends because they were usually boisterous, enjoyed visiting discos and hanging out late. She felt that their lifestyle opened them to various negative influences. Also, she feared they were drug addicts.

Lynn looked towards Tuminah and offered a smile as their mother spoke. As for Tuminah, she looked sad as she swallowed a lump in her throat. When asked to respond to Sarah, Rashid summed up his feelings and thoughts in one word 'Pressure!' Then Tuminah exclaimed that it was very boring at home and she needed her friends. Also, she was very disturbed by Sarah's display of anger whenever there was a disagreement. Sarah would shout at the top of her voice and throw plates and other household items around. It would be such a commotion that the whole block would be aware. Sarah had such a loud voice that even neighbours started calling her 'Mak Tarzan.'

Zarinah joined in and described Sarah as being very suspicious and fearful whenever she went out with friends. 'Mum is always scared that I will do bad things.' Sarah was near tears and covered her mouth with her hand as the barrage continued. 'She likes to jump to conclusions like a speedboat motor; all the negatives...' Tuminah burst out.

Zarinah and Tuminah were in tandem taking turns expressing their grievances but sometimes, the complaints came across playfully releasing the escalating tension. 'Mum don't like to dance but we like' Zarinah joked but the humour had little effect on Tuminah who was very in touch with her disappointments, hurt and anger. In a rhetoric manner, she said that it was no wonder why Rashid and her were in the drug rehabilitation centres. She elaborated that there had never been any role models for her or her siblings. 'Father was as you know and mother is not too right. Why can't I say we are as happy as other families?' It was a powerful statement and silence followed punctuated only by Tuminah's quiet tears. Lynn put her hand on Tuminah's shoulder and the family was left to mull over their thoughts for a few moments.

When Anna began again, she discovered that the family especially Tuminah felt 'lighter' after the exchange. She asked Tuminah to describe how the family could support her. 'I want mum to be more understanding and trusting. I want caring and concern.' 'Is it only mum or the rest of the family?' Anna probed but Tuminah chose to answer indirectly 'Actually, I have ever sent a letter to my family telling them I love them all and asking for a chance to start again but mum did not reply.' Connecting Sarah to Tuminah, Juliana ask 'If you were to write a letter, what would you say to Tuminah?' 'Prove to me by your actions.' Spontaneously, Tuminah responded 'I am trying my best.'

Sarah and Tuminah then spoke a little about Tuminah's difficulties at previous jobs. Sarah acknowledged that there were practical constraints like not having the necessary bus fare to get to work but still felt that Tuminah was too sensitive and could have stayed at her jobs for longer periods.

The rest especially Zarinah, listened intently as Sarah and Tuminah conversed. Half crying Tuminah reiterated that she did not have her mother's trust. 'How can Tuminah make mum more restful?' 'As long as I never go back to my old friends and I know what I am doing.' Tuminah replied Juliana. 'How will mummy know?' 'She has my friends' phone numbers. The mood changed as Tuminah expressed her hopes for herself and the family. The family listened intently as she shared and everyone admitted that it was the first time they had heard Tuminah's hopes. Sarah giggled nervously when she admitted that she appreciated Tuminah's sharing. Perhaps the family appreciated Tuminah's sincerity as she related how she had been reflecting a lot during her detention. She thought deeply about family life and how she could overcome her ordeal concluding that family support would be vital for a mutually promising future. Though fearful, she hoped to get married and to be able to help out with family expenses especially since both her younger sisters were still in school.

In response, Zarinah hoped aloud that Tuminah would find new friends and commented that perhaps everyone in the family needed each other. She added 'It's very touching that Tuminah cares so much about the family.' Rashid had similar thoughts too and for the first time during the session he expressed his opinion in a complete sentence. After tense moments, the family ended the session on a note of hope.

Mum Speaks

Wednesday, 4 December 1996, 3.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid
- Lynn
- Zarinah

Staff

- Anna
- Bee Leng
- Gerard
- Juliana

Pre-Session Information

Hypotheses

Living with an abusive spouse for many years had moulded Sarah into an action-oriented person. She developed a high threshold for tremendous pressure, pain and difficulties. Thus, Sarah had learned to get on with her life, duties and responsibilities against all odds.

Sarah was the only functional parent within a cycle of family violence. Thus, her priorities were the safety of her children and the provision of basic necessities for the family. The circumstances left her little time or energy to fulfil the role of a nurturing mother. Currently, in the light of the conflictual relationships with her children, Sarah may be feeling guilty and blamed for her not being a more nurturing mother. Also, although she provided the family as much stability as it was possible, her efforts are not appreciated.

Goals

- i. To help the family experience Sarah as a human person with strengths and weaknesses rather than a faultless and stoic authority figure.
- ii. To help the children appreciate their mother's efforts as a parent.
- iii. To establish a psychological and emotional connection between Sarah and her children.

Summary of the Session

An emotionally charged session that enabled family members to share personal information that had never been raised. The hearing out transformed initial anger and frustrations into healing interaction patterns.

Post-Session Findings

- i. Sarah efforts as a parent enabled her children to experience some form of security despite the chaos during their childhood. Currently, this security is evident in the manner in which the children feel safe enough to converse with each other on the feeling level.
- ii. The family was materially deprived but not emotionally. There appears to be a very supportive sibling sub-system.
- iii. Lines of communication between Sarah and her children were established. The children were very responsive towards Sarah's sharing of her struggles and offered their sympathy. Perhaps this would encourage Sarah to disclose more to her children in the future.
- iv. Tuminah was satisfied that her goal to improve communication with the family was somewhat met.
- v. The live-in context provided the opportunity for staff to access an actual family conflict making therapy most relevant.
- vi. The family conflict was helpful in removing the characteristic decorum which often hindered the family from raising sensitive issues.

Process Recording

*S*arah refused to sit with her children as the staff called the session to a start. She pulled a chair and sat outside the circle formed by the rest. Tuminah had her back towards her mother and they exchanged brief and angry sentences without facing each other. It was a telling picture as every time Sarah spoke it was as if she was on Tuminah's back. The staff were a little bewildered because they walked into the middle of a fight and had yet to make sense of the happenings.

Zarinah tried to be the peacemaker as she explained 'Tuminah did not mean to hurt Mak's feelings, this is just a misunderstanding and it is a small matter.' She added that just before the session, Tuminah and her siblings were recollecting their past and Tuminah commented that as children they were always materially needy. They survived on a day to day basis and their parents never had enough money for the occasional family outing. On hearing these comments, Sarah lost her head.

'Mak cannot understand that we were just talking and not trying to blame her' Tuminah joined in. Rashid also reassured his mother that they meant no offence by shaking his head and smiling politely when Anna asked if he blamed his mother for their deprived past. Trying to move away from the problematic interaction pattern, Anna commented that it must have been very difficult for Sarah as a de-facto single parent when her ex-husband was still around. She then asked the children if they were aware of their mother's struggles.

'I was in the Boy's Home but I guess it was terrible' Rashid reflected. Zarinah added on 'Mak's responsibilities were a lot, washing, cooking, looking after us and teaching us to be independent. She must have sacrificed very much.' Then Zarinah shook her head when Anna asked her if she had any idea how Sarah was able to cope during the hard times.

Overcoming her anger, Tuminah affirmed Sarah too 'She suffered a lot. It was definitely not easy for Mak being beaten by father. Also, she worked very hard and it must have been a hard life.' As she finished, Tuminah started crying. Zarinah who was composed till now became wet in the eyes and blurted out 'Not only Mak suffered. We also suffered. We children are all the victims!' The vivacious and reportedly headstrong teenager suddenly appeared very needy and wanting.

There was no visible display of emotion as Sarah listened to her children. In a collected manner, she recollected the hard times when Anna asked her to describe her experiences. Sarah recounted that she had to work two jobs because her husband's employment was irregular and he did not contribute to the household expenses. He was a demanding man who was addicted to a mentholated powder for

headaches. Without the snuff powder and his cigarettes, he would be temperamental and abusive. Hence, a sizeable amount of the family's income would be used to feed his cravings.

When there was not enough money, Sarah borrowed and even begged as she feared the abuse. Sarah seldom fought back and resigned herself to her husband's abuse but she was unprepared for her children to accept the same. Whenever she sensed that her husband would be abusive, she would wake up in the wee hours of the morning even after just returning home late from work a few hours earlier, freshen her children and pack them off to friends or relatives. This was a frequent routine but it gave her peace of mind to focus on work.

The strong front Sarah put up began to crack as her story unfolded. Tuminah looked at her mother with concern when Sarah's voice began to quiver. Within moments, Sarah broke down in tears. The children observed respectful silence as they watched their mother overwhelmed with emotion.

All the children revealed that it was the first time Sarah had told them the story. They were probably much too young to understand their mother's worries and concerns. Rashid became sullen and his face filled with sadness while all his sisters started crying. Rashid and Zarinah felt that Sarah was very gutsy to have brought them out of the house. 'At least she thinks about our safety. I realise I have such a wonderful mum. I feel lucky' Zarinah reflected.

As the session was mostly in Malay, the therapy team paused the session for a while to clarify their uncertainties in the family's presence. Here, Tuminah asked her mother to sit closer and Sarah moved into the circle. When the staff resumed they asked the family if they wanted to share the thoughts they had during the interval. 'I thought about the past and I really hate my father but I feel safe now.' Zarinah responded.

'Mak seemed to have provided a sense of security among the children. Yesterday, Tuminah felt that it was safe enough to speak about her disagreements with Mak without fear. It was not an easy task but there was enough faith that her family will not reject her despite her comments' Anna remarked. 'I wonder if the children could tell me what are Mak's other strengths.'

Tuminah described her mother as a patient person while the rest thought she was a very brave and strong-willed person. The children were then asked to describe what they thought were Sarah's hopes. Zarinah thought that her mother wanted happiness for the family. Zarinah looked forward to the day when her mother 'could work less because everyone else earned enough to support her.'

As for Tuminah she thought that her mother would like the children not to forget the sacrifices she had made. At this point, Lynn already teary-eyed started resting her head on Tuminah's shoulder and started crying. Spontaneously, Sarah also cried. After a while, Sarah composed herself but Lynn still had her head down. Zarinah and Tuminah comforted their sister and they spoke in soft tones. The staff kept quiet for the next 5 minutes allowing the family solidarity to set in.

'Lynn is crying because she feels a lot for the sacrifices mum had made for us. She studies very hard to make mum happy but sometimes she is worried she cannot achieve.' Zarinah spoke on behalf of her sister.

At this point, the staff felt that Sarah and her children had connected to some extent on the emotional level and family members were being very supportive of each other. Thus, they decided to take their leave so as to allow the family time alone to strengthen their bond.

Just A Little Concern, Please Wednesday, 4 December 1996, 8.00 p.m. - 9.30 p.m.

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid
- Lynn
- Zarinah

Staff

- Anna
- Bee Leng
- Gerard
- Juliana

Pre-Session Information

Hypotheses

The family is at a life-stage where mother needs to play the role of the home-maker and 3 of the children are on the brink of leaving home. If this life-stage development is not negotiated productively, family tension will increase pushing the children, especially Rashid and Tuminah out of the family pre-maturely. This would be detrimental to their overall well-being as they currently seek a secure family environment to support them in their rehabilitation process.

Also, the family should be aware and realistic about the pull of the external systems and pertinently in their case, the drug system. The pull of the drug system is notorious and coupled with push factors within the family, Rashid and Tuminah's rehabilitation process will most probably be ruined.

Thus, the family should work towards the strengthening of pull factors within their system so as to weaken the pull factors of detrimental external systems.

Goals

- To highlight the pull of the drug system and to prepare the family mentally for the difficulties they will face in the future.
- To help the family reflect on how they may strengthen the pull factors within their family system.

Summary of the Session

The session brought forth the enthusiasm and hope the family had for the future. The experience of the live-in had been very positive and the family were exuberant. Happy as they were for the family, the staff helped them focus on the practicalities of daily communication and living.

Post-Session Findings

- The family appear to be on a high over their positive live-in experience and may not have a realistic view of the difficulties presented by daily living.
- The ability to draw boundaries in communication between the children and Sarah affirms an earlier assessment that the children are experiencing the family as a safe environment.
- To the children, the perception and experience of continued concern from their mother is more important than the quantity of verbal communication.

Process Recording

*I*t felt like a place called home when the staff met the family. It was not that they felt like part of the family but rather there was an easy peaceful feeling as the family greeted them. Much had changed over the last few hours as they watched the family enjoying each other's company. The gentle teasing, jokes and laughter could only be summed up in one word - happiness.

They approached the therapy session with hopeful anticipation and the confidence that things could only get better. Even Sarah who was normally reserved commented that she found Juliana vaguely familiar and asked Juliana directly if she had ever been on television. The children were curious about the transvestites that frequented the area and openly asked Gerard for more information. This light banter signalled to the staff the comfort and trust that prevailed within the family.

Anna outlined the concept of push and pull factors within the family and highlighted the draw of the drug system. The family had no trouble comprehending and went on to describe how they could reduce the pull of the drug system for Rashid and Tuminah. 'Don't give them a lot of pressure' Zarinah started the ball rolling. 'Have a schedule for family activities. For example, on Saturdays we could all go on outings.' Lynn agreed heartily with Tuminah's suggestion 'Yes we could spend time together, watch TV and eat together.' 'I hope she doesn't mean bathing and sleeping together' Zarinah joked. The family chuckled but when Rashid said 'My feelings are the same' they burst into laughter and Sarah slapped Rashid playfully on the thigh.

The family had anticipated his response and commented that he seemed to have a standard response during therapy. Rashid grinned sheepishly and covered his mouth with his hand but after a couple of seconds before the laughter died down he articulated in a clear and firm voice 'Let's have no noise in the family. The fights and commotion give me much pressure. If there is really a problem, we should all share it with one another.'

'The children seem to be able to share their problems among themselves, can you share problems with mother too?' Anna's question brought the family back to the practicalities of family relationships. Zarinah was not sure if her mother could always take the truth. Her guess is that Sarah would blow her top if she shared all her secrets. Sarah responded to her daughter by saying that the timing must be right for problems to be discussed. She felt that she would rather be aware of what her children are up to than to hear it from another source later. Sarah also told the family that she will try not lose her temper when confronted with her children's difficulties.

Tuminah was more supportive of her mother rationalising than her mother often reciprocated 'softness with softness.' She felt that an honest relationship with Sarah could be nurtured and suggested that they talk more just before bedtime because she had always experienced very positive conversations when the family members were lying on the floor waiting to doze off.

'What will help make the children confident enough to share with mother?' Julie enquired. Zarinah answered in a reflective manner deflecting the question. Perhaps, what was important to her was not whether she could share everything with her mother but Sarah's constant display of concern. She cited the example of an uncle who often enquired about her progress at school. This demonstrated concern and she felt confident confiding in him.

Zarinah wanted Sarah to be more pro-active in showing concern and she summed it up by saying 'don't get me only when I am in trouble.' Zarinah elaborated on her need for a certain amount of privacy. She recounted that Lynn would keep their mother informed when she shared her problems with her. Sarah confirmed the statement and acknowledged that Lynn would 'spy for her.' Despite the breach of confidentiality, Zarinah did not show any resentment towards Lynn. Instead, she appeared to be teasing her shy sister. She then leaned onto Tuminah and added that they shared secrets too which were kept from Sarah.

Sarah responded by reiterating that she preferred to be aware of her children's problems. This was especially so for Zarinah because 'When Tuminah is up to no good I can tell but not Zarinah.' Sarah appeared to be slightly uncomfortable with the boundaries to communication which her children were drawing and enquired about the need for secrets. 'I don't want to worry you Mak' Zarinah verbalised. Juliana then restated the situation by concluding that the children still wanted much communication with their mother but they also wanted some personal space.'

To reassure their mother, Zarinah and Tuminah agreed that they will keep her informed of their whereabouts whenever they leave the house. The staff then checked if Rashid and Lynn were able to receive emotional support from their family. Lynn felt that Rashid who is usually quiet will speak to Sarah if he had a problem. Sarah confirmed this by revealing that Rashid often spoke to her about work. Rashid felt that Lynn was close to her sisters and their mother and would have no difficulty getting support when needed. However, he had no idea what her difficulties would be.

Nonetheless, the family expressed confidence that they will be able to support each other stating that they realised the importance of positive family relationships. The exuberance displayed by the family at the beginning of the session was toned down with a touch of realism at the end.

Other Incidental Purposeful Discussions**Synopsis**

s/no	Date	Time	# hours	Client/Worker	Issues
1.	3 Dec. 96	4.00 - 5.30 p.m.	1.5	Sarah/Anna	Family, personal history and inter-personal relationships.
2.	4 Dec. 96	10.00 -10.30 a.m. 12.00 - 1.00 p.m.	1.5	Tuminah/Gerard	Drugs, personal history and parent-child relationship.

**Discussion 1
Alone with Sarah**

Anna was writing her case notes in the staff's flat when Sarah visited unexpectedly. Except for Lynn, the rest of the children were out canoeing with Gerard. She accepted Anna's offer of coffee and soon she started chatting away.

Sarah shared about her ex-husband's violent behaviour towards her and her children. According to her, he was fine until the birth of Rashid. After which, he stopped working and spent most of his time minding his pet birds. The problems began when he started demanding money for cigarettes and would throw a tantrum when his demands were not met. His temper tantrums worsened and there was a period when Tuminah and Rashid had to beg on the streets to feed his craving for cigarettes. Sarah and her children would do anything to appease the man for they feared his wrath. Besides begging, they sometimes peddled 'kuih kuih'(cakes, cookies) from door-to-door.

Sarah then spoke about her current personal relationship with Azman, a family friend. She got to know Azman through Tuminah. Tuminah was friends with a relative of Azman and soon Azman learnt of Tuminah's past too. He was very sympathetic towards Tuminah and visited the family often offering his friendship and practical assistance.

Over time, Azman's friendship with the family deepened and he even asked Sarah for her hand in marriage. Sarah declined as she did not feel ready to make a commitment. Also, because of her past experience, she worried about the safety of her daughters should there be a man in her house.

Post-Session Findings

- i. Sarah seized the opportunity to seek support for her personal issues. Perhaps, she had difficulty raising such issues with the rest of the family because around her children she had to maintain her position as the authority figure. There may be a need to create a separate therapeutic context for her to address her personal issues.
- ii. Azman is a family friend that seems to have some influence in family matters. There may be a need to take his contribution and opinions into consideration in the future.

Discussion 2 To and Fro Urine Test

Tuminah was dressed smartly in a blouse and pants and was wearing light make-up when Gerard met her. Noticing Gerard's surprise, she explained that a well-groomed appearance was part of the urine-test routine. Failure to do so would solicit a stern reprimand from the supervising officer.

Tuminah was grateful for the efforts staff were making to accommodate her and her family and as soon as the opportunity arose, she thanked Gerard. As the ride began, Gerard enquired about the urine-test procedures. Tuminah provided the information freely and soon she was also sharing information about her detention. She spoke candidly about life at the DRC and how her sentence was extended for a month simply because she marked her initials on her bed sheet. The rules were rigid and unbending and she was charged with vandalism.

Tuminah shared the information without lamenting. She was stoic about the event and accepted it as a hard lesson learnt. She concluded that it was the intention of the institution to instil discipline by insisting on complete compliance. The conversation progressed naturally and soon Gerard and her were discussing drug trends. At the DRC, inmates were categorised by the type of drugs they abused and she provided Gerard a vivid picture of the different categories.

Perhaps by talking about others, Tuminah was getting in touch with herself and at the same time distancing herself from a situation she hoped she would never return to. She was also testing the waters with Gerard establishing the communication comfort zones.

On the journey back, Tuminah spoke about how her family was isolated from relatives. She felt that the drug convictions and her ordeal with her father had contributed to this. Thus, her family preferred to keep to themselves whenever possible. She then described her difficulties with her mother. While deep down, she believed that her mother cared for her and her siblings, she had difficulty accepting her mother's cool and distant disposition. To her there was only anger and disappointment in her mother and this made it difficult to improve their relationship. Also, her mother never shared her difficulties or any personal information and this made it difficult for her and her siblings to offer any support or concern.

Post-Session Findings

- i. The extended family may be more of a source of tension rather than support.
- ii. Tuminah's immediate concern is to improve her relationship with her mother.

We Feel Good

Thursday, 5 December 1996, 5.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid
- Lynn
- Zarinah

Staff

- Anna
- Bee Leng
- Gerard
- Juliana

Pre-Session Information

Hypotheses

The family appear to have found the live-in a very positive experience. Further sessions would be inappropriate as the family appear to be benefiting from the supportive environment they had created over the last few days. Thus, the goal of improving family relationships seem to have been achieved and a family accustomed to continual failure should conclude therapy on a note of success.

Goals

- To evaluate the impact of the live-in and to bring therapy to a closure.

Summary of the Session

A final session that enabled the family to end the live-in on a note of success and hope.

Post-Session Findings

- i. Tuminah felt that the goal of creating lines of communication between family members was achieved as the live-in provided the new experience of hearing her mother share personal information, views and feelings. Likewise, Sarah was gratified that she was able to understand her children better after hearing them speak.
- ii. Rashid found the entire experience completely new and enjoyable. His childhood was fraught with deprivation and he had spent much time in institutions. Thus, he found the mixture of recreation and therapy a meaningful experience for the family as well as himself.
- iii. The live-in provided a context for the family to connect with each other in a manner never before. Unlike previous encounters with each other which were often stressful, they were able to enjoy each other's company.
- iv. The live-in enhanced and strengthened the stability which the family has been trying to develop after separating from their abusive father. It created the context to bring out the solidarity that was within each other but never expressed or acknowledged.
- v. The family is experiencing the euphoria of a very positive experience. While this is very strengthening for the family, it will wear out. It is unclear if the family has actually developed sufficient resources to overcome the low points of daily living in the near future. Over time, the family system may be unable to resist the homeostatic tendencies and the shape of the system may deteriorate. Follow-up, if necessary should be at the point when the system starts to deteriorate so as to improve the chances of building on the achievements of this live-in.

Process Recording

Anna started the session by casually asking the family about the Pulau Ubin trip. Instantaneously, Rashid gave the staff the thumbs up gesture and said that he had so much fun he did not want to leave. This spontaneity was a refreshing transformation by the normally tensed young man. Sarah shared similar feelings 'It was like we were back together in a kampong. I too would have liked to stay a while longer.'

'Maybe we should apply for P.R.' Tuminah joked and added that the tranquillity of the island made her feel like she had not a care at all. Even Zarinah who had visited the island before described the experience positively. Although with friends, she would have explored more places, she found it heart-warming to be doing something together with her family. 'For the first time, we all enjoyed and became tired together.'

During the trip Lynn had difficulty keeping up with her more active siblings but she liked the family togetherness 'it was terribly tiring but it was good to be with family.' Tuminah informed that Lynn was very worried for Sarah when it started raining and Rashid, Zarinah and herself decided to leave the island because the lightning troubled Lynn.

Anna praised the family for showing much mutual concern during the trip and enquired about how they felt about the entire live-in. Again Rashid responded animatedly, and he described the canoeing as a new and enjoyable experience. He particularly appreciated the peacefulness he experienced when he stopped the canoe in the middle of the sea.

The family laughed when Anna commented that Rashid was speaking more but Rashid did not seem to mind and laughed along. Zarinah then commented that she appreciated the 'communication between everyone' and the fact that 'all not working, no stress.' Sarah added on and described that she liked how the family could eat together and fool around with the karaoke set.

'This togetherness you are all experiencing sounds wonderful but can it be created at home?' Anna challenged. 'At home, not all of us can eat together' Zarinah hesitatingly reflected. 'Can, can, I have confidence' Rashid countered. Rashid was so sure that the rest simply looked at him with loving pride without disagreement.

Anna re-focused on her earlier question and asked Lynn for her comments. 'All right, this counselling. It was helpful.' 'This few days we changed a lot. We feel a lot closer to mum. Actually, I have friends camping at the beach but I feel I want to stay here.' Zarinah helped out. Tuminah continued, 'Fine, there was no bising (noise, commotion), we co-operated and we had meaningful conversations. Hope we can live together like this.' When it was his turn, Rashid reiterated that there were no problems and he was optimistic about the future.

'Do you think the goals of the live-in were achieved?' Anna asked. 'Berjaya (success)' was Tuminah's reply. Sarah did not fully comprehend what Anna was asking and immediately the children tried explaining to her. The staff watched impressed as Rashid patiently explained the question to his mother drawing examples from the previous interviews. Rashid did a good job explaining and besides gaining understanding, Sarah looked like she felt a sense of contentment and pride. Perhaps, Rashid being her only son had a special place in Sarah's heart.

'This counselling is good because it gave us the opportunity to hear one another' Sarah replied after understanding. 'Mum is right, I give it 100% plus' Rashid emphasised.

We Were So Busy Being Family!
Sunday, 12 January 1997, 2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.

Synopsis

Family

- Sarah
- Tuminah
- Rashid

Staff

- Anna

Pre-Session Information

Hypotheses

The family did not attend the follow-up interview as scheduled and so the staff decided to visit them to assess the situation. The staff were concerned that perhaps the family situation had worsened and the family were too embarrassed to seek help again.

Goal

- i. To assess the impact of the live-in and to explore the possibility of engaging the family in further therapy.

Summary of the Session

It was an informal session held at the family's home during the Hari Raya Season. Zarinah and Lynn were away at school but the rest of the family reported that all was well and that there was no need for further therapy.

Post-Session Findings

The family appeared to be coping well and did not see the need for further therapy.

Process Recording

*S*arah was extremely apologetic for not keeping the appointment for the follow-up interview. She told Anna that during Ramadan, the whole family often stayed over with a relative making preparations for the Hari Raya Puasa celebrations. The therapy appointment slipped their minds as every evening the whole family would be caught up with shopping and preparations such as baking cakes, cleaning and so forth. Sarah added that they also did not see the need to trouble the Centre because the family was doing all right. Rashid and Tuminah held regular jobs and Zarinah and Lynn were coping in school.

Tuminah and Rashid were pleased to see Anna and were very hospitable. It was still the Hari Raya Season and they filled Anna with festive goodies. Tuminah kept Anna abreast of her job and expressed that she was very happy in the workplace. Her colleagues were older than her but she felt very comfortable with them. Work as a production operator takes up a lot of her energy as the hours

are long but she enjoys feeling occupied. Rashid had been resting during the fasting month and was eagerly waiting to resume work.

Rashid informed that the family spent much time together and they were generally happy. Leisure was usually watching video movies or singing karaoke at home. Tuminah too had no complaints and on her off days, she would normally be at home with the family. As for Sarah, she revealed that she was very pleased with her children and enjoyed their company tremendously. Thus, on the whole, the family did not foresee any need for further therapy.