

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference

### INT. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

*The supervisor is sitting at her desk. Sophia walks to the open door of the office and knocks.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Right on time for supervision.

*The supervisor gestures toward a chair at a table.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Have a seat.

*Sophia sits.*

*Supervisor gets up, picks up a file folder from her desk and joins Sophia at the table. She sits.*

**SUPERVISOR:** How are you doing?

**SOPHIA:** I think we're going to have to place the Gonzales child.

**SUPERVISOR:** That's...that's little Emilio and his mother Carmelita, correct?

**SOPHIA:** Right.

**SUPERVISOR:**

So, let's talk about what leads you to the conclusion that Emilio may be unsafe.

*Sophia opens her briefcase and pulls out her notes. She speaks with a little passion in her voice.*

**SOPHIA:** Well, first of all, Emilio is eleven months old; he did not say a word yesterday, and according to his mother, he never talks. She continues to miss follow up doctor's appointments for him, and then claims that it's because she doesn't have a way to get there. And Emilio doesn't even have a crib; he sleeps in a playpen. A baby needs a crib. This woman doesn't even have a kitchen table in her apartment. Uh she grew up in foster care and was continually kicked out of her foster homes.

*Sophia pauses and tosses her notes on the desk.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Let's take a deep breath here; now, tell me what you observed.

*Sophia inhales slowly and then exhales.*

**SOPHIA:** I observed a baby in trouble with a mother that has a lot of problems; and that's what leads me to my conclusion.

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**SUPERVISOR:** It would help me understand this situation better if you were to state your observations in terms of risk factors and safety threats. And from what you are saying, you definitely observed multiple risk factors. Is that correct?

*Sophia speaks in a somewhat more professional voice.*

**SOPHIA:** Yes, that's right. The child is eleven months old; the mother is only nineteen. She has a flat affect and basically ignores him. He seems to ignore her as well, even when she sort of slides him a toy or picks him up. The only thing she's worried about is whether or not we're going to take him away from her.

*The supervisor smiles.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Sophia, was that last statement an observation, or something that you surmised?

**SOPHIA:** That was me, I guess. But i wish you could have seen her. She acts like it's her against the world.

**SUPERVISOR:** Let's take a closer look at Carmelita and her son.

**SOPHIA:** Are you telling me I'm doing this wrong?

**SUPERVISOR:** Oh, I didn't say that at all. Let's consider the strengths of your report. It did indicate that you made some good observations: Ms. Gonzales and her affect and Emilio's reactions to his mother.

**SOPHIA:** Okay.

**SUPERVISOR:** The fact that you are telling me this today instead of yesterday tells us something.

**SOPHIA:** What's that?

**SUPERVISOR:** It tells me that you might not believe that Emilio is in present danger. Um... Let's see if there is another way we can look at this family situation.

**SOPHIA:** Well, not that I can see. The woman doesn't even have a kitchen table in her apartment. Who doesn't have a kitchen table?

**SUPERVISOR:** How important is having a kitchen table to her ability to take care of her child?

*Sophia thinks for a few moments.*

**SOPHIA:** Not very, I guess.

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**SUPERVISOR:** Okay. Let's focus on real risk factors and safety threats: we have the child risk factors, caregiver risk factors, and environmental risk factors. We will also need to discuss how any safety threats you identify cross the safety threshold. Where would you like to begin?

*Sophia flips through her notes again.*

**SOPHIA:** Definitely caregiver risk factors.

**SUPERVISOR:** Okay, go on.

*Sophia looks at her notes and speaks in a matter of fact tone.*

**SOPHIA:** Well, Emilio won't eat and Carmelita won't take him to the doctors. The situation is hopeless. The truth is that I feel like Carmelita is one of those mothers who should never have a baby.

*She stares at the supervisor.*

*The Supervisor remains calm.*

**SUPERVISOR:** You sound like you have a lot of strong feelings about this that I would like to understand better. So let's take a few minutes to discuss those, before getting back to our risk and safety threats discussion. Okay?

*Sophia stares at the supervisor and nods.*

**SOPHIA:** Okay.

**FADE TO:**

### **MOMENTS LATER**

*Sophia and the Supervisor are still seated at the table.*

*The Supervisor smiles at her.*

**SUPERVISOR:** So, now let's proceed with Ms. Gonzales and Emilio.

**SOPHIA:** Okay.

**SUPERVISOR:** Did you observe any strengths Carmelita?

**SOPHIA:** Not that I could see.

**SUPERVISOR:** Sometimes it is difficult to see strengths in problem situations, especially those that evoke emotions. But if we look at everything, we often find that they are there. Why don't you take another look at your notes?

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

*Sophia slowly searches through her notes.*

**SOPHIA:** Well, Carmelita has her high school diploma. And she keeps in touch with her old independent living worker. The apartment is very neat and clean, but it is awfully small.

**SUPERVISOR:** Good. Let's talk about a young mother and her baby. What might her expectations be?

**SOPHIA:** Well, Carmelita expects somebody to help her, whether she helps herself or not.

**SUPERVISOR:** And who do you think she expects to help her?

**SOPHIA:** Probably the baby's father. He needs to support his child.

**SUPERVISOR:** How?

**SOPHIA:** Financially.... and emotionally.

**SUPERVISOR:** Good. Let's move on. What do you think might be the pressures a young mother faces?

*Sophia thinks for a few moments.*

**SOPHIA:** Well, if she's a single parent, then she has to find the resources herself to support her child: food, rent, clothes.

*She thinks for a few moments again.*

**SOPHIA:** She might worry that she's not mature enough to handle taking care of a baby. And that her baby has a chance to grow and thrive.

**SUPERVISOR:** What might an eleven-month old be expected to do?

**SOPHIA:** At least say a few words. Walk maybe. Play with his mother. Laugh. Play with toys.

**SUPERVISOR:** Let's take a look at a resource together to learn more a typical eleven-month old should be doing.

*The Supervisor gets up and goes to a bookcase. She looks over the books and then pulls one from the shelf. She flips through the pages and then hands the open book to Sophia.*

**SUPERVISOR:** (Pointing) Here, this section might be helpful.

*Sophia starts reading as the Supervisor returns to the table.*

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**FADE TO:**

### **MOMENTS LATER**

*Sophia finishes reading a passage in the book and looks up again.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Did you read anything that might make you think differently about Emilio's situation?

**SOPHIA:** Well, i might have been worried for nothing that he hasn't any words. That's not really a major concern, I guess.

**SUPERVISOR:** Good. Anything else?

**SOPHIA:** It says that stranger anxiety and separation anxiety are usually very strong at Emilio's age. But I didn't see Emilio ever having separation or stranger anxieties at all.

**SUPERVISOR:** What makes you think that?

**SOPHIA:** I didn't see anything in his behavior that shows he ever had any attachment to his mother or anybody else.

**SUPERVISOR:** Can you be a little more specific about your observation? Exactly what are you basing that conclusion on?

**SOPHIA:** When Carmelita asked me if i wanted to hold Emilio, I could tell he didn't care whether he came to me or not.

**SUPERVISOR:** How could you tell that?

**SOPHIA:** Well, he looked at me real quickly and then looked away. So I didn't pick him up.

**SUPERVISOR:** Remember that attachments are typically reciprocal in nature and directly related to caretaking behaviors.

**SOPHIA:** Uh huh.

**SUPERVISOR:** And adults, of course, must take the first step. Maybe if you had held Emilio, you would have gotten a better sense on that.

*She pauses to allow Sophia to reflect on what she said.*

**SOPHIA:** OKAY.

**SUPERVISOR:** Write this down for me.

*Sophia poises to write.*

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**SUPERVISOR:** Inconsistent or neglectful parenting can lead to insecure attachments.

*Sophia writes and then stops looks at the Supervisor.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Now, let's talk about how caretaker behaviors are learned.

*The two start talking.*

**FADE TO:**

### **MOMENTS LATER**

*The supervisor finishes a point.*

**SOPHIA:** So, are you saying that Carmelita may never have learned to care take because she was not taken care of?

**SUPERVISOR:** From hearing your assessment, that sounds like a fair conclusion.

**SOPHIA:** But what about from her foster parents?

**SUPERVISOR:** Well, given that Ms. Gonzales was in seven different foster homes, she may have seen seven different care taker models, and not all of them positive, unfortunately, and none of them were consistently there for her.

**SOPHIA:** So, you're saying that Emilio needs consistent care giving so that he can begin to establish an emotional attachment.

**SUPERVISOR:** Yes. So let's take a look at where you are with the family now.

**SOPHIA:** Well, i know that Emilio's at risk if we don't do something.

**SUPERVISOR:** Yes, but is he safe?

**SOPHIA:** I guess. I'm not sure.

**SUPERVISOR:** And what does that tell you?

**SOPHIA:** Maybe I should to go back and find out more about the family.

*The Supervisor nods.*

**SUPERVISOR:** What about Emilio's immediate needs?

**SOPHIA:** He needs to be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. And what I don't understand is that she used to take him to checkups regularly.

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**SUPERVISOR:** So even if we decide that this issue is a current safety threat, it is promising to know that Carmelita has demonstrated protective capacity in the past. Let's talk about how you can phrase some probing questions with Carmelita that may lead to the real reason why she just stopped?

*Sophia ponders the Supervisor's suggestion.*

**SOPHIA:** Okay.

*The Supervisor gets up and goes to the bookcase to return the book then returns to where Sophia is still sitting at the table and sits back down.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Sophia, on a scale of one to ten, with one being the lowest and ten the highest, how confident are you that Carmelita will take Emilio to the doctor?

*Sophia smirks.*

**SOPHIA:** Zero.

*The Supervisor smiles.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Okay. On a scale of one to ten, how confident are you that you can help Carmelita take Emilio to the doctor?

*Sophia looks at the Supervisor anxiously.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Okay, let me ask another way: what do you think you can do to help increase the likelihood that Carmelita will take Emilio to the doctor?

**SOPHIA:** I could tell her that if she doesn't take him to the doctor by Friday, I'll have to take him there myself.

**SUPERVISOR:** Okay, let's role play how you can speak to Ms. Gonzales about going to the doctor, and we want to use the least amount of protective authority as necessary. Okay. Let's just see what happens.

*Sophia nods.*

**SUPERVISOR:** I'll play the role of Ms. Gonzales and you start.

**SOPHIA:** Ms. Gonzales, the last time I was here, we talked about you taking Emilio to the doctor. You do realize how important that is, don't you?

**SUPERVISOR:** (Sighs!) Yes, but I don't have a ride.

**SOPHIA:** Didn't you say you took a taxi before?

**SUPERVISOR:** Yes.

## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**SOPHIA:** Then why don't you take one again or call your independent living counselor?

**SUPERVISOR:** Um... Then why don't you take me?

**SOPHIA:** Maybe, I'll do just that.

**SUPERVISOR:** Time out. What are you really trying to find out?

**SOPHIA:** Why Carmelita's afraid to take Emilio to the doctor.

**SUPERVISOR:** So?

**SOPHIA:** Okay. Okay. Are you afraid that something might happen to him at the clinic?

**SUPERVISOR:** Yes, I'm afraid the doctors will take Emilio away from me. I don't want to lose my baby.

**SOPHIA:** But if you take your child to the doctor, that shows that you really care about your him. But if you don't -

**SUPERVISOR:** (Interrupting) Are you sure you want to go there?

**SOPHIA:** I guess not.

*The Supervisor resumes role playing.*

**SUPERVISOR:** But when i go to the doctor, I don't understand the things the doctor's saying.

*Sophia thinks for a moment.*

**SOPHIA:** Would you feel better about going to the doctor if you had someone there with you so you did understand?

**SUPERVISOR:** Yes.

*The supervisor lightly applauds.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Now you're getting it. By using focused listening, being empathetic, and using the least amount of protective authority necessary, Carmelita will be much more likely to share with you what her obstacles to parenting are. Engaging Carmelita in the assessment process will help you and her to identify solutions. Okay. Now the more information you get from Carmelita, the better your assessments will be. Understand, though, the solutions that she may come up with may not be the same that we've come up with here. You'll have to decide whether or not they sound effective.

**SOPHIA:** Okay.



## Video Script: Sophia's Supervisory Conference (continued)

**SUPERVISOR:** Well, it sounds like there are some things that you can do to better position Ms. Gonzales to be successful in parenting and getting little Emilio the help that he needs. Um...tell me what you should do.

*Sophia thinks for a few moments.*

**SOPHIA:** I think I should go back for a follow-up visit and find out more from Carmelita about what it's like for her being a single mother. That way I will be able to tell if there are any true safety threats.

**SUPERVISOR:** Good.

*Sophia glances toward the bookcase.*

**SOPHIA:** And I could take her some information from that book about the development of eleven month old babies. Let's see...we need to build her supports so I can work with Carmelita to start a list of people that could make up a family team.

*The supervisor nods in agreement.*

*Sophia jots down some notes.*

**SUPERVISOR:** Anything else?

*Sophia looks up.*

**SOPHIA:** Oh yes; I need to talk to Carmelita so I can see what it's going to take to get Emilio to the doctor.

**SUPERVISOR:** Sounds like a plan.

*Sophia smiles and responds eagerly.*

**SOPHIA:** Okay, so as soon as we're finished here, I will call Carmelita to set up an appointment.

*Sophia finishes writing.*

**SOPHIA:** I got it.

**SUPERVISOR:** Good. Then let's be clear on what we talked about today. And then let's next Friday to talk about the family and we'll do that after your follow-up visit with Carmelita and Emilio.

**SOPHIA:** Okay.

*Sophia looks at her notes and starts summarizing the conversation.*

**FADE TO BLACK.**