

The Case of Juanita

Juanita is a 17-year-old Latino student who moved with her family from Mexico six years ago. Two years ago, Juanita lost her arm in an accident. Juanita lives with her family, and has been determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation. She attends her first planning session with her family (father, mother, sister, brother, and elderly aunt.) Juanita does not speak English, and has chosen her brother to interpret for her.

Well into the planning session it becomes evident to you that Juanita is not the person doing the majority of the speaking. The family is having a good deal of discussion in response to each question you ask. You also get the impression that the brother may not be accurately translating disability related information you are providing, and may not be exactly reporting Juanita's comments to you.

It is very clear that Juanita's choice for interpreter is indeed her brother, the only family English speaker. The choice for interpreter is the only choice you are certain of however. Juanita spends much of the appointment looking toward the ground, being relatively silent, while her family generates much discussion. The brother tells you that Juanita chooses a career in childcare for Latino children, (we will assume there are such positions in your community) and requests your assistance in obtaining a position in this field.

How do you proceed? (There are no multi-lingual counselors in your office/school, so don't even think looking there for assistance...)

What assumptions might you make about the families behavior?

How will you handle confidential material?

How do you assure choice?

What are the possible cultural considerations?