

Oregon Child Welfare Division

CW



## **“All About Me” book helps nurse build instant rapport with teen**

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Sarah Weston, RN, is part of the great team of nurses that works throughout the state to care for the medical needs of children in foster care. One day, she was asked to travel to Portland to check on and care for a teen with complex mental and physical needs.

As a nurse, Weston says the first impression is really important and can determine how much you are able to help a child depending on their willingness to open up to you. The teen’s caseworker had given Weston the teen’s “All About Me” book so Sarah made sure to take a look at the book before meeting with the teen. “All About Me” books are a trauma informed book where a child can document their interests, feelings and ultimately captures who they are and their journey.



Weston learned that the teen likes sharks and dolphins and would adopt dolphins and sharks through online programs to be able to track them. With this information, Weston was able to break the ice immediately and build rapport. The teen lit up when Weston asked the teen what she liked about sharks and dolphins. In addition, they were able to bond when Weston asked for the teen’s help to choose which dolphin to adopt as a gift for Weston’s daughter. Another thing Weston learned from the teen’s “All About Me” book was this teen’s passion for music. Weston joked around with the teen as she asked the teen to sing for her. It mainly ended in Weston belting out in song while the teen laughed. Weston also realized as she continued meeting with the teen that music was the teen’s way of speaking. When Sarah

noticed the teen listening to sadder or darker music, Weston reached out to a therapist to help the teen regulate some difficult emotions.

These are just a few examples of how Weston was able to use the “All About Me” book to better understand the teen she was working with and to build trust immediately. To this day, Weston still meets with the teen and they bond over things the teen has written in the “All About Me” book. Sarah advocates for updating these books regularly so that providers like her can continue to build trust with children and young people in foster care, without needing them to retell their story or explain who they are to yet another stranger. Kudos to Sarah Weston for exemplifying Guiding Principle 1: Supporting families and promoting prevention through building trust with a teen through an “All About Me” book.

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