

## Sample Messages for Power Differential

**Sample 1:** “Greetings, Mrs. Smith. I’m from CPS, I’m here due to a complaint received regarding your child and potential harm to her. I want to acknowledge and appreciate that my role can be seen as threatening both to you and your daughter. I also want to recognize that I do have power through the state, but my goal is to do all I can to ensure the safety of your child and support you in parenting your child. I know I’m an outsider to your family and often people are angry and defensive, for good reason, because I can be viewed as a threat. My hope is that despite some likely fear or anxiety you may have about my presence here and my future role, we can cooperate to ensure the safety of your child and to maintain your custody of her. However, I don’t want to avoid that there is a difference in power and I will do what I can to share that power to maintain your family. The only exception to this, is to the child’s safety, which is my first duty. I am hopeful that we both want the same thing - to ensure that your child is safe. If there are times when there is a serious risk to a child’s safety, I am committed to bringing the matter to the court to make a decision about custody of the child. Only the court has the power to remove children from their homes and my role, if a matter ever gets to court, is to make recommendations about the child’s safety. I look forward to talking with you and your children to help minimize any fears, to gain an understanding of what may have occurred and to make a decision swiftly regarding CPS involvement, so as not to cause emotional upset to your family.”

**Sample 2:** “Mrs. Jones, I want to introduce myself as the new caseworker for you and your children. First, I want to acknowledge the tremendous weight you must feel with the removal of your children. I am sure that you sincerely love your children, that you want what is best for them, and that you are willing to support them any way possible while they are currently in foster care. To do this takes a significant amount of courage and perseverance, but I am confident that we will be able to work through that by empowering you to regain custody. I can’t imagine some of the anger or animosity that you may be feeling and want to provide supportive services in multiple areas for you and children. I also want to acknowledge that you and I may have differences that could disrupt the movements necessary to regain custody. I don’t expect you to trust me, but I am hopeful that we can work together to keep your child and your relationship with that child at the center of everyone’s decision making. It will take time to develop a relationship that honors the different power within each role and will require continuous efforts on both our parts to achieve the primary goal of your child’s reunification with you.”