CASE STUDY for ADVANCED STANDING APPLICANTS ONLY:

William is a 14 year old bi-racial (Caucasian and Southeast Asian) boy raised in an upper middle-class home where both parents work. His parents are currently divorced, with William living with his Southeast Asian mother and seeing his Caucasian father regularly. The relationship between his mother and father is contentious however; because his father’s beliefs are more western including a reliance on traditional western medical treatments and being a member of a Methodist church, whereas his mother’s beliefs are more eastern including a reliance on traditional eastern medicine, her family and her Buddhist spiritual leader for guidance. William’s mother does not believe in western medical intervention except for physical injuries.

A family court judge has ordered William into a day treatment program seeking compliance by both William and his mother with prescribed treatment protocols, including the use of prescription drugs to control behavior. In particular, William has a history of what appears to be Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). He has been suspended from school numerous times since kindergarten for being disruptive, defiant and angry in class. He has been in numerous fights with other students.

His mother feels her son is being treated unfairly and has begun to keep him at home to protect him and heal him with eastern remedies. William has reported that he is teased and picked on at school for being weird. He states his teachers don’t like him and they are mean, “they tell me I cannot go to the bathroom,” and I need to be quiet and stop squirming.

William is small for his age, and his mother has read that medicines to control his aggression may inhibit growth in pubescent boys. She has him on a special diet, which includes drinking a cup of a traditional herbal medicine every hour, as prescribed by the Healer in her spiritual community, followed by 5 minutes of meditative walking.

She has reluctantly accepted that William has to go to day treatment because of the court order but wants to continue his herbal treatments and meditative walking instead of medications prescribed by the center psychiatrist. She states the behavioral interventions provided by the therapists in conjunction with her regimen and spiritual Healer will help him. She stated that if she is forced to give her son medications, she will flee the country with him and live in a place where the government cannot control them.

You are the director of a day treatment program in a community mental health center serving youth ages 12-18 with seriously persistent mental health, behavioral and developmental disorders. William has been placed in your program for therapy, medication management, and specialized schooling. As the director of the program, you have to follow the court order and follow agency policies, while ensuring appropriate and meaningful treatment is being provided to William and his family.
The case study essay is a critically important part of your application because it reflects your ability to think critically about a situation and indicates your level of knowledge about social work.

Your essay should:

- not exceed 4 double-spaced pages, using 12 point Times New Roman font;
- be written from the perspective of the program director;
- provide the Admissions Committee a clear picture of your ability to construct a cohesive, academic essay that demonstrates your readiness for graduate-level work;
- synthesize your foundational social work knowledge and combine academic sources to support your rationale (references are expected and APA style should be followed); and,
- provide the information requested below in a well formed essay (that is, incorporate the required information into an essay) and NOT in short answer form.

1. Describe your understanding of the current situation and how things are the way they are.

2. How do you explain the problem, the dynamics, the strengths and challenges this family faces? Your explanation should be supported by scholarly sources.

3. Describe your action plan to address the issues presented.

4. What are the cultural considerations that one must consider while working with this family?

5. How do the macro systems impact the way you serve this family? What changes would you like to see in these systems and how would you go about creating change?

6. As a director/supervisor how would you support your employees in supporting William and his family?