



# TRAVERSE IN ACTION



## NEW WORKER

### UNDERSTAND KEY TOPICS AND EVENTS QUICKLY

New workers have a lot to learn: best practices, mandates, policies, local resources, collateral systems, and every detail about the children and families in their caseload. But critical information about cases—extensive history, key issues, important contacts or previous placements—is often hidden or virtually impossible to retrieve. A new worker must quickly understand each case, child, and family while mastering social work policies and best practices to provide quality services that ensure safety and wellbeing. This is a story about Liz, a new ongoing caseworker who is using a child welfare case discovery solution, Traverse, to surface “dark data” to feel confident that she understands her cases.

— Elizabeth Merringer, Ongoing Caseworker  
Fairfield County Child and Adult Protective Services, OH

Liz has been an ongoing caseworker in child welfare for about two months. She's smart, enthusiastic, and eager to learn so she can make a difference for the children she's working to protect.

During a recent case transfer meeting, Liz and her supervisor learned everything they could from the investigator about her new case—which was provided from memory. The children had multiple transitions, which were talked about briefly, but not in chronological order or in the level of detail Liz needed. The team reviewed the mom's history with addiction but didn't view the actual pattern and impact of ongoing drug screening results. The team discussed a possible placement option, but it took several minutes to explain that placement option's connection to the child.

As a new worker, Liz is trying to learn everything about the family, including key topics, major events, root cause, traumatic events, and people connected with the case, while she also learns the best way to do casework.

“I'm new and I'm getting cases that are transferred from another ongoing worker. A lot of my time is just spent trying to understand the case. I feel like I'm wasting a lot of time I could be doing actual interactions with the family or providing services for the family.”

“I like that I'm able to just ask Traverse and see what's going on or what happened before I got involved. I can search very specific things instead of trying to figure it out on my own and that way I can spend more time with the family.”

Liz didn't have Traverse before the case transfer review, but now that she does she's thinking about how to use it in the future. For starters, she'll look at the Word Cloud to see major topics like substance abuse, review Events to see transitions in chronological order for the children, and view People Connections to better understand everyone connected to the case to identify positive supports or placement options if necessary.

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If the children do move to foster care, Liz plans to use Traverse to find people who can ease the transition, such as a good friend who they could visit on weekends to provide stability and familiarity.

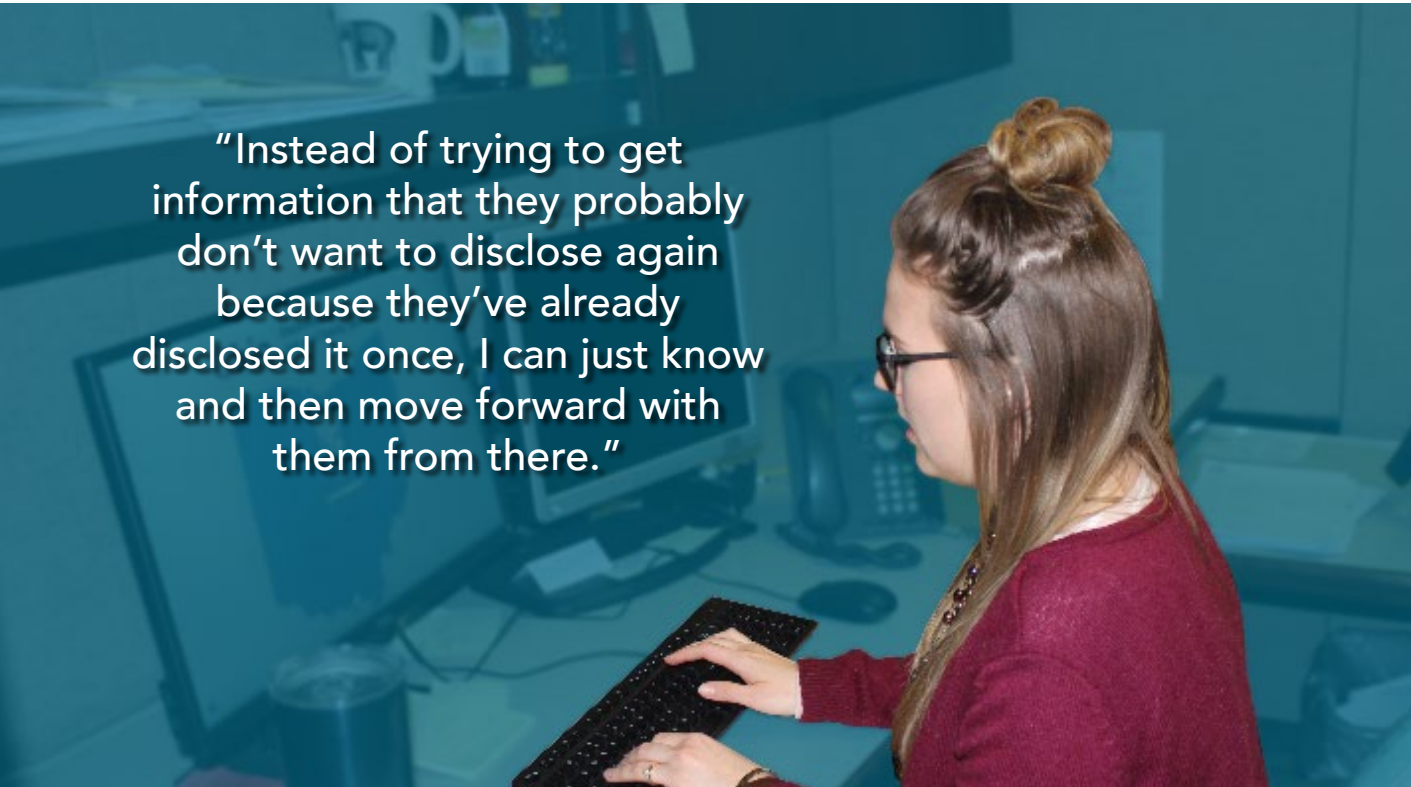
Liz also wants to use Traverse to minimize trauma. If she can start the conversation where the investigator left off and apply the detailed insights she learned previously, Liz can spare the children or family from re-telling her information they already shared.

"With the trauma some of our families have experienced, they don't want to relive that every single second of every single day. When we go into a place and they are saying something it shouldn't be a surprise to me. Instead of trying to get information that they probably don't want to disclose again because they've already disclosed it once, I can just know and then move forward with them from there," Liz said.

Once Liz has worked with the family, she envisions Traverse helping her close her cases more quickly with a higher degree of confidence. She needs to prove the family has made progress and met the goals in their case plan before closing a case. To do that, she must understand everything over the life of the case, not just the portion she was involved in.

Using Traverse to find specific content, such as past treatment progress reports, court documents, or behavioral health records, will help Liz find the evidence she needs and feel confident about her decisions.

"I could say for certain that this family is ready for us to not be in their lives."



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## About Northwoods

We believe the best predictor of future safety is a thorough understanding of the detailed past. Northwoods' solutions surface key information workers need to make confident decisions about safety.

To learn more about Traverse, visit [teamnorthwoods.com/meet-traverse](https://teamnorthwoods.com/meet-traverse).



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