

CASE STUDY #2

Mrs. Ortiz checks in to the WIC clinic for her appointment. She is Spanish-speaking. Mrs. Ortiz has brought her children with her to the clinic. While in the waiting room before the session begins, the children are noisy and begin running through the waiting area. Rebecca is trying to work at the front desk and is getting frustrated. She begins speaking in English to another WIC employee, loudly enough so that some people in the waiting room can hear what she is saying. She is overheard saying, "These people (referring to Mrs. Ortiz) don't know how to control their kids." Rebecca tells the participant, "If you don't get control of your children, you'll have to reschedule your appointment for another day and get your checks then." Mrs. Ortiz leaves the clinic without getting her checks. Mrs. Ortiz later calls the state WIC office and states that she was discriminated against and was denied WIC services. Mrs. Ortiz says that Rebecca thought she couldn't understand English, but in fact she heard what Rebecca was saying about her family.

Questions to consider:

1. What are some assumptions that people make about WIC participants?

When Rebecca said that "these people don't know how to control their kid", she has assumed that "these people" or "these immigrants" are ignorants.

2. Can you think of other examples where these assumptions could lead to conflict?

These assumptions lead to racism, and consequently, to a conflict. That way of thinking divides people and also puts one group against another. That was what happened in Rwanda, in which those assumptions lead to an extreme example of conflict, a genocide of almost one million people.

3. Write a new statement for Rebecca to use when talking with Mrs. Ortiz about her children's behavior.

| Rebecca says: | What might work better: |
|---|--|
| "If you don't get control of your children, you'll have to reschedule your appointment for another day and get your checks then." | "Could you please try to keep your children a bit more calm or maybe take them outside to play." They are getting a bit louder in this clinic. I appreciate your comprehension." |

Source: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wicpro/training/conflict/conflict-resolution-training-casestudy.pdf>