

From Caseworker to CEO

by Shaina Wright

Chapter 1: From Burnout to Breakthrough

After 12 years in CPS, I was emotionally drained. I was doing purpose-driven work, but I felt invisible-underpaid, overextended, and constantly fighting for families and for myself.

Then it hit me: I wasn't just burned out. I was stuck in a system that didn't recognize the full value of what I brought to the table.

I realized my skills-crisis management, advocacy, trauma-informed care-could make a greater impact if I could deliver my message to the people who truly needed it.

That's when I pivoted.

This eBook is more than a guide-it's a declaration. That your skills, your story, and your passion can become the foundation of a powerful, profitable side hustle.

You don't need to wait for someone to promote you or validate you. You get to choose yourself.

Chapter 2: The Caseworker's Secret Weapon

Social workers and caseworkers have unmatched emotional intelligence, resilience, and communication skills. These are the same tools that successful coaches, consultants, and entrepreneurs use every day. Your work has already trained you for the next level.

Chapter 3: Degrees Don't Define Value

In the field of social work, there's a deeply rooted belief that more degrees = more value. While education is powerful, it is not the only path to expertise or income.

You've managed home visits, deescalated crises, written court reports, and navigated complex systems. These aren't soft skills-they're marketable survival skills.

Transferable skills include:

- Crisis Management
- Interviewing + Assessment
- Documentation + Writing
- Cultural Competence + Empathy
- Systems Navigation

Many LCSWs, licensed therapists, and nonprofits actively seek team members and collaborators with this kind of hands-on experience. Your skills are needed.

(Reference: The Social Work Hustle by James H. Williams)

Chapter 4: Choose Your Hustle Type

Explore what fits you:

- Coaching
- Consulting
- Digital Products
- Services

Ask yourself:

- What do people come to me for?
- What problem have I helped people solve?
- What could I teach, guide, or support someone through in 60 minutes or less?

Offer Examples You Could Create:

1. Surviving and Thriving as a Child Welfare Caseworker

For: New or struggling CPS workers

What you teach:

- Managing caseloads without burning out
- Emotional survival skills for high-stress environments
- Boundaries, time management, and self-care

Bonus: Templates, checklists, and scripts for home visits or court reports

2. Trauma-Informed Parenting for Foster and Bio Families

For: Parents navigating CPS involvement or fostering

What you teach:

- Basics of trauma-informed care for kids

- De-escalation, communication tips, emotional regulation
- How to rebuild trust with children

Bonus: Downloadable behavior guides and activity ideas

3. How to Work With CPS (Without Losing Your Mind)

For: Parents or caregivers involved in CPS cases

What you teach:

- Understanding the CPS process
- What to expect during investigations, court, and reunification
- How to advocate for yourself and your child

4. From Burnout to Balance: A Self-Care Guide for Helping Professionals

For: Caseworkers, therapists, nurses, and teachers

What you teach:

- Signs of compassion fatigue and burnout
- Stress relief practices tailored to helpers
- Long-term emotional resilience strategies

5. The Business of Social Work: How to Turn Your Skills into a Private Practice or Side Hustle

For: Social workers or CPS professionals looking to pivot

What you teach:

- How to package your experience into coaching, consulting, or courses
- Basics of business setup, marketing, and pricing
- Mindset shifts for leaving the system

Chapter 5: The Weight We Carry - Black Women in Social Work

Black women in social work are often underpaid, overworked, and under-recognized. According to NASW and peer-reviewed research:

- Black women are less likely to be promoted into leadership positions
- More likely to report burnout and workplace bias

We carry both the professional expectations and the cultural burden of being 'strong.' This eBook is about claiming our worth and choosing freedom.

(Sources: NASW 2022 Report, Everand Publishing)

Chapter 6: Build Your First Offer

Choose a problem to solve and package it as a service. Example: Parent Coaching for families navigating CPS, or Document Review Services. Keep it simple, clear, and valuable. Your first offer doesn't have to be perfect-it just needs to help.

Chapter 7: Get Paid-Fast

Start with your network. Reach out to former colleagues, post on social media, or ask for referrals.

Set up a free PayPal or Stripe account to accept payments. You can even use Calendly to book sessions. Quick wins build confidence.

Chapter 8: Systems That Save You Time

Use free tools like Google Drive for templates, Canva for graphics, and ConvertKit or Wix Email for automation. You don't need a full business overnight-just a clear next step.

Chapter 9: Mindset of a Social Work CEO

Let go of guilt and lean into growth. You have permission to profit from your purpose. Your knowledge, your voice, and your story are powerful assets.

Chapter 10: Why We Pivot - Safety, Impact & Innovation in Child Welfare

Working in child protective services comes with intense emotional, mental, and even physical risks-especially for Black women. As frontline workers, we are often the buffer between broken systems and the families caught in them.

Recent studies have shown that:

- 80.1% of child welfare workers have experienced non-physical violence from clients (e.g., verbal abuse).
- 47.2% have been threatened.
- 19.0% have experienced physical violence on the job.

(Source: ScienceDirect, 2020)

Further research indicates that Black and Hispanic child welfare workers face even higher odds of client threats compared to their white colleagues.

(Source: ResearchGate, 2018)

Despite our commitment to families and communities, many of us face unsafe, under-resourced work environments where we're expected to carry more than our share-often with less protection.

Pivoting into private practice, coaching, consulting, or digital support roles is not a step back. It's a powerful decision to:

- Preserve your health and energy
- Continue serving, educating, and supporting families
- Create safer, more sustainable ways to make an impact

There is a need in child welfare that traditional systems are failing to meet. Your voice, your tools,

and your lived experience are part of the solution-and you don't have to risk your safety to keep doing what you were called to do.

Bonus Tools

- Side Hustle Starter Checklist
- Income Goal Tracker
- Client Inquiry Script
- Tools: Canva, Calendly, Stripe, Wix, ConvertKit

Final Word: Confidently Step Into CEO Energy

You don't have to shrink, struggle, or stay stuck. You already have everything you need to build something profitable, powerful, and free.

Further Reading & Resources

- The Social Work Hustle: A Social Worker's Guide to Making Money by James H. Williams
- Black Women's Comprehensive Guide to Creating and Selling Digital Products by Simone Lee
- NASW Report on Racial Equity and Leadership Gaps (2022)
- Everand: Black Women and Digital Entrepreneurship

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