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2315284

ECEY5011 Safeguarding: Practice, Legislation and the Multi-disciplinary Team

Part 2- written portfolio

(2000 words)

Case Study 2 - Joanna's Story.

Recognising and Recording

According to Hobart., Frankel., and Walker. (2009a) as a teacher in a primary school, it is not your role to decide whether the children in your care are in danger of significant harm, abuse or neglect. However, it is your responsibility to be vigilant and aware of current policies and procedures within your setting if a concern is to arise and you are aware of the staff member you can go to with concerns, such as the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Within schools it is a legal requirement for teachers and staff to have Safeguarding and Child Protection training, this is to ensure that you are able to manage, support and guide the next steps of safety for the child once a disclosure has been made. (NSPCC Learning, 2024)

Recognising abuse is vital when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Referring to Joanna's story, it is important that you know the signs and symptoms that may be noticed when recognising physical abuse or neglect. NSPCC (2024) say that physical abuse and injury can be seen as bruises, broken or fractured bones, burns or bite marks. Effects of physical abuse can also be shown in children as their behaviour changes, they become anxious, and develop issues at school. As a result of this statement, it has become clear that Joanna has suffered physical abuse as bruises have been seen in an incidental area.

Whereas Hobart., Frankel., and Walker. (2009b) says, behavioural signs of neglect shows that the child may be seen as clingy to any trusted adult within the setting, low self-esteem and lack of confidence, as well as the inability to make social relationships.

After a disclosure has been made, it is paramount that you do your best to remember the key features of what the child has said. Once the child has finished, it is your duty, as the teacher or practitioner that you write down all that has been discussed. This disclosure should be recorded in ink, signed and dated by the teacher whom the child disclosed the information to, using the wording and vocabulary used by the child. Recording this disclosure of abuse or neglect should also be accurate, factual and completed as soon as possible. NSPCC (2024) continue by suggesting during this process you should be precise and listen carefully to what you are being told, reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you, then explain to the child what happens next and what you need to do to help them in the best possible way to ensure that they are safe. It is also helpful to have a witness where possible, however this should not be known to the child. To do this, you could nod to another

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practitioner for the practitioner to listen from a distance, this can help ensure all information is gathered effectively.

During the period of both recognising and recording abuse and neglect it is important that you observe the child from the very first time you suspect or spot a sign, or symptom that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Observing Joanna when noticing behaviour changes can be extremely beneficial, this is because as shown above, behavioural changes including ones that Joanna was experiencing including, being reluctant to take off clothing in hot weather, becoming quiet and reserved and unable to leave a trusted adult are all first signs of abuse and neglect. By observing, making notes and inputting information on platforms such as, My Concern can help build upon evidence and reports to encourage and help in-depth referral making, if the incidents develop. This information is then passed onto the Designated Safeguarding Officer in your setting. (NSPCC, 2024).

When discussing the situation with the child who has disclosed their hurt, it is important that as the practitioner you use question techniques that help the child continue, and not make the child feel that they should stop talking. Questioning during a disclosure is recommended as open-ended questioning. Open-ended questions are not answered with a yes or no. These questions will ensure the child is able to build upon their experience and go into further detail. Open-ended questions allow the child to tell the full story without being influenced by the question itself, for example a question that could have been asked to Joanna is “I notice that you have a bruise, how did that happen?”. (Do Right by Kids, 2024).

Reporting and Referring

According to *Social Care Wales (no date)* as a teacher in a primary school, it is your duty to report any concerns, suspicions or evidence of child abuse or neglect. This reporting can be written or on a platform like My Concern, both reporting strategies should only be shared with the relevant people and staff within your setting and should be included in the referral that is produced, within both topics, it is vital that as a teacher all information is kept confidential to all, unless relevant to certain staff, or agencies. As the teacher's duty to act and to report the concerns that has arisen, it is important that all information gathered is passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and then the relevant department in social services. However, *Social Care Wales (no date)* continues by saying, practitioners/teachers should try and seek consent from parents before officially making a referral to social services this is

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because involving families and carers are likely to lead to encouragement in the safeguarding process and to child-centred outcomes as well as promoting an effective working partnership with the family. Nevertheless, in Joanna's story it is important to only share the vital information with the family due to Joanna not sharing any details or information on how or who caused the bruises. Overall, the safety and welfare of the child is paramount, therefore information should be kept confidential and should be acted upon in the best way for the child.

When reporting abuse and neglect in a primary school it is vital that you as the teacher, are aware of the policies and procedures within your setting. These policies and procedures will inform you who the Designated Safeguarding Officer is, the official channels you may need to contact, for example the GP (General Practitioner) and step by step guidance to what you should do if a concern arises. As a teacher, every child in your care and setting has the right to have protection from harm. All organisations, such as schools, and nurseries have a safeguarding policy and procedures in place to ensure the teachers and practitioners know the set rules and steps to take when a situation or disclosure is raised. Setting up and following these safeguarding policies means that the children are safe and cared for when in your setting. (NSPCC Learning, 2024).

UNICEF (20118) states that, there are several Principles for Ethical Frameworks when reporting on children. For example, when interviewing and reporting on children, special attention is to be paid to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their opinions and voices heard, to participate in decisions affecting them and to be protected from harm and retribution. They add by saying, "the dignity and rights of every child are to be respected in every circumstance".

Once a concern is shown, it is vital for the child's welfare that you consider whether a referral needs to be made to the local authority of social services. If the concerns develops and the concern begins to rise about the child suffering significant harm or is likely to suffer, the headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Officer of the school should immediately refer the child. When the teacher and Safeguarding team makes the referral, they should include any information they have on the child's developmental needs, the ability of the child's parent, carers, or family network to meet the needs as well as any external factors that may be undermining their capacity to parent. During this referral, details such as the child's details, family details, and what the child has said, including when, who, and how (if these details

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have been shared). For example, in Joanna's case, the behavioural changes, unable to disconnect with practitioners and bruises will be at the heart of the referral and will be developed upon with any other information gathered during observations or on My Concern/online platforms. After this, feedback should be given by social services on the outcome and decisions made. Practitioners should always follow up their concerns if no feedback is given or if they are unsatisfied with the outcome suggested. (Her Majesty's Government, 2023).

Settings Responsibilities

Within Joanna's case study, after noticing the behavioural changes the teacher within the classroom could have spoken to Joanna's parents/carers to see if there were any changes within the family home, or events that may have taken place. The concern about the clothing within the hot weather could have also been passed onto the family to see if they could explain or justify any reasonings. After the bruise was witnessed, the practitioner asked an open-ended question, but Joanna did not say anything, therefore the teacher should then pass all information onto the Designated Safeguarding Officer to then work together effectively to make a referral while being in contact with the family.

NSPCC Learning (2024) say that schools within the United Kingdom have a statutory responsibility to protect children from abuse and neglect. Schools enable children to feel confident enough to speak out if they have a concern about themselves or another child's safety. Schools also have a child centred and coordinated approach to enable this to happen. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 provides a requirement for schools to safeguard, support and promote the welfare of the children. The educational standards must be met and are observed and noticed within inspections as safeguarding is at the centre of all that they do. (Estyn, 2019) In schools, it is extremely beneficial to create an inviting environment where children can feel safe, learn effectively, play, grow, and meet every individual need. Children should feel comfortable within their surroundings and have a trusted adult within their classroom, this enables children to feel safe within your care. High Speed Training (2024) adds, teachers safeguarding responsibilities is to ensure you have the correct, up to date training to develop your knowledge and understanding of different types of abuse, and neglect. Furthermore, the Governors safeguarding responsibilities is to again, ensure they have the correct and up to date training while ensuring the school staff are suitable and are able to support, care and provide safety for the children. Additionally, a Designated

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Safeguarding Officer must ensure that all staff follow the safeguarding policies, while drawing up and enforcing the safeguarding policy to all children, recognising issues, making referrals to social services and work alongside families.

Within a school setting it is also their responsibility to make children aware of their rights inside, and outside of school. This can encourage children to open up or realise that what has happened or what is happening is not acceptable. For example, in Joanna's story the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (2024) say, children have the right to life, survival and development, protection from violence, abuse and neglect, and parental responsibilities and state assistance. All these rights show that parents and families should not harm their children, but should look after, care and support their child's development, overall life and happiness. All these factors should also be included throughout the policies and procedures produced by the school.

The Childcare Act 2006 publicly announce that all early years settings should provide support, high quality, integrated care and education for children aged 0-5. To do this, you should support and act upon a child's well-being by protecting the children when in your care, from harm and neglect. You should provide trained, supportive and reliable staff, a positive and safe environment and resources to ensure the children are having their needs met while indulging on the positivity the school environment offers.

Within a setting, identifying abuse and neglect is a key role to your title. As a teacher or practitioner within the primary school, good practice in recognising abuse is shown as being alert to all signs of abuse, to keep yourself up to date with your knowledge and understanding of developmental and age-appropriate behaviours. They continue by adding, "your role is to observe, record and report suspected abuse, not to investigate it. Make notes immediately and record exactly what the child says and does. Do not add your own interpretation of the child's words. All notes should be signed and dated then kept in a safe place", you should be discreet, discuss all concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or line manager in your setting while being sensitive towards the children as you communicate with them, however you should not continue to question the child after the disclosure has taken place. (Hobart., Frankel., and Walker. 2009c).

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