



Assessment Component 1: A Case Study of Bristol



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Introduction

This report is based on a case study of a family that has been dealing with adversity. Adversity here refers to the difficulties that are faced in the form of issues such as domestic violence, criminal justice involvement, substance misuse, poverty, etc. (Cassels *et al.*, 2018). These situations often tend to make the people within the family a little vulnerable especially the young children within the family. Vulnerability as mentioned here refers to the state of being in a position of getting harmed in some or the other way (Etzel, 2020). The case study that is going to be done here is a description of vulnerabilities that the members of the family, especially the children face in several ways.

Case Study

The family in the case study

The case is about a family in Bristol comprising a mother with her two children. The mother has been facing issues related to depression and the effect is that she is not able to cope with the parental responsibilities properly. The thing that was worsening her situation was her financial capacity which was too limited to cover even the necessities. In fact, she has been facing debt issues for quite some time and is herself unemployed. The children on the other hand are getting too much out of control. There is a girl and boy in the family, and both were behaving quite abnormally. The neighbors had already reported about the sounds they hear that make them suspect about domestic violence being going on inside the family. The anti-social behavior of both the children had attracted the attention of the criminal justice system and the children are quite vulnerable to the judicial punishments that they might face anytime in near future. In fact, it is not wrong to say that all three of them are vulnerable in some or the other way. Not only were they vulnerable from the judicial intervention point of view, but they could directly harm one another considering the state of mind that they all were in. They mother had already been physically assaulted by her children more than once and the level of domestic violence that was going on within the family got so high that there was always a huge risk of damage to life considering their activities.

The risk factors of the vulnerability

The following factors have been recognized as the main contributors to the vulnerability of the children and perhaps the mother also.

The mental health of the children

In the case study, the son has been described as a regular assaulter of those around him and his behavior can be attributed to some mental disorder that he has been facing for some time that has worsened to the limits. Therefore this point has clearly explained the existence of special needs (in precise words, the mental conditions) of the child as one of the factors of vulnerability of the children.

The mental health of the parents

The mental health of the parent or the guardian is also a crucial determiner of the behavior of the activities of the children. Out of the 175 cases that were studied in a research done to find out the factors responsible for the reasons of vulnerability and adversity that it creates, 53% of the cases were related to mental health of the parents. In the selected case study also (NSPCC, 2018), the mother suffered from prolonged depression. Depression as mentioned here is, yet another factor can be added to the list of possible risk factors leading to vulnerability of both the mother as well as the children. The mother too in a state of vulnerability that has arisen perhaps due to the combination of her depression issues as well as the abnormal behavior of her children. The depression has led to her not being sensible enough to deal with the happenings in a controlled manner as is generally expected from a mother of two children. Her inability to think properly is clearly reflected in her issues of having herself and her children under control during times of domestic violence which is a factor of risk (Sohmaran and Shorey, 2019).

Domestic abuse

Domestic violence or abuse refers to any action carried out by one family member on the other, which is threatening, coercive or abusive in any form be it mental or physical. 54% of the cases which were studied as an initiative to identify the causes of family adversity involved domestic violence (NSPCC, 2018). The mother as well as the children was under huge risk of getting into huge troubles related to physical damage to other human beings. The mental disorders that each one of them was facing could have further worsened leading to permanent damages.

Analysis

The point where the intervention was needed

Both the son as well as the daughter had been involved in several antisocial activities despite getting several warnings from the people around them. The people have also tried to offer help to the family, but the members have just been too abusive to accept the help. The clearly

reflects the mental state that the children were in. They were likely to cause damage either to themselves or anyone who they would have met. To prevent anything big in terms of damage, the intervention became very important, and it was them that the family intervention worker took the charge of settling things.

The process of intervention by relevant health and social care agencies and current relevant policy

The children in the case study clearly were in the state of need as stated by the Children Act of 1989. According to Tunstill and Thoburn (2020), the Children Act of 1989 has clearly stated about the situations when there must be an intervention from the outside to help the children in need. Section 17 of the legislation clarifies that any child that is in the state of getting harmed mentally or physically or is in a mental state of harming those around him is a child in need. The son and the daughter did need attention based on what has been mentioned in the legislation like the Children Act of 1989 (and its revised version of 2004). Section 17 of the Children act 1989 has what is needed to identify the children in need (Bridgeman, 2017).

Section 47 of the same legislation has clarified and stated the importance of intensity of the need in inviting judicial and legal intervention. It must be very clear as to when the intervention is really required. Anything that can be handled without the intervention of the legislative or judiciary is given a thought by correlating the points mentioned in the legislation. Only if there is a possibility of a significant harm to the child or anyone around him due to his activity, the authorities can act keeping the legislative points as the basis for their actions (Bridgeman, 2017).

Section 20 or 31A of the same legislation has provided the points that need to be considered before arrangements for accommodation of the children identified to be in need. They cannot be forced to leave their homes simply they have been identified as the ones in need of intervention. There must be a concrete evidence of the safety risks that exist with them continuing in their original place of residence (McHale, 2017).

The intervention that was adopted in the case study that is the involvement of a family intervention worker is an outcome of the assessment based on what is given in the legislation mentioned above as well as in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* document of 2018. The assessment involved an analysis of the parental capacity as well as the environmental factors. Every possible correlation was done from all the possible angles to make sure that the

intervention stood justified in the context of law and sensible from the rational point of view. According to BECKE (2019), the practitioners that are involved in taking initiative in cases such as these must work in consultation and collaboration with the statutory and voluntary bodies that serve the purpose of childcare in both private as well as in the public sector domain. There are several bodies like the police, the health care workers, the rehabilitation facilities, etc. They all must work together to make sure that the help is ensured at the right time to those children who are in need. This addresses the essentials of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* document of 2018 (Frost, 2020).

There is also this United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1991 that has been instrumental in clarifying as well as justifying the actions that has been taken to ensure that the children are provided with the support that they are entitled to (Tobin, 2019). Certain articles of the national document have clearly been in close correlation with the case study. The Article 24 of the UNCRC has clearly mentioned that it is the responsibility of the government to intervene in the matters such as the one mentioned in the case study and ensures that the financial issues and unemployment conditions faced by the mother are addressed along with the governmental support in terms of free availability of health care facilities that the entire family needs. Article 28 highlights the rights of the children to education despite them being a sufferer of mental disorder. The article states that every child irrespective of who he or she is and what is physical or mental condition is, can access the education. The modes might be different to those of a normal learner but still education must be ensured to them (Unicef, 2019).

The Equality act of 2010 also stand firms in protecting the rights of the family in accessing the healthcare, education and employment facilities and opportunities without having to face any sort of discriminatory issue on any grounds whatsoever (Hankivsky *et al.*, 2019)

Evaluation of the current policy and the roles of multi-disciplinary services

The governmental support is hence possible in terms of provision of employment opportunities for the mother, free schooling for the children after they have been declared mentally fit by the health practitioners and availability of health care facilities that the entire family needs. It has been mentioned in the case study that the family intervention worker did help the mother in realizing the need of the situation. With her efforts, there was improvement in the behavior of both the children and their relationship with the mother. She has even assured further support in terms of getting a stable job for the mother that could possibly sort out the financial setbacks.

Evaluation

Critical analysis of the responses of the relevant agencies

The relevant agencies involved are the police, the healthcare workers who would be handling the mental conditions of the children and mother, the family intervention worker, etc. While the intervention worker responded just correctly to address the special needs of the family, the statutory body that reacted in the past in the case seemed to have not understood the needs properly. The son was involved in multiple anti-social activities in collaboration with a gang, as mentioned in the case study. He needed help right from the beginning when he was caught in those. The police could have acted a bit more responsibly by making him aware about his mental conditions.

Recommendations for improvement in the efforts made

To ensure that efforts of the policies and interventions are in correct direction, it is important to link the case with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs which states that a person's overall set of requirements during his lifetime could be described using a pyramid consisting of the five levels of needs (Hopper, 2020).

Physiological needs

The health and basic amenities to survive must never become an issue. Financial issues of the family could have been addressed at the right time to have the basic necessities ensured.

Safety

The intervention could have been made earlier so that domestic abuses were minimal. Agencies were late to act in the case study that resulted in evident violence in the family.

Social

The family needs to socialize in order to learn the correct way of interacting with the outside people. They need to be made aware that people can help if they are properly interacted with.

Ego

Ego might cause unnecessary conflicts out of nowhere. That issue of each of the three family members must be controlled by subjecting them to suggestions from psychological experts.

Self-Actualization

The three members of the family need to realize their state of mind so that they can control themselves without the need of any external influence. That has been achieved to large extent by the family intervention worker but needs further involvement of health care workers.

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