

**Children, Young People, and Families
(BMHP5004_LON)**

Assessment Component 1

Case study - Written Report

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Vulnerability is the state an individual is at a high risk of being exposed to the possibility of being abused, either physically or emotionally (Brown, 2011). The purpose of this essay is to analyse and evaluate a case study on a single mother and her two children who are experiencing multiple factors that poses the children at a high risk of abuse and how effective the multi-agency intervened to safeguard the children and help the mother (Community and Local Government, 2014).

The mother of the two children was an alcoholic who was raised from an abusive childhood, and in her past relationship, she was domestically abused by her partner (Community and Local Government, 2014). Her home had been where other drinkers meet to get drunk, and there was anti-social behaviour around her property. The children had low school attendance and behavioural issues (Community and Local Government, 2014). Their father had died due to drug misuse. This family is troubled because the people within this family are twice at risk of being abuse and having mental health problems than an average person (NSPCC, 2021). This is because the mother has an uncontrollable use of alcohol, and people who are on substance misuse often experience uncontrollable behaviours such as violence, shouting and cannot properly supervise their children (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011). These factors tend to affect the development of the children within the family, and they may grow up with the relationship and emotional difficulties while the mother may be at risk of being dead as the father or suffer other health diseases (wright, 2015).

2.0 CASE STUDY

The numerous growing research on multiple adversities identifies clear and consistent evidence that people exposed to adversities in their childhood are vulnerable to experiencing mental and emotional difficulties while developing into adulthood (Felitti and Anda 2010). As children experience neglect and abuse, it negatively affects the healthy growth of the child's brain. The effects of abuse and neglect on children's brains have a long-term impact on the development of the brain; this is where the child carries such effects into adulthood. Such long-term effects may impair the child's cognitive development; this causes a reduction in impulse control and a less active memory immune system to aid in learning (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014). According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory, the environment where the child is natured influences the development of the child. It identifies the macrosystem where parents and carers are the most significant factors that influence the child's behavior when developing. All children under 18 years are vulnerable since they must depend on their parents for survival (NSPCC, 2018).

Moreover, due to the parent's lifestyle, she struggles to cater to the wants of her children (NSPCC, 2021). This environment puts the children at a high risk of self-neglect and emotional and cognitive

difficulty (NSPCC, 2018). Children under the parental care of substance misuse are often at risk of neglect because research has found that some parent who drink excess alcohol mostly loses consciousness without seeking any responsible adult to cater for children at her absence (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011). However, the Children Social Rights 1991 states the right of every child to having education and safety. Bronfenbrenner identifies that adults who have a better life and are without emotional problems are those who had good parental care, education, safety, and a welcoming environment during their childhood.

Again, evidence from the child protection 1995 research identified that when parents experience personal problems, it tends to disrupt their ability to cater to the wants of their children. For instance, Cleaver and Freeman (1995) research found that more children were abused in families where parents were alcohol drinkers or drug misusers. Therefore, the misuse of a substance by the mother tends to put the children at high risk of abuse. Therefore, the children Act 2004 (section 10(2) demands children's services to take up the responsibility of recognising children who have special needs to safeguard the well-being of these children, that is; mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically to protect them from being neglected or abused.

3.0 ANALYSIS

Early help, also called early intervention, is a support used by social care agencies to support families suspected to be troubled at their early stage (INSPCC, 2019). The UK Statutory policy lays down the essence of development early intervention, rather than doing nothing until matters worsen within the family (Department for Education (DfE), 2018). The children and parents within the family are given Early intervention services; however, the agency's primary purpose is to improve the well-being of the children (INSPCC, 2019). The early help intervention can be performed by agencies in various activities, including home visit programmes, school-based programmes, and mentorship schemes programmes (EIF, 2018). It is essential to include Early help services when intervening to support families and children. This is because it aids the social care workers to respond and recognise that every family and children have their own needs and the degree of the impact of their problem on their way of life and cannot be considered the same for all families (DfE, 2018). the intervention is holistic and looks at more comprehensive family needs and how the agency can provide adequate support. The intervention offers the child the support they need to release their maximum capabilities (EIF, 2018). It also builds a peaceful and quality family life for the child, encouraging children to perform at their maximum potential at school while improving their cognitive health (EIF, 2018). Various research on early intervention has pointed out that the intervention can safeguard children from abuse, decrease the tendency of the child being directed to child protection services and improve long-term well-being results of children (Haynes et al., 2015). Moreover lastly,

the intervention supports children to build upon their strengths and capabilities to prepare them for the future (EIF, 2018).

In England, the 2017 drug strategy has laid down how parental substance misuse tends to influence the behaviour and development of a child. It also sets out the vital roles each family can undertake during the recovery stage (HM Government, 2017). In addition, the local authorities within the public health in England are being urged to comply with some code of conduct about protecting and improving the well-being of vulnerable children who are negatively affected by their parent's substance misuse (Public Health England, 2018). Public Health England has also issued a toolkit for all child and family services in England and adult alcohol and drug treatment services. The toolkit highlights the principles that will aid healthcare professionals in helping families with parental alcohol misuse in giving practical support for a better outcome (Public Health England, 2021).

The characteristics that were identified does not consider the children to be abused or neglected; however, these problems have been identified by research as often interlinked, and the continuity of these problems on children within the family tends to pose a greater risk of abuse of the children (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011). Regarding the case study, the children should have been subject to assessment after the death of their father. However, safeguarding agencies like the child protection services, the family worker, and the police did not recognise the situation. Even after the death of the children's father because of drug use, no assessment was done on how the children in the family are coping (Community and Local Government, 2014). Furthermore, the care worker who worked with the family failed also to disclose how the mother turned the house into a drinking pub and how her alcoholic behaviors affected her parental lifestyle (Community and Local Government, 2014). The children became subject to assessment when the mother realised how her substance misuse was destroying her and parenting and disclosed the situation in Stockport with the help of her family worker. After the disclosure, Stockport conducted an intensive assessment into the family; the family worker arranged a detox programme to help her cut her alcohol dependency (Community and Local Government, 2014).

They were consistent and regular communication between the mother and the family worker; this helps the family worker gain the mother's trust and challenge her to improve her parenting skills. The family worker contacted the children's school to disclose reasons for the children's poor attendance and empowered the mother on how to build a firm boundary with her children by setting daily routines in her daily schedules. The purpose of the intervention action was also to ensure that there is an improvement in the children's school attendance. Counseling programmes were also organised for the mother to tackle the psychological aspect of the impact of alcohol misuse and help

her overcome it. The actions taken helped the mother improve; the family worker also scheduled a meeting with a specialist Troubled Families JobCentre Plus worker who could offer her direct support. The action helped the mother quit her drinking habits; she keeps a logbook of all her triggers to keep her addiction under control. She also quit making her home a drinking place, providing a peaceful and safer environment for the children. The school had also reported improved behaviour and happiness within the children, and their participation in school activities had also improved.

4.0 EVALUATION

According to Munro (2019), there has been increased attention of children vulnerable to harm under poor parenting and parental substance misuse by the child protection services, and measures are being laid in place to safeguard such children like the children within the case study. In this regard, various laws and policies have been implemented to target the multi-agencies on how they can intervene support children. The current set policies urge all multi-agency workers to explain the action to be undertaken concerning safeguarding disclosures. Furthermore, another aspect of the current policies ensures that mothers are given all the informed information about the misuse of substances on their mental health and the danger they put their children in because of such behaviour (INSPCC, 2019). Again, the current policies ensure a regular review of the child safeguarding practices by local authorities to ensure a decrease in the risk of occurrence of similar incidents (Department of Education, 2020).

The risk of child abuse is becoming one of the rising global crimes (Turner et al., 2017). Therefore, policies must be prepared to improve the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures and increase the participation of multi-agencies in health and social care. The case study shows that if the mother had not stood up to seek help, multi-agency workers like family workers and even the police would have ignored the situation until it had gotten worse. However, this situation could have been solved a long time, even after the death of the children's father, with compliance to the early intervention.

On assessing the case study, it could be retrieved that the family is now getting a positive outcome because of the agency's effective action and the mother's cooperation. The troubled family programme identified five factors that can effectively change the situation of troubled families if used by agencies; this includes (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012); a dedicated worker, dedicated to a family, Practical 'hands-on support, A persistent, assertive, and challenging approach, Considering the family as a whole – gathering the intelligence and Common purpose and agreed on the action, which all these factors were identified in the action of the Stockport for supporting the family.

4.1 recommendation

Multi-agencies should ensure that concerns are disclosed and recorded whenever there is a notice of negative parental behaviours. This will help prevent early damages on children, and protection is made available. In addition, it can help in recognising the pattern of abuse that the child has experienced in their past life and the best intervention that can be done to safeguard the child. At the same time, it builds up an overview of the child's lived experience so potentially abusive behavior patterns can be identified (INSPCC, 2019). Agencies should also ensure that the records they keep on the children are shared with a nominated person from the children's protection service. This will aid during the assessment process, as this action can help the agency decide whether the child needs to be referred to the local child protection services (INSPCC, 2019).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the case study discussed the vulnerability of children under the parental care of an alcoholic mother. It also discussed the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of children. Analysis was made of how the family was supported by agencies and evaluated the children's policies. Lastly, recommendations were also provided on how the agency can continue to support the family effectively.

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