

Script

5 R's

According to Buckler (2023), safeguarding is the responsibility of every professional working with children. Therefore the 5 R's provide a clear framework to follow when a concern is raised. They ensure that concerns are handled consistently and in line with legal duties such as the Children Act (2004) (Mackreth and Walker, 2020).

The first R is Recognise. This being, identifying signs of abuse or changes in behaviour that might indicate a child is at risk. According to Ashley, Armitage and Taylor (2016), recognition involves being observant and understanding different types of harm. This is important because at times the smallest behavioural change, or something that 'does not seem right' can be the first sign that a child needs help.

The second R being Respond. According to Butler (2022), when a child shares a concern, it is important to respond calmly and supportively. This meaning a practitioner must listen without interrupting or asking leading questions. It is a practitioner's role at this stage to offer reassurance, not to investigate (Cocker et al., 2021).

The third and fourth Rs are Report and Record. Blyth (2014) states that any safeguarding concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible. According to Duffy, Browne and Connolly (2024), everything must be Recorded accurately and timely. This is important as a practitioner is more likely to write what was seen and heard in the child's exact words accurately which will support multi-agency decision-making and help build a picture (Davies and Ward, 2012).

The final R being Refer. Once recorded, the DSL then refers the concern to children's social care or other relevant services who then decide whether to carry out further assessment, offer support or perhaps initiate immediate safeguarding action (Lindon, 2012).

To conclude, following the 5 R's protects children and supports professional accountability, while also ensuring every child has the right to grow, safe from harm.

Reflection

This module explored how professionals recognise, assess and respond to risks. And strengthened my understanding of legal and ethical responsibilities involved in keeping children safe. Before beginning the module, my understanding of safeguarding was quite general. I knew it involved protecting children from obvious harm and that concerns should be reported to a designated safeguarding lead. However, I did not fully appreciate how complex safeguarding can be, or how many subtle indicators of risk exist. I also was not aware of the many legislations created due to tragic and fatal events for example, the case that stood out most to me was the Victoria Climbié case.

One key idea stood out to me was the importance of professional curiosity such as questioning inconsistencies and not making assumptions about a child's situation.

This module helped me realise that safeguarding is not just about responding to visible signs. Hidden harms such as emotional abuse and parental substance misuse can be just as damaging. I now understand why practitioners must look beyond the surface and consider the child's wider context.

I now feel more confident in following safeguarding procedures that I will be considering as a future practitioner, such as working within frameworks such as the Children Act 1989 and working together to safeguard children. The module helped me understand my duty to share information when necessary to protect children.

Ty for ur time

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