



BMHP5004

Children, Young People and Families

Case Study Report

Student Name: Crizanta Barros

ID: 1913506

Lecturer: Bianaca Sanfilippo

University: University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Case Study	4
3	Analysis	6
4	Evaluation.....	8
5	References	9

1 Introduction

The case study chosen is a project done by the social care agency, the Families Unit, in Norfolk. The family in question consisted of Holly and her three kids, Sarah, Mark, and Kylie. The vulnerability issue in the children and the family as a whole that this study recognized and pointed out was the effect of alcohol abuse on the mother and how she took it out on her children in the forms of domestic violence and emotional neglect. The mother was also deemed to suffer from bursts of panic and anxiety attacks, and had poor decision making and problem-solving skills, causing her parental controls to malfunction. Hence, the examples of vulnerability this case touched upon were domestic violence and emotional abuse and neglect, and how it caused everyone in the family to become anti-social. The distancing from social activities also caused the children to miss school many times and the mother to not handle things properly.

Furthermore, the reasons behind the aspect that sets this family apart from others is their position of vulnerability. As per the study, it was stated that Holly was prone to abusive relationships, which led her to getting addicted to alcohol, which ultimately led to emotionally, and sometimes physically, too, neglecting and abusing her children. Consuming alcohol when the drinker is feeling strong emotions like fear and anger can have dire consequences, and that is exactly what happened to Holly. It was also stated that the family had a long history of domestic violence, in which case Holly's children both experienced and witnessed domestic violence, either from Holly's past husband or boyfriend or from Holly herself. Hence, the position of vulnerability that makes Holly's family distinct is the absence of a spark of a loving and bonded family. The problem is not just domestic violence, but it is what led to it and what caused it, where the culprits can be Holly's abuse of alcoholic drinks, her poor problem-solving skills, her poor parenting, and the emotional neglect she puts in front of her children. Negative effects on a woman's physical

and mental health can have severe outcomes, and they are mostly resulted from an exposure to feelings of low self-esteem, sadness, fear and depression, which also bring about repercussions that lead to social isolation and drug abuse (Carneiro et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be seen why Holly's family is problematic and is different from an average family of a single mother living with her children. To begin with, an average family of this sort would not need any health or social care agencies to get in contact with them, but Holly's family did, and Holly herself needed counselling on how she could get rid of her abusive relationships that caused her worst emotions to get heightened, the abuse of alcohol that followed, and the immense amounts of panic attacks and emotional neglect that her children had to experience. Her children not going to school like their average peers is alarming and had to be looked into instantly as emotional neglect and domestic violence caused the whole family to become anti-social – something which is not welcomed at such a vulnerable age for children and their healthy growth.

2 Case Study

The issues identified in this case were the effects of emotional abuse and neglect on children, which was a result of domestic violence and anti-social behaviour, as well as panic attacks and poor problem-solving abilities. On such aspects, countless theories and professional views have been put forward to inspect these problems in a more expertly manner, so the solutions to them could be reached more effectively. In this case, domestic violence has always been a popular topic for observation. Domestic violence is not uncommon – it happens in every nook and corner of the world. It happens from partner to partner, partner to child, parent to child, etc., and has the ability to turn the state of a normal household into a chaotic and negative one. The case of domestic violence with Holly's family has been stated as having a 'long history'. This history can consist of domestic abuse upon Holly from her previous partners, or on the children from Holly

herself or her abusive partners. Nevertheless, in either way, all Sarah, Mark and Kylie experienced it or witnessed it, causing negative effects on them, like anti-social attitude and the wrong views about the world. Moving on, as it was said, domestic violence is a frequent topic that takes place in discussions among professionals and theoreticians. Currently, it is a broadly accepted fact that children who either experience or witness domestic violence in their homes have a greater threat to get exposed to neglect, physical or emotional abuse (Devaney, 2015). Unfortunately, Holly's children had surpassed this risk and were actively getting the full effects of domestic abuse and its introduction to emotional neglect. An instance that can be given for the United Kingdom is that fact that a research discovered that children or adolescents who witness and experience domestic violence within their families are more likely to also experience emotional abuse and neglect than children who have not experienced it (Devaney, 2015). The same study also claimed that children living in a negative household where parents are not in their right minds, like the one with Holly, can cause severely negative impacts on their emotional and mental health. It is vital to understand that the effect of domestic violence does not stop at childhood and continues to disrupt a person even when they are well off into adulthood (Evang and Øverlien, 2015). This is because the consequences of domestic violence cause the parents to not meet the physical, emotional or parental requirements of children because of their poor mental or physical health, and seeing those people on whom they are dependent upon can ultimately also cause the children to suffer, especially when it is their mother in question, like for the case of Holly (Zeanah and Humphreys, 2018).

Moreover, another issue highlighted in the study is poor social behaviour that resulted from Holly's alcoholic abuse and domestic violence. It is another commonly known fact that children who are living in disturbed households tend to experience poor bouts of social behaviour and have

a hard time making friends (Brown et al., 2016). This is a significant subject for concern because in order to grow effectively, a child needs to have same-age friends and peers to foster their development physically, emotionally and mentally. Furthermore, emotional abuse and neglect also paves the way towards fear and depression in children that can progressively get worse as they grow up, which is problematic because it can lead them towards criminal behaviour or bullying habits (Maguire et al., 2015).

On the other hand, if Holly and her family's case is looked into from a different perspective, some factors that would have made the situation even more vulnerable come onto the surface. Firstly, the case didn't mention any partner violence, but it did touch upon the fact that due to domestic violence, the condition of Holly declined. Hence, a risk factor that would have indicated a higher level of vulnerability is partner violence, which is one of the most significant aspects of child maltreatment (Raitasalo et al., 2019). Secondly, eating disorders is also another risk factor that highlights the increased bouts of vulnerability in Holly and her children. It was already stated that Holly was prone to alcoholic abuse, but if eating disorders were also added, the effect of child emotional neglect would have increased as in many cases, eating disorders are also a result of domestic abuse and can cause negative effects on children (Kimber et al., 2017).

3 Analysis

Moving on, for Holly's family case, the health and social care agency named the Families Unit had intervened and had worked with the family for eleven months straight. The point at which the family had become in such a dire need of professional help and had to get in contact with this agency was when Sarah's and Mark's absence in school became frequent and Holly's negligence towards them increased. They were put forward to the Families Unit by the local authority of their living area in Norfolk and had the children become a subject for a child protection plan due to their

poor upbringing in the household, their poor social behaviour, and their poor attendance in school. After observing the family and their issues, this particular social agency took some steps to help the family get back on track – and all of them had positive results.

Firstly, the Families Unit team worked to decrease the bouts of anti-social behaviour of the family. This behaviour had caused them to not even go out for a healthy amount of time, but the agency's efforts proved to be a success and the family members found themselves moving to a different location that sported a lack of such memories that could incite negative emotions. Next, Holly was the main target of the team, as her getting better would ultimately mean the children getting better. Hence, she was counselled and was supported to leave a bad relationship that made her a subject of domestic abuse. The attitude and the behavioural patterns of hers that led her to abusive relationship one after the other were also discussed, causing her to understand the consequences of them and how they affected her children. This discussion also led her to put a stop on her anti-social behaviour and become livelier. The Families Unit team also gave her support and advice about how she should improve her parenting skills and how she could set appropriate boundaries with her children to foster their upbringings. The halt on the anti-social behaviour also caused her children to become more socially skilled, resulting them to increase their school attendance and for Sarah and Mark to join such courses that boosted their confidence and self-esteem. Lastly, for the youngest, Kylie, Holly was aided in finding a good and appropriate nursing place while she got her life back on track. In summary, the work and efforts of the Families Unit team produced amazing results, and Holly's family is now back on track in happy and healthy spirits.

In the means of current policies in the UK that deal with issues related to this case, there are several. Domestic violence is also exceedingly common in the UK, and it has led to countless

arrests of people who abuse their partners or their children (Strom et al., 2014). These arrests have been found to be relieving, yet emotionally distressing for the offended families, and can have a lifelong impact on them even (Strom et al., 2014). However, for the case of child abuse in any form, the most common policy or practice in the UK is that an abused or neglected child can contact Childline, a service provided by the UK's health and social governmental department that listens to their worries and tries to help them solve them (Atkins and Durrance, 2020).

4 Evaluation

From a personal perspective, the steps that were taken to help Holly's family were appropriate and effective. It could be seen that the agency tried to help her and her children in the best way possible, and helped them get their life back on track. However, there were some aspects that were missing in their approach that could have brought even more effectual results if they had tried it. For instance, the case did not mention any sort of communication with Holly's abusive partner, if there was one. The team should have come into contact with him and tried to counsel him as well, because even if Holly would have gotten rid of him, his disturbed behaviour and attitude would only make more women a victim of theirs (Stanley and Humphreys, 2014). Second, the team should also have provided some thorough therapy for Holly to cater to her panic and anxiety attacks, like CBT therapy as it is the most effective. (Haverkamp, 2017) Nevertheless, the efforts of the team were successful, and that is all that matters.

5 References

- Atkins, D.N. and Durrance, C.P., 2020. State Policies That Treat Prenatal Substance Use As Child Abuse Or Neglect Fail To Achieve Their Intended Goals: Study examines the effect of state policies that treat prenatal substance use as child abuse or neglect on the incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome and other factors. *Health Affairs*, 39(5), pp.756-763.
- Brown, L.A., LeBeau, R., Liao, B., Niles, A.N., Glenn, D. and Craske, M.G., 2016. A comparison of the nature and correlates of panic attacks in the context of Panic Disorder and Social Anxiety Disorder. *Psychiatry Research*, 235, pp.69-76.
- Carneiro, J.B., Gomes, N.P., Estrela, F.M., Santana, J.D.D., Mota, R.S. and Erdmann, A.L., 2017. Domestic violence: repercussions for women and children. *Escola Anna Nery*, 21.
- Devaney, J., 2015. Research Review: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children. *Irish Probation Journal*, 12.
- Evang, A. and Øverlien, C., 2015. 'If you look, you have to leave': Young children regulating research interviews about experiences of domestic violence. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(2), pp.113-125.
- Haverkamp, C.J., 2017. Communication-Focused Therapy (CFT) for Anxiety and Panic Attacks. *J Psychiatry Psychotherapy Communication*, 6(4), pp.91-95.
- Kimber, M., McTavish, J.R., Couturier, J., Boven, A., Gill, S., Dimitropoulos, G. and MacMillan, H.L., 2017. Consequences of child emotional abuse, emotional neglect and exposure to intimate partner violence for eating disorders: a systematic critical review. *BMC psychology*, 5(1), pp.1-18.

- Maguire, S.A., Williams, B., Naughton, A.M., Cowley, L.E., Tempest, V., Mann, M.K., Teague, M. and Kemp, A.M., 2015. A systematic review of the emotional, behavioural and cognitive features exhibited by school-aged children experiencing neglect or emotional abuse. *Child: care, health and development*, 41(5), pp.641-653.
- Raitasalo, K., Holmila, M., Jääskeläinen, M. and Santalahti, P., 2019. The effect of the severity of parental alcohol abuse on mental and behavioural disorders in children. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, 28(7), pp.913-922.
- Stanley, N. and Humphreys, C., 2014. Multi-agency risk assessment and management for children and families experiencing domestic violence. *Children and youth services review*, 47, pp.78-85.
- Strom, K.J., Warner, T.D., Tichavsky, L. and Zahn, M.A., 2014. Policing juveniles: Domestic violence arrest policies, gender, and police response to child-parent violence. *Crime & delinquency*, 60(3), pp.427-450.
- Zeanah, C.H. and Humphreys, K.L., 2018. Child abuse and neglect. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 57(9), pp.637-644.