

Safeguarding: practice, legislation and the multi-disciplinary team

Self-Reflection

I have used generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this work, Grammarly (2025) to assist grammatically, and Google Translate (2025) to support this work as an English as a Second Language.

Self-reflection:**Cristiane Ribeiro de Freitas, self-reflection.**

Before undertaking this safeguarding module, my understanding was primarily shaped by the training provided within my early years setting. While I was generally familiar with the four categories of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect), my knowledge of safeguarding procedures, relevant legislation, and multi-agency working was limited. For instance, I was unaware of the structure and purpose of Initial Child Protection Conferences and unfamiliar with external support mechanisms such as the Children's Commissioner for Wales (2019), who offers a confidential route for raising concerns when safeguarding is not adequately addressed within a setting. Gaining this insight during the module has significantly deepened my awareness of professional responsibilities and the practical steps required when encountering barriers to safeguarding.

One of the most impactful learning experiences during this module was comparing Daniel Pelka's safeguarding case with a situation I faced in my early years of practice. While working with a child, I recognised signs of emotional abuse, not through visible injuries, but through a quiet disclosure during play, where the child used an animal to describe parental behaviour. This experience reinforced for me the importance of building strong, trusting relationships, as highlighted by Bowlby's Attachment Theory (Watson and Ecken, 2018). However, it also made me reflect on how easily those subtle signs could have gone unnoticed without the relationship I had built with the child and the deeper understanding I have developed through this module.

In contrast, Daniel's case revealed how seemingly minor indicators, such as stealing food or delayed speech, were repeatedly missed, despite the involvement of multiple professionals. I came to understand how failures in communication and a lack of coordinated action, as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard People (Welsh Government, 2018), contributed to a preventable outcome. Although emotionally difficult to study, this case prompted deep reflection on my professional responsibilities, particularly the importance of recognising early signs of harm, reporting concerns appropriately, and contributing to effective multi-agency safeguarding responses.

Through this module, I have come to understand the 5 Rs of safeguarding—recognising signs of harm, recording observations accurately, responding appropriately, reporting to the correct agencies, and upholding professional responsibility, not as discrete steps, but as a cohesive process that ensures concerns are taken seriously (NSPCC, 2025). I now approach subtle disclosures during play with increased sensitivity and professional confidence. I also appreciate the importance of precise documentation and timely reporting in enabling coordinated multi-agency support. Above all, this experience has reinforced that safeguarding is a continuous professional duty, requiring vigilance, collaboration, and proactive engagement to protect children's well-being. Reflecting on my learning, I now recognise the importance of engaging more openly with colleagues and families, fostering a shared understanding of safeguarding and building trust to ensure every concern is acknowledged and addressed.

Looking ahead, I will continue to enhance my safeguarding practice by applying the knowledge gained from this module and utilising resources such as the Way of Safeguarding Procedures APP to stay informed and collaborate effectively with other professionals. I recognise safeguarding as an ongoing responsibility grounded in vigilance, multi-agency cooperation, and a commitment to protect children from all forms of harm. As Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) states, children have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, and I now feel much more prepared to uphold that right in everything I do.

Thank you.

Reference list:

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NSPCC (2025) *4Rs of Safeguarding and Child Protection | NSPCC Learning*. Available at: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/4rs-safeguarding-child-protection> (Accessed on: 02 July 2025).

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Watson, M., and Ecken, L. (2018) *Learning to trust: attachment theory and classroom management* (Second edition). Oxford University Press.

Welsh Government (2018). *Working Together to Safeguard People*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/working-together-to-safeguard-people-volume-5-handling-individual-cases-to-protect-children-at-risk.pdf?> (Accessed: 18 June 2025).