ECEY5011 – Safeguarding: Practice, legislation and the Multidisciplinary team

Group Discussion

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Welcome everyone, we are here today to discuss the case of Sophie and her children, Tommy, who is 3 years old, and Lily is 6 months, Under the UN Convention and European Convention on Human Rights (The UNCRC), grants young people and children under the age of 17, special protection, measures and assistance. My role as a social worker, I believe that it has been identified that calling a conference regarding the best interest of the children's safety and wellbeing is essential and must be acted on for the purpose of safeguarding the whole family. I have called this conference to establish if a serious case review is needed in order to protect these children and what measures can be put into place to support Sophie, enabling her to safely take care of her children. According to the Child Protection Enquiries (Section 47) states that a child protection conference must be called, the social worker is responsible for the completion of the enquiry, all agencies involved are responsible for providing information to assist by obtaining a fuller picture of the circumstances of the children in the household.My role as a social worker,is to help individual and families improve their quality of life by ensuring that they have acess to their basic needs and advocating for an individual's human rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Legally children should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other individual.Before we start this conference, I would like us all to introduce ourselves and the services we work for, regarding this family and then we will discuss the case.

So, can we please go around the table and introduce ourselves, Janna, would you like to start first, Janna Bint-E Saif (2129742) Designated safeguarding lead, Amie Handley Police (2310796), Elizabeth Llewellyn-Jones, Independent Domestic Violence Support Worker (2306796) and myself Aimee Robinson social worker (2314197)Now we will procced with the conference, I was made aware of a concern for Tommy's welfare by the Designated safeguarding lead at his school setting, Janna could you confirm this please?

Yes I can confirm that.

Hello, my name is Janna, and I serve as the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Tommy's school. The Children Act (2004) specifies the critical responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), which are crucial for safeguarding children within educational environments. Section 175 of The

Education Act (2002) mandates that all educational settings have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of the children in their care. Each school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) whose responsibility is to ensure that the school adheres to safeguarding legislation and guidance. Identify children at risk of abuse or neglect and respond to and report any concerns without delay.

In England, the Department for Education (DfE) issues essential guidance for schools and colleges titled "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE, 2023). This document outlines the legal obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18 within educational institutions. As stated in "Keeping Children Safe in Education," as educators it is our legal duty to uphold the safeguarding responsibilities for the children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), a key statutory guidance document for schools, defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems arise. Article 19 of UNCRC and UNICEF stated that, children have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, including violence, abuse, or neglect by their parents or caregivers.

According to the Children Act (1989), a child's wellbeing should come first, and this act offers the guidelines for child welfare and protection, emphasising the need to protect children from harm, advance their welfare, and provide necessary services. In line with the guidelines, it is our responsibility as DSL to conduct investigations and follow producers to protect the well-being of children.

The EYFS Statutory Framework establishes guidelines for schools to implement clear safeguarding policies and procedures. These align with local authority guidance on recognizing, responding to, reporting, and recording suspected or actual abuse.

Tommy is 3 years old boy who lives with his mum Sophie and little sister Lilly. Tommys class teacher has reported a change in his behaviour, expressing concerns about his well-being. In collaboration with the class teacher and in accordance with our school's safeguarding policy, we have compiled a profile using various reports from CPOMS, our reporting system. This profile details our concerns about Tommy's behaviour, hygiene, and the behaviour of the adults who drop off and pick him up from school.

Recently, I've observed changes in Tommy's behaviour; he appears increasingly frustrated, frequently upset, and angry, and has been hitting other children. Tommy is no longer the cheerful, talkative, and cheeky individual he usually was in recent weeks, he had become withdrawn and silent. His personal hygiene had deteriorated, and his school uniform was often dirty, ill-fitting, and worn out. Based on the class practitioner's report and my own observations, I suspect Tommy may be coming to school hungry, as he often mentions not having breakfast.

Additionally, I believe he might be missing meals, evidenced by his requests for second helpings during dinner time. On the morning of 2nd of June Tommy was dropped by an unknown male who looked rough and was smelling of strong alcohol. The practitioner brought this matter to my attention, so we reached out to the mother, inquired about the man's identity and who would be picking up Tommy. She responded that the man is her new partner and that she would be the one collecting Tommy from school.

Tommy's mother Sophie's physical appearance also caused concern because it seemed like she had dropped weight and was wearing heavy makeup to hide facial bruising. She seemed to be always avoiding interaction and making excuses when asked to come and speak at the school.
When Tommy's younger sister Lily was spotted with Sophie, she was sobbing and didn't look like a typical six-month-old infant.
The factors I have mentioned are signs of neglect, as defined by the NSPCC. in 2021, under Section 11 of the Children Act (2004) and Section 175 of the Education Act (2002). Neglect involves a consistent failure to meet a child's basic needs, such as sufficient food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter, which is likely to seriously impair the child's health or development.
I believe from what I observed Tommy falls under neglect, and he is a child who is in need. Children considered to be in need Under section 17 of the Children Act (1989), if they are unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development without the provision of services. Under section 47 of the Children Act of (1989), If you suspect a child may be in need, at risk of harm, or suffering harm, you should immediately report this to the local authority's children's social care service.
Therefore, to ensure Tommy and his family's safety and well-being, I made the decision to contact social worker Amie Robinson and report Tommy's case. Amie, could you confirm?

Yes, thank you Janna i can confirm that on Wednesday the 2nd of June at 12:15pm, I received a phone call from Janna the designated safeguarding lead at Tommy's school setting

According to the Regional Child Protection procedures for the west midlands, professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to refer a child to the local authority children's social care, if they have a concern for the welfare of a child, if there is a concern then it should be raised as local procedures. Contact should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding hub known as (MASH), is an arrangement that allows organisations with the reasonability to protect vulnerable people, sharing information quickly and efficiently between services. Also, if a child is known to social services, then that child's allocated social worker should be contacted and the concern for the welfare of the child should referred to them. Janna had concerns about Tommy's well-being, as Sophie and her children are known to me as she has previously been involved in a Domestic violence relationship, with the biological father of her children. I had previously referred Sophie to be seen by a designated Health Visitor during the pregnancy of her second baby (Lily) she was to be seen weekly as she was struggling from having been inflicted with physical and emotional abuse and really needed support to cope. The school setting built up a picture about Tommy's wellbeing, between the class practitioner and the designated safeguarding lead recorded various CPOMS reports about the concern of Tommy's behaviour, hygiene and about the behaviour of the adults picking up and dropping Tommy off at his school setting. It was reported that tommy had

become withdrawn and quiet over the last few weeks. His uniform was becoming worn and small and there was a concern that he was missing meals. There was also a concern about his mother's appearance as it looked like she was trying to cover facial bruising and, also the concern she was avoiding conversation and seemed to be making excuses when asked to speak to the school. According to the children's services referral and assessment, children's services have 24 hours to determine a required response and to consider the action they may need to take.

Having received this information, I decided to go and visit the family home, to check on and see if Sophie and the children are ok, I arrive at the house on the 3rd June at 9;30am, when I approached the house, I can hear screaming which seemed to be coming from Sophie's home, I knocked on the door and I could hear what seemed to be a female screaming out and then a male voice that was shouting aggressively. I repeatedly knocked and the house went silent. I could tell that the disturbance was coming from Sophie's house, and I announced myself by shouting through the letterbox, i could then hear the children crying. I was extremely worried and did not want to come away from the house so that is when i decided to call the police and waited for them to arrive. I waited around 30 minutes and officer Handley and her partner arrived at the house. Under the UN Convention and the European Convention on Human rights the (UNCRC) grants young people the age of 17 and under specical protection, measures and assistance.

Hello, my name is Amie Handley; I am a police officer on this case.
According to HM Government (2023) the police force have a duty to carry out section 11 obligations and we are one of the three statutory safeguarding partners The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is required under section 1(8)(h) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011) to hold the Chief Constable accountable for carrying out his or her responsibilities under sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act (2004) regarding the protection of children. A phone call from a social worker, known as Aime Robinson, on the morning of 3rd June 2024 at 10am requested support for entry to a home with a suspected case of child neglect. Do you confirm Aimee? Yes, I can confirm

According to the College of Policing (2022) police officers must recognise reports of child neglect and make pertinent inquiries and conduct a comprehensive investigation. Child neglect may not always be recognised as such by the victim or witness reporting it.
According to HM Gov (2023), as stated in Section 46 of the Children Act (1989), the police (including British Transport Police), should use their statutory child protection powers to act immediately to secure the safety of the child when there is a risk to the child's life or a

likelihood of serious immediate harm, whether from inside or outside the home. According to NSPCC, (2015) case studies show that to react to child safety concerns promptly and comprehensively, law enforcement must collaborate closely with other agencies. The effects of abuse and neglect on children must be understood by us, the police, as must the warning indicators of abuse. As a force, we must also consider the impact that criminal activity on family members has on children.

In addition to rescuing children from imminent danger, police have a crucial role in sharing intelligence and information in relation to child protection. There is a record of previous 'call outs' regarding 'disturbance' at this address. The incident was recorded as domestic violence and the father was detained and charged with battery of his wife, known as Sophie. No physical harm was inflicted on the children. As the children were not in imminent danger, they remained at the home with their Sophie.

I shall now read the notes/ formal report as recorded in my notebook on 3rd June at 10am. I arrived at the house, to be met by the social worker, and could hear screaming and crying from inside. I knocked on the door, and informed the occupants of our presence, but there was no response. With persistent knocking and calling, a gentleman opened the front door. He appeared heavily intoxicated and was verbally aggressive. He refused us entry to the house and back up was called. On arrival of back up, we gained entry by force. The back up team applied negotiating measures with the male adult, known as Mike, whilst myself, Aimee Robinson the social worker and Officer James, conducted a thorough investigation of the home. According to the College of Policing (2022), establishing as much detail as possible can help officers and police officials conduct a comprehensive investigation into an allegation of child neglect. During the search I noted a strong smell of tobacco or a class B drug. As there was an implication of illegal activity, the police can interact with children according to the NSPCC (2015). The adult female, known as Sophie, was covered in bruises, with a cut lip. The children were found unharmed, but in an obvious state of fear and anxiety. The baby, known as Lily, was crying in her cot. Tommy, the three-year-old child, was hiding under his bed and appeared scared and fearful. According to the NSPCC (2015), we, the police should ensure the welfare, safety, and well-being of children under the age of eighteen is taken into consideration. We should consider the effects that criminal activity has on children when we interact with families. When we are responding to an event, we should routinely inquire about the safety and welfare of any relevant minors.

During the house visit we considered the guidance provided by Citizens Advice (2021) that is if there are grounds to suspect that a child is being harmed or is about to suffer serious injury, the police have the authority to place the child under police protection for a maximum of 72 hours. We agreed that the children would be placed in police protection. To place a child under police protection, the police can do so without a court order. According to the

Care Act (2014), a child is subject to safeguarding obligations if they require care and support (regardless of whether the local authority provides it); are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect; or are unable to protect themselves due to their care and support needs. Where a police officer has reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, under section 46 of the Children's Act 1989 (UK Government, 2014), the police can use their (PPP), Police Powers of Protection, and a child may be kept in or taken to appropriate accommodation where they may be protected, such as a relative's home, a hospital, a police station, a foster home, a children's home, or any other suitable place. Police protection cannot be applied to a child for longer than 72 hours.
Aimee Robinson, the social worker oversaw the child on behalf of the local council, as Sophie, the mother, required hospital attention. The child's placement in foster care or ability to remain with other family members was determined by the social worker. Where the child resides will normally be communicated to the parents, although occasionally, when there is a significant risk, this information may not be provided. Aimee, do you confirm this? Yes, I can confirm. Mike, the aggressive male adult was taken into custody that day and will be doubt with by another police officer back at the police station. Sophie, the mother, will subsequently receive support by a domestic violence support worker. I will now pass you back over to Aimee Robinson for further information into this case.

After the incident it was evident that Sophie was a clear victim of physical and emotional abuse, controlling and coercive behaviour, and the children, especially Tommy. After speaking with Tommy, he said that he "didn't like mommy's friend, he pulls my arm and shouts at me, he hurt mommy" was also affected by the emotional abuse and possible neglect from economic abuse. Under the children's act 1989, children's services are legally required to ascertain the child's wishes and feelings, the child can be spoken to alone if there is a concern for child safety, children services must then draw up a 'child in need' plan. I have made the decision along with officer Handley that the children should be placed into protection with their maternal grandparents for 72 hours, while Sophie received medical treatment and recovered from the shocked state, she was in am referring Sophie to a Domestic Violence Adviser, this being a must for the welfare of Sophie and both children. Elizabeth, can you confirm this please, the children's Act 1989 also states that parents should be encouraged to exercise their responsibility for their child or children's welfare, parents should be supportive in a consuctive way and when necessary compulsory interventions must be put into place. Elizabeth, can you confirm this please,

Yes I can confirm this
Hello, my name is Elizabeth Llewellyn-Jones and I am an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. According to the Home Office (2022) in the statutory guidance issued under section

84 of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), statutory and non-statutory agencies have a responsibility to work together to provide protection and support to victims of domestic abuse. Statutory agencies include local authorities, children's services, schools and early years settings, the police, housing departments, health professionals, mental health professionals, and the criminal justice system. Non-statutory agencies can include employers, financial services institutions, community based groups, support groups; including drug and alcohol services, as well as specialist domestic abuse agencies.HM Government (2021) agrees about the importance of effective multi-agency working. The Department for Education (2024) states that protecting children from harm takes priority over protecting their privacy, or the privacy rights of the people failing to protect them.

To ensure an effective multi-agency response to domestic abuse, frontline agencies should consider domestic abuse and be trained to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021, HM Government, 2021).

According to the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), domestic abuse is defined as abusive behaviour between persons aged 16 or over, who are personally connected to each other. Behaviour is defined as abusive if it consists of threats, physical assault, sexual assault, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse or any other type of abuse.

Sophie was referred to me after Aimee Robinson the Social Worker and Amie Handley the Police Officer recognised signs of abuse. Aimee Robinson and Amie Handley can you please confirm this? Yes, I confirm That is correct.

The type of abuse suspected is physical abuse because Sophie has suffered several physical injuries, and Sophie's partner was present and behaving aggressively. We must also consider that Sophie may have been subjected to other types of abuse, such as economic abuse, or controlling or coercive behaviour, which are offences under Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act (2015). Since Sophie has failed to maintain the previous standard of cleanliness and hygiene of Tommy, and there are concerns about Tommy not being adequately fed, there is a possibility that Sophie may be subject to controlling behaviour or economic abuse, which has prevented Sophie from adequately meeting the needs of Tommy.

According to the Home Office (2022) in the statutory guidance issued under section 84 of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), there is an increase in the likelihood and severity of domestic abuse, where factors such as alcohol misuse are present. Police Officer Amie Handley found an excessive amount of alcohol in the home when she forced entry on 3rd of June.

Police Officer Amie can you please confirm this? Yes, I confirm

This may suggest that someone in the household drinks excessively, or several individuals

have been drinking in the house. Mike was intoxicated when he was arrested, and there has been no suggestion that Sophie has ever been seen to be intoxicated, or evidence of other visitors to the house, but this will require further investigation to determine who the excessive alcohol was for.

As part of my role as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor, I will be supporting Sophie. According to the Ministry of Justice (2024), it is the role of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors to support victims to make informed choices, and to work with other agencies to meet the needs of victims. I will be working with other agencies to offer Sophie support. I will be referring Sophie for specialist counselling. Also, it may be necessary to rehouse Sophie. The Homelessness Reduction Act of 2017, enables Sophie to be given priority for social accommodation, and the Domestic Abuse Act of 2023, places a legal duty on councils to fund support for survivors of domestic violence to access safe accommodation. I will liase with the local housing department as well as local charities to offer Sophie support with housing.

Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), recognises children as victims of domestic abuse if they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse. Tommy and Lily were both distressed at the time of the home visit, and were probably both aware of the abuse. According to the Home Office (2022) in the statutory guidance issued under section 84 of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), adopting a trauma informed approach reduces the impact of domestic abuse on children. I will be referring Tommy for specialist children's counselling. Domestic abuse has been recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience, also known as ACES. According to Safe Lives (2024), children can suffer multiple health consequences as a result of experiencing domestic abuse. According to the Office for National Statistics (2021), an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 experienced domestic abuse in England and Wales in the twelve month period before the report and there were 114 domestic homicides recorded in 2020-2021, of which 75 victims were female, according to the Office for National Statistics (2021).

It is vital that we ensure the safety of Sophie, Tommy and Lily. I am therefore proposing the need for a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, as detailed in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), to further examine the family situation and decide what action is necessary.

To conclude, this (ICPC) Initial child protection conference, as professionals of multiagency do we all agree that Tommy and Liliy have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm?

I agree I agree I agree

Do we agree that a child protection plan should be agreed on for the well-fare of the children and Sophie as their mother must comply with this plan, with regular monitoring to take place

to ensure this is happening? She must be prepared to have no more contact with her male friend known as Mike, for the safety of her children.as part as the plan.

I agree I agree I agree

According to the 1989 Children Act the local authority places a strong emphasis on working in partnership with the parents, we will work with Sophie to ensure the safety of her children, and to safeguard Sophie we will make a referal to the West Midlands Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), following the process as detailed in the West Midlands Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference Partnership Operating Protocol (2019).

Thank you everyone.

We will now reflect on our own safeguarding knowledge and practice. ,Amie would you like to go first, then Eliabeth and Janna, followed by myself

Amie Handley (2310796) Reflection

I have been a practitioner for over seven years; therefore, I am aware of current safeguarding procedures from participating in annual training. I gained an understanding of good practice on how to safeguard pupils within my setting by reporting concerns to the Senior Leadership Team straight away and attending daily briefings, in the morning and a debrief in the afternoon. Verbal feedback during meetings ensures that all staff are aware of any concerns or issues raised. I also document any concerns on CPOMS, an electronic database for educational establishments, and is endorsed by the Local Education Authority. According to CPOMS (n.d.) the data educators ascertain regarding a child can be safely recorded in one location using CPOMS, and it can be uploaded quickly, simply, and most importantly, staff members from all areas upload and access information onto the system, enabling Senior Leaders to take the necessary follow-up measures.

In addition to personal practice, information and theory provided through this module, has expanded my understanding of different roles of professionals regarding safeguarding. This role play experience has taught me how important it is to report and document correctly so all recorded information in reports is correct and in detail, as this will be passed on to multi agencies associated with the case to ensure that the child receives the right support and help, which will protect him from harm.

Having read widely on the topic, I have learned that difficulties can arise when sharing information, in particular response time, which makes the process of reporting longer than

necessary, and therefore less effective according to the Department for Education (2023). Information-sharing procedures are not always consistent. This delay is typical of unclear processes within agencies. Legislation requires multi agencies to work in partnership and communicate, by following protocol and guidance procedures to get the relevant support in place.

Going forward, as a practitioner, I need to keep up to date with professional learning opportunities provided by my setting, follow the policies correctly and keep using CPOMS to build a better understanding of what the child is going through and discuss better ways of sharing information with multi agencies so a referral can take place effectively.

Elizabeth Llewellyn-Jones (2306796) Reflection

I have self reflected critically on my own knowledge and practice, with regard to safeguarding children. Having worked with children and young people professionally and as a volunteer for over 20 years, I already have considerable knowledge and experience of safeguarding practices and legislation. I have worked and volunteered in a range of settings, including schools, nurseries, scouts, church groups, chaperoning for performances and on location, and as DSL in my own childminding setting. Each environment has been different, but I have always been aware of my duty to safeguard the children and young people in my care and taken care to ensure that I was aware how I was to best do this.

I have kept up to date with changes to safeguarding legislation and best practices through extensive CPD, annual training from my employer and having signed up for weekly safeguarding bulletins.

Despite my extensive knowledge, I have never reflected on the role of other professionals as part of the multidisciplinary team. This assignment has prompted me consider the role of others and how we work in partnership to safeguard children. Having really considered the role of DSL, for example, I think that in future when I log a concern on CPOMS, I will be more aware of the need to provide as many additional details as possible, which could be useful for discussions at a Child Protection Conference.

I have also found out about other professionals, who I was not familiar with, such as Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.

This assignment has already had an impact on my practice. Whilst covering a different class, I recently had a brief conversation with a parent at drop off, which made me concerned for the wellbeing of the parent, and prompted me to immediately contact the DSL and discuss my concerns. Unbeknownst to me, the DSL was already aware of concerns about the

parent's mental health and the DSL visited mom that morning and was able to access support for mom, who was very depressed. Before this assignment, I probably would not have been as receptive to the ques that something was wrong with this parent. I am now much more aware about the need to work in partnership with parents to safeguard children.

Janna Saif (2129742) Reflection

My understanding of the topic before was that safeguarding is the process of ensuring the safety of children in our care. As educators, it is our duty to ensure that children are safe, happy, and secure while under our supervision. Every child has the right to be protected from harm. All educational settings that interact with children must have safeguarding policies and procedures to maintain their safety. Each organization should have a designated safeguarding lead to whom any concerns should be reported.

While studying this module, I learned about the origins of legislation, policies, and procedures. I discovered how they came to be and heard about the horrific stories that underscored their importance. Understanding the key legislation and policies ensures that one can do everything possible to protect the children in their care. There is a wide array of policies and legislation concerning the safeguarding of children, reflecting its crucial role in education and childcare. I have learned about key legislation including The Children Act 1989, The Education Act 2002, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and Keeping Children Safe in Education, among others. I have also acquired knowledge on how to recognize, respond to, and report concerns, as well as how to assist a child in need. Furthermore, I understand the importance of multi-agency collaboration in protecting and promoting the welfare of children to ensure their well-being.

For future practice, while every part of the legislation is crucial, comprehending the key aspects and takeaways is vital for everyone involved in the care of children and young people. Safeguarding is a collective responsibility: to ensure effective services, each professional and organization must play their part fully. The local authority bears responsibility for the protection, safeguarding, and welfare of all children. Establishing and adhering to robust safeguarding policies and procedures ensures that children are protected from adults and other children who may pose a risk.

Aimee Robinson (2314197) Reflection

Working in a school setting and also having a background of working in the care sector as a care and support worker, I was aware of the general knowledge of safeguarding and how everyone has the right to having their basic needs met. I am aware that concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the setting's teacher, phase leader and designated safeguarding lead. I am also aware that anybody can call MASH to ask for advice on or report a concern. I understand that safeguarding is very important and even without realising it, I am practicing safeguarding children all of the time, taking everything into account even

including in the martial arts club I belong to we use safeguarding procedures we must follow. I am also aware of some multi-agencies that work with schools such as having speech and language therapists, school nurses, however I did not realise the scale of how many different multi-agencies that can work with one child to protect them.

I have learnt about the importance of how multi-agencies must share accurate information and how quickly they must act to ensure the safety of a vulnerable child, if they fall to act correctly in the specified time frames it could have detrimental and devastating effects. The impact from this assignment on my future practice is to be more observant, and to more aware of what agencies are dealing with the children in my setting. This September we will have a child who is under the care of social services and their extended family because of domestic violence between their parents. I must learn how to understand the child's complex needs, to enable me so that I can help to give them the best experience in their young age. I will continue to update my training and learning for my professional development in order to keep learning and understanding enablinreng me to help keep children or any vulnerable individual safe from harm.

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