

The 5 R's Section:

Recognize:

The first of the 5 R's is 'Recognizing' abuse and understanding warning signs. Abuse is considered maltreatment and can present itself as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect (Developing Child-Centered Practice for Safeguarding and Child Protection, 2023). According to All-Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008), a child needs help if they cannot achieve standard health and development without local authority intervening. All people must know how to recognize abuse so that abused children have a higher chance of getting the help and support they need.

Record:

The second R is 'Recording'. It is important to know how to properly record instances of child abuse so that all agencies can work together properly. NSPCC learning from case reviews police (2015) emphasizes the importance of timely record keeping and sharing to ensure children's safety. In the case of Victoria Climbié, who was failed by the system when she was brutally murdered, it becomes unmistakably clear that proper recording is one of the most important steps (The Inquiry Victoria Climbié, 2003).

Report:

The third R is 'Reporting'. In the case of the ICPC, clear and concise reporting is important so that all agencies with a responsibility to protect children, understand the extent of the situation (Multi-agency Protocol for Safeguarding Children Affected by Parents who are Experiencing Mental Ill Health, 2017).

Refer:

The fourth R is 'Referring' which is the process of involving police and/or social services when child abuse is suspected. All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008), states that all referrals should be made as soon as someone suspects or is concerned about abuse, or within 24 hours. Quickly referring to the correct agencies allows children to get help and protection as soon as possible.

Responsibility:

The final R is 'Responsibility' which refers to the responsibilities of anyone involved in child protection. All four R's are included in this as a whole alongside any responsibilities tied to a specific role. According to The Development of Child Protection Law and Policy (2020), child abuse and neglect is a large societal issue, which means that the responsibility of reporting properly is on everyone, not just specific agencies.

Personal Reflection:

My knowledge of safeguarding within the UK before beginning this module was limited, as I am an exchange student from the States and have not spent much time researching the topic. However, I do have experience working with children which gave me a general understanding of safeguarding within the States. I worked as a Behavior Technician with Autistic kids ranging from ages 3-21 during my first year of uni. A significant part of the job was understanding the laws surrounding safeguarding, especially the laws targeting mandated reporting and the procedures to follow in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. I was also taught what the signs of abuse were and was trained in how to recognize it. I, unfortunately, was able to experience multiple cases of child abuse and neglect, and being the mandated reporter in those cases was heartbreaking, but the joy I felt when seeing kids finally get treated properly was indescribable, which is why I have such a passion for this field.

I have learned a significant amount about safeguarding within the UK during this module. The valuable information I have learned has given me more awareness of the children in the community. It has strengthened my want and need to help save children from abusive situations. However, I did find it incredibly difficult to read about the cases of child abuse and neglect that led to innocent children being brutally mistreated. I don't know if I could ever have a full-time career working closely with cases of murdered children. This experience has been very beneficial in helping me narrow my career path.

The knowledge I have gained from this module will hopefully be following me back to the States. I hope that someday I can use what I have learned, to better the American Safeguarding System, or at least a small portion of it. At my home University, I study forensic psychology and I'm interested in a job in law enforcement or social work, so researching what a police officer's role would be in an ICPC was very engaging for me. It has made me so interested in safeguarding that I would like to research more about the safeguarding legislation in the States and see how it differs from UK legislation.

References:

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