



Open Learn: Learning Space Case Study

K315_1: Becoming a social work practitioner

Case study 2: Under the streetlight

For this series of case studies, we have adapted transcripts of conversations and interviews recorded for the K315 Open University course.

John is a social worker who took over the case of fourteen year old Sarah, who became involved with social services two years earlier, when her mother found herself unable to cope.

This conversation takes place when John met up with Sarah one evening.

John

We all care about you. You're a very young vulnerable, right, impressionable, right, teenage girl, right. There are some of those people who think, along with your mum, that you should be locked up.

Sarah

I'm on drugs ... who ... who says that? You or my mum?

John

She cares about you.

Sarah

No. She doesn't.

John

Yes she does.

Sarah

No she doesn't.

John

She might have a funny way of showing it sometimes, but she does care about you.

Sarah

No no, sorry ... mum's that do show it to their ... to kids can piss off in my books, yeah? If I got locked up in a secure unit, when I get out I would kill every f***** that put me in there. do you know that? Because that would make me go f***** insane. I would go insane in there. I would go insane, believe me, in a week of being locked in. I would go insane. I would be smashing the room.



John

No. She wants you protected.

Sarah

If she wanted me protected, yeah ... no mum in her right mind would put her flipping kid in care, right? So she ... no ... that ... I don't want to talk about it anyway because that's b*ll*cks.

John

Yeah but, if she can't cope with your behaviour, then, you know, she has to go and get help, doesn't she?

Sarah

No. She's caused my behaviour. She's the only person in the world that's caused my behaviour ... my problems, right ... and makes me the way I am. My attitude with her her own fault.

John

Yeah. So you understand that your mum causes you a problem in your behaviour, yeah? So why don't you want to change your behaviour for you?

Sarah

Erm ... don't know.

John

That's okay.

Sarah

I don't know ... seriously. I don't know. I don't have an answer for that.

**This case study has been adapted from recordings made for the
OU course DVD for K315 'Critical Social Work Practice'
The original recording is a BBC production for the Open University.
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