



Open Learn: Learning Space Case Study

K315_1: Becoming a social work practitioner

Case study 4: Child protection conference

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

John gave up a job as a panel beater to become a social worker four years prior to the recording. He then 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 between Sarah's mother, Karen, who is attendance at a child protection conference. Because Sarah is on the child protection register, Social Services must review her case every six months.

Social worker

In terms of the last conference, what we agreed was that there was a lack of emotional warmth, boundaries or guidance for Sarah at home. The concern is that Karen cannot cope with Sarah.

Karen

We can't cope with Sarah, let alone me alone with my problems.

Social worker

Allegations of intravenous drug use. She has allegedly had a relationship with a twenty-one year old intravenous drug user who has stayed overnight at the family home. Ongoing concerns of Sarah's attraction to dangerous males such as Yardies, and, at times, Karen has found it difficult to protect Sarah.

What I would suggest is that Sarah has experienced a lack of emotional warmth and an appropriate level of structure ...

Karen

How can you say that? How can you write something down? How can you write something down, and it gets taken notice of? That's it, I ...

Social worker

I have taken that from the report, and also I have read all the other notes as well. So I suppose ...



Karen

It's all what you say isn't it? That is, you know ... take your word. But I could write something down ... read that ... get chucked over there.

**This case study has been adapted from recordings made for the
OU course DVD for K315 'Critical Social Work Practice'
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