# Mandating reporting of child abuse

Individuals who are regularly in contact with vulnerable children are required to report suspected or observed cases of child abuse including neglect, sexual, physical or other forms of abuse (Mathews & Bross, 2015). While everyone ought to be concerned with issues regarding child abuse and neglect, specific professionals well as other individuals are obligated by law to report any suspected form of or child abuse. Mandated reporters may include unpaid or paid individuals who have assumed intermittent or full responsibility for the care of children to report any form of ill-treatment to the appropriate agency. Parents have a fundamental right to raise their children, and our community presumes that parents will act in their children’s best interest (McCoy & Keen, 2013). If parents and guardians do not protect their children from potential harm and instead put them at risk of neglect or abuse, members of the community have been tasked with the responsibility to come in and protect the health as well as the welfare of children.

**Criteria needed to report**

Before reporting, the mandated reporter should ensure that the abuse case being reported to meet the criteria for the requirements of child abuse (McCoy & Keen, 2013). The nature of the allegations that the child sustained is the significant criterion to enable appropriate legal definition for the abuse. The abuse may be physical, emotional or sexual. The physical (including hunger, lack of supervision or unexplained bruises), emotional abuse (impairment or depression) or sexual abuse (excessive crying, withdrawal or other physical symptoms) meets the criteria for reporting. Reporting ought to be done immediately by calling or other forms of reporting (Mathews & Bross, 2015). While reporting is confidential, the reporter ought to give their names and other personal details that may be required during reporting. Correspondingly, factual information is required as much as possible to make it easier to identify and he perpetrators and subjecting them to trial. The location or jurisdiction, as well as the identity of the potentially abused or neglected child, are necessary criteria to enable the law enforcement authorities to commence investigation (McCoy & Keen, 2013). The legal responsibility of the person committing who is alleged to have committed the act is significant because if the alleged offender is not regally responsible (legal guardian, parent or caregiver) the circumstances constitute criminal acts and ought to be handled as such. The level of danger, date, possible witnesses, the address of the caregivers, capacity, and willingness to help as well as other relevant information useful to the incident ought to be provided. The report must meet legal definition regarding child abuse or neglect (Mathews & Bross, 2015). Child protection and law enforcement agencies, as well as other responsible agencies accommodatingly, investigate and assess the reports, ascertain whether such report meets the legal criteria of child abuse.

There are differences between Counseling vs. Police Officer in responding to various crimes or abuses. While involving police offers seeks to the reprisal of abusers, criminals, and other offenders through retribution to deter abusers and offenders from committing the crime in future, counseling aims at restorative aspects where abusers and criminal are subjected to outselling process to restore and reconcile them with the community (Zunker, 2012). Similarly, police officers seek to incapacitate abusers thus preventing them from omitting crime in the future. The offenders are removed from the community through arrest, incarceration of or execution. On the other hand, counseling seeks to change the offender through offering alternative ways of evading crime and coexistence with other members of the community (Houser & Thoma, 2012).

There are various similarities between Counseling vs. Police Officer in responding to various crimes or abuses (Zunker, 2012). Both are rehabilitative in that they are aimed at preventing future crime from occurring by struggling to change the behavior of the abuser or the offender. Counselling techniques entail treatment center placement, educational and vocational programs and other associated therapeutic strategies (Zunker, 2012). Involvement of police offers and subsequent incarceration is meant to rehabilitate the abusers or offenders in a way that they will be restored to the community as the responsible member and law-abiding citizens. For instance, the court may combine incarceration with rehabilitation or with parole with probation. Some of the members subjected to rehabilitative activities become valuable members of the community whether subjected to counseling or incarceration. Correspondingly, both counseling and involvement of police officers are similar in that they seek to restitute individuals thus preventing them from committing the future crime (Houser & Thoma, 2012). However, both counseling and involvement of police officers diminish hostility between the offender and the offended party with the aim of restoring tranquility in the community.

Counselling education enables police officers to acquire interpersonal skills which are significant for their daily duties since policing is changing (Kirschman et al., 2015). The policing has increasingly become more professional as opposed to the conventional authoritative, hierarchical, reactive and strict chain of command. In contemporary society, officers have more influence and authority in the community because they are increasingly being involved learning of intricate community affairs. Counselling offers leadership, critical thinking and decision-making skills to police officers thereby making them valuable members of the community regarding solving problems that face the community (Kirschman et al., 2015). The challenges facing the community goes beyond enforcing laws and order to engaging the community in identifying ways of preventing possible crimes and abuses of various members of the society. Correspondingly, counseling education offers skills that enable police officers to interact with the public. While many incidences involving police have been associated with handling criminal activities, nearly 90% of the work of police officers have nothing to do with the crime. Police officers were currently negotiating disputes, communicating with individuals and groups in the community and guide community relations (Kirschman et al., 2015).

Building relationship with the members of the community and other stakeholders in the security departments utilize acquired counseling skills in both implementation and evaluation. Consequently, counseling education provides the different set of skills that could not be associated with police work in the past. Similarly, there has been increasing visibility while handling issues regarding criminal justice and shaping community opinions, which in all manners of approach requires skills obtained through counseling education. While police officers receive expert training on issues regarding legal and tactical skills, they rarely receive basic counseling on interpersonal skills (Kirschman et al., 2015). Necessary counseling skills enable police officers to acquire necessary skills to assist them to communicate diffuse conflicts, demonstrate a professional demeanor and instill public partnership. Essential communication or talk skills will enable them to accomplish these activities sufficiently. Besides, counseling enables police officers to enhance skills necessary for receiving, giving and clarifying feedback regarding many issues including criminal cases, conflict situations and other relevant issues (Kirschman et al., 2015). Counselling education enhances leadership skills in that police officers can demonstrate leadership competencies in building relationships, gathering information, understand group dynamics, and addressing various issues in meetings and other forums.

References

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