

Reflecting on Abuse and Neglect

This is a fictionalized account of events that occurred on a U.S. military installation. The names, exact dates, locations, child care setting, and service-specific terminology have been changed or neutralized. To create the activities in this and subsequent lessons, we started with the facts of a real criminal investigation and lawsuit. What you will read here goes beyond the facts recorded in the criminal case by imagining details of individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Learn more about the scenario that you read in Lesson One. This time, look for the signs of abuse and neglect. Then answer the reflection questions. When you are finished, share your answers with your trainer, coach or family child care administrator.

Kate's Story: Part 2

In the Family Child Care Home:

Diane, a family child care provider, called her training and curriculum specialist for help. "Hey, Sandy, will you come visit and look at some marks on Kate's arms?" The two women knelt down while Kate pulled up her sleeves. There were dark scars up and down her arms. Some appeared fresher than others. Others were in various stages of healing. Some simply looked like dry skin. All were roughly the same size and shape.

Later, Diane overheard Kate's stepmother talking to another parent about their children's behavior. She heard, "It's OK to whip a child. Just don't leave any marks."

Diane had only worked with Kate for a few months, but she had growing concerns about her behavior and social development. She seemed to be regressing in some ways. She was having more toileting accidents, but she would try to hide the accidents. She would hide under tables or other furniture any time she had an accident. Diane knew some children regressed on toilet training when a new baby was born in the family, but Kate's behavior seemed extreme enough to worry her. Kate began having more frequent outbursts of crying and screaming. When Diane tried having a conversation with Gigi and Alan about their concerns, the family did not respond as Diane had hoped. They were friendly with Diane, but she sensed that they were angry with Kate for causing trouble. The family seemed to avoid Diane after that conversation. They dropped Kate off and picked her up as quickly as possible with little time for conversation. They did not attend any family events or conferences.

In the Community:

Neighbors often heard shouting and crying from the house. Tonight felt different. Kate's neighbor, Tammy, paced her back porch. She had heard the crying begin about an hour ago. Over the past hour, Kate's cries had turned to screams and sobs. "Something's not right. I've got to do something." She asked her husband to come outside and listen. They both agreed that something didn't sound right. Together, they called the military police. When the police arrived,

they found Kate naked in her bedroom with feces on the carpet. There were scratches and bruises of various shades on her face and body.

In the Family:

Kate's stepmother was on the phone with her cousin, Mia. Through the phone, Mia heard Kate's stepmother swear and berate the child. "You stupid little [****]," she screamed. "I can't believe you are still peeing you pants like a [****] baby. I hope my baby's not a dumb [****] like you. You ruined my floor. You ruin everything. Alan, get the belt. She did it again." Then she heard the sounds of Kate's father stepping in. She could hear the child's crying and screaming as she was whipped.

Reflection Questions:

What signs of abuse or neglect did teachers and neighbors notice?

Based on what you read in Part 1, what additional signs of abuse or neglect were present but unknown to people outside the family?

Think about Kate's family's situation. What was going on in the family's life that might have caused stress? What should have triggered some supports for the family?

Think about the five protective factors. What supports might have helped the family around each of these factors?

Parental Resilience: This family was dealing with a great deal of stress. What community or installation resources might have helped?	
---	--

<p>Social Connections: As military service members stationed in a remote location, this family was isolated from extended family and friends. Kate’s biological mother lived several time zones away. What could have helped them build social connections?</p>	
<p>Concrete Support in Times of Need: This family experienced a crisis when Alan and Gigi assaulted each other. What concrete supports did they need?</p>	
<p>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Kate’s experience is a classic example of unrealistic expectations for behavior. How could Kate’s family have been prepared?</p>	
<p>Social and Emotional Competence of Children: Given the severity of Kate’s situation, we might expect her social and emotional development to be affected. What might have helped her?</p>	