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.

Reread these scenarios in which individuals suspected Kate was being abused. Be sure to notice the additional information about what the adults in each situation did. Then answer the reflection questions and share your responses with a trainer or coach.

Kate’s Story: Part 3

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 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. Some were in various stages of healing. Some simply looked like dry skin. All were roughly the same size and shape. When seeing the marks, Diane remembered overhearing 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 called the Family Advocacy Program that day and made a report. She described what she had seen and provided detailed information about the child and her living arrangements. FAP contacted the command, the local child protection agency, and the military police. An assessment interview with the family was scheduled for the following day.

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.

When the military police asked Alan about the scratches on her face, he said another child had scratched her.
In the Family:
Kate’s step-mother 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.

Mia made an anonymous report to Child Protective Services. The call log states that the caller would call back with the child’s correct last name and address. The caller never called back.

Reflection Questions:
Think about each of the scenarios above. What should the individual do?

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<tr>
<th>Did the adult do the right thing?</th>
<th>If you were Kate’s teacher, neighbor, or cousin on the phone, what would you do?</th>
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<td>In the Family Child Care Home: If this happened in your program, what would you do?</td>
<td>The provider did the right thing. She reported her concerns to the Family Advocacy Program. She continued talking to the FAP even after the child was withdrawn from the program. She did everything she could to keep the child safe.</td>
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<td>In the Community: If you were the neighbor, what would you do?</td>
<td>The neighbor did the right thing by calling the military police. Police are mandated reporters and can help protect the child and family.</td>
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<td>In the Family: If you were the cousin, what would you do?</td>
<td>The cousin did make an anonymous report to Child Protective Services, and that was a good thing. She did not follow up, though. The CPS logs indicated the caller could not confirm an accurate last name for the child, address, or phone number. Therefore, an investigation could not begin.</td>
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