Reflecting on Abuse and Neglect

This is a fictionalized account of actual events that occurred on a U.S. military installation. The names, exact dates, locations, 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. Although much of what you will read here is fiction, the sequence of events and the tragic consequences are very real.

Reread these scenarios in which individuals suspected Timothy 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, supervisor, or coach.

Timothy’s Story: Part 3
At the Child Development Center
From Part 2: When Timothy was out for a week without notice, Beckett was concerned. He tried calling the family, but no one answered. It wasn’t too unusual for children to be out for extended periods of time, though. He figured Trevor was on leave, and they were out exploring the local country or visiting friends. When Timothy came back the next week, though, Beckett knew something wasn’t right. Timothy cried more than he ever had before. When Beckett picked him up, Timothy screamed so loud that a trainer walking down the hallway stepped in to make sure everything was OK. Beckett wasn’t sure what to do. When he laid Timothy down on the changing table to check his diaper, Timothy screamed again as soon as his shoulders touched the pad. Beckett gently lifted the baby’s shirt to investigate. That’s when he noticed the burns. He had never seen burns like that on a baby. The trainer was still in the room and came over to look. She was very upset by what she saw and called Trevor to ask about the injury. He said the baby had been burned by hot water in the bathtub. He said he had not taken the baby to the doctor because there didn’t seem to be any sign of infection.

Together Beckett and the trainer gathered the information Beckett would need to make a report of suspected child abuse to FAP. Beckett made the call and described the injury.

At the Pediatrician’s Office
At roughly the same time as Beckett was noticing Timothy’s burns, Candice took Timothy to his regular well-baby check-up. That was one of the few times she got out of the apartment because the office was only open while Trevor was at work. She knew Timothy had a large burn on his back, but she also believed her husband
when he said it was an accident. She was treating the burn at home every night, and it was healing. She never thought the doctors might be concerned about it. She was surprised when two different pediatricians came in to look at the burn. She answered their questions each time. She assured them she was not home when the accident happened. Her husband told her Timothy got burned in the bathtub. Accidents happen.

The second doctor looked very serious when he sat down across from Candice. He said, “It’s my professional opinion that those burns are not consistent with an accidental scalding in the bath. I am worried about Timothy’s safety. I have a legal obligation to report suspected child maltreatment. I am obligated to report this injury to the Family Advocacy Program.” Candice could not believe what she was hearing. There had to be a mistake.

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 not, what should the adult have done?</th>
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| **In the Child Development Center:**  
If this happened in your program, what would you do?  
The staff members did the right thing. They reported their concerns to the Family Advocacy Program. They did everything they could to keep the child safe.  
Beckett did the right thing. In this situation, follow specific reporting procedures for the State or Service.  
- Call FAP and CPS. Be prepared to provide the child’s name, address, phone number, and signs of abuse or neglect.  
- Make sure your manager is aware of the report.  
- Work with your program to identify ways to communicate with the family and help them access resources. |

| **In the Pediatrician’s Office:**  
The pediatrician did the right thing by calling FAP. Doctors are mandated reporters and can help protect the child and family.  
- Call FAP.  
- Be prepared to provide the address and as much information as you can about the family. |
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<th>In the Home: If you were Candice, what would you do?</th>
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<td>It is easy to blame Candice for not taking more action. We must remember, though, that signs indicate she was in an abusive relationship. This might have made it difficult for her to recognize a problem and take action. Had she suspected abuse, she might have had a difficult time reporting her own husband.</td>
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<td>- Candice could have found resources on the installation. She could have called FAP and asked for help or support via the New Parent Support program or other services. Candice could have shared her symptoms of depression with the pediatrician or her provider. FAP can help with preventing child abuse and neglect. FAP may also have been able to help her in her relationship with Trevor.</td>
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