

CATEGORY: Addressing suspicion of abuse	Case Study # 5
TITLE: Parental sexual abuse	DATE: 12-21-2014
SUB-TITLE: high status parent/Board member; timidity in pursuing suspicions	
LOCATION: Western Europe	
<p>Amy (not her real name) was 5 years old and in the kindergarten. Her parents were host country nationals. She was a creative, quiet, dreamer of a child. She would love to tell fantasy stories and go off and ‘do her own thing’ during class. At that time, the homeroom teachers and Principal of the Early Childhood Center noticed her academic difficulties but could not quite figure out the problem.</p> <p>Meetings with the parents indicated that they would not accept the facts. The father’s behavior during conversations about his daughter demonstrated his denial of the realities and that he was a person who was used to imposing his will. He would not consider her retention in Kindergarten. He subsequently ran for the school board and was elected.</p> <p>By 2nd grade, the teacher and the Principal observed that Amy’s fantasy stories had sexual overtones. Other parents complained to the homeroom teacher that their child(ren) were coming home telling them sexually -tinged stories that they had heard from Amy.</p> <p>In addition, Amy often told her teacher that her stomach hurt. She was often sent to the nurse who would have individual ‘chats’ with her. After hearing her stories, the nurse believed that this could be a case of possible abuse. The nurse immediately informed the homeroom teacher, the Principal and the Director.</p> <p>The parents were called in for a meeting with the Principal & Director, who informed them about what other parents were saying. The parents were asked whether Amy could possibly have seen videos or had a close relationship with ‘a neighbor.’ Amy’s parents dismissed the concerns saying that Amy had a very creative, imaginative mind & the school shouldn't worry. The Nurse, HR teacher & Principal were even more concerned after observing the parents’ attitude.</p> <p>The Director felt there was nothing more that could be done. He knew the family personally & had been with the family socially & all seemed normal... ALSO, the father was a board member.</p> <p>In parallel, it was known that the parents were going through a messy separation/divorce. At some point, it was learned that the father had a relationship with another woman and had a child with her.</p> <p>Amy continued having increased stomachaches, headaches, and continued telling stories with sexual innuendos. Her drawings even had images of a hardened penis.</p> <p>As the divorce got messier the social services got involved. They contacted the school & the school informed them of their suspicions.</p>	

Social services interviewed both parents & decided that it was more a problem due to the fighting between the adults. In the summer after 2nd grade Amy took a knife to herself & ended up in the children's hospital. She was placed in isolation and her parents were not allowed to visit.

It was determined that the father had been sexually abusing Amy. Amy and her two younger sisters were put in foster care until the courts decided where the best place would be for the girls. The girls were no longer enrolled in the 'international' school, thus, the details of the follow up are missing.

A few years later the Principal was called to testify in court, however the hearing was cancelled. The Principal never found out why. As far as what is now known, the girls spent several months in a social service home and attended a local school somewhere in a nearby town. The mother eventually gained custody of the girls.

QUESTIONS-COMMENTS-CAVEATS:

See the 30 Guiding Questions
