

EMOTIONS IN OUR INTERVENTIONS

PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE:

The aim of this exercise is to make transparent the way feelings may influence our reactions when confronted with a story of (possible) sexual abuse or offending behaviour.

TIMING:

40 minutes.

NEEDED MATERIAL:

Copies of the case.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE EXERCISE:

A girl, Cynthia, (14) tells you in confidence the following: her brother (16) went too far last year. After they had a frolic, he laid himself on top of her and felt her up. During this, he has put his hand in her underpants and pushed his finger in her vagina.

When she said she did not want this, he immediately stopped. The girl is confused about this and hasn't spoken about this with anyone.

The brother is also staying in the organisation...

Form a group of four students.

1. Each student separately indicates which feelings are evoked by this story. Try to formulate these emotions as precisely as possible. Is there any ambivalence in your feelings?
2. Each student formulates what his/ her impulsive reaction would be. What would you want to do, and what would you want to say to the girl? How would you react if you see the brother?
3. List and assess the possible positive and negative effects of these reactions. Make a distinction in effects for the girl, the boy, the parents, other children, yourself as a professional and the organisation.
4. Try to come to conclusions which reaction would be the wisest at this moment.
5. Sometimes emotions make people take rash decisions. Would you also run this risk if you were a professional? How can you prevent this pitfall?

SUGGESTIONS:

To make this exercise work, students must feel the freedom and safety to express their emotions and impulses. The coach/ teacher makes sure these conditions are respected.

BACKGROUND:

When we are confronted with a history of sexual offending behaviour, we are emotionally affected by this story. This may lead to a strong urge to react, or on the other hand, to a feeling of paralysis. None

of these feelings are wrong. But it may happen that they steer our reaction, and maybe not in a professional way. It is necessary to dwell upon these feelings and how they influence our reactions.

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