

Learning from Rapid Reviews: Intra-familial CSA

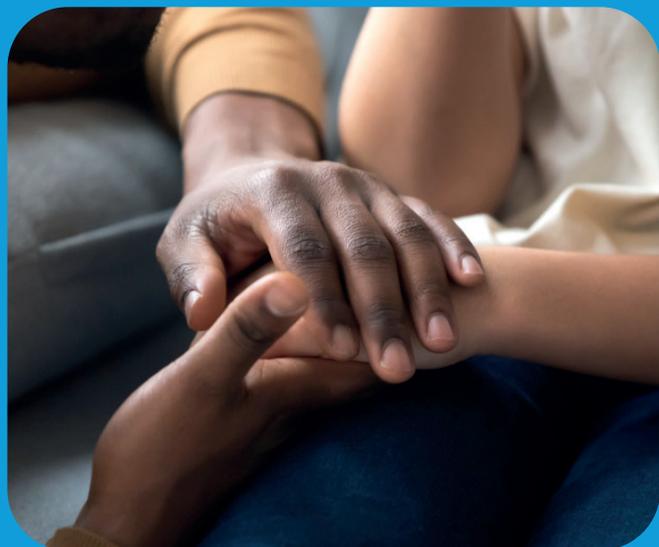
Introduction

This briefing aims to provide an overview of key findings and recommendations from a rapid review case involving Intra-Familial Child Sexual Abuse. Rapid Review meetings are held to ascertain the facts of the case prior to the critical incident and identify immediate multi-agency learning.

Features of this case

- Reoccurring sexual abuse both within and outside of the family
- Poor mental health within the family
- Historical domestic abuse
- Poor school attendance
- Strong indicators of neglect
- Lack of parental boundaries
- Sibling violence and abuse

Learning from this case



Support for vulnerable families usually stops when the risk is believed to have decreased, but in this case, work with the mother to ensure her children's safety was incomplete.

Efforts to assist the children in addressing their experiences of direct sexual abuse or being in a family affected by sexual abuse had not been undertaken.

Involvement with this family revealed missed opportunities for intervention.

The children in this case were in different schools. Information sharing between the schools, before referral to MASH may have strengthened the Early Help response and contributed to a more robust referral.

Impact

It is crucial to understand the devastating impact of sexual abuse on survivors. The trauma of such abuse can result in severe difficulties in academic performance, concentration, and memory, potentially jeopardizing their education and future career opportunities.

Survivors may also encounter significant challenges with trust, confidence, and establishing healthy relationships. It can cause emotional and physiological disruptions that can result in long-lasting pain, sleep disorders, eating disorders, substance abuse, and risk for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidal ideation.

It is therefore essential to provide adequate support and resources for survivors to overcome these challenges.

Questions When dealing with a victim of intra-familial abuse, professionals should ask themselves a range of questions to ensure they approach the situation in a sensitive and effective manner. Here are some key questions that professionals might consider:

- Are my own biases, judgments, or personal experiences affecting my ability to provide support and assistance to the victim?
- How can I create a safe and non-judgemental environment for the victim to share their experiences?
- Do I have the necessary knowledge and training to recognise signs of intra-familial abuse and respond appropriately?
- What resources and support services are available to assist the victim in their unique situation?
- How can I effectively communicate with the victim, considering their age, developmental stage, cultural background, and any potential communication barriers?
- What steps can I take to ensure the victim's immediate safety and well-being?
- Am I aware of the potential long-term effects of intra-familial abuse, and how can I support the victim in their healing process?
- How can I collaborate with other professionals, such as law enforcement, child protective services, therapists, or victim advocates, to provide a comprehensive and coordinated response?
- How can I share information while balancing the need to protect the victim and fulfil legal obligations regarding reporting and intervention?
- How can I practice self-care and seek support to ensure my own well-being while dealing with the emotional and challenging nature of intra-familial abuse cases?

References

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/3253/summary-iicsa-final-report-government-responses-caspar-briefing.pdf>

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