



Scenario (Facilitators Guide) Safe Church Foundations for Ministry Agents

Scenario 2: Mental Health & Emotional Abuse

Read the scenarios as if you were the ministry agent receiving the information incrementally over time (from a third party) as part of a complaints process.

Information:

Since transitioning to a group for older children, Stephanie seems to have become withdrawn and anxious. Her once bubbly personality is no longer evident.

Her mum, Helen spoke with Colin, the group leader, saying Stephanie's not keen to attend the group and has become depressed at home.

Colin, reassures Helen that it's probably transitional nerves and to keep her coming so she can adjust.

Over time, Stephanie becomes worse and her self esteem seems lower and her anxiety higher. Helen tells Colin she's taking Stephanie out of the group and that Stephanie has been begging not to go, saying the kids always fight and she has no friends there.

Colin suggests that it's probably best to keep her away until she gets over her insecurities.

More information:

- <https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-emotional-abuse>
- [Headspace Australia Website](#)

Questions:

- What actions could Colin have taken when Helen first approached him about Stephanie's anxiety about the group?
(Asked leaders to observe interactions with other children, assigned a buddy to help Stephanie adjust, checked in regularly with Helen to discuss progress)
- How do you think Colin could have handled the final conversation with Helen better?
(Listened better rather than making snap judgements. Been more sensitive to Stephanie's wellbeing from the start)
- What type of abuse is Stephanie potentially experiencing in this scenario?
(Emotional abuse: rejection, hostility, witnessing violence)
- What harm could result from emotional abuse?
(depression, poor self-esteem, self harm, anxiety)