



CASE STUDY 1: FACILITATORS GUIDANCE

The Role of the Facilitator:

- To encourage the social workers to share their thoughts about the case study.
- To facilitate discussion to identify the opportunities and challenges of this scenario.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR FACILITATORS TO ASK THE GROUP:

What evidence of internalised racism can be identified?

Model Answer

Ayaan's statement, "People like me don't get those opportunities anyway," suggests he has begun to internalise negative societal messages about the prospects available to people from his ethnic background. His embarrassment when his grandmother speaks Urdu and his rejection of cultural activities may indicate that he views aspects of his identity as less valued or acceptable. Rather than seeing barriers as external, he appears to be attributing limited opportunities to who he is.

What examples of interpersonal racism are evident in this case?

Model Answer

The jokes about terrorism, questioning whether Ayaan is "really British," and the teacher repeatedly confusing him with another South Asian student are examples of interpersonal racism. These actions communicate exclusion and reinforce stereotypes based on ethnicity.

What impact might these experiences have on Ayaan?

Model Answer

Repeated exposure to racism can contribute to low self-esteem, school disengagement, mistrust of adults, emotional distress and a weakened sense of belonging. These experiences may help explain his declining attendance and withdrawal from school life.

Don't forget to share the critical reflection survey and encourage completion. Set aside 5 minutes for this at the end of the session





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Why is the school's response concerning?

Model Answer

By dismissing racist incidents as "banter," staff may unintentionally minimise the harm caused. This can discourage future disclosures, reinforce feelings of exclusion and signal to Ayaan that his experiences are not taken seriously.

What evidence suggests institutional racism may be present?

Model Answer

Despite achieving highly, Ayaan has not been recommended for gifted and talented opportunities. The explanation that he may not cope with additional pressure appears subjective and unsupported by his academic performance. If patterns show minority ethnic students are consistently overlooked despite achievement, this suggests a potential institutional issue rather than an isolated incident.

How might institutional racism affect safeguarding outcomes?

Model Answer

When children are not recognised for their strengths and potential, they may become disengaged from education and feel excluded from legitimate pathways to success. This can increase vulnerability to exploitation and reduce trust in institutions that should provide support.

How do structural factors affect the Khan family?

Model Answer

The family lives in an area characterised by poverty, limited youth provision, underfunded schools and high crime levels. These conditions are not the result of individual choices but reflect broader social and economic inequalities that shape opportunities and life outcomes.

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Areas with fewer educational, recreational and employment opportunities can create conditions where criminal groups are more active and where young people may be more susceptible to exploitation. Structural inequalities can increase exposure to risk while limiting access to protective resources.

What evidence of aversive racism can be identified in the social worker's reflections?

Model Answer

The social worker considers themselves anti-discriminatory and committed to equality. However, they acknowledge feeling more comfortable with White British families and less confident discussing race. They also describe Farah as potentially "confrontational" rather than viewing her behaviour as advocacy for her son. These may indicate unconscious biases influencing practice.

Because aversive racism is often subtle and unintentional. Practitioners may genuinely believe they are acting fairly while assumptions influence engagement, assessment and decision-making. Without reflection and supervision, these biases can remain unnoticed.

How could supervision support the social worker?

Model Answer

Supervision should provide space to explore assumptions, discomfort and decision-making.

Questions might include:

- Why do I feel more comfortable with some families than others?
- How am I interpreting Farah's behaviour?
- Have I avoided discussing race because of my own anxiety?
- What impact might this have on assessment and intervention?
- Reflective supervision can help practitioners recognise bias, build confidence discussing race, and develop more culturally responsive practice.

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Ayaan's experiences of racism, exclusion and reduced opportunity may contribute to feelings of alienation and low self-worth. These experiences can create vulnerabilities that exploiters target by offering belonging, status, protection and identity. An effective Child in Need response should therefore understand exploitation not only as a safeguarding issue but also within the context of racism, identity, inequality and social exclusion. Practitioners should avoid viewing these issues separately and instead consider how they interact to shape Ayaan's lived experience.

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