



CASE STUDY:

Dawt and her child Sui*

Dawt is a Chin woman who fled Burma/Myanmar. Her youngest daughter Sui is enrolled in 4-year-old kindergarten.

Reflective Questions

Dawt's disclosure and Rebecca's response

- ☞ Why do you think Dawt shared information about her family's experiences and situation with Rebecca?
- ☞ How might the conversation and Rebecca's response contribute to a stronger sense of safety and control for Dawt?
- ☞ How might the conversation and Rebecca's response enhance Dawt's experience of dignity and value?
- ☞ How did the conversation assist Rebecca to understand Sui and the family's situation?

A Kindergarten has children enrolled from Chin families of refugee background (from Burma/Myanmar). Recently, the service acknowledged the Chin National Day on February 20th by placing a statement in the reception written in both Hakha Chin and English and displaying Chin traditional colours (red, green and black). This was well received by the families, who contributed to the display.

Rebecca teaches the 4-year-old Kindergarten group and makes connections with families by chatting with them at drop-off and pick-up times. She encourages families to stay with their children so they can better understand play-based learning and feel more comfortable leaving their children at the service. Rebecca also uses the Language Loop interpreter service to help with important communications such as: enrolment; orientation sessions; and one-on-one meetings about children's learning and developmental progress.

Over the past few months, Rebecca has developed a connection with a parent called Dawt whose daughter Sui enjoys Kindergarten. Dawt arrived in Australia three years ago with her two daughters (now aged nine and four-years-old). Ten years ago, in Burma, Dawt's village was attacked, and she saw her husband and father killed. She hid in the jungle with her mother and younger sister. They were separated from her grandparents and older sister, and Dawt doesn't know what happened to them. Meanwhile, her younger brother remained in Burma.

The ongoing conflict in Burma is affecting Dawt. She experiences feelings of intense anxiety, grief and fear related to her family's past experiences and is worried about family and friends who are now in danger. In the evenings, she watches and reads news from Burma and responds to messages from distressed family members.



Foundation House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc.

- ☞ What do you think about the way the conversation ended and what might Rebecca do next?

Supporting Sui

- ☞ What might be causing Sui's recent change in behaviour at Kindergarten?
- ☞ What strategies could Rebecca use to support Sui to regulate her emotions and behaviour? How might these contribute to a stronger sense of safety and control for Sui?

In recent weeks, Rebecca has noticed Sui has been missing kindergarten sessions. When Sui attends, she is often distressed during play, ends up hurting her peers and is unsettled during rest time. One day Sui bit another child while playing outside. Rebecca sensitively discussed the situation with Dawt and explained the incident report, asking if she had noticed a change in Sui's behaviour at home, or if anything might have changed that could be impacting Sui.

Dawt shared that she is not eating or sleeping well and is irritable and critical toward Sui and her older sister. She shared that six months ago Burmese army soldiers invaded her brother's home, tortured him in front of his family and then took him away. The family do not know where he is now.

Rebecca was surprised by how much Dawt shared with her and felt deeply moved; but tried to keep her emotions in-check. As Dawt finished talking, Rebecca responded: 'It's a terrible experience you're going through'.

She then said to Dawt: 'Thank you for letting us know, so we can better understand what is happening for Sui and your family... Do you want to sit down and have a chat about how we could help you during this difficult time?' Dawt declined and started to pack up Sui's bag and get ready to go home, saying to Rebecca: 'Let me think about it'.

**This fictional Case Study is an amalgamation of real characters and scenarios to facilitate professional learning.*



Department
of Education

Foundation House's Early Years Program is supported by the Victorian Government.

© Copyright 2024 The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc.