Case Study: Joseph Lansing

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Summary

This is a case study of Joseph Lansing, a victim of child abuse and neglect. He is eight years old, but at this tender age he has been abused physically and neglected. The abuse and neglect that Lansing faced resulted in anti-social behavior. According to the case study, Lansing and his sister had a hard time living with their abusive mother. Dark bruises were spotted on his arms and wrists forcing his removal from their home. He was placed in foster care with Ed and Susan Smith. Lansing’s mother was sentenced to a six-month jail. After serving her term she is supposed to be put in another facility for substance abuse rehabilitation.

The antisocial behavior displayed by Lansing here is not something especially for a victim of child abuse and neglect. According to Kerig, & Becker, (2015) maltreated children are likely to show violent and criminal behavior. Based on the case, Lansing is becoming violent and shows signs of his readiness to commit a crime. He has threatened his peers that he will take a gun to school perhaps to shoot his schoolmates so that he could also be arrested. Unfortunately, this led to his suspension from school. Child abuse and negligence has far reaching psychological problems that make children to be extremely emotional and very violent. It becomes everyone’s problem from home to school. The school as a social community would find ways to understand the victim and try to help. Suspending Joseph would not change his emotional behavior but something more helpful would help a lot.

Nevertheless, Lansing attends Samuels Elementary School, where his performance is exponentially improving since he was put in foster care. However, this is after he repeated first grade. This is to imply that abuse and neglect he was subjected to had already affected his academic performance. Repeating first grade enabled him to revive his decelerating performance. His school attendance had also improved, where he only absented from school twice. However, his separation from his mother is still taking a toll on him and according to Child Protective Services Lansing and his sister who was placed under the care of family relatives was ill-advised.

In-depth Analysis

 From the collaborative meeting, one of the major observations was social isolation. Despite becoming a good and laidback student, Lansing isolated himself. A student is supposed to interact with others, but this was not the case. Lansing must have been stressed or depressed. In addition, his silence portended depression. Matthews et al, (2016) researched the correlation between social isolation and loneliness and observed that their separateness and both are linked to depression. It was further explained that lonely people are usually depressed, partly due to the same genes influencing depression and loneliness. From this finding, it is plausible to conclude that Lansing was depressed. However, his silence and demeanor at a great level convinced his peers that he is fine and reformed. His schoolmates obviously could not understand that his silence was gnawing at his inner side. Social isolation or loneliness, in this case, was due to the depression Lansing was already in. He must have been in pensive mood overthinking what he could do to reunite with his mother. Essentially, from the collaborative meeting, the major point extracted is that Lansing was already depressed.

 The entire reason for Lansing depression is linked to his separation from his mother. As pointed out in the case that it was a wrong decision to place Lansing in the foster care, insinuates that he was not comfortable there. Considering that he was eight years old, his connection with his mother was very strong regardless of the abuse and neglect. The case reports that when Lansing was questioned why he wanted to carry a gun to school his response was simple, “I want to be closer to my mother.” This means that if Joseph’s mother was around him, he would not be depressed or be plotting to be violent. A parent plays an important role in child development and considering that the family is the first agent of socialization, his behavior seems to be justified. Already he was aware that his mother was arrested and believes that the school was responsible for that.

 Lansing developed a behavior problem due to depression. From the collaborative meeting, it was made clear that Lansing wanted to be himself and never wanted to engage in any activity with other students. This is because he considers himself valueless and finds it difficult to associate with peers and other people. Children are affected by the way they are treated. They try to find matching situations to theirs. Joseph due to abuse and negligence, he grew up knowing that he is a bad person who doesn’t deserve to be with others. Lacking parental love and care was devastating and made him think that if his mum hates him, then no one can ever love him. Joseph would feel guilty and uncomfortable spending time with “good” children when he is a “bad” one according to what the mother taught him theiugh victimization. He did not join his classmates for games, because his mind was elsewhere. Kerig, & Becker, (2015) states abused and neglected children are most likely to be depressed and have behavior problems. Borrowing from this finding, it is logical to state that the school failed to provide counseling assistance that would have helped avoid bad behavior. Therefore, failure to prevent behavior deterioration in Lansing’s depressed state justifies his newly acquired antisocial and criminal behavior. Noticeably, the school had an opportunity to correct unwanted behavior and guide Lansing according. But, instead his teachers neglected him and in response he isolated himself from others. This isolation pushed him into depression, hence forcing him to resort to threats to get a reason that would incriminate him.

 Nevertheless, the other point that was offered in the collaborative meeting that I did not consider much is that Joseph was seeking attention. In Dr. Manning findings Lansing simply lacked attention and if he got it, he would have obviously been free from depression. Another point that the collaborative meeting offers is that the school administration was ill-advised to suspend Lansing. This is a child and it was easy to correct him rather than rejecting him through a suspension. Besides, I was able to integrate this information by using research findings to buttress my argument. Also, I think I need to gather information on how Lansing can be counseled and the likely outcome of such counseling. To achieve this, I would consider administering personality tests. I will also use behavioral change technology through apps like Look in My Eyes: Steam Train, Learn with Rufus: Emotions to see how they can harness positive behavior in Lansing (Applied Behavior AnalysisEdu.org, 2019).

Course Action

The first issue that extracted from the collaborative meeting or case study is social isolation. It was unhealthy to allow a young person of Lansing age to stay away from others. It was the failure of his teachers to not care about the consequences that such kind of isolation could lead to psychological effects. According to Lubben, (2017) social isolation is a potent killer but can be addressed by paying attention. Although the author’s research focused on older people, where he reports that social isolation is a growing epidemic affecting more than 8 million old Americans his solution to the problem can be used. The author notes that once adequate attention is paid to a person who is vulnerable or in a problem like Lansing, they are likely to integrate with others. Teachers, administration of Samuels Elementary School and other students need to embrace Lansing. They need to understand his problem, pay him attention and show him, genuine love. Scaring and intimidating such a abused and neglected cultivates his violence behavior and may lead to devastating actions. To help deal with Joseph, teachers need to engage him in games that can keep him busy like simulation games while introducing him to playing with other students. Through spending good times with Joseph, it would aid in understanding. Showing love would reduce the rejection effects that had been build up in the victim’s mind. To reach such a stage, the abuse, negligence and rejection was growing to irreversible stages and it would cause death if not handled early.

Depression is another issue that was observed in the case study. There normally low self-esteem with victimized children. They tend to consider themselves useless. They opt to spend their time alone and away from the peers. This kills their positive thinking and leads to unhealthy relationships with friends. To address this problem, Dr. Manning should recommend anti-depressants and counseling. Counseling will help allay stress and enable Lansing to believe in himself. By believing in himself and accepting the situation, Lansing will behave positively. Counseling is key in the treatment of depression and it helps solve several psychological problems. In principle, behavior problem is a psychological problem, which can be corrected through counseling. Counseling coupled with attention and love Lansing is likely to change his behavior positively. During counseling, it will be the role of the physician to strength Lansing emotionally so that he can accept his situation of living without his mother. Ideally, counseling, attention, and administering anti-depressants have a likelihood of solving this problem.

Recommendations

I recommend that Lansing takes a personality test. A personality test is critically important in this case. Beus, Dhanani, & McCord, (2015) noted that personality tests help in understanding safety-related behavior. Equally, it will be the mandate of the counselor that will be handling Lansing to administer a personality test to arrive at the best approach to help him. Personality test also informs about a person’s emotional intelligence. The scores that Lansing’s score will inform the counselor the best approach to take to correct the negative behaviors for Lansing to function and related properly with others. However, based on the age of Lansing, he will not be able to take the personality test independently. He should be guided properly and questions should be simplified for easy understanding.

Another recommendation is that the school should build trust and love among students. To do this, teachers should praise Lansing in the presence of other students objectively to create a situation where he can be embraced. Creating high self esteem can reduce stress and make Joseph think positive about himself. Psychological problems can be handled by giving victims attention and accepting them. Other students may have fears that Lansing can hurt them, but if teachers pay him attention and encourage other students to embrace him, he will feel that the school is safer. While building trust and urging other students to care for each other including Lansing, teachers should monitor his behavior to identify any misconduct. Further, it is recommended that the school uses behavioral change technology to correct Lansing’s behavior and make him a more responsible person. This technology will assist in assessing Lansing’s behavior, interpret it and inform the right behavioral modification therapy. In a firm conviction, paying attention to Lansing, creating a safe environment and modifying his behavior appropriately will reform him into a good person. Teachers should take the role of a parent in understanding, guiding, controlling and taking necessary actions to help such children. For example; congratulatory messages like “clever boy, best friend, always smart, so kind” and rewards would motivate him and change his behavior to a good child.

Conclusion

In conclusion, at Lansing’s age it was wrong for the school to suspend him. This is a child and possibly his threat to carry a gun to school was just an emotional outburst. The administrator of Samuels Elementary School had an obligation to help Lansing rather than exposing him to unnecessary suspension. A school does not just exist for the sake of exam excellence, but it is there to model behavior. That is why it was ill-advised to suspend Lansing. In addition, Lansing needs proper counseling, love and care for him to accept that and to live a life without his mother.

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