

Case study - Sabiha

Background

Sabiha is four years old. She lives with her mum, Judith and baby sister, Veronique. Judith is a partner in a firm of accountants and works long hours which means that Sabiha attends breakfast and out of school club in addition to school. Sabiha's dad lives some distance away. The children stay with him during the school holidays.

Sabiha returns to school after the Christmas holidays with her usual enthusiasm. She works hard in class and is a bright child. She works at a high level in all subjects and is particularly advanced in her numeracy skills.

After the half term holiday, Sabiha is reluctant to return to school, she clings to her mum at the door and makes her promise that it will be her that picks Sabiha up from out of school club. She is very tired on arrival at school and is reluctant to get changed for music and movement, something that previously, she thoroughly enjoyed. Sabiha has become very sensitive and cries at the slightest thing.

Judith, Sabiha's mum asks to see you after school one day. She tells you that she has a new boyfriend, Germain but that Sabiha and Veronique don't like him. Judith has noticed the change in Sabiha's behaviour and thinks that this is an attention seeking thing as it has just been Judith and the girls for the last three years.

Judith is very busy during March in sorting out the year end accounts. She is working very long hours and it is Germain that brings Sabiha to school. Sabiha runs into school when Germain drops her off and doesn't say goodbye or look back at him. She says that Germain is rude and nasty.

When Sabiha is playing in the home corner, you observe her touch a male doll in the genital area. She asks you to join her. She says to the doll "It's our little secret". Looking at you she says this again and adds "Yes its Sabiha and Germain's little secret".

What type(s) of abuse may have taken place?	
What are the factors that indicate this?	
What actions might be taken?	
By whom might these actions be taken?	
Comment	

Case study - Suggested response

Background	<p>Sabiha is four years old. She lives with her mum, Judith and baby sister, Veronique. Judith is a partner in a firm of accountants and works long hours which means that Sabiha attends breakfast and out of school club in addition to school. Sabiha's dad lives some distance away. The children stay with him during the school holidays.</p> <p>Sabiha returns to school after the Christmas holidays with her usual enthusiasm. She works hard in class and is a bright child. She works at a high level in all subjects and is particularly advanced in her numeracy skills.</p> <p>After the half term holiday, Sabiha is reluctant to return to school, she clings to her mum at the door and makes her promise that it will be her that picks Sabiha up from out of school club. She is very tired on arrival at school and is reluctant to get changed for music and movement, something that previously, she thoroughly enjoyed. Sabiha has become very sensitive and cries at the slightest thing.</p> <p>Judith, Sabiha's mum asks to see you after school one day. She tells you that she has a new boyfriend, Germain but that Sabiha and Veronique don't like him. Judith has noticed the change in Sabiha's behaviour and thinks that this is an attention seeking thing as it has just been Judith and the girls for the last three years.</p> <p>Judith is very busy during March in sorting out the year end accounts. She is working very long hours and it is Germain that brings Sabiha to school. Sabiha runs into school when Germain drops her off and doesn't say goodbye or look back at him. She says that Germain is rude and nasty.</p>
	<p>When Sabiha is playing in the home corner, you observe her touch a male doll in the genital area. She asks you to join her. She says to the doll "It's our little secret". Looking at you she says this again and adds "Yes its Sabiha and Germain's little secret".</p>

What type(s) of abuse may have taken place?	Sexual abuse. Emotional/psychological abuse.
What are the factors that indicate this?	Changes in Sabiha's behaviour. Reluctance to be around Germain. Awareness of sexual behaviours. Keeping secrets. Increased sensitivity. Reluctance to remove clothing.
What actions might be taken?	Written reports and observations to date will be used as part of the investigation. Investigation within setting and referral to social services. Medical assessment. Criminal investigation. Removal of Germain from the home. Involvement of father.
By whom might these actions be taken?	Practitioner will report to manager/child protection officer who will refer if needed after initial investigation into concerns.
Comment	<p>Sabiha is keeping secrets which may be against her wishes. When telling you about secrets she is disclosing that there are some secrets that she may not wish to keep anymore.</p> <p>When Sabiha tells you that Germain is rude it could mean two things, verbally rude or sexually rude. Have the records that have been made recorded this?</p> <p>A multi-agency approach will be used as Veronique may also be affected.</p> <p>Germain needs to be removed from the home. If Judith does not want him to leave, the girls will need to be removed.</p>