



Closed cultures- features and risks

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Context:

- The culture of your setting sets the scene for all aspects of the provision and within this must sit a clearly defined , well structured , recognisable TO ALL secure safeguarding culture.



Starting point:

- In small groups discuss what a “closed culture “ means to you ? It is important to remember that generally , no-one sets out to harm..... but, closed cultures can lead to significant harm
- Feedback- please nominate one person.
- Let's look at indicators



Closed cultures...

- Are one of the biggest of safeguarding risks and as recently seen in the Hesley phase 1 report (October 2022) can lead to serious and significant harm for children and young people.
- As a senior leader what should you look out for ?
 - ❖ Poor experience of children who should be safeguarded and their well being supported and promoted
 - ❖ Weak leadership and management
 - ❖ Limited or no external input , review , alignment



Closed cultures.....

Features:

- Children are at risk of deliberate or unintentional harm-
can you think of how unintentional harm can occur and become common practice ?
- Leaders / staff stop seeing or have never seen the true situation re. safeguarding in the setting-why ?
- Children / staff are unable or afraid to speak up for themselves and are not listened to if they do-how ?
- There may be high levels of dependence on some staff/ RM/others- why is this worrying ?
- There may be breaches of human rights and equality law-how ?

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Closed cultures.....

- Poor skills, experience and training of staff / leaders
- There are regular changes in leadership roles-why ?
- There is a high staff turnover- across the board
- High frequency of staff absence / leadership & SLT absence / illness
- Cliques-why are these especially dangerous ?
- Staff are not supported or encouraged to raise concerns.
- SLT fail to monitor, and address issues raised by staff, ,children , families and others-why ?
- SLT fail to respond to recommendations of others, for example professionals and regulators.

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Closed cultures

- There is a high use of agency/cover staff
- There is a lack of suitable induction, training, monitoring and supervision of staff.



Closed cultures.....

External oversight..

- Is there a high or increasing number of safeguarding incidents, complaints or other notifications?
Especially concerning if they involve:
- any form of inappropriate behaviour by staff towards children / young people
- complaints by children / young people using the service, their family and friends, including those that are withdrawn subsequently.
- Anything else ?
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Lots to review and reflection is key...

- What gives you cause for concern ?
- Are any of these issue causing you concern in terms of monitoring / review in the home ?
- Stability of the staff team?
- Skills base of the staff team?
- Skills of leaders and managers ?
- Any thoughts- open discussion....
- How do you avoid such a culture becoming established ?
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