Counselor Talk Discussion, March 2018 Regarding DCS

Question: What is your experience with DCS? I was told the person who makes the report is not supposed to be disclosed to the family. If the family is told is there any action the reporter can take against the DCS worker?

Response: We have been having issues with this a lot lately. We actually had the director of our local DCS office come in and explain to staff what is disclosed. The way it was explained to us was that they would not put a name of the original report maker, but might put “school counselor reports”, which in most cases give it away. Also, she let us know that if they call for follow up information and you give them any they could then use your name in documentation, So, if they called me for follow up and I said that the student also told me dad smacked her face, they could then put in the documentation, “Paige Mundy reports additional information of dad smacking child in the face.” All of this goes into one final report that is available to the parents simply by them requesting it. We expressed our concerns with this process; how if could affect our rapport with families, our own safety, etc. She did say she would communicate these concerns. I have changed the way I report. I am very direct and to the point. If I have follow up information, I typically call back and make a new report and let them add it the original. It still isn’t “anonymous” as I am the only person who has my title in the corp, but at least it doesn’t have my name. If I have a true concern for my safety when making a report, I decline to give my title when reporting and may just say “school staff” or even that I would rather not disclose my relationship to the student.

Hope this helps! It is daunting making these reports knowing they will likely upset parents and we are not truly protected. But, at the same time it is our duty to protect the kiddos. :(

Response: Based on my experience as a former DCS worker and former service provider for DCS the parents know exactly who reported them even before they know the allegations against them. As a service provider there were several times I didn’t know who turned them in and the families would always know. I feel a big part of our attendance issues are because of abuse or addiction and parents keep the kids home, of course the school filed that report. When I would go in for an initial investigation I would read the allegations; parents don’t ask who reported, they usually tell us who did. We are trained to deflect that but sometimes it is hard.

At the end of the investigation period of a DCS case (30 days) the decision to substantiate or not is determined and the report (known as the 311) is generated. This report contains all parties and their statements; a recap of the initial report, and demographic information, as well as the outcome of the case. This report is available upon request to any party involved in the case.

Hope this gives you some insight.

Response: My experience is when I say “school reporter” they simply state that on the report. I have called them a few times this year and it has worked out well that the family isn’t made aware of who reported abuse.