

YMCA Sydney Critical Incident Meeting 7th March 2013

Craig Hemsworth, Deb Holmes ACF

AnneMary Nolan, Kylie Pearson,

Caringbar staff

Staff

- Staff expressed ongoing anger and frustration toward management
- While some staff believe that they should have been alerted to JL's actions, they all feel that they have been blamed for JL's actions
- Some staff concerned that parents think staff were involved in JL's actions, and no communication to off-set this. This is compounded by one staff member being moved at the time from the centre without any explanation. This still remains the case and the staff member involved remains acutely distressed. Other staff empathise with this member closely.
- Staff saying that they were given formal warnings for what they considered minor breaches of policies. Staff stated that prior to the incident such breaches were relatively common place and people (management) well aware and tolerant of these.
- Staff made to sign a confidentiality statement without explanation
- Feeling uninformed throughout the process
- Questioned why it took so long to begin a debriefing process and questioned why there was no information or follow-up from October 12 and March 13
- Staff feeling they were left alone to deal with significant ongoing distress over JL's actions
- Staff saying that they want group counselling and wanting reassurance from senior management that this would be available if another situation arose
- Individually staff present took the opportunity to tell Anne-Mary and Kylie how the events had impacted on them personally. Individuals remain highly emotional and distressed
- Staff believed it was the strength of their team that had allowed them to cope and continue within their jobs
- Staff expressed a disappointment that management had not taken a larger presence in the centre and managed the parent concerns and questions directly. Referred to a manager being present but not interacting with parents directly.
- Staff uncomfortable that they had to hold back information from parents
- Staff expressed disappointment and confusion over Catherine leaving, she was seen as the only staff member supporting them through the process. They were concerned that her leaving coincided with the de-brief in October last year.

- Staff expressed a wish to be addressed by the CEO personally to explain why they weren't kept informed and supported throughout the proceedings.

Management

- Anne Mary and Kylie acknowledged staffs' distress and the circumstances they have faced
- They acknowledged that the process could have been handled better and the experiences have highlighted better ways to handle similar circumstances
- Management acknowledged that they struggled as individuals and as a team to know the best way to manage the process
- Management were often operating under information, advice and instructions that were constrained through a variety of conditions. They now know that some of these constraints could have been challenged or more appropriate actions, such as supporting direct staff more closely.
- Management indicated that Catherine's leaving was not related to the JL process rather that her position was terminated due to work performance in relation to rolling out of the SCP to accreditation. Anne Mary and Kylie acknowledged that the timing could be seen as poor, however there remains a priority to implement the SCP. This remains a big issue for all staff as they saw Catherine as the only senior person who supported them and was then dismissed.
- Management advised staff that a formal critical incident analysis was to be undertaken as soon as possible. Within this process Caringbah staff would be invited to contribute through their experiences and offer suggestions around how a similar event might engage staff in a more cooperative and supported approach.
- A general acknowledgement that proceeding with the safeguarding accreditation process would put in place procedures and standards that would assist the organisation to prevent and/or deal with another situation like this