

Scenario

Posting On Social Media

Allie is an RECE who has been working in a large child care centre since she graduated three years ago. In the last year or so, the centre has undergone significant change with high staff turnover, a new supervisor and a number of new families.

She has felt that the relationships between staff and families are tense. Communication is unclear and at times, rude. Collaborative efforts are non-existent. Allie has observed that staff members appear to feel unappreciated and families appear to feel unsupported.

One evening after work, Allie spent some time reading and commenting on multiple Facebook groups that were devoted to the profession. She found many of the discussion themes inspiring and got some great ideas for curriculum and ongoing professional learning. She decided an online discussion group was just what she and her colleagues needed. That night Allie created a closed Facebook group for her colleagues to discuss some of the ongoing issues at work. She planned to discuss ideas to improve communication and collaboration efforts with families. She emailed her colleagues immediately to invite them to her new group.

The next day, Allie's colleagues were already starting threads about the families from their centre. Only the discussions were not what she expected. Some staff, while clearly frustrated and feeling undervalued, were speaking negatively of families – commenting on and judging their parenting approaches, cultural beliefs, socio-economic status or their education.

Allie watched the discussions and let the threads continue. She tried redirecting her colleagues by asking reflection questions in order to problem-solve and come up with ways to repair the relationships but the negative and disparaging comments continued. Comments even began to address staff that had chosen not to join the group as well as the new centre supervisor.

Weeks passed and the Facebook group continued. Comments were posted well into the night and during lunch breaks when staff would check social media. One day, the centre supervisor called Allie into her office and showed her a screenshot of a particularly critical and inappropriate thread about one family and fellow staff member.

“Allie, did you start a Facebook group for staff to publicly criticize the families, your colleagues and me?”, the supervisor asked.

Allie was shocked by the accusation. She thought:

The group was private and yes, discussions had become a bit offensive but staff clearly needed to vent about their working relationships and everything was done in a closed group and on personal time!

Reflecting on the Scenario

1. Consider why Allie started the Facebook group for her colleagues. What led to this decision?
2. What role did relationships, communication and collaboration with others play in Allie's situation?
3. What was the dilemma or ambiguous practice situation? How did the situation change over time?
4. In what ways did Allie and her colleagues demonstrate or fail to demonstrate aspects of professionalism? Reflect on how ethical values, knowledge and skills, professional judgement, accountability, and continuous professional learning were upheld or ignored.
5. Reflect on Allie's statement about the posts being part of a closed social media group and done on personal time. Consider whether closed groups on a public platform like Facebook can in fact, be private.
6. How might the behaviour of Allie and her colleagues in their personal lives impact their professional lives?
7. How might the behaviour of Allie and her colleagues impact their workplace, their relationships with families, colleagues, the supervisor, the entire profession and public trust?
8. In what ways could Allie have taken a leadership role and demonstrated professionalism or encouraged professionalism from others?
9. How could the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* have been used to support decision-making, actions and interactions with others?