

Debrief template

Description of the event: What happened

Context: Where it started/ended

Children and adults involved:

Witnesses:

Date/time:

Leading the discussion: (this should be a person who has a good relationship with the child and who the child trusts)

- Only begin if the child is calm, regulated and the caregiver is present
- Explain the purpose of the conversation and why it is necessary (to understand what happened and why)
- Ask if they have any questions
- Ask the child to think for a few minutes about what happened
- The child/adult should describe what they did, saw and experienced pre, during and post the event and how it made them feel (it may be in the best interests of the child to do this separately)
- Useful questions – Can you tell us what happened today? Do you know what made you feel that way? What are your ideas for making it better next time? What can I do to help you?

Note: If the child is in survival response fight/flight/freeze, they will have no memory of why they behaved in the way they did. It is important to remember that these subconscious occurrences are survival instinctive responses, not those of conscious thought, or if resulting from communication difficulties, the child may not be able to articulate the issue to you (see Chapter 6).

Analysis/reflection: With the evidence of the events, examine what happened and why

- Were there any warning signs? What were these and were they responded to?
- What did the behaviour look like and how often is it occurring? Does this occur elsewhere outside of school?
- What is the severity of the behaviour and how long did it last?
- What support do the child, family and colleagues need?
- How could the situation be prevented in the future?
- Are current processes/behaviour policy fit for purpose?
- How can any broken relationships be repaired?
- Are there any training needs?

Lessons learned and recommendations	Actions	Review date/outcome
What was and was not managed well?		
How can future incidents be prevented/managed?		
Does the child appear to have unmet needs?		
Does the child need referral to health/children's services?		
What support needs to be in place for the child and family?		
Are any risk assessments needed?		
Is any staff training needed?		
With hindsight, what could have been done differently/better?		
It may be appropriate for the child to develop a support plan with an adult to support them in sharing what their needs are to reduce future incidents.		
<p>Caregiver's response:</p> <p>Child's response:</p>		

Table 11.3 reproduced from Martin-Denham, S. and Watts, S. (2019) *The SENCO Handbook*. London: Sage.