

Watch what you say to your local family counsellor as it could literally destroy your family!

by Vernon Beck, child and family justice advocate

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Recently, I received a call from a mother who described her ongoing horrific experience with the local children's aid society and how the involvement of the agency was literally destroying her entire family.

It all started over a simple argument

The mother's story started about four months ago when she and her husband got into a heated argument at home with their 13 year-old son.

It began with the mother attempting to talk to her son about some homework issues and about some trouble he got himself into at school for not following the rules.

As many teens sometimes do, in an act of defiance, the teen pushed his mother and told her to shut up, that she was an idiot and to not talk to him.

Stomping his feet, he started to walk away from her.

In response to the disrespect and the language, the father grabbed his son by the arms and then physically forced the boy back over to the couch and then forced him to sit down.

The father stood beside the boy and warned him not to get up until he had finished listening to what his parents had to say to him.

The father lectured the boy on the rules of the house, about respecting his mother and about respecting the rules that society has established outside of the home for everyone to follow.

After being put in his place, the boy was grounded to his room for the rest of the evening.

After a good night's sleep things were back to normal the next day with the boy and his parents talking to each other just as if nothing had happened.

Worried about some of the poor choices the boy had made, about a week after the incident, the mother called a local family counselling agency believing that the involvement of an outside third party might help in getting her son to realize that some of his decisions were not in his best long term interests.

The mother spoke to one of the counsellors over the phone and got an immediate sense of security because the counsellor reassured her that their agency was well experienced in working with problem children and that they did a lot of referral work for the local CAS.

During her phone conversation, the mother described the incident at the home a week earlier which was one of the reasons for her phone call.

She also told the worker that this incident was an isolated incident and that there were no issues since then.

The worker pressed the mother to make an appointment to come in to their offices and to bring only herself and her teenage son.

The mother told the worker that she had a busy schedule for the next week or two because her son was involved in a number of sports related activities.

When the counsellor asked the mother for her contact information, the mother willingly provided it to her believing that she would get back to the worker in the near future when she had a better idea of her schedule.

The "anonymous" call from the community

The next day the mother got a call from a worker with the local children's aid society.

According to the CAS worker, a referral had come in from an "anonymous source in the "community" and because it was the job of the CAS to help children and families, would it be OK if she came over to have a meeting with her and her son later that day.

The mother gave the CAS worker the same response she gave to the counsellor the day before and told her that because of her son's sports schedule, she would call her back when she had the time.

Without any warning beforehand, about two hours later the same CAS worker showed up at the mother's home with a second CAS worker as well as two uniformed police officers beside her.

Both she and her husband were home at the time.

The CAS worker told the parents that the Children's Aid Society had concerns about her son being abused by the father and that there were concerns that the parents were not taking steps to protect him.

The parents were told that if they did not allow the CAS workers to speak to their son right then, that their son would be apprehended and taken away by police.

Now in fear and with two uniformed police officers present, the parents allowed the boy to be taken outside to be spoken to privately outside of their house.

One police officer and one CAS worker remained in the home with the parents.

About 10 minutes later the CAS worker and the officer came back into the house with the boy and then asked that the father step outside with them.

Outside of the house, the CAS worker told the father that the boy had disclosed the incident in which his father had grabbed him and that this constituted a criminal assault.

Without even being allowed to come back into the home, the father was arrested, handcuffed, escorted to the police cruiser and taken away by police.

At the police station the father was charged with assaulting his son.

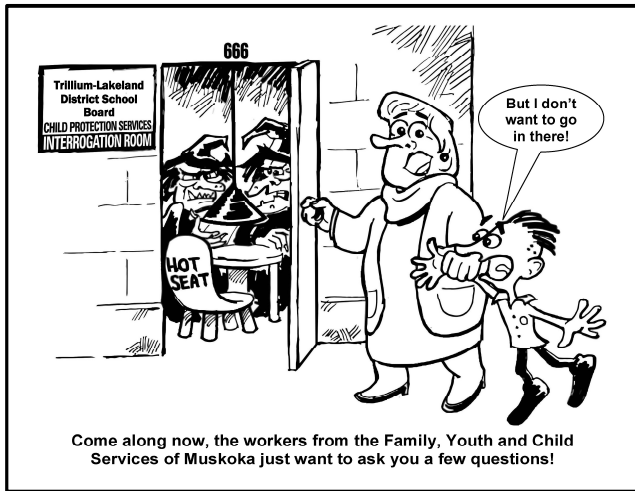
As bail conditions, the father was not allowed to have any contact with either one of his sons, not even by phone until the criminal charges have been dealt with in court.

Teen being harassed at his school

Not long after the father was arrested, the same CAS worker started coming into the boy's school and on more than one occasion, pulled him out of class to interrogate him about having any contact with father in violation to the bail conditions.

The boy was reminded at each visit by the CAS worker that everyone was doing what is in the boy's best interest but that his father will get in a lot of trouble if the boy talks to his dad.

The boy was also told that he was not to tell his mother what was discussed between him and the CAS worker at these school interrogations.



Cartoons like the one above illustrate how many parents and their children feel about CAS workers interrogating children at schools

Because of the CAS worker coming into the school, rumour spread that his parents were abusive.

Some of the boy's friends told him that they were not allowed to go over to his home anymore after school because of the rumors about his abusive parents.

The other parents have heard rumors too that his father is not allowed to live at the home anymore.

CAS now want the boy put on drugs

Because the teachers noticed a decline in the teen's performance they contacted the CAS workers and told her of this because they were told that must report this.

The CAS worker told the mother that the drop in her son's academic performance can be traced back his father's abuse when the father did live at the home and her son needs to be medicated and put into counselling.

But mom knew otherwise and knew that the real reason why her son was suffering was because of not seeing his dad and because of all the other bad things that have happened to the family since the CAS became involved and forced dad out of the home.

The mother said that she was afraid to tell her true thoughts to the CAS worker as she had now come to learn that if she dares to disagree with the CAS worker, she would be accused of not being "uncooperative" and for not doing

what is best for her son.

The mother stated that the CAS worker was coming to the house every couple of weeks to see how things were going, sometimes arriving unannounced.

The mother described how on a couple of occasions when she walked out of her house, she saw the CAS worker's vehicle parked a few houses down on the street.

It was her belief that the CAS worker was parked there in hopes of trying to catch her husband's car parked in the driveway at her home when the kids were at the house.

The effects of CAS involvement

According to the mother ever since the CAS became involved, so much harm has been done to her family.

Four months have now passed. The father has been forced to rent a room and is not allowed to come to the house when either of the boys are at home.

The father's criminal lawyer is telling him that it will likely be at least another 6 to 7 months before the matter can be heard in court unless he pleads guilty to the charges of assault.

The older boy is now becoming increasingly depressed and resentful to those who he perceives as having done this to him and his family.

The teen now hates the police, the CAS workers and he no longer considers his school a safe place as he does not trust his teachers because they are the ones who have allowed the CAS workers to pull him out of class and to be interrogated in school.

The boy has had to quit most of his extra-curricular sports activities because his mother is having money problems and can't drive the boy with another younger child in the home to care for.

Mom is now having difficulties paying the bills because between the father's legal defence costs and having to maintain two separate residences, the burden has now financially crippled the family.

"My son is frustrated and angry. He just wants to see his dad and to have life back to where it was before CAS became involved. My son knows that his father does not deserve what the CAS has done to his father," said the mother.

When asked what she would have done differently, her reply was, "if I had to do it all over again, I would have never made that phone call to the local counselling agency as that it was the biggest mistake of my life."

Tragically in these politically correct times of zero tolerance, it seems that our child protection system, which is supposed to be helping families, is doing exactly the opposite and destroying them.

This one mother's experience should serve as a warning to all other parents about how one phone call can destroy a family.

Parents must be careful of what they say next time they call any local agency for counselling services involving their children as they just might get a lot more than what they bargained for.