

The Knowledgeing Work-Shop – Method and Process In the Pilot Project “Stories Enhancing Skills”

Contribution by Inger Helen Erstad

*Knowledge can be communicated,
But not wisdom
Hermann Hesse*

Introduction

I would like to start with a comment on the saying: Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. Somehow that challenges the title of the pilot project “Stories enhancing Skills”¹. But how can stories enrich our skills or ability to make wise judgments?

I will share my reflections on a story from the Bible, about Solomon who became a king at a young age. He prayed for wisdom and a compassionate heart to help him make the right judgment in a case where two women claimed the right to the same child. I think you all know the story so I will turn to my interpretations.

It is a dramatic story where we get to witness a conversation between the King and the two women. One of them had lost her baby and now they both claimed the right to the living baby. King Solomon does not enter into what might have been a fruitless discussion about which of the two is the child’s real mother. He has an indirect approach to the situation, and distinguishes between essentials and inessentials in order to clarify the question. He proposes a radical, and in our world unthinkable judgement when he orders for a sword and demands that the living child should be divided in two. In this way he put the two women to test and makes them reveal their relation to the child. Thus he has a basis on which to decide what is best for the child. This judgement might well be the first public exercise involving a custody case.²

A reasonable interpretation of the story is that it is the biological mother who begs for the child’s life. But independent of this question she also demonstrates that she is the most suited one, with compassion for the child. Her concern is the child’s situation, or as we would put it today: *the best interest of the child*.

King Solomon received his wisdom as a gift. The social workers that are dealing with severe problems about child protection do not receive wisdom as a gift. They go through a vocational

¹ The long title is: A model for reflection and enhancing professional judgment in child welfare work.

² Text from Erstad 2006.

education that is supposed to prepare them for working with some of society's most difficult dilemmas. It is a great and heavy responsibility to carry.

My statement is that wisdom *can* be communicated, but not straightforward. The stories, fiction, fable, fairytale, poem or movie often contains sources of wisdom, but they need to be interpreted. We can't adapt the concept immediately and use it in the same way. It is not like a list of instructions to follow. Still, the skilled person will recognize wisdom and is able to adapt the underlying principles. He or she can sense the analogies and personalize in various situations.

For many years now, I have been interested in practical knowledge and how we can learn from experience. It has been said that hindsight is the only exact knowledge, but the question of how we learn – or fail to learn – from experience still remains to be answered. To me this search has consisted of a continuous alteration between theoretical approaches and experimenting – which in the end has led to new understanding.

In my thesis on *Experience Based Knowledge and Stories within Child Welfare*, I wanted to find out how experience based knowledge can be investigated and communicated. I was interested in the many sources of knowledge that are available to us and how wisdom and judgment is developed in our professional work, something that implicates an ethical dimension.

I established the *Knowledgeing Work-Shop* as a meeting place between practice and theory, where practitioners and researcher work together on knowledge development. As a method this is closely related to action research traditions with focus on communication and joint research. A great deal of the research process takes place in interaction between researcher and practitioners. The knowledge and understanding that develops, however, is not external research knowledge, but a common shared knowledge between researcher and practitioners. One could say that this way of communicating research is weaved into the research itself in a continuous process.

The ambition was to develop the Knowledgeing Work-Shop into a learning model that can be incorporated into educational systems in an interaction between practice, education and research. The Leonardo program has made it possible to test the model in a broader multinational perspective.

The Concept of the Knowledgeing Work-Shop

The Norwegian term refers to the “workshop” as a working place. It refers to the old craft traditions where the workshop was not only a place for repair. It was just as much a place for creating new things. The cabinetmaker created furniture and repaired old ones. The activity took place within a tradition that regulated use of materials and tools and requirements for quality and design, but in between new forms and things were created. What in today's

society has been divided into many separate functions used to be parts of a whole and in a closer relation to the customers or receivers of the goods.

In Spanish we use the word “taller”, which is a typical expression for the craft activity and the place where it is carried out. “Taller” is also used as a more modern term for a place where people are participating in practical teamwork, for example small groups that are producing something for joint presentation. It is a workshop where people are working their way towards a final product. The Spanish term for this is “taller de los conocimientos”, where conocimientos means knowledge understood as something one has and can communicate to others.

In English we have chosen the term Knowledgeing Work-Shop – the *knowledge-creating* workshop. Unlike workshop, the word knowledgeing is not found in any dictionary. It has, however, been launched by researchers as a description for the creative and vital element of knowledge, knowledgeing as distinct from knowing.

We might say with Mattaini (2002): *The nature of knowledge is not straightforward*. The Dictionary definition of knowledge includes intellectual knowledge as well as knowledge acquired through experience. Still, there is the question of how these forms relate to each other and how they are valued within professional work today. In my view, our Western tradition puts too much emphasis on theoretical knowledge.

If we take a look back to the Antique, at Aristotle and his view on knowledge we will find that he distinguishes between different, but equal forms or fields of knowledge, such as *theoria*, *poiesis* and *praxis*. Here I will bring to light the term *praxis*.

In the practical field we need our judgmental ability. We need *phronesis*, which refers to an analysis of values as a starting point for action, in order to decide what would be the right thing for an individual to do in a concrete situation. In practice based on wisdom, ethical considerations are always incorporated. Phronesis is one of the Greek intellectual virtues that contribute exactly to the practical area in this process. Thus Aristotle sees no fundamental difference between *is* and *should*, nor between knowledge and feelings. Phronesis focuses on context and variability and presupposes an interaction between the general and the particular. This requires consideration, common sense and decisions.

Knowledge in action demands attention. A person with practical insight refines his or her emotional openness and attention when meeting new situations. Often it is active attention (feeling) rather than distanced thought that leads to the right insight (Nussbaum 1990). The experienced and wise person uses judgment in the meaning of phronesis and is able to weigh the situation and make the right decisions under changing circumstances.

The exercise of professional social work involves theoretical, practical and experience based knowledge. The social worker must develop the ability for judgment in order to meet the

changing situations in their work. Then theoretical knowledge, practical insight, common sense and skills merge as parts of a whole. Thus proficiency becomes a sort of *fluent knowledge in action*. The proficient social worker is able to make accurate distinctions and use judgmental power in practical situations – and communicate the reasons.

Experience and practical knowledge is in itself a source of knowledge, but this is mainly an unexpressed and personal insight that is developed by the individual professional or within a team. It is an invisible form of knowledge production that is incorporated into practice traditions and work systems.

When the knowledge production is invisible it is a risk that myths live side by side with valuable insight. Therefore it is important to investigate these sources of knowledge systematically through critical reflection. Then knowledge can be communicated in its own form, through stories that leave room for nuances and variations.

The tradition that the Knowledgeing Work-Shop identifies with sees practical and theoretical knowledge as complementary forms that refer to different aspects of knowledge. They form parts of a whole, but have different roots when it comes to the theory of knowledge and thus have to be explored and analyzed on the basis of their particular qualifications. We could say that knowledge in action is analogous or ambiguous rather than unambiguous.

The essence of the Knowledgeing Work-Shop

The Knowledgeing Work-Shop is basically a meeting-place between practice and theory, where practitioners and advisor/researcher work together on a systematic knowledge development and an understanding of practical work.

The practitioners communicate their experience based knowledge by rendering stories based on concrete situations. We asked about dilemma stories, and the social workers have told us about difficult situations where they were unable to see any good solutions or where they thought they had made wrong decisions. Such stories often express basic problems in the professional field. Therefore they are of special interest for closer analysis. But we also need stories about social workers that deal with difficult situations in an excellent way.

The stories give access to the social worker's implicit perception and judgment in action. The story represents the social worker's perception of the situation at the moment it takes place. At the same time it is colored by the fact that there is a time-gap between action and story and also that the Knowledgeing Work-Shop represents a different context than the practitioners are familiar with. In the Work-Shop social workers are exempted from the requirements of decision-making or action that characterize their busy workdays.

The stories will then be the subject of systematic investigation and dialogical reflection. The methodical process includes 1) narratives and transcripts, 2) concrete reflection and 3) theoretical reflection. This is a process of storytelling and modified reproductions of the

stories, alternating between the oral and the written, between the concrete and the theoretical. The written transformation of the stories and the reflections are important because it contributes to stringency and makes it easier to stick to the subject, which then can be elaborated.

The themes of the stories can be elucidated from different angles, with contributions from ethics, philosophy, art and field theory. Through the use of analogues from fiction and contributions from ethics, the frame of reference for interpretation and understanding is extended to include a wider range of facets than specialist literature can provide. Stories and reflecting retelling forms a basic pattern that can be created and recreated into different forms.

When the experiences that are implicit in the stories are disentangled and seen from different facets, the complexity emerges. We see that the situations that are presented can be interpreted in different ways depending on what we define as foreground or background. From a simple story, reflections and descriptions can be derived that will have ramifications throughout the Child Care system. The knowledge that has developed through essayistic texts is ambiguous and analog, the same way we define the practical knowledge.

From this basic pattern we can think of the Knowledgeing Work-Shop as different forms and characters depending on its purpose. When the purpose is research, as in the PHD project, the researcher is responsible for the written reflections and analyzes.

In the Leonardo program the goal has been to find out how well the Knowledgeing Work-Shop is suited as a learning model to enhance the social workers skills and ability to make wise judgment. For the purpose of education, it is vital that the social workers concentrate on written reflections. The work shall lead to an essay, written from a personal angle.

Testing of the Knowledgeing Work-Shop in the Leonardo Project

The greatest challenge of this project has been to modify personal competence from research methods in Norway into a learning model for social workers and then test it out in a European context – all in one operation.

It has been adventurous and very informative. The model has been put to a hard test – with tight schedules and cultural and linguistic challenges. The critical factors have been literature and advisor competence. We can regard the test as a critical and strategic case.

Questions according to the Model

- How relevant is the Knowledgeing Work-Shop – professionally and personally – to social workers?
- How relevant is the Knowledgeing Work-Shop as a model for further- and upgrade education?
- What kind of variations or adaptations is needed in the different countries or regions?

- What kind of organization and competence is needed?

The first question can best be answered by the participants in the Knowledgeing Work-Shop, which they have done by giving us feedback throughout the process, and later to Sigrid Nordstoga, who has evaluated the Knowledgeing Work-Shop as a learning model. She discusses this in her report that she will be presenting tomorrow.

Questions around variations, adaptations and competence are something we have been working with throughout the project. We have made the necessary adjustments and included them as a part of our experience basis. Finn Thorbjørn Hansen has been following the process. He has been our critical friend with a particular interest in the relation between the basic idea and the process (Hansen2008). He will give more information about this in his contribution.

As you can see from the program, many voices and perspectives will be heard at this conference. This is vivid knowledge and understanding that will be developed and communicated throughout this conference. As the project leader it is my responsibility to sort out and organize the information afterwards. Therefore I am also here to listen and learn.

We have gained valuable experiences – both through other people’s view on the Norwegian model and our own access into the ‘foreign’ – experiences that has lead to a broader insight.

The Organization of the Project

The project is divided into an operating section that concentrates on testing out the Knowledgeing Work-Shop in the different countries, and a development section that modifies experience material into “products”. The correlation process has been taken care of by the advisor group.

1. The advisor group was established in order to enhance and develop the advisors’ competence. Both social workers and researchers have participated in this group, all of them with long experience as advisors. The members of this group have been working on their own dilemmas and reflections. In addition we have discussed the didactic program, a form of meta-learning.

2. The model has been tested on four groups of social workers according to the curriculum. The setting has been six gatherings over a period of fourteen months: One Spanish, one Nordic and one group from North Norway that was established in April 2007. In addition there is an Estonian group that started up later.

The present status is that the Spanish, Norwegian and Nordic groups have completed their education according to module 1 in the curriculum and several of them are working on a major subject according to module 2. The Estonian group will be finished late this year.

During this period we have done two things that have had a good effect on cooperation and inspiration. In November last year, partners and participants from all the Knowledgeing

Work-Shop groups gathered in Malmoe. This was included as a part of the education – with lectures and group work. The participants were given tasks and contributed with professional and cultural interaction and social activities as well.

There was a positive climate for continuing the contact and the participants arranged a new meeting, which took place in Montforte. They have also made descriptions of the framework of the professional work in each country, which will be presented later in the conference.

Organization and Recruitment under Time Pressure

Testing of a model requires practical organization. In this project it had to be done within a very short time span. Web site and brochures had to be produced and published in three languages in the course of three months. After that we made a curriculum that has been approved by the Tromsø University College.

However interesting an education might seem, it does not mean that social workers are rushing to participate. We are competing with others. Therefore we saw the advantages of a broad partnership and contact with people who could be “door openers” into the field. Our partners in Spain cooperated on recruitment. In the Nordic countries Bufetat and NOPUS did the job. WGCC put us in contact with the Estonian group in Tartu.

Advisor Competence and Literature as Critical Factors

Making my personal competence more explicit and accessible to others has been an ongoing process throughout the pilot project. Each group was appointed advisors, where two types of competence were essential: Leading the group process and guiding the research of experience and practical knowledge. Most of the advisors have competence and long experience in operating group processes and guiding reflections. That is, asking questions and arrange for good interaction. They did not have the same competence when it came to methodical research of experience. Therefore we have used the advisor group as an arena for common learning. These experiences will form the basis for further advisor programs.

Literature on this subject has been in short supply. We have had to rely on basic textbooks within practice philosophy/ knowledge and ethics. Most of these are available in the Nordic languages. The Spanish advisor has used her network and involved writers and philosopher.

Cultural Variations and Group Processes

My contact with the Spanish partners has developed through the years. A statement early in the process concluded that the model, although it was interesting, might not be as well suited for Spanish conditions as for Norwegian ones. The argument was that Spanish social workers were not as accustomed to share difficult experiences as the Nordic workers. In light of this, it is interesting to look at the experiences we gained.

First of all, one would think that it would be more difficult to recruit participants in Spain than in the Nordic countries because the program would seem strange and unfamiliar.

We tried to adapt recruiting to local conditions. Aside from that, we did nothing in particular. The result was surprising. Soon we had 15-16 Spanish applicants, and the competition was strong. I think this shows the value of the commitment of the University and the Colegio Oficial. In the Nordic countries it took longer time to fill the groups.

We assumed that the model was more unknown and untraditional in Spain, so we organized an information meeting at the university and also interviewed each of the applicants. It was therefore an informed choice to participate. Everyone who was invited accepted the offer. We extended the group to seven because there were so many well-qualified applicants. Everyone has attended the gatherings. In comparison two of the Nordic group members quit because of change of work etc.

However, in her evaluation Nordstoga found that there has been a little more insecurity in the Spanish group through this period.

A couple of other participants writes about difficulties in the beginning to share one's own insecurities, fear and emotions that they wanted to cover up and prevent from coming to the surface. Gradually, they learned that the others shared the same insecurities, and the group became a good place to work with these issues.

This shows that our pre-considerations indeed were well founded, but also that the problems could be dealt with during the process. So the role of the advisor is important.

Reflection: Models and methods that are transferred from one country to another, as for example import of methods to Norway, cause many objections and reservations. It is so easy to say no, this does not fit in – and certainly not in small communities in North Norway. However I do think it is a methodical challenge to have an open mind about how local traditions can be enriched as well as challenged when confronted with external models and thoughts.

Still, there is an interface here that indicates where or in what situations the model is not suitable. The foundation is built on democratic traditions with a great degree of participation and a view on knowledge inspired from the Antique.

In Norway, the current trend is to work according to evidence-based and standardized methods. Despite this - or perhaps because of it – several Norwegian participants state that we need the Knowledgeing Work-Shop as a place for reflection. And gradually they have come to realize that their experiences indeed involve a nuanced knowledge and insight that otherwise would not have come to the surface.

Linguistic Challenges

One of the greatest challenges has been language – also when it comes to dissemination to other countries.

First of all, there is a shortage of relevant literature. This is because some of the literature is only available in the Nordic languages, and not in English – or the other way around. And there would be even less in Spanish, or that's what we thought. But he who seeks shall find. And gradually we have discovered articles that discuss how prudence in the Greek tradition has relevance for social work to day.

My experience from Spain is that language can be like a filter. The texts are translated into Norwegian and my comments into Spanish. This is a resource-demanding challenge and a filtration of words where things can get lost in translation. On the other hand, it is interesting to see that modes of expression sometimes are different from that of Norwegian social workers. As for example when someone says: I start this story with a firm decision - con el firme propósito – to explain everything that happened. When reading this I feel a different energy than from the Nordic texts.

Using English as a unifying language also present some problems. Although the participants speak English quite well, it can be difficult to articulate the nuances. They need to be able to express exactly what they want to say – and not only what they are able to say – in lack of proper English words. I think most of us recognize this problem from working together across language borders.

The Writing Process as a Critical Factor

The next thing I would like to focus on is the writing process as a methodical challenge. This challenge is apparently the same across the borders. Everybody who has been working with writing processes knows that there are several barriers that make this a difficult process.

In the Knowledgeing Work-Shop we asked for personal experience and dilemmas. Practical knowledge is connected with the person as an internal relation. It is something one has (ore is). Oral stories are often communicated in a vivid language, with facial expressions and body postures that enhance the message. A written reproduction often has the opposite quality: the style is rigid, careful or formal. The social worker becomes as invisible as in professional reports. The first barrier we have to deal with, then, is to find a narrative form where the narrator is totally present. What did the social worker see or think? What was in the foreground?

- working on difficult subjects

Dilemmas are often connected to emotional feelings, such as a feeling of falling short or desperation over a situation that does not seem to have any good solutions. Some of the stories deal with basic dilemmas of child protection work. The stories give evidence of

closeness and involvement, closeness to children that despite being neglected are longing for their parents, or to the young mother who is unable to take care of her baby.

“When you have used the reason of laws and regulations in a transfer of custody, your heart screams and asks you to stop. And you feel guilt. However, the feeling of guilt disappears when you can convince yourself that the decision was right.”

Here we have metaphorical expressions. The heart screams, and the theme evoke recognition. Many are also concerned about the great responsibility that rests on social workers:

“There are so many decisions I have been forced to make, but how do I know if they are the right ones? I am becoming increasingly aware of the importance of my decisions and what influence they have on the lives of the people involved.”

This reflection process takes time and develops many nuances in the oral dialogue within the group. However, the written process of realization takes even more time.

- insight developed from the story

New insight develops during the writing process. One social worker refers to a concrete situation where a father becomes furious at her during a meeting. A closer look at the situation reveals that this is different from other, similar situations where she has been scolded while exercising her power. “It is ok for me to be called a “bitch” or “the one who eats babies” when I know that this is what I had to expect”. But this episode with the father was different. Her professional skill and communicative ability was at stake. “And that makes me much more vulnerable”, she says. When she takes a closer look, she realizes that the situation arose because of the way she was acting. “I was arrogant and forgot to show respect. I forgot to put myself in the place of the father and try to understand his point of view”. Her insight increased during the writing process and we as readers could take part in her reflections. Here she separates between herself and the other and demonstrates an ability to distinguish and recognize the small details that can influence judgment and become a sort of personal knowing in action.

- a change of understanding

When we look into experiences we often become stuck in our preconceptions, and our reflections contribute to confirm them. This is just the way it is. Changing our perspective and trying to see a situation from someone else’s point of view is a difficult process. A social worker from the Nordic group tells us that a change of perspective happens when he realizes that, although his professional view of the situation is right, it does not help. This is not what the conflict is all about. And then he discusses his own participation in the conflict situation that has developed. This is a basis for learning from experience and to recognize similar situations.

- disentangling implicit knowledge

Practical situations often demand immediate action, and we have to use our intuition. One person tells about a situation where she needed to act immediately. In her story she uses the word “knew” again and again. In her reflections she disentangles the many nuances that lie behind the different things she knew. Here we get to share her knowledge about confidence, in things that fall outside formal guidelines and methods.

- the general in the unique.

Personal experiences also involve general themes. Another person writes about problems when her advisor asks her to confront a mother. She resists, because she feels that this will make matters worse and because she herself is reluctant to conflicts. Gradually she sees why this is not only a personal thing, but something involving cultural practices that she is a part of. This give grounds for a nuanced discussion of the relation between standardized methods and local conditions and traditions.

Learning experiences

What then, has been my learning experience in all this? What has been unexpected or more complex than I originally thought?

First of all I found that social workers’ need to work on the emotional sides of experiences and dilemma has taken far more time than expected. Working on one story over a long period of time has been meaningful to the individual as well as the groups. Working on feelings and sorting out experiences takes time, but evidently it is necessary in order to move on and extend ones perspective to more inquiring research – and wondering.

This is an experience that will be important in my future work. To the social worker, having some space for deeper thought outside their daily work and within the intimacy of the group, is of great value. It is a place for reciprocity and learning.

The situations that have been in focus have been complex and fixing the limits of themes for further investigation is also time-consuming. This is about being a researcher in our own culture, with particular challenges.

The writing process has been a challenge – also from the advisors’ point of view. We have made room for variation both in time and space. In the future it will perhaps be a good idea to have a better structure of the process – with smaller subtasks. At the same time this open attitude has led to interesting variations. A Spanish social worker writes fairy tales about finding principles for justice when faced with difficult choices. It is about a knight’s journey and struggling. Others have been inspired to write their own poems that are interwoven or commenting on a theme.

Along the road we have also used sources such as movies, fiction and art, and it is exiting to see how individuals have brought up various sources from their texts as analogues to their

own themes. Such sources can be a treasury of old wisdom and common sense, also relevant for difficult decisions in the field of social work.

We have followed the structure of the model but it has still been an open process. It has been a testing within the range of further- and upgrade education. The experiences give grounds for further development towards a broader competence system. And, in addition, Brussels has granted a new project 2009-2010 under the Leonardo program *Transfer of Innovation*.

The Knowledgeing Work-Shop as a Competence Development System

The further development of the model involves effort and focus on:

- 1) Educational material / literature (3 languages)
- 2) KWS as master modules / program for advisors
- 3) Practice development /organization learning

In an educational path the Knowledgeing Work-Shop will contribute to a differentiated and integrated understanding of theory by going from personal experience to a search for relevant theories and ways of understanding. In this way we can learn to see how various professional theories in different ways can throw light on concrete situations or circumstances. This will stimulate to a more balanced view on theory and give an opportunity to analyze the interests and power structures that forms the framework of practical work.

The Knowledgeing Work-Shop can be integrated in different forms of organization learning or development projects by systematizing reflections on problems areas as well as better ways of performing, and by considering how structural changes in the organization can contribute to promote or prevent particular working methods. This is a way of combining competence development for the employees and development of the organization. Such programs can also be established in cooperation between a University and an organization in order to give the workers an opportunity to take an examination.

When the purpose of the Knowledgeing Work-Shop is internal competence- and organizational development within the different activities of the practice field, the work with reflections on experience does not necessarily have to be guided by a researcher, but I will argue that the role of a researcher must be taken care of. Contributions from philosophers and authors would also be of great interest. The process from affirmative to extended reflection requires an open and keen attitude combined with systematic work.

At the same time, external views represents vital contributions to help the child welfare system see itself in relation to its environment, at an individual level as well as a system level. The users' stories make it easier to understand their world and also for the social workers to see themselves through the eyes of the users. This can be a way to stimulate a development of wise judgment and the effort to clarify more precisely the reasons behind specific actions, so

that they can be communicated and discussed with the users or others that are involved with the child welfare system.

In order to enhance practical knowledge, it is important that the Knowledgeing Work-Shop is connected to scientific competence in order to systematize and analyze the material that develops through storytelling and reflection. The stories are often more ambiguous than they might seem at first glance, and such nuances needs a deeper analysis in order to emerge. This activity will gradually give a more extensive description of the work methods and practical challenges within the child welfare system and the relation between rule and exception will be clearer.

The wise judgment in Interaction between Guidelines and Control

Although I argue for reflection as a tool to develop the judgment ability and speak up for a balanced practice with room for judgment and individual variations, I do see a clear need for appropriate guidelines, routines and control. As Janik (1996) says it: We need regulating as well as constituting rules (paradigmatic examples).

The task of the child welfare system is to administer innate dilemmas in society when it comes to the relation between normality and abnormality. The child welfare system's methods and ways of understanding are neither static nor unique. With reference to Ericsson (1996) we can regard child welfare as a mirror of society, where professional theories and perspectives gains power in cooperation with ruling ideologies in society.

The mandate of the child welfare system extends deep into people's private sphere, and therefore judgment should not be left to the individual social worker alone. People who are involved with the child welfare system are entitled to predictability, openness when it comes to reasons for actions and legal protection in general, according to regulations.

The most important reason for guidelines and control is the fact that social workers confront individuals in vulnerable situations where the power is asymmetric. It is therefore important to make sure that the professional worker does not misuse his or her authority. Sometimes violation can be deliberate, other times it is the choice of words or working methods that can be experienced as offensive without the social worker being aware of it.

The child welfare system has an important social-political function and needs a fair degree of consensus around its activity. The understanding of what is in the best interest of the child and how children should be protected is not only an internal professional question. It should be everybody's concern, and everyone is entitled to give his or her opinion. Still, 'the better argument' carries more weight. Opening up to access, for example by modified stories and reflection about reasons for actions can be a contribution in this connection.

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