Behaviour & Environment Case Study

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**The Case Scenario**

George Abram is a 13 years old boy who shifted to Batlow, Australia from Oymyakon, Russia in 2017 along with his family. Unfortunately, a deadly bushfire surrounded the whole town two days after they arrived in the town. Everyone was stirred by the sudden bushfire so he was. Scores of animals burned alive including Vladimir, his favourite pet. Abram and his family escaped the fire and shifted to Canberra, but came back after three months. Abram had never seen fire in such a large amount before that and he stayed traumatized after many weeks of that incident. He was taken to a psychiatric who told not to expose Abram to fire before he turns 25.

**Section 1 - Overview of issue/intervention**

George Abram was affected by pyrophobia and he needed a proper psychological treatment. He is a Russian who spent almost 7 years of his life seeing snow everywhere around. He shifted to Australia and this world was new for him. This weather might have irritated him due to higher temperature, but it was tolerable. Shifting from a region where temperature falls more than 50 Celsius to a town where temperature rises more than 20 degree Celsius was itself a challenge, but a bushfire was like a volcano for a young boy. It burned his house and his beloved pet before his eyes (Schirmacher, 2011). Amygdala an almond shape part of Abram’s brain was affected due to that incident. He should have been treated using psychological therapies instead of keeping away from fire. Amygdala is responsible for making mind conscious about phobias which can lead to loss of confidence in humans. That is the reason Abram is still suffering from the fear of fire even after three years and it is possible that he might stay same if not treated before he reaches mature age (Chadwick, Birchwood, & Trower, 1996).

Cognitive therapy, a kind of psychotherapy, is a useful treatment to treat Abram. Apart from that, the authorities will be approached to make strategies to avoid such incidents in future. The only disorder that is causing complication in the psyche of Abram is pyrophobia, but it can lead to many other phobias like scopophobia that causes too much anxiety in the patient. Cognitive therapy targets the mind of the patient and it attempts to change the way a person thinks about a certain entity. If Abram is not convinced that fire is a dead entity and it does not have the capability to think, he might consider it a giant killer throughout his life (Young, 1999). This theory will be implemented by arranging meetings with Abram and developing interpersonal relationship with him. Abram is a kind of shy boy, but once he feels comfortable with anyone, frank communication becomes easier. He would be approached by talking about his favourite game cricket. Moreover, some prominent community members of Batlow will be approached to make formal claim of proper strategies for precaution to the authorities.

**Section 2 - Identify important stakeholders**

George Abram lives in Batlow which is a beautiful town in Australia, but it is vulnerable to bushfire like many Australian regions. The town is surrounded by woods that is a good thing, but Global Warming has made these woods fire-bombs. The setting is made by Nature although exploited by humans. Woods are a natural part of the territory where humans are building industries. Almost one dozen hundred people reside in Batlow who are vulnerable to bushfire if such an incident happens again (Alvarez, 1997). The town is under the provision of the Commonwealth of Australia and governed by the LGA Council of Batlow. In fact, the main cause of bushfire is Global Warming and increasing temperature plus famine in Australia, therefore, the Batlow authorities alone cannot be held responsible for the bushfire although they should have taken precautionary measures and timely actions to save the houses and infrastructure which burned. This fire affected many people’s psyche who were new in Australia as they were shocked when they learned that even non-human forces can rise anytime to kill humans here (Hawton, 1989). Two cases were reported where young children were taken to psychiatrists for mental treatment in Batlow with the same disorder that haunts Abram's mind.

**Section 3 - Explain how the strategy would be implemented**

In the first step, Abram will be treated using Cognitive Therapy. It starts with the idea that what a person thinks shapes the way of his feeling. Pyrophobia in Abram stemmed from having thoughts or beliefs that fire is alive creature like a wolf who can attack when offended and can eat humans, animals, and many other things. Changing this belief might change Abram’s and the other patients’ view of the events they experienced and their emotional state. Cognitive focuses more on current thinking and communication patterns instead of past. I will work with Abram to confront and challenge inappropriate thoughts by encouraging different ways of viewing fire. The usefulness of fire will be explained to him and I will light and put out fire before him. Moreover, I will explain to him how fire burns using scientific knowledge in the school lab.

In the second step, I will approach the LGA authorities of Batlow having some suggestions with the support of prominent community members of Batlow. After I receive the government and the community support, we shall raise fund by some businessmen and the government to spread awareness and to build a canal between woods and the town (Ellis, Kanowski, & Whelan, 2004). Awareness about the impacts of Global Warming will be spread and the people will be portrayed how to act during fire-emergency. They will be encouraged to keep fire-fighting tools in the houses like Oxygen cylinders and other tools which they can use to flee the houses in case of emergency. Woods are at the two sides of Batlow Tumut River is linked to Blowering, the neighboring town of Batlow. The state authorities will be asked to invest in making a canal that go around Batlow and fells back to the river. It would stop the bushfire rushing towards the town and the authorities will feel easier to take precautionary measures if the fire gets uncontrolled. Moreover, it would enrich the area with surface water that would be used to cope with fire-emergency. As a result, we be able to avoid cases like George Abram.

**Section 4 - Evaluate the rationale for the strategy**

A solution that is proposed in two steps is a workable strategy and it is possible that both the community and the government help me to execute the solution strategy. Two parties are expected to help me for the execution of the first step that is the treatment of Abram. Fortunately, they both agree to help me rather Abram has become a friend to me and we talk much about cricket. Judith Beck writes in his book *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (1995) that a psychiatric can treat a patient only when the patient feels comfortable to share his/her experiences with the psychiatric. I and Abram have developed such a relationship.

The second step is also applicable and useful since our application has been received by the authorities for consideration. Peter Schirmacher writes in his book *Fighting with fire: How bushfire suppression can impact on firefighters' health* (2011) that if educated adult people are able to deal with them in the case of emergency more than seventy per cent burden of firefighters would decrease and they would be able to save more lives and infrastructure. A public awareness campaign can help to make the adults able to cope with such situations. It is a time consuming and money consuming task and I agree here with Argimiro Lopez Alvarez who writes in his book *Bush Fire Fighting Machine* (1997) that civilized nations do not hesitate to sacrifice their money and time if their future is at stake. If incidents like one experienced by Abram are handled properly, our other children might stay safe from psychological disorders and traumas.

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