

1 What is a professional curiosity?

Professional curiosity is a golden thread through all Safeguarding Partnership learning reviews and audits and is an essential part of safeguarding. Nurturing professional curiosity is a fundamental aspect of working together to keep children, young people and adults safe. A lack of professional curiosity can lead to missed opportunities to identify less obvious indicators of vulnerability/significant harm.

7 Top Tips

- Be watchful for disguised compliance
- Using motivation interviewing techniques
- Appreciate the impact of lived experiences on someone's ability to be open and honest
- Think outside of the box
- Actively listen

6 Be self aware in your practice

Professionals need to have a degree of caution in their judgements and triangulate information. This means seeking independent confirmation of individuals' accounts and weighing up details from a range of sources or practitioners, particularly when there appear to be discrepancies. Professionals need to be aware of their own values without letting them influence their decision making and practice in a way that is non-judgemental and anti-discriminatory.

2 Why it matters?

Incorrect assumptions can be made in assessments of needs and risk which could lead to wrong interventions for individuals and families. It is natural to want to believe the best of a family, thinking the unthinkable does not mean assuming the worst. It means keeping an open mind, thinking objectively about the evidence presented.



Professional Curiosity

5 Think family

A Think Family approach to safeguarding work with children and adults and their families is essential. When completing assessments we need to take opportunities to see, feel and recognise risk and enquire deeper. Being open minded and curious will help to make an informed decision about the child's, adult's or families' lived experiences. Analyse all available information and record all concerns and considerations.

3 Use your senses

- Look: Is there anything about what you see when you meet with this adult/ family which prompts questions/makes you feel uneasy?
- Are you observing any behaviour which is indicative of abuse or neglect?
- Does what you see support or contradict what you're being told?
- Listen: Are you being told anything which needs further clarification?
- Are you concerned about what you hear family members say to each other?
- Is someone in this family trying to tell you something but is finding it difficult to express themselves?

4 What to ask

- Ask: Are there direct questions you could ask when you meet this adult/family which will provide more information about the vulnerability of individual family members. Here are some examples:
 - How do you spend a typical day? Who do you live with? When were you last happy? What do you look forward to? How did you get that injury? Who is this with you? When do you feel safe?
- Check out: Are other professionals involved? Have other professionals seen the same as you? Are professionals being told the same or different things? Are others concerned? If so, what action has been taken and by whom?