

## 01 WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY?

Professional curiosity is having a healthy scepticism about what you are being told about a child. It is a communication skill to explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting service users' versions of events or disclosures at face value. This requires practitioners to practice 'respectful uncertainty'.

## 07 TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- Seek advice guidance and second opinions
- Work in partnership with other agencies
- Carry out unplanned visits (where possible)
- Play 'devil's advocate'
- Present alternative hypotheses
- Present cases from the child, young person, adult or another family member's perspective
- Share your concerns and findings with other professionals

## 02 CONSIDER DISGUISED COMPLIANCE

Disguised compliance involves parents or carers giving the appearance of cooperating with agencies to avoid raising suspicions and to allay concerns (e.g. agreeing to attend appointments but not turning up). Practitioners should verify and corroborate information with others.

## 03 THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

Thinking the unthinkable does not mean assuming the worse. It means keeping an open mind and being able to think objectively about the what the evidence is telling you.

### PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY Key Features

## 06 BARRIERS TO CURIOSITY

- Unconscious bias
- Making assumptions
- Over-identifying with carers and losing focus on the child
- Over optimism: professionals who do not want to acknowledge that things are not getting better and that they need to make hard decisions
- Being afraid to raise concerns
- Time constraints
- Lacking confidence to ask sensitive questions

## 05 ASSESSING RISK & RECORDING

Be observant when completing key tasks such as home visits and considering all notations within a risk context. Analyse all available information and record all concerns and considerations.

## 04 MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational interviewing means speaking with parents to promote their internal intrinsic motivations for change. (e.g. "I want to be a better parent because..."). Challenging parents/carers requires expertise, confidence, time and emotional energy. Follow up with appropriate questions to gather more information.

