



Professional Curiosity 7 minute Briefing

1. Why it is important? Professional curiosity is about using skills of communication to explore and understand what is happening for a person without making assumptions or accepting things at face value. It requires the skills of looking, listening, asking direct questions and being able to hold difficult conversations.

Nurturing professional curiosity and challenge are fundamental aspects of working together to keep adults and children safe from harm. This approach is important in helping to identify abuse and neglect which is less obvious and can ensure that the right information is gathered to assess needs and risks.

2. Professional Challenge Differences of opinion, or concerns about practice, can arise for practitioners at work and it is important they are resolved as effectively and swiftly. Having different professional perspectives within safeguarding practice is a sign of a healthy and well-functioning partnership. Differences could arise in multi-agency working as well as within single agency working. Differences are most likely to arise in relation to:

- criteria for referrals
- outcomes of assessments
- roles and responsibilities of workers
- service provision
- timeliness of interventions
- information sharing and communication.

professional differences are reduced by clarity about roles and responsibilities and the ability to discuss and share problems in networking forums.

6. Additional resources

If you require further information about this briefing, please contact:

LICB safeguarding Team
Licb.safeguarding1@nhs.net

Safeguarding Adults Board.
LSAB@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Safeguarding Children's Board
LSCP@lincolnshire.gov.uk

5. Consider Disguised

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

4. Holding Difficult conversations

Tackling disagreements or hostility, raising concerns, and giving information that may not be well received are incredibly challenging and difficult things to do.

• **Plan** - in advance to ensure there will be time to cover essential elements of the conversation

4. Developing Skills in Professional Curiosity continued:

Ask - Research indicates those who experience abuse, including coercion and control want practitioners to ask direct questions and that it is easier to respond to a direct question than offer information independently.

- I notice you have this injury. Is there anything going on for you which may have caused this?
- Do you feel frightened of anyone? / Do you feel safe living here?
- Who makes decisions about what you can and cannot do?

Some of the things you have said concern me. Is somebody hurting you or are you afraid someone might hurt you in the future?

Clarify

- Are other professionals involved? What information do they have?
- 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 is there anything else which should or could be done by you or someone else?

3. Developing Skills in Professional Curiosity

Look - Is there anything about what you see when you meet with the adult / their family that makes you feel uneasy or prompts questions? Do you see behaviours which indicate abuse or neglect, including coercion and control? Does what you see contradict or support what you are being told? How are family members interacting with each other and with you?

Listen

Are you being told anything that needs further clarification?

- Is someone trying to tell you something?
- Are you concerned about what you hear family members say to each other?
- Is someone in the family trying to tell you something, but finding it difficult to express themselves or speak openly?

Make time and space to have a private conversation with an adult who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, or subject to coercion and control.

