

What is professional curiosity?

Professional curiosity involves actively exploring every possible indicator of abuse or neglect and trying to gain insight into what a child's or adult life is truly like on a day-to-day basis. Professional curiosity is a practice mindset and communication skill that involves exploring and understanding what is happening by asking questions and maintaining an open mind. It is about understanding one's own responsibility in managing risk and safety and knowing when to act, rather than making assumptions and taking things at face value.

Think Family

'Think Family' refers to the practice of considering the entire family unit when working with an individual, acknowledging that complex difficulties like learning disabilities or physical disabilities within one family member can significantly impact the whole family dynamic, and that a holistic approach to support and intervention across all family members is required.

[OSAB 7MB - Think Family](#) .

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. It also provides a vehicle for engagement.

Why is professional curiosity important?

A lack of professional curiosity can lead to:

- Missed opportunities to identify less obvious indicators of vulnerability
- Assumptions made in assessments of needs and risk which are incorrect and lead to wrong intervention for individuals and families

Applying Professional Curiosity

Look 1: Is there anything that makes you feel uneasy or prompts questions? **2.** Are you observing any behaviours indicative of abuse or neglect? **3.** Does what you see contradict or support what you are being told?

Listen: **1.** Are you being told anything that needs further clarification? **2.** Are you concerned about what you hear? **3.** Is someone trying to tell you something, but finding it difficult to express themselves or speak openly?

Ask: There are a variety of questioning techniques you could use which will provide more information about the vulnerability of individual family members? For example, direct questions, How do you spend a typical day? How did you get that injury? When do you feel safe? Open questions, tell me about that, help me understand

Barriers

- Practitioners can be fooled with stories we want to believe are true
- Lack of effective multi-agency work
- Challenging parents or carers (colleagues) requires expertise, confidence, time and a considerable amount of emotional energy
- We may hold stereotypes and/or bias that we are not recognising.
- Practitioners do not always listen to adults who try to speak on behalf of a child or another adult and who may have important information to contribute



Professional Curiosity

Training and Support

Take a look at upcoming training opportunities on the OSCP website

[Training - OSCP](#)

Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board have produced a Professional Curiosity Guidance document, available [here](#)

Professional Curiosity and Cultural Competent Safeguarding Practice

Professionals must be professionally curious about a child, young person or adult faith, culture, and nationality, and take personal responsibility for informing their work with sufficient knowledge or seeking advice to support this.

Knowing about and using services available locally to provide relevant cultural and faith-relation input to prevention, support and rehabilitation services for the child, young people and their families will support practice.

[NSPCC - Children from minoritised ethnic communities](#)

[GM - Resolving professional differences escalation policy](#)

Website: www.oldhamsafeguarding.org

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