

# Reflecting on your practice

## Child Sexual Abuse in the family environment

This learning comes from the recent OSCP evaluation of multi-agency responses to child sexual abuse in family settings, based on six audited MACE cases.



### Keep the child in view

- Ask yourself: "Do I really understand this child's daily lived experience?"
- Prioritise time to see, hear, and check in with each child and sibling.
- Notice patterns: changes in behaviour, attendance, sleep, relationships, mood.



### Strengthen Your Observations & Analysis

- **Be explicit: What are the concerns? What indicators are present? What is the impact?**
- **Avoid vague phrases. Use clear language: "The child described...", "I observed..."**
- **Consider access: Who can see the child, contact them, or influence them?**



### Use Chronologies Purposefully

- Keep your own working chronology up to date.
- Log: disclosures, retractions, missed appointments, injuries, visitors, disruptions.
- Ask: "What changes over time? What is escalating?"



### Build Your Multi-Agency Curiosity

- **Pick up the phone – professional curiosity is active, not passive.**
- **Ask partners: "What do you see that I don't?"**
- **Share the child's voice and your observations promptly.**



### Prepare Well for Meetings

- Bring: key observations, chronology updates, questions, and the child's voice.
- Before attending, ask:
  - What do I need clarity on?
  - What risks remain unclear?
  - What does the child need today, not just long-term?



### Strengthen Information Sharing

- **When something significant happens, share it the same day with core partners.**
- **Check: Has the school/GP/social worker seen this too? What do they think?**



### Be Confident Naming CSA Concerns

- Use clear, unambiguous language.
- Avoid euphemisms – clarity protects children.
- Ask: "If someone read my recording in 6 months, would they understand the risk?"



### Focus on Safety in Daily Life

- **Think practically:**
  - Who sleeps where?
  - Who visits?
  - Who has unsupervised access?
- **Ask parents direct, respectful, specific questions – don't assume.**



### Record With Purpose

- Write as if the child will read it one day:
- Clear
- Factual
- Impact-focused
- End your records with: "So what? What difference does this make?"



### Use Reflection to Improve Practice

Reflect after key interactions:

- What went well?
- What did I miss?
- What do I need to check with another agency?
- What support or advice should I seek?

Reflection is continuous, not only in supervision.



### Look After Yourself

- CSA work is emotionally heavy.
- Use supervision to reflect, not just to update.

