

What is Professional Curiosity? 1

It is the ability and skills to explore what is happening with an individual or family. You must understand the responsibility you hold and know when to act.

Families are dynamic. It requires you to be curious and explore the networks and interdependencies between family members, relatives and friends. Never taking anything at face value or making assumptions.

Lack of professional curiosity can lead to a failure of professionals and agencies to initiate safeguarding processes and procedures appropriately. This can impact a person, a partner or their families.

Barriers 2

A key issue is how your emotional world may inhibit professional curiosity.

Work/personal pressures, fixed thinking and unwillingness to change are barriers to professional curiosity.

- **Normalisation** of actions and therefore no longer assessed as a potential risk
- Deferring **professional judgement** – be confident in your judgement/assessment of risk presented
- **Confirmation Bias** – ignoring other useful facts or accumulating risks
- Not confident to manage **difficult conversations/tension**

Barriers (cont'd) 3

Other barriers you need to consider when working with individuals and families are:

- The use of **disguised compliance** to avoid suspicion
- '**Rule of Optimism**' – the person/family rationalise risks despite clear evidence of escalation
- Dealing with uncertainty – keeping a **person-centred approach**, investigate retracted allegations, collate your observations and further assess unsubstantiated concerns before case closure.

What are the opportunities? 4

THINK FAMILY APPROACH – See, Feel and Recognise Risk.

Be open-minded and curious – taking an interest rather than making assumptions. Engage through visits, conversation and observation – focus on building close relationships. Hear their voices and understand lived experiences.

Consider who might influence the person/family/carer and triangulate information from a range of sources.

Do they have executive functioning and capacity to make the choices they are making?

Reflective practice and regular supervision are ways of supporting professional curiosity.

Develop Professional Skills 5

Be open-minded and prepare yourself for managing risk and uncertainty; remember to process the impact it has on you too.

Think the unthinkable; believe the unbelievable. Consider how you can articulate 'intuition' into an evidenced, professional view.

Review records, check facts and record accurately – never assume. Ask for feedback from your line manager or peers. Triangulate information and case history from everyone but remember to look at behaviours and not just the words spoken. You could consider a multiagency meeting to gather support from other agencies.

Attend good quality training to develop your knowledge and skillset – **See Section 7 for more information.**

How can I incorporate this? 6

- Remain diligent, focus on the person AND those around them (**the whole family and friend network**). What is the lived experience/reality for this person?
- What might be the second story (what else is happening beneath what you are already being told/believe as a professional)?
- Take responsibility for **Safeguarding**
- Analyse, reflect, think about **intuition**, ask key questions, be **confident** to have difficult conversations and **challenge assumptions** <https://youtu.be/XEdNGbnvzRs>
- Encourage peers to think around **case circumstances**
- **Use information and records** available to you – triangulate with partner agencies
- Managers should support opportunities for **group discussion** on the evidence available.

Further information 7

- [Norfolk Safeguarding Adult Board](#)
- [Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- [Professional Curiosity Guidance](#)
- [Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support](#)
- [Managing Professional Difficulties](#)
- [Complex Case Guidance](#)
- [Safeguarding Adults available Training](#)

Learning from Safeguarding Adults Case Reviews :

- [Adult H](#) – disguised compliance
- [Mrs BB](#) – normalisation
- [Mr Bates and Mr Lewis](#) – confirmation bias

Learning from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews:

- [Irene](#) – unconscious bias
- [Sofia](#) – familial DA was overlooked
- [Lynne](#) – perpetrator manipulation