

Professional Curiosity

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What you will get from this session

An understanding of what professional curiosity is, and why it is important

Insight into the attitudes, behaviours and skills needed to enact professional curiosity

A challenge to you to go back to your organisations and identify any barriers to your people using professional curiosity in their work with beneficiaries, and start removing those barriers

What is Professional Curiosity?





What



Why

2019 analysis of 113 Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARS)

16 explicitly mentioned
professional curiosity



69 where better professional
curiosity could have led to a
safeguarding intervention



Professional Curiosity

Personality Traits



Likes finding things out
Positive and adaptive
Tolerant of uncertainty
Creative thinker

Attitudes



Tenacious and determined
Willing to learn
Interested in people's stories & experiences

Behaviours



Will ask questions
Alert to signals
Courage to hold difficult conversations

Skills



Good communicator
Uses reflection
Makes connections
Uses research

How professionally curious are you & your teams?



Attitudes

Tenacious and determined
Willing to learn
Interested in people's stories & experiences



Behaviours

Will ask questions
Alert to signals
Courage to hold difficult conversation



Skills

Good communicator
Uses reflection
Makes connections
Uses research



Using the skills of professional curiosity

I am
actually
coping ok

I have to
manage,
don't I?

I can't do
these things
but feel
ashamed

I don't want
to admit I
can't
manage

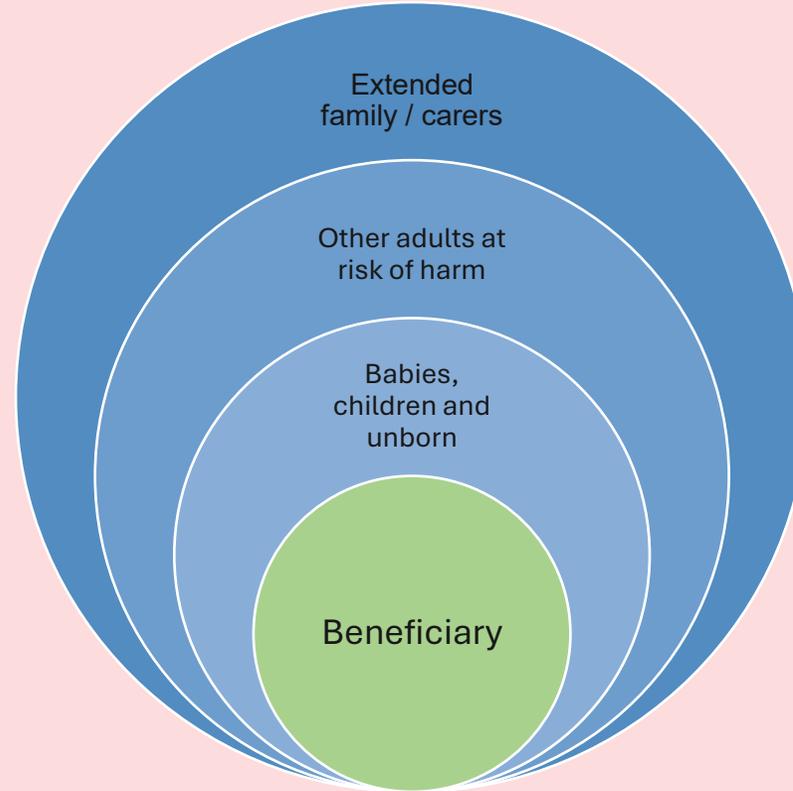
I really can't
cope but I am
scared of the
consequences
of saying so

What is the person saying? What are they not saying? What is the meaning behind their words?

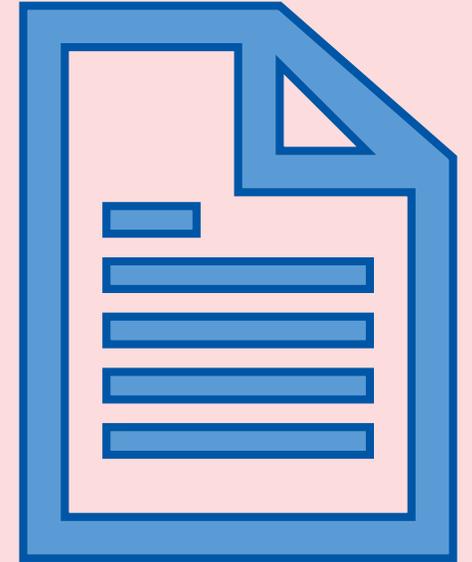
Start with the basics



What do you know about the person?



Who else might be at risk?



Are you recording information?

Being professionally curious



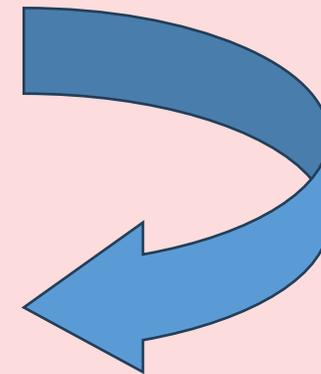
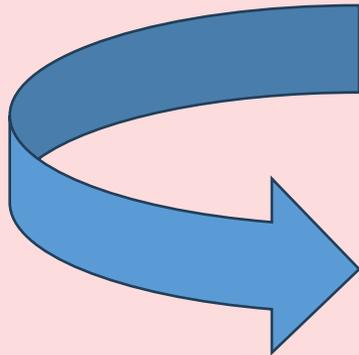
Interrogate the information



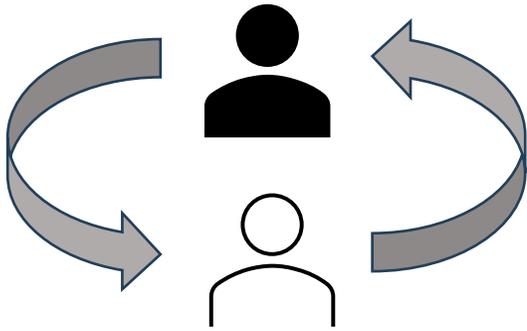
What do you know?



Where are there gaps?







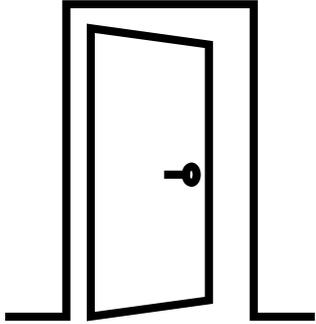
Build rapport
Finding a connection



Unconditional positive regard
Accepting people as they are, not
as how we want them to be



Empathy
Recognise their experience
without judging it



Open questions

Prompt the thinking of the other person

“Can you tell me more about.....”

“What options do you have here?”



Paraphrasing & summarising

Provides clarity and gives person ability to correct our thinking

“Your main concern is, but you’re also worried about..... Have I got that right?”

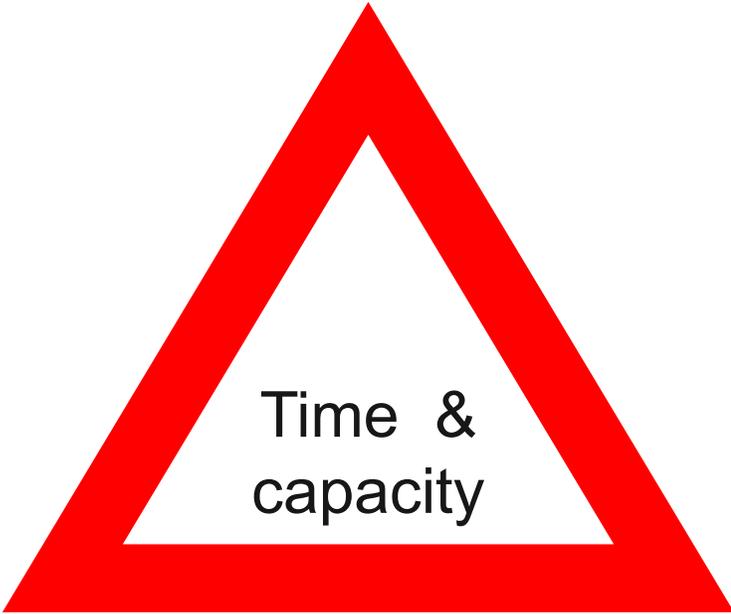


Reflecting feelings & contents

Shows you have heard the person – not just what they’ve said but how they feel

“You’re in touch with the local refuge which you’re finding helpful, but you are still concerned about leaving your partner.....”

Barriers to being professionally curious



Time &
capacity



Working
practices



Anxiety &
confidence

Normalisation

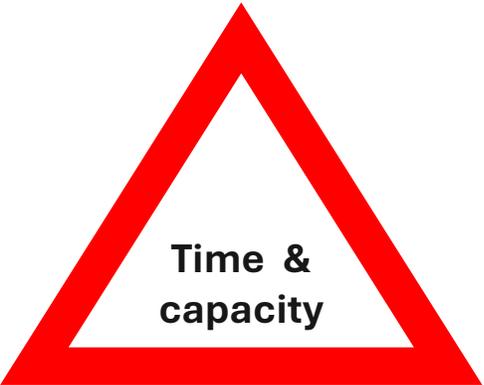
Things become seen as normal, and questions stop being asked and potential risks are missed

Accumulating risk

Responding to each new situation or risk discretely and not looking at cumulative effect

Bias

When information gets filtered and anything which doesn't match with pre-held views is ignored



**Time &
capacity**

What are you doing to make sure workloads in your organisation are at a safe level?

Are your remote workers able to access support when they need it?

Do your beneficiary-facing staff have enough time and space to reflect?



**Working
practices**



**Anxiety &
confidence**

Does your staff training address building skills as well as giving knowledge?

Can your staff access peer support, mentoring or coaching to help develop confidence?

'When someone asked me those questions, it didn't open a can of worms, it opened a door to healing.'

Danny Wolstencroft, the co-founder of Lads Like Us



Questions for consideration and self-reflection

How professionally curious are you?

How professionally curious is your organisation?

How do you know?



“Professional curiosity in safeguarding adults “ – Strategic Briefing – Research in Practice/Dartington Trust
[What is professional curiosity? | Research in Practice](#)

Thank you

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