

Professional Curiosity, Overreliance & Judgement

Curiosity:

The responsibility for practitioners to exercise 'respectful uncertainty' and be open to exploring different understandings, not making assumptions.

Overreliance:

Taking information provided by an individual at 'face value' without exploring the presenting information from other professionals.

Judgement:

Using knowledge, skills, and experiences of professionals to develop an opinion and/or come to a decision that benefits the service user

Professional Curiosity & Overreliance

Thinking the unthinkable:

It is easy for practitioners to be overly optimistic, to want to believe best of individuals or families and accept another's views. **However**, it is important to consider **ALL** possibilities, think objectively about the evidence presented, accepting that information may not fit with previous assumptions and assessments.

Disguised compliance:

An adult or family may give the appearance of co-operating with agencies in order to avoid raising concerns and reduce professional intervention. **E.g., not reporting concerns or having short bursts of engagement.**

Professional Judgement:

Professional judgement and informed decision making involves the following:

- Gathering facts and information relevant to the decision.
- Thinking critically about the sources of information, its origin and reliability.
- Using all relevant sources of information and experiences e.g., Law and policy, professional wisdom & experience and services user views.

What can you do?

- Never assume and be mindful of assumptions already made.
- Communicate with other professionals and challenge each other, in order to work effectively together to explore all possible explanations.
- Use case history and examine information from the service user, family, and other professionals.
- Think the unthinkable
- Don't take everything at 'face value', remain open minded.
- Record accurately and check facts.
- Pay attention to how individuals look or behave not just what they say.
- Ensure decision-making is transparent and is clearly recorded.



What have we learnt?

- Professionals in their everyday working life will, be involved in decision-making which affects the lives of service users/ patients. The decision-making process should be transparent so it can be confidently and clearly explained. **(SAR Adult V)**
- Effective responses require a well-constructed assessment of risk supported by information from all agencies **(SAR Alan)**
- Effective care is a combination of professional knowledge, respect for the service user/patient, seeking to understand their behaviours and using professional skill, to respond to need, purposefully and compassionately. **(SAR Claire)**
- Observations by practitioners are even more vital when people are less able to communicate verbally and/or directly. Good observational skills are essential, in order to understand non-verbal communication. **(SAR Adult V)**

*SAR = Safeguarding Adults Review

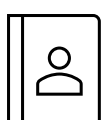
Source: [Join the Safeguarding Adults Reviews \(SARs\) Library network - SCIE](#)

Contact details:

OSAB@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Worried about an adult?

[How to report concerns - Oxford Safeguarding Adults Board \(osab.co.uk\)](#)



Resources

[Professional Curiosity Resource Pack- Swindon Safeguarding Partnership OSAB-Threshold-of-Needs-Matrix-January-2021-MASTER.pdf](#)

