

Courageous Conversations With Parents/Carers

Talking to parents/carers about safeguarding concerns can often feel uncomfortable and challenging. This information sheet will provide you with support on how to approach potentially difficult conversations around your safeguarding worries and concerns. It is important to remember that this information should be used alongside your organisation's own safeguarding practices and with agreement and support from your line manager and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Be Prepared

- Talk about your concerns with your manager or designated safeguarding lead and discuss next steps.
- Consider when to have the conversation. Be mindful that if it is at the end of the day, the parent/carer may be tired and less able to take on new information.
- Plan your conversation beforehand – be clear about what it is that is worrying you. The "Signs of Safety" model can support you to explain your worries to the parent/carer. Click [here](#) to read more about this approach. What do you want this conversation to achieve?
- Ensure you have prepared a safe and private space to have your conversation. This may involve e.g. having a colleague or manager with you and also making sure other parents/carers cannot overhear the conversation.

Having a Courageous Conversation

- Avoid using jargon or acronyms. Use everyday language to explain your worries or concerns.
- It is sometimes helpful to start with a positive comment about something that is going well for the parent/carer and/or child.
- Make sure you don't provide information overload. This can take away the emphasis of the key messages that you are trying to get across.
- Explain the impact that the identified concern is having on the child or young person. This may help the parent to consider your concern from a perspective they have not thought of before.
- Clearly explain what needs to happen next. Choose your language carefully e.g. "would you be willing to consider..." is neutral in tone. This might be an action for the parent/carer to ensure the concern does not escalate or it may be that you are informing them of your intention to refer into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Click [here](#) to read more about MASH.
- Listen carefully to what the parent/carer has to say; repeat back to them to clarify if you need to.
- Finish the conversation by informing the parent/carer of how you will be reviewing the concern or worry. When will you follow up? What action will you take? Ensure you provide clear information to the parent/carer to avoid any uncertainty on their part. Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
- Ensure you make a record of your conversation and inform your manager and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead. Does anyone else need to be aware of this information for the purposes of safeguarding a child/ren?