

Creative Art Works CIC

Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child, young person, or vulnerable adult

Responding to disclosures

Research has been carried out to find out how adults can better respond to a child who is disclosing abuse (Baker et al, 2019). Three key interpersonal skills were found, that help a child feel they are being listened to and taken seriously:

- Show you care, help them open up: Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.
- Take your time, slow down: Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.
- Show you understand, reflect back: Make it clear you're interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.
- If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.

Reporting concerns

- If a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, you can share information with appropriate agencies or professionals without the child's or their parent's consent
- If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.
- If a child is not in immediate danger:
- Follow your organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures as soon as possible. These should provide clear guidelines on the steps you need to take if a child discloses abuse. They

will state who in your organisation has responsibility for safeguarding or child protection and who you should report your concerns to.

- Contact your local child protection services. Their contact details can be found on the website for the local authority the child lives in.
- Contact the police. They will assess the situation and take the appropriate action to protect the child.
- Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk. Our trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you, give you expert advice and take action to protect the child as appropriate. This may include making a referral to the local authority.

Non-biased approach

It's vital that any child who is trying to disclose abuse feels that they are being listened to and taken seriously.

But there can be a risk that if professionals just believe the child's account without thoroughly investigating the situation, this can lead to unfair bias against the alleged abuser as formal investigations progress (Child Protection Resource, 2021; Transparency Project, 2018).

This means it's important to maintain an unbiased approach when responding to disclosures and follow your organisation's procedures to ensure each case is treated in a fair and transparent manner and that the child gets the protection and support that they need.

Making notes

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with your nominated child protection lead.

Include:

- the child's details (name, age, address)
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser.

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead

Name: Joanna Boyce, Director

Phone: 07949 726 888

email: Joanna@creative-art-works.org

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 20-03-2023(date)



Signed:

Date: 27-04-2023.....