

Safeguarding Team 7 Minute Briefing

1 Introduction

Safeguarding and the 'Think Family' Approach is an aligned approach to safeguarding. If you work primarily with adults, you should consider the safeguarding needs of children, and if you work primarily with children, you should still consider the needs of adults. People do not exist in isolation and our complexity is best reflected in a whole family approach. This should be embedded into everything we do as practitioners and everyday practice.

Think Adult; Think Child; Think Family

2 Background

The 'Think Family' Approach was initially developed in response to the need to consider the impact of parental mental health on the care of their children. It is now widely recognised as the key to effective safeguarding practice with both children and adults. We also need to consider the impact of any difficulties on ALL family members, and ensure we look beyond the primary service user, be that adult or child.

We need to be transparent and involve our service users in why we need to do this.

It can help to identify strengths – offering people the right help at the right time.

3 What is Family?

'Family' means different things to different people. Families can be dynamic, including an extended network of relatives and friends. Practitioners should be curious and explore the networks and interdependencies between children and adults.

**Be professionally curious-
think the unthinkable**

Safeguarding and the 'Think Family' Approach



4 Factors impacting adults

Adult difficulties such as parental mental, health issues, substance misuse and domestic abuse can impact upon a parent's capacity to meet the needs of their children. It is essential that professionals who work primarily with adults actively consider the impact on any children and adults being cared for and offer support at the right time. This may include making safeguarding referral/s if appropriate.

7 What to consider in practice

Reflect on what this might mean for you

- how well do you understand the networks of the families you work with?

Review

- how often your teams are curious about the relationships and dynamics of the families you are working with Think Family in every contact that you have

Record what work you do

6 Pressures on caring

Parents & carers may experience pressures *and* strain of looking after someone else. Practitioners are well placed to reach out and offer support when it is needed

Consider signposting to sources of support.
Consider need for a Carer Assessment

5 Working Together

- Using genograms to explore and identify the support network around the service user and other professionals already involved
- Early support/Help is the key to effective safeguarding
- Considers the needs of the whole family, enabling early intervention.
- Considers everyone in the home, including issues such as poverty, drug & alcohol misuse, domestic abuse and poor mental health
- Think about the family's needs and identify professionals with the right expertise to support the family
- Make sure information is shared appropriately
- Effective escalation when there is professional dispute or disagreement
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