



FIRN CONSULTANCY

Assessment • Consulting • Education

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2026–2027

Practical, evidence-informed professional development for professionals working with children, young people, families and carers.

Our professional development

Firn Consultancy provides professional development designed to strengthen professional knowledge, confidence and practice across safeguarding, child protection, assessment and professional relationships.

Our sessions draw on contemporary practice knowledge and practical experience to support professionals to navigate complex situations, respond thoughtfully to concerns and make well-informed professional decisions.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Supporting Children and Young People Who Have Experienced DFV

Domestic and family violence can have a profound and lasting impact on children and young people, including their understanding of relationships, emotional regulation, behaviour and responses to adults. Professionals working with children and families need to understand these impacts while remaining mindful that children and young people can experience and respond to DFV in very different ways.

This training explores the ways children and young people may be affected by experiences of DFV and how these experiences can influence their behaviour, relationships, emotional responses and engagement with professionals. It considers the importance of understanding behaviour within the context of a child's experiences rather than viewing behaviour in isolation.

Participants will explore the role professionals can play in creating safe and predictable relationships and modelling healthy ways of communicating, responding and resolving conflict. The training considers how professional interactions can contribute to a child or young person developing a different experience of relationships and safety.

Key areas explored include:

- The impact of DFV on children and young people
- Behaviour and emotional responses in the context of DFV
- The impact of disrupted or unsafe relationships
- Understanding children's responses to adults and relationships
- Building safety, trust and predictability in professional relationships
- Supporting children and young people to experience healthy relationships
- Responding to behaviours through a trauma-informed lens
- The professional role in supporting safety, stability and wellbeing

SAFEGUARDING FOR PROFESSIONALS

Safeguarding is a shared professional responsibility. Effective safeguarding requires professionals to recognise concerns, respond appropriately, understand their responsibilities and communicate information in a way that enables concerns to be assessed and acted upon.

This training explores what safeguarding means in practice and how professionals contribute to creating environments in which children and young people are safe. It considers the importance of professional curiosity, recognising indicators of concern and responding appropriately when information or behaviour raises questions about a child's safety or wellbeing.

Participants will also explore the importance of accurate and objective documentation. The training considers how information should be recorded so that those responsible for assessing, investigating or responding to concerns can clearly understand what has occurred and make informed decisions. The session also considers reportable conduct and professional responsibilities associated with responding to safeguarding concerns.

Key areas explored include:

- Understanding safeguarding in professional practice
- Recognising indicators of safeguarding concerns
- Professional curiosity and responding to concerns
- Information sharing and professional responsibilities
- Responding appropriately when concerns arise
- Reportable conduct and professional obligations
- Objective and accurate documentation
- Recording information that supports assessment and investigation
- Creating a culture of safeguarding within professional environments

HAVING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS WHILE MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Professionals working with carers and families will inevitably encounter situations where concerns need to be raised, views challenged or professional expectations reinforced. Having these conversations effectively requires professionals to balance respect for the relationship with their responsibility to address concerns and maintain professional standards.

This training explores how professionals can approach difficult conversations with confidence, clarity and professionalism. It considers how to challenge behaviour, decisions, beliefs or actions without unnecessarily damaging the working relationship.

Participants will explore practical approaches for preparing for difficult conversations, communicating concerns clearly, managing disagreement and responding when conversations become uncomfortable or emotionally charged. The training also considers the importance of establishing appropriate professional boundaries from the outset. The focus is on maintaining constructive professional relationships without avoiding necessary conversations or compromising professional responsibilities.

Key areas explored include:

- Preparing for challenging conversations
- Clearly communicating concerns and expectations
- Challenging views, decisions and behaviours respectfully
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Managing disagreement and defensiveness
- Responding when conversations become emotionally charged
- Remaining professional when faced with difficult responses
- Balancing empathy with professional responsibility
- Maintaining relationships while addressing concerns
- Knowing when a conversation needs to move beyond informal resolution

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

Professionals working directly with children and young people may be placed in situations where a child shares information about abuse, harm, trauma or another concern. The way a professional responds at this point can have significant implications for the child's experience and for the information that needs to be understood and acted upon.

This training supports professionals to respond calmly, appropriately and confidently when a disclosure occurs. It explores the different ways children and young people may communicate concerns, including direct and indirect disclosures, changes in behaviour and information that may emerge gradually over time.

Participants will consider how to respond in a way that supports the child while avoiding questions or responses that could influence, shape or unintentionally alter their account. The training also explores appropriate documentation and the importance of understanding professional responsibilities and the steps that may need to follow a disclosure.

Key areas explored include:

- Understanding disclosures and how they may present
- Recognising direct and indirect disclosures
- Responding calmly and supportively
- What to say — and what to avoid saying
- Avoiding leading or suggestive questions
- Supporting a child without influencing their account
- Responding to uncertainty, distress or unexpected information
- Recording and documenting disclosures appropriately
- Understanding professional responsibilities following a disclosure
- Identifying appropriate next steps and information sharing

ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Effective assessment depends on the quality of the information gathered. Developing purposeful interviewing skills enables professionals to explore complex circumstances, understand different perspectives and gather information that supports balanced and well-informed assessment and decision-making.

This training focuses on the practical skills required to conduct effective assessment interviews with children, young people, parents, carers and other relevant adults. It explores how professionals can establish rapport while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and a clear assessment purpose.

Participants will consider how to structure interviews, develop purposeful lines of enquiry and explore sensitive or complex information. The training also addresses situations where an interview does not proceed as expected, including resistance, emotional responses, unexpected information or conflicting accounts. The focus is on moving beyond simply asking questions to developing interviews that generate meaningful, relevant and reliable information for assessment.

Key areas explored include:

- Preparing for purposeful assessment interviews
- Establishing rapport while maintaining professional boundaries
- Structuring interviews and developing lines of enquiry
- Using open, focused and follow-up questions effectively
- Exploring sensitive and complex information
- Clarifying and testing information
- Responding to unexpected or difficult answers
- Managing resistance, disagreement and emotional responses
- Exploring different perspectives and conflicting information
- Identifying information that requires further exploration
- Gathering information that supports balanced assessment and decision-making

ASSESSMENT WRITING SKILLS

Assessment writing requires professionals to do more than record the information they have gathered. Effective assessment writing demonstrates how information has been considered, weighed and analysed to reach clear and defensible professional conclusions.

This training focuses on translating assessment information into clear, structured and evidence-based professional writing. It explores how to distinguish between facts, observations, information provided by others and professional analysis, and how each should be appropriately presented within an assessment.

Participants will consider how to identify relevant evidence, recognise strengths and concerns, weigh information and develop analysis that demonstrates the connection between evidence and professional conclusions. The training also explores how to avoid common weaknesses in assessment writing, including unsupported assumptions, descriptive writing without analysis and conclusions that are not clearly connected to the available evidence. The focus is on producing assessment writing that is clear, analytical and demonstrates how and why the available information supports the professional decision or recommendation.

Key areas explored include:

- Structuring clear and purposeful assessment writing
- Distinguishing facts, observations, reported information and analysis
- Identifying relevant and significant evidence
- Weighing and testing information
- Identifying strengths, concerns and areas of uncertainty
- Moving from description to meaningful analysis
- Connecting evidence to professional conclusions
- Avoiding assumptions and unsupported conclusions
- Demonstrating the reasoning behind professional decisions
- Writing clear, balanced and defensible assessments

Professional Development with Firn Consultancy

Our professional development is designed to be practical, reflective and directly relevant to professional practice.

Sessions can be tailored to the needs of individual teams and organisations, with opportunities to explore practice examples and apply learning to the contexts in which professionals work.

Looking for training that isn't listed? Get in touch to discuss your needs.

For further information or to discuss professional development for your team, contact Firn Consultancy.

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