

Appendix 3

Relational Safeguarding: Key Ideas

- **Effective Safeguarding Practice thrives on conversation** - Each profession has its own language and traditions, and inter-professional identity may be co-created through dialogue. Effective safeguarding practice depends on how we communicate with each other, how we talk and think together across agencies and hierarchies. Working inter-professionally requires the formation of an inter-professional identity and it is in this space we can act together, while remaining grounded in our own disciplines, (*Wittgenstein, 1953; Pengelly, 2009*)
- **Conversation is the fabric of inter-professional safeguarding practice** – It turns policy into practice, uncertainty into shared responsibility and keeps the welfare of children and adults at the centre. It keeps professionals connected and helps bear complexity, acknowledge uncertainty, and avoid blame - (*Foster, 2001.*)
- **Disagreement is learning, not failure** - Tensions should be viewed as opportunities for reflection and shared understanding—not escalation. When handled well they are an essential part of professional learning. Differences in professional opinion should be viewed as a resource; diverse perspectives from for example teachers, police, nurses and social workers enrich understanding – they should not oppose it.
- **Curiosity bridges differences** – We should stay curious in moments of conflict; and use conversation to connect professional worlds, (*Engström, 2001.*) Aligning thoughts and actions with others helps solve problems and find solutions collectively (*Edwards, 2005*)
- **Trust builds through action** - Collaboration deepens trust via cycles of learning and reliability; and trust allows freer dialogue to happen (*Huxham & Vangen, 2005, Edwards 2005*)
- **Anxiety must be contained** - Emotional defences are normal; reflective spaces help manage them - (*Foster, 2001.*) However, reflection requires structure e.g. single or multi-agency reflective supervision as this allows safe exploration of emotion and power – (*Vince, 2002.*)

- **Language creates reality** - Saying “our concern” enacts shared responsibility, (*Butler, 1993; Pengelly, 2009*)
- **Knowledge is distributed** - No one holds the full picture—meaning emerges between perspectives.
- **Relational work is ethical work** - Collaboration means shared responsibility and a more compassionate response.