



## MODULE 4 – SECTION A DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE



Children may not tell anyone about abuse. It is important to create a safe environment where a child knows they will be listened to and believed.  
When a child chooses to disclose, your response is crucial to their safety and well-being.

### UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD

- If a child chooses to disclose to you, never forget how hard it is for them to tell someone about what they have experienced.
- It is devastating to hear that a child is being abused, and your initial reactions may be to not believe, or to show shock or horror, so be guarded against this.
- Acknowledge their courage in speaking out.
- Have a plan to support the child over the next few days and know what your legal requirements are.
- The way you respond can make a huge difference to the child's safety and to any possible future action.



### KEY PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER

- ✓ Listen carefully and believe the child.
- ✓ Stay calm and reassure the child they have done the right thing.
- ✓ Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- ✓ Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.
- ✓ Reassure them they are not to blame.
- ✓ Let them speak at their own pace.
- ✓ Explain what you will do next.

### DURING THE DISCLOSURE – WHAT TO DO



#### 1. LISTEN

Listen carefully and let the child speak. Do not interrupt. Let them use their own words.



#### 2. BELIEVE & REASSURE

Believe what they are saying. Reassure them it is not their fault and they have done the right thing by telling you.



#### 3. RECORD

Write down exactly what the child said using their words as soon as possible – date, time and any other relevant details.



#### 4. REPORT

Report the disclosure immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or the appropriate person.



#### 5. PROTECT

Ensure the child is safe and continue to support them. Do not investigate the matter yourself.

### WHAT NOT TO DO

- ✗ Do not interrogate – do not ask a lot of questions.
- ✗ Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- ✗ Do not express disbelief or shock.
- ✗ Do not speculate or make assumptions.
- ✗ Do not share the information with others.
- ✗ Do not delay in reporting.

### WHAT TO SAY (EXAMPLES)

- “Thank you for telling me. You have done the right thing.”
- “I am sorry this has happened to you.”
- “You are not to blame.”
- “I need to tell someone who can help keep you safe. I will explain what will happen next.”



### REMEMBER:

Your response can help a child feel safe, supported and protected. Always report. You are not expected to deal with it alone.



Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Together we can create safe environments for all children.



BE AWARE. BE RESPONSIBLE.  
BE THE REASON A CHILD IS SAFE.

