



SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality)

Race Equality, Diversity and Culture

What 'Good' Looks Like

“Children from all cultures are subject to abuse and neglect. All children have a right to grow up safe from harm.

In order to make sensitive and informed professional judgements about a child's needs, and parents' capacity to respond to their child's needs, it is important that professionals are sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles and to child rearing patterns that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups.

Professionals should also be aware of the broader social factors that serve to discriminate against black and minority ethnic people. Working in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society requires professionals and organisations to be committed to equality in meeting the needs of all children and families, and to understand the effects of racial harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism, as well as cultural misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Professionals should guard against myths and stereotypes, both positive and negative, of black and minority ethnic families. Anxiety about being accused of racist practice should not prevent the necessary action being taken to safeguard a child. Careful assessment, based on evidence of a child's needs, and a family's strengths and weaknesses, understood in the context of the wider social environment, will help to avoid any distorting effect of these influences on professional judgements.

Lord Laming's Report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry (The Victoria Climbié Inquiry, Section 16, Working with Diversity) addresses some important issues related to Race, Ethnicity and Culture.” Source: Working Together to Safeguard Children. Chapter 10. http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/chapter_ten.html#top

Your challenges:

1. Child protection is complex and each case is unique in its complexity and full of uncertainty (Munro)
2. When you form a judgment don't then look for information to confirm it – challenge your judgement and challenge constantly.
3. Don't over focus on the positives of faith or culture – be ready to challenge the negatives if they compromise child protection.
4. Take social history and in particular consider any experiences of racism the service user may have faced and the impact of this on them.
5. Be Consistent about Ethnicity and Diversity (E&D) in case planning
6. Have you asked about parent's experience of being parented? E.g. how was discipline used in their culture/ family?
7. Discuss and analyse family identity, religious and cultural background – and don't forget the child's views.
8. If you refer to a BME specialist – follow up – has it sorted the issue and if not – do something else or challenge.
9. Is your plan child and outcome focussed and does it consider cultural and identity needs?
10. Managers need to ensure that case discussions during supervision consider culture and identity issues.

“Professionals often struggle with how best to address the needs of black children and their families, and minority ethnic cases tend to be closed more quickly, or the families are offered inappropriate services once the immediate problems have been patched up. *Files often provide little evidence that race and culture have been considered.*

Chand A and Thoburn J: Research Review: Child and family support services with minority ethnic families: what can we learn from research? in Child & Family Social Work, Vol 10, Issue 2 (2005).

Check for	Recommendations for action	Aim to
Equalities Information	Gender; age; disabilities; ethnicity; sexual orientation; multiple protected characteristics.	Be accurate; ask questions; complete all queries
Ensure that E&D and cultural relevance is woven throughout your report or review	With each key point that you make or query you answer check if there are any E&D or Culturally specific needs or issues to consider.	Be realistic; not to always know the answer; for E&D and Cultural issues and needs to be through-out your assessment or review and not to be an add on, tick box or artificial.
Experiences of discrimination, hate crime and racism. Stigma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the question. Be open and ask for impact. • Ensure you consider internal, external and institutional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize importance and significance of such abuse on family's ability to cope and succeed. • Ensure that tackling this is part of plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception is important as well as evidence of incidents • New experiences since last review • Neighbours? • Isolation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready to tackle other agencies e.g. school; police; housing who may not want to tackle this. • Families can be discriminatory and racist – this can severely impact on parents and children e.g. White Mum with D/H child may have parents or relatives who are racist. Can be from both sides. Siblings may be racist to each other or parents/ relatives may treat different siblings of different colours differently. Child growing up in this has identity severely undermined. Mum can be judged and under-mined.
Consider your own stereotypes, prejudices, views and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have pre-conceived ideas about the ethnicity, life style, geographical location or life history of your client? • Have you challenged these views before making your decision? • If you are a manager – do you always listen to your staff rather than the service users? Do you need to double-check and talk to the service user before signing off an action which changes a child’s life? • Are you making any judgmental remarks or sticking to factual points? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Workers should ask, what were my assumptions about this family? What, if any, is the hard evidence that supports, or refutes, these assumptions?” (Munro) • Always check your own views and prejudices. • Be willing to challenge yourself. • Put yourself in position of your service user and their life history. • Don’t make judgmental remarks – stick to facts.
Consider identity, faith and culture of each parent, family member and child or lack of one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A failure to be able to promote positive identity or views of colour or culture for a child may be a CP issue. • Culture is not necessarily related to the colour of their skin or their parentage; it may be different for different family members and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask sufficient questions to help you understand need. • Read up on or research the needs of different ethnicities, faiths or cultures by talking to people from those cultures. • Don’t assume parents of mixed race children

	<p>siblings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different members of the family will be different. Could be different due to generation, life experiences or heritage. The difference may mean conflict and identity crises. • Parenting style and belief systems differ from culture to culture. • Colour doesn't define identity or culture necessarily but it will define life experiences and perceptions towards that person. • Remember a Dual Heritage child is 'all of their mother and all of their father' – they may need more input to understand, relate to and feel positively about the culture of a missing or negative role model. Don't forget Black <i>and</i> White culture and heritage is important for these children and families. • Remember gender – does a child have positive role model for male and female? • Do you have a view re: what makes good and what makes bad culture? Are you looking to place a child in a culture that you perceive to be 'best for the child?' • A white single Mum who has dual heritage children and who has negative experiences of the father may then find it difficult to feel positively about their 'black' child or they may feel guilty that they can't understand what it's like to be a different colour. They may also simply not know about the culture or needs of 	<p>are equipped or know what to do to meet their child's cultural or ethnicity needs or they may be in such crises it's the last thing on their mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may need to help with basic knowledge e.g. hair and skin care especially in long term neglect cases • Do they have the right toys or books to promote positive role models and identity for the children. • Foster carers need to be equipped to promote a positive environment for the child's ethnicity, skin colour or culture. • Seek expert help e.g. from community/ who they have confidence in (confidentiality) • Be aware of dates of key religious events and customs • Be aware of the cultural implications of gender • Acknowledge cultural sensitivities and taboos e.g. dress codes.
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	<p>their child – they may be too afraid or unaware to ask.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you presumed knowledge about heritage? African Caribbean culture can be many and varied and so can African and Asian – have you checked? Do you need to ask more questions or do more research? • Does culture impact on verbal or non-verbal communication e.g. are you wrongly perceiving behaviour or verbal communication as aggressive when it is their cultural norm? Is eye contact culturally different? Have you offended them by your communication approach? 	
<p>Consider cultural, systems and language barriers</p>	<p>Are there any barriers? What are they? What impact are they having? What adjustments have you made? Do you fully understand them e.g. systems barriers due to different experiences in country of origin?</p> <p>Does your client have different perceptions of authority due to country of origin or ethnic origin?</p> <p>What about education? Are there barriers here and have you adjusted for them?</p> <p>Does the family know the law re: disciplining of children in the UK?</p> <p>Does the family have cultural or faith related negative views re: equality e.g. sexual orientation or gender? Do they know the law about this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals should be aware that some families, including those recently arrived from abroad, may not be aware of roles that different professionals and agencies play and may not be aware that the local authority and partner agencies have a statutory role in safeguarding children, which in some circumstances override the role and rights of parents (e.g. child protection). • If the child uses a language other than English, or alternative non-verbal communication, <i>have I made every effort to get help in understanding them?</i> • Professionals tend to think that when they have explained something as clearly as they can, it will always be understood. <i>Ask yourself: Have I double-checked with the family that</i>

		<i>they understand what will happen next?</i>
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Professionals must

1. Be genuine
2. Be narrative (listen to them)
3. Communicate effectively
4. Inform them of systems to help them
5. Inform them of the power of the systems
6. Understand the differences in background of parents and their children (children born in England while parents were born abroad)
7. Help families to navigate the system and use specialist services such as SARI and the Black Families Initiative to support this process.

Risks associated with BME families:

- High proportion facing discrimination, disadvantage and poverty
- Unaccompanied asylum seeker children
- Trafficking/ sexual exploitation (China/South East Asia/Thailand and Central and Eastern Europe)
- Concealed pregnancies due to culture/ faith making it harder to disclose
- FGM (Somali; other African; Arabic)
- Forced marriage (South Asian; some African; Middle Eastern; Gypsy Traveller; Morman)
- Sexually active children

- Witchcraft/ spirit possession
- Uncooperative families
- Working Across Boundaries

Relevant Policies you have for the above:

- Concealed pregnancies
- FGM
- Using interpreters
- Forced Marriage
- Private Fostering
- Sexually active young people
- Working across boundaries
- Safeguarding children from abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession
- Working with Uncooperative families