

Always ensure that all safeguarding guidelines are adhered to while following these tips. The aim of the document is to make the victim/survivor and parents/carers journey easier.

Guidance Document for Professionals			
In order for someone to disclose and work with you, you must build a relationship.		Always reassure the victim they are not on their own. This has and does happen to many people.	
Understand all types of CSE and sexual abuse. You cannot challenge something if you do not understand it.		Do not ask questions when family members are around. Some may not have told parents, partners or children. (Specific to adults).	
Determine a line between victim/survivor or offender. Many victims are groomed to groom and/or to commit crimes. Ensure if they have committed offences, they will not be charged.		Some victims live in areas where perpetrators reside. For this reason, do not go to the victim's house in uniform or in marked cars. (Police).	
Respect when someone is not ready to talk. Do not pester them but make sure you offer them some form of support, if needed.		Do not make arresting people the main focus, it is not. The main focus is the victim's safety and welfare.	
Do not blame victims for their own abuse. You cannot consent to any form of abuse. Be careful of language used (victim blaming).		Do not assume females want female officers or males want male officers, they want who they trust and feel safe and comfortable with.	
When approaching victims, make sure a CSE expert is present. This will help a victim feel more understood.		Be patient, victims have lived with this for years; a couple more months may be what they need to come forward. (Always consider safeguarding issues, under 18's).	
Victims/survivors do not just struggle (meltdowns) Mon - Fri, 9am-5pm. Please make sure some support is available 24/7 such as helplines.		Do not use patronising language such as "we know what we are doing, we are the experts". Listen to what the victim wants.	
Not all victims understand the meaning of CSE. Use language that reflects the persons understanding.		Have two allocated workers to one victim. Too many workers can make people disengage.	

Always remember some victims still have contact with perpetrators and criminals.		Do not offer support and then threaten to take it away if someone will not come forward.	
A victim will disclose if they know they have been groomed. Getting them to fully understand grooming should be the first thing you do.		Always gather as much information as possible on a victim before the first contact. This will help you understand where the victim is at emotionally.	
Be prepared for all types of behaviour. Disclosing can be very distressing for a victim.		Dress casual. Being over dressed can be intimidating and often makes you stand out to neighbours and passersby.	
Do not make it about your current work position. A victim is only interested in knowing you are going to help them.		Ask the individual how they want to be addressed, Victim, survivor or neither. Some may take offence.	
Don't ever shout.		Choose an appropriate venue that the victim prefers when meeting with them, they may not want to meet at their home.	
Be open about your own experiences in life, this will help build a trusting relationship. Do not forget that as a professional you can be humane and still stay with boundaries. Stay, honest, friendly, open and always listen.		Remember some victims have gone into other violent and abusive relationships and can still be involved with their childhood perpetrators (post abuse victims). It is not up to them to remove themselves from harmful situations. Some Victims still may not realise that they have or are being groomed.	
Treat every individual as an individual. One shoe does not fit all.		It is ok to feel affected by what someone has told you, show some feelings (always stay within professional boundaries), it shows the victim the way they feel is ok too.	
Ask questions if you are unclear on things but please do not interrogate.		If dealing with a child victim, who has parents or carers, make sure they have some support in place. The aim is to get parents or carers to support the child and not for services to take over.	
Be careful when mentioning social services, sadly, a lot of people think social care may remove their children if they are aware of past abuse. Always explain confidentiality to the victim and how that works.		Offer victims/survivors opportunities to meet other victims/survivors. This will help them feel like they re not alone. Always risk assess this before hand and make sure they are not potentially in the same investigation.	
Give victims a notebook to write down their thoughts and feelings. Often writing how you feel can be easier than saying it.		Remember to praise the victim; it takes an awful lot of courage and strength to come forward.	
Help rebuild their self esteem and confidence. This will help them disclose and help them to move forward in life.		Remember do not work to a schedule when wanting someone to disclose. Disclosures happen when victims feel ready; a time frame cannot be put on that.	

Assure them that there is life after abuse. Give them books that survivors have wrote to read.		Always remember to share information with other agencies no matter how big or small. Child protection supersedes confidentiality.	
Make victims aware of all support services and arrange support for them if needed.		Do not go away and not get in contact for a number of weeks, ask them what they want and need, do not give them what you think they need and always be honest about what happens next, its important they feel in control.	
Make sure support is in place before, during and after a court case. The victim needs to be strong enough to deal with the justice system.		Offer childcare and support if they have children, especially when they are part of court cases. It's important that they have time to reflect and gather their feelings before going home and being a parent.	
Ask yourself – ‘if this was my child, what would I expect from services’. If it is not good enough for your child, it is not good enough for anyone. Treat a victim as he/she is your own child.		And always remember YOU are there to provide a service and the service users are the ones who will decide if that service is good enough, always make sure they are aware of how to make complaints.	

Parents/Carers and Families			
Do not automatically assume that the parents/carers are bad. Approach them with understanding. They are only to blame if they are responsible for abuse.		Families suffer too; sometimes they are also the strongest witness to what's happened or happening. Always offer an appropriate support worker to them. (PACE)	
Make sure siblings are offered support too, often they are forgotten about.		Always make sure the parents/carers of the victim understand the grooming process and what CSE is.	
Always include parents/careers in meetings, it is important they feel in control and know what is happening with their child.		Remember anger is a very normal emotion for parents/careers to feel.	
Tell parents/carers to keep a diary of everything the witness. Times, dates, car reg, phone numbers, names. Also tell them to keep a separate diary to document interactions and meetings with professionals and police. These diaries' can help with evidence.		Advise parents/carers around social media. Make sure they are aware of safety settings and how social media works. They can find information on this at: www.thinkuknow.co.uk	

Advise parents/carers to keep an eye on their child's friends.
Often groomers will encourage victims to invite friends.

Always ensure parents/carers do not feel like everything is
their fault and like their parenting skills are not good enough
and that they are aware of the complaints process.