

Topic 8

What to do if you have concerns



The National Child Safety Training aims to enhance safety for children and strengthen child-safe culture across the education and care sector by introducing shared language, responsibilities, and understanding. The training was developed in partnership between Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) and the Queensland Government on behalf of Australian governments.

The first level of training, Foundations of Child Safety, includes two eLearning courses:

- **Course 1:** Understanding Child Safety
- **Course 2:** Understanding and Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

To complement the mandatory eLearning courses, a suite of non-mandatory Community of Practice resources has been developed to extend learning and support the application of knowledge in education and care settings. Whilst the Community of Practice are a voluntary component of the National Child Safety Training, they provide structured opportunities for discussion, reflection, and shared learning over time, helping staff build confidence and consistency in practice.

These resources contain prompts and suggested activities aligned with each course topic. They are designed to be flexible and may be selected, adapted, shortened, or revisited to suit different service types, team sizes, and meeting formats. The intention is to support practical conversations, not to prescribe a fixed program. There is no expectation that all topics and activities will be used and it is at your discretion how you use these resources.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility in places where children learn and grow. Harm can affect a child's wellbeing, learning, and development throughout childhood, and its impacts can continue into adulthood. When child safe practices are not in place, children are more at risk of harm.

By completing the mandatory eLearning training alongside some non-mandatory Community of Practice activities, you can strengthen your understanding of your role in protecting children, responding to concerns, and supporting a child safe environment in your service.



What to do if you have concerns

Topic 8 focuses on what to do when something you see, hear, or notice raises concern about a child's safety. It supports educators, leaders, volunteers, and other staff to act early, even when concerns feel unclear or small.

This topic supports participants to understand their responsibilities under mandatory reporting laws, reportable conduct schemes, and the National Law and Regulations, while recognising that reporting requirements differ across states and territories.

It also acknowledges that reporting can feel difficult. Fear of getting it wrong, worries about relationships, past experiences, cultural considerations, and organisational barriers can all affect decision-making.

This topic reinforces that:

- You do not need proof to act on a concern; reasonable grounds are enough
- If you are unsure what to do, seeking guidance is a responsible and protective step
- Reporting responsibilities may involve more than one pathway




Reminder

You **do not** need to run all three activities.

Select, adapt, shorten, or spread activities across sessions or contexts to suit your group and available time.

Activities can also be adapted for one-on-one supervision, mentoring conversations, or team meetings. You may choose to use a single scenario, question, or reflective prompt to guide discussion.

These activities are designed to be flexible and responsive to your service context.

Activity 1: When reporting feels hard	
Objective	<p>This activity supports participants to reflect on barriers to reporting and develop strategies to move forward.</p> <p>It helps participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify personal, relational, cultural, and organisational barriers. • Understand how fear and uncertainty can influence decisions. • Practise finding safe ways around barriers. • Strengthen confidence to speak up.
Time	45-70 minutes
Format	 <p>The 'Pair Work' illustration shows two people sitting at a table, one writing in a notebook. The 'Small Group Activity' illustration shows three people sitting on the floor in a circle, talking.</p>
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“Even when we know what we should do, reporting can feel hard. This activity gives us space to talk honestly about what gets in the way and how people work through it.”

Remind participants:

- This is a reflective exercise, not a judgement
- You do not need to share personal experiences
- Keep discussion respectful and de-identified

Step 1: Case Study Review (15 minutes)

- In small groups, provide a case study describing a worker who is unsure whether to report.
- Ask participants to read the case study and take a moment to reflect on the situation.
- Reinforce that the purpose of this step is to reflect on uncertainty and decision-making, not to assess past actions or determine outcomes.

Step 2: Identifying barriers (15-20 minutes)

- Ask groups to identify:
 - *What is making this hard for the worker?*
 - *Which barriers are present?*
- Encourage groups to think beyond knowledge gaps.

Step 3: Finding ways around barriers (15-20 minutes)

- Ask groups to identify one or two strategies the worker could use to move forward safely, such as:
 - Seeking supervision
 - Talking with a trusted colleague
 - Using policy or external advice
 - Focusing on the child rather than the fear

Step 4: Whole group sharing (10 minutes)

- Invite groups to share one barrier and one strategy.

Step 5: Personal takeaway (5 minutes)

- Invite participants to complete this sentence: *“When reporting feels difficult, one thing that can help me move forward is...”*



Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using shared slides, quiet reflection time, breakout rooms, and chat-based responses. The purpose remains the same: to support participants to reflect on barriers to reporting and practise identifying safe, role-appropriate ways to move forward when reporting feels difficult.

Platform Preparation (before the session)

- Prepare the case study on a clear, uncluttered slide. Avoid including conclusions or category labels.
- Prepare one slide with the reflection questions so participants can refer to them during discussion.
- Create a simple slide titled “Barriers” and “What Helps” to capture whole-group responses.
- Set up breakout rooms in advance (2-3 participants per group).
- Prepare a neutral holding slide for quiet reflection (e.g., “Quiet reading and reflection - 3 minutes”).

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin by reading the facilitator preamble aloud.
- Provide a brief wellbeing reminder.
- Reinforce that this activity focuses on reflection and decision-making, not judging past actions or determining outcomes.
- Remind participants that sharing is optional, examples must remain de-identified, and listening is a valid way to participate.

Step 2: Individual reflection

- Share the case study slide and read it slowly.
- Invite participants to take 2-3 minutes to reflect independently.
- Display the reflection slide with prompts such as:
 - *What is making this situation hard for the worker?*
 - *What barriers might be influencing their decision-making?*
 - *What could help them move forward safely and within their role?*
- Encourage participants to jot down brief notes or keywords rather than detailed responses. Allow silence.

Step 3: Breakout room discussion

- Place participants into breakout rooms of two or three.
- Before opening rooms, clarify expectations:
- Keep discussion practice-focused
- Avoid speculating about outcomes
- Focus on barriers and safe next steps
- In rooms, ask participants to discuss:
 - One key barrier in the scenario
 - One realistic strategy that could help the worker move forward
 - What support (team, leadership, policy) might strengthen confidence to report

Step 4: Whole-group sharing and consolidation

- Bring participants back to the main room.
- Invite each group to share:
 - One barrier
 - One strategy or support that helps overcome it
 - Capture responses live on the shared “Barriers / What Helps” slide or summarise verbally.
- Draw attention to patterns such as fear of consequences, uncertainty about thresholds, workload pressure, or unclear processes. Link responses back to shared responsibility and organisational support.

Step 5: Closing reflection

- Invite participants to complete in chat or privately: *“When reporting feels difficult, one thing that can help me move forward is...”*



Case studies: When reporting feels hard

These case studies are intentionally brief and incomplete and are used to support reflection on uncertainty and decision-making when concerns arise.

Facilitators are encouraged to adapt these case studies or develop their own to suit their setting, context, or community. If appropriate, participants may also be invited to draw on examples from their own practice.

Remind participants that any shared examples must remain de-identified, avoid naming individuals or services, and focus on the situation rather than personal details.

Reinforce that the purpose of this activity is to reflect on how to respond when unsure, not to assess past actions, investigate concerns, or determine outcomes.

Case study 1: Subtle changes/Lack of confidence or knowledge

An educator notices that a usually talkative child has become quieter over the past few weeks and often seems tired. There have been no disclosures and no visible injuries. The educator is unsure whether this is a developmental phase, something happening at home, or a concern that needs to be raised.

Case study 2: Inconsistent explanations/Confusion about thresholds

A child arrives with a small bruise on their arm. When asked casually how they got it, the child gives a different explanation on two separate days. The educator is unsure whether this is typical childhood injury or something that should be documented and discussed.

Case study 3: Boundary discomfort/Fear of getting it wrong

A staff member feels uneasy about the way a colleague regularly seeks one-on-one time with a particular child and offers extra help during routines. Nothing clearly inappropriate has been observed, but the behaviour does not feel quite right. The staff member is worried about saying anything in case they are overreacting.

Case study 4: Conflicting advice/Damaging reputations/Getting it wrong

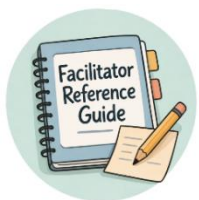
An educator raises a concern with a colleague, who responds by saying they've seen similar situations before and that "it's probably nothing." The educator is still unsure and worries about overreacting or damaging team relationships.

Case study 5: Working across services/Confusing about reporting processes/Thresholds.

A relief educator works across two services in different states. They notice a pattern of concerning behaviour involving a child but are unsure which reporting requirements apply and who they should speak to first.

Case study 6: Family relationship concerns

A child becomes distressed at pick-up time when a particular family member arrives. The child does not disclose harm and settles once they leave the service. Staff are unsure whether this reflects separation anxiety, a family dynamic, or a concern that needs to be escalated. Staff have a positive relationship with the child's family and are concerned that raising concerns may damage this.




Facilitator reference guide: When reporting feels hard

This reference guide is provided to support facilitation and discussion only. The responses and prompts included are not intended to be absolute or the only appropriate ways to respond. Participants may identify additional perspectives, questions, or approaches based on their role, experience, and context. These contributions are welcome and can enrich discussion. Facilitators are encouraged to use this guide flexibly, focusing on shared principles, role clarity, and safe decision-making rather than on “right” or “wrong” answers.

Case study	What makes this a grey area	Possible barriers to reporting	Helpful facilitator prompts	Role-appropriate next steps (examples)	Key learning points to reinforce
1. Subtle changes	No disclosure or visible injury; changes are gradual and could have multiple explanations	Fear of overreacting; uncertainty about whether behaviour changes are “enough”	What patterns are being noticed over time? What makes this worth paying attention to?	Document observations; consult supervisor; monitor patterns; seek guidance if changes continue	Reasonable concern can be based on patterns, not single events
2. Inconsistent explanations	Injury could be accidental; child’s explanations vary	Worry about misinterpreting a typical childhood injury	What matters more here: the bruise or the inconsistency?	Record observations using the child’s words; discuss with supervisor; follow service procedures	Documentation supports decision-making even when outcomes are unclear

3. Boundary discomfort	No clear breach observed; concern is based on unease rather than evidence	Fear of accusing a colleague; power dynamics; loyalty to team	What about this behaviour feels uncomfortable? What boundaries are relevant?	Raise concern through internal processes; consult leader; follow reportable conduct procedures if required	Feeling uneasy can be a valid signal to seek guidance
4. Conflicting advice	Mixed messages from colleagues; normalisation of concern	Fear of being seen as difficult; reliance on peer reassurance	Who holds responsibility for advice and decision-making?	Seek supervision from a leader; refer to policy; document concern	Colleagues' opinions do not replace formal processes
5. Working across services	Different state requirements; uncertainty about jurisdiction	Lack of knowledge; fear of reporting incorrectly	What would help clarify obligations in this situation?	Consult supervisor; check service policy; contact local authority for guidance	If unsure, seeking advice is appropriate and expected
6. Family relationship concerns	Child distress without disclosure; behaviour could have multiple causes	Concern about damaging family relationships; uncertainty about interpretation	What is the child communicating through behaviour? What patterns are present?	Document behaviour; consult supervisor; continue supportive practice; escalate if concerns persist	Supporting the child continues even when outcomes are unknown

Activity 2: Policies, pathways, and support	
Objective	<p>It helps participants to reflect on how they navigate policies and reporting requirements in their setting, and to identify where they can go for guidance when they are unsure.</p> <p>It supports participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • xxx
Time	25-40 minutes
Format	
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs arranged in a circle • Optional: prompt questions on a slide or printed card • Optional: soft toy or items to pass around and use as a 'talking stick'



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“Policies and reporting requirements can feel complex, especially when they differ across states or services. This activity is a space to talk openly about what helps, what feels confusing, and how people find their way when they’re unsure.”

Remind participants

- This is an open, reflective discussion, not a test of knowledge
- There may be differences across services and jurisdictions
- It’s okay to say ‘I’m not sure’
- Keep examples general and de-identified

Step 1: Set up the reflective circle (5 minutes)

- Arrange seating in a circle to support conversation.
- Explain that this is a shared reflection rather than a problem-solving activity.

Step 2: Individual reflection (5 minutes)

- Invite participants to take a quiet moment to think about:
 - *Where they would go first if they were unsure about reporting a concern*
 - *Which policies or pathways they feel most confident using, and which feel less clear*

Step 3: Guided group discussion (20-30 minutes)

- Use one prompt at a time. Participants can respond to any prompt that resonates. Suggested prompts include, but are not limited to:
 - *When you are unsure about your mandatory reporting obligations in your state or territory, where would you go first for guidance?*

- *If you work across more than one state or territory, what helps you keep track of different reporting requirements?*
- *How confident do you feel about knowing when mandatory reporting applies in your role, and what helps build that confidence?*
- *What role do service policies play in helping you navigate state or territory laws?*
- *If a concern involved another staff member, would you know where to find information about reportable conduct in your state or territory?*
- *Are there parts of reporting or escalation that feel harder to navigate?*
- *How do differences between states, jurisdictions or services affect confidence in reporting?*
- *What support does your service provide to help staff understand jurisdiction-based reporting requirements?*
- *How are new or relief staff supported to understand reporting obligations in your jurisdiction?*
- *What would help reporting requirements feel clearer or more accessible in everyday practice?*
- *What helps you feel supported to speak up when something doesn't feel right?*
- Allow conversation to flow naturally. You don't need to cover every question.

Step 4: Shared learning (5 minutes)

- Invite participants to share one thing they learned from hearing others, or one support or strategy they want to remember.

Part 5: Closing reflection (2 minutes)

- Close by reinforcing that knowing where to find guidance is just as important as knowing the policy itself. Child safety is strengthened when educators and other staff talk openly about uncertainty and rely on shared processes and support rather than managing concerns alone.
- Invite participants to complete this sentence, silently or aloud: *"One place I can go for support or guidance if I'm unsure is..."*



Facilitator tips

- If misinformation arises, note it for follow-up rather than correcting publicly.
- Gently redirect if discussion moves into specific cases or identifiable details.
- Remind participants no one is expected to memorise legislation.





Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online as a reflective group discussion. The purpose remains the same: to support participants to talk openly about service policies, jurisdictional requirements, and where they go for guidance when they are unsure, without testing knowledge or expertise.

Platform Preparation (before the session)

- Prepare reflection prompts on a slide or shared document so they are clearly visible during the session.
- Set up breakout rooms in advance (4–6 participants per group if using).
- Prepare a shared slide, whiteboard, or word cloud tool to capture emerging themes.
- Consider preparing an optional anonymous poll (e.g., “How confident do you feel about mandatory reporting requirements in your role?”).

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin by reading the facilitator preamble aloud.
- Provide a brief wellbeing reminder.
- Reinforce that this is a reflective discussion, not a compliance check or knowledge test.
- Emphasise that policies and reporting requirements differ across services, states, and territories.
- Normalise uncertainty and remind participants that knowing where to seek guidance is part of professional practice.
- Encourage cameras on or off based on comfort.
- Remind participants that listening or reflecting silently are valid ways to participate.
- Optional pulse check: Run a quick anonymous poll asking participants to rate their confidence in navigating reporting obligations.
- Reinforce that examples must remain de-identified and practice focused.

Step 2: Breakout room discussion

- If the group is large, place participants into breakout rooms of 4-6.
- Before opening the breakout rooms, display and paste into the chat:
 - Discuss 2-3 prompts, focusing on experience rather than specific cases.
- Suggested prompts include, but are not limited to:
 - *When you are unsure about your mandatory reporting obligations in your state or territory, where would you go first for guidance?*
 - *If you work across more than one state or territory, what helps you keep track of different reporting requirements?*
 - *How confident do you feel about knowing when mandatory reporting applies in your role, and what helps build that confidence?*
 - *What role do service policies play in helping you navigate state or territory laws?*
 - *If a concern involved another staff member, would you know where to find information about reportable conduct in your state or territory?*
 - *Are there parts of reporting or escalation that feel harder to navigate?*
 - *How do differences between states, territories or services affect confidence in reporting?*
 - *What support does your service provide to help staff understand state-based reporting requirements?*
 - *How are new or relief staff supported to understand reporting obligations in your jurisdiction?*
 - *What would help reporting requirements feel clearer or more accessible in everyday practice?*
 - *What helps you feel supported to speak up when something doesn't feel right?*
- Encourage groups to:
 - Nominate a discussion lead
 - Nominate a note taker
 - Focus on systems and support pathways rather than gaps in knowledge


Step 3: Whole group sharing and reflection

- Bring participants back to the main room.
- Invite participants to share one insight, question, or helpful idea that came up in discussion, rather than details of their service or policies.
- As facilitator, reflect back common themes.
- Write common themes into the chat, or on an online word cloud.

Step 4: Closing reflection

- Close by reinforcing that knowing where to find guidance is just as important as knowing the policy itself. Child safety is strengthened when educators talk openly about uncertainty and rely on shared processes and support rather than managing concerns alone.
- You may invite participants to quietly reflect on the sentence: *“One place I can go for guidance if I’m unsure is...”*



Activity 3: Finding your way when you're concerned	
Objective	<p>This activity supports participants to navigate uncertainty about reporting requirements. It helps participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that a single concern may trigger more than one reporting pathway. • Clarify the difference between individual, organisational, and provider responsibilities. • Practise what to do when unsure about state or territory requirements. • Identify where to go for guidance instead of managing concerns alone.
Time	35-45 minutes
Format	
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario cards involving different types of concerns • Headings displayed on a table or wall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory reporting ○ Reportable conduct ○ Regulatory authority notification ○ Internal consultation



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“Reporting requirements differ across Australia, and it’s common to feel unsure, especially if you work across services or states. This activity isn’t about memorising laws. It’s about understanding roles and knowing how to find the right information when you’re unsure.”

Remind participants

- Reporting requirements vary across states and territories
- This is about decision-making, not legal expertise
- Asking for guidance is a responsible and expected action

Step 1: Setting the frame – overlapping responsibilities (5 minutes)

- Explain that reporting responsibilities are not “either/or.” One concern may require:
 - An individual to make a mandatory report
 - An organisation to manage reportable conduct
 - An Approved Provider to notify the regulatory authority
- Reinforce that these pathways can operate at the same time.

Step 2: Scenario overview (5 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups and provide one scenario per group.
- Ask participants to read the scenario carefully and note:
 - Who is involved
 - What the concern is
 - Where the concern is occurring (e.g., home, service, staff conduct, mixed)
- Remind participants they are not being asked to decide what happened.

Step 3: Pathway mapping (15-20 minutes)

- Ask groups to place or list the reporting pathways that *might* apply to the scenario.
- For each pathway, ask groups to discuss:
 - Why this pathway may be relevant
 - Who holds responsibility for action (individual staff member, Head of Organisation, Approved Provider)
 - Encourage groups to include more than one pathway if appropriate.

Step 4: The uncertainty check (10 minutes)

- Invite groups to pause and reflect on uncertainty by discussing:
 - *What part of this scenario feels most confusing or unclear?*
 - *What information would help clarify next steps?*
 - *What would you do if you were unsure about the state or territory requirements?*
- Normalise that uncertainty is expected in real practice.

Step 5: Finding guidance – next best steps (10 minutes)

- Ask groups to identify practical, role-appropriate ways to clarify obligations, such as:
 - Consulting a supervisor or service leader
 - Referring to service policies or flowcharts
 - Contacting the local child protection authority for advice
 - Seeking guidance from the regulatory authority
 - Emphasise that seeking advice is part of meeting responsibilities

Step 6: Whole-group reflection (5-10 minutes)

- Bring the group back together.
- Invite each group to share:
 - One pathway they identified
 - One action that helped clarify uncertainty
 - Highlight shared themes and reinforce collective responsibility.

Step 7: Closing reflection (2 minutes)

- Invite participants to reflect silently or aloud: *“If I’m unsure about reporting requirements, one place I can go for guidance is...”*



Facilitator tip

If participants worry about “getting it wrong,” remind them that reporting frameworks are designed to support decision-making, and that seeking guidance early is protective for children and staff.



Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using breakout rooms and whole-group discussion. The purpose remains the same: to support participants to navigate uncertainty about reporting requirements, understand overlapping responsibilities, and practise how to find guidance when they are unsure.

Platform preparation (before the session)

- Prepare each scenario on a separate slide or shared document.
- Display the pathway headings clearly on a slide:
 - Mandatory reporting
 - Reportable conduct
 - Regulatory authority notification
 - Internal consultation
- Prepare breakout rooms in advance (3–5 participants per group).
- Prepare a shared slide or whiteboard to capture key themes during whole-group reflection.
- Optional: prepare a quick anonymous poll (e.g., “How confident do you feel navigating reporting pathways in your role?”)

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin by reading the facilitator preamble aloud.
- Provide a brief wellbeing reminder.
- Reinforce that reporting requirements vary across states and territories.
- Emphasise that the activity focuses on decision-making and process, not legal expertise.
- Reinforce that asking for guidance is responsible and expected.
- Encourage cameras on or off based on comfort.
- Reinforce that discussion must remain de-identified and practice focused.

Step 2: Scenario overview (whole group)

- Share one scenario per breakout room via screen share, chat, or a shared document.
- Briefly explain the pathway headings that will be used during the activity:
 - Mandatory reporting

- Reportable conduct
- Regulatory authority notification
- Internal consultation
- Remind participants that they are not being asked to decide what happened or determine outcomes.

Step 3: Breakout room discussion

- Place participants into breakout rooms of 3-5.
- Invite groups to work through the following steps:
 - Identify who is involved and where the concern is occurring
 - Discuss which reporting pathways might apply to the scenario
 - For each pathway, discuss why it may be relevant and who holds responsibility for action
- Discuss what they would do if they were unsure about the state or territory requirements
- Encourage groups to include more than one pathway if appropriate.
- Encourage groups to:
 - Nominate a discussion lead
 - Nominate a note taker
 - Consider whether more than one pathway may apply

Step 4: Whole group sharing and reflection

- Bring participants back to the main room
- Invite each group to share:
 - One reporting pathway they identified
 - One action that helped clarify uncertainty
- As facilitator, reflect shared themes and share them on a shared screen or via the chat function

Step 5: Closing reflection

- Close by reinforcing that reporting responsibilities are not “either/or” and that uncertainty is a normal part of child safety decision-making.
- Child safety is strengthened when educators rely on shared processes, consultation, and support rather than managing concerns alone.
- You may invite participants to quietly reflect on the sentence: *“If I’m unsure about reporting requirements, one place I can go for guidance is...”*



Scenario cards: Finding your way when you are unsure

These cards are designed to be printed and provided to participants for reflective discussion. Facilitators may choose to use all cards or select a small number that best suit the group, time available, and local context.

Facilitators are also encouraged to adapt these cards or develop their own scenarios based on their context.

Scenario 1: Injury noticed at the service

An educator notices a child has a significant bruise when they arrive at the service. The child gives a vague explanation and becomes quiet when asked how it happened. The injury did not occur at the service.

Scenario 2: Concerning staff behaviour

A staff member reports feeling uncomfortable about how a colleague frequently seeks one-on-one time with a child and discourages others from assisting during routines. No specific incident has been observed.

Scenario 3: Disclosure about home

A child tells an educator that they are scared to go home because “someone gets really angry.” The child does not provide details and changes the subject.

Scenario 4: Incident during routine care

During a busy period, a staff member is observed speaking harshly to a child during a toileting routine. The child appears distressed, but the staff member later says they were “just being firm.”

Scenario 5: Pattern of injuries

Over several weeks, different educators notice small injuries on a child. Each injury appears minor on its own, but together they form a pattern. No explanation has been documented.

Scenario 6: Boundary concerns involving a volunteer

A volunteer regularly brings small gifts for one particular child and seeks extra time to help them during rest periods. Other staff feel unsure whether this is generous or concerning.

Scenario 7: Allegation about another child

A parent tells the service that their child has mentioned another child touching them in a way that made them uncomfortable. The parent wants to know what the service will do next.

Scenario 8: Emotional harm concern

An educator notices a child becoming increasingly anxious and withdrawn after interactions with a particular educator. No physical harm has been observed.

Scenario 9: Working across jurisdictions

A relief educator works across two services in different states. They notice a concern involving staff conduct at one service but are unsure which reporting requirements apply or who holds responsibility.

Scenario 10: Information shared indirectly

A family member casually mentions to an educator that “things have been really chaotic at home lately.” The child’s behaviour has also changed, but there has been no disclosure.



Facilitator reference guide: Finding your way when you are unsure

This reference guide is provided to support facilitators in guiding discussion and reflection. The examples and prompts included are not intended to be the only possible responses, nor are they definitive or exhaustive. Participants may offer additional perspectives, questions, or approaches based on their role, experience, service context, or jurisdiction. These contributions should be welcomed and used to deepen discussion.

Facilitators are encouraged to use this guide flexibly, focusing on shared principles, role clarity, and safe decision-making rather than on identifying “right” or “wrong” answers.

Scenario	What makes this unclear or complex	Reporting pathways that may apply	Who may hold responsibility	Common barriers to notice	Key facilitation points to reinforce
1. Injury noticed at the service	Injury occurred outside the service; explanation is vague	Mandatory reporting; internal consultation	Individual staff member; supervisor; Approved Provider	Fear of overreacting; uncertainty about home vs service responsibility	Reasonable concern does not require proof; document and consult early
2. Concerning staff behaviour	No specific incident; concern based on pattern and discomfort	Reportable conduct; internal consultation; Notification to	Individual staff member; Head of Organisation;	Fear of accusing a colleague; loyalty to team; fear of reprisal	Unease can be a valid signal; staff raise concerns,

		Regulatory Authority under the National Law. (Note: under the National Law, any incident of inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct needs to be reported to the Regulatory Authority.)	service leadership; Approved provider		leaders manage processes
3. Disclosure about home	Disclosure is partial and unclear	Mandatory reporting; internal consultation	Individual staff member	Fear of saying the wrong thing; Fear of over-reacting; Fear of consequences to child; uncertainty about thresholds	Listen, reassure, document, report; do not investigate
4. Incident during routine care	Behaviour may be seen as “firm” or “discipline”	Reportable conduct; internal consultation; and notification to the Regulatory Authority under the National Law	Individual staff member; Head of Organisation; Approved Provider	Normalising behaviour; discomfort challenging practice; fear of accusing a colleague	Inappropriate discipline and conduct must be reported; systems do not blame

		where required (including incidents of inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct).			
5. Pattern of injuries	Each injury is minor on its own	Mandatory reporting; internal consultation	Individual staff member; supervisor	Seeing incidents in isolation; poor documentation	Patterns over time matter; shared records support decision-making
6. Boundary concerns involving a volunteer	Behaviour could be generosity or grooming	Reportable conduct; internal consultation; and notification to the Regulatory Authority under the National Law where required (including incidents of inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct).	Individual staff member; Head of Organisation; Approved Providers	Fear of misinterpreting intent	Focus on boundaries and impact, not intent

<p>7. Allegation about another child</p>	<p>Involves peer behaviour and family expectations</p>	<p>Mandatory reporting; internal processes; and possible notification to the Regulatory Authority where required under the National Law and Regulations (including incidents or allegations of physical or sexual abuse at the service).</p>	<p>Individual staff member; Head of Organisation; Approved Providers</p>	<p>Uncertainty about harmful sexual behaviour vs developmentally typical sexual behaviour</p>	<p>Child safety concerns can involve multiple children; follow policy</p>
<p>8. Emotional harm concern</p>	<p>No physical harm observed</p>	<p>Mandatory reporting; reportable conduct; internal consultation; possible notification to the Regulatory Authority under the National Law as required.</p>	<p>Individual staff member; Head of Organisation; Approved Provider</p>	<p>Belief that emotional harm is less serious; uncertainty about thresholds</p>	<p>Emotional harm is reportable; behaviour and impact matter</p>

9. Working across jurisdictions	Different state requirements	All relevant pathways depending on concern	Depends on role and service	Confusion about laws; uncertainty about thresholds, fear of reporting incorrectly	If unsure, seek guidance from authority or regulator
10. Information shared indirectly	No disclosure, concern is contextual	Mandatory reporting; internal consultation	Individual staff member	Minimising vague information; fear of getting it wrong or overreacting	Changes in behaviour and context can form reasonable concern