

Guidance On Working With People Who Are Uncooperative

The guidance supports practitioners on how to respond when working with reluctant service users and to consider the impact of this behaviour on children and families.

There may be a wide range of uncooperative behaviours. All staff will at some point encounter people whose engagement with services is patchy or sporadic, reluctant or resistant and at times angry.

4. Impact on Multi-Agency Working

- Any professional or agency faced with incidents of threats, hostility or violence should routinely consider the potential implications for any other professional or agency involved with the family, in addition to the implications for themselves and should alert them to the nature of the risks as they occur.
- Expectations and attitudes of mutual respect and trust are the core of inter-agency working. When working with hostile or violent Parent/Carers, the need for very good inter-agency collaboration and trust is paramount.

1. Recognition

There are several behaviours of non-cooperation that may be encountered when working with families

- Ambivalence
- Avoidance or Resistant
- Parental deception previously as disguised compliance
- Confrontative
- Violence and or aggression

Please see:

https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/manag_fam_obst_resist.html

5. Communication

Just as our clients have the right to respect, so do practitioners. Reflection may be a useful tool to consider if there was ostensive communication or if paralinguistics when interfacing conveyed, a poor attitude.

Even when we think we are not communicating, we usually are. Non-verbal behaviour may give away a person's true intentions or state of mind.

2. Reasons

There are a multitude of reasons why families may display uncooperative behaviour including:

- The right to privacy and resenting outside interference
- Refusing to believe there is a problem
- Cultural and language differences
- Previous poor experience with professionals feeling overwhelmed
- Vulnerability with mental health which may increase paranoia

6. Before concluding that a family is resistant, practitioners should:

- Respect the right of parents/carers to challenge any professional's interpretation of events, assessment of their child's needs or assessment of risk to the child.
- Confirm that the parents/carers understand the professionals concerns and what is expected of them relative to these.
- Assess what, if any, contribution the service approach and/or interventions may make to this.
- Risk assessment is therefore a complex task in which workers need to "... balance an empathic approach with a bounded authoritative approach which avoids over-optimism and scrutinises apparent parental compliance" (Sen and Green Lister, 2011).

3. Impact on Assessment

- A clear understanding and accurate information of what is happening to a child/adult is essential to analysis and plan. The most effective means to achieve this is to engage and to incorporate children and adults in assessment.
- Engagement with a someone who is uncooperative is challenging. Be explicit in your records as to what areas of assessment are difficult and the rationale.
- The presence of violence or intimidation should be included in the assessment of risk to the child or adult living in such an environment.

7. Training & Supervision

All Oxleas Staff are required to have safeguarding children training at a level commensurate to their role. Please see the Oxleas Learning Centre.

Staff have access to clinical and safeguarding supervision. All staff may contact the safeguarding team: oxl-tr.safeguardingchildren@nhs.net

