



Lessons Learnt – Child G

1. To continue to respect the rights to confidentiality of a young person when safeguarding concerns are increasing, will likely mean that interventions are becoming increasingly ineffective and that different strategies are needed. It is appropriate for professionals to challenge the appropriateness of adhering to a principle of complete confidentiality when it may not be in the best interests of the young person.
2. Whilst adhering to and addressing the wishes and needs of children and young people is an important component of child centred practice, it needs to be acknowledged that young people are unlikely to have all the necessary experience, knowledge and confidence to be the only arbiter of the sorts of services and interventions that are needed.
3. To become resigned to difficulties in inter agency relationships that create obstacles to achieving effective multi agency practice, is an aspect of professional dangerousness. For such difficulties to go unchallenged potentially maintains children and young people in at-risk situations. Professional frustrations about poor inter agency relationships need to be channelled upwards via line management.
4. An essential role of line managers is for them to escalate matters when the successful management of a case is impeded by an impasse about referral discussions, when there is evidence of ineffective inter agency working, or when the agency is unable to manage the level of risk being presented by the service user.
5. The inability to engage key family members in the delivery of services to an adolescent is potentially a risk factor in its own right.
6. The first step to successfully working with adolescents who are difficult to engage, is to gain a clear understanding of the reasons and motivators for the individual's attitude to help.
7. An additional risk factor for an adolescent, who is presenting with self harming or suicide ideation, is the suicide or attempted suicide by an adolescent peer.
8. For self harming or the expression of suicidal intentions by a young person, not to be seen as a child protection issue, or as part of a Care Programme Approach will likely mean that levels of risk will not be fully assessed or multi agency interventions effectively coordinated.
9. For an agency to close a case because they consider themselves unable to manage the level of risk being presented by the service user, without ensuring that an appropriate and more suited agency takes over responsibility, will not address the risk and potentially lead to it increasing.

10. Professional communication is a two way process, meaning that there are responsibilities for both the communicator and the recipient of that communication, in making sure that information is properly understood and that follow-up actions are clear.
11. The greater the complexity of threshold criteria and of referral processes and pathways to tiered mental health services, then the greater the likelihood that they will be misinterpreted and misused by professionals, leaving children and young people to fall through the gaps that are left.
12. The consistent and structured recording of incidents of concern, interventions, communications and decisions, provides the essential framework to aid effective assessments and gives direction to appropriate interventions.
13. The innovative use of inter agency meetings or professional network meetings at times of apparent impasse in achieving change with a troubled adolescent, can generate useful new inter agency initiatives to address problems.
14. Incomplete assessments will lead to uninformed interventions.