

Question guide for social workers:

Exploring faith or belief within an assessment



Developing excellence
in response to FGM and
other harmful practices

Using this document

Depending on the information shared in the referral, this question guide can be used by social workers to ensure that faith or belief is explored with families within a holistic assessment, to assess the impact faith or belief has on parenting practices and capacity.

Social workers should use their professional judgement regarding which questions are relevant and appropriate to ask.

Parent(s)/carer(s) are entitled to their beliefs, however when these cross over into causing potential or actual harm to a child's emotional/physical health, it is unacceptable and should be considered child abuse.

Questions for parent(s)/carer(s)

Faith or belief

- Do you and your family have a faith or belief?
 - If yes, what is your faith or belief? Please tell me more about it
 - Is it a sub-section of a faith?
- Does your child(ren) hold the same faith or belief?
 - If no, what faith or belief do they hold?
 - If no, how do you feel about that?
- How did faith or belief impact on your upbringing?
 - Explore if there were/are any influential faith or belief figures within the family.
- Who are the main people who provide guidance around your faith or belief?
- Who in your family take part in any activities related to faith or belief?
 - Explore what activities these include.
- How does your faith or belief and the community around it support you in times of need?

Exploring places of worship

- Does your family attend a place of worship at the moment?
 - If yes, what is this place called? (including the address).
 - Who is the leader at this place of worship?
 - If yes, who in the family attends?
- How often do you go?
- Does your child(ren) go on their own or does someone go with them?
 - If yes, who goes with them?
 - If yes, are you happy with their participation?
- What do you do at the place of worship?
 - If the child attends, what do they do?
- What do you like or dislike best about the place of worship?
- Do you take part in faith or belief activities outside of your daily/weekly attendance at your place of worship?
- If you do not attend a place of worship, how do you practice your faith at home?

Expressing faith or belief

- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, how important is faith or belief to you and your family?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest, how does your faith or belief contribute to you being a better parent?
- What ceremonies/events/festivals are part of your faith or belief?
 - Do you do anything special for these ceremonies/events/festivals?
- How else do you express your faith or belief?
 - Do you pray? Are there specific prayers said? Do these prayers have to be conducted at specific times?
 - Are your children expected to participate in prayers? At what age would this be expected?
 - Does your faith or belief require you to fast? Why, when and how long for? Are your children expected to fast? From what age?
- Are there any requirements in your faith that place strict boundaries on your children? What does this entail?

Possession, witchcraft and curses

- Do you believe that someone can be possessed/a witch/have a curse placed on them?
- Do you believe your child is possessed/a witch/has a curse upon them?
- Do you think possession/being a witch/being cursed is positive or negative and why?
- What are the signs of possession or being a witch/cursed?
 - What does your faith/belief say about this?
 - Have you spoken to the leader of your place of worship about this? What do they say about this?
- How do you think the possession/witchcraft/curse can be removed?
 - Who can help if you think someone is possessed/a witch/has a curse upon them?
 - Does this come at a cost?
- What will happen if it does not work? Would you seek help from someone else or abroad?

Questions for children and young people

- Do you have a faith or belief?
 - If yes, what is your faith or belief? Please tell me more about it.
- How does faith or belief impact on your life?
- Who are the main people you would go to for guidance and support around your faith or belief?
- Do you attend a place of worship?
 - If yes, what is this place called? (including the address).
 - If yes, who in the family attends?
 - How often do you go? For how long?
- What do you like or dislike about the place of worship or your faith?
 - Do you take part in faith or belief activities outside of your regular time/place of worship?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest how important is faith or belief to you.
- What ceremonies/events/festivals are part of your faith or belief?
- Do you do anything special for these events/festivals?
- How else do you express your faith or belief?
- Do you believe that someone can be possessed/cursed or a witch?
 - If yes, how would you know?

- Do you think possession/being a witch/being cursed is positive or negative and why?
- How do you think the possession/witch/curse can be removed?
- Are there any times when you feel your faith may be harmful to you? If yes, explain how.

Remember

If a child has been accused, the accusation itself (even when not accompanied by physical abuse) can be psychologically damaging and affect a child's self-esteem and emotional well-being and can be deemed emotional abuse

You can find further resources and information at www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk