

Faith & Safeguarding: Springboard questions

For Statutory Professionals

A practical guide for statutory professionals: Providing open, respectful, and non-intrusive questions to help professionals understand how a person's faith may shape their needs, risks, decisions, and support networks.



thirtyone:
eight



Hello there!

Welcome!

Faith and belief can shape how people understand safety, harm, and care. They may influence views on discipline, gender roles, leadership, healing, and how people seek help or engage with services.

For safeguarding professionals, understanding faith is key. It helps explain behaviours, builds trust, and supports respectful, safe responses—especially when care decisions or concerns are shaped by religious or cultural beliefs.

We hope these springboard questions give you the confidence to engage well in every area of your clients' lives.

Your Thirtyone:eight Training Team

Principles for Practice

Be curious, don't assume

Faith is deeply personal, and no two people within the same faith group will experience or express it in exactly the same way.

Use faith as a lens, not a label

It's one part of a person's identity.

Recognise power dynamics

Some people may feel unsafe discussing faith with authorities.

Respect privacy and autonomy

Let the person decide what to share.



Springboard questions by practice area

1. Understanding the person's beliefs and values

- "Are there any beliefs or values that are important to you that we should be aware of in how we support or work with you?"
- "Do you see your faith or spirituality as something that helps you make decisions or cope with challenges?"

2. Care, safety, and daily life

- "Are there any religious or cultural practices we should respect when planning your care or support?"
- "If possible, would you prefer to work with someone of a particular gender or background for religious or cultural reasons?"
- "Are there any times, places, or routines (e.g. prayer, fasting) that are important for us to consider?"

3. Safeguarding and risk

- "Are there any aspects of your faith or community that you feel affect your safety or wellbeing?"
- "Do you feel comfortable talking about concerns or risks within your family or community?"
- "Are there any beliefs that might affect how you view certain behaviours or risks?"

Springboard questions by practice area

4. Support, resilience, and recovery

- “Are there any spiritual or religious practices that help you feel supported or grounded?”
- “Would you like us to involve anyone from your faith or community in your support or recovery?”

5. Health, mental health, and crisis

- “Are there any beliefs that affect how you view illness, mental health, or treatment?”
- “If you were in crisis, are there any spiritual or religious needs we should be aware of?”

6. Children, families, and education

- “Are there any religious or cultural values that are important in how you raise your children?”
- “Are there any practices or holidays that are important for your child’s identity or wellbeing?”
- “Would you like your child’s support team to be aware of any faith-related needs?”

“We’re all working towards the same goal—keeping people safe.”
— Helen Platt



Springboard questions by practice area

7. Accessible language – for children, adults with learning disabilities and speakers of English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- “Do you have any special beliefs or ways of living that are important to you?”
- “Are there things you do—like praying, going to a special place, or following certain rules—that help you feel safe or calm?”
- “Is there someone you trust—like a leader, elder, or family member—who helps you make big decisions?”
- “Are there things you do or don’t do because of your beliefs or what’s important in your life?”
- “Would you like us to talk to someone who understands your beliefs or way of life?”

Closing the conversation

- “Is there anything else about your beliefs or background that you’d like us to understand or take into account?”
- “Would you like us to record any of this so others in the team are aware and can support you appropriately?”

Who we are:

Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian safeguarding charity working across the UK. While rooted in Christian values, we serve organisations of all faiths and none, equipping them to protect vulnerable children and adults through training, consultancy, and resources. Our vision is for a world where every child and adult can feel—and be—safe.

Each year, we provide **safeguarding training** to over **11,000** people from the faith and community sector, support more than **12,000 organisations**, and respond to around **9,000 safeguarding helpline calls**. Our name comes from a verse in the bible, Proverbs 31:8: “Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of those who are vulnerable.” This is our mandate and the foundation of our work.

This resource has been developed to support statutory professionals in engaging confidently and respectfully with faith communities in safeguarding contexts.