Ten Top Tips for Dealing with a Disclosure of Sexual Harm

1. Don't panic – take the issue of sex/abuse out of it and remember you are responding to a child who needs you to help them
2. Make sure the child feels safe (right place) and able to share with you (right person)
3. Remember that the child needs to know the truth about what will happen next. Don't promise that you can keep their information a secret
4. Listen carefully – don't show judgement and just let the child share (remember this could be continuous over days or weeks)
5. Use the child's language, turn of phrase, expression (be as detailed as possible from what they have said)
6. Don't ask questions unless to clarify e.g., tell me what happened, what does that word mean etc.
7. Remember that children's biggest fear is what will happen to the abuser. They may not recognise the behaviour as harmful or abusive
8. Make sure that the child knows what next steps you will take. Don't leave them wondering
9. Spend time ensuring the child knows that police officers & social workers are safe adults, despite what they might have been told by the abuser
10. Get support immediately for the child and record your actions. Make sure you off-load any impact on yourself with the Designated Safeguarding Lead

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SAFEGUARDING FIRST