

7 Minute Briefing: Social GRRRAACCEEESSS and Professional Curiosity

1. What Are the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS?

The Social GRRRAACCEEESSS framework—developed by Dr John Burnham—helps practitioners reflect on the **social, cultural, and identity-based factors** that shape how people experience the world, relationships, and systems of power. It highlights both **visible and invisible** aspects of identity, supporting anti-oppressive, inclusive, and culturally aware practice.

These factors include: **Gender, Geography, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Class, Culture, Ethnicity, Education, Employment, Sexuality, Sexual Orientation, and Spirituality.**

7. Suggested Reflections with Children

- What makes you feel special or unique?
- Are there things about you or your family that you'd like people to understand better?
- Have you ever felt different from others? What was that like for you?
- Who are the people that make you feel safe, understood, and accepted?
- Is there anything about yourself that you sometimes hide or keep quiet about?

[Direct work with children](#) | [Understanding-Supporting-and-Exploring-Childrens-Identity-Development-PDF_compressed.pdf](#) | [Practice Tools and Guides for professionals in social care](#) | [Research in Practice](#) | [Promoting a positive sense of self with children](#) | [Research in Practice](#)

6. Suggested Reflections for Supervision

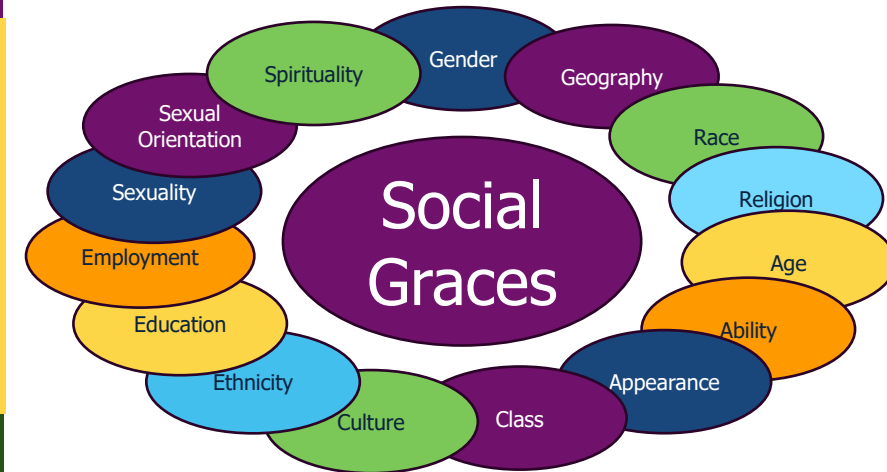
- Which aspects of your own Social GRACES feel most present or influential in this case?
- How might the family's Social GRACES be shaping their engagement with services?
- What assumptions—based on identity, culture, or background—might we be making as professionals?
- How do power dynamics or privilege show up between agencies or in our work with the family?
- Whose voices (professional or family) may be less heard, and why?
- If a practitioner with different GRACES were reviewing this case, what might they notice?
- What identity-related factors feel uncomfortable or less discussed, and how can we explore them safely?
- What can we do differently to ensure our approach is culturally responsive and inclusive?

2. Why This Framework Matters in Safeguarding

In safeguarding, children and families often report being seen only as part of a **homogenous group**, rather than as individuals with layered identities.

The Social GRRRAACCEEESSS helps us all to recognise the **complex interplay of identity, power, privilege, and discrimination** that can influence risk, engagement, voice, and decision-making.

Using this framework encourages everyone to look **beyond the visible**, understanding that many identity factors are **silent, unspoken, or easily overlooked.**



5. How the Framework Supports Better Multi-Agency Practice

Across agencies, adopting the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS can:

- Improve **relationship-building** by showing attunement to identity and lived experience.
- Enhance the quality of **assessments**, ensuring they consider intersectional influences.
- Reduce **blind spots**, especially where identity factors overlap to increase vulnerability (intersectionality).
- Support **supervision**, providing a shared reflective tool to explore dynamics, biases, or challenges.
- Strengthen **child-centred practice**, ensuring we identify and respond to barriers that affect voice and participation.

Case studies show how using the tool in supervision builds **trust, mutual respect, and deeper insight** between practitioners.

3. The Link to Cultural Competency

Because safeguarding relies on **meaningful understanding** of each child and family, the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS directly supports the development of **cultural competence**—the ability to work respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. It helps practitioners:

- Examine their **own identity and biases.**
- Recognise how **power and privilege** shape interactions.
- Avoid assumptions or cultural stereotyping.
- Adapt their practice to each family's unique profile ([Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#), Pg 17).

This framework strengthens the partnership's commitment to **anti-discriminatory and equitable safeguarding.**

4. Professional Curiosity Through the Social GRRRAACCEEESSS

Professional curiosity is central to good safeguarding practice. The Social GRRRAACCEEESSS provides a lens for **curious, respectful questioning**, such as:

- *"What aspects of your identity feel most important for us to understand?"*
- *"Are there elements of your background or beliefs that affect how you engage with services?"*
- *"How might your experiences of race, gender, disability, or faith influence what is happening for you or your child?"*

It helps practitioners explore areas that may be **unvoiced or invisible**, enabling a fuller understanding of lived experience and risk.