Tool 7: Individual reflection – My strengths in relationship-based practice supervision

> I'm good at this aspect of my role because....

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> I'm proud of the way I have...

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> I've helped my organisation by...

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Tool 8: Reflective cycle

Supervision can support good decision making through enabling critical reflection. This includes:

- **Critical thinking:** Identifying how we know what we know.
- **Analysis:** Breaking something down into parts.
- **Reflection:** Looking back at what has happened and looking forward to what will happen.
- **Reflexivity:** Identifying your impact on a situation

When you are dealing with a difficult issue or case, critical reflection can help you to understand and to gain insight into what to do.

This tool provides example questions which can be asked in supervision to explore all four stages of Kolb's (1984) reflective cycle to solve a dilemma.

You can use this tool in individual or group supervision to talk through a situation and identify insights that feed into action planning. It is particularly helpful in complex cases. However, the reflective cycle can be used for any discussion or decision. This is also a useful tool for development as it helps you to identify learning from your experiences.

Describe the situation for 5 minutes

Take 5 minutes answering questions about experience:

For example –

> Who was involved?
> What happened?

Take 5 minutes answering questions about reflection:

For example –

> How did you feel?
> What do you think others felt?

Take 5 minutes answering questions about analysis:

For example –

> What were the causes of the event?
> What can we learn from research?

Take 5 minutes answering questions about planning and acting

For example –

> What else do I need to know?
> What should be my next step?

Clarify the actions that are needed.

Tool 9: Group reflection

This is a model of group reflection called Systemic Reflective Space (SRS). It was developed through a small-scale, practitioner-led qualitative research project to develop 'reflective space' in children's services. The approach is rooted in Tom Anderson's (1987) work on the reflecting team, and was adapted by Child Centred Practice and Research in Practice.

Systemic Reflective Space seeks to create space to explore experiences, intuition and ways of knowing to enable learning and help to transform practice. It does this through:

- Building collaborative and reflective practice
- Offering opportunities for an alternative view on aspects of a practitioner's work and for the practitioner to explore a variety of options in their practice
- Employing the strengths and diversity of participants.

You can use this model in group supervision to support critical reflection that enables someone experiencing a situation to gain insight that will help them judge what to do.

Ground rules:
In order to facilitate the process, team members are encouraged to:

- reflect the presenter's pace and style
- connect comments to material that has been presented
- look for strengths and be mindful of negative feedback
- talk in a way that enables the presenter to listen
- listen in a way that enables the presenter to give feedback
- Ideas should be presented tentatively and not as solutions

(Jude and Regan, 2010: 11).

Getting started

In groups of around six, nominate one person to present a practice issue.

1. One participant presents a practice issue within a circle (approx. 15 minutes)
The issue is presented in story form – first of all from the point of view of the practitioner, then from the point of view of the service user and then from the point of view of other significant people involved. The practitioner can draw on resources such as pictures, objects and role play to tell the story.

The other members of the group pay attention to how the presenter talks about the issue. Their focus should be on emotional listening. Emotional listening requires a willingness to let others dominate a discussion and attentiveness to what is being said. Emotional listeners take care not to interrupt, use open-ended questions, reflect sensitivity to the emotions being expressed, and have the ability to reflect back to the other party the substance and feelings being expressed.

2. Presenter turns to sit with their back to the circle. The group converses and explores the issue (approx. 15 minutes)
The group talks about the situation without asking questions of the presenter. All participants must learn to 'sit with uncertainty'. This involves a willingness to continually challenge one's own assumptions and place knowledge in the context of values, past experiences, feelings and relationships to test them out. The group adopts an exploring (not a 'solving' or 'expert') stance. The aim of the exercise is to explore different ways of understanding the presenting dilemma and why their own attent ion has landed on the story in the way it has. The group can draw on resources such as pictures, objects and role play in their exploration.

'What else could it be?' is a helpful way for them to think about what has been presented along with asking 'How is this dilemma the same as one I have experienced?' More importantly, 'How is it different?' (a useful way for members of the group to check out that they are not relying too much on similar experiences of their own, or the shared wisdom of the organisation).

The group works to capture the 'known' and 'unknown' areas of the original presentation, recognising their own assumptions about what is happening. (What we sometimes call 'thinking' can just be a rearranging of our own prejudices and beliefs.)

The group generates a list of 'curious' questions the presenter should consider. However, they do not ask the questions and the presenter does not answer them; the presenter remains outside the circle, listening.

3. Presenter re-joins the circle and comments on the group's discussion (approx. 10 minutes)
The presenter responds to the different discussions, viewpoints and questions generated, talking about what captured their attention and why. The group is to listen in silence to these points.

The presenter tries to remain curious about what they are attending to and how they felt with each response (reflection in action). They can use these prompts to help them:
'The first thing I noticed from your discussion was ...'
'It made me feel like ...'
'Now I realise that ...'
'This is what I would like to do about that ...'

4. Group discussion in the circle (approx. 10 minutes)
The whole group including the presenter then reflects on why different perspectives have emerged – or why they have not emerged, if there have been no alternative perspectives.

The group checks in that they are feeling OK and explores the usefulness of the process.

Source: Adapted from Jude and Regan (2010)

Tool 10: Effective group supervision

Group supervision can have many advantages but these are dependent upon adequate preparation and thought beforehand (Earle et al 2017).

This tool sets out some of the considerations around group supervision and helps you to think through how group supervision will work.

You can use this tool to plan or to review group supervision. It can also be used to inform a group supervision policy.

	Checklist to consider	Actions to take	Other actions: when, by whom?
Purpose	What is the purpose? > Enhance practice related to a specific case > Explore a common theme in practice for group members > Integration of theory and practice How would you know if the group was successful? What do we need to walk away with?	Produce/clarify agenda Specify tools or methods to be used Any research or literature to support exploration of topic area Check the venue has good acoustics, space, any equipment or materials that might be required Set up an evaluation process Specify outcomes and plan for achieving them prior to starting group	
Membership	Who should be in the group? Should it be open (people can come and go) or closed (for a specific time period)? Is it voluntary or compulsory? Is the membership a work group or does it include people from a range of work groups? Will senior practitioners/team managers or other senior managers of staff attend? How will issues of power and authority be managed in the group?		

Activity and focus	How will the aims and purpose be achieved – case discussion, theoretical discussion, active methods such as role play? Is it a one-off group to discuss a critical issue or an ongoing group with learning and development or accountability goals? Is the primary focus case practice and conceptualisation, individual or group development, organisational issues?	Distribute model or approach to all members Agree number of sessions and review Develop aims and objectives prior to first meeting and then seek clarification and agreement in first meeting	
Authority	Who is 'in charge' – peers, designated leader? What role does this person play – facilitator, supervisor, consultant, trainer or coach? What are the limits of authority during the group discussions? What if there are concerns about practice standards or ethical issues? How will decisions be made? How will decisions be recorded? How will we know if it is working? (loops back to purpose)	Agree what will be recorded and where it will be stored Agree conflict resolution approach Nominate people responsible for all specific roles, including recording, facilitating, managing the room/ space Explore any conflict of roles and responsibilities in the group Agree who will hold responsibility for any decision made	

Tool 11: Levels of reflection

Gillian Ruch (2000) has identified four levels of reflection.

This tool helps you to consider what level of reflection you use and how to increase the depth of your reflection

You can use this in supervision to identify what level of reflection is needed for a particular situation.

You can also use it to deliberately engage a deeper level of reflection when you had been using technical or practical reflection. This tool supports critical reflection on cases and also development of your professional capability.

Technical reflection – This is a pragmatic form of reflection that compares performance with knowledge of 'what should be done' as set out in standards, policies, timescales and procedures. This is often used as a quick response to a question of 'what should I do?'

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Practical reflection – This is reflection on how we are making sense of situations. By helping the practitioner to look back and learn from practice experiences, supervisors build practitioners' capacity to 'reflect in action' and 'reflect on action'. This may be the level that is used in a 'reflective discussion.'

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Critical reflection – This deep layer of reflection includes a focus on power relationships and social and public contexts. It recognises the impact of the practitioner on the situation. The term 'reflexivity' often refers to this type of reflection.

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Process reflection – Drawing on psychodynamic theory, this deepest layer aims to explore conscious and unconscious aspects of practice and how these shape judgements and decision-making. Emotions and unconscious responses generated in engaging with people are surfaced and managed to contain their impact on practitioners' wellbeing and on their ability to assess risk.

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Tool 12: Wonnacott's Discrepancy Matrix

This tool encourages practitioners to reflect on what is known about a case and what is unknown or not yet known – a vital aspect of working with uncertainty. It supports the practitioner to tease out the information they hold into four types: evidence, ambiguous, assumption, and missing.

Aim

To help the practitioner think critically about the information upon which they're basing their decision-making.

Application

Can be used as a standalone activity or in combination with, for example, the Systemic Reflective Space group supervision model) or other critical thinking and analysis tools, such as De Bono's Six Hats (the white hat), which ask participants to critique the information they hold about a case.

Instructions

Follow the steps below and record key evidence of reflection and the outcomes of the discussion in the matrix.

Step One: Telling the story

The case-holding practitioner tells their story briefly. The supervisor or group members then begin to support the practitioner to sort the information they have been told into each of the boxes. Questions such as:

> How do you know that...?

> What other evidence do you have that this is true?

> How often have you felt like that even though you have no evidence it is true?

> When do you feel that most strongly? Why?

> If you had this piece of information what might it make you do differently?

Step Two: Sorting information

The information is sorted into the four areas as the practitioner answers the questions.

1. **What do I know?** For something to go into the 'evidence' category, it needs to be proven and verified (in other words, come from more than one source as a fact). Evidence also includes knowledge about legal frameworks and roles and responsibilities under the Care Act, as well as research. This category provides the strongest factual evidence for analysis and decision-making.

2. **What is ambiguous?** This relates to information that is not properly understood, is only hearsay or has more than one meaning dependant on context, or is hinted at by others but not clarified or owned.

3. **What I think I know** This allows the practitioner to explore their own practice wisdom and also their own prejudices to see how this is informing the case. Emotion and values can also be explored in this area and the self-aware practitioner can explore how they are responding and reacting to risk.

4. **What is missing?** These are the requests for information coming from the people listening to the story (supervisors, peers, other agency staff) that prompt the practitioner to acknowledge there are gaps in the information. The gaps then have to be examined to see if the lack of information might have a bearing on the decision-making in the case; if so, it needs to be explored.

Step Three: Reflections

Once the exercise is complete the practitioner is then asked:

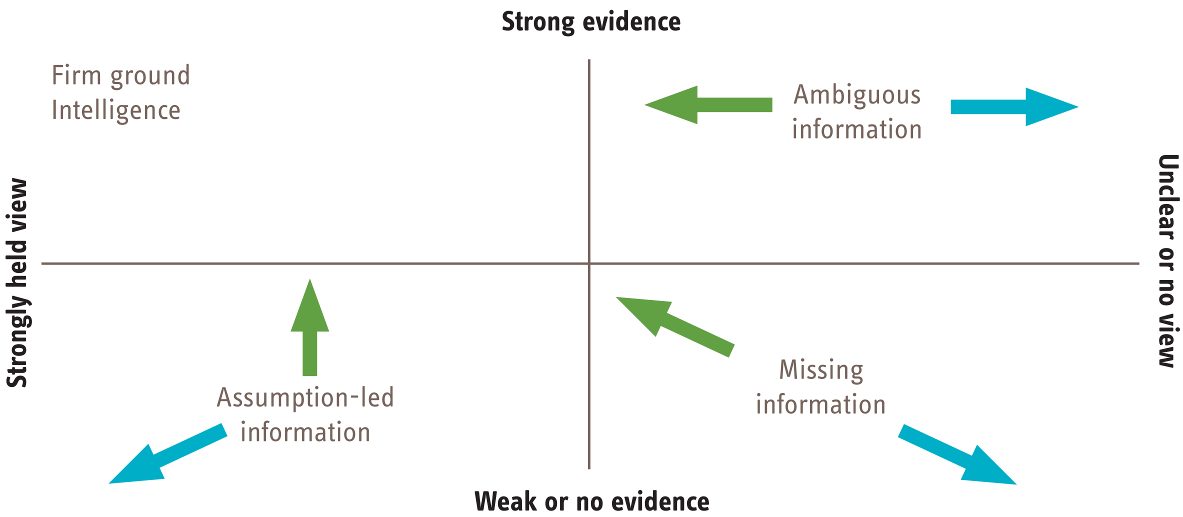
1. What has changed about what you know?
2. What do you still need to know?
3. What does this mean for the adult or adult & carer?
4. What do you want to do next?

Discrepancy matrix

Strong evidence

Strongly held view		Unclear or no view
What do I know (evidence)?	What is ambiguous?	
What I think I know (assumption)	What is missing (what action is needed)?	

Weak or no evidence



Source: Based on Morrison and Wonnacott (2009) in Wonnacott (2014)

Tool 13: Using law, theory and research in a reflective discussion

Supervision can support good decision making through enabling critical reflection. Within this critical reflection, we can consider:

> Law – this helps us to be clear about the scope and purpose of our involvement

> Theory – this helps us to identify the approach we will take, e.g. relationship-based work

> Research – this helps us to compare our experience and analysis with what is known from other situations.

This tool sets out a method for reflective discussion that deliberately brings in law, theory and research. This tool provides example questions to bring in law, theory and research in all four stages of Kolb's (1984) reflective cycle.

You can use this tool in individual or group supervision to facilitate critical reflection and identify insights that feed into action planning. This is also a useful tool for development as it helps you to identify learning from your experiences.

Preparation
Identify the main issues in the situation
Identify the law, theory and research that might apply to the situation

Discussion
Take 5 minutes to explain the situation

Take 5 minutes answering questions about experience:

For example –

> Who was involved?

> What happened?

Consider: How does this situation compare with the main messages from law, theory and research?

Take 5 minutes answering questions about reflection:

For example –

> How did the situation impact on you?

> What do you think the impact was on others?

Consider: What do we know from law, theory and research about how this situation impacts on people?

Take 5 minutes answering questions about analysis:

For example –

> What were the causes of the event?

> What did the event mean to people involved?

Consider: What do we know from law, theory and research about what this situation means?

Take 5 minutes answering questions about planning and acting

For example –

> What else do I need to know?

> What should be my next step?

Consider: What do we know from law, theory and research about how we can respond to this situation?

Follow up
Consider: What else do I want to find out from law, theory and research?

