

Supporting individuals, teams and organisations

Tool: Critical Incident Analysis

Account of the incident

- > What happened, where and when; who was involved?
- > What was your role/involvement in the incident?
- > What was the context of this incident eg. previous involvement of yourself or another person from your agency with the person/service user group?
- > What was the purpose and focus of your contact at this point?

Initial responses to the incident

- > What were your thoughts and feelings at the time of this incident?
- > What were the responses of other key individuals to this incident? If not known, what do you think these might have been?

Issues and dilemmas highlighted by this incident

- > What practice dilemmas were highlighted as a result of this incident?
- > What are the values and ethical issues which are highlighted by this incident?
- > Are there implications for inter-disciplinary and/or inter-agency collaborations which you have identified as a result of this incident?

Learning

- > What have you learned eg. about yourself, relationships with others, the social work task, organisational policies and procedures?
- > What theory (or theories) has, or might have, helped develop your understanding about some aspect of this incident?
- > What research has (or might have) helped develop your understanding about some aspect of this incident?
- > How might an understanding of the legislative, organisational and policy contexts explain some aspects associated with this incident?
- > What future learning needs have you identified as a result of this incident? How might this be achieved?

Outcomes

- > What are the outcomes of this incident for the various participants?
- > Are there ways in which this incident has led (or might lead to) changes in how you think, feel or act in particular situations?
- > What are your thoughts and feelings now about this incident?



Useful references

- Tripp, D. 1993. *Critical incidents in teaching: Developing professional judgements*. London: Routledge.
- Montalvo, F.F. 1999. The critical incident interview and ethnoracial identity. *Journal of Multicultural Social Work* 7(3/4): 19-43
- Nygren, L., and B. Blom. 2001. Analysis of short reflective narratives: A method for the study of knowledge in social workers actions. *Qualitative Research* 1: 369-84.
- Thomas, J. 2004. Using 'critical incident analysis' to promote critical reflection and holistic assessment. In *Social Work, critical reflection and the learning organisation* edited by N. Gould and M. Baldwin. Aldershot: Ashgate.