

OPEN Quick Guide: Reflect and Review

Practitioner

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This OPEN Quick Guide provides an overview of what reflection and review means for practitioners. It provides you with practical advice to nurture a culture of evidence-informed practice and continuous improvement.

What

Across all stages of a program or service cycle, you gather enormous amounts of information to help make decisions. Reflect and Review is the process of making sense of this information for the purposes of continuous improvement and evidence building. Essentially, it allows you to gain new knowledge to adapt and enhance your approach.

For practitioners, this means thoughtfully considering an experience or client interaction and identifying the strengths, weaknesses, underlying assumptions and power dynamics with a mind to continuously improve.¹ This also means drawing on the data that you have collected to inform your next steps, for example, the level of client engagement or the number of clients successfully completing the program.

How

Reflect and Review; stop, check-in and create a tangible action plan based on findings.

As you engage with clients you will be gathering lots of information to design, develop and improve your approach e.g. the best available research, practice expertise, program data, and client and community feedback. All of this information needs to be analysed and interpreted to produce 'findings'. Then, to deliver evidence-informed practice and achieve better outcomes we link these findings with action.

Creating the right environment²

Being reflective is not only about asking the right questions, but it is equally important for you to create a safe environment where team members are comfortable and supported to share their learnings. Key ways to do this include:

- Being non-judgemental
- Maintaining confidentiality (relevant in both group and individual settings)
- Being open to new perspectives
- Being respectful and accepting

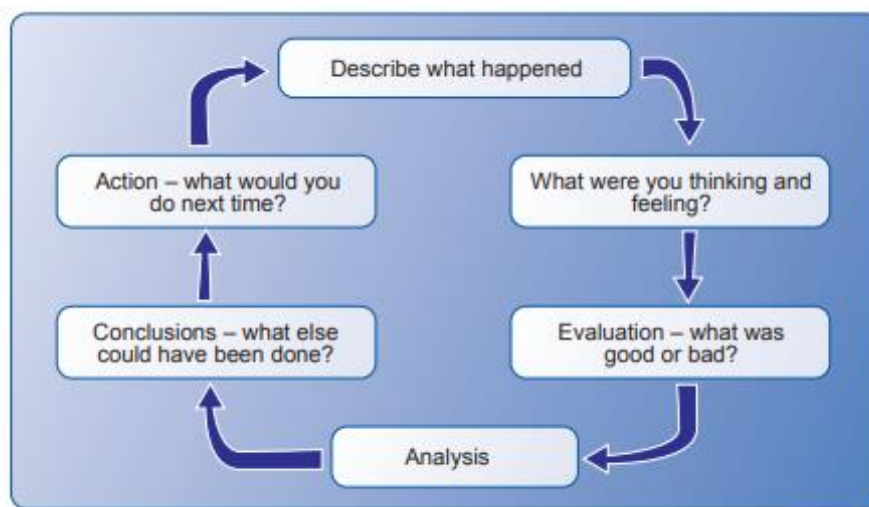
¹ Schon D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. London. Temple Smith.

² Fook, J (2007). Reflective Practice and Critical Reflection. In J Lishman (ed.), *Handbook for Practice Learning in Social Work and Social Care, Second Edition: Knowledge and Theory*. Jessica Kingsley, pp. 363–75.

With this in mind, here are three Reflect and Review approaches to get you started:

Gibbs' reflective cycle

Gibbs' reflective cycle (pictured below) is one of the most widely referenced tools to embed reflective processes in practice.³ The model employs a series of critical questions focussed on transforming and adapting practice to achieve better outcomes and acknowledges that learning comes from both successful and challenging practice experiences. Gibbs' approach can be used to guide a reflective session one-on-one with your supervisor or as a team.



What? So What? Now What?

The '**What, So What, Now What**' model is another useful starting point to reflect on the theories, assumptions and power dynamics inherent in a client engagement and how you might adapt and learn going forward.⁴

- 'What?' includes questions such as: initial expectations, what happened and what was observed.
- 'So what?' dives deeper, looking at the new skills you might have learnt as a result of the interaction as well as learnings about the client or community.
- 'Now what?' is future focussed, looking at how new knowledge and insights can be applied to improve future practice.

³ Gibbs, G, (1988) *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*, Oxford, Oxford Brookes Further Education Unit.

⁴ Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., Jasper, M. (2001) *Critical reflection in nursing and the helping professions: a user's guide*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

CRITICAL REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS
Here are some examples of critical reflective questions you might like to try during your next supervision

 **WHAT WAS I ASSUMING? WHAT WERE MY PRECONCEPTIONS AND HOW MIGHT THESE HAVE INFLUENCED WHAT I DID?**

 **WHAT BELIEFS DID I HAVE ABOUT POWER? HOW DID THESE AFFECT WHAT I DID OR CHOSE TO SEE?**

 **HOW HAS MY THINKING CHANGED? HOW MIGHT I USE MY POWER DIFFERENTLY IN THE FUTURE?**

Critical Incident Technique

You might like to try the ‘critical incident’ technique to structure your next group reflection. This involves writing down a significant incident that happened during practice. Each individual then presents their unique incident to the group and together you discuss by asking critical reflective questions (examples on the left). Together you reflect on the theories and evidence used during the incident as well as strategies that could be used to improve your practice approach next time.⁵

Tools

Here are some more useful tools to kick start your Reflect and Review process:

<p>Community Care: Tools for Reflective Practice</p>	<p>Community Care’s tools include a guided reflection using the weather as a metaphor and playing ‘snap’ to identify the interconnections between social work theories</p>
<p>Stronger Safer Together: A reflective practice resource and toolkit</p>	<p>This toolkit provides resources for delivering targeted support collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families</p>
<p>National Child Welfare Workforce Institute: Data-Driven Decision Making and Continuous Quality Improvement</p>	<p>Here you will find links to modules, webinars, and videos on data-driven decision making and continuous improvement</p>

⁵ Fook, J (2007). Reflective Practice and Critical Reflection. In J Lishman (ed.), *Handbook for Practice Learning in Social Work and Social Care, Second Edition: Knowledge and Theory*. Jessica Kingsley, pp. 363–75.