# Reflective supervision:
## Resource Pack

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Edited by Steve Flood

'Maybe reflective practices offer us a way of trying to make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos ...'
(Ghaye, 2000)

# Contents

# Foreword

A good supervisor is able to contain the supervisee's anxiety, stress and hope and model the kind of relationship practitioners are expected to build with children and families. A supervision experience should enable the practitioner to walk away feeling less anxious than when they walked in, and with a clearer view of what the child, family and organisation require, what actions are most likely to produce the best results, and what to do next.

At its best reflective supervision offers a safe space for a practitioner to slow down and think, explore possibilities, look for meaning and a way to do their work well.

This Resource Pack of tools is the result of a two-year Research in Practice Change Project which set out to contribute to the evidence that informs reflective supervision, with a core focus on exploring how reflective supervision can:

> Support analysis and critical thinking in work with children and families

> Contribute to the building and sustaining of practitioners' emotional resilience.

It builds on a previous Change Project (Brown and Turney, 2014), which explored analysis and critical thinking in assessment, including the important role of supervision.

Whilst the project's engagement with the research literature revealed how much remains unproven about supervision and the use of reflective methods, participants' commitment to reflective supervision held over the course of our exploration. This is because the experience of the participants (from 19 local authorities) supports the currently available evidence that a reflective approach to supervision:

> Facilitates direct work with children, young people and families

> Supports safe and proportionate decision-making

> Helps keep staff well.

These are facets of practice which, when developed and supported, are likely to contribute to more positive outcomes for children and families. Learning from the project also reinforced our understanding of the inter-related nature of analysis and critical thinking and emotional resilience, suggesting it is important to concentrate on developing both in supervision.

What we also learnt is that reflective supervision can be the space where a learning culture takes root, from the bottom up. When the right building blocks are in place, and opportunities for critical reflection are provided at all strategic levels, reflective supervision seems to offer both supervisors and supervisees the chance to take a step back from process and procedure, to explore what is shaping practice and support supervisees to develop and apply professional judgement.

Social work and family support with children and families involves dealing with complexity and uncertainty. While practitioners often cannot *know* the best course of action, they need to be able to make well-reasoned judgements and understand the far-reaching implications of decisions for the child. We believe reflective supervision has a vital role to play in that process.

*Ferdia Earle, Jo Fox, Caroline Webb and Susannah Bowyer*

# 1. Introduction

## About this Resource Pack

This Resource Pack comprises a suite of 25 tools designed to help practice supervisors and supervisees, team leaders and organisations build, develop and consolidate reflective supervision in child and family services.

It will help supervisors, teams and organisations who want to move towards a more reflective style of supervision think about where and how to start, and help those already committed to practising reflective supervision think about how they can best consolidate and build on what they do.

The Resource Pack does not attempt to offer the last or definitive word on supervision; no resource could claim to do that. But the tools have been collated and developed during a two-year Research in Practice Change Project (see below) involving 19 local authorities. That is, they have been developed, tested and evaluated in the real world. These are tools that supervisors, supervisees and their organisations have found worked for them.

### How to use this pack

There is no 'right' way to use the tools. Each tool comes with a summary of aims, application and instructions, but they are designed to be flexible and adaptable to local working and cultures. Each may be used as a standalone; some might be used regularly, with others using them once a year might be appropriate. We are certainly not proposing that anyone would wish to use all 25 simultaneously.

The accompanying commentary in this pack is intended to provide an evidence-informed context to help supervisors, supervisees, teams and organisations think about how to get the most from the tools. This includes discussion of the evidence base for the benefits of supervision, the influence of organisational cultures, how to build a learning culture, and some conceptual models to help supervisors and supervisees think about reflective learning.

The commentary also includes dedicated sections on the two key aims of the project – the role of supervision in contributing towards analysis and critical thinking in frontline practice and in the development of a resilient workforce. A further section includes suggestions for how organisations can approach recording reflective supervision.

## Who is this Resource Pack for?

The Resource Pack is intended for supervisors and supervisees across child and family services, including: multi-agency early help; child protection social work; looked after children services; practice and policy development activities; those new to practice supervision as well as those looking to advance their skills and knowledge; those working in settings where supervision is not so well embedded as well as those where it is well established.

## Using the tools alongside existing practice frameworks

In both national and local policy there is increasing emphasis on developing and implementing coherent 'practice systems' within which to work with children and families. Many organisations use a combination of practice frameworks (such as Systemic Practice, Reclaiming Social Work, the Family Partnership model), practice tools or models (such as Signs of Safety), evidence-based programmes (such as Multi-Systemic Therapy), and practice principles and values on which to develop a shared organisational culture (such as Restorative Practice).

Common values of strengths-based and relationship-based practice underpin many of the practice systems currently gaining traction, as does an active commitment to the use of evidence to inform practice. Many organisations are engaged with more than one practice framework or system and use a range of practice tools. In Lincolnshire, for example, the Signs of Safety model is actively complemented by other tools, such as the Research in Practice Anchor Principles (see section 7) and the Kolb cycle (see section 6).

The fact that this Resource Pack was developed and tested with practitioners working across 19 organisations with a variety of practice frameworks gives us confidence that the tools and approaches explored here can, with the right organisational commitment and support, be integrated within practice systems geared towards strengths-based and relationship-based practice.

## A note about language

We use the terms 'practitioner', 'professional' or 'worker' interchangeably to refer to frontline staff working directly with children and families. 'Supervisee' means anyone who receives supervision; 'supervisor' refers to anyone delivering it (not just line managers), which might include Team Managers, Advanced Practitioners, Practice Educators or equivalent roles.
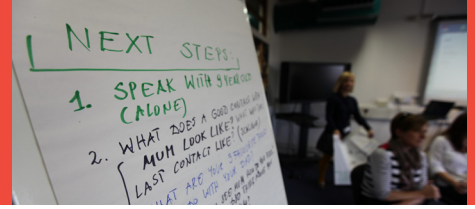
## How this Resource Pack was developed

This Resource Pack was developed through a Research in Practice Change Project involving participants from 19 local authorities that ran between 2014 and 2016. The Change Project method (see p111) draws on action research and action learning theory and brings together researchers and practice experts to explore key issues identified by the Research in Practice network. Read about all our Change Projects at **www.rip.org.uk/change-projects**

A Development Group works to develop resources, which are then tested in practice and further developed by a Pilot Group. Change Projects have proved an effective method for engaging academic and professional experience to explore pressing practice issues – evidence-informed practice in action.

This project aimed to contribute to the evidence base for reflective supervision by homing in on two research-informed questions:

1. How can reflective supervision support analysis and critical thinking in work with children and families? (see section 7)

2. How can reflective supervision contribute to the building and sustaining of practitioners' emotional resilience? (see section 8)

Watch a short film introducing the project here. **www.rip.org.uk/reflective-supervision-resources**

This project builds on a previous Change Project, which led to publication of a handbook, *Analysis and Critical Thinking in Assessment* (Brown et al, 2012, revised by Brown and Turney, 2014). Available online at **www.rip.org.uk/acta2**

# 2. Supervision: A brief overview

*'Effective supervision is the cornerstone of safe social work practice. There is no substitute for it.'*
(Laming, 2003)

High-quality supervision has long been viewed as a fundamental 'cornerstone' (Laming, 2003: 211) and 'an integral element of social work practice' (DCSF, 2009: 29). Direct work with children and families can be highly rewarding as well as complex, stressful and emotionally demanding. Organisations have a duty of care to their workforce and good-quality supervision can support practitioners' wellbeing and job satisfaction, and may support workforce retention.

**Morrison's four functions of supervision**
Across the range of professional contexts in multi-agency practice the term 'supervision' can mean quite different things. The definition most widely used in social work theory and practice is Tony Morrison's:

*A process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another in order to meet certain organisational professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users.*
(Morrison, 2005)

He goes on to describe four key interdependent functions of supervision:

> **Management** – Ensuring competent/accountable practice and performance

> **Development** – Facilitating continuous professional development

> **Support** – Providing personal and emotional support to workers

> **Mediation** – Engaging the individual with the organisation.

In practice, the quality and consistency of supervision varies. In 'good' supervision, the process flows between Morrison's four functions. However, delivery of supervision is frequently challenged by resource pressures and practitioners' support and development needs can be overshadowed by performance measurement and management oversight.

In 2009 the Social Work Task Force reported that social workers in England were receiving variable access to supervision, which was largely process-driven and focused on case management (DCSF, 2009). More recent research (Manthorpe et al, 2015) suggests process and performance often continue to dominate. Many practitioners are not receiving supervision as often as recommended in policy (Baginsky et al, 2010) and studies highlight that practitioners want more time for critical reflection (Jack and Donellan, 2010).

Inadequate and inconsistent supervision is linked to detrimental effects on practitioners, and has been highlighted as a significant factor in serious case reviews (Brandon et al, 2008; Laming, 2003).

## Benefits of supervision: What does the research say?

Research suggests supervision is associated with a variety of positive outcomes for supervisees, organisations and (potentially) service users.

### Benefits for supervisees

> Supervision is associated with increased job satisfaction (Barth et al, 2008; Lee et al, 2011; Manthorpe et al, 2015; Renner et al, 2009) and a perception among staff that it improves their practice and helps them prioritise and manage their workload (Manthorpe et al, 2015; Juby and Scannapieco, 2007; Collins-Camargo and Millar, 2010).

> Supervision may affect the extent to which employees believe an organisation values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing (Landsman, 2008; Gibbs, 2001; Collins-Camargo and Royse, 2010).

> Good supervision is associated with lower levels of practitioner stress, burn-out and role conflict (Lloyd et al, 2002; Mena and Bailey, 2007; McFadden et al, 2014) and greater staff wellbeing (Kinman and Grant, 2016).

> An empowering supervisory approach may affect practitioners' own feelings of empowerment and increase their ability to make decisions (Cearley, 2004).

> Supervision may be particularly important for workers in the early stages of their career; Manthorpe et al (2015) found NQSWs who had infrequent supervision were less likely to feel that they had a manageable workload, less likely to be engaged with the job and more likely to describe working conditions as poor.

### Benefits for organisations

> Supervision is associated with improved job performance (Smith et al, 2007) and improvement in workers' perceptions of their own levels of critical thinking in case analysis and planning (Lietz, 2008; Smith et al, 2007).

> Supervision is associated with practitioners' commitment to an organisation and intention to stay (Renner et al, 2009; Strand and Dore, 2009; Landsman, 2008; Bowyer and Roe, 2015).

> The quality of supervision and the supervisory relationship are often highlighted as important factors in promoting staff retention (Dickinson and Perry, 2003; Yankeelov et al, 2009; Gibbs, 2001; Gonzalez et al, 2009); supervision may be especially important for retaining workers with low self-efficacy (Chen and Scannapieco, 2010).

### Benefits for service users

> There is limited research into how supervision impacts on outcomes for service users (Wilkins et al, 2016); establishing a direct causal connection would, in any case, be a challenging research undertaking (Carpenter et al, 2012 and 2013; Lambley and Marrable, 2013).

> There is some limited evidence that supervision can promote service user empowerment and participation, reduce complaints and increase positive feedback (Collins-Camargo and Millar, 2010). Potential links between supervision and improved placement safety and family functioning have also been tentatively suggested (Yoo, 2002).

> Nevertheless, research findings endorse project participants' experience that reflective supervision helps facilitate direct practice, support safe and proportionate decision-making and keep staff well. It is reasonable to hypothesise, as Morrison (2005) has done, an impact on practitioners' ability to develop and sustain relationships of trust with service users and that better outcomes will follow.

### Some caveats

> While supervision appears to be linked to a variety of benefits, weaknesses in the evidence should be acknowledged. One constraint is the lack of detail provided by researchers on the nature, quality and regularity of supervision.

> Most studies are also 'correlational' and 'cross-sectional' in design – they look only at *relationships* between supervision and other variables, so we cannot say that supervision actually *causes* the effect. Nearly all studies originate in the US, which also limits their generalisability.

## Types of supervision

Practitioners working in children's social care and family support organisations need access to a range of support – from peers, managers, and external supervisors and specialists (from the same or another discipline).

Within child and family social work, one-to-one supervision is standard practice. There is a growing interest in extending this beyond social work to support safeguarding, decision-making and direct practice across the wider workforce.

There is also growing interest in group supervision and its potential for providing opportunities for peer development and shared reflective space. The Knowledge and Skills Statements for Practice Leaders and Practice Supervisors encourage 'group case consultation to help identify bias, shift thinking and the approach to case work in order to generate better outcomes for children and families' (DfE, 2015: 6).

## One-to-one supervision

*Who's involved and who's accountable?*

One-to-one supervision involves two people (not necessarily from the same professional discipline) and is usually conducted face to face (but can be by phone or video call). The supervisor is usually the supervisee's line manager but may be a senior practitioner or professional from another organisation. Management and performance management elements will depend on the supervisor's mandate; however, the line manager will hold responsibility for overall decision oversight.

*What's covered?*

One-to-one supervision discusses cases or themes and can attend to all four functions of supervision (but not necessarily in the same session or with the same person). When delivered by an external supervisor or specialist with skills specific to the practitioner's caseload, the focus may be development and/or support.

*What's needed?*

Sessions should be pre-arranged, regular and take place in a confidential space. They must be prioritised; they should be moved or cancelled only in exceptional circumstances. Agreed use of tools can support reflection. Ideally, both supervisor and supervisee will receive supervision training.

*Benefits and pitfalls*

Much of the existing research on the impact of supervision relates to one-to-one supervision. Good one-to-one supervision:

> Provides consistency

> Facilitates the development of a positive supervisor-supervisee relationship

> Is the primary opportunity to review cases, practice issues and developmental needs

> Is an opportunity to thank, praise and motivate staff (SSSC, 2014 and project participants).

Conversely, one-to-one supervision can suffer from irregularity (through failure to prioritise), lack of continuity (eg, because of management changes or poorly outlined roles) or be overlong. Preoccupation with process and performance (the management function) is another danger, which may reflect a culture of risk aversion (within the team or organisation), an attempt to fulfil all four functions within a single supervisory session, the supervisor's own learned (now habitual) experiences of supervision, or the supervisor's discomfort in a support role and/or lack of skills to promote development or reflection (SSSC, 2014 and project participants).

## Group supervision

*'Group reflection is critical. You need much more than one worker running around with a piece of string. You need a net, and a net is held by a group of people.'*

(Project facilitator)

Group supervision is the use of a group 'to implement part or all of the responsibilities of supervision' (Brown and Bourne, 1996). This is what distinguishes it from other group activities such as team meetings. It can be used to complement one-to-one supervision or on its own. It is important to recognise that individual and group supervision are complementary practices; one should not take place at the expense of the other (Gibbs et al, 2014).

### Who's involved and who's accountable?

Group supervision can be supervisor or peer-led. Make-up of the group depends on the goals of supervision but it can be used with a team (including very effectively with multi-agency teams) or a group of peers (eg, NQSWs or service managers). Accountability for decisions should be clarified in the contracting stage (see section 4).

### What's covered?

Group supervision can be used for case discussion and planning, or exploring team dynamics or a theme. Typically, groups may agree to supplement the professional development, support and mediation functions of supervision but keep the accountability (management) function within one-to-one supervision. There are notable exceptions, however; within the Reclaiming Social Work model, for example, group supervision is used on its own to cover all four functions of supervision.

Although many people are supported by group supervision, it may not be suitable for intentionally exploring personal and emotional issues (Kettle, 2015).

### What's needed?

Establishing a clear structure to ensure delivery of the different supervision functions and agreeing ground rules about behaviour at the start of each session are key to realising the full potential of group supervision. Ideally, facilitators will receive training in the skills needed to facilitate group supervision.

Contributory factors to successful group supervision include:

> A mutually agreed contract including purpose, focus and structure

> Trusting relationships between participants and facilitator

> Time to build relationships (particularly when working with temporary staff)

> Clear articulation of the presenting problem

> Strong facilitation

> Participants' commitment to the process

> An emphasis on the quality of group supervision, not just session frequency

> Managerial support.

(Carpenter et al, 2012; Gibbs et al, 2014; Kettle, 2015; project participants)

Group facilitators also need to have some understanding of common group processes:

**Tug of war between diversity and coherence** (Casciaro and Lobo, 2005): people are drawn to those who are similar to themselves, but being comfortable is not necessarily conducive to critical reflection.

**Group think** (Munro, 2008): bias based on over-estimation, closed-mindedness or pressure to conform to the dominant view.

**Power relations** in the group may lead to some people not contributing or not being heard. Collectively negotiating group membership and establishing a culture of open communication will help.

*Benefits and pitfalls*

Potential benefits of group supervision include the opportunity to:

> Reflect in depth on complex problems

> Pool and apply knowledge and skills

> Challenge individual perspectives (a group's diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and experience will provide different perspectives)

> Explore the skills, processes and dynamics needed in work with children and families and to influence organisational culture from the 'bottom up' ('parallel process' – see section 6)

> Provide a safe space to share feelings

> Build relationships and reduce isolation

> Develop a shared language, values and culture.

(Gibbs et al, 2014; Kettle, 2015; Lietz, 2008; SSSC, 2014)

Project participants found that group supervision also developed participants' understanding of themselves and the families they work with, increased staff confidence, energised practice and helped reduce dependence on the supervisor.

There are potential pitfalls, however. Without confident facilitation, groups can lose focus and lack challenge (eg, lapsing into 'group think') or be dominated by a few loud voices. Groups can amplify dysfunctional team processes – such as anxiety about speaking out – and confuse boundaries of responsibility and structures. And time for individual needs or cases to be explored will be limited (Gibbs et al, 2014; Kettle, 2015).

*Multi-agency group supervision*

The strength of a multi-agency teams is the variety of perspectives and practice approaches it can bring to bear on casework. To make best use of this diversity, teams might develop an approach that enables them to actively explore differences before seeking consensus. In due course, the facilitator should support the group to reach consensus on decisions and next steps.

Some simple ways to achieve this are:

a) Ask everyone to bring their dilemma about a shared case into the room prior to the supervision discussion. These should be given to the facilitator of the session who can then think about how to explore them.

b) Ask each person in the room to state what they believe their role is in this child's life and what they think they can contribute to the child's improved wellbeing.

c) Ask everyone to write down their 'best hope' for this child and family and where they would like to start in their work with them.

**Ad hoc supervision**

*'Reflection happens all the time − in the car, at lunch, over the photocopier. It's about recognising that.'*

(Project participant)

Working with children and families involves dealing with unpredictable situations and there will be times when an issue needs to be discussed before a scheduled session.

The importance of supervisor availability to ensuring staff feel supported is well documented and project participants' experience confirmed just how valued informal opportunities for reflection are. Supervisors and supervisees may discuss and make important decisions that impact on a case over lunch or on a shared journey, for example.

The potential benefits of ad hoc supervision include that it is responsive and flexible and helps the supervisee feel supported (SSSC, 2014). Ad hoc discussions can constitute a supervision session. Potential dangers include developing actions without adequate reflection and analysis and challenges in how to record discussion and actions (see section 9), with repercussions for worker development and decision-making (SSSC, 2014). Project participants also warned that being too available to supervisees can create dependency.

*Making best use of ad hoc conversations*

Project participants suggest a practical approach to optimising ad hoc supervision. If an ad hoc conversation has been requested, supervisees can be encouraged to think through their concerns by first taking five minutes to consider the questions in **Tool 5**. This can also form the basis of the record.

Sometimes this will be enough to help the supervisee resolve the issue on their own or hold on to it until their next planned supervision, promoting independent decision-making and reducing supervisor dependency. If an ad hoc session is still required supervisees should try to identify the issue they would like support with.

# 3. What is reflective supervision?

*'We need to foster resilience by providing ... staff with the scaffolding they need to get out there, work with the most vulnerable members of our society with the emotional intelligence and compassion that will make a difference. Relationships are at the heart of good ... practice and relationships must be at the heart of the way we supervise and manage as well.*
(Wonnacott, 2013)

## Return of the 'reflective practitioner'

As many commentators have noted, safeguarding and social work practice with children and families over recent decades has been dominated by a 'technical, rational approach to practice... the development and introduction of procedures, checklists and processes as a way of managing the increasing volume and complexity of the work and to assist practitioners to predict and minimise risk' (Gibbs et al, 2014: 11). In this context, the most common supervisory model has been an *instrumental* one (Manthorpe et al, 2015) in which supervision focuses primarily on administrative/ case management functions in order to assess the performance of the employee in line with the organisation's duties and responsibilities (Carpenter et al, 2012).

In recent years, there has been a resurgent understanding of the fundamental importance of relationships and strengths-based direct work in safeguarding and supporting change for children and families (eg, Munro, 2008 and 2011; Care Inquiry, 2013; Featherstone et al, 2014). In this context 'the reflective practitioner' 'has emerged as 'an alternative model of expertise' (Gibbs et al, 2014: 11).

Effective reflective practice is seen in terms of the quality of relationships and an ability to empathise and be thoughtful in making sense of complex situations (ibid). Supporting reflective practitioners requires a different kind of supervision, which can provide:

> A space in which practitioners can build their capacity to think about and analyse complex situations

> Containment for practitioners' emotional responses to direct work.

> A means for practitioners to make use of their own experience and develop awareness of how their experience informs their practice.

(Morrison, 2001; Sheppard, 1998)

## Defining reflective supervision: It's a learning process

Reflective supervision is above all a learning process in which the supervisor engages with the supervisee to:

> Explore a supervisee's practice and factors influencing their practice responses (including emotions, assumptions, power relations and the wider social context)

> Develop a shared understanding of the knowledge base informing their analysis and the limitations of their thinking, and

> Use this understanding to inform next steps.

(Wonnacott, 2014)

There is no simple or magic formula for this complex task. What is important is that:

> Reflective supervision is driven by experiences of the learner

> The supervisor provides the space and context for learning

> The supervisor takes the role of facilitator (see below) rather than that of 'expert', thereby promoting ownership of decisions by the supervisee

> Supervision is seen as part of an ongoing learning process that engages adult learning theory and reflective practice.

(Ruch, 2013)

Project participants found that Morrison's (2005) application of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle provides the most helpful basis for the concept for reflective supervision.

Morrison showed how supervisors can draw practitioners through the learning cycle and avoid any inclination to jump to an immediate solution or act without reflection and analysis. Morrison advocated using the cycle both in supervision and in practice. (Morrison's adaptation of Kolb's cycle is discussed fully in section 6, which also includes discussion of other conceptual models.)

## Six principles of reflective supervision

In developing a shared understanding of reflective supervision, project participants drew on the research evidence and their practice experience to develop six evidence-informed principles of reflective supervision.

1. To deepen and broaden workers' knowledge and critical analysis skills.

2. To enable confident, competent, creative and independent decision-making.

3. To help workers build clear plans that seek to enable positive change for children and families.

4. To develop a relationship that helps staff feel valued, supported and motivated.

5. To support the development of workers' emotional resilience and self-awareness.

6. To promote the development of a learning culture within the organisation.

## The supervisor as learning facilitator

The supervisor's role in facilitating reflective learning is critical. The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Practice Supervisors sets out the skills needed for 'developing excellent practitioners'. Practice supervisors should:

> 'Facilitate use of the best evidence to devise effective interventions'

> 'Recognise the strengths and development needs of practitioners'

> 'Use practice observation, reflection and feedback mechanisms, including the views of children and families, to develop practice'

> 'Develop a culture of learning and improvement, where staff are sufficiently stretched and mentored to meet their aspirations'

> 'Recognise when the role of Practice Supervisor is to teach and when it would be more effective to draw on practitioners' own knowledge'. (DfE, 2015)

## Asking effective questions and listening deeply

A supervisor's ability to ask questions that promote critical reflection and ownership of decision-making will model the 'parallel process' (see section 6) in which practitioners engage with families. **Tools 10, 12 and 15** set out suggested questions and types of question that supervisors can ask.

Effective questions might be:

> **Curious:** helping us to avoid assumptions and engage others by trying to understand how they arrived at their point of view, even if we do not necessarily agree with it (Dwyer, 1999 and Hughes, 2008 cited in Gibbs et al, 2014). Asking *why* a practitioner has chosen a course of action, or why a particular event occurred. Asking 'what else could this be?'

> **Strengths-based:** enabling learning through reflection on what is working well. 'Tell me something you're proud of?' For example, see Research in Practice's practice tool: *Appreciative Inquiry in child protection* (Martins, 2014: p11-12).

> **Solution-focused:** asking how problems have been overcome previously and encouraging these 'solutions' to be done more (de Jong and Berg, 2002 and Turnell and Edwards, 1999 cited in Gibbs et al, 2014).

Listening deeply to responses to such questions, both to what is and is not being said and to the emotion being expressed, is at the heart of both reflective practice and supervision.

# 4. Agreeing the supervision contract

Most supervision policies include a contract or agreement between the supervisor and the supervisee. The most important part of the contract is the discussion that takes place before it's signed (see **Tool 2**), as this is when the supervisor and supervisee can explore their expectations of each other and of supervision.

Morrison (2005) lists some characteristics that contribute to effective supervision agreements. Effective agreements should:

> Be supported by agency policy

> Clarify purposes and tasks of supervision

> Include the four functions of supervision (see section 2)

> Include the four stakeholders (see Morrison's 4x4x4 model section 6)

> Cover frequency, location and recording of supervision

> Clarify what is, and what is not, negotiable

> Agree how feedback will be given

> Clarify the boundary of confidentiality

> Set down how the contract will be reviewed

> Be written and signed by both parties.

Morrison (2005) also identifies key tasks in establishing the role, function and process of group supervision:

> Clarify the purpose, focus and key tasks of the group

> Clarify its mandate and decision-making authority

> Define boundaries (eg, who should attend)

> Negotiate the role and authority of the facilitator

> Agree on the range of methods to be used.

Project participants identified an additional ground rule – that participants are not bound to speak/contribute in a group session. They found this is useful when introducing group supervision or when new members join a team or group.

The methods and tools used in supervision should be tailored in light of the experience and developmental needs of individual supervisees. Discussions to inform a useful supervision agreement will allow the supervisor to build an understanding of:

> The supervisee's supervision history

> The supervisee's stage of professional and personal development

> The supervisee's preferred learning styles.

(Gibbs et al, 2014)

It is particularly important to establish supervision as a two-way process. Supervisor and supervisee must both prioritise and prepare for it in order to ensure the most is made of each session. The contract might specify, for example, that supervisees should complete summary case notes for the cases they wish to discuss. Or they can be supported to identify and begin to work through their concerns using one of the preparation tools (**Tools 5 and 6**).

A supervision agreement should be reviewed at least annually. Davys and Beddoe (2010) identify useful questions for the supervisee to use to prepare for the review of the agreement (**Tool 3**). The supervisor should also prepare for the review by reflecting on their role and seek feedback from the supervisee. In doing so, they must be able to listen to the feedback and consider the implications for the relationship and for the agreement (Gibbs et al, 2014).

## Tools to support contracting of supervision

**Tool 1 Exploring expectations in the supervisory relationship**: When the supervisor and supervisee hold similar expectations, the casework experience is richer and more pleasant for both. This tool is intended to help the supervisor and supervisee understand each other's expectations.

**Tool 2 Supervision contract discussion**: This interactive tool can be used to explore and agree key supervision activities and record the key outcomes of the discussion. This can then form the basis of the contract between the supervisor and supervisee.

**Tool 3 Group supervision contract discussion:** A tool intended to act as an aide-mémoire for setting up group supervision and negotiating a supervision contract with members.

**Tool 4 Supervision contract review**: This interactive tool sets out a series of questions for the supervisee to complete in advance of the review session.

## Tools to help the supervisee prepare for supervision

**Tool 5 Preparation tool:** This tool supports the supervisee to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of the child's lived experience and next steps, and/or define the issue they would like support with.

**Tool 6 Framing the dilemma:** Many tools that are helpful to supporting decision-making and critical thinking require the supervisee to identify and clearly articulate a key issue. This tool supports the supervisee to define the key issue faced by the child to the best of their deduction.

**Developing a strong relationship: The CLEAR model**
Clarifying expectations provides the basis for a strong supervisory relationship. The CLEAR model developed by Peter Hawkins in the 1980s (and adapted here) can support supervisors and practitioners to develop a within-session process that promotes a strong relationship and boundaries for safe exploration of practice.

| CLEAR supervision model | Process |
|---|---|
| **Contract** | Supervision session starts by establishing the practitioner's desired outcomes, what needs to be covered and how the supervisor and the supervisory process can be most valuable. Ground rules and roles will also be agreed. |
| **Listen** | By using active listening and agreed reflective models and tools, the supervisor helps the practitioner to develop an understanding of the situation in which they want to effect difference. |
| **Explore** | Through questioning, reflection and the generation of new insights and awareness, the supervisor works with the supervisee to identify different options for handling the situation or relationship. |
| **Action** | Having explored the various dynamics and options for handling the situation, the practitioner chooses a way forward and agrees first steps. |
| **Review** | The agreed actions are reviewed. The supervisor also encourages feedback from the practitioner on what was helpful about the supervision process, what was difficult and what they would like to be different in future sessions. Agreeing how the planned action will be reviewed at future supervision sessions completes the work. |

# 5. Learning organisations

*'The best and worst features of the organisation often accompany the participants into supervision.'*
(Davys and Beddoe, 2010)

Supervision is a core element in the organisational processes designed to support practice. The organisational culture within which supervision takes place greatly influences the supervision experience, to the extent that 'the best and worst features of the organisation often accompany the participants into supervision' (Davys and Beddoe, 2010).

Organisational culture can be defined as the traditions, values, attitudes, practices and policies in which work is carried out (Hawkins and Shohet, 2006) – 'the way things work round here'. It is articulated through an organisation's stated values and purpose and through the behaviour and language of leaders.

## Characteristics of a learning organisation

These are the sorts of practice we might expect to see in a healthy learning organisation:

> Individuals and teams are allowed to dedicate work time to learning; moreover, this is celebrated.

> Facilitative, learning-focused supervision is valued, supported and well-resourced.

> All staff members, including the most senior, participate in supervision and professional development.

> The emotional impact of work with children and families is recognised and effective processes are in place to mitigate this.

> Reviews of mistakes, particularly after trying new things, are seen as an opportunity for learning, not a way of finding scapegoats.

> There are opportunities for ongoing feedback, including immediate feedback close to an event and between the levels of the organisation.

> There is room for professional autonomy and discretion in practice.

(Hughes and Pengelly, 1997; Hawkins and Shohet, 2006; Schön, 1991; Davys, 2001; Green, 2007; Eraut, 2006; Franks, 2004)

## Characteristics of dysfunctional organisations

Whereas a resilient organisation will seek to ensure a healthy work-life balance along with collaborative decision-making and opportunities for reflection (Davys and Beddoe, 2010), a dysfunctional organisation may be bureaucratic and crisis-driven and allow no time for reflection. A typology of dysfunctional workplace cultures can help us understand their potential impact on the supervisory climate.

| Dominating organisational culture | Common themes | Impact on supervision |
|---|---|---|
| *Blame and shame culture* | Defensive practice, risk averse, scapegoating, focus on individual deficits. | Focuses on surveillance (Peach and Horner, 2007) with little time for reflection. Workers may be fearful about admitting mistakes. |
| *Efficiency model* | Rigid hierarchies. Very task-orientated with less attention to personal relatedness. | Focus is on targets and outputs. Over-reliance on audit processes at the expense of innovation. |
| *Perpetual crisis* | Constant state of stress and vigilance with little time for planning. | Focuses on debriefing and survival with little time for reflection. |
| *'Workaholic' culture* | Enthusiasm and commitment blurs into a 'missionary' zeal. There is often denial, collusion or reward for overwork (Burke, 2001). | Seen as support for the 'needy', whilst attention to personal development may be seen as a reward not a right. |

(Hawkins and Shohet, 1989, 2000 and 2006, adapted from a table in Davys and Beddoe, 2010)

## Reflective supervision: The building blocks

*'Many supervisors punch above their organisational weight, frequently having a much greater influence on staff and practice than they think.'*
(CWDC, 2009)

Project participants identified key factors or building blocks for achieving good reflective supervision:

1. Relationship
2. Time
3. Space
4. Permission from a reflective organisation.

When these building blocks are in place – with supportive, challenging supervisory relationships and opportunities for critical reflection provided at all strategic levels – reflective supervision seems to offer both supervisors and supervisees the chance to take a step back from following process and procedure, from having to 'do' and to 'know'.

And crucially, reflective supervision can provide the conditions and space for a learning culture to take root within an organisation, from the bottom up.

## Relationship

*'This is about relationship. The relationship is vital to the family feeling supported through change.'*
(Project participant)

Critical reflection demands a supervisor-supervisee relationship that is trusting and challenging. Learning and change are facilitated by the support of people we trust in a safe environment where we can practise a new skill in psychological safety (Goleman et al, 2002). To build a safe environment for learning, a supervisor needs to demonstrate genuine concern, empathy and respect, a willingness to suspend judgment, and to be comfortable with a practitioner's ambiguity (Hallberg and Dill, 2011).

Many of the relationship-building skills a supervisor needs will already have been developed through working with families. When Kadushin (2002) compared what service users expected from practitioners and what supervisees expect from supervisors, the findings were very similar:

| What service users want (from a practitioner) | What supervisees want (from their supervisor) |
|---|---|
| Knows what they're doing | Good working professional knowledge of the field |
| Can work towards a goal | Skills in coordinating work |
| Is honest and realistic about what can be achieved | Setting limits and manageable goals |
| Can recognise progress and pitfalls | Monitoring progress for frontline workers |
| Can be trusted | Creating a climate of belief and trust |

This relationship exists as part of a continuum of relationships between child, family, practitioner, team and organisation. Supervisors at all levels need continuous professional development and opportunities to reflect: 'Front-line practitioners learn more about practice with children and families from the way their supervisor works with them than from discussions with their supervisor or formal training' (Hallberg and Dill, 2011).

## Case Study: Using the Family Partnership Model (FPM) to promote workers' resilience (Camden)

Camden has invested in building an early help approach based on working in partnership with families towards explicit outcomes. FPM combines the expertise of parents with that of helpers, and seeks to avoid the pitfalls associated with the imposition of 'expert' knowledge. The development of a respectful partnership provides the basis for a clearer understanding of families' strengths and for building parental self-efficacy.

These same principles are embedded in FPM supervision practice with the aim of ensuring that practitioners themselves experience partnership, support and empowerment to take out into their direct work with families.

Supervision sessions mirror the stages of the helping process with families (see below) and are intended to help staff feel valued, supported and motivated, and enable them to identify and explore the barriers and constructs they bring to their casework.

| Relationship building | Exploration |
| --- | --- |
| | Understanding |
| | Goal setting |
| | Strategy planning |
| | Implementation |
| | Review |
| | Ending |
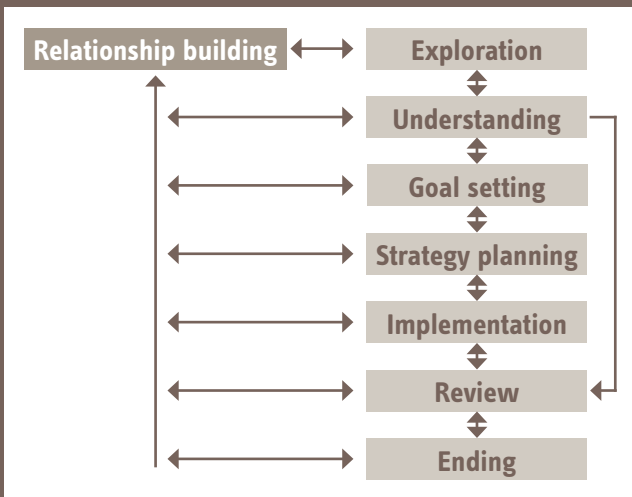
At each stage, supervisors aim to support workers to complete a three-stage 'cycle' of reflection in order to guide the conversation: 'off-load', purposeful reflection, and action. This is not a prescriptive format but a guiding structure for supervision.

Practitioner feedback is positive. Supervisees report feeling listened to, valued and motivated to think reflectively. A sense of trust is developing in being able to explore individual barriers and constructs without fearing negative judgement for doing so.

## Time

Project participants consistently raised the issue of pressure on time for supervision and critical reflection. Whilst reflective supervision will help build staff resilience under pressure, ultimately too much work is too much work. Participants shared strategies to maximise the use of supervision time, manage workload and reduce anxiety.

**Support with prioritisation**: It helps if a supervisor can be clear about the difference between urgent, important and maintenance tasks – for example:

> *Urgent* – A time-bound task; once the specified time limit has passed, the task loses impact and usefulness.

> *Important* – A required task that has a high positive impact on the team, role or responsibilities (and will have a high negative impact if not done).

> *Maintenance* – A task (usually repetitive) that needs to be done over a certain period and helps ensure the continued functioning of the team, role or responsibilities.

**Support with assessing the practitioner input/effort required**: Some tasks require more effort than others; when allocating work, it helps to discuss its complexity and expectations of how much input and what result are expected.

**Selective case discussion**: There may be a perception that each supervision session should include discussion of every open case in order to retain oversight and accountability. This is generally impossible in the time available and doesn't support practitioners in taking ownership and prioritising issues and cases for discussion themselves. However, practitioners can be asked to 'RAG rate' their cases (rating cases red, amber or green, with red indicating priority cases) to prioritise issues for discussion. As they develop confidence in 'reflection on action' (see section 6), the perceived need to discuss all cases diminishes.

The challenge of covering all four functions of supervision in every session was also raised. Recommendations were to separate reflective and case discussion through either using two different sessions (perhaps engaging an external supervisor to lead reflective supervision) and setting up opportunities for group reflection alongside one-to-one supervision.

Conversely, project participants described supervision sessions sometimes lasting several hours. Keeping to a time limit is important. It keeps reflection focused and energised and avoids inadvertently giving the message that 'this problem is so big we can't solve it', potentially increasing the supervisee's anxiety. Asking supervisees to prepare for the session by using **Tools 5 and 6** will also help and promote the supervisee's responsibility for their learning and can form the basis of the record.

## Space

Project participants identified two elements to creating a 'safe space' for learning. It should be:

**Psychologically safe:** A relationship in which it is OK to experiment, be uncertain, unknowing and express emotions, where anxieties are acknowledged and contained, and dilemmas translated into doable tasks (with help provided to do tasks if needed).

**Physically safe:** A place that's away from other people, interruptions and distractions, isn't overheard or overseen, has enough space, seating and a comfortable temperature, where everyone can hear the person speaking, and with toilet and refreshment facilities close at hand.

The team often constitutes part of a safe space but this can be facilitated or hindered by workplace environment (Biggart et al, 2016). Remote working and hot-desking arrangements in open plan offices may mean staff have limited access to 'physically safe' spaces and fewer opportunities to meet colleagues and discuss cases, increasing uncertainty and removing an important buffer of stress. Remote messaging systems have been found to help when teams are dispersed (Biggart et al, 2016), although remote working has also been described as risking 'promoting practice that is detached and literally distant from service users' (Ferguson, 2011).

### Permission from a learning organisation

In a learning organisation, staff at all levels have access to reflective supervision in which trusting, challenging relationships are expected and modelled, and time and space is prioritised for critical reflection. Supervisors (and ideally supervisees) receive supervision training, including the different skills required in one-to-one and group supervision. This sends a clear message about organisational commitment to direct practice and staff wellbeing.

Not all organisations are like this, however. But even when an organisation lacks vision and leadership, supervisors can play a pivotal role in helping to build a learning culture for practitioners from the 'bottom up'. Changes in learning attitudes and practices in just one part of an organisation can promote 'parallel process' (see section 6) elsewhere.

## Growing a learning culture

*'All it takes is one person. If you push reflective supervision, no one is going to stand in your way.'*
(Project participant)

Project participants found these activities particularly useful for promoting a learning culture:

> Beginning to deliver reflective supervision with their supervisees and seeking more reflective supervision themselves

> Setting up group supervision

> Using tools to support reflection (including in their own supervision)

> Sharing their learning about reflective supervision

> Generating discussion – eg, 'list three things supervision means to you?'Reviewing organisational supervision policy and tools

> Developing staff training on supervision

> Introducing reflective supervision audit

> Joining a reflective supervision 'community of practice' (like the Change Project).

When trying to persuade other leaders to adopt change, it can help to emphasise the link between critical reflection, staff support and retention. A staff survey on supervision is a good way to highlight and then respond to issues identified by staff themselves. Staff may also be able to influence the training department to offer training on supervision.

## Case study: Embedding reflective supervision (Cornwall)

Cornwall took a number of steps to help embed reflective supervision:

> Aligning supervision guidance with the Mission and Values statement

> Recommending that reflective supervision occurs at least every four weeks

> Making it a key feature of the 'Reconnection Clock' systemic approach

> Requiring all supervisors to undertake supervision training in the 4x4x4 model

> Offering supervisee training to all frontline practitioners, including in inductions (evaluated every four months)

> Developing evidence-based critical reflection flash cards

> Creating Principal Social Worker roles to increase supervision capacity

> Prioritising professional supervision as well as casework supervision

> Implementing different types of supervision (one-to-one, peer, and group)

> Introducing observation of practice in supervision, and as part of threshold requirements on the career and qualification pathways

> Routinely seeking feedback from supervisees on their supervision experience

> Involving practitioners and managers in refreshing and updating guidance and standards.

## Potential challenges of introducing reflective supervision

Seeking to introduce critical reflection can be unsettling for individuals, as well as organisations. Any change involves an emotional response and in this project the main challenges for some supervisors and supervisees were around exploring factors affecting emotional resilience, which could be seen as intrusive or irrelevant.

Supervisors found (as did Fook and Askeland, 2007) that what helped was:

> Highlighting the desired outcome (in this case, promoting workers' and service users' resilience)

> Clarifying how disclosure would be used

> Reassuring supervisees they could choose only to share information about factors they thought affected their work

> Creating a team environment in which reflection can safely take place.

## Introducing new tools

Learning from the project and project evaluation suggests that introducing new tools to support reflective supervision and help build a learning organisation works best within the context of a trusting supervisory relationship and when:

> Their use is negotiated between supervisor and supervisee (and time taken to learn their use together)

> They are introduced progressively (ie, simpler tools, and those that fit within existing approaches, are introduced first)

> The supervisee is given control of the tool in supervision

> It's clear what will be done with any information shared by the supervisee (this should be clarified early on in the contracting stage: see section 4)

It also helps if tools are introduced in a team/organisational context where critical reflection is cultivated and time taken to explore how this will be achieved (group supervision may help), when 'champions' are appointed to promote use of tools, and when tools the supervisor wants to use are experienced by them as a supervisee first.

## Double loop learning

A concept central to understanding and developing learning organisations is '**double loop learning**' (Argyris and Schön, 1996). Single-loop learning describes a repeated attempt to solve the same problem, without varying the method and without questioning the goal: a repeated cycle of 'Do', 'Learn', 'Review'. In contrast, double loop learning adds an additional element: 'Do', 'Learn', 'Review how we are doing' and 'Review why we are doing what we do/are we doing the right things?' This second loop provides the opportunity to modify or reject a goal in the light of experience or to recognise that the way a problem is defined and solved can be a source of problems in itself.

**Figure illustrating single versus double-loop learning**



**Single-loop learning**
The most common style of learning is just problem-solving – improving the system as it exists

**Assumptions**
*Why we do what we do*

**Strategies and techniques**
*What we do*

**Results**
*What we get*

**Double-loop learning**
More than just fixing the problem, this style of learning questions the underlying assumptions, values and beliefs behind what we do
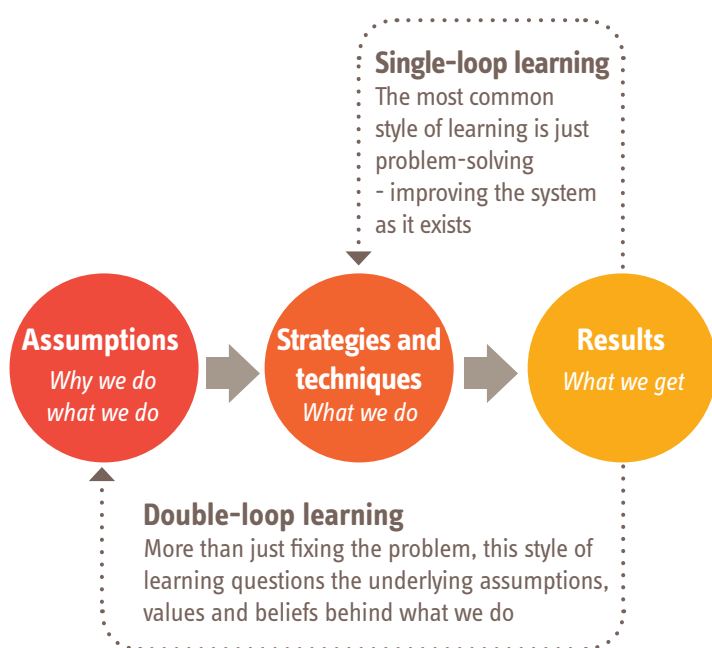
## Auditing reflective supervision

Learning organisations seek to understand the difference made by approaches in which they invest. One aspect of this process is audit of supervision and case records.

Effective audit is not a tool of a 'blame and shame' culture. Some authorities participating in the project were described as having effectively developed into learning organisations after implementing audit processes, including themed case audits, that promoted a sense of ownership of shared learning throughout the organisation. Peer and multi-agency audit were found useful, as well as practice observation.

When used well, audit can be a useful mechanism and should be:

> Proportionate – not everything needs to be looked at and not always at the same depth

> Focused on *outcomes* not *outputs*

> Placing the needs of children and families at the centre

> Used to inform and improve practice and service delivery

> Motivating in recognising and improving good practice, rather than being punitive – audits should not negatively affect staff morale!

(Munro, 2008)

In Lincolnshire, to give a basis for challenge and to check the supervisee has reflected on the effect of supervision, practitioners are frequently asked:

*On a scale of 1 to 10, how far has your social work practice been affected by the supervision you receive?*

**Case study: Using the principles of reflective supervision to promote a positive organisational culture** (North Yorkshire)

North Yorkshire's Effective Reflective Supervision for Managers programme includes two consecutive days of teaching followed by a period in which candidates make a video recording of their supervision practice. They then re-group for a final day of experiential learning. This includes peers viewing the recording and giving feedback on supervision practice and reflective skills within a safe environment conducive to learning.

Using the six principles of reflective supervision (see section 3), staff in North Yorkshire developed an audit tool as a means to critique the programme and identify strengths and areas for development. This tool is proving invaluable for the quality assurance process in North Yorkshire.

## A tool to support audit of reflective supervision

**Tool 7 Reflective Supervision Audit tool:** An interactive tool developed by project participants to provide a framework for auditing the occurrence and quality of reflective supervision. The tool is intended to facilitate the identification of practice that may need challenging and practice that should be promoted more widely.

# 6. Thinking and reflecting: Models to support reflective supervision

This section discusses some key concepts and models of reflective practice and adult learning, including group learning, which project participants found particularly helpful. While by no means exhaustive, the models, concepts and ways of thinking outlined here should help individual supervisors, team managers and their organisations think about how best to build and consolidate reflective supervision as a continuing learning process.

## 'Reflection in action' and 'reflection on action'

Schön's (1983) interest in professionals' ability to develop their practice through 'think[ing] on their feet' led to the concepts of *reflection in action* and *reflection on action*.

### Reflection-in-action
> Works on getting to the bottom of what is happening in the experiencer's processes, decision-making and feelings at the time of the event or interaction.

### Reflection-on-action
> Works on sifting over a previous event to take into account new information or theoretical perspectives available in conjunction with the experiencer's processes, feelings and actions.

In developing a practitioner's *reflection on action* skills, a supervisor can support the development of *reflection in action* over time, helping to create an 'internal supervisor' to enable the practitioner to critique their own practice in the moment.

## Four levels of reflection

Gillian Ruch (2000) identifies four levels of reflection, which she likens to the layers of an onion. These lead us into deeper reflection on how and why we know what we know, what information is missing and other possible explanations.

Supervisors may support practitioners to focus on one or all of these levels. Reflection becomes reflective practice only 'when the critical reflection shapes future practice' (Scaife, 2010: 2).

**Technical:** pragmatic; compares performance with 'what should be done' according to policy and procedures

**Practical:** looking back and learning from practice experiences; builds practitioners' capacity to 'reflect in action' and 'on action'

**Critical:** includes focus on deep-seated assumptions, power relations, social contexts and reflexivity about the impact of self on a situation

**Process:** explores conscious and unconscious aspects of practice including emotional responses to engaging with children and families and how these shape judgements and decisions. (Ruch, 2000)

### Learning from practice

*I found Ruch's categories of reflective practice very useful in my supervisory role. Often NQSWs use a technical approach to reflection, which is retrospective, practical and at a surface level. I encouraged NQSWs to move from a technical approach and to become more critical in their thinking, considering the wider context and structures of their work.*

(Lead Practitioner)

## Kolb's experiential learning cycle

There are a range of models of reflection but Kolb's Cycle of Reflective Practice, an extension of Schön's (1983) work, is perhaps the most widely used basis for models in social work. The cycle (which was published in 1984) demonstrates how experience is transformed into learning via four stages: focus on event recall, reflection on the information, analysis and planning for action. A core strength of Kolb's cycle is that it brings cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) aspects of experience to bear on recalling information, understanding experience and planning for action.

### Learning from practice

*It is a challenge to understand how social workers learn. I used Kolb's learning cycle with NQSWs to consider their experiences of practice, how they reflected on those experiences, analysed and theorised their actions and moved on to plan how to act in future on the basis of what they had learnt. These theoretical frameworks can help us understand how learning in supervision occurs, how it changes over time and is influenced by the organisational culture in which it takes place.*

(Lead Practitioner)

## Morrison's 4x4x4 model of supervision

A particularly useful model when thinking about the supervisory relationship is Morrison's (2005) '*integrated 4x4x4*' model of supervision, which is built around three cycles each of which has four component parts, described in Gibbs et al (2014). The three cycles are:

1. Thinking about the four functions of supervision (**outer circle**) – the 'WHAT' of supervision.

2. Thinking about the key stakeholders – the 'WHO' and 'WHY' of supervision (**inner circle**). To be kept in mind by all practitioners, supervisors and leaders.

3. Thinking about Kolb's reflective learning cycle as the 'HOW' of supervision (**middle circle**).
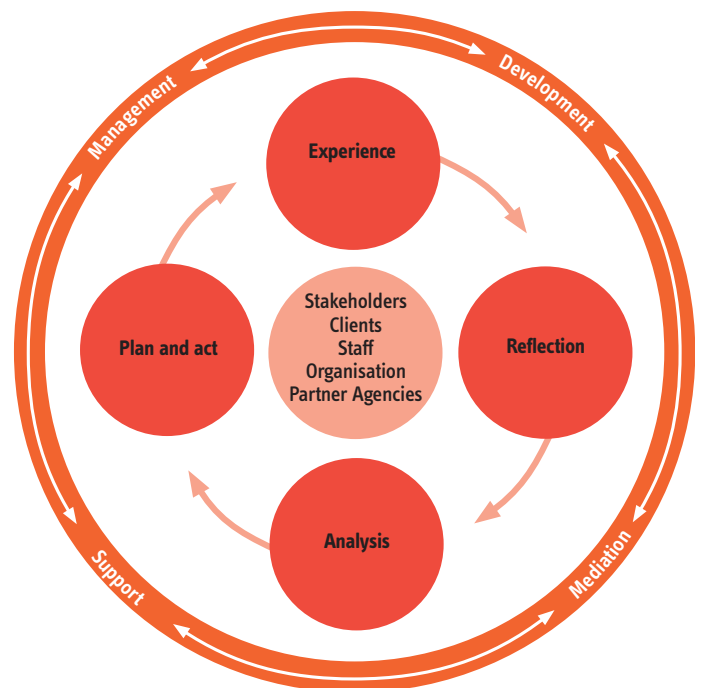


Morrison's 4x4x4 Model (2005)

## Models of reflective supervision

### The practice cycle and supervision cycle based on the Kolb cycle

Morrison's (2005) application of the Kolb learning cycle to promoting critical reflection and learning from experience forms the bedrock of the concept of reflective supervision most widely used in social work settings. Morrison articulated how, by using focused and open-ended questions (see **Tools 10, 12 and 15**) to draw practitioners through the learning cycle, supervisors can interrupt the inclination to jump straight into solutions and actions without reflection or analysis.

**The practice cycle and supervision cycle based on the Kolb cycle**



Morrison (2005) advocated using the cycle both in supervision and in practice. It can help practitioners understand a child or parent's perspective through considering their experiences, the meanings given to those experiences and how families see their own future as a result (Gibbs et al, 2014).

Examples of topics a practitioner or supervisor might explore with the supervisee in order to encourage critical reflection include:

| Experience | Reflection |
|---|---|
| Awaken awareness | Feelings |
| Recollect and describe the event | Beliefs |
| Provide the context | Behaviours |
| Tell the story | Intuition |
| Clarify the issue for supervision | Values |
| Identify the goal of supervision | Identify patterns of behavior, transference, links to the past, resistance |

| Analysis | Plan and act |
|---|---|
| Theory | What has been learned by reflecting |
| Professional practice standards and values | How practice might change |
| Policy and protocol | Flexibility and limitations of plan |
| Practice wisdom | Strategies for implementation |
| Relationship dynamics | Contingency plan |
| Roles and authority | Skill or resource requirements |
| Wider organisational, social and political context | Follow up and recording |
| | Review the plan |
| | Evaluate whether the issue has been addressed |
| | Review the session |

Based on Davys and Beddoe (2010)

## Safeguarding Restorative Supervision model

Safeguarding Restorative Supervision (SRS) was initially developed by Jane Wonnacott and Sonya Wallbank (2016) for use in health organisations but is anticipated to have relevance to all safeguarding settings. It builds on Wallbank's (2010) Restorative Supervision model, which has been shown to support professionals to think and make decisions (Wonnacott and Wallbank, 2016), and combines this with the 4x4x4 model.

The underlying premise of SRS is that developing the practitioner's resilience is a fundamental aspect of the supervisory relationship and that to achieve this the supervisor needs to provide a safe and emotionally contained space. This enables the practitioner to slow down their thinking so that critical reflection on a family's experiences can occur.

Examples of topics a practitioner or supervisor might explore with the supervisee in order to encourage critical reflection using this model include:



**Experience**
> Engage with the experience of service users
> Observe accurately
> Recognise significant information

**Reflection**
> Challenge assumptions and biases driving practice
> Individual learning and personal development

**Safe Space Containment**
Process experience and work with anxiety

**Action**
> Creative solutions
> Collaboration with other
> Challenge others
> Organisational assurance

**Analysis (critical thinking)**
> Understand the meaning of information and behaviour
> Focus on strengths
> Evaluate risk and remain 'risk sensible'
> Creative thinking
> Understand organisational requirements

Wonnacott and Wallbank (2016)

## Containment and 'parallel process'

Containment is a significant element in relationship-based practice and is particularly important as a means to manage anxiety, which is the most common obstacle to reflection (Ruch, 2002). Containment allows supervisees to reflect upon:

> The emotional experiences of children, young people, parents, carers and the actions they (the supervisee) take to 'contain' them

> Their own emotional responses and the actions taken by managers and the organisations to help 'contain' them in the course of their work.

The latter should be a form of parallel process, enabling a practitioner to experience the relationship-building skills and learning processes they need to use with children and families.

The diagrams below illustrate well the importance of containment to the child. In the first diagram, the parent's head is too 'full' to be able to receive, understand and respond sensitively to the baby, and the professional's head is too 'full' to function reflectively for the parent in turn. In contrast, in the second diagram, the contained practitioner gains the thinking space to be able to effectively contain the parent, enabling the parent to respond sensitively to the child.

**Overwhelmed**



Baby — Parent (Head full) — Professional (Head overloaded)

**Dual processes**



Baby — Parent — Professional
Received and understood
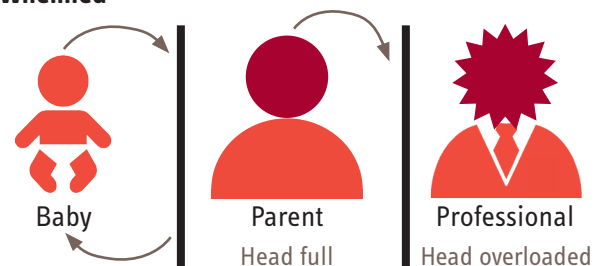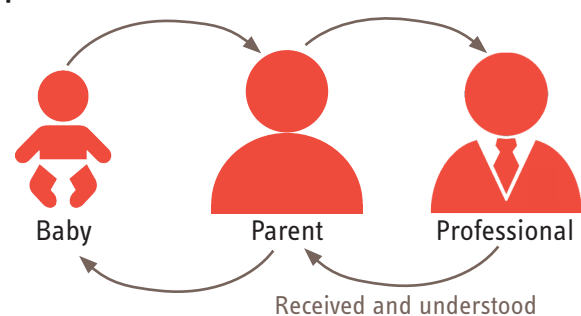
Received, understood, held in mind: sensitive response to babies cues. Reflective functioning: mind-mindedness

Based on Swindon Borough Council (2016)

**Case study: Containment – time to think**
(Swindon)

Swindon Borough Council offers reflective one-to-one supervision to frontline health and social care practitioners, alongside case management or clinical supervision. Practitioners are free to bring to the session whatever they choose.

The sessions are facilitated by a trained supervisor and are based around the Solihull Model of Containment and Reciprocity (Douglas, 1999). The service has been developed over the last year in response to the question 'How do we support supervisees to behave mindfully when our heads are full?'

An initial meeting begins to build the trusting, working relationship. This is the bedrock of creating a space where the primary focus is to share, explore and reflect upon the emotional content of daily working relationships between parents and infants, parents and practitioners, practitioner and other professionals.

At the end of a session the supervisee is asked 'Would you like to meet again?' allowing sessions to be negotiated in response to the supervisee's emotional needs. Currently up to six sessions are offered. The content of discussions are confidential and no records are kept by the supervisor (unless otherwise agreed or a safeguarding issue is identified). Verbal feedback has demonstrated the opportunity is effective and valued by those who choose to access these sessions.

## Models of group reflection

While there are many approaches to group supervision in use by different professional disciplines and in multi-professional casework, they tend to have more similarities than differences. Most are designed to ensure:

> The primary aims of the discussion are achieved in a manner that is respectful for the child/family/client and case presenter

> Group processes and contributions are valued, and attended to

> Collaboration is promoted

> Critical reflection is enhanced

> The facilitator models curiosity, respect, clarity and authority. (Gibbs et al, 2014)

Important elements include: a mutually agreed purpose, focus and structure; trusting relationships between participants and facilitator; and strong facilitation by someone with an understanding of the group processes being used.

**Tools 8 and 9** are designed to support case discussion in a group. In particular, they are designed to help:

> Create a safe space to explore a practice issue

> Promote curiosity rather than making statements

> Prevent jumping straight into problem-solving and unconstructive questioning of the presenter's actions

> Give the presenter different ways to think about the issue

> Respect the presenter as 'expert' on what it is like to work with that child and family

> Draw on collective knowledge to support the presenter to reach a solution.

A well-articulated case dilemma is absolutely crucial for focusing and containing a case discussion and **Tool 6** is designed to help with this.

**Tool 8 Systemic Reflective Space: A model of group supervision**: Systemic Reflective Space is a model of group supervision which seeks to create 'reflective space' for a group of staff.

**Tool 9 A model of group supervision used in Camden – A film:** This film demonstrates a model of group supervision being developed by colleagues in a multi-disciplinary early help team in Camden. The approach seeks to help the practitioner to develop a hypothesis to test and 'next steps' for a child and their family. The film is also a useful demonstration of the skills involved in facilitating group supervision.

**Tool 9 A model of group supervision used in Camden:** This is a tool to support the application of the above model in practice.

# 7. The role of reflective supervision in promoting analysis and critical thinking

*'It is the quality of 'thinking' that dictates the quality of practice and, ultimately, the effectiveness of any support provided to children and their families.'*

(Brown and Turney, 2014)

## Why is analysis and critical thinking important?

Work with children and families involves dealing with complexity and uncertainty. Whilst this means professionals often cannot *know* the best course of action to take, they need to be able to make well-reasoned judgements about complex situations and understand the far-reaching implications of decisions for the child (Munro, 1996). This involves analysing the sometimes limited, disparate or misleading information available and being prepared to revise judgements in the face of new information (ibid).

Without analysis and critical thinking, practitioners are essentially gathering information rather than forming professional judgements.

### Knowledge and Skills Statements

The Knowledge and Skills Statements for Practice Leaders and Practice Supervisors (DfE, 2015) recognise the central importance of a culture of 'focused thinking' to confident analysis and decision-making, and the role of supervisors in helping to build that culture. They explicitly recognise that supervisors can promote the different and equally important kinds of thinking by:

> Using focused questioning to identify whether practitioners need to adopt a more reflective and curious approach or respond with greater pace

> Consistently exploring a wide range of contexts (including family and professional stories, the chronology of critical events, social and economic circumstances)

> Generating multiple hypotheses that make sense of the complexity in which children and families are living

> Ensuring that family narratives are sought and listened to, and that all relevant family members, including fathers, are engaged in shaping plans and supported to carry them out

> Helping practitioners to make decisions based on observations and analyses, taking into account the wishes and feelings of children and families

> Promoting reflective thinking to drive more effective discussions so that reasoned and timely decision-making can take place.

## Thinking about our thinking

To be able to support reflective practitioners, it is important to understand some of the different sources of knowledge (Munro, 2002) and kinds of 'thinking' (Brown and Turney, 2014) practitioners employ in their work, often in tandem.

### Sources of knowledge

**Research evidence:** research and theory

**Practice wisdom:** folk psychology, social norms, life experience

**Values:** eg, about the balance of rights and needs and awareness of discrimination

**Emotion**: awareness of the emotional impact of work on oneself and others

### Modes of thinking

**Analysis**: To break something down into parts and explore the relationship between those parts ('helicopter vision')

**Hypothesising** involves trying out different interpretations or giving different meanings to information

**Critical thinking** is about weighing up different options, interpretations and sources of information and being explicit about why one might be chosen over another

**Intuition** draws on life experience, practice knowledge and research.

### The analysis-intuition continuum

Analysis and intuition are often presented as opposite 'poles' – analysis as precise, objective and rational and intuition as woolly, imprecise and prone to bias. Such representations oversimplify the two concepts and the relationship between them.

Recent research suggests that both types of thinking are interconnected in the brain and that an effective practitioner moves between analysis and intuition as they progress with a case (Gibbs et al, 2014: 17). It is therefore constructive for practitioners to consider how to use both, and to understand the strengths and limitations of each way of thinking.

*What is important here is not the 'truth' of the intuition but rather that the practitioner ask, 'What makes me think that?' and then pursue their hunch further, testing it so a decision can be made about its validity or otherwise.*

(Brown and Turney, 2014)

## Characteristics of an analytical practitioner

The literature points to a number of attributes and skills that support critical, analytical and reflective thinking (eg, see Balen and White, 2007; Gambrill, 2012; Holland, 2010; Lymbery, 2003). At the risk of reducing these to a 'shopping list', the following can be identified:

> Curiosity

> Open-mindedness

> The ability to manage uncertainty

> Being able to question one's own assumptions as well as those of others

> The ability to hypothesise

> Self-awareness

> Observation skills

> Problem-solving skills

> The ability to synthesise and evaluate information from a range of sources

> Creativity

> Sense making

> The ability to present one's thoughts clearly, both verbally and in writing.

(Turney, 2014)

What these skills and attributes underline is how important it is for practitioners not to jump to conclusions in order to try and make sense of complex, sometimes disparate and misleading case information. Hypothesising – trying out different interpretations of the information at hand – allows a practitioner to think about a range of possible meanings or ways of explaining what might be going on. Supervision is the space in which to test out thinking in this way.

## Promoting analysis and critical thinking

Opportunities for staff at all strategic levels to reflect, provided in the context of a culture that values and permits reflection, are crucial to enabling analysis and critical thinking. Access to research and training in critically appraising and applying this are particularly important (Gray et al, 2015).

The Research in Practice Change Project on Analysis and Critical Thinking in Assessment (ACTA) produced practical recommendations for promoting analysis and critical thinking at the organisational and team level. The project handbook and the research literature (Brown and Turney, 2014; Turney, 2014) all endorse the vital role of supervision in supporting analysis and critical thinking in practice and the role of the supervisor in:

> Modelling analysis and critical thinking

> Using effective questioning to promote this in supervisees

> Providing a safe environment for the practitioner to explore new knowledge and skills and integrate them into practice (Hallberg and Dill, 2011)

> Enabling the effective use of emotions as information - not allowing them to dominate what is paid attention to during decision-making (Gibbs et al, 2014) but also not dismissing their value (Kirkman and Melrose, 2014) or allowing them to be buried following emotionally charged situations (Rustin, 2005).

Ingram (2013) advocates for an emotionally intelligent supervision to manage the important relationship between emotions and rational decision-making. Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to empathise and to identify and manage emotions in oneself and others (Biggart et al, 2016).

## The Anchor Principles

Tools to support critical thinking when making decisions have been found to make it more likely to help clients attain desired outcomes (Gambrill and Gibbs, 2009; Holtz Deal, 2003 and Munro, 1996 cited in Hallberg and Dill, 2011). The ACTA project developed and piloted five evidence-informed questions that outline the characteristics of a sound analytical assessment and which can be used in supervision. The group called these the Anchor Principles – their purpose being to anchor assessment firmly within the context of analysis (Brown and Turney, 2014). **Tool 12** expands on these principles for the purposes of reflective supervision.

**Q. What is the assessment for?**

**Q. What is the story?**

**Q. What does the story mean?**

**Q. What needs to happen?**

**Q. How will we know we are making progress?**

Source for ACTA Anchor Principles (Brown and Turney, 2014)

Brown and Turney suggest four key things supervision should do to support analysis and critical thinking. It should:

> Provide an opportunity for reflection

> Provide an opportunity for challenge

> Provide an opportunity to test out ideas and hypotheses

> Increase a practitioner's confidence in their own judgement (Brown and Turney, 2014).

## Tools to support analysis and critical thinking in supervision

**Tool 10 Socratic questions:** This tool is intended to act as a guide to the kinds of effective questions to ask in supervision.

**Tool 11 How to run a Journal Club:** This tool sets out guidelines for setting up and running a 'Journal Club' session. It aims to combine discussion of research with application of the research to practice.

### Case study: Developing a Journal Club (Coventry)

I circulated *That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risks in adolescence* (Hanson and Holmes, 2014) to social workers in child protection, looked after children and disability teams and asked them to consider how this evidence might support the development of a more 'adolescent-centred' approach to practice.

The whole-group discussion after using the Journal Club method confirmed that practitioners were able to apply the messages from the research to a case study in a critical and reflective way. Practitioners were animated by the experience and feedback showed they found it effective in contributing to a learning culture. Practitioners felt safe sharing experiences that enabled a sense of a developing 'community of practice'.

The learning points highlighted were picked up by team managers at cluster, team and individual meetings with a commitment to developing organisational responses and training for identified needs.

**Tool 12 RiP Anchor Principles for reflective supervision:** The Research in Practice Anchor Principles can be used as a framework to encourage analytical thinking in case supervision or enable supervisors to think analytically about the needs of supervisees.

**Tool 13 Wonnacott's discrepancy matrix:** Jane Wonnacott's tool encourages reflection on what is known about a case and an analysis of what is unknown/not yet known – a vital aspect of working with uncertainty.

**Case study: Using the discrepancy matrix to promote critical thinking and inform case planning** (Wirral)

Wirral County Council has been developing reflective supervision for practitioners in Intensive Family Support Services. Wonnacott's discrepancy matrix template is used to support key workers to ask themselves: 'What do we really know about this child and their family'?

Practitioners report that the matrix:

> Helps them make sense of information from different sources

> Supports them in prioritising key areas on which to focus

> Supports clarification of what is a fact and what's an assumption

> Helps clarify what has been achieved and what needs to happen next

> Informs planning and areas that require further information

> Supports the generation of new ideas.

**Tool 14 De Bono's six hats:** This exercise helps separate thinking into different functions and roles. Mentally wearing and switching 'hats' encourages us to focus and redirect thoughts, conversations or meetings.

**Tool 15 Questions for reflective case discussion based on the Professional Capabilities Framework:** The Knowledge and Skills Statements for child and family social work focus in on knowledge and skills for child protection practice. The PCF remains a strong structure for thinking about capabilities for social work and working with the wider workforce. With this in mind, project participants produced this set of reflective cues or questions in flash card format to guide discussion across the nine domains of the PCF.

**Tool 16 Munro's decision tree:** Decision trees are a means of opening up a dialogue about casework and mapping possible consequences of decisions.

**Tool 17 Maclean's head, heart, hands and feet:** This interactive tool builds on a concept from social pedagogy to guide reflection on the range of skills and knowledge – both cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) – a practitioner draws on in their work.

In the experience of project participants, a reflective and challenging form of supervision needs to be delivered in a safe space (see section 4). This supports practitioners to think critically and analytically by:

> Containing anxiety, creating space for practitioners to think

> Supporting them to reflect on thoughts and feelings about a case

> Uncovering a 'subjective truth' by exploring assumptions, power relations, social contexts and the impact of self on a situation

> Enabling them to ask for help

> Enabling them to sit comfortably with uncertainty

> Helping them to be comfortable saying 'I didn't get it right that time'

> Trying new things

> Supporting them to plan actions with children and families.

Participants' experience echoes research findings on the role group supervision can play. It allows staff to:

> Reflect on complex problems in-depth

> Pool and apply knowledge and skills

> Challenge individual perspectives – a group's diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, experience offers different perspectives

> Access a safe space to share feelings

> Parallel process – exploring the skills, processes and dynamics needed in work with children and families.

(Gibbs et al, 2014; Kettle, 2015; Lietz, 2008; SSSC, 2014)

Importantly, participants also found that group supervision promoted shared decision-making, developed participants' understanding of themselves and the families they work with and allowed participants to learn from others' cases.

Individual feedback from the project evaluation stage found that some of the tools had helped workers to slow down and be more analytical in their approach (where previously they might have jumped from issue to action without any reflection). They were also reported to have helped staff to develop 'reflection in action' skills.

# 8. The role of reflective supervision in promoting workers' emotional resilience

*'Workers' state of mind and the quality of attention they can give to children is directly related to the quality of support, care and attention they themselves receive from supervision, managers and peers.'* (Ferguson, 2011)

## Why is emotional resilience important?

Building and sustaining an emotionally resilient workforce matters because staff need to engage in emotionally demanding, relational work with children and families in the context of resource cuts and frequent organisational change. Poor job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and stress are all linked to high turnover (Carpenter et al, 2012), which can in turn affect service delivery and, ultimately, outcomes for service users (Fox et al, 2014). There is also evidence that practitioner resilience affects service users' resilience (Hart, forthcoming).

Crucially, however, not all practitioners go on to experience burn-out, despite the challenges inherent in the work they do. Many continue to find their role rewarding and experience job satisfaction (Ellett, 2009; Nordick, 2002) while some actually appear to 'thrive' within a stressful context (Wendt et al, 2011).

**The Knowledge and Skills Statements**
The Knowledge and Skills Statements for Practice Supervisors and Practice Leaders (DfE, 2015) recognise the research pointing to the important role supervisors can play in supporting their staff emotionally. The Statement for Practice Supervisors sets out an expectation that they will be able to:

> Provide emotionally intelligent practice supervision

> Provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all staff

> Identify emotional barriers affecting practice and recognise when to step in and proactively support individuals

> Protect practitioners from unnecessary bureaucratic or hierarchical pressures and have in place strategies to help manage the root causes of stress and anxiety

> Continually energise and reaffirm commitment to support families and protect children.

## What do we mean by emotional resilience?

Until recently, research on developing resilience in social work tended to conceptualise it as an individual personality 'trait' and to focus on deficit models, such as burn-out. However, the evidence now suggests resilience is not a personality trait but is supported by 'an array of possible resources both internal and external to the person' (Adamson, 2012).

Emotional resilience is associated with a number of important external factors:

> **Job-related factors** eg, exposure to threat, public mistrust (Ellet et al, 2007)

> **Workplace factors** – caseloads, limited resources, organisational culture, social policies (Adamson et al, 2012)

> **Social support** – supportive work environment, social support from managers and colleagues (Boscarino et al, 2004; Jenkins and Elliott, 2004).

This means we can work on building emotional resilience.

## Competencies associated with the emotionally resilient practitioner

The literature points to a number of competencies associated with emotional resilience, as summarised by Kinman and Grant (2016):

> Personality traits (eg, hardiness, persistence and resourcefulness)

> Positive attitudes towards the self and others (eg, self-efficacy, self-esteem and forgiveness)

> Positive explanatory styles (eg, hope and optimism)

> Behavioural tendencies (eg, appropriate coping and the ability to set boundaries)

> Social competencies (eg, self-awareness and confidence)

> Well-developed critical thinking, problem-solving and emotion management skills.

In addition, emotional resilience is associated with workers believing in the value and efficacy of social work practice (eg, Adamson et al, 2012; Stalker et al, 2007).

## Promoting emotional resilience

As we have seen, emotional resilience is not a personality trait and greater attention is now being paid to those factors that may predict emotional resilience. In child protection workers this includes organisational factors (such as workload, social support and supervision) and individual factors (such as personal history, training and coping style) (McFadden et al, 2014) outlined above.

So promoting emotional resilience ultimately demands a systemic approach – resilient organisations develop resilient staff. Recommendations for public policy, organisations and line managers are outlined in Kinman and Grant's (2016) strategic briefing: *Building emotional resilience in the children and families workforce.* Positive supervisory relationships based on authenticity, respect and positive regard can promote the wellbeing of frontline staff (Kinman and Grant, 2016). However, in order to be truly effective, supervision should enable staff to reflect on the emotional impact of practice (including positive emotions – Collins, 2007) and provide an opportunity to model and develop learnable skills of resilience, such as self-awareness and emotional intelligence. This may be particularly beneficial in the early stages of a practitioner's career (Grant and Kinman, 2012).

## Tools to support emotional resilience through supervision

**Tool 18 Reflecting on challenging experiences:** A series of questions in an interactive template to help practitioners consider a recent experience that they found challenging, but that ultimately had a successful outcome.

**Tool 19 Supervisee anxiety scale:** This tool aims to promote practitioner self-awareness and identify any issues for discussion relating to anxieties that might be blocking the benefit supervision can offer.

**Tool 20 Seven learnable skills of resilience:** A self-audit tool designed to encourage supervisees to think about and reflect on their own resilience skills in order to support their wellbeing.

**Tool 21 Self-help audit and plan:** This tool supports practitioners to reflect on the importance of self-care and develop appropriate strategies to promote their emotional wellbeing.

**Tool 22 Wagnild and Young resilience scale:** This tool comprises a series of questions about practitioner resilience for both supervisees and their supervisors to answer. The results can then form the basis of a discussion on issues of wellbeing.

**Tool 23 Emotional resilience postcard:** This tool focuses on individual strategies to cope with the emotional demands practitioners face at work.

Project participants' experience is that a reflective and challenging form of supervision provided in a safe space supports workers to build their emotional resilience by:

> Letting them 'off load'

> Providing containment

> Helping them to critically reflect, move cases forward and develop competence, thereby contributing to reduced anxiety and increased job satisfaction

> Promoting self-care

> Thanking, praising and motivating

> Exploring strengths and achievements.

Participants suggest group supervision can support staff by:

> Building relationships and reducing isolation (and helping to mitigate some effects of modern working practice, such as hot-desking and remote working)

> Developing a shared language, values and culture (especially useful in multi-agency contexts and with new team members)

> Showing the organisation values the work of its staff.

Several project participants reported that some of the tools had helped them to develop their supervisory relationship with staff, which they believed had had a positive impact on resilience. Supervisors also reflected on the benefits of the tools in strengthening team dynamics and worker resilience by enabling staff to reflect informally with their peers. One project participant suggested that the combined effect of the benefits of group supervision were playing an important role in keeping staff well.

Participants felt the tools had helped to normalise workers' emotional responses to the job, allowing time to reflect on the personal impact of the work, where they might be having difficulties or where personal issues may be impacting on their role.

**Learning from practice**

*For a number of NQSWs, I was the person who gave them space not only to talk and reflect about their casework but also about how they were feeling. The emotional impact of social work practice, excessive work and time pressures, combined with the personal elements of learning, led to some NQSWs feeling out of control and experiencing a crisis of confidence. In these circumstances, it was even more important to ensure they were given space for 'deep reflective thinking'. Often I would ask the practitioner to give some thought to the things that were causing stress and to consider possible solutions. Drawing up an action plan to be shared with their line manager helped NQSWs to regain a sense of control and refocus on their role in the complex casework activity. These experiences reinforced my view that supervision can have a strong emotional dimension, not only for the social worker but also for the supervisor.*
(Lead Practitioner, Coventry)

## Emotional intelligence, analysis and critical thinking, and emotional resilience

Emotional intelligence appears to be central to psychological resilience (Armstrong et al, 2011). What this project reinforced is the interrelatedness of analysis and critical thinking and emotional resilience, and the key role of emotional intelligence to both.

In order to be able to think critically and effectively, staff must first be supported to contain their anxieties, 'slow down' their thinking and take the emotional risks needed to explore new knowledge and skills. They need to be supported to develop and use their emotional intelligence to identify and manage their own emotions and those of the parents/carers they work with, to empathise and use their emotional responses to inform their decision-making.

Emotional intelligence is an important aspect of emotional resilience too, enabling practitioners to reflect on the nature of their work, recognise their responses and develop management strategies.

In turn, the role of analysis and critical thinking in developing confident, competent practice may itself contribute to reduced anxiety and increased job satisfaction, and thereby emotional resilience.

# 9. Recording reflective supervision

The renewed focus on the quality of direct practice and the resurgence of reflective supervision has encompassed a shift in emphasis in audit and inspection towards seeking evidence of direct practice centred on 'the child's journey'.

However, such priorities are often at odds with electronic recording systems that have been designed with a 'technical rational' focus on performance management. As Munro reported in her review of child protection, 'the emotional dimensions and intellectual nuances of reasoning are undervalued in comparison with simple data about service processes such as time to complete a form' (Munro, 2011).

Electronic management systems tend to capture snippets of a child's story deconstructed across a system and 'feeding the machine' of process can become an end in itself. Moreover, because so much information can be stored, the temptation may be to record as much detail as possible on the premise that it may be useful in future (Gillingham, 2016). Such systems are not well suited to the work of a reflective manager whose role is not to have all the answers, but rather to offer containment and work with supervisees to accurately define the 'primary task' (Ruch, 2013).

## Why is recording important?

*'Recording is about so much more than pleasing Ofsted'*
(Project participant)

Recording is 'an integral part of the services we provide to children and their families ... an essential component of gathering information, analysis and decision-making and a means by which staff can justify, explain and be accountable for their actions' (Child Centred Practice, 2015: 21); in particular, to the child. Each time a record is made, a picture of a child's life at its most difficult is frozen in time, potentially for decades. The child's lived experience must be fairly portrayed and decisions recorded in public-facing files written in jargon-free language.

Good reflective supervision can offer the chance of moving from a generalised response to one in which the individual child and their story lives in the mind of the practitioner and responses become tailored to their needs. Project participants' experience was that when done well and proportionately, recording can actually facilitate reflection rather than hinder it. A good example is Hertfordshire's 'child's workbook' outlined in the following case study.

## Case study: The Family Safeguarding Model (Hertfordshire)

Hertfordshire was funded through the government's Innovation Programme to develop its Family Safeguarding Model (FSM). Evidence shows that practitioners can spend up to 80 per cent of their time servicing electronic information systems and only 20 per cent doing direct work (Gillingham, 2016); FSM sought to reverse this statistic.

Developing FSM included restructuring safeguarding teams by developing multi-disciplinary teams that also include specialist workers with adult mental health, drug and alcohol, and domestic abuse backgrounds. Teams have adopted monthly group case supervision redesigned to be more reflective, sharing information and risk. Case decisions are made not in one-to-one supervision, but in multi-disciplinary group supervision. All staff are trained in Motivational Interviewing (Miller and Rollnick, 1991), which is very much part of FSM and used with all families.

Recording has been reconsidered, with the development of a 'family workbook' on Herts' Liquidlogic system. This is updated monthly by each member of the multi-disciplinary team, with a summary of the work undertaken by each worker along with an outcome and analysis, including a risk rating. This has helped to make practitioners' writing more analytical and reduce duplication when it comes to court reports and child protection conference reports. There is now one record for the child and better capturing of the voice of the child. Importantly, it allows risk to be judged by the whole network, not just the social worker, helping staff feel safer. Caseloads have reduced, which has generated more time for direct work, increased staff enthusiasm and contributed to team stability.

The project has been independently evaluated by the University of Bedfordshire. Identified outcomes include a reduction in child protection plans (by 49%) and children looked after (by 10%), and repeat police domestic abuse call outs (down by 67%).

## What to record and where

Current SCIE guidance (2013) suggests the use of separate records for issues relating to the supervisee and service users. Wonnacott (2015a) recommends that ad hoc or informal discussions should be recorded in the relevant file:

> A **service user file** will include case decisions and actions and a record of the core discussion and thinking that led to a decision (SCIE 2013), and be produced in a format suitable for sharing with the child and family.

> A **personal supervision file** will include: relevant information on the supervisee's views and values, in relation to the case and other discussions; learning and development or other support needs; CPD activities/ requirements; performance issues (positive and negative); personal issues that may affect development and capacity (SCIE, 2013). Relevant sections might be linked to a child's file using the case number.

Project participants found that in deciding what aspects of ad hoc supervision to record, it helps to ask: 'Does this have a bearing on the case?'

And with regard to recording group supervision that occurs for purposes other than case management, it may help to consider:

1. What is recorded and by whom?

2. Where are records kept and who has access to them?

3. What is the process for any relevant information to be transferred to individual case or personal files?

4. How is information from group supervision shared with line managers, particularly regarding case and performance management issues?

During project evaluation, some participants said they had given workers the choice of whether or not to keep completed tools on their personal supervision file. Doing so was useful as the tool could be subsequently reviewed. A positive relationship with the supervisee aided the recording of reflection where more personal issues had been discussed.

Recording should be timely so that decisions made in supervision and which change the plan for a child and their family are available to all those involved with the case. To this end, the supervisor and/or supervisee might make notes during the session. Another option is to agree and finish them together at the end of the session to promote transparency and supervisee ownership of the record.

## Defensible decision-making: showing our workings and recording uncertainty

The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Practice Supervisors is clear about what is expected of supervisors in terms of recording. They should:

> *Establish recording processes, provide the full analysis underpinning decisions, making sure the rationale for why and how decisions have been made is comprehensive and well expressed.* (DfE, 2015)

However, project participants reported concerns about how to record hypotheses and 'workings out' without it looking as though 'we don't know what we're doing'. This reflects an understandable anxiety that recording uncertainty could, for example, be interpreted in court or in a serious case review as evidence of poor work.

But if it isn't possible to follow *how* a practitioner reached a particular conclusion, it isn't possible to explain *why* a decision to follow a particular course of action was made. Professionals cannot be expected to *know* for certain which children are safe and which are not, but can be supported to make 'the best decision at the time with the information available.'

When deciding what to include on the case file, it may help to draw on Kemshall's criteria for defensible decision-making. These are:

> All reasonable steps are taken.

> Reliable assessment methods are used.

> Information is collected and thoroughly evaluated.

> Decisions are recorded and carried through.

> Agency processes and procedures are followed.

> Practitioners and managers are investigative and proactive.

> When making a decision, the test is: Did you act 'reasonably' to gather, appraise and apply relevant information?

> Did you follow the steps that someone in your position would be expected to?

> Did you record your workings out and the decision itself?

> And, crucially, did you then put the decision into effect?

(Kemshall, 2003, cited in Child Centred Practice, 2015)

Feedback from the formal evaluation stage of the project indicated that the tools in this Resource Pack often supported the recording process and were easy to upload to electronic recording systems.

## Tools to support recording of reflective supervision

**Tool 24** **Recording template:** This interactive recording template (based on the Kolb cycle and suitable for both one-to-one and group supervision) uses open-ended questions to explore a child's current situation, reflect on the experience of working with the child and family (and gaps in knowledge about the child's situation), and support case analysis and hypothesising and the formation of next steps.

**Tool 25** **Recording template:** This interactive recording template (suitable for both one-to-one and group supervision) uses statements addressed directly to the child to bring the child 'into the room' before exploring both the strengths and risks they face in their current situation, reflecting on the views of the family and other professionals, and planning next steps.

# Reflective supervision tools

**1** **Tool 1: Exploring expectations in the supervisory relationship**

**2** **Tool 2: Supervision contract discussion**

**3** **Tool 3: Group supervision contract discussion**

**4** **Tool 4: Supervision contract review**

**5** **Tool 5: Preparation tool**

**6** **Tool 6: Framing the dilemma**

**7** **Tool 7: Reflective supervision audit tool**

**8** **Tool 8: Systemic Reflective Space: A model of group supervision**

**9** **Tool 9: A model of group supervision used in Camden**

**10** **Tool 10: Socratic questions**

**11** **Tool 11: How to run a Journal Club**

**12** **Tool 12: RiP Anchor Principles for reflective supervision**

**13** **Tool 13: Wonnacott's Discrepancy Matrix**

**14** **Tool 14: De Bono's decision-making hats**

**15** **Tool 15: Questions for reflective case discussion based on the Professional Capabilities Framework**

**16** **Tool 16: Munro's decision tree**

**17** **Tool 17: Maclean's head, heart, hands and feet**

**18** **Tool 18: Reflecting on challenging experiences**

**19** **Tool 19: Supervisee anxiety scale**

**20** **Tool 20: Seven learnable skills of resilience**

**21** **Tool 21: Self-help audit plan**

**22** **Tool 22: Wagnild and Young resilience scale**

**22** **Tool 23: Emotional resilience postcard**

**24** **Tool 24: Recording template**

**25** **Tool 25: Recording template**

# Tool 1: Exploring expectations in the supervisory relationship

**NAME** ........................................................................................................

**DATE** ...........................................................

**CHECK ONE:** ☐ SUPERVISOR

☐ SUPERVISEE

The most important part of the supervision contract is the discussion that takes place prior to signing it, because this is when the supervisor and supervisee can explore their expectations of each other and so establish the basis for a strong supervisor-supervisee relationship.

## Aim

To help the supervisor and supervisee understand their expectations of each other in the supervisory relationship.

## Application

Supervisor and supervisee should each complete this form independently, then share their responses with each other in a supervision time set aside for this purpose. Where expectations differ, discuss these and try to reach a consensus.

This exercise will be most beneficial if carried out before the supervision contract is agreed, as that will specify the goals of supervision and the supervisory style.

## Instructions

Give your assessment of what you expect to happen during future supervision sessions. Choose the number that best represents the level of your expectation for the listed behaviours to occur. Numbers correspond to the following scale:

**1 = very little extent, 2 = a little extent, 3 = some extent, 4 = a great extent, 5 = a very great extent**

| Behaviour | Expectation |
|---|---|
| | Supervisors should help manage cases |
| | Supervisors should use supervision time to discuss ways to improve practice |
| | Supervisors should be able to support supervisees to manage their workload |
| | Supervisors should motivate supervisees to perform at their highest potential |
| | Supervisees should contribute to the agenda of their supervision |
| | Supervisors should be available to pay attention to supervisees whenever they need to talk with them |
| | Supervisors should expect supervisees to ask many questions during supervision |
| | Supervisees should expect their supervisors to use their ideas in discussion during supervision |
| | Supervisors should expect to function as a teacher who is instructing the supervisee |
| | Supervisees should take responsibility for managing their workload |
| | Supervisees should expect to inform their supervisor of their needs |
| | Supervisors should be willing to tell supervisees of the weaknesses in their casework |
| | Supervisees should use supervision time to provide information about casework sessions to supervisors |
| | Supervisors should be willing to listen to supervisees' professional problems |
| | Supervisors should be available to talk to supervisees immediately after their casework sessions |
| | In the supervisory relationship, supervisors should be the superiors and supervisees subordinates |
| | Supervisees should give value judgements about their casework |
| | Supervisors should give suggestions on intervention techniques to be used in subsequent sessions |
| | Supervisors should be supportive of supervisees |
| | Supervisors should focus discussion on service users' behaviours rather than on supervisees' behaviours |
| | Supervisees should be able to discuss the emotional impact of casework in supervision |
| | Supervisors should give rationales for their statements or suggestions |
| | Supervisors should demonstrate to supervisees how to improve performance |
| | Supervisors should give supervisees the opportunity to express their opinions |
| | Supervisors should ask supervisees to think about strategies that might have been carried out differently (or may be in the future) |
| | Supervisors should be willing to listen to supervisees' personal problems |

Finally, describe how often and in what circumstances you think the supervisor and supervisee should meet for individual supervision sessions

Source: Adapted from Larson (1981)

# Tool 2: Supervision contract discussion

**NAME** ........................................................................................................................

**DATE** .................................................….

Most supervision policies include a contract between the supervisor and the supervisee. When the supervisor and supervisee hold similar expectations of supervision, the casework experience is richer and more pleasant for both.

## Aim

To help supervisor and supervisee understand one another's expectations of supervision.

## Application

This tool can be used to explore and agree the key activity areas of supervision, which can then form the basis of the supervision contract.

## Instructions

Discuss each of the aspects of supervision below and record the key outcomes of the discussion in the blank box.

| Areas for discussion | Details of agreement reached |
|---|---|
| **Supervision arrangements** | |
| Purpose: What is the purpose of supervision, from the point of view of the organisation, the supervisor and the supervisee? | |
| Frequency, location and duration: When does supervision occur? Where does supervision occur? How long is each session? | |
| Cancellation: Under what circumstances may supervision be cancelled? What about interruptions? | |
| Agenda: Who prepares the agenda? How long before the session should it be available? | |
| Confidentiality: What information will be shared outside of supervision and with whom? | |
| Recording: What will be recorded? Where, when, how and by whom? When will it be shared? Where will it be stored? | |
| Review: How often will the supervision contract be reviewed? How will the effectiveness of supervision be measured? | |

| Management function | |
|---|---|
| What information will be required about cases to inform oversight of decision-making? Who will bring the information? In what format? | |
| How much time should be spent on casework discussion at each supervision session? Where should it come in the agenda? | |
| What support should be offered in supervision for managing workload and prioritising tasks? | |
| How can the supervisee demonstrate effective outcomes in casework activity? How can the supervisor explore these? | |
| What will support the supervisee to make good decisions through critical exploration of casework (including learning style, resources, tools to support analysis)? | |
| **Support function** | |
| Has a supervision history been shared? | |
| Where will discussions about supervisee's feelings around work-related issues be recorded? How will any impact on the quality of work be explored and recorded? Who else might they be shared with? | |
| Asking for help: How can the supervisor be helpful to the supervisee? How does the supervisee seek help? | |
| Personal issues: What sorts of issues might be expected to be brought to supervision by the supervisee regarding their life beyond the workplace? Where will they be recorded? How will any impact on the quality of work be explored and recorded? Who else might they be shared with? | |
| Conflicts within the team: How will any issues affecting team relationships and functioning be dealt with? How will they be recorded? Who else might they be shared with? | |
| How much time should be spent on support discussion at each supervision session? Where should it come in the agenda? | |

| Development function | |
|---|---|
| How will supervision support registration, accreditation, and knowledge and skills requirements? What will the supervisee need to bring to supervision? | |
| How will the supervisee be supported to gain knowledge and skills required to manage their caseload? Where will these agreements be recorded and how will they be supported and monitored? | |
| What helps the supervisee learn? What helps the supervisor to understand? | |
| How will the supervisee be supported to explore and develop areas of interest and career development opportunities? | |
| How will the supervisee share knowledge and skills gained through learning and development activities? | |
| Where will discussions around development be recorded? How will development be reviewed? Who will this be shared with? | |
| How much time should be spent on development discussion at each supervision session? Where should it come in the agenda? | |
| **Mediation** | |
| How will any conflict between supervisee and supervisor be dealt with? Who will be the most appropriate third person to involve in any such disputes? How will that be done? What will be recorded and where? Who else will it be shared with? | |
| How will any conflict between the supervisee and a service user be dealt with? Who else will be involved in any such disputes? How will that be done? What will be recorded and where? Who else will it be shared with? | |
| How will any conflict between the supervisee and the organisation be dealt with? Who else will be involved in any such disputes? How will that be done? What will be recorded and where? Who else will it be shared with? | |
| How will any conflict between the supervisee and professionals in other agencies be dealt with? Who else will be involved in any such disputes? How will that be done? What will be recorded and where? Who else will it be shared with? | |
| How will feedback about performance concerns be given? When, and where? Should this be part of regular supervision or a separate session? Where will it be recorded? Who else will it be shared with? | |
| How will feedback about excellent work by the supervisee or supervisor be given? How will it be recorded? Who else will it be shared with? | |
| How much time should be spent on development discussion in each supervision session? Where should it come in the agenda? | |

**Any other topics not yet explored?**

Source: Based on Morrison (2005) and Gibbs et al (2014)

# Tool 3: Group supervision contract discussion

**NAME** ................................................................................................

**DATE** ...............................................................

Group supervision can have many advantages but these are dependent upon adequate preparation and thought beforehand.

## Aims

> To support negotiation of a group supervision contract with members

> To act as an aide-mémoire for setting up group supervision

## Application

The line manager, supervisor or facilitator should arrange a meeting between group members to agree and establish the group supervision contract.

## Instructions

Discuss each of the aspects of group supervision below and record the key outcomes of the discussion in the blank box.

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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Activity and focus** | > How will the aims and purpose be achieved – case discussion, theoretical discussion, active methods such as role-play?<br><br>> Is it a one-off group to discuss a critical issue or an ongoing group with learning and development or accountability goals?<br><br>> Is the primary focus case practice and conceptualisation, individual or group development, organisational issues? | Distribute model or approach to all members<br><br>Agree number of sessions and review<br><br>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?<br><br>> What role does this person play – facilitator, supervisor, consultant, trainer or coach?<br><br>> What are the limits of authority during the group discussions?<br><br>> What if there are concerns about practice standards or ethical issues?<br><br>> How will decisions be made?<br><br>> How will decisions be recorded? | Agree what will be recorded and where it will be stored<br><br>Agree conflict resolution approach<br><br>Nominate people responsible for all specific roles, including recording, facilitating, managing the room/space<br><br>Explore any conflict of roles and responsibilities in the group<br><br>Agree who will hold responsibility for any decision made | |

Source: Based on Gibbs et al (2014)

# Tool 4: Supervision contract review

**NAME** .........................................................................................................................

**DATE** ..............................................................

A supervision agreement should be reviewed regularly.

## Aim

This template offers a structure for supervisee feedback to ensure supervision is meeting the learning needs of the supervisee and having a positive impact on their practice.

## Application

Ask the supervisee to complete the template in advance of the review session.

## Instructions

Consider the questions below and write your answers in the blank box.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Is my supervision meeting my learning needs?** | |
| **What needs to be added or removed from the agreement?** | |
| **What have I learnt during this period?** | |
| **How has this made a difference to my work?** | |
| **How has supervision helped me to learn?** | |
| **What do I like about supervision and what don't I like?** | |
| **What feedback do I want to give during supervision sessions?** | |
| **What feedback do I need during supervision sessions?** | |
| **What are my current goals and how should they be documented in the new agreement?** | |

Source: Based on Davys and Beddoe (2010) and Gibbs et al (2014)

# Tool 5: Preparation tool

**NAME** ................................................................................................................

**DATE** ...........................................................…

Supervision is a two-way process. Both supervisor and supervisee must prepare for it, helping to ensure that learning is maximised and best use made of the time available.

## Aims

To support the supervisee to:

> Reflect on the positive and negative aspects of the child's lived experience and the next steps

AND/OR

> Define the issue they would like support with.

## Application

This tool can be photocopied or shared electronically with staff for them to keep and complete as needed. A completed form can be uploaded to the child's file as a case note.

## Instructions (to the supervisee)

Take some time to think about and respond to statements 1-3 ahead of supervision. Be prepared to discuss your responses. If you can't respond to statement 3, try to respond to number 4.

If you are considering whether or not you require ad hoc supervision and you have managed to respond to questions 1-3, consider whether you now feel you can hold onto the case until your next scheduled supervision.

| 1. This is what is worrying me and others | 2. This is what is working well for you (the child) | 3. This is what I have decided to do |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

**4.** *This is the issue I am asking for support with today*

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

..................................................................................................................................................

Source: Developed by the authors based on project participants' practice

# Tool 6: Framing the dilemma

Many tools that help support decision-making and critical thinking require the supervisee to identify and clearly articulate a key issue. By refining your thinking prior to a reflective supervision session, you will gain more clarity and rigour from the process of exploring the issue.

## Aims

To support the supervisee to:

> Define the key issue faced by the child, instead of bringing an overwhelming and complex problem to supervision, and

> Gain clarity in supervision as to whether this is the crucial issue and whether the supervisee can gain any traction on it to produce change in the child's lived life.

## Application

Supervisees can use this tool on their own, with the supervisor or with their peers ahead of, and then in, supervision.

## Instructions

Follow steps 1-4 ahead of supervision. You'll need Post-it notes and a piece of paper to produce a mind map/spider diagram. Complete steps 5 and 6 in supervision.

## Step 1:  Map the story

With the child at the centre of the piece of paper, use the Post-it notes to begin a mind map or spider diagram of all the issues that are surrounding the child .

## Step 2:  Sort the issues into themes

Take all of the threads of the story that feel similar and place them together under the following headings (it's likely they will have clusters of similar sub-themes):

> Child's own experience/action

> Parents' experience/action

> Environmental and wider family impactors

> Other issues.

## Step 3:  Ask yourself the following questions

1. Which one of these themes worries me the most? (Choose only one)

2. Which one of these things harms the child the most? (Choose only one)

3. Which one of these things is the lever for change for the child? (If we could do something here, the child's safety and lived experience would be improved.) (Choose only one)

## Step 4:  Frame the dilemma

Take the theme that has the most impact on the child and write (in one sentence) what the issue is from the child's point of view. For example:

> Where should Jamie live?

> Is Kerry's mother able to protect her from violence?

> Can Paul's mum manage her drug addiction well enough to give Paul the care he needs?

> Does Sarah's father understand her disability and how best to help her?

This is the dilemma that you should bring to your supervision session.

## Step 5: Present the dilemma in supervision

Present your statement first before any other information is offered.

You can then build on the original statement in a number of ways.

> - You can offer a two-minute case description of what is working well and what you are worried about, and then let your supervisor/the group examine this.
> - You can provide a genogram and a chronology of significant events to look for patterns.
> - You can answer the question ('I think that Kerry's mother can protect her') and then ask your supervisor/the group to test it out for you by looking for exceptions, bias and errors in thinking or any outlying factors not considered.

## Step 6: Return to your themes

Once you have worked on the dilemma for 15 minutes, go back to your themes.

Is this still the one that stands out?

Ask the questions again.

If you get the same answers, then it's likely you have framed the dilemma that will have a helpful impact on the child if you can work out a way forward.

Source: Developed by the authors

# Tool 7: Reflective supervision audit tool

Proportionate and outcomes-focused audit plays an important role in a learning organisation. This is an interactive tool that draws on the project participants' 'six principles of reflective supervision' to provide a framework for auditing the occurrence and quality of reflective supervision.

## Six principles of reflective supervision:

1. Deepens and broadens workers' knowledge and critical analysis skills.
2. Enables confident, competent, creative and independent decision-making.
3. Helps workers to build clear plans that seek to enable positive change for children and families.
4. Develops a relationship that helps staff feel valued, supported and motivated.
5. Supports the development of workers' emotional resilience and self-awareness.
6. Promotes the development of a learning culture within the organisation.

## Aims

To facilitate the identification of:

> Practice that may need challenging

> Practice that should continue to be embedded and promoted more widely.

## Application

This tool has been designed for audit of reflective supervision at both team and organisational level and is suitable for multi-agency and peer audit. Evidence might be gathered via a range of methods, including observation, interviews, child and family feedback and case note audits.

## Instructions

For a given practitioner, fill in their details and details of the supervision they receive below. You are then asked to provide evidence relating to a number of statements about the supervision they receive, along with actions required and one of four possible audit outcomes for each statement.

**Practitioner's name:** .............................................................................................................

**Team:** ..........................................................................................................................................

**Length of experience:** ..................................................................................................

**Type of contract:** ..............................................................................................................

| Please answer for each type of supervision received. | Type of supervision | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Group** | **Peer** | **One-to-one** | **Other** |
| **Frequency?** | | | | |
| **Who provides (role)?** | | | | |
| **Where?** | | | | |

## Audit outcomes (see worked example at end of document):

**Challenge:** The practice is detrimental to children/families/practitioner/organisation and needs to be changed.

**Support:** The current practice is not meeting all the standards and the supervisor/supervisee require support in terms of training, practice, policy (individual/organisation).

**Maintain:** Ensure that the current practice is embedded and able to continue/develop.

**Promote**: The current practice is excellent and should be promoted across the organisation for everyone to learn from (individual/organisation)

| | Evidence: This should support the final audit outcome in each section | Required actions: Opportunities for promoting excellent practice or improving practice in each area | Audit outcome: Challenge (C) Support (S) Maintain (M) Promote (P) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle 1 – Is the reflective supervision deepening and broadening the worker's knowledge and critical analysis skills?** | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **... has identified the worker's learning needs?** | | | |
| **... has deepened and broadened their knowledge?** | | | |
| **... has developed the worker's critical analysis skills?** | | | |
| **... has promoted a consideration of power and the wider social and public contexts?** | | | |
| **... supports the worker to learn from their experiences, and apply this learning in practice?** | | | |

| | Evidence | Required Actions | Audit Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle 2 – Is the reflective supervision enabling confident, competent, creative and independent decision-making?** | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **... has enabled confident, competent and creative decision-making?** | | | |
| **... has supported the worker to make confident, competent and creative decisions independently of supervision where appropriate (reducing 'supervisor dependency')?** | | | |
| **... has supported, encouraged and appropriately challenged decision-making (eg, in the style of a 'critical friend')?** | | | |

| | Evidence | Required Actions | Audit Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle 3 − Is the reflective supervision helping workers to build clear plans that enable positive change for children and families?** | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **... has enabled a focus on the impact of the following in relation to the service user: Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Abilities, Class, Culture, Ethnicity, Spirituality, Sexual Orientation?** | | | |
| **... has resulted in specific actions/ outcomes for the service user?** | | | |
| **... considers performance in relation to standards, policies, procedures, etc, to identify 'correct' actions to follow?** | | | |
| **... explores the views of other agencies, and promotes joint development of holistic plans that meet all of the child's needs?** | | | |

| | Evidence | Required Actions | Audit Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle 4 – Is the reflective supervision helping staff to feel more valued, supported and motivated?** | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **... is helping the worker to feel more valued supported and motivated?** | | | |
| **... supports exploration of the worker's health and wellbeing (in terms of sickness, punctuality, ability to manage workload, for example)?** | | | |
| **... has increased worker's job satisfaction?** | | | |

| | Evidence | Required Actions | Audit Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle 5 – Is the reflective supervision supporting the development of workers' emotional resilience and self-awareness?** | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **... has promoted the worker's emotional resilience?** | | | |
| **... has developed the worker's self-awareness by exploring how thoughts and feelings may unconsciously shape judgements and decision-making?** | | | |
| **... considers the following in relation to the worker: Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Abilities, Class, Culture, Ethnicity, Spirituality, Sexual Orientation?** | | | |

| | Evidence | Required Actions | Audit Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Principle 6 – Is the reflective supervision promoting and developing the organisational learning culture?** | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **... has resulted in specific actions/ outcomes for organisations? (eg, staff development training or sharing of good practice)** | | | |
| **... makes use of any tools to assist in the reflective process? (either specific to the agency or those available more widely, such as within this Resource Pack)** | | | |

**Comments from the supervisor**

.......................................................................................................................................................................
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.......................................................................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................................................................

**Comments from the practitioner**

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.......................................................................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................................................................
.......................................................................................................................................................................

Signature of Auditor ........................................................................ Date: ..............................................

Signature of Supervisor ........................................................................ Date: ..............................................

Signature of Practitioner ........................................................................ Date: ..............................................

## Worked Example

| | Evidence:<br><br>This should support the final audit outcome in each section | Required actions:<br><br>Opportunities for promoting excellent practice or improving practice in each area | Audit outcome:<br><br>Challenge (C)<br>Support (S)<br>Maintain (M)<br>Promote (P) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Principle 1 – Is the reflective supervision deepening and broadening the worker's knowledge and critical analysis?* | | | |
| **Is there evidence that the reflective supervision:** | | | |
| **1.1 Has identified worker's learning needs/ deepened their skills?** | *Supervision notes dated 3/7, 12/8, and 20/9/2015 demonstrate the worker putting into action her learning about domestic violence issues that had been explored.  She was able to link her experience and learning to plan her next interactions with the father.*<br><br>*The supervisor used Kolb's learning cycle and introduced the RiP resource on Working with Domestic Violence.* | *Practitioner is presenting her case to the team at next team day to share her experience and learning.*<br><br>*RiP resource to be shared with team.* | *(P)*<br><br>*Promote the resource to the team and continue to use the Kolb cycle in supervision.*<br><br>*Consider using the case and a RSS model in the group to explore DV as an issue.* |

Source: Developed by project participants

# Tool 8: Systemic Reflective Space: A model of group supervision

Systemic Reflective Space is a model of group supervision that seeks to create 'reflective space'. The question stage takes the presenter around the four stages of Kolb's cycle.

## Aims

> To support practitioners to share their skills, competence and abilities, inviting collaborative and reflective practice

> Provide alternative views on aspects of a practitioner's work and offer an opportunity to explore options, facilitate shared learning and develop practice

> Draw on the diverse strengths and skills of participants.

## Application

**Group size:** About six

**Time:** Takes about one hour

**Roles:** A presenter, facilitator, time-keeper and recorder should be nominated

**Facilitation:** The group can be facilitated by a supervisor, external facilitator or peer-group member.

## Instructions

The model is designed to disrupt the habitual ways in which we might approach problems. So group members are encouraged to:

> **Reflect** the presenter's pace and style

> **Connect** comments to material that has been presented

> 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**

> Present ideas tentatively and **not as solutions.**

The reflecting team conversation should not mirror what the presenter has discussed, but should **offer something different** to enable difference to emerge. The model invites participants to offer as **many explanations** for a situation as possible, inspiring possibilities that will lead to hope and change (Anderson, 1987).

Make sure to record key discussion and actions, perhaps using one of the recording templates in this Resource Pack.

### The model: Systematic reflective cycle
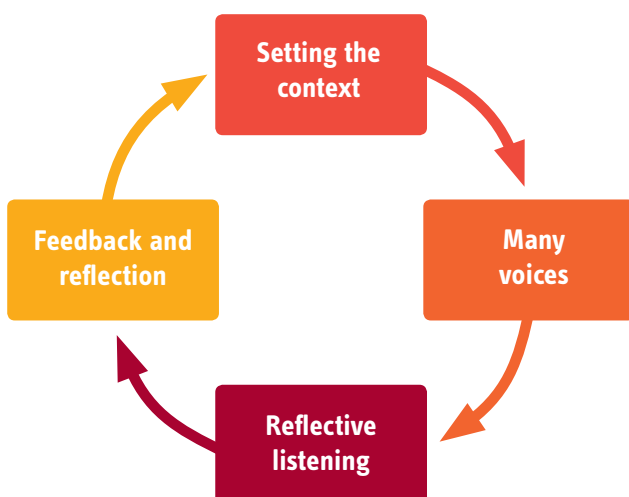


Systematic reflective practice graphic adapted from Jude and Regan (2010)

## 1. Presentation of the dilemma to the group (15 minutes)

The presenter presents a dilemma in story form from the point of view of

> the practitioner

> the service user

> any other key players.

The presenter can use any available resources to tell it – eg stories, pictures, sculpt (moving group members into positions they feel represent the family and their dynamics) and objects.

Others pay attention to how the presenter talks about the issue, with a focus on emotional listening.

**Emotional listening** requires a willingness to let the other parties dominate the 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. Group discussion (15 minutes)

The aim of the group discussion is to offer the presenter an opportunity to think about things as widely as possible. The group converses and explores the dilemma using any available resources.

The presenter sits outside the circle. It can enhance listening and group discussion if the presenter has their back turned so their body language and facial expressions do not influence the discussion.

No questions are to be asked or answered at this stage. The facilitator supports the group to:

> Adopt an exploring (not problem-solving) stance – the aim of the exercise is to explore different ways of understanding the presenting dilemma. Questions rather than statements are a helpful way to think about what is presented, eg **'What else could it be?'**

> Consider the 'known' and 'unknown' areas of the presenting dilemma

> Explore why their attention has landed on the story in the way it has

> Test 'practice wisdom' – be alert to whether the group are basing their responses too much on similar experiences of their own, or approaches/assumptions shared within your organisation. Ask both **'How is this dilemma the same as your past one?'** and, more importantly, **'How is it different?'**

> Be aware that sometimes thinking processes are dominated by a rearranging of existing prejudices and beliefs

> Sit with uncertainty.

**Sitting with uncertainty** involves a willingness to continually challenge one's own **assumptions** and place knowledge in the context of **values**, **past experiences, feelings** and **relationships**.

## 3. Generating questions (10 minutes)

The group seeks to generate a list of 'curious' questions, formed to test hypotheses.

The presenter does not respond but remains outside the circle – listening. If the presenter jumps to respond, the facilitator might ask them why they chose not to include that information in the first 15 minutes as this is likely to be worth reflecting on.

## 4. Presenter responds to the group's discussion (15 minutes)

The group is to listen in silence as the presenter responds within the structure set out below.

The presenter should complete the following sentences five times:

> **The first thing I noticed from your discussion was ...**
>
> **It made me feel like ...**
>
> **Now that I am talking about it I realise that ...**
>
> **This is what I would like to do about that ...**
>
> **What this means for the child is ...**
>
> **The second thing I noticed from your discussion was ...**

Doing this five times means the presenter moves past noticing only things that confirm their own view, and creates differences in thinking.

**Reflection in action** – As the presenter has been responding to the different discussions, view points and questions generated, they try to remain curious about what they are attending to and how they felt with each response.

## 5. Group reflections (5 minutes)

The whole group (including the presenter) reflect on why different perspectives have emerged – or why they have not emerged if there have been no alternative perspectives.

Everyone explores the usefulness of the process.

Source: Adapted from Child Centred Practice (based on Anderson, 1987)

# Tool 9: A model of group supervision used in Camden

Since 2014, Camden's multi-disciplinary early help team have been developing a model of group supervision that increases participants' capacity to see issues from a variety of perspectives and to generate more than one hypothesis on casework issues.

## Aims:

> To enable staff to 'translate' their professional approach to colleagues

> Enable practitioners to recognise their own habitual patterns and preferences

> Provide practitioners with access to other expertise and experience

> Help practitioners to develop and test hypotheses and 'next steps' for a child and their family.

## Application

**Group size:** Up to 12

**Time:** About one hour

**Roles:** A presenter, facilitator, time-keeper and recorder should be nominated

**Facilitation:** The group can be facilitated by a supervisor, external facilitator or peer-group member.

## Instructions

The facilitator takes the group through each of the steps whilst:

> Ensuring the group sticks to the structure (and steering the group if it's going 'off task')

> Increasing participation

> Keeping the child as the focus

> Rephrasing comments and questions that are too critical of the presenter – for instance, by asking 'What does this tell us about the child and family?'

If the facilitator is also the supervisor, they reduce dependency by stepping back from their role as expert.

Make sure key discussion and actions are recorded, perhaps using one of the recording templates in this Resource Pack.

## Step 1: Presentation of the dilemma to the group (10 mins)

Presenter:

> Briefly talks about practice involvement with the family including reasons for current involvement and first referral.

> This information must include GRRAACCESS (Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Abilities, Culture, Class, Ethnicity, Spirituality, Sexual Orientation).

> Information must be presented with a genogram

> When out of time, the presenter takes one more minute for any final details they think are important.

Group:

> Listen and seek to distinguish between facts, thoughts and feelings.

**Tips for the presenter**

> Choose a piece of work that others in the group do not know about

> Talk without too much preparation

> You can start by giving your reason for choosing a particular case

> You can omit information if you wish

> Describe a real interaction.

### Step 2: Group asks clarifying questions (5 mins)

Group:

> Only ask questions in order to clarify and establish facts.

Facilitator:

> Prevent the group from digging too deeply into case detail.

### Step 3: Group generates new hypotheses about the family (15 mins)

Presenter:

> Sits out of the group (with back turned) while the group discuss the presentation

> Does not step in or answer questions

> Observes what the group focuses on (do they omit anything?)

> Listens to discussion and takes note of new ideas and hypotheses generated.

**Tips for the presenter:**

Consider:

> 'Which hypothesis is new to me?'

> 'Which sounds familiar and has been tested already?'

> 'Which one would I like to test next?'

Group:

> Explore the dilemma but do not seek to solve it

> Disclose thoughts and feelings.

Facilitator:

> Prevent the group from problem-solving and steer back to exploration

> Observe whether 'parallel process' occurs, where the group's interactions might mirror those of the family and their worker. What can the worker learn from this?

### Step 4: Talking about the next steps (15 mins)

Presenter:

> Tells the group what they noticed and learnt from their discussion

> Responds to any further points that need clarifying

> Tells the group which hypotheses they intend to test next and what this means for the child.

Group:

> Discuss next steps and perhaps help the practitioner to formulate reflexive, solution-focused questions.

### Step 5: Comment on themes or additional reflections

Supervisor (if present):

> Provides case management instruction (if necessary)

> Comments on themes and/or adds further reflections.

### Step 6: Feedback

Did the presenter find the process helpful?

Source: Based on Edmunds (2012) and systemic training by Morning Lane Associates.

# Tool 10: Socratic questions

What makes a supervisor effective is the ability to ask useful questions to promote critical reflection and ownership of solutions. Supervisors can develop the critical thinking skills of frontline practitioners by using a technique called 'Socratic questioning'. This involves asking questions that encourage practitioners to critically reflect on their own thought processes and decision-making.

## Aims

> Encourage frontline practitioners to think more deeply about a situation, breaking their thoughts down and identifying the various elements.

> Probe assumptions to encourage practitioners to think about the presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs on which they are founding their argument.

> Dig into their reasoning, rather than assuming their reasoning as a given.

> Reveal a practitioner's position, and show that there are other equally valid viewpoints.

> Reveal the potential consequences of a practitioner's thinking and assumptions.

## Application and instructions

Use the sorts of questions listed below to encourage practitioners to critically reflect on their thought processes and decision-making.

When engaging in Socratic questioning in supervision it is helpful for the supervisor to inform the supervisee that they will be taking this approach and what it aims to achieve. They should also:

> Conduct Socratic questioning with respect

> State that by using the method, they are seeking to understand the foundations for what is said or believed, and follow the implications of those foundations

> Agree with the supervisee that they will treat all thoughts as thinking that is in need of development and not yet fully formed

> Explain that they will respond to all answers with a further question to call upon the supervisee to develop his or her thinking in a fuller and deeper way.

## Conceptual clarification questions

Support practitioners to think clearly about what exactly they are asking or talking about. Probe the concepts behind their argument. Ask basic 'tell me more' questions to encourage practitioners to think more deeply.

Why are you saying that?

What exactly does this mean?

How does this relate to what we have been talking about?

What is the nature of...?

What do we already know about this?

Can you give me an example?

Are you saying ... or ...?

Can you rephrase that, please?

Can you help me understand more clearly?

### Probing assumptions

Challenge supervisees to think about the presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs on which they are founding their arguments.

What else could we assume?

You seem to be assuming...?

How did you choose those assumptions?

Please explain why/how...?

How can you verify or disprove that assumption?

What would happen if...?

Do you agree or disagree with...?

### Probing rationale, reasons and evidence

People often use poorly thought-through or weakly understood rationale for their arguments. Dig into the reasoning a supervisee gives for a hypothesis or argument.

Why is that happening?

How do you know this?

Show me...?

Can you give me an example of that?

What do you think causes...?

What is the nature of this?

Are these reasons good enough?

Would it stand up in court?

How might it be refuted?

How can I be sure of what you're saying?

Why is ... happening?

Why? *(Keep asking this question if you need to)*

What evidence is there to support what you're saying?

On what authority are you basing your argument?

**Questioning viewpoints and perspectives**

Most arguments are given from a particular position. Challenge that position. Show there are other viewpoints that may also have validity.

Another way of looking at this is ... Does this seem reasonable?

What alternative ways of looking at this are there?

Why is ... necessary?

Who benefits from this?

What is the difference between ... and...?

Why is it better than...?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of...?

How are ... and ... similar?

What would ... say about it?

What if you compared ... and...?

How could you look at this another way?

**Probing implications and consequences**

The arguments that people give may have logical implications that can be forecast.

Do these make sense? Are they desirable?

Then what would happen?

What are the consequences of that assumption?

How could ... be used to...?

What are the implications of...?

How does ... affect...?

How does ... fit with what we learned before?

Why is ... important?

What is the best...? Why?

Source: Based on Hallberg and Dill (2011)

# Tool 11: How to run a Journal Club

Using research and other evidence supports practitioners and managers to increase their competence and confidence around a particular topic, supports organisations to learn and improves the experiences and outcomes for service users and carers.

This tool offers guidelines for setting up and running a Journal Club based on the Kolb cycle.

## Aims

Support supervisees to:

> Appraise a piece of research and identify the main messages

> Understand how reliable and robust the messages are, and how they might be used in practice

> Use the research to support reflection on a case

> Identify learning, as well as actions to transfer that learning into practice.

## Application

**Time:** About 45 minutes

**Roles:** A facilitator and time-keeper should be nominated

Use the tool in group supervision, team meetings or practice development workshops, or even adapt for use in one-to-one supervision.

## Instructions

Before the session, send participants a piece of research to read – this may be the executive summary of a recent report – and ask them to bring it to the session. In the session, follow this step-by-step process:

## Step 1: Introduction to the Journal Club (5 minutes)

The facilitator opens the session by reminding participants of the importance of using research in practice and highlighting that evidence-informed practice draws on:

> **Research evidence** – What is likely to be effective?

> **Practice experience** – How does this work in practice?

> **Service users' views** – What's it like for the individual?

## Step 2: Discussion and appraisal of research (15 minutes)

The facilitator leads a discussion about how useful the research is:

> **How reliable it is** – Where did it come from, who was involved and why, what might have influenced the evidence?

> **How robust it is** – Can we see the workings out?

> **How relevant it is** – Does it apply to the situations that we encounter?

## Step 3: Reflective case discussion (15 minutes)

The facilitator supports participants to identify what the implications of the research might be for their practice.

The research is then applied to practice through case discussions.

> In groups of 3-6 people, one person volunteers a case where they think that the research is relevant to the situation.

> The Kolb reflective cycle is used to talk through the case.

> At each stage, participants ask the volunteer to talk about the case and then discuss how that relates to the research they have read.

**Experience** – What happened before, during, and after the event or situation?

How does that fit with what the research suggests might happen in these kinds of situation?

**Emotion** – How did you feel, and how did others feel, at the time? How do you feel now?

How does that fit with the way the research suggests people might feel in these kinds of situation?

**Analysis** – What did this event or situation mean to you, the child and others? What did it remind you of, and what was unusual about it?

How does that fit what the research suggests causes these kinds of situation?

**Action** – What do you need to do in order to understand your role (and others' roles) in the event or situation? How can you make progress? How can you use what you have learnt with others?

How does that fit what the research suggests might be helpful in these kinds of situation?

## Step 4: Learning and actions

The facilitator finishes by asking participants what learning they will take away and use in practice.

Source: Based on Research in Practice for Adults (2013)

# Tool 12: RiP Anchor Principles for reflective supervision

**NAME** ...............................................................................................................

**DATE** .............................................................

These open-ended questions based on the Research in Practice Anchor Principles promote clear and analytical thinking and/or assessments from supervisees and the development of clear plans for children and families.

## Aims

Support practitioners to:

> Explore the purpose of their intervention

> Analyse the information they hold

> Develop hypotheses that can assist case planning and decision-making

> Define clear outcomes and ways of measuring whether these have been achieved.

## Application

The tool can be used in its entirety or as a reminder of the kinds of questions to explore in either one-to-one or group supervision.

## Instructions

Consider some or all of the following questions and record key evidence of reflection and outcomes of the discussion in the blank box.

| Anchor Principles | Notes |
|---|---|
| **What is the supervision or assessment for?**<br><br>ENCOURAGE THE PRACTITIONER TO:<br>Reflect prior to action.<br><br>GUIDING QUESTIONS<br><br>> What does the practitioner hope to achieve from the supervision or assessment?<br><br>> What might the family and child be hoping for or worried about?<br><br>> What might the organisation be hoping for or worried about?<br><br>> How might the practitioner feel about doing direct work or carrying out an assessment?<br><br>> How might the child feel during direct work or about being assessed?<br><br>> Is there a different way to achieve an understanding of the situation?<br><br>> Is all the information collected useful and relevant?<br><br>> What skills and support might the practitioner need to engage in direct work or carry out the assessment? | |
| **What is the story?**<br><br>ENCOURAGE THE PRACTITIONER TO:<br><br>Explore what is known so far.<br><br>GUIDING QUESTIONS<br><br>> What are the facts?<br><br>> Are there any grey areas or unknowns?<br><br>> Has the practitioner thought about how their own past experience may be colouring the story?<br><br>> Can the practitioner tell the story from the viewpoint of another professional? Or the child? Or the family members?<br><br>> How does the story make the practitioner feel?<br><br>> How has the practitioner used the story to make sense of the child's lived life?<br><br>> What tools has the practitioner used to help focus and explore the story? | |

**What does the story mean?**

ENCOURAGE THE PRACTITIONER TO:

Analyse the story, using research, practice wisdom and the family's expertise.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

> What hypotheses have been developed? What else could it be?

> What does the practitioner know about stories like this?

> What tools could help the practitioner test the meaning?

> Does the practitioner understand the resilience the child brings to their story?

> What is the impact of the story on the child?

> Imagine the child is in this room – what would they say about the meaning being made of their life?

> Are there any meanings the practitioner may have missed because of their own story (think about gender, ethnicity and religion, for example)?

> Does the practitioner understand what and who is helping the child grow well, and what or who is holding the child back?

## What needs to happen?

ENCOURAGE THE PRACTITIONER TO:

Explore options for direct work and support: (a) from the point of view of the practitioner; and (b) from the point of view of the child.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

> What does the practitioner think will be the best outcome and why?

> What does the practitioner think will be the worst outcome and why?

> What would the child say about that?

> What would the family say about that?

> How will this be helpful to the child's current situation?

> What would have to happen for this child in order for the practitioner to stop being involved with the child and family?

> Does everyone involved agree about what needs to happen for the child?

> Is the family clear about what has to happen next?

> Is the child/young person clear about what has to happen next?

**How will we know we are making progress?**

ENCOURAGE THE PRACTITIONER TO:

Reflect on action. Think about the practitioner's role in doing meaningful work with the child and family.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

> How does the practitioner feel about progress?

> What would the child/family say?

> What did the practitioner hope would have happened by now?

> What is different?

> How does the practitioner know they are being helpful?

> How is the child's lived life different this week?

> What is the practitioner still worried about?

> What is the family still worried about?

> What is the child still worried about?

> Does the practitioner know what will happen for the child if there is no progress?

> Does the practitioner have a plan to challenge the other professionals and family involved in helping this child, if there is no change for the child?

> Has the hypothesis been disproved?

> Did the practitioner intervene based on the wrong need?

> Was the right meaning given to the story?

Source: Adapted from Brown and Turney (2014)

# Tool 13: 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 (Tool 7) or other critical thinking and analysis tools, such as De Bono's Six Hats (the white hat) (Tool 14), 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 either in the matrix itself or by using one of the recording templates in this Resource Pack.

## 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 Children 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 child/family?

4. What do you want to do next?

## Discrepancy matrix



**Strong evidence**

| | |
|---|---|
| What do I know (evidence)? | What is ambiguous? |
| What I think I know (assumption) | What is missing (what action is needed)? |

**Strongly held view** (left) — **Unclear or no view** (right)

**Weak or no evidence**



**Strong evidence**

Firm ground
Intelligence

Ambiguous
information

Missing
information

Assumption-led
information

**Strongly held view** (left) — **Unclear or no view** (right)

**Weak or no evidence**
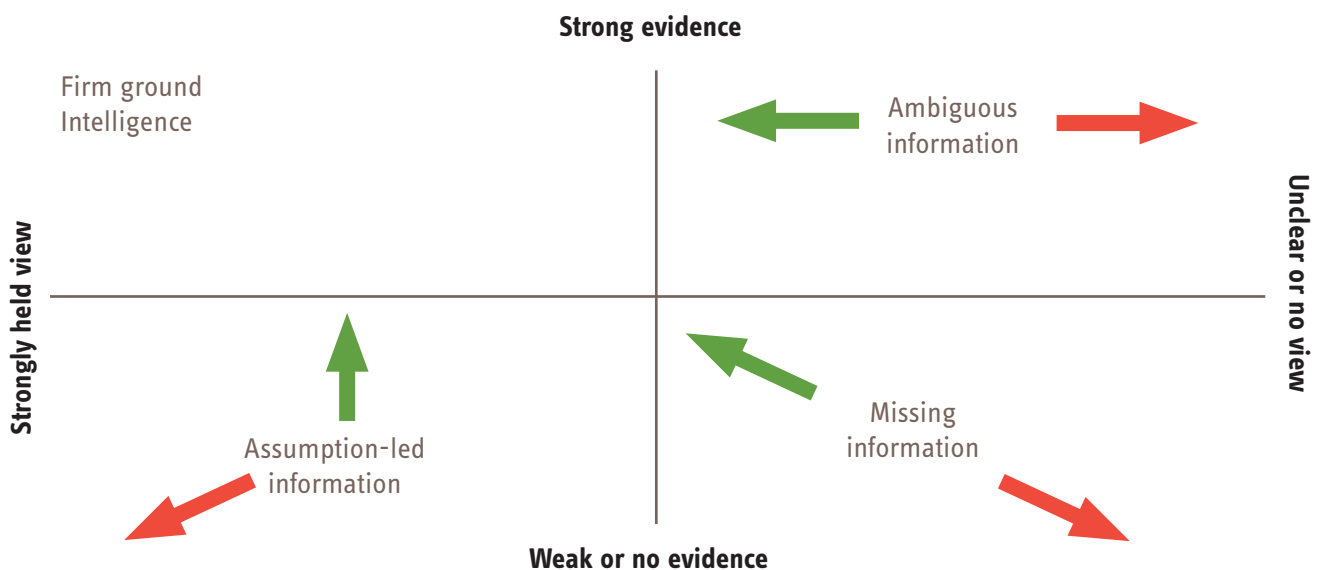
Source: Based on Morrison and Wonnacott (2009) in Wonnacott (2014)

# Tool 14: De Bono's decision-making hats

Everyone has a preferred thinking style and this affects the approach we take to making decisions. This tool supports supervisees to try out different thinking styles.

## Aim

To help supervisees understand how different thinking styles affect decision-making.

## Application

In one-to-one supervision, the supervisor might ask the supervisee to think about a problem wearing one hat or each hat in turn – this is good if someone is struggling to 'think outside the box'. This tool is particularly well suited to:

> Looking at team make-up

> Helping the supervisor check they have covered all angles of discussion

> Exploring a decision that management has had to make.

## Instructions

After introducing the tool and the benefits of approaching problems with diverse ways of thinking, the supervisor might:

> Keep people with their preferred hats in order to problem-solve

> Ask people to put on other hats

> Combine with other tools – for example, Wonnacott's Discrepancy Matrix (Tool 13) works well with the white hat.

Make sure to record key discussion and actions, perhaps using one of the recording templates in this Resource Pack.
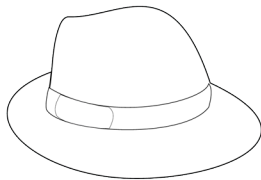
**White hat: Analytical**
You focus on what is known and test out the evidence
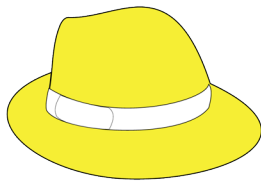
**Yellow hat: Empowering**
You advocate for self-determination, and challenge obstacles to rights and freedom
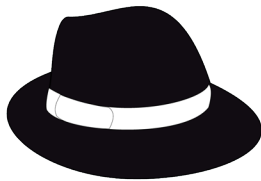
**Black hat: Procedural**
You consider the law, policy and procedures that you need to follow
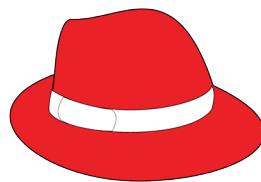
**Red hat: Intuitive**
You use personal experience, emotion and empathy to understand how people are affected
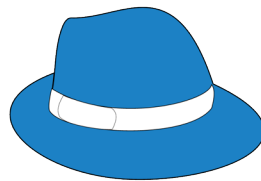
**Blue hat: Resilient**
You weigh up risks, consider possible problems and identify contingencies
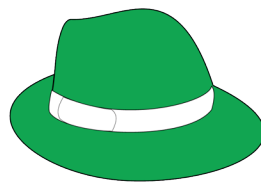
**Green hat: Creative**
You look for alternative explanations and solutions
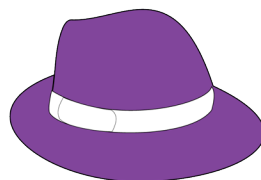
**Purple hat: Facilitator**
You make sure everyone has the chance to give their view and ensure that any decisions are appropriately recorded

Source: Adapted from Research in Practice for Adults (2013) based on de Bono (1985)

# Tool 15: Questions for reflective case discussion based on the Professional Capabilities Framework

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) sets out nine 'capability statements' detailing what is expected of social workers across the profession and at different levels in their career. It is a strong structure for thinking about wider capabilities for social work and working with the wider workforce.

This set of reflective cues or questions provide prompts for exploring practice issues in a discussion structured by the nine domains of the PCF.

## Aims
> To support practitioners to think about the knowledge, skills and values required for effective practice

> To identify areas for professional development.

## Application and instructions

These nine flash cards are designed to be cut out or photocopied and used.
> Use the questions on the cards as prompts
> Randomly select a card to focus on, hand it to the supervisee
> Consider one or two PCF domains in a session.

Remember to record evidence of reflection and the key outcome of discussion prompted by the cards, perhaps using one of the recording templates in this Resource Pack.

**Professionalism**

**Values and ethics**

**Diversity**

**Rights, justice and economic wellbeing**

**Knowledge**

**Critical reflection and analysis**

**Intervention and skills**

**Contexts and organisations**

**Professional leadership**

**Action plan and next steps**

> Is there anything in the situation that has challenged your values or posed an ethical dilemma?

> How might you view this situation differently if the person (infant/child/young person/family member) you are working with was:
>   – male / female
>   – had a physical or learning disability
>   – was lesbian / gay / bisexual / transgender
>   – was from a different ethnic background?

> How do you feel about the use of your own power and authority in this case?

> How have you managed professional boundaries?

> How have you managed your time?

> How can supervision support you in working in this situation?

> What feedback have you received from other professionals on the quality of this piece of work?

> What does/might the person you are working with say about their relationship with you?

> Are there issues around rights for the person (infant/child/young person/family member/carer) you are working with?

> Are there concerns around financial issues / poverty?

> Do you feel able to advocate for this person's rights?

> Are you aware of the legal framework pertaining to this person's issues or rights?

> What would this person say about their place in society?

> What do you know about the perspectives of the person (infant/child/young person/family member/carers) you are working with?

> How are you supporting this person to achieve their own outcomes?

> Are there any issues around discrimination, oppression, and this person's 'structural identity'?

> What would this person say about their own identity?

> What went well in this piece of work? What might you have done differently?

> What are your feelings about this piece of work?

> Were there any pivotal moments that influenced the way the intervention went?

> Have you had any feedback from the person you have been working with or others in the case?

> How have you analysed risk in this situation?

> How has your critical analysis and decision-making been reflected in your recording?

> What sources of knowledge did you draw on to inform your thinking?

> What legislation/policy informed your practice?

> What social work theory have you used in this piece of work?

> What different social work theory might be applied to this piece of work?

> What research has informed this piece of work?

> What is the evidence (eg, from theory, research, direct observation and case work) informing the decisions you have made?

> Have you given different weight/emphasis to different pieces of information, and if so why?

> How did this piece of work meet the objectives of your team/service?

> Did you work within agreed systems and processes?

> Did you meet/exceed/fall short of any standards or timescales relevant to this piece of work?

> Have you encountered any blocks or difficulties due to systems and processes? How have these been addressed?

> How have you worked with other professionals and organisations?

> How well do you feel you have represented your organisation in this piece of work?

> What is the purpose of your intervention?

> What approach did you take?

> What skills did you use?

> What has challenged you about this piece of work?

> What is the experience of the person you are working with (infant/child/young person/family member) of your work with them? What do they say might be done differently/better?

> What skills might you need to develop to work with similar situations more effectively?

> What will you do next in working with this person (infant/child/young person/family member)?

> Do you need the support of anyone else?

> What are the timescales for next steps in this case?

> How will you know if your work has met its objectives?

> What are the supervisor's views and agreed actions?

> Are there implications from this work for your team, the wider organisation, partner organisations, or others?

> What learning might be shared with colleagues? How will you go about this?

> What might managers or leaders have done differently or better?

> Did you experience clear management oversight of your decision-making?

Source: Developed by project participants

# Tool 16: Munro's decision tree

Decision trees are a means of opening up a dialogue about casework and mapping possible consequences of decisions.

## Aims

> To support the supervisor and supervisee to approach an issue from a different perspective.

> To support decision-making and planning.

## Applications

Decision trees are particularly useful if the practitioner and supervisor have different opinions on the course of action that needs to be taken, or when neither is clear about the best way forward, perhaps around long-term planning for children.

It can be helpful to use with someone who is more often led by their emotions and intuition, though care must be taken that decision trees do not lead practitioners to become so immersed in analysis that they avoiding identifying their feelings at all.

## Instructions

Read these instructions alongside the accompanying illustration.

1. What is the decision to be made? Enter data into square on left of tree.

2. What are the possible choices (options)? Enter up to four different options. Write these along the radiating lines coming out of the square.

3. What are the possible consequences of the different options? Create the same number of consequences for each option (3 or 4) and write them along the lines radiating from the circles.

4. Try and give a score to the probability (likelihood) of each consequence occurring. Score somewhere between 0% and 100% (0% = certainly not; 100% = certainly will). The total score across the consequences for one option should equal 100%. You will be likely to use research evidence, practice experience, and discussion and debate to help you decide on this. Place the score in the triangle.

5. Try and decide on the desirability of each consequence occurring. Ascribe a score from 0 to 10 (10 = least desirable; 10 = totally desirable). These do not need to total up to 10. You have to use your judgement to decide on the desirability: by weighing up the impact on the child, their family, the wider society, cost to agency, etc. Place this score in the last box on the right.

6. Multiply each probability score by each desirability score, and then add these together for each option. This gives you a total score for each option. Place this score in the square inside the tree. The option with the *highest overall score* should be the best option for you to choose as it combines realistic likelihood of success with best desirability.

**Decision tree**

The possible consequences.
Each probability score is a
percentage of 100%

Final score for option

Utility = desirability
0-10 score

The options

Decision
to be
made

Multiply probability by
desirability. Then add all
together for each option
giving a final score for
the option
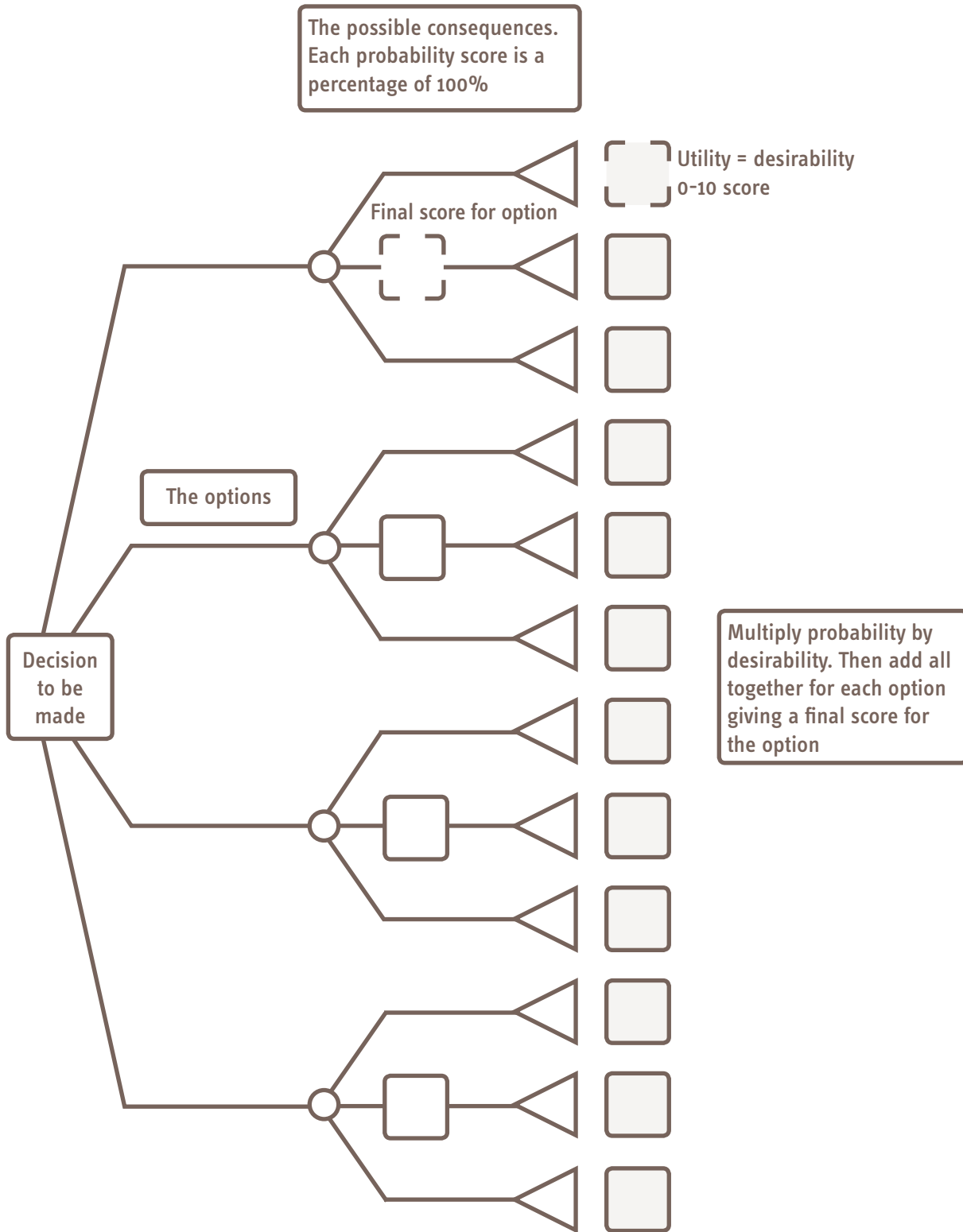
Source: Munro (2002) reproduced in Dalzell and Sawyer (2007)

# Tool 17: Maclean's head, heart, hands and feet

This tool can be used as a framework to support the practitioner to reflect on a recent experience and the range of skills and knowledge (both cognitive and affective) they drew on in their practice.

'Head, heart and hands' is a phrase commonly used in social pedagogy. Cameron (2005) described the idea that:

> **Head**: refers to the use of reflective skills and a body of theoretical knowledge to help the worker assess a situation and develop actions.
>
> **Heart**: refers to the importance of the relationship between the worker and service user.
>
> **Hands**: refers to the skills a worker uses – particularly skills in developing relationships.
>
> Ingram (2013) adds a fourth concept – the **feet** – which 'ground' practice and can be seen as making use of the 'professional value base' as a motivation to persevere in challenging situations and treat the service user with respect at all times.

## Aims

> To conceptualise practice

> To support practitioners to reflect on the range of skills and knowledge they use in their work.

## Application

The questions might be used to guide discussion in supervision. Or the supervisee might think about the questions ahead of supervision and make some brief notes before discussing their responses with their supervisor during supervision.

## Instructions

Consider the key questions under each concept and record your responses in the boxes.

**Head, heart, hands and feet**

**Head:**
**What knowledge did you draw on?**
**What did the child say?**

**Heart:**
**How did you feel?**
**How did the service user feel?**

**Hands:**
**What did you do?**
**What skills did you use?**

**Feet:**
**How did the social work profession 'ground' your practice? For example – in terms of values, standards etc.**

Source: Based on Maclean (2015)
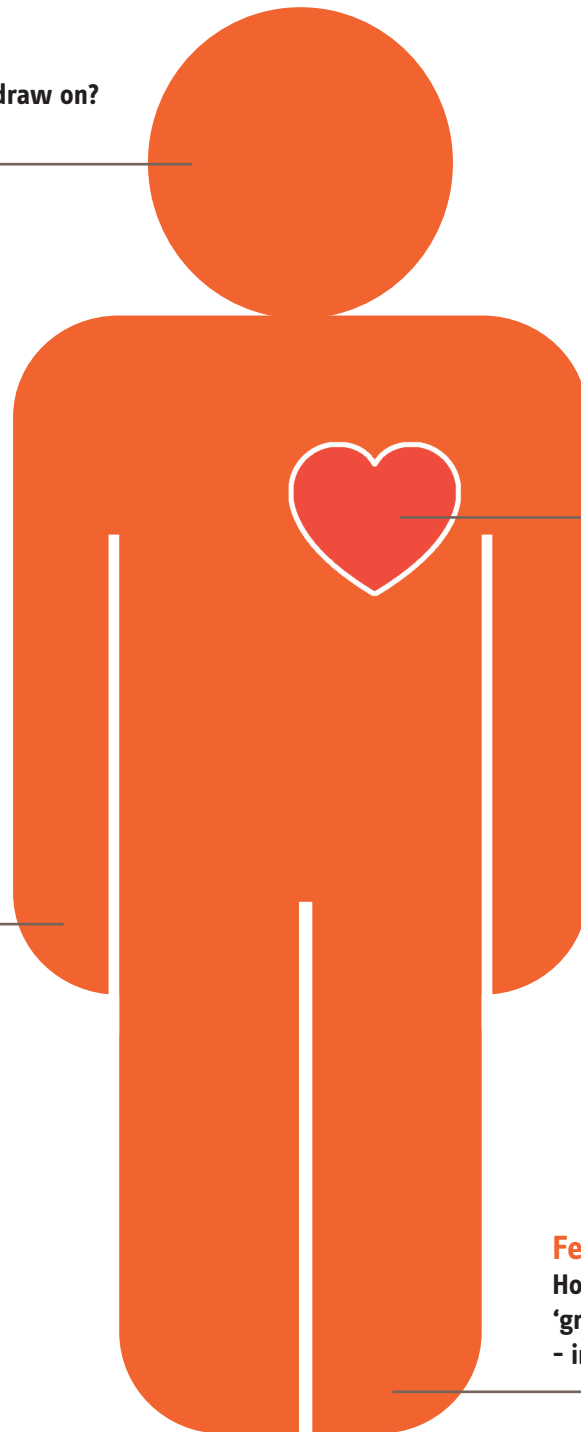
# Tool 18: Reflecting on challenging experiences

**NAME** ..........................................................................................................

**DATE** ...............................................................

This tool consists of a series of five questions to help practitioners consider and learn from a recent work experience which they found challenging, but that ultimately had a successful outcome.

## Aims

> Support practitioners to notice positive emotions and strengths, even in difficult circumstances

> Support staff to use both thoughts and feelings as sources of information.

## Application

This tool can be used to:

> Explore a challenging abuse incident

> Explore confident practice with cultural diversity

> Identify key/trigger moments in practice

> Explore how to contain feelings within a team that is becoming preoccupied with a story, perhaps something that has happened to one team member.

This tool should not be used for performance management purposes. If performance issues come to light, you might do some causal analysis in a later one-to-one supervision: 'Could you have done anything to influence the outcome?'

## Instructions

Ahead of one-to-one supervision, the supervisee should think about the following questions and make some brief notes in the blank box. In supervision, discuss your responses with your supervisor and, where possible, try to make links to other practice examples.

In a group setting, practitioners could take it in turns sharing a story with their colleagues, who then offer feedback. It might also be useful to reflect on what the combined stories tell the team about themselves (Gibbs et al, 2014).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Brief description of challenging experience** | |
| **What was it about the experience that you found difficult?** | |
| **In what ways did it challenge you?** | |
| **How did you decide whether it was ultimately successful?** | |
| **What personal strengths and qualities did you have to draw on during this event?** | |
| **On reflection, what does this tell you about yourself in relation to the work you do?** Optional further questions: What does this tell you about you as a practitioner? If the story had a different ending, would you feel different? What would the child say about the outcome? What are you still preoccupied with? | |

Source: Based on Dwyer and Vivekananda (2002) in Gibbs et al (2014)

# Tool 19: Supervisee anxiety scale

**NAME** ...................................................................................................

**DATE** ...................................................

Research identifies how important emotional support in supervision is in helping practitioners deal with stress, anxiety and workload pressure. For supervision to be emotionally supportive, the practitioner should experience supervision sessions as containing and helpful.

## Aims

> To promote self-awareness in the practitioner

> To identify issues related to anxiety that might be blocking the benefit supervision can offer.

## Applications

The anxiety scale can be used by individuals independently to challenge and reflect on their own thinking. If the supervisor-supervisee relationship is secure, then the scale can also be used in a session to explore the reasons for the anxiety being experienced by the practitioner.

## Instructions

The following statements describe possible feelings or thoughts you may have about your upcoming reflective supervision session.

Indicate your **current** thoughts and feelings about the upcoming session by responding to the following sentence:
*'When I think about my next reflective supervision session I ...'* with a rating for each statement on a scale of 1 – 4 where:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Not true at all | Somewhat true | More true | Completely True |

It is important to answer all the questions.

| | When I think about my next reflective supervision session I ... | Score |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ... have difficulty focusing on what I will say to my supervisor | |
| 2 | ... feel my heart pounding | |
| 3 | ... feel anxious about what my supervisor might think about me | |
| 4 | ... feel self-conscious | |
| 5 | ... worry about how my peers will see me | |
| 6 | ... think less of myself because of my shortcomings as a caseworker | |
| 7 | ... feel fearful I might receive negative feedback from my supervisor | |
| 8 | ... notice I am feeling stressed | |
| 9 | ... feel nervous | |
| 10 | ... feel annoyed with my limitations | |
| 11 | ... am concerned about my skills compared to other practitioners | |
| 12 | ... can't help but compare myself to my peers | |
| 13 | ... feel overwhelmed | |
| 14 | ... feel pleased to have the opportunity to explore my case work | |
| 15 | ... feel apprehensive | |
| 16 | ... feel calm | |
| 17 | ... worry about being blamed for making a mistake | |
| 18 | ... feel stressed out | |
| 19 | ... feel afraid my supervisor might find a mistake in my casework | |
| 20 | ... question my ability as a practitioner | |
| 21 | ... think I won't perform my best in the supervision session | |
| 22 | ... feel myself getting tense | |
| 23 | ... feel relaxed | |
| 24 | ... worry I might not make sense or present the issues well | |
| 25 | ... wonder what my supervisor might be thinking of me | |
| 26 | ... become concerned about showing emotions in front of my supervisor | |
| 27 | ... worry that I might appear stupid | |
| 28 | ... am uneasy about receiving criticism from my supervisor | |
| 29 | ... am looking forward to discussing my case work | |
| 30 | ... feel like it is a waste of time | |
| Total score | | |

## Scoring

**Add all the scores together (but reverse the scores for statements 14, 16, 23 and 29 as these four statements are all framed positively: so 4 becomes 1, 3=2, 2=3, and 1=4).**

An overall score between **90** and **120** indicates a high anxiety level about your next supervision. It is unlikely that you are experiencing supervision as helpful at this time.

A score between **60** and **89** indicates a moderate level of anxiety. It's likely that you have some conflicted feelings about some parts of supervision and that you need to reflect on this.

A score between **30** and **59** indicates a low level of anxiety. The lower the score, the more positive it is that you're experiencing supervision as helpful.

## What can you do if you have a high or moderate level of anxiety about supervision?

Reflect on why you might be anxious – is it case related or about your current supervisory relationship? Or based on past experience? Is it about a specific issue or related to your work more generally?

Once you have worked through the possible areas that are provoking anxiety, then work out who you are able to have an adult-to-adult conversation with about the difficulties you are encountering. Ideally, this should always be your supervisor in the first instance.

When talking to your supervisor about your anxiety, ensure the conversation is productive by basing it on Hawkins and Shohet's CORBS model:

**Clear**: Avoid vague and generalised statements such as: 'There are lots of things that are making me unhappy.' Use concrete examples such as: 'When we last had supervision it was shortened to 30 minutes and we were only able to discuss recording on the system.'

**Owned**: The issues are your perceptions and worries and are not anyone else's, so avoid 'We all think that …' Instead use: 'I have been reflecting on how helpful I am finding supervision at the moment and I realise that it is not working for me as it is.'

**Regular**: As soon as you realise that supervision is not a positive experience, start to address it. Don't let it drift or build up.

**Balanced**: Talk about what is working for you currently, both in your role and supervision, as well as what you are struggling with. Be clear about what will be helpful to you in the future.

**Specific**: Talk about behaviours and give examples wherever possible. Own your behaviours and reflect on how the supervisor's behaviours make you respond – without saying 'You make me feel like …'

(Hawkins and Shohet, 2006)

Source: Based on the unpublished Anticipatory Supervisee Anxiety Scale (by Ellis, Singh, Dennin and Tosado, University of Albany) in Bernard and Goodyear (2014)

# Tool 20: Seven learnable skills of resilience

**NAME** .................................................................................................................

**DATE** ...................................................…

**CHECK ONE:**  ☐ SUPERVISOR

☐ SUPERVISEE

Using this tool practitioners rate their abilities in seven key areas of resilience, and identify factors which might be supporting or blocking them.

## Aim

The aim of this tool is to encourage practitioners to think about and reflect on their own resilience in order to support their wellbeing.

## Applications

> Complete the audit individually and then share the results in the next supervision session.

> Complete the audit in supervision, using the supervisor to help rate skills and identify influencing factors.

> Both parties might complete the audit tool for the supervisee before comparing and discussing results.

> Use the tool to devise an individualised support plan

> Supervisors can support practitioners to write and regularly review their action plans.

## Instructions

Consider each of the learnable skills of resilience below before rating your ability in each 1-5, where one is low and five is high. Then consider the strategies that support the use of each skill and note down in the blank boxes what supports or blocks you using them. Finally, focus on three priority areas to improve your resilience and develop an action plan for the next three months to discuss and review in supervision. Revisit and review the plan in three months.

| Learnable skill | Current ability 1 – 5 (Low – High) | Strategies that support use of each factor | Support | Blocks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Each of the skills below support resilience and can be learnt | How good are you at doing these things? | The behaviours below describe skills that support resilience | What supports you to employ these skills? | What makes it hard for you to use these skills? |
| **1. Emotional regulation** Manage your internal world in order to stay effective under pressure | | **A+B=C** Recognise the impact of your 'in- the-moment' thoughts and beliefs on behavioural and emotional consequences | | |
| **2. Impulse control** Manage the behavioural expression of emotional impulses, including ability to delay gratification | | **Calming and focusing** Finding ways to step back from adversity; creating breathing space to think more logically and in depth | | |
| **3. Causal analysis** Ability to accurately identify the causes of adversity | | **Challenging beliefs** Checking out the breadth and accuracy of our understanding of events – do I know everything I need to know? | | |
| | | **Detecting icebergs** Building up an awareness of how deep-seated beliefs we hold can impact upon our emotions and behaviours | | |
| **4. Self-efficacy** The sense we are effective in the world and that we can solve problems and succeed | | **Thinking traps** Recognising and challenging the traps that impact upon our self-efficacy, such as jumping to conclusions, globalising | | |

| 5. Realistic optimism | | Putting it into perspective | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to stay positive about the future yet be realistic in our planning | | Learning to stop the spiralling of catastrophic thinking and turn it into realistic thinking | | |
| 6. Empathy | | Put yourself in their shoes | | |
| Ability to read other's behavioural cues to understand their psychological and emotional states | | Asking yourself how someone else would see the same situation; and seeking to understand before being understood | | |
| 7. Reaching out | | Seeking support from others | | |
| Ability to enhance the positive aspects of life and take on new challenges and opportunities | | Being able to ask for help reasonably and accept it positively when offered | | |

## Actions as a result of my reflections:

**In the next 3 months I will work on the following skills:**

**1.** ....................................................................................................................................

**2.** ....................................................................................................................................

**3.** ....................................................................................................................................

**By doing the following things:**

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**With the following support:**

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**I will know that I am more resilient when I am able to:**

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**This is important to my life and to my work with children and families because:**

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Source: Based on Child Centered Practice adapted from Reivich and Shatté (2002) and Jackson and Watkins (2004)

# Tool 21: Self-help audit plan

**NAME** ...........................................................................................................

**DATE** ...................................................................

Working with children and families can have both positive and negative impacts on practitioners. Developing appropriate self-care strategies is one way of limiting the negative impacts.

## Aims

> To support staff to reflect on the importance of self-care

> To support staff to develop appropriate self-care strategies to promote their emotional wellbeing

> To help the supervisor to meaningfully engage with issues around supervisee resilience.

## Applications

Not everyone will feel comfortable discussing the details of the audit with their supervisor. If this is the case, the supervisee may still be able to identify some useful points of discussion for supervision when reflecting on what the audit tells them they need to do in terms of self-care (and the possible impact on their work with children and families).

The tool may also be suitable for:

> Supporting supervisees to write and regularly review self-care plans

> Using annually, perhaps at review time

> Using with a whole team following a critical incident

> Elements of the tool might be used to guide a supervision session.

## Instructions

Take time to go through the following list and answer each question as honestly as possible before completing the self-care plan. Revisit and review the plan in three and six months' time.

**Reflect on your current work context**

> How long have you been working with children and families?

> What opportunities for variety do you have in your work?

> What feelings do you have about the families you work with?

> What are the kinds of traumatic and distressing stories or experiences you are exposed to?

> What kind of support and supervision do you receive?

**Reflect on your own life experiences**

> Have you had difficult experiences in your own life?

> Are these similar to or different from those of the families you work with?

> How often does your work remind you of your own life experiences?

> In what ways has your life been different from their lives?

> What effects, both positive and negative, do you think your own experiences currently have on your life?

> What are the positive and negative ways this may impact on your work?

**Reflect on your current life circumstances**

> What stressors do you currently experience in your life?

> How do these impact on you?

> Which of these are likely to diminish, and which may be more enduring?

> Do any of these connect to aspects of your work and, if so, in what way?

> In your current circumstances, what brings you pleasure and comfort?

> Who are the people in your life who are good for your spirit and wellbeing?

> Who are the people in your life who add stress and distress?

> Who and what are your major supports?

**Reflect on your coping style**

> What coping strategies do you currently use in managing stress and distress?

> Which of these are potentially problematic for you?

> Does your approach to problem-solving assist you in managing stress?

Considered together, what are the sources of stress and comfort that arise in each of these areas? Based on these reflections, begin to consider what would need to go into a self-care plan that covers the immediate, short term and long term:

> On a daily and weekly basis, what are the things you need to do, or not do, to keep balance in your life?

> On a monthly and regular basis, what are the things you need to do or not do?

> Who do you need to spend more or less time with?

> In the next six months, what long-term changes or strategies do you need to develop to limit the impact of your work on your life?

## Self-care plan

In the next ＿ months I will make self-care a priority in my life because:

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Not taking care of myself has the following impact **on my life and on my work with children and families:**

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When I take good care of myself I notice:

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The following people, places or activities bring me pleasure and comfort:

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My strategies and plans for self-care (in both the personal and professional realm) are:

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On a daily, weekly or fortnightly basis I will:

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On a regular basis I will:

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In the next three to six months I will:

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Source: Based on Gibbs et al (2014) adapted from Dwyer (2002)

# Tool 22: Wagnild and Young resilience scale

**NAME** ...............................................................................................................

**DATE** ...........................................................…

This standardised measure comprises a series of questions about practitioner resilience. The results can form the basis of a discussion on issues of wellbeing, the impact on the supervisee's own life and their work with children and families.

## Aim

The tool is designed to assess practitioner resilience.

## Applications

Practitioners should complete the questions on their own and pass the completed scale to their supervisor to score using the instructions below.

## Instructions

The following questions ask you to make a series of judgements about your attitudes to your life in general. Please circle the number that you feel best corresponds to the strength of your disagreement or agreement.

## Practitioner questions

1. **When I make plans I follow through with them**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

2. **I usually manage one way or another**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

3. **I feel proud that I have accomplished things in my life**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

4. **I usually take things in my stride**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

5. **I am friends with myself**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

6. **I feel that I can handle many things at a time**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

7. **I am determined**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

8. **I have self-discipline**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

9. **I keep interested in things**

   *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

10. **I can usually find something to laugh about**

    *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

11. **My belief in myself gets me through hard times**

    *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

12. **I can usually look at a situation in a number of ways**

    *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

13. **My life has meaning**

    *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

14. **When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it**

    *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

15. **I have enough energy to do what I have to do**

    *DISAGREE*    *1*    *2*    *3*    *4*    *5*    *6*    *7*    *AGREE*

## Supervisor scoring

Possible total combined scores range from 15 to 105; higher scores reflect higher resilience.

Items 4, 5, 10 and 13 refer to a worker's acceptance of themselves and their life.  High scores on these items indicate traits such as adaptability, balance, flexibility, a balanced perspective on life and a sense of peace in spite of adversity.

The remaining items (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15) refer to a worker's personal competence. High scores on these items indicate traits such as self-reliance, independence, determination, invincibility, mastery, resourcefulness and perseverance.

Source: Grant and Kinman (2014) based on Wagnild and Young (1993)

# Tool 23: Emotional resilience postcard

This tool focuses on individual strategies for coping with emotional stress. However, it is important to note that emotional resilience is an organisational issue and it is vital that individual practitioners are not held solely responsible for their own responses to the emotional demands of their role.

## Aims

To support supervisors to work with supervisees to:

> Identify the emotional demands they face at work

> How they feel in response to those demands

> How they are currently managing their emotions.

## Applications

The tool should be explained and worked through in supervision first. The postcard might then be photocopied and printed off for supervisees to keep with them.

The postcard provides a framework for reflection but this does not replace the support element of supervision. This tool should only be used if the supervisee finds it useful as a tool to promote individual learning of effective coping strategies in stressful situations.

## Instructions

### Step 1: Identify emotional demands

Begin by asking the supervisee to identify the emotional demands they face; knowing what these are will inform the discussion about which coping strategies might work best, so it's important to identify them at the outset.

### Step 2: Identify current coping strategies

Ask the supervisee what strategies they use for coping with stressful situations. Strategies currently being used can be compared to those on the postcard.

The six strategies on the postcard have been found to provide longer-term benefits (compared to short-term distractions such as comfort eating or drinking alcohol, for example).

Negative strategies – such as self-criticism, avoiding the problem or wishful thinking – are often used but will not help individuals cope in the long term. (Note: The supervisor should avoid any implied 'telling off' of individuals who use negative strategies; rather, they should encourage the supervisee to turn to some of the more effective strategies on the card.)

### Step 3: Identify main stressors and explore new coping strategies

The supervisor can help individuals identify what demands at work appear to be creating the most stress and consider whether these demands can be controlled by the individual, team or organisation. If they can be influenced, try and work towards a solution together.

If the demands are not controllable (by the individual, team or organisation), then other strategies such as reframing the problem, exercise, seeking social support and modifying mood might be more helpful.

Original postcards are available from Dr Laura Biggart: **l.biggart@uea.ac.uk**

**When things get stressful...**

### Plan ahead

How will I feel?

Could I change...
....where future events happen

...how things happen - for example, layout, sequence, people attending

### Reframe

What can I control?

What is not in my control?

Focus on what is in my control

Think of the bigger picture

Take time out to think

### Exercise

Any kind of physical activity to...

...use up emotional energy

...help breathing

...regain perspective

...give a break from thinking

### Tackle the problem

What is the root cause?

Tackle the root cause

Seek advice/help with this

What problems might be on the horizon?

Learn new skills to prepare for change/challenge

### Modify mood

Before any challenge, visualise it going well in detail

Think of something that makes you smile

Pay equal attention to the positive

At the end of each day, bring to mind at least one positive thing

### Seek support

Talk to colleagues, family and friends

Listen to different perspectives

If support is not immediately available, bring to mind someone who loves and/or respects you

Source: Biggart et al (2016)

Based on tool by Economic and Social Research Council, University of East Anglia and Centre for Research on Children and Families

# Tool 24: Recording template

| Supervisor: | |
| --- | --- |
| Case holder: | |
| Facilitator (if group) | |
| Attendees (if group): | |
| Date of Supervision: | |
| Child/family's details: | |

## What is the story?

Experience of work with the child and family since the last supervision discussion. What is the child's current experience? How do we know this? What is the issue you need support with today?

Reflection on experience and the factors that need to be taken into consideration in order to gain a full understanding of what is happening, including the intuitive responses of the social worker and assumptions that have been made.

## What does the story mean?

Analysis of the current situation. What is the working hypothesis and possible alternative explanations? How can theory and research inform understanding and conclusions regarding what this situation means for the child and family?

| What needs to happen? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What is the plan? How will this improve the child's experience? What have you learned? What would you do if this situation arose again?** | | | |

| Actions and who is responsible for carrying them out, including contingency planning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What will I do now?** | **I will know this has worked when…? (child's outcomes)** | **I will do this by…?** | **Review date** |
| | | | |

| Did I get the support I needed? |
|---|
| |

Source: Developed by the authors based on Wonnacott (2015b), Brown and Turney (2014) and Kent County Council (2015)

# Tool 25: Recording template

| | |
|---|---|
| **Supervisor:** | |
| **Case holder:** | |
| **Facilitator (if group)** | |
| **Attendees (if group):** | |
| **Date of Supervision:** | |
| **Child/family's details:** | |

**How are needs being met with regards to GRRAACCESS (Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Abilities, Culture, Class, Ethnicity, Spirituality, Sexual Orientation).**

**This is what I see when I look at you (the child). This is the issue I want support with today.**

| **This is what is worrying me and others.** | **This is what we think is working well for you** |
|---|---|
| | |

**This is what we think is happening**

**This is what we have decided to do about it. This is how it will improve your lived experience.**

| Actions | I will know this has worked when...? (child's outcomes) | I will do this by...? | Review date |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

**Did I get the support I needed?**

Source: Developed by the authors based on project participants' practice; in particular, North Yorkshire County Council (2015)

# Project participants

The Development Group included professionals from 11 local authorities who developed pilot resources between October 2014 and April 2015. Pilot Group participants were from two of these agencies plus eight other local authorities. The Pilot Group trialled nine of the tools between January and September 2016.

**Barnsley** Kevin Williams *Team Manager, Safeguarding* Louise Danks *Team Manager*

**Blackpool** Sara McCartan *Children's Centre Partnership Officer* Suzy Robertson *Service Manager, Families in Need*

**Camden** Elaine Dunning *Area Manager, Family Support* Lea Christodoulou *Area Manager, Families in Focus* Monika Krupa-Flasinska *Consultant Social Worker*

**Cheshire East** Julie Bennett *Practice Manager* Stephen Pepper *Practice Manager*

**Cornwall** Ali Bell *Principal Social Worker, Practice Education* Marion Russell *Principal Child and Family Social Worker*

**Coventry** Dana Ashley *Team Manager, Social Care* Janet Goode *Practice Educator* Sarita Sharma *Team Manager* Dr Vicky White *Lead Practitioner*

**Hertfordshire** Liz Wood *Service Manager, Family Safeguarding Service* Louise McKenna *Team Manager* Teri Peck *Service Manager, Children's Residential* Tricia Day *Service Manager, Children's Safeguarding*

**Kent** Julie Davidson *Principal Social Worker* Stephen Hollands *Early Help Case Work Team Manager*

**Lincolnshire** Sam Clayton *Principal Children and Family Social Worker* Wendy Fegan *Practice Supervisor*

**Liverpool** Jeannette Rowe *Safeguarding Team Manager* Lesley Sheriff *Family Support Team Manager*

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**Northamptonshire** Abi Gibbs *Team Manager, Post Approval Fostering Team* Sue Stevenson *Team Manager, Social Work Academy*

**North Yorkshire** Emma Hopper *Team Manager and Practice Lead* Paula Hopkins *Social Work Professional Learning Team Leader*

**Sefton** Caroline Watts *Advanced Practitioner* Christine Fletcher *Family Centre Manager*

**Solihull** Katie Hall *Assistant Team Manager, Children's Services* Selina Rawicz *Assistant Team Manager, Children's Services*

**Swindon** Louise Campion *Principal Officer, Health and Wellbeing* Maria Young *Service Manager, Children's Social Work Teams*

**Walsall** Georgina Atkins, *Parenting Toxic Trio Intervention Lead, Early Help, Children's Services* Sherrie Francis, *Practice Development Coordinator, Children's Services*

**Wiltshire** Julie Riggs *Assistant Team Manager, Community Safeguarding and Assessment Team*

**Wirral** Lynne Elton *Intensive Family Intervention Programme Team Leader* Nikky Kenny *Principal Manager*

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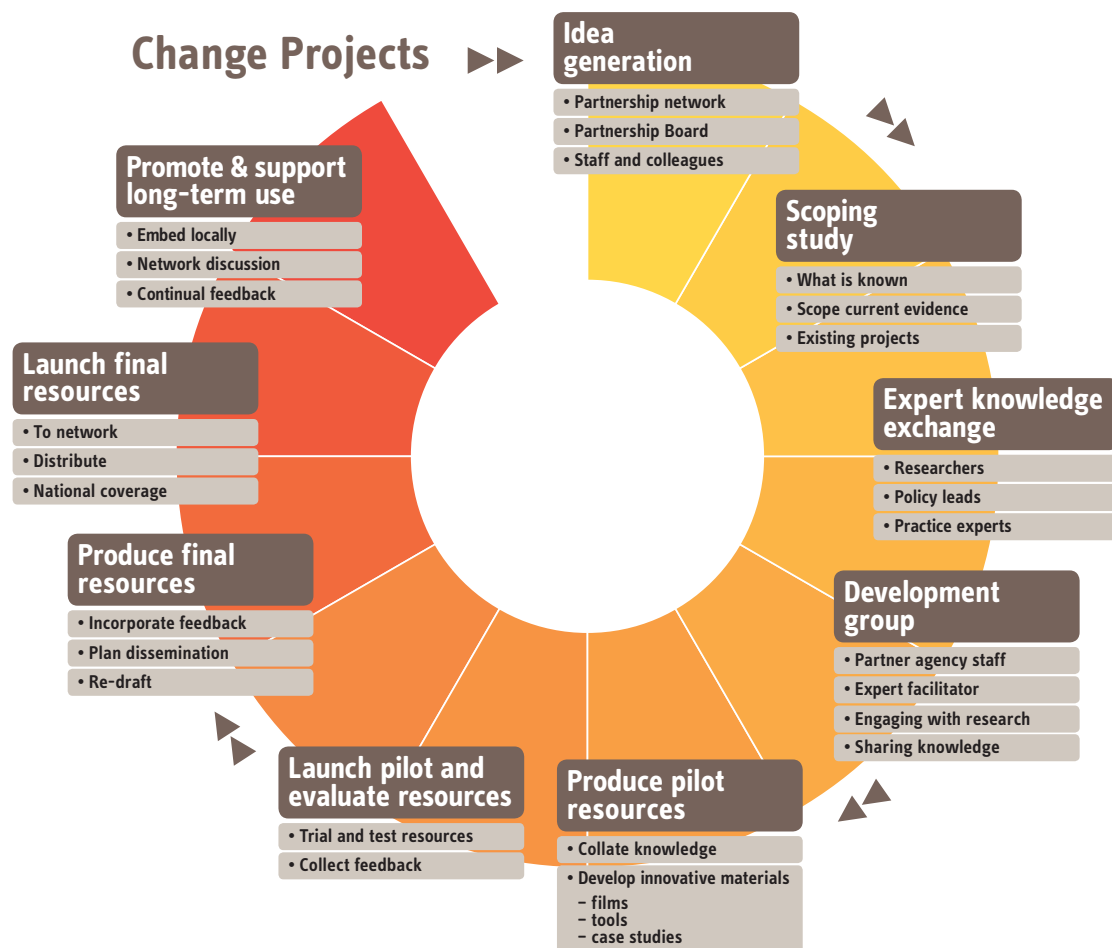
# About Change Projects

The Change Project is a method of intensive engagement which enables participants to find solutions to specific challenges and results in new knowledge and resources.

**Change Projects give Partners the opportunity to:**

> Explore the evidence around a particular problem or topic.

> Bring together professional knowledge and research evidence

> Improve practice through the application of evidence-informed approaches.

> Share new knowledge and resources with the wider network.

**A focused and rewarding learning process**

A group of participants from across the Research in Practice network come together with research experts and explore an issue over a development phase of 8 – 12 months. Research in Practice then produces resources which draw together the evidence and outputs of this collective learning. The resources are piloted across the network and refined accordingly. Final resources are produced, including practical exercises and interactive learning tools and made available to our network and beyond.

## Change Projects ▶▶

**Idea generation**
- Partnership network
- Partnership Board
- Staff and colleagues

**Scoping study**
- What is known
- Scope current evidence
- Existing projects

**Expert knowledge exchange**
- Researchers
- Policy leads
- Practice experts

**Development group**
- Partner agency staff
- Expert facilitator
- Engaging with research
- Sharing knowledge

**Produce pilot resources**
- Collate knowledge
- Develop innovative materials
  – films
  – tools
  – case studies

**Launch pilot and evaluate resources**
- Trial and test resources
- Collect feedback

**Produce final resources**
- Incorporate feedback
- Plan dissemination
- Re-draft

**Launch final resources**
- To network
- Distribute
- National coverage

**Promote & support long-term use**
- Embed locally
- Network discussion
- Continual feedback

# research in practice

# Reflective supervision:
## Resource Pack

**Social work and family support with children and families involves dealing with complexity and uncertainty. While practitioners often cannot know the best course of action, they need to be able to make well-reasoned judgements and understand the far-reaching implications of decisions for the child. Reflective supervision has a vital role to play in that process.**

This resource pack comprises a suite of 25 tools designed to help practice supervisors and supervisees, team leaders and organisations build, develop and consolidate reflective supervision in child and family services.

It will help supervisors, teams and organisations who want to move towards a more reflective style of supervision think about where and how to start. And it will help those already committed to practising reflective supervision think about how they can best consolidate and build on what they do.

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# Dartington