Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning.

Reflective practice involves the critical analysis of everyday working practices to improve competence and promote professional development. Reflective practice is all about:

- Thinking
- Self-Awareness
- Values
- Consideration
- Understanding
- Analysis
- Evaluation

This tool is based on an eclectic mix of theoretical models. Broadly however, the reflective process will follow Gibb’s cycle below:
Preparation

This tool is aimed at a group for reflective supervision. You will need a flip chart and pens. Also one member of the group should be able to present information relating to a case. This approach is particularly useful for cases where a practitioner feels ‘stuck’.

Elements of this tool can also be used in everyday practice and supervision and this should be reinforced throughout the session.

The process usually takes one to one and a half hours.

Description

Start with a Genogram. To begin with, just sketch out the family make up and do not be tempted at this point to provide any detail on the family circumstances. Ensure that as many generations and family members are included as is known.

Description:

- Formulate some hypotheses based on the apparent information in the genogram.
- Make observations in relation to patterns

(This approach is derived from systemic family therapy.)

Then add in the full detail of the circumstances of the family:

Description:

- What is the family and child scenario we are working with?
- What are the current concerns?
- What history is known?
- What action has been taken recently?
Then ask four key questions:

**Description – four key questions:**

- What are your niggling doubts?
- Are there any signs of disguised compliance?
- Have we been over-optimistic?
- What is the parent/s capacity for change?

**Feelings**

Using the flip chart ask everyone to list in a left hand column what feelings this case is generating in them. Sometimes practitioners try to avoid answering so keep bringing them back. Then ask what the child is feeling and list these feelings in the next column. Compare this to the practitioner’s feelings. You can also go further and explore what the parent/carers are feeling.

**Feelings:**

- Feelings lead to behaviours
- Planning to address behaviours will not work without plans to address feelings/emotional needs
- Understanding feelings enable a more child centred approach
- Children’s feelings will be far more profound than practitioner’s feelings – imagine that.
Evaluation:

On another sheet of flip chart, using three columns, start summing up with listing what is working well, what is not working so well and what needs to change.

-Evaluation:
  - What did you, we or others do that, a) worked well; b) did not work?
  - What was the impact on the child?
  - During the course of our involvement, has there been overall progress or deterioration?
  - What needs to change?

(This is derived from the Signs of Safety model of practice.)

Analysis and Conclusions

Re-cap on the needs identified throughout the course of the discussion. This can be done verbally or on paper (but ensure that this is recorded). Discuss available options and theory behind analysis and judgements.

-Analysis:
  - What are the strengths, needs and areas of concern or risk?
  - What sense can you make of the situation?
  - What are the options?
  - What knowledge and tools have you used to help you (evidence, theory, assessment tools, research, previous experience, practice wisdom?)
  - Consider from your point of view, the child’s point of view and also that of other family members and other professionals
Action Plan

Formulate two plans. One is for how the case should progress. The other plan is for general learning for the team, e.g. team members may want to research further issues related to a specific theme such as domestic abuse or paedophile behaviours. Or, team members may require formal training on some subjects.

Action Plan – Learning and Development:

- If this scenario arose again, what would you do?
- What impact has this had on your practice?
- What have you learnt?
- What future professional developmental needs do you have?

Ensure that the session is recorded as a group reflective supervision on Azeus and that the plans made in this session are monitored in future supervisions of the case.

Action Plan – next steps on case:

- List key actions
- Agree what will be reviewed and how
- Identify in particular how child will be involved in next steps
- Be SMART and add these actions to your main plan
- What is your contingency plan?