Practice Matters

A close-up of a label

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Reflective Supervision

What is reflective supervision?

Reflective supervision, either 1:1 or in a group, provides a safe time and space for practitioners to go beyond case management to think and question their practice and its impact.

Why do we use reflective supervision?

Reflective supervision helps us to think more systemically about families and promotes our strengths based, relational ‘Stronger Families Safer Children’ practice model. It encourages us to acknowledge and question assumptions, judgements and biases. To consider alternative perspectives and explore further what we’re curious about. To consider personal beliefs/ social graces / experiences and how they might be impacting on our thinking / relationships and practice. To ensure we are noticing strengths and safety factors as well as risks. To learn, develop and consider the emotional impact of the work.

How to develop helpful reflective supervision (some ideas that might be helpful)

* Be prepared for supervision (both supervisor and supervisee) – think about what will be most helpful for you to explore reflectively to either develop you / the practitioner and or help unstick / develop part of your / the practice with a particular child / family.
* What patterns of behaviour / family dynamics / scripts / family beliefs have you / the worker noticed? Do we understand why the family behave the way they do – do we understand the different relationships within this family and with those outside? Do we understand how they communicate with each other and others? What don’t we know that we may need to explore further? How can we do this?
* Be open to listen and consider / offer different ideas / perspectives – that may be very different. Develop multiple hypotheses, which are very different, to encourage curiosity.
* Tune in to the language you and others use about a child / family – that will give real insight into beliefs / biases / narratives you and others have. Is it problem saturated or too optimistic?
* Discuss what you / the worker brings to the relationship with the family – how might the similarities / differences in social GRACES be helpful or a challenge. What role have you/ the worker taken on with the family (e.g. parent / rescuer). Does the relationship need to change / develop - is it the most helpful for the child / family to help affect change?
* Are the family on the same page as us – are the outcomes we want and they want the same or different? What impact might this have?
* Explore risk and your / the workers relationship to it – how do you / they feel about it - do you / they feel safe / supported in holding risk with this child/ family – is risk being collaboratively held and managed - how is it impacting the child and them. Have strengths and safety factors been explored and understood enough?
* Explore change and impact – what difference is our involvement having, is it focussed on the right things, will it be sustainable.
* Use some of the stronger family safer children tools in the [toolkit](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/7090/stronger-families-safer-children-toolkit.pdf) – e.g. the Grid, the discrepancy matrix, safe uncertainty, 3 Ps, social discipline window