

A Resource Pack and Toolkit for Practice Supervisors



Contents

Content	Page Number
Introduction and Guiding Principles of the Supervisor's Toolkit	Page 3
Skills and Approaches - A Person Centred Approach	Page 4
Active Listening Skills	Page 5
Effective Questioning	Page 6
Giving and Receiving Feedback	Page 7
Challenging and Confronting Conversations	Page 8
Supervision Models	Page 9
Reflective Practice Groups	Page 10
Critical Reflection	Page 10
Reflective Supervision	Page 11
Kolb's Experimental Learning Cycle	Page 12
Prompting Reflective Phrases	Page 12
5 Anchor Principles	Page 13
Gibbs Reflective Cycle	Page 15

Introduction and Guiding Principles of the Supervisor's Toolkit

The resources provided have been put together to offer succinct information and practical tools to use when preparing for and delivering high quality, reflective supervision.

Dudley Children's Services want to encourage and embed the use of reflective thinking; professional, respectful challenge; and building a supportive environment for practitioners and supervisors to develop their practice.

The Guiding Principles of Supervision

- Good supervision within a positive organisational culture can support the development of analytical, critical and reflective thinking in practice.
- Supervision is a shared responsibility and can be drawn from a multiplicity of sources. It is a process rather than an event, session or method.
- Supervision is relational and invites regular feedback in all directions.
- Supervision arrangements are set out in a clear contract which is negotiated and reviewed, and which includes regular, uninterrupted, structured and recorded sessions.
- The organisation values and supports the process, recognising the critical influence of supervision on transformational practice.

Skills and Approaches

Person-Centred Approach

Being person-centred in approach means creating a positive environment with:

- Respect
- Empathy
- Genuineness
- Unconditional Positive Regard

The 'person-centred' approach was developed by Carl Rogers in the 1950s in the field of psychotherapy. Essentially, he proposed that a person will grow and develop if these core conditions are in place and believed that persons have a basically positive direction.

Respect for the individual as the person they are, offering non-judgmental acceptance. It is a commitment to being real and honest in the relationship and also about the professional standards expected.

Empathy involves 'getting in contact with another's world', understanding their perspectives and feelings. Empathy builds self-esteem and is very powerful when working with resistance. An important component of empathy is reflecting key themes and messages back to the supervisee through skilled communication.

Genuineness or congruence can be understood simply as 'being one's self'. This will inevitably influence the level of trust in the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. Trust built on an honest, professional relationship is essential so that the likelihood of positive motivation can be maximised.

Unconditional Positive Regard involves regarding the supervisee as a separate person of intrinsic worth and value, a human being and not just a 'human doing'. The challenge for supervisors can be to achieve this while being clear about the standards and performance required.

Active Listening Skills

Active listening should be demonstrated in all supervision sessions. This requires practitioners and supervisors to pay full attention and communicate this through verbal and non-verbal cues which include:

- Maintaining positive eye contact.
- Angling your body language towards the other person, however, not invading their personal space.
- Not fidgeting.
- Nodding or saying phrases such as 'yes', 'ahh' or 'mmm'.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing what has just been said can support understanding and listening. This also gives supervisors the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and ensure that they are understanding what is said to them. Phrases such as 'Can I just check that I've understood, you said...' or 'So what you're saying is...'

Summarising

Summarising, when appropriate to do so, ensures that what has been said has been accurately captured. Phrases that can be used are;

- 'Overall, it seems that...'
- 'What seems to be most important to you is...'
- 'So to pull this together...'
- 'To summarise so far...'

Reflecting Feelings

Reflecting feelings to show recognition that someone's feelings are important while checking out understanding and interpretation. This can be very empowering and release the supervisee's energy to change and develop. Useful phrases include:

- 'You sound upset (or very pleased) about that'
- 'I notice that you seem anxious when you mention...'

Effective Questioning

Asking different types of questions effectively provides a way of structuring information in sequence to explore a topic and to get to the heart of the issues. Types of questions include:

- **Open questions** - These are useful in getting another person to speak and can provide you with a good deal of information. They often begin with the words: What, Why, When, Who. Sometimes statements are also useful: “tell me about” or “give me examples of”.
- **Closed questions** - These are questions that require a yes or no answer and are useful for checking facts. They should be used with care - too many closed questions can cause frustration and shut down conversation.
- **Specific questions** - These are used to determine facts. For example “How much did you spend on that?”
- **Probing questions** - These check for more detail or clarification. Probing questions allow you to explore specific areas. However, be careful because they can easily make people feel they are being interrogated.
- **Hypothetical questions** - These pose a theoretical situation in the future. For example, “What would you do if...?” These can be used to get others to think of new situations and how they might cope or use their skills.
- **Reflective questions** - You can use these to reflect back what you think a speaker has said, to check understanding. You can also reflect the speaker’s feelings, which is useful in dealing with angry or difficult people and for defusing emotional situations (ref. Active Listening Skills above).
- **Leading questions** - These are used to gain acceptance of your view – they are not useful in providing honest views and opinions. If you say to someone ‘you will be able to cope, won’t you?’ they may not like to disagree.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Supervision aims to be a two-way process where learning is effectively and respectfully shared, so the giving and receiving of good feedback by both supervisor and supervisee is essential.

When Sharing Feedback

Good feedback is;

Invited – ideally offered on request or by agreement that feedback will be given.

Timed – feedback is generally more effective when given shortly after the event, i.e. following a Direct Observation of Practice.

Positive – feedback should always include some comments about what went well, i.e. ‘You have shown a really good knowledge of child development’.

Specific and prioritised – Quote the exact words or actions rather than using general statements like ‘that was fine’ and explain your reasons to the other person.

Alternatives and suggestions – After listening to how the person themselves perceives their performance, offer your views on the ways in which they might develop or improve.

Owned – If the giver of feedback uses an ‘I’ statement, this leaves the receiver free to accept or reject a comment rather than having a view or a judgement imposed; it is a more sensitive approach for delicate issues in particular.

When Receiving Feedback

Listen – focus on understanding the feedback and avoid rejecting, arguing or being defensive.

Check your understanding – ask questions to fully clarify; for instance seek examples.

Acknowledge the giver – Show appreciation for receiving the feedback.

Make a choice about what to do – You may or may not wish to act on the feedback; this is optional.

Take a positive view – Remind yourself that the aim of feedback is to help you learn in order to improve future performance.

Challenging and Confronting Conversations

During supervision, it may be necessary for a supervisor to have a challenging discussion or confront a practitioner, i.e. timescales not being consistently met or another performance issue. This should always be delivered in a professional, open and honest way.

Dudley Children's Services offer a three stage approach that supervisors can follow when challenging in supervision. This is a valuable everyday tool, probably not suitable for complex or very serious situations, but very useful indeed for preventing any escalation of unacceptable behaviour and embedding a positive culture which is professional at all times.

Stating the Behaviour

This can include time management, recording, inappropriate language. State 'When you...' and include the specific behaviours which have led to your concern and this discussion. Describe the behaviour or quote the language; do not be judgmental or accusatory.

Explain the Impact or the Effect

For example, as an individual you may have found the language or behaviour offensive, embarrassing or distasteful. In a team or work-setting the behaviour may have been unprofessional or reflected badly on the competence or reputation of the team. State 'I feel...' or 'it is impacting on...'

Explain what you want to happen

This may simply be a request for the behaviour to stop or a constructive suggestion about how things could be done differently. (If this is not the first time the behaviour has occurred, or if it is very serious, you may need to be clear about what the possible consequences could be). Be clear about what is going to happen next and how this will be recorded. Use language such as 'I would like you to...'

Supervision Models

A Problem Solving Approach

A Problem Solving Approach can be used in all supervision sessions whereby a practitioner is discussing a case or personal issue and they need support uncovering and progressing this.

During supervision, you should support and encourage the practitioner to do the following;

Identify and Define the Problem

Collect Information and Analyse the Problem

Prioritise and Set Objectives for Improvement

Outline Plan of Action

Implement a Plan

Monitor, Review and Evaluate

Identify and Define the Problem – identify key problems which will have most impact on service quality.

Collect Information and Analyse – Gather information from the practitioner and analyse together what this means and what impact it is having.

Prioritise and Set Objectives – This should be recorded in a SMART format, where appropriate so that actions and timescales are clear and there is a plan to review progress.

Plan of Action – Link the action plan to each identified objective. Creative methods and tools can also be used. Planning the evaluation also needs to be done at this stage.

Monitor and Evaluate – Identify *who* will monitor and *how*. Evaluate effectiveness against the agreed measures and methods.

Reflective Practice Groups

The following process model is one of many which is tried and tested it can be used in a range of settings, including team meetings or gatherings of specific peer groups to review practice.

This approach and process supports supervision by offering unconditional positive regard and being non-judgemental - the experience then becomes positive, valuing, creative, and dynamic and also helps to resolve any conflict.

These discussions should take place in a secure environment with the input of all relevant team members, where possible.

Principles:

- The approach is affirming and optimistic and it frees the team from the blame culture, enabling learning and growth to take place.
- The focus is on each person's strengths, potential ideas, progress and aspirations.
- Each team member's role is to validate what other people do well – this helps individuals to feel better about themselves.
- Understand what is not working well, and do less or stop doing this.
- Understand what is working well, and continue to do this or do more.

Critical Reflection

Tony Morrison & Jane Wonnacott (2010) clarify the essential link between critical reflection and supervision:

'Professional practice, and worker/service user dynamics need to be critically analysed, and the impact of the worker's emotions on thoughts and actions is explored. This is the basis by which reflective but authoritative social work/care practice is developed. Drawing on research and experience of working with supervisors, the Supervision-Outcomes chain describes the way in which supervision influences practice'.

Core Conditions of Critical Reflection:

- Encouragement and facilitation of **professional and personal development** by attending to the emotional content of the work and how reactions to the content affect the work.

- Integration of **emotion** and **reason** - it is essential to observe, listen, wonder and respond

Reflective Supervision

What is Reflective Supervision?

Reflective Supervision is offered on a regular basis in the context of a collaborative relationship, providing opportunities for the individuals involved to reflect on hands on work.

Reflective supervision helps gain an in-depth understanding of a situation, become more aware of their own reactions and responses to the client, how they intervened and the consequences of their intervention.

Supervisees are encouraged to explore other ways of working with a variety of client interventions. These approaches encourage supervisees to become more creative, develops critical thinking and problem solving skills, and their decision-making processes, this, in turn, encourages autonomy within supervisees.

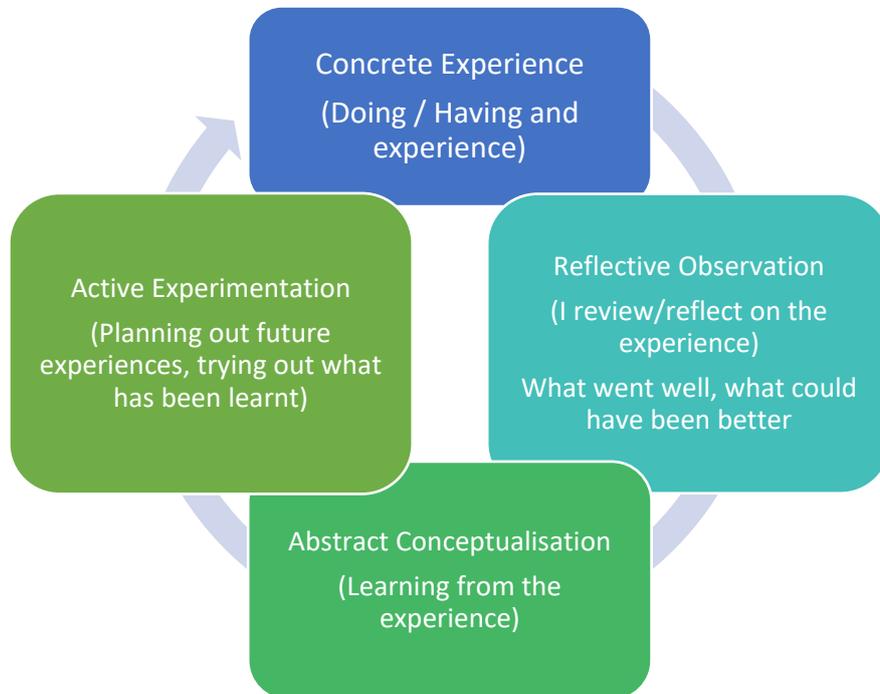
Reflective Thinking is a skill that children and family practitioners and supervisors can continue to develop throughout their careers. It encourages individuals to keep the child in mind and to reflect and think about their own skills and approaches to their work.

Using reflective thinking in practice allows practitioners and supervisors to feel 'safe' in their work environment where they can talk about their experiences.

A safe atmosphere at work will encourage practitioners to share their practice knowledge, be knowledgeable and be motivated.

Kolb's Experimental Learning Cycle (1984)

Four stages of learning that are formed by reflecting over experiences to guide future actions and experiences.



Prompting Reflective Phrases

These questions are examples of ones that supervisors can use in their supervision sessions in order to encourage reflective thinking and ideas.

- I'm wondering...
- Can we explore for a moment...
- What are your thoughts on...
- How would you approach...
- How will your strengths...
- Can you tell me more about...
- How would you describe...
- If you viewed this from _____ perspective, what would you see?

The 5 Anchor Principles

Brown et al, 2012; Brown and Turney, 2014 devised the ‘**Five Anchor Principles**’ for practitioners to use when undertaking assessments and as a supportive tool to use in either one to one supervision or group supervision.

These principles can be used in conjunction with Dudley Children’s Services assessment tools and approaches, including Restorative Practice or Signs of Safety. These principles encourage practitioners to reflect on their practice and develop their understanding of a child’s story, lived experiences and the impact of Children’s Services intervention on their lives.

The Five Anchor Principles are:

- ⚓ What is the assessment for?
- ⚓ What is the story?
- ⚓ What does the story mean?
- ⚓ What needs to happen?
- ⚓ How will we know we are making progress?

What is the assessment for?

This helps the practitioner to consider what they are assessing and what they are involved in the family’s life for. This question enables practitioners to demonstrate reflection at the beginning stages.

Some questions to consider are:

- What are we worried about?
- What might the family/child be worried about?
- What skills and support might the practitioner need to complete the assessment?

What is the story?

These are the relevant facts, circumstances and events. This question supports a practitioner to consider the journey of a family and the lived experience of the child.

Some questions to consider are:

- Can the practitioner tell the story from the viewpoint of the child?
- How has the practitioner used the story to make sense of the child's lived life?
- How does the story make the practitioner feel and has the practitioner thought about how their own past experiences influences the story?

What does the story mean?

At this stage, the practitioner will begin to analyse the story using their own practise wisdom, research and expertise about the family. This is the principle whereby you will 'show your workings out'.

Some questions to consider are:

- What hypotheses have been developed and what are the alternatives?
- 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?

What needs to happen now?

Plans are now starting to emerge and solutions are now being suggested. Practitioners should focus on the needs of the child or family, rather than describing need, i.e. 'the child needs to be in a safe environment where there is no domestic abuse', rather than 'referral to domestic abuse service'.

Some questions to consider are:

- What would have to happen for this child for the practitioner to stop being involved with the child and family?
- What does the practitioner think will be the best outcome and why?
- How will this be helpful to the child's current situation?

How will we know we are making progress?

Practitioners are encouraged to consider what things need to look like in order to be encouraged that the child is safe, loved and their needs are being met. We should consider what 'good' looks like in the life of a child and how we will know the family have achieved that.

Some questions to consider are:

- What did the practitioner hope would have happened by now?
- What would the child/family say?
- Does the practitioner have a plan to challenge family or other professionals involved, should there be no change for the child?
- What did the practitioner hope would have happened by now?

Gibbs Reflective Cycle

Gibb's Reflective Cycle is one model that can be used in practice and in supervision as a way of encouraging reflective thinking. Supervisors can utilise this cycle when asking a practitioner to consider a case or an event that was meaningful to them, i.e. a resistant family has refused to work with them.

The practitioner can be encouraged to verbally follow the cycle, or can use a piece of paper/flip chart to reflect upon their feelings and how this may impact on their practice in the future.

Information and guidance for supervisors about dealing with difficult situations, recognising issues and supporting supervisees.

