**Appendix F – Systemic Reflective Space – A Model for Reflective Group Supervision**

Systemic Reflective Space (SRS) is a model of group supervision developed through a small-scale practitioner led qualitative research project to develop a ‘reflective space’ for a multi-disciplinary children’s services team (Jude and Regan 2010). The approach is rooted in Tom Anderson’s (1987) work on reflecting team and is adapted here by Child Centres Practice and Research in Practice.

Systemic Reflective Space seeks to create space to explore lived experiences, gut feelings and human ways of knowing. It does this by:

* Developing professional practice that requires practitioners to share their skills, competence and abilities thus inviting collaborative and reflective practice.
* Providing an alternative view on aspects of a practitioner’s work and offering an opportunity for the practitioner to explore a variety of options in their practice, to facilitate learning and help transform practice.
* Developing professional practice that requires practitioners to share their skills, competence and abilities thus inviting collaborative reflective practice.
* Providing an alternative view on aspects of a practitioners work and offering an opportunity for the practitioner to explore a variety of options in their practice, to facilitate learning and help transform practice
* Focusing on strengths and diversity of participants (Jude and Regan, 2010:11)

Ground Rules

In order to facilitate the process, team members are encouraged to:

* Reflect at the presenter’s pace
* 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
* Ideas should be presented tentatively and not as solutions (Jude and Regan, 2010:11)

The reflecting team conversation should not mirror what the presenter has discussed, but offer alternatives to enable sufficient difference to emerge.

**Getting Started**

In groups of six, nominate one person to a practice issue

1. **One participant presents a practice issue**

The issue is presented in a story form- first of all from the point of view of the practitioner, then from the point of view of the service user and then from the point of view of any other key players.

Presentation of the story should only take about 15 minutes. The practitioner can draw on resources such as pictures, objects and role play to tell it.

The other members of the group pay attention to how the presenter talks about the issue. Their focus should be on the emotional listening.

Emotional listening requires a willingness to let others dominate a 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.

1. **Presenter silently observes the rest of the group in discussion and sits outside the circle.**

No questions are asked or answered at this stage. All participants must learn to ‘Sit with uncertainty’. This involves a willingness to continually challenge one’s own assumptions and place knowledge in the context of values, past experiences, feelings and relationships to test them out.

1. **The group converses and explores the issue using stories, visual aids and role play.**

The group adopts an exploring (not a ‘solving’ or ‘expert’) stance. The aim of the exercise is to explore different ways of understanding the presenting dilemma and why their own attention has landed on the story in the way it has.

‘What else could it be?’ is a helpful way for them to think about what has been presented along with asking ‘How is the dilemma the same as one I have experienced?’ More importantly, ‘How is it different?’, a useful way for members of the group to check out that they are not relying too much on similar experiences of their own, or the shared wisdom of the organisation.

1. **What is known an unknown?**

The group works to capture the ‘known’ and ‘unknown’ areas of the original presentation, including presumptions. (What we sometimes call ‘thinking’ can be a rearranging of our own prejudices and beliefs). The group generates a list of ‘curious’ questions the presenter should consider. However, they do not ask the questions and the presenter does not answer them; the presenter remains outside the circle, listening.

1. **Presenter comments on the group’s discussion**

The presenter responds to the different discussions, viewpoints and questions generated, talking about what captured their attention and why. The group is to listen in silence to these points

The presenter tries to remain curious about what they are attending to and how they felt with each response (reflection in action). They will use the below sentence structure to guide their responses:

*“The first thing I noticed from your discussion was…”*

*“It made me feel like…”*

*“Now I realise that…”*

*“This is what I would like to do about that…”*

1. **Group discussion**

During this period the whole group including the presenter reflects on why different perspectives have emerged- or why they have not emerged, if there have been no alternative perspectives. The group checks in that they are feeling OK and explores the usefulness of the process.

Source: adapted from Jude and Regan (2010)