

Reflective Supervision Tip Sheet

Reflective supervision provides a consistent, supportive space to explore thoughts, feelings, and reactions related to caregiving work.

The purpose of this tip sheet is to support effective practice before, during and after reflective supervision meetings. Additionally, the ongoing development of the reflective supervisor is addressed.

Preparing Yourself for Reflective Supervision

- Check in with yourself – Notice what is present for you emotionally or mentally. Ask yourself is there anything that could distract you from being present and take steps to set it aside.
- Ground yourself – Take a few deep breaths, set an intention, or a mindful pause to be present and curious.
- Remove distractions – Silence notifications, close your computer, phone out of sight.
- Review notes from prior session – Reflect on any themes, feelings or questions that may still be unfolding.
- Consider the supervisee's patterns – How do they use supervision? What helps them feel safe and engaged.
- Prepare reflective prompts – Identify one or two questions that might deepen reflection based on previous conversations or recent experiences they've had.



During Reflective Supervision

Collaboration:

- Clarify what the supervisee hopes to gain from reflective supervision.
- Establish how feedback will be offered in a way that feels constructive and supportive.
- Intentionally foster a safe space where vulnerability is met with curiosity and respect – not judgement.

Predictability:

- Maintain a consistent meeting structure: schedule regular sessions, start and end on time, and use a consistent format.
- Show up with a calm, attuned presence.
- Uphold and model clear boundaries.

Reflection:

- Begins by understanding the supervisee's narrative – what stands out to them and what may be missing or avoided.
- Invite them to explore their thoughts, feelings and responses to the situation.
- Reflect on how they feel now compared to how they felt in the moment.
- Consider the supervisees reflective functioning and support development across thinking, feeling and responding.
- Help them bridge personal experiences (when shared) to their professional responses. Don't explore further unless it's invited *and* relevant to the work.
- Support the development of insight into how these reflections might guide future interactions with families.

During Reflective Supervision (cont.)

Rupture and repair:

- Be aware of signs of rupture (disengagement, defensiveness, emotional withdrawal).
- Take responsibility for naming and repairing ruptures - acknowledge the impact and invite reflection.
- Remember repair strengthens trust and models accountability.

Things to remember:

- You do not have to come up with a solution! Your role is to be curious and create space for insight to emerge.
- Silence is valuable. If a supervisee becomes quiet after a question allow space for internal reflection.
- Help supervisees strengthen regulation skills so they can tolerate difficult emotional states and stay present with others.
- Reflective practice can be emotional demanding. Normalize this and be aware of pacing and timing.

After a Reflective Supervision Meeting:

- Regulate your body – take a moment to breathe, stretch, hydrate or release tension in healthy ways.
- Have a transition ritual that marks the end of a session.
- Jot down a few notes to capture key themes or anything you feel is important to remember.
- Check in with yourself – What did the session stir in you? What emotions came up? Where did you feel stuck or uncertain.
- Offer yourself compassion for the misses and missteps. Presence, not perfection, is what matters most.

Ongoing Development for the Reflective Supervisor:

- Regularly engage in your own reflective practice such as journaling, mindfulness/meditation, etc. to deepen your self-understanding.
- Expand your skills in providing reflective supervision through reading, attending trainings or discussing with peers.
- To sustain yourself in the work, engage in your own reflective supervision at least once per month to explore countertransference, parallel process, themes that emerge across supervision sessions and so forth.



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