

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.

Preparing Yourself for Reflective Supervision

- We don't just hear the stories of the families, we hold them.
- The families bring their hope, pain, trauma, and confusion.
- At times, the struggles the family is experiencing mirrors those you may have had or are having in your life, which can make doing the work more challenging.
- Reflective supervision provides a space to explore and process the emotional weight of the stories the families share and the impact on you.
- It is a place to unpack, make meaning of and let go of what you have been holding.



Before Reflective Supervision:

- Take a moment to check in with yourself to see how you are feeling. Are you tired, frustrated, happy, overwhelmed?
- Think about what you would like to explore.
 - Was there an interaction between a parent and child that you keep thinking about?
 - Did you react in a way that surprised you in a visit?
 - Is there a person, story or experience that you can't get out of your head?
- You don't have to have anything figured out. It's just a starting point to begin exploring.
- Eliminate as many distractions as possible, such as silencing your phone, turn on email notifications, be in a quiet place.

During Reflective Supervision:

- Bring what's real even if it's messy, uncomfortable, or emotional. This is a time for you to get the support you need.
- Instead of trying to rush to find "the answer," remain curious about your thoughts, feelings and reactions.
- Explore how what you are experiencing with families may stir up memories or emotions in you.
- It's ok to be silent and reflect quietly on what you are experiencing.
- Trust that it's ok to not have everything tidied up when you finish. Reflective supervision is about exploring and processing not necessarily having answers.



After Reflective Supervision:

- If possible, give yourself a few minutes to pause and let what you have explored settle.
- Notice what stood out to you – themes, emotions, thinking patterns, insights – and jot them down.
- Make sure to take care of your body – drink water, stretch, get a snack, take a walk, listen to some music.
- Consider how you can bring the insights you have gained into your work with families, colleagues, and yourself.
- Sometimes it can take a few days or weeks for something you have learned about yourself in reflective supervision to click. It can be helpful when that happens to make notes and connections to take back to the next reflective supervision session.

A few reminders:

- Reflective supervision is about supporting not judging you.
- It's ok to not know where to start, just pick a spot and go.
- You don't have to love reflective supervision right away. It can take a bit to be comfortable sharing your thoughts, feelings and responses. Just give it a chance.
- Tiny bits of understanding add up to a deeper understanding of yourself in the work. Don't discount the little things.
- The reflective supervisor will ask questions, if you are not comfortable answering, just say so. It's ok.
- What you get out of reflective supervision matches what you put into it. Arriving prepared and curious positions you for the best insights and growth.



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