

“We do not learn from experience....we learn from reflecting on experience.”

John Dewey

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is thinking about or reflecting on what you do and what happened and learning from that to improve your actions.

We encourage employers and managers to support their staff to undertake regular reflection as this can lead to a more confident, insightful, open and honest culture.

Benefits of reflection

- Positive impact for service users, colleagues your practice and wellbeing.
- Allows you to identify ways you can improve your practice, from positive and challenging experiences.
- Professionals who are able to reflect with their colleagues protect their mental health and develop stronger teams.
- Can be used as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) evidence.

What isn't reflection

Reflecting is not the act of talking, meeting with your team, meeting with a supervisor or writing about your day. These activities can become reflective if you use them to analytically assess your practice and to develop insights. Supervision can also play a role in your reflections, however it is not a substitute for reflection and the same is true for other activities like coaching or case reviews.

Reflective Practice Methods

Different people learn in different ways and while one person may learn by reflecting on a positive outcome, another may find it most useful to focus on a situation they found challenging. It is important that reflection is done in the way that suits you best to provide the greatest benefit.

- **Reflecting by yourself**, can be flexible, or more structured depending on your preferences. How you reflect and how you record these reflections is up to you. Just because you reflect by yourself doesn't mean that the things you learn need to be kept to yourself. Your individual reflection can be something you bring to larger meetings or presentations to colleagues and form a valuable learning.
- **Group or team reflection**, allows professionals to come together and build collective wisdom through the sharing of ideas and knowledge. Reflecting together with your colleagues and other professionals can also allow you to identify complex issues you encounter in your practice that are common across organisations or departments. There are no restrictions on the types of activities that you can reflect on. You can reflect on a positive or negative event and focus on anything within your scope of practice.

Reflective practice questions

- What went well?
- What could be better?
- How did this improve my skills?
- How could I improve these skills further?
- How do these improved skills help my practice and service users?

Tips for reflective practice:

Positive outcome of challenging situation: Don't feel like you have to choose a 'special' event.

Take a focused approach: Focus on what you want to learn from your reflection and think about how it relates to your role.

Learning: Focus on what you learned in an event, don't just provide an account of an event.

Resources: There are wide variety of resources to help with your reflection. Check with your employer, your professional body or union.

Confidential: When making your notes, respect everyone's confidentiality.

Acknowledgement/Further information

- [Reflective practice | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/) – which this guide is based on
- [reflective-practice-template.pdf \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/reflective-practice-template.pdf)
- [West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adult Board Website](https://www.westofberkshiresafeguardingadultsboard.org.uk/)

Thankyou for taking the time to read this Learning Brief. If you would like to provide any feedback or have any questions regarding the Board please contact: Lynne.Mason@Reading.gov.uk