


Introduction to Reflective Practice and Supervision

Introduction to Reflective Practice and Supervision

Aims:

- ▶ Better understand Reflective practice
- ▶ Explore the advantages of being reflective.
- ▶ Examine some models of reflective practice and the challenges of applying them in everyday practice.



Breakout

What is reflective practice?



What is reflective
practice?

The act of thinking about our
experiences in order to learn
from them for the future


What is reflective practice?

- Reflective practice was something which developed in disciplines such as teaching, medicine and social work as a way to learn from real life experiences.
- People in these areas would think about encounters with their students, patients or clients, how these worked and what lessons they could take away.
- Reflection is a very personal thing and different people will define it in different ways.
- It is important to remember that there is no one 'correct' way of defining what reflection is or how it should be done as a lot of this will depend on your own circumstances.



Breakout

Why might it be useful as a practitioner or manager to reflect?



Why reflect?

- It can be easy to respond to crisis after crisis without thinking.
- Reflective practice allows you to look at the bigger picture.
- It can help you to think about your goals and your plans for the future.

Why reflect?

- It can help with the issue of 'self-talk'. We all have a little voice inside our heads which reminds us of all the things we could have done differently in certain situations.
- Reflecting on an experience can help to put this voice to use as we learn from what we have done and move forward.

Why reflect?

- Reflection can help you to be more creative and try new things. It's very easy to get stuck in a rut and it can be helpful to think about what you are doing and why you are doing it. This can help to spark new ideas and ways of thinking.
- Human nature means that we all make assumptions about people and situations. Taking a step back and reflecting can help you to challenge some of these assumptions and see things from a new perspective.


Why reflect?

- Reflection is a key part of emotional intelligence - the ability to understand and remain in control of our emotions.
- This is a useful skills to have both for our own wellbeing and when working with others.
- It helps to maintain a healthy work/life balance by offering a defined process for thinking things through. Hopefully you can learn from them and move on rather than dwelling on what happened.



Breakout

Discuss in your group any models or techniques of reflective practice you may have used in your practice



ERA Cycle

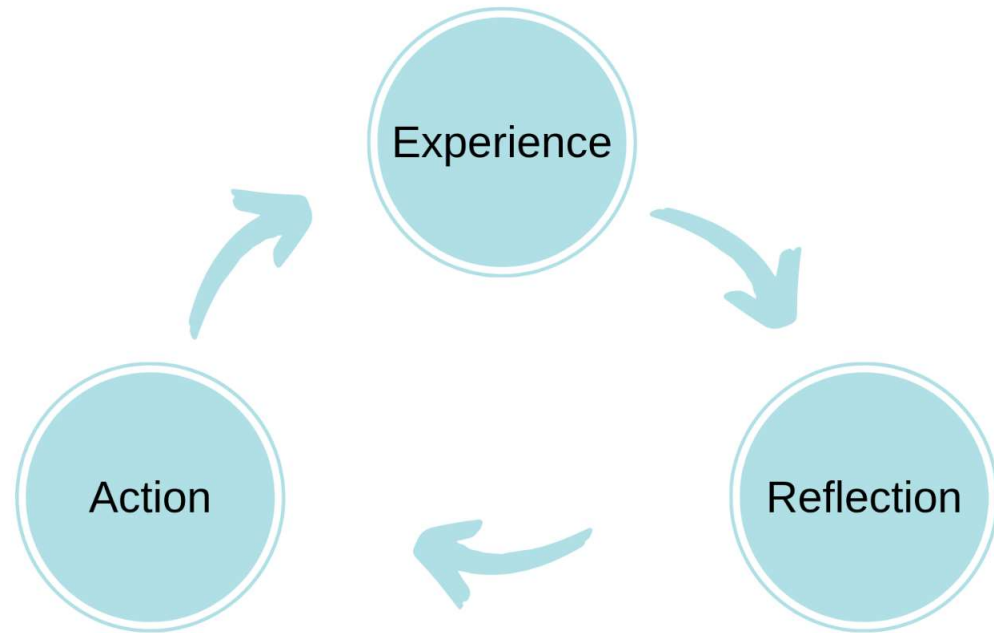
The ERA cycle (Jasper, 2013) is one of the most simple models of reflection and contains only three stages:

- Experience
- Reflection
- Action

ERA Cycle

- The cycle shows that we will start with an **experience**, either something we have been through before or something completely new to us. This experience can be positive or negative and may be related to our work or something else.
- Once something has been experienced we will start to **reflect** on what happened. This will allow us to think through the experience, examine our feelings about what happened and decide on the next steps.
- This leads to the final element of the cycle - taking an **action**. What we do as a result of an experience will be different depending on the individual. This action will result in another experience and the cycle will continue.

ERA Cycle



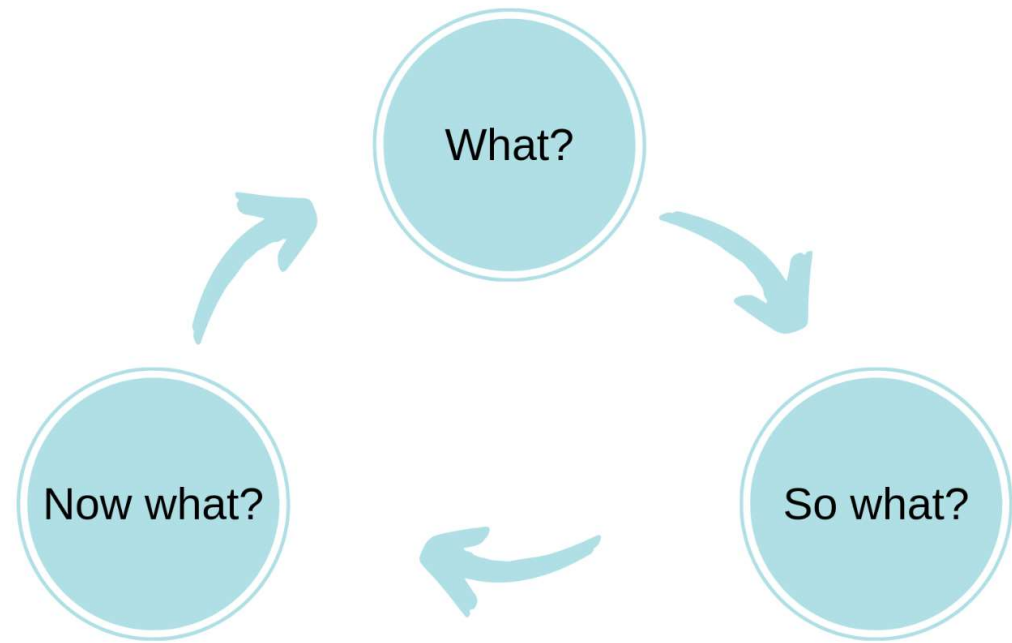
Driscoll's What Model

- Another simple model was developed by Driscoll in the mid-1990s. Driscoll based his model of the 3 What's on the key questions asked by Terry Borton in the 1970s:
 - What?
 - So what?
 - Now what?

Driscoll's What Model

- Firstly we should describe **what** the situation or experience was to set it in context. This gives us a clear idea of what we are dealing with.
- We should then reflect on the experience by asking '**so what?**' - what did we learn as a result of the experience?
- The final stage asks us to think about the **action** we will take as a result of this reflection. Will we change a behaviour, try something new or carry on as we are? It is important to remember that there may be no changes and you should not worry if you can't think of something to change.


Driscoll's What Model





Breakout

What elements do you think might be missing from these models?



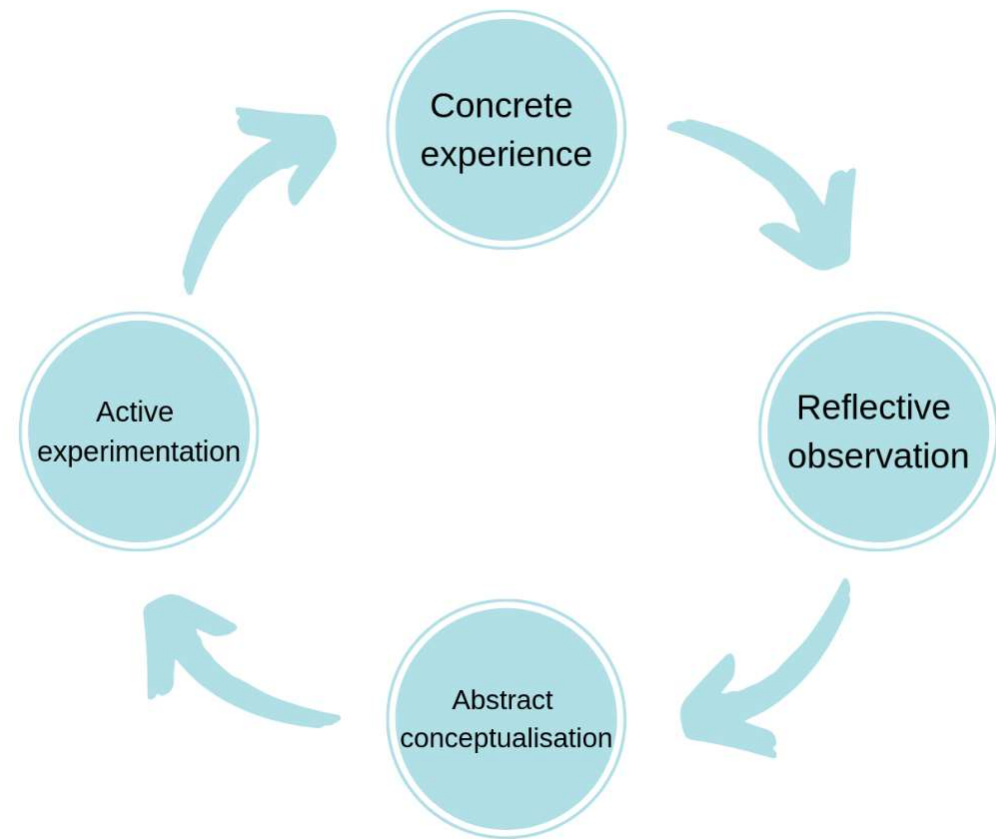
Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

- Kolb's model (1984) takes things a step further. Based on theories about how people learn, this model centres on the concept of developing understanding through actual experiences and contains four key stages:
- Concrete experience
- Reflective observation
- Abstract conceptualization
- Active experimentation

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

- The model argues that we start with an **experience** - either a repeat of something that has happened before or something completely new to us.
- The next stage involves us **reflecting** on the experience and noting anything about it which we haven't come across before.
- We then start to develop **new ideas** as a result, for example when something unexpected has happened we try to work out why this might be.
- The final stage involves us applying our new ideas to different situations. This demonstrates **learning** as a direct result of our experiences and reflections.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



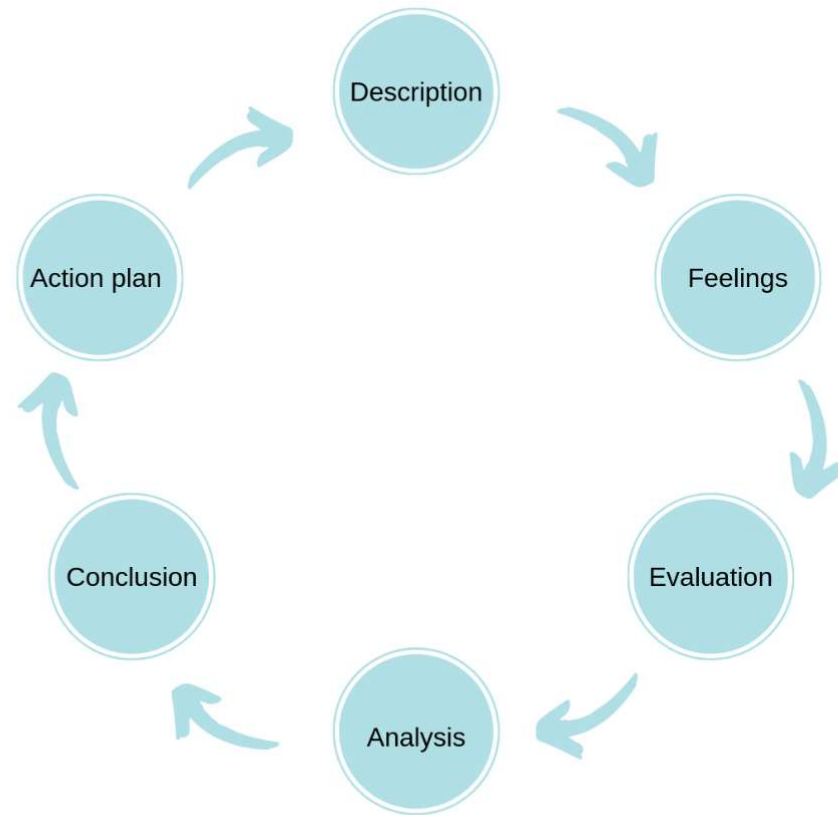
Gibb's Reflective Cycle

- This final model builds on the other three and adds more stages. It is one of the more complex models of reflection but it may be that you find having multiple stages of the process to guide you reassuring. Gibb's cycle contains six stages:
- Description
- Feelings
- Evaluation
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Action plan

Gibb's Reflective Cycle

- As with other models, Gibb's begins with an outline of the **experience** being reflected on.
- It then encourages us to focus on our **feelings** about the experience, both during it and after.
- The next step involves **evaluating** the experience - what was good or bad about it from our point of view?
- We can then use this evaluation to **analyse** the situation and try to make sense of it.
- This analysis will result in a **conclusion** about what other actions (if any) we could have taken to reach a different outcome.
- The final stage involves building an **action plan** of steps which we can take the next time we find ourselves in a similar situation.

Gibb's Reflective Cycle



Questions to ask yourself

What did I learn?

What do I need to learn more about?

Why did I feel the way I did?

What was easy?

What went well?

What was difficult?

What went badly?

I wonder what would happen if...

How can I improve in the future?



Breakout

What are the main barriers to reflection?



What are the main barriers to reflection?

- **No time**
- It can be hard to find time to complete your existing to-do list so why add another thing?
- Doing proper reflection takes time but you need to think of this as an investment in your professional development and your own mental wellbeing.

What are the main barriers to reflection?

- **Organisational culture**
- Not everyone works in an organisation which is open to the idea of being reflective - something which is particularly difficult in the workplace.
- A lack of support from management who don't see reflective practice as a valuable activity can be hard to navigate.
- Try to outline it in terms of the return on investment they will get if they give you the resources you need to reflect.
- Think about what they will get out of it, whether this is a new approach to a project or just happier staff!

What are the main barriers to reflection?

- **Lack of skill**
- Many people who are new to reflection are worried that they are doing it wrong or don't know where to start.
- Some of the popular models of reflection set unrealistic expectations that the process needs to be undertaken in a certain way.
- It is important to remember that reflection is a very individual process and there is no one 'right' way of doing it.
- You can follow which ever course suits you. It may take some experimentation before you find the way that works for you, but half the fun is trying!

What are the main barriers to reflection?

- **Environment**

- For some people, finding a physical location to be reflective can be a challenge. You will need to be in a certain mind set in order to practice reflection and it can be difficult to find an available place for this.
- Some people need a busy environment whilst others will need somewhere quiet and empty.
- If you are new to reflection then you may find that you need to experiment to find the right environment for you but once you have then you can work to find somewhere to practice your reflection.

What are the main barriers to reflection?

- **Motivation**

- A lack of time and support can take a toll on your ability to reflect, especially if you are reflecting on something you have been doing all day.
- The last thing you will want to do is to go home at night and think about it!
- Even the best reflective practitioners experience this feeling at some point so if you don't worry.

What are the main barriers to reflection?

- **Yourself**

- Perhaps one of the biggest barriers to reflection is you! Unfortunately, this is one of the hardest to overcome but it can be done.
- Being reflective takes a certain level of self-insight which can be uncomfortable for some people, especially if you are not used to it.
- The good news is that this can be achieved with some practice. If you are new to reflection you might need to try lots of different methods before you find the one(s) which works for you so don't get disheartened if something doesn't work first time - you can reflect on why and move on to something else!



Breakout

What do understand by Reflective Supervision?



Reflective Supervision

- Reflective supervision is above all a learning process in which the supervisor engages with the supervisee to:
- Explore a supervisee's practice and factors influencing their practice responses (including emotions, assumptions, power relations and the wider social context)
- Develop a shared understanding of the knowledge base informing their analysis and the limitations of their thinking, and use this understanding to inform next steps
- (Wonnacott 2014)

Reflective Supervision

- In reflective supervision:
- Discussions are driven by experiences of the learner
- The supervisor provides the space and context for learning
- The supervisor takes the role of 'facilitator' rather than that of 'expert', thereby promoting ownership of decisions by the supervisee
- Supervision is seen as part of an ongoing learning process that engages adult learning theory and reflective practice.
- (Ruch 2013)

Reflective Supervision Six Principles:

- To deepen and broaden workers' knowledge and critical analysis skills.
- To enable confident, competent, creative and independent decision-making.
- To help workers build clear plans that seek to enable positive change for children and families.
- To develop a relationship that helps staff feel valued, supported and motivated.
- To support the development of workers' emotional resilience and self-awareness.
- To promote the development of a learning culture within the organisation.
- (Earle et al 2017)