

What is Reflective Supervision?

The primary focus of reflective supervision is the shared exploration by an IMH Home Visitor and the Reflective Supervisor (who may be the Program Supervisor or a consultant) of the emotional content of work with infant/toddlers and parents. This emotional content is expressed in the relationships between parents and infants/toddlers, parents and practitioner and supervisor and practitioner.

This exploration occurs within the context of a trusting supervisory relationship that highlights the IMH Home Visitor's strengths and vulnerabilities and invites attention to the awakening of thoughts and feelings that occur in the presence of infants/toddlers and parents. This discussion leads the IMH Home Visitor to introspection and deeper understanding of herself and of the work she performs with families.

Mutually rewarding reflective supervision requires the construction of a secure and trusting relationship between the Reflective Supervisor and the IMH Home Visitor. Both the Reflective Supervisor and the IMH Home Visitor share responsibility for the growth of the relationship, The Reflective Supervisor has primary responsibility for creating a safe environment in which the IMH Home Visitor feels secure enough to have and explore thoughts and feelings about the work with very young children and families and, as appropriate, her own feelings and responses. The IMH Home Visitor is responsible for sharing what is on her mind when meeting for reflective supervision. Together, the two learn to explore what the IMH Home Visitor has seen and heard, as well as the emotional content of the work. Over time, the capacity for reflection deepens as the Reflective Supervisor and the IMH Home Visitor demonstrate a willingness to be open, curious and emotionally available to each other. Emotional safety is important to a successful supervisory relationship, allowing each to offer information, ask questions, remain curious and explore possibilities for quality services, growth and change.

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