



Reflective Supervision: Co-Construction of a Relationship

DEBORAH WEATHERSTON, PHD, IMH-E® FAITH EIDSON, LMSW, IMH-E® (GUEST)

MAY 7, 2019

Overview of the Agenda

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Brief remarks about reflective supervision : What is it?
- ▶ Principles and practices of reflective supervision
- ▶ The co-construction of a reflective supervisory relationship

- ▶ A real time reflective conversation: co-constructing a relationship

- ▶ Shared observations and reflective responses

Reflective Supervision/Consultation

- “Two people thinking are probably going to do a better job than one person alone.” J. Pawl
- “...the process of examining with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with infants, young children and their families.” L. Eggbeer, T. Mann & N. Seibel
- “...a set of caring conversations co-constructed over time...” R. Shahmoon-Shanok
- “the shared exploration of the emotional content of infant and family work as expressed in relationships between parents and infants, parents and practitioners, and supervisors and practitioners.” D. Weatherston & C. Barron

Reflective Supervision/Consultation

- ▶ A journey that two or more people embark on together
- ▶ A shared experience founded on trust, mutual respect, curiosity, wonder
- ▶ A learning relationship that encourages best practice
- ▶ A process that takes place in the context of a relationship – mirroring our relationship with families
- ▶ A place to have angry feelings, frustrations, inadequacies and discouragement, as well as joys or victories and to share them with another
- ▶ A space in which to see/be seen, listen/be heard, hold/be held

Reflective Supervision/Consultation

- * Reflective supervision/consultation is a relational process where emotions are shared, with and without words, within a safe listening context, making room for new understanding, self-reflection, self-confidence and hopefulness to emerge

Reflective supervision/consultation is a creative process

Collaborative Consultation

- ▶ “quiet, respectful observation” in a setting that is comfortable
- ▶ “an appreciation of individual differences” in effort to understand the uniqueness of each, “what she is able to do and handle,” with “a fundamentally positive focus”
- ▶ “an awareness of what one brings to it, how one changes, and is changed by the other”
- ▶ “an unfolding of development in the context of relationships”
- ▶ “the power of ideas to transform arises not from one person thinking alone” but through “shared discovery”

From “Aligning Systems of Care with the Relational Imperative of Development” by

J. Sparrow in *Nurturing Children and Families* (2010).

Core Principles of Reflective Supervision

- ▶ A safe, trusting reflective supervisory relationship develops most optimally with opportunity for regularly scheduled meetings between supervisor and supervisee(s) at a consistent time that is mutually agreed on, in a place that is comfortable, protected, and free from distractions or interruptions
- ▶ Supervisor and supervisee(s) help to build the reflective supervisory relationship together; each contributes; each is attentive, curious, open, emotionally available, and responsive to the other
- ▶ Reflective supervision is a place where observations can be shared & explored
- ▶ Reflective supervision is a relationship for learning about one's work and oneself
- ▶ Reflective supervision is a relationship in which vulnerabilities and strengths, personal and professional, may be shared and explored

Core Principles of Reflective Supervision

- ▶ Reflective supervision is a relationship in which supervisor and supervisee deepen their understanding of the supervisee's work as together they make meaning about what they share within their purposeful partnership
- ▶ Reflective supervision is a place where emotions can be experienced, felt, shared and co-regulated within the context of the supervisory relationship
- ▶ Reflective supervision is a relationship where supervisor and supervisee feel understood, partnered, "felt" and held in the other's mind

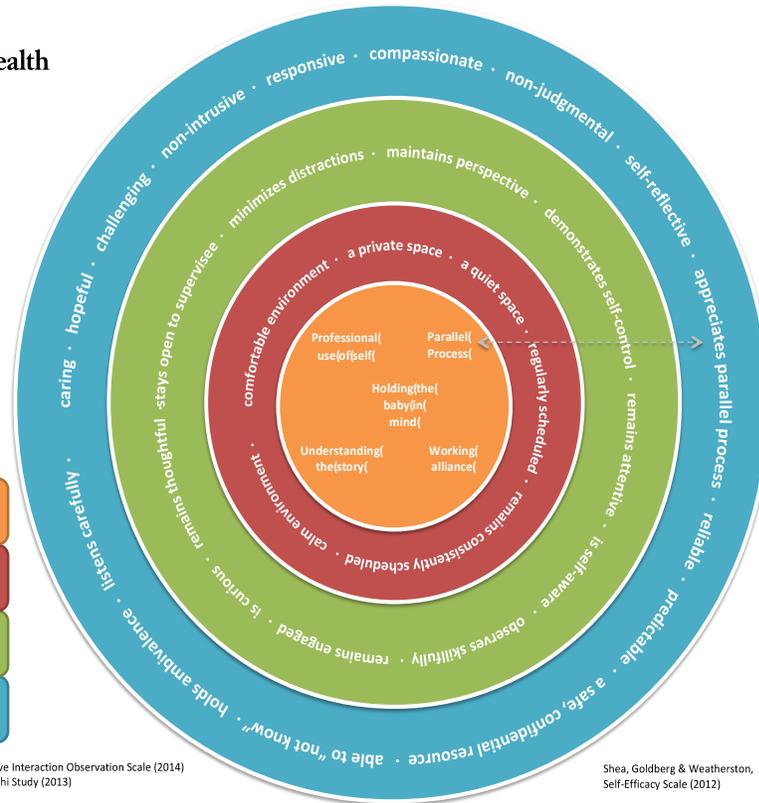
Core Principles of Reflective Supervision

- ▶ Reflective supervision offers a space where one can:
 - ▶ *Regularly examine thoughts, feelings, strengths, and growth areas
 - ▶ *Discuss issues, concerns, and actions to take with supervisor, consultants, or peers
 - ▶ *Explore and understand emotional responses to one's work
 - ▶ *Recognize areas for professional and/or personal development
- ▶ Observes, listens, wonders & responds with empathy

A Composite View

REFLECTIVE Supervision

- Content/RIOS¹
- Structure of Environment²
- Supervisory Behaviors³
- Supervisor Qualities⁴



¹Watson, Hennes, Harris & Cox. Reflective Interaction Observation Scale (2014)
^{2,3,4}Tomlin, Weatherston & Parkov. Delphi Study (2013)

Shea, Goldberg & Weatherston, Self-Efficacy Scale (2012)

RSC Content

- ▶ Essential Elements of RSC: the RIOS (Reflective Interaction Observation Scale)
 - ▶ Understanding the Family Story
 - ▶ Holding the baby in mind
 - ▶ Professional Use of Self
 - ▶ Parallel Process
- ▶ REFLECTIVE ALLIANCE
- ▶ (Watson, Harrison, Meuwissen, Hennes, & Harris, 2017)

RSC Content & Process

- ▶ Essential Tasks of RSC: the RIOS (Reflective Interaction Observation Scale)
 - ▶ Describing – What do we know?
 - ▶ Responding – How do we and others think and feel about this?
 - ▶ Exploring – What might this mean?
 - ▶ Linking – Why does this matter?
 - ▶ Integrating -
- ▶ (Watson, Harrison, Meuwissen, Hennes, & Harris, 2017)

RSC Process



Co-Constructing a Relationship

- ▶ What does each bring to the other?
 - ▶ The supervisor to the supervisee
 - ▶ The supervisee to the supervisor

Reflective Capacities

- ▶ Capacity to acknowledge the importance of relationship-building in one's work
- ▶ Capacity to focus on the relationship
- ▶ Capacity to "be with" another as opposed to "do for" another
- ▶ Capacity to be curious about thoughts, feelings, experiences and realities of another
- ▶ Capacity to wonder in a thoughtful way
- ▶ Capacity to appreciate parallel process
- ▶ Capacity to have, express, manage, and consider intense feelings
- ▶ Capacity to value and practice cultural humility, to explore and deepen understanding about differences across culture, class, race, ethnicity, gender, family styles.
- ▶ Capacity to acquire new perspectives or new ways of thinking
- ▶ Capacity to hold another and others in mind, consistently and securely, across time and when absent (J. Pawl, 1995)

- ▶ Adapted from Goldberg & Weatherston, 2015

Building Trust – Observe

Weatherston & Barron, 2009

Supervisor

- 🕒 Enter the relationship in a non-judgmental way
- 🕒 Be culturally aware and sensitive
- 🕒 Ask about beginnings
- 🕒 Explore expectations
- 🕒 Talk about confidentiality
- 🕒 Invite sharing of details, aware of pacing, timing

Supervisee

- 🕒 Enter with an open mind
- 🕒 Allow supervisor to support you
- 🕒 Come prepared to share information about yourself, your expectations
- 🕒 Share enthusiasm, worries or concerns

Foundation for Relationship: Listen

Supervisor

- 🕒 Remain quiet, follow supervisee's lead
- 🕒 Acknowledge what it takes to bring details about the work to you
- 🕒 Be accessible, genuine, caring, emotionally available
- 🕒 Protect supervisory time from interruption
- 🕒 Listen for themes that emerge, emotions awakened and expressed, hold & contain them

Supervisee

- 🕒 Acknowledge importance of consistent supervision meetings for relationship-based, reflective practice
- 🕒 Listen to your own descriptions of the pregnancy, baby, family, relationships and events
- 🕒 Listen for the feeling words that you choose to use and the emotions awakened in the presence of the family
- 🕒 Let the feelings inform you about your work

Sharing Vulnerabilities: Wonder

Supervisor

- 🕒 Be open to sharing stories of experiences about your own work
- 🕒 Remain emotionally available & fully present; hold the ambivalence; maintain a sense of hope
- 🕒 Gently encourage exploration of thoughts and feelings
- 🕒 Wonder about the feelings expressed; wonder about your own feelings
- 🕒 Engage in reflective supervision yourself

Supervisee

- 🕒 Ask questions that allow you to think more deeply about your work and also yourself
- 🕒 Be aware of the feelings that you have in response to your work
- 🕒 When you feel safe enough, share those feelings with your supervisor
- 🕒 Increase attention to “self” and “other” with a deeper level of attention to the emotions felt

Deepening of the Relationship: Respond

Supervisor

- ⌚ Maintain cultural awareness and sensitivity
- ⌚ As trust between you grows, encourage greater reflection
- ⌚ Recognize and understand supervisee's feelings of helplessness, vulnerability and confusions, as well as strengths
- ⌚ Wonder about, name and respond to feelings with appropriate empathy
- ⌚ Remain curious, open, and content to “not know”; focus on understanding, not “problem solving”

Supervisee

- ⌚ Allow feelings to inform your work
- ⌚ Remain curious
- ⌚ Take in and use new insights
- ⌚ Trust yourself to discuss what you need to discuss
- ⌚ Remain curious, open, and content to “not know”
- ⌚ Feel free to explore the intersection of personal and professional

Reflective Capacity



Looking
within

The diagram features two large, light green arrows pointing in opposite directions. The left arrow points left and contains the text 'Looking within'. The right arrow points right and contains the text 'Looking outside of ourselves'. The two arrows are connected at their inner ends, forming a continuous shape. The background is white with a dark blue header bar at the top and a small green square in the top right corner.

Looking outside
of ourselves

An Invitation to Observe & Listen, Wonder & Respond

- ▶ Faith Eidson, LMSW, IMH-E®
- ▶ 40 minutes followed by time to share observations, ask questions, wonder aloud

Reflecting on Content & Process

- ▶ Shared observations
- ▶ Questions
- ▶ Comments

A Few RSC Resources

- ▶ Eggbeer, L., Mann, T., & Seibel, N. (2007). Reflective supervision: Past, present, and Future. *Bulletin for Zero to Three*, Zero to Three, Arlington, VA.
- ▶ Heffron, M.C. & Murch, T. (Eds.). (2010). *Reflective supervision and leadership in infant and early childhood programs*. Washington, D.C.: Zero to Three.
- ▶ Pawl, J. (1994). On supervision, *Zero to Three*, Arlington, VA., 21-29.
- ▶ Shahmoon-Shanok, R. (2009). What is reflective supervision? In S. Heller & L. Gilkerson (Eds.). *A practical guide to reflective supervision*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three, 7-24..
- ▶ Sparrow, J. (2010). Building community through collaborative consultation. In J. Sparrow & B. Lester, B. (Eds.) *Nurturing children and families: Building on the legacy of T. Berry Brazelton*, Wiley-Blackwell: West Sussex, UK, 15-27.
- ▶ Tomlin, A.M., Weatherston, D.J. & Pavkov, T. (2013). Critical components of reflective supervision: Responses from expert supervisors from the field. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 35(1), 70-80.
- ▶ Watson, C., Harrison, M., Meuwissen, A., Hennes, J. & Harris, M (2017). *Reflective Interaction Observation Scale (RIOS), Manual*, St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education & Development.
- ▶ Weatherston, D.J. & Barron, C. (2009). What does a reflective supervisory relationship look like? In S. Heller & L. Gilkerson (Eds.), *A practical guide to reflective supervision*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three, 61-80.