

How might the supervisor introduce the concept of “reflection” in preparation for entering into a supervisory relationship that is reflective? Keeping in mind that reflective supervision is a partnership, the following questions are intended to guide the initial conversation about reflection individually or within a reflective consultation group:

1. What does “reflection” or “being reflective” mean to me and to you?
2. What is your understanding of “reflective supervision” or “consultation”?
3. How will “reflective supervision” help us to understand the infants, toddlers and families with whom you are working?
4. How will “reflective supervision” help me to guide and support you?
5. What will “reflective supervision” require of me and of you?
6. How does “reflective supervision” differ from administrative or clinical supervision?
7. What might you be wary of or cautious about?
8. Does “reflective supervision” sound risky? If it does, why does it?
9. What “ground rules” do we need to put in place to create a safe and secure space in which we can be open, curious, and reflective?

The supervisor and practitioner(s) may watch a videoclip/dvd of a mother, father, baby, and/or toddler in interaction with one another and share observations about what they see. They may wonder about the nature of the developing relationship and the emotions that are expressed (or not) during the interaction. These questions and the observation experience set the stage for continuing reflection for individual reflective supervision and also within a reflective group consultation setting.

Other ideas when working reflectively with a group:

Open up the group to each other by asking, “What brings you to the work of IMH home visiting? To the work you are doing today?” or invite more personal reflection, asking, “Who are you? What do you bring through the door when you enter? To infants and families? To one another?”

Invite participation in a “listening to the other” exercise. Divide the group into pairs and suggest that one person be the listener and the other the talker. The first to talk is asked to share a dilemma, something on his/her mind, a personal reflection, etc. and the other listens. After 10 minutes, the pairs change roles with one another. Following the 20 minute exercise, ask “What happened for you? What did you discover as the listener? As the one who talked?” This invites each to experience being quiet or being heard.

Suggest that each group participant bring a picture as a baby or very young child. Prepare to talk about the picture or tell a story based on the picture. This invites reflection about one’s infancy or early childhood experiences that we carry within as we work with infants and families.

Allow for plenty of time for each of these reflective exercises. They will help to build trust within the group and lay a foundation for continuing reflection.