Reflective Supervision: Co-Construction of a Relationship

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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 letter 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 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”

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.
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

Adapted from MI-AIMH Competency Guidelines
A Composite View

Reflective Supervision

- Content/KIS
- Structure of Environment
- Supervisory Behaviors
- Supervisor Qualities


Understanding the story – Holding the baby in mind –

Notes:
- Informal, non-linear, & experiential
- Reflective Interaction Observation Scale (RIOS)
- Saarel, Arokiasamy, & Dux (2015)
- Egan, McInerney & Walsh (2016) - Study (2016)
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)
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

- Look
- Listen
- Wonder
- Respond

Reflective Practice
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Supervisor</strong></th>
<th><strong>Supervisee</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Enter the relationship in a non-judgmental way</td>
<td>- Enter with an open mind</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Be culturally aware and sensitive</td>
<td>- Allow supervisor to support you</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ask about beginnings</td>
<td>- Come prepared to share information about yourself, your expectations</td>
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<td>- Explore expectations</td>
<td>- Share enthusiasm, worries or concerns</td>
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<td>- Talk about confidentiality</td>
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<td>- Invite sharing of details, aware of pacing, timing</td>
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### Foundation for Relationship: Listen

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<tr>
<th><strong>Supervisor</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✨ Remain quiet, follow supervisee’s lead</td>
<td>✨ Acknowledge importance of consistent supervision meetings for relationship-based, reflective practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>✨ Acknowledge what it takes to bring details about the work to you</td>
<td>✨ Listen to your own descriptions of the pregnancy, baby, family, relationships and events</td>
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<td>✨ Be accessible, genuine, caring, emotionally available</td>
<td>✨ Listen for the feeling words that you choose to use and the emotions awakened in the presence of the family</td>
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<td>✨ Protect supervisory time from interruption</td>
<td>✨ Let the feelings inform you about your work</td>
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<td>✨ Listen for themes that emerge, emotions awakened and expressed, hold &amp; contain them</td>
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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

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<tr>
<td>✤ Maintain cultural awareness and sensitivity</td>
<td>✤ Allow feelings to inform your work</td>
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<td>✤ As trust between you grows, encourage greater reflection</td>
<td>✤ Remain curious</td>
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<td>✤ Recognize and understand supervisee’s feelings of helplessness, vulnerability and confusions, as well as strengths</td>
<td>✤ Take in and use new insights</td>
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<td>✤ Wonder about, name and respond to feelings with appropriate empathy</td>
<td>✤ Trust yourself to discuss what you need to discuss</td>
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<tr>
<td>✤ Remain curious, open, and content to “not know”; focus on understanding, not “problem solving”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Feel free to explore the intersection of personal and professional</td>
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Reflective Capacity

Looking within

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