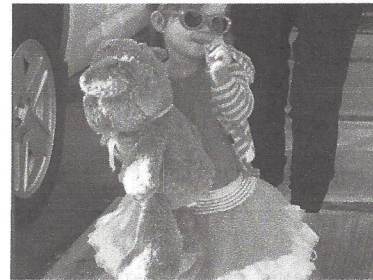


Infusing Reflective Practice Into Your Work

KAREN MORAN FINELLO, PHD
CAAECY FORUM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PALM SPRINGS, CA
NOVEMBER 9, 2018



1



WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



2



Let's Get Centered



3

Basic Underlying Tenets Of Reflective Work

- Relationships are the essential ingredient in our lives on every level
- Relationship-based organizations promote the investment in relationships at all levels
- Reflective practice supports our work with others



11/9/2018

4

Simplifying the Concept of Reflective Practice

- Thinking about and reflecting on your work/actions
 - What happened?
 - How did you respond?
 - What was the impact of your response?
 - What would you do next time?

Generally, we use reflective practice with someone else in EC work & it is focused on complex & challenging situations
It creates an opportunity for growth & learning



11/9/2018

5

What Are Some Origins of Reflective Practice?

- Exploring beliefs and assumptions to find solutions
- Was used in Business/Organizational Management
 - Chris Argyris (Business Management at Harvard)
 - David Schon (Urban Planning at MIT)



11/9/2018

6

The Reflective Process (Schon, 1983)

- Reflection *in* action is the capacity to think, consider, and reflect in the moment. Reflection in action includes a well-developed ability not to act immediately even when there are pulls to do so.
- Reflection *on* action is the creation of a space alone or with others to look back on something that has happened and consider motivations, consequences of any action taken, pacing, and personal presses that may have been present.

11/9/2018

7

Reflective Process cont'd

- allows the practitioner to remember essential details, drill down into a process, and consider what might be altered in the next encounter
- is a tool for continuous professional growth as well as service improvement as the practitioner thinks, analyzes, and is supported in taking what has been learned from self reflection and applying it in the next encounter

— California Center for Infant Family & Early Childhood Mental Health website (2012)

11/9/2018

8

Theoretical Underpinnings of Reflective Practice

- Attachment theory
- Neuroscience around regulatory skills
- Mindfulness
- Leadership skills
- Organizational Management

11/9/2018

9

Goals of Reflective Practice in Early Childhood Work

- To improve the quality of services for infants, young children and their families
- To improve professional satisfaction in the workforce
- Ultimate goal of better outcomes in programs

11/9/2018

10

Why Is Reflective Practice Important?

- Facilitates different ways of thinking about the work we are doing
- Helps develop greater depth in responses and support for difficult work
- Allows us to step back from the work and think about our "gut responses" and why they are important to address
- Provides a safe, consistent environment to discuss complex issues and feelings
- Reduces sense of isolation, vicarious trauma and burnout
- Builds the parallel relationships we are fostering with young children and between young children and their parents

11/9/2018

11

Why Is Reflective Practice Important?

- Fenichel & Eggbeer (1992) point out that the result of inadequate supervision may not be starvation but rather failure to thrive....responsible staff can get by, but they won't grow

11/9/2018

12

Value of RPF

- Allows facilitator to gain deeper program understanding
- Provides safe, calm and supportive environment for all
- Helps to improve problem solving skills, conflict resolution, perspective taking
- Promotes shared decision making at all levels (including with families)

11/9/2018

13

Value of RPF cont'd

- Promotes leadership skills
- Helps in recognition of progress that is often unmeasured by "outcome" studies
- Can help to decrease burnout and compassion fatigue and improve overall job satisfaction
- Reflection encourages balance in professional and personal life

11/9/2018

14

Core Elements of RPF

- Regularity of meetings
- Confidentiality of sessions
- Establishment of trusting, collaborative relationships
- A "parallel process"
- Facilitates perspective taking on all sides
- Promotes self-awareness
- Provides arena to explore underlying beliefs, responses in situations, and mutual impact of these beliefs and responses
- Helps individuals to understand and handle their strong feelings
- Built on foundation of mutual acceptance and trust

11/9/2018

15

Common Themes in Reflective Supervision

- Relationships are key
- Parallel process is occurring
- Emotions and experiences are "contained"
- Being "held in another's mind" (Pawl, 1995)
- Giving up control and authority
- Understanding how past experiences influence current ones

11/9/2018

16

What is Reflective Practice Supervision/Facilitation?

Shamoon-Shanook (2009) describes reflective supervision as a "collaborative relationship for professional growth that improves program quality and strengthens practice."

This is accomplished through building the capacity of "individuals, relationships and organizations by cherishing strengths and partnering around vulnerabilities to generate growth" (Shammoon-Shanok, 1991, p. 18)

11/9/2018

17

What does Reflective Practice Facilitation/Supervision Include?

- A consistent time to stop and take a deep breath and address the issues that come up in working with very young children and their families
- Allows an opportunity to consider and describe the feelings being experienced in the work
- Provides a safe place to "hold" the service provider

11/9/2018

18

Reflective Practice & Supervision

- Provides regular time for exploring together the complex feelings, thoughts, and issues that come up when we work with young children and their families
- Recognizes that there is no single "right" answer or response; helps in considering other perspectives about events or issues
- Offers an atmosphere of safety and trust for discussing our complex responses to events
- Provides a supportive atmosphere to "hold" practitioners who are often isolated by their work and making decisions in the moment

11/9/2018

19

Traditional Supervision vs Reflective Practice Facilitation

Traditional Supervision

- "Administrative"-housekeeping & management
- Hiring, training, educating
- Provision of oversight for program standards (paperwork, fidelity)
- Evaluative & directive
- Policies & procedures – agency "rules"

Reflective Practice Facilitation

- Regular, collaborative sessions
- Guiding, nurturing, containing
- Time for personal reflection & discussion of feelings and emotions the work raises
- Supportive
- Helps deal with ambiguity & complex problems with no simple resolution

11/9/2018

20

What is Value of RS to Supervisee?

- Providers are often dealing with high caseloads of extremely high risk families living under adverse conditions who may be resistant to interventions, are frequently in crisis, and may only demonstrate very small changes over time (IMHP, 2004b)
- Both clinical and non-clinical staff working with such families may undergo burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization, and heavy staff turnovers (Barak, Nissly & Levin, 2001; Woltman, 2008)

11/9/2018

21

Important Qualities for Reflection

- Individual Exercise: Think for a few minutes about who in your life you want to talk with when things happen (both good and bad)
- What is it about this person that makes you seek them?
- How do you feel after talking with him/her?
- What are the things s/he does that are important to you?

11/9/2018

22

Common Qualities Described

- Listens carefully and fully
- Inquires gently and non intrusively
- Creates safe environment—make us feel comfortable
- Honors confidentiality (unspoken)
- Provides affirmation while also probing for alternate possibilities
- Respects boundaries
- Does not try to impose their own belief system
- Offers broader perspective

11/9/2018

23

Your Supervisors?

- Reflect briefly on your favorite supervisor. What made that person unique for you?
- How does that supervisor compare to others you have had?
- When you had a problem, how comfortable were you in letting that supervisor know about it?
- Now think about your worst supervisor.
- How comfortable were you in letting that person know about issues and problems? How much did you hide from him/her?

11/9/2018

24

Platinum Rule

Do unto others as you would have others do unto others

Jerree Pawl (1995)

11/9/2018

25

Relationship-Based Organizations

- Mutuality of shared goals (Mission)
- Commitment to evolving growth and change
- Commitment to reflecting on one's work
- Respect for individuals
- Sensitivity to context
- Open communication
- Clearly communicated standards for staff

(Parlakian, 2002)

11/9/2018

26

Organizational/Infrastructure Responsibilities

- Where is reflective practice/supervision occurring?
- How often is it scheduled?
- Is it group or individual?
- What is done to support the time needed to participate (on all levels)?
- How are decisions made about focus—difficult situations or discussion of all active cases?

11/9/2018

27

Organizational/Infrastructure Responsibilities

- Expectations of supervisor—who does administrative supervision or is this separate time and place?
- What is being done to prevent burnout of both supervisors and staff?
- How is the hierarchy in the organization?
- What is the level of respect shown throughout org?
- Annual retreats, etc.—cannot be regarded as “fluff”
- What kind of support is provided to the Reflective Supervisors?
- What are the quality of relationships throughout the org?

11/9/2018

28

Organizational/Infrastructure Responsibilities

- What resources are available as needed? On a regular basis?
- What constraints exist (time, costs, location)?
- How is the reflective experience embedded into regular staff meetings, in service trainings, etc. to expand opportunities for reflection?
- What is the view of administration on the purpose of reflective practice and supervision?

11/9/2018

29

Principles of Reflective Practice (Heffron, 2000)

- Development of atmosphere of safety, trust, consistency
- Acknowledgement of complexity and difficulty of the work
- Attention to both process and content of work
- Introduction of new ideas as possibilities, not dictates
- Facilitation of problem solving skills
- Creation of environment that encourages learning & exploration
- Exploration of boundary issues
- Encouragement of self reflection

11/9/2018

30

Elements in Building a Relationship in Reflective Supervision/Facilitation

- Build trust through observations
- Listening is the foundation for relationships
- Reflect on shared vulnerability
- Deepen relationship through careful responses

11/9/2018

31

"Collective Intelligence"—Approaching Collaborations Differently

- "It is in the collective intelligence of people at all levels, who need to use one another as resources, often across boundaries and learn their way to solutions."

• From Heffetz & Laurie (1997) *The work of leadership*.

11/9/2018

32

BREAK

11/9/2018

33

Reflective Practice Supervisors/Facilitators

- Need to develop a particular set of skills that are different from other types of supervision and administration
- Cannot just move from administrative supervision to RPF because it is dictated by program standards or a desire to change agency operating procedures
- Must receive training/mentoring in developing the skills needed and in applying them
- Need for ongoing support for RPFs—still not well addressed or funded
- Time is required to develop the skills and to hone them and feel comfortable with the process

11/9/2018

34

Models of Reflective Practice/Supervision

- Can be individual or small group
- We recommend group sizes no larger than 8 (ideal is really 4-5)
- Most programs that provide group reflective practice also have a mechanism for "drop in" or immediate individual meetings on as needed basis
- Pros and cons of group vs individual

11/9/2018

35

How Do We Encourage Reflection?

- Asking "what" and "why" questions
 - "What do you think would happen if ..."
 - "What does this remind you of?"
 - "What were you feeling when ..."
 - "What do you think might help at this point?"
 - "Why do you think you responded the way you did?"
 - "How do you think the mom felt?"

11/9/2018

36

Types of Questions Important to Reflective Practice (Adapted from Heffron, 2000)

- Questions that consider alternatives
- Questions that encourage evaluation of options
- Questions that examine the whole picture
- Questions that help to clarify
- Questions that lead to description of situations

11/9/2018

37

Types of Questions cont'd

- Questions that raise thoughts about why things happen
- Questions that identify key issues
- Questions that raise the need for more information
- Questions that facilitate next steps

11/9/2018

38

Practice Vignette

- #1: Head Start teacher: "I'm at the end of my rope ..."

11/9/2018

39

Role of Supervisor Vignette #1

- What if she was NOT understanding of Lindsey?

11/9/2018

40

Role of Supervisee Vignette #1

- What if she did not trust her supervisor to understand her worries?

11/9/2018

41

ARE YOU READY FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE?

11/9/2018

42

Can you....

- model conflict management?
- allow others to express their opinions even when you disagree?
- understand why hearing different opinions promotes growth and learning?

11/9/2018

43

Do you like to.....

- brainstorm about different ways to solve a problem?
- have a clear direction and logic to problem solving?
- learn what others think?
- stay focused on your own knowledge and skills?
- think about the underlying causes for things?
- resolve problems without worrying about their root causes so that you don't get bogged down?

11/9/2018

44

Personal Reflections on RS

- What strengths do you bring to the role?
- What do you believe is important for effective reflective practice/supervision?

11/9/2018

45

How you are is as important as what you do

(Jeree Pawl)

11/9/2018

46

Skills to Develop as a Reflective Supervisor

- Follow the lead of the supervisee
- Resist the urge to fix things, "do it right," or take over
- Link what is happening to other events and to past experiences
- Think about why the supervisee is responding the way s/he is
- Recognize the importance of mutual regulation and co-creation of meaning
- Refocus on the relationship
- Manage your own feelings
- Encourage perspective taking

11/9/2018

47

Stepping Back

- Taking time to observe, explore, and wonder aloud about things
- This leads to hypotheses about "what next" and "what if"
- Avoid jumping to conclusions, which may lead to quick action without sufficient reflection
- Allows reflection as you plan for next steps

11/9/2018

48

Staying Fully Engaged As a Reflective Supervisor/Facilitator

- Must be able to balance work and personal needs
- Cannot put everything else first
- Need to address challenges experienced in order to understand areas for growth
- Must view both successes and “failures” in order to fully grow
- Need for infrastructure/organizational support for the supervisor

11/9/2018

49

Avoiding “Selfless Obligation”

- Continually putting the needs of others first
- Gilbert, (2001) point to heavy workloads leading to limited time for reflective practice, despite a recognition of its value.
- Describes this as a sense of “selfless obligation” (p. 203) arising from organizational cultures focused on putting client needs ahead of staff needs at all times.

11/9/2018

50

What Can Organizations Do?

- Move to more balanced philosophies in order to retain and support highly qualified staff working under stressful conditions
- Provide appropriate supervisor-staff ratios that allow regularly scheduled reflective supervision to occur and to ensure the nurturing and case support needed for this work
- Make a commitment to protect staff from the pressure to increase productivity to the exclusion of supervision time and their own self-care (Van Berckelaer, 2011)

11/9/2018

51

Why is this Important?

- “Selfless obligation” can lead to reduced effectiveness, mistakes, boredom, chronic irritability, lack of receptiveness, lack of availability
- Exhaustion, burnout and fatigue result in supervisors who are unable to be fully present

11/9/2018

52

Challenges

- Reflective Practice process is not easy—involves complex actions of bringing together people who may not think the same way, negotiating ground rules that all are comfortable in following, developing trust within the group, learning to be supportive and withhold judgment, learning to give (& receive) authentic feedback (Bruen, 2013)
- The positive side is that the process of being reflective leads to better decision making and strength in doing the work

11/9/2018

53

Surviving as a Reflective Supervisor

- Role is very stressful at times
- Remember that supervisors do not have to know everything!
- Must be able to develop balance yourself
 - Monitor your work hours
 - Learn to recognize your own stress
 - Seek out a mentor for yourself or a peer mentor for support
 - Don't be afraid to delegate
 - Communicate as much as possible with others—especially about the things that are going well
 - Differentiate things that are urgent from those that are important and learn to respond to the important things
 - Recognize & validate your own accomplishments and those of the people around you

11/9/2018

54

Reducing Stress In Yourself And In Staff

- What activities help you to reduce stress and maintain balance in your life?
- How can you improve your life balance?



11/9/2018

55

References & Resources

- Bruen, S. (2013). An experience of reflective practice—Finding a reflective space. *Perspectives in Infant Mental Health*, 21(2), 1-2.
- Fenichel, E. (Ed.) (1992). *Learning through Supervision and Mentorship*. Washington, DC : Zero to Three.
- Heffron, M.C. & Murch, T. (2012) *Finding the Word, Finding the Ways: Exploring Reflective Supervision and Facilitation*. Sacramento: California Center for Infant Family & Early Childhood Mental Health @ WestEd. (Video vignettes available for purchase from WestEd)
- Heffron, M.C. & Murch, T. (2010) *Reflective Supervision & Leadership in Early Childhood Programs*. Washington DC: Zero to Three.
- Heller, S.S. & Gilkerson, L. (2009). *A Practical Guide to Reflective Supervision*. Washington DC: Zero to Three.
- Pawl, J. (1995). On supervision. In R, Shahmoon-Shanok, L. Gilkerson, L. Eggbeer & E. Fenichel (Eds). *Reflective supervision: A relationship for learning*. Washington DC: Zero to Three.
- Schon, D. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London: Temple Smith.



11/9/2018

56

kfinello@wested.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
REFLECTIVE PRACTICE, VISIT
www.cacenter-ecmh.org



11/9/2018

57