

## Reflective Tool for Social Work Practice

### Reflection is:

“A process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyse, evaluate and to inform learning about practice.

(Reid:3)

### Reflective Practice

Involves the critical analysis of everyday working practices to improve competence and promote professional development.

Reflective practice is all about:

- Thinking
- Self awareness
- Values
- Consideration
- Understanding
- Analysis
- Evaluation

Reflective practice improves social work intervention as it:

- Helps practitioners to identify gaps in their skills and knowledge. This helps them to identify their learning needs and improve their practice.
- Encourages practitioners to analyse communication and relationships. This means that relationships can be improved. As such collaborative working is improved.
- Supports practitioners in examining the decision making process – such that they are able to justify practice more readily.
- Encourages a healthy questioning approach which can help practitioners “find their way”.
- ***It is closely linked to emotional intelligence which is about “being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations, to control impulse and delay gratification, to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think, to empathise and to hope.”***
- Enhances resilience to stress
- Fosters wellbeing

### Reflection in Action

- Planning for the interview/assessment
- Reflecting as the assessment visit is taking place
- Thinking things through after the visit, perhaps talking it through in supervision

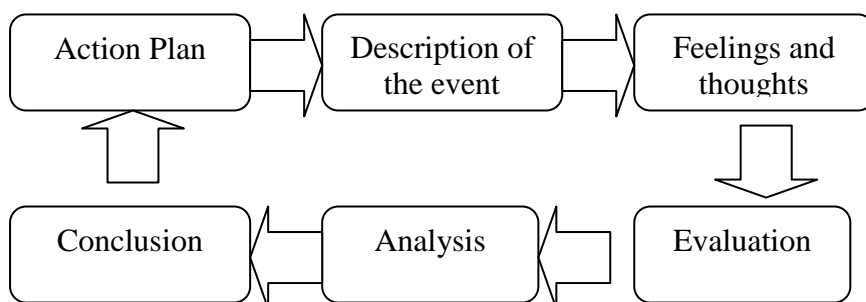
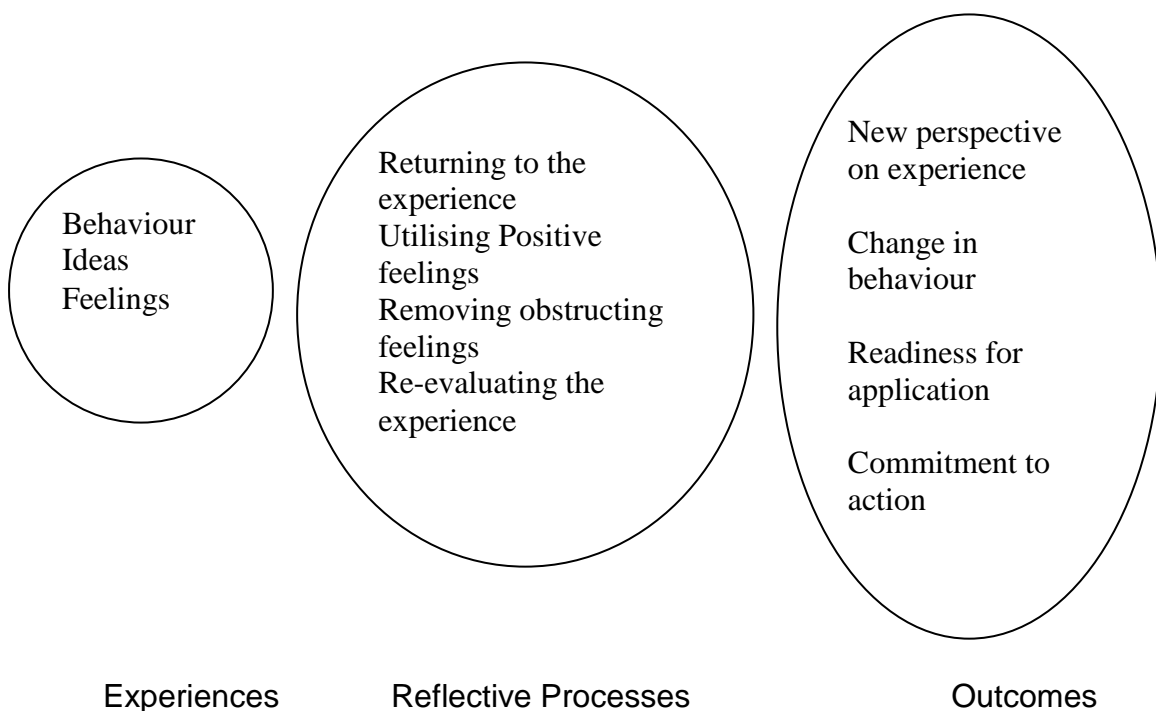
Cumulatively the three forms of reflection should lead to an Action Plan for taking further action (taking us into reflection for action again).

Greenaway (1995) explores this idea by creating a basic framework for reflection consisting of three stages. Often depicted as a cycle in the following way:

→ Review → Plan → Do →

An individual then:

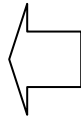
- Recaptures that experience
- Mulls it over (perhaps with others)
- Considers their feelings about the experience (both positive and negative)
- Evaluates the experience – identifying new knowledge
- Acts on the reflection – incorporating new knowledge into their planning



## The so What Model?

This model involves the following questions forming the framework for reflection:

What?

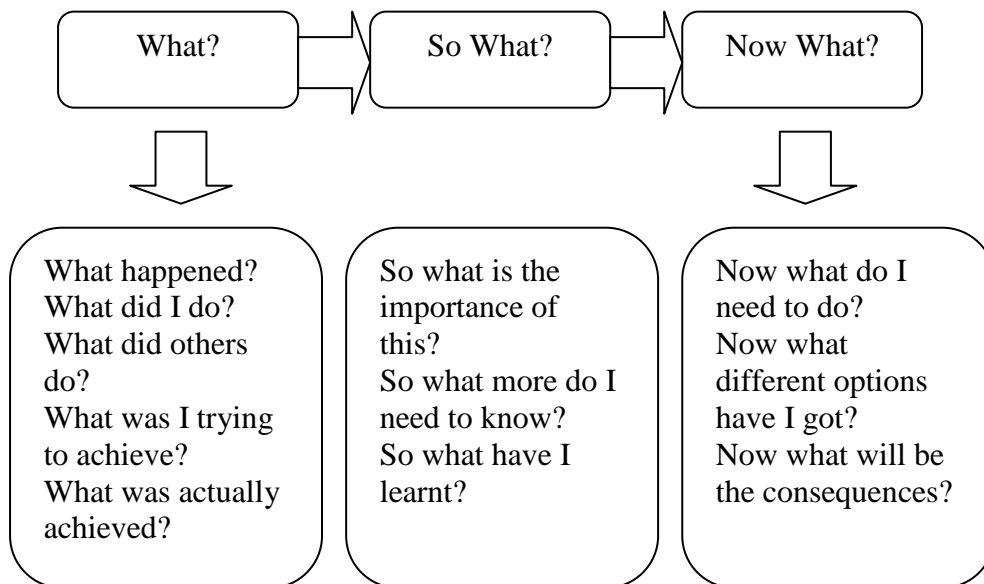


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So What?

Now What?

This model is often criticised on the basis of its simplicity. However, it can be useful for more experienced practitioners who are confident about reflection and who do not want or need a highly structured framework.



## **Gibb's Model of Reflection:**

- Description: What is the family and child scenario we are working with?
  - Feelings: Whilst working with the family, what were you thinking and feeling?
  - Evaluation: What was good and bad about the scenario?
  - Analysis: What sense can you make of the situation, from your point of view, the child's and family members?
  - Conclusion: What do you need to improve, and assist the child and family?
  - Action Plan: If it arose again what would you do?
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- Emotional intelligence and reflective ability together:
  - Foster wellbeing
  - Enhance resilience to stress

## **Questions to Enable Active Reflection**

What did you feel at the start?

Describe your feelings?

What feelings/thoughts/ideas did you feel during?

What patterns did you see? Any links to historical information you have seen, any new information?

What did you think the service user was feeling?

Any factors that influenced your feelings for example gender or race?

Where and when did you feel least/most comfortable?

Any change/similarities/difference since last encounter with the service user?

What aims/outcomes were not achieved?

What do you need to revisit or feel is not known?

Define your role/agency role?

How do the service users define your role?

What went well, or not well, and why?

How would you describe the power relationship?

Has your thinking changed, if so why?

What areas of further assessment/resources are required?

What bits of theory, training, research, policy or values might help you make sense of what happened?

What are the current strengths, needs, and risks for the different service users?

Use of tool:

- Read and make notes following a visit or meeting with a child/family/caller
- Prepare for supervision
- Work through questions
- Use in practice workshops/discussions with colleagues

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