Reflective and reflexive practice

A toolkit for managers to help embed psychologically informed services
Your reflective and reflexive practice toolkit

The aim of this workshop is to give you tools and models to effectively use reflective and reflexive practice with your teams to continually increase performance through increased resilience, decreased burnout and dealing with change.

What are the objectives?

- To gain an understanding of reflective and reflexive practice in supported housing
- To understand your own behaviours and how this impacts on your teams
- Examine the models and understand how they work

This toolkit should be used in conjunction with the workshop and is made up of a number of activities, models and further reading and sources of reading.

Embedding reflective and reflexive practice

What is reflective practice?

A process by which you stop and think about your practice, consciously analyse your decision making and draw on theory and relate it to what you do in practice.

What is reflexive practice?

The process of using reflection to plan and implement the next stage of the work in a reflexive loop on the basis of the person’s reflection of what has happened, what they would like to happen next and with what rationale. This creates a reflexive loop.

A psychologically informed approach to Riverside services

About Psychologically Informed Environments (PIEs)

Psychology is simply about understanding why people behave the way they do. For example, understanding that a child might misbehave when over-tired, or that someone who is afraid and feels they are cornered and have no control, could lash out and be violent. These are things you will already know.

Being Psychologically Informed means ensuring that the way we talk to people and manage relationships and communication, the support we provide, the tools we use, all are created and delivered in a way which will promote trust, openness, understanding and ultimately ‘better’ behaviour from our customers.

With a PIEs service, simple but targeted changes in the language employees use can make a huge difference from a customer feeling they are worthless, something in them is broken and that they can never change, instead to feeling valued, empowered, motivated and in control.

These are simple but powerful shifts and all of it is underpinned by employees being self-aware with their own style, communication and demeanour.

You will be aware that Riverside’s model of support is based on PIEs services. The founders of PIEs have told us that the single most effective tool to achieve psychologically informed services is reflective practice. This is because it nurtures a safe environment to examine employees’ behaviours, thoughts and feelings and understand how these impact on customers and situations.

Employees who are self-aware, who reflect in teams and who explore alternative approaches are those who are able to truly put their customers in control of the service they receive. Reflective practice is something that most managers do anyway.
## Benefits of reflective practice

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<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>You</th>
<th>Riverside</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Service User</th>
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<td>Increases self-awareness (beliefs, values and attitudes)</td>
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<td>Focus on the health and well-being of employees (reduces burnout, sickness, absence, staff turnover, stress)</td>
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<td>Effective tool for change</td>
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<td>Improves confidence</td>
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<td>Enables growth and development</td>
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<td>Self-evaluation</td>
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<td>Insight into the perception of others</td>
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<td>Identify personal strengths and areas of improvement</td>
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**Notes...**
Self awareness: self esteem questionnaire

Look at each of the statements below and circle if you feel they are true or false for you. Be honest with yourself and trust your gut feeling.

1. I feel that I am as capable of achieving my goals as other people
2. I hardly ever worry that I am going to fail at something
3. I have some clear strengths that help me do a good job
4. I generally expect the worst in everything I try to do
5. There are lots of things I would change about myself
6. I have as many attractive qualities as most other people I know
7. I regard myself as a worthwhile person for the most part
8. I often remind myself of the nice things I have done
9. It bothers me for a long time when people criticise me
10. I go on the attack when people criticise me
11. I feel I can do what want without worrying about what people think
12. I accept feedback and take what is useful from it
13. I find it very hard to say “No” to requests from others
14. I feel really guilty when I feel I may have hurt or annoyed someone
15. I often feel guilty for things that are not my fault
16. I often feel guilty if I tell people how I really feel
17. I am quicker to see positives in situations than negatives
18. I regularly pat myself on the back for the good things I do
19. I generally lack confidence in my own abilities
20. My success in my life is mostly outside of my control
21. I often criticise my work quite harshly
22. I am always calling myself names like 'stupid' or worse
23. I often pat myself on the back for doing a good job
24. I seem to find a lot of things to be thankful for
25. I always need to please people I like
26. I am always wondering what people really think of me
27. I find it hard to make difficult decisions without asking what others think first
28. I get really down when people are displeased with me
### This section is how competent you feel about yourself

1. I feel that I am as capable of achieving my goals as other people  
   **True** / **False**
2. I hardly ever worry that I am going to fail at something  
   **True** / **False**
3. I have some clear strengths that help me do a good job  
   **True** / **False**
4. I generally expect the worst in everything I try to do  
   **True** / **False**

### This section is how self-accepting you are about yourself

5. There are lots of things I would change about myself  
   **True / False**
6. I have as many attractive qualities as most other people I know  
   **True** / **False**
7. I regard myself as a worthwhile person for the most part  
   **True** / **False**
8. I often remind myself of the nice things I have done  
   **True** / **False**

### This section is how receptive to feedback you are

9. It bothers me for a long time when people criticize me  
   **True** / **False**
10. I go on the attack when people criticize me  
    **True** / **False**
11. I feel I can do what want without worrying about what people think  
    **True** / **False**
12. I accept feedback and take what is useful from it  
    **True** / **False**

### This section is how guilty you feel daily

13. I find it very hard to say “No” to requests from others  
    **True** / **False**
14. I feel really guilty when I feel I may have hurt or annoyed someone  
    **True** / **False**
15. I often feel guilty for things that are not my fault  
    **True** / **False**
16. I often feel guilty if I tell people how I really feel  
    **True** / **False**

### This section is how optimistic you feel

17. I am quicker to see positives in situations than negatives  
    **True** / **False**
18. I regularly pat myself on the back for the good things I do  
    **True** / **False**
19. I generally lack confidence in my own abilities  
    **True** / **False**
20. My success in my life is mostly outside of my control  
    **True** / **False**

### This section is your self-talk

21. I often criticise my work quite harshly  
    **True** / **False**
22. I am always calling myself names like ‘stupid’ or worse  
    **True** / **False**
23. I often pat myself on the back for doing a good job  
    **True** / **False**
24. I seem to find a lot of things to be thankful for  
    **True** / **False**

### This section is how self-sufficient you feel

25. I always need to please people I like  
    **True** / **False**
26. I am always wondering what people really think of me  
    **True** / **False**
27. I find it hard to make difficult decisions without asking what others think first  
    **True** / **False**
28. I get really down when people are displeased with me  
    **True** / **False**

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**Please add up your score**

**Key**

1-2 = Needs focus
3-4 = Maintain it
Competence
To feel competent, you need to feel confident in your ability as a manager. You should feel that, for the most part, you have the skills and resources to solve problems and meet the challenges that arise day to day in your team. Watch out for any globalising tendencies i.e. using words such as “never” or “always”. To boost your feeling of competence, it may be an idea to ask your team to reflect on what has gone well in the week and bring a “victory” to the team meeting.

Receptivity to feedback
Becoming comfortable with negative feedback is a trait of top leaders. Things don’t always go the way we want them to. Successful managers will always reflect on what went wrong and thank people for the feedback. You can teach yourself to reframe feedback and take the opportunity to learn. Think about how becoming overly sensitive or upset could impact on your team? When you receive negative feedback it is a great opportunity to role model positive behaviour!

And most importantly…all feedback is not negative, make a point of giving daily positive feedback to your team, and accept when you are told you have done a good job!

Guilt
Guilt is one of the fastest ways to drain your energy. Guilt is felt when we are sensitive to other people’s feelings and we feel we may have upset someone. Often managers feel guilt when having to say “No”.

A simple way to approach this is rather than telling someone why you are unable to do something, offer them a different kind of help, such as advice and guidance. You will show you understand how important this task is, just unable to give up time on this occasion. This is a win-win, as your team feel valued and empowered and you feel less or no guilt.

Self acceptance
Everyone has a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, people who score low in this section, tend to emphasise their negative traits and focus weakness, rather than how to improve on something. Using reflective practice promotes a sense of ownership and acceptance of what went wrong and what can be learned from the experience.

Optimism
To become more optimistic requires discipline, as you will need to actively seek the positives in every situation. Reflecting on a situation can really help with this. Even in a really negative situation you can remain positive by telling yourself “I’ll ensure this does not happen again” and learn from it.

Self-talk
It is important to understand the psychology of self-talk and the impact this has. Your self-talk affects your self-image and your self-image affects your performance.

Negative thoughts will show up in your performance. Commit to exchanging global thinking for realistic thinking i.e. “Nothing I do ever works out.” Instead say, “Often things do work out for me, but this time is a real challenge.” It will affect your performance and will give your team a morale boost.

Self-sufficiency
Self-sufficiency is a mind-set of not being dependent on the approval of others to be happy. You can’t please everyone and need to remind yourself that you are not a mind reader. Being a manger is about sometimes making tough decisions that will affect others. It is vital that you are not paralysed by the fear of displeasing people-getting feedback form a neutral third party can be helpful.
A well informed outcome

Event + Response = Outcome

Please describe a challenging event in your team.

What outcome do you want?

What does your response need to be to get the outcome?
Transactional analysis & a healthy mindset

Positive
- Keep safe
- Calming
- Nurturing
- Supportive
- Reasonable
- Logical
- Rational
- Not-threatening
- Non-threatened
- Curious
- Playful
- Creative
- Spontaneity

Negative
- Controlling
- Critical
- Patronising
- Finger-pointing
- Rebellious
- Tantrums
- Difficult
- Insecurity

Parent

Adult

Child

Eric Berne, 1964 – ‘The Games People Play’

I’m OK. You’re Not.
This manager has limited self-awareness and may come across as patronising and want to ‘rescue’ as they ‘know better’.

I’m OK. You’re OK.
This is the optimal position, where the manager has a healthy self-esteem and can use effective reflective practice, focusing on guidance and encouragement.

You’re OK. I’m Not.
In this position the manager would feel inferior and not as good as the person they are working with. This is unhealthy reflective practice, as it often results in moving forward.

I’m not OK Neither are You.
This creates a feeling of hopelessness and pessimism for potential change. A manager should help to reframe a mindset to optimism and action. This will not happen if the manager is ‘Not OK’.

Thomas Harris, 1996 ‘I’m ok, you’re ok’
Donald Schön (1983) identified two types of reflection:

**Reflection-on-action**
This is the process of looking back on what has been done and searching for new insights. The advantage is that there is usually more time and less imperative to act so we can come to new ideas and concentrate on the thinking. The difficulty is that by this point we have already decided certain things, and do not have our assumptions in the moment to reflect on.

**Reflection-in-action**
This is the questioning of what I am doing as I do it. It has the difficulty of having to get on with things while I am thinking, but has the advantage of being able to notice my thinking in the raw. Schön says that this is the time to be able to bring our good habits to consciousness as well as being able to raise questions for further learning.

To be able to learn about reflection, it is helpful to understand how we take in information and how our thinking process makes judgement.

What is skilled reflection?
Reflection is something we do all time. We think over what we have just done, wonder about we are just going to do. A human being is a meaning making machine. How we understand ourselves and our environment is what drives our decision making.

We ask ourselves, “Why did this happen? Why is it like that?” until we have come up with answer that satisfies us.

Note that we tend to search for an explanation that is satisfying, and that is not the same as accurate or skilled. Brookfield (1995) observed that reflection is not always critical and can reinforce our previous assumptions and misconceptions. When it comes to leadership and managerial decision-making, we will be making major decisions about our organisation and other people’s lives. This means we need more rigorous thinking, which strives for greater objectivity in our conceptualisation and decision-making. To do this we need to make the human ability to reflect, a professional tool.
Schon - continued...

What reflection is not

Rumination
One of the ways reflection can go off course is the we go round and round in our heads either re-confirming previous ideas or wishing we had done something differently. This experience can often have a very critical voice, blaming somebody else or being very hard on ourselves. This rumination does not allow ourselves to gain clarity on new learning from a situation. It blunts our thinking, and takes up more time than it is worth.

Narration
At the other end of the spectrum we go off course by concentrating on telling the story to others. This becomes preoccupied with getting the other person involved in experiencing what we were experiencing, particularly the emotive content. The point of narration is to replay the experience rather than critically re-evaluate it.

We may find that we tell the same story a number of times to different people each time trying to engage that person in the experience we had. Where a story gets passed on in this way it has become gossip. Again it absorbs time without providing a critical reevaluation.

Justification
The human mind is incredibly fast. This means that we can come up with a reason for what we did so quickly that it feels natural and obviously right to ourselves. This process is a sort of automatic pilot that goes on in our head a lot of the time.

While it feels clear and logical it actually misses out the aspect of critical analysis and does not check out our assumptions, our habits, or if our usual way of doing things could be bettered.

All of the above processes have the seeds of critical reflection in them. Going over things in our own heads and describing the situation to others are useful tools for reflection.

The difference is that in reflection we use the process of going over an event to re-evaluate, question, and deepen our understanding of what happened, enabling us to have a more accurate and objective perception, and gain learning. We evaluate the meaning behind the thing.

Where we need to keep going over and over an experience there is something that we haven’t grasped. When we have effectively reflected on an event we can take our understanding and are learning from it, leaving behind the experience itself.

Notes...
Kolb’s learning cycle

Concrete Experience
Doing / having an experience

Active Experimentation
Planning / trying out what you have learned

Abstract Conceptualisation
Concluding / learning from the experience

Reflective Observation
Reviewing / reflecting on the experience

Notes...

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Gibbs’ model of reflection

Gibbs’ reflective cycle is a process involving six steps:

1. **Description**: What happened?
2. **Feelings**: What did you think and feel about it?
3. **Evaluation**: What were the positives and negatives?
4. **Analysis**: What sense can you make of it?
5. **Conclusion**: What else could you have done?
6. **Action Plan**: What will you do next time?
For the manager
The cycle was originally used in the health-care profession as a way for professionals to assess and reflect on any given situation in their job. By reflecting, and learning to do it reflexively, the professional can gain a sense of how a method or his or her actions can be improved upon when a similar situation arises.

1. Description
Write a description of the event. The first step in the six-step cycle is to describe the event factually, just as it happened. Explain the details from the beginning to the end of the event and your role in them. For example, “I was in the reception area, tenant ‘x’ turned up and an argument broke out “

2. Feelings
Write down what you were feeling during the event. If your feelings changed at different stages in the event, be sure to outline what those different stages were and your particular feelings associated with them.

3. Evaluation
Write down an evaluation of your event. List both the good and the bad aspects of what happened.

4. Analysis
Write down your analysis. This part can be tricky and is subjective. You need to write down the meaning of the incident or event. In the supported/sheltered housing profession, you can reflect on the client’s situation in conjunction with his or her history and piece together a cause for the reaction. Also reflect on the meaning of your actions during the event. Did you make a mistake from a bad day? Tired or stressed? Did a previous reflection cycle exercise help you to keep a cool head in this situation?

5. Conclusion
Write down a conclusion. This is an evaluation of your behavior in the event. Consider what you should or could have done differently and make a point to recognise what you did that was spot-on correct.

6. Action plan
Write an action plan. Consider what you will do differently if and when this situation should occur again. Write down a decisive plan for your altered behavior in similar circumstances.
Rolfe’s reflective model

Rolfe's framework for reflective practice
Rolfe uses three simple questions to reflect on a situation: What? So what? And now what? He considers the final question as the one that can make the greatest contribution to practice.

- What ...is the problem? ...was my role? ...happened? ...were the consequences?
- So what ...was going through my mind? ...should I have done? ...do I know about what happened now?
- Now what ...do I need to do? ...broader issues have been raised? ...might happen now?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive level of reflection</th>
<th>Theory - and knowledge - building level of reflection</th>
<th>Action-orientated (reflective) level of reflection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What...</strong></td>
<td><strong>So what...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Now what...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- What is the problem / difficulty / reason for being stuck / reason for feeling bad / reason we don’t get on?</td>
<td>- So what does this tell me / teach me / imply / mean about me / other / the team / my attitudes to service users / my work?</td>
<td>- Now what do I need to do in order to make things better / stop being stuck / resolve the situation / feel better / improve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What was your role in the situation?</td>
<td>- So what was going through my mind as I acted? So what did I base my actions on?</td>
<td>- Now what broader issues need to be considered if this action is to be successful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What were you aiming to achieve?</td>
<td>- So what other knowledge can I bring to the situation? Experiential-personal- psychological?</td>
<td>- Now what might be the consequences of this action?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What actions did you take?</td>
<td>- So what could/should I have done to make it better?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What was the response of others?</td>
<td>- So what is my new understanding of the situation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What were the consequences for you and others?</td>
<td>- So what broader issues arise from the situation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What feelings did it evoke in you?</td>
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<td>- What was the response of others?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What was good/bad about the experience?</td>
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Johns’ model of reflection: Self-reflective

Description of the experience
Describe the experience and what were the significant factors?

Reflection
What was I trying to achieve and what are the consequences?

Influencing factors
What things like internal/external/knowledge affected my decision making? Could I have dealt with it better? What other choices did I have and what were those consequences?

Learning
What will change because of this experience and how did I feel about the experience?

How has this experience changed my ways of knowing:
- Empirics – scientific
- Ethics – moral knowledge
- Personal – self awareness
- Aesthetics – the art of what we do, our own experiences.
1. Give it time / make time
2. Regularity
3. Ask, not tell
4. Be proactive not reactive, not reactive
5. Active listening including paraphrasing
6. Body language
7. Clean language
Clean language

Clean language questions are designed to reduce to a minimum any influence from the manager’s ‘map of the world’ via his or her metaphors, interpretations or unwarranted assumptions.

They are also designed to direct the employees attention to some aspect of their experience (as expressed in their words or non-verbal expressions) that the manager has noticed and chooses to highlight for the client’s potential learning.

An example dialogue is as follows:

**Employee: “I feel strange.”**

Non-clean language facilitator responses might include:

- “Have you got a headache?”
- “Are you ill?”
- “You’re probably catching a cold.”
- “You must be hungover!”
- “Stop complaining! Take a pill...”

**Clean language manager responses might include:**

- “Where do you feel strange?”
- “What kind of strange?”
- “Strange like what?”
- “Is there anything else that feels strange?”
- “What happens just before you feel strange?”

**The basic clean language questions (established by David Grove)**

In these questions, X and Y represent the person’s words (or non-verbal).

**Developing questions**

- “(And) what kind of X (is that X)?”
- “(And) is there anything else about X?”
- “(And) where is X? or (And) whereabouts is X?”
- “(And) that’s X like what?”
- “(And) is there a relationship between X and Y?”
- “(And) when X, what happens to Y?”

**Sequence and source questions**

- “(And) then what happens? or (And) what happens next?”
- “(And) what happens just before X?”
- “(And) where could X come from?”

**Intention questions**

- “(And) what would X like to have happen?”
- “(And) what needs to happen for X?”
- “(And) can X (happen)?”

The first two questions: “What kind of X (is that X)” and “Is there anything else about X?” are the most commonly used.

As a general guide, these two questions account for around 50% of the questions asked in a typical clean language session.
High quality question bank

Generic version:

What happened?
- What took place?
- What do others think or say took place?
- What worked really well?
- What needed improvement or change?

Why did it happen?
- What were the factors contributing to the success / issue?
- What assumptions, beliefs, motives and emotions were involved from you, and others?
- What issues can you recognise in what took place?
- What external factors had any effect?

What can be done?
- What are the possible ways to improve?
- How could you use some of the learnings in the future?
- How do others think you could use some of the learnings in future?
- What ways forward are there?
- Which parts of the changes are the most straightforward / least straightforward?
- How will this affect what the situation going forward?

What will be done?
- What action will you take?
- When will you take action?
- What impact do you believe it will have on you, your team, services users, Riverside, any other stakeholders?
- What would be the results?

What impact does the action/s have?
- How do you know?
- How can you evidence the impact?
- How will you/others feel, think/what will you see/hear next time if you do this?

What will you do next?
- What will you do differently next time and why?
- What will you do next to make it happen?
Self-reflection tool

**Description**
What happened?

**Feelings**
What were you thinking and feeling?

**Evaluation**
What was good and bad about the experience?

**Analysis**
What else can you make of the situation?

**Conclusion**
What else could you have done?

**Action plan**
If it arose again what would you do?
Stop, start and continue

What do you need to stop, start and continue doing in order to lead others to utilise reflective practice?

Stop...

Start...

Continue...
Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think about it.