The heART of Reflective Supervision

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Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, Inc.®
Agenda for Parts 1 & 2

- 1:30-3:00 pm
  - Introductions, questions & reflections
  - Exploring reflective supervision or consultation

- Break 3-3:30 pm

- 3:30-5:00 pm
  - A “real time” reflective conversation & response
  - Putting it all together
Introductions

- Who am I? Who are you?
  - Who is here? Disciplines represented? Programs?
  - What is your role? Family support worker? Supervisor? Manager?

- What are you curious about? Have you come with any particular questions about reflective supervision or consultation that you would like us to keep in mind?
Getting to know you - Introductions

- This is a week to “Celebrate Babies!” in the IMH world
- Divide into pairs (or around the table) and introduce yourselves
- Share with each other one way that you “celebrate babies”
- Invite a few “celebrations” shared with larger group
- Babies challenge us to bring our very best to our work/our lives.
Reflections - HFA

- We celebrate babies every day in HFA
- HFA invites a focus on early development, family relationships, vulnerabilities and strengths as parents prepare for and care for their very young children, often in the midst of challenging situations.
- What we may not be prepared for is the emotional journey, what is awakened in response to what we see, what we hear, and what we feel as we enter into helping relationships with families and/or staff on behalf of babies, very young children and parents who courageously allow us into their lives.
Important Questions

- How do we do this work, month after month, year after year?

- How do we maintain relationships with families and/or staff over long periods of time, offer guidance and support, keep our spirits up and restore the balance if we are discouraged or face crises while working in very intimate ways with the infants and families referred?

- The answer to these important questions may be through our own relationships, most especially through a supervisory relationship we call “reflective”

- What makes “reflective” so unique? Let’s consider supervision.
Administrative Supervision

- Administrative supervision relates to the oversight of federal, state and agency regulations, program policies, rules and procedures. Supervision that is primarily administrative will be driven to achieve the following objectives:
  - hire
  - train/educate
  - oversee paperwork
  - write reports
  - explain rules and policies
  - coordinate
  - monitor productivity
  - evaluate
Clinical Case Supervision

- Clinical supervision/consultation, while case-focused, does not necessarily consider what the practitioner brings to the intervention nor does it necessarily encourage the exploration of emotion as it relates to work with an infant/toddler and family. Supervision or consultation that is primarily clinical will most likely include many or all of the administrative objectives that are listed above as well as the following objectives:
  - review casework
  - discuss the initial assessment, impressions and reasons for referral
  - discuss intervention strategies related to the intervention
  - review the intervention or treatment plan
  - review and evaluate progress
  - give guidance/advice
  - teach
Reflective Supervision/Consultation: A Relational Process

- A learning relationship that encourages best practice.
- A time and place to think deeply about one’s work and, as one is able, about one’s self.
- A journey that two or more people embark on together.
- A shared experience founded on trust, mutual respect, curiosity, wonder.
- A process that takes place in the context of a relationship – mirroring our relationship with families.
- A place to hold and address angry feelings, frustrations, inadequacies and discouragement, as well as joys or victories.
- A holding environment, a place to feel secure enough to expose insecurities, mistakes, questions and differences.
- A relationship within which to co-construct new understanding.
Reflect and Reflection: Meanings

- Reflect:
  - to give back
  - to show an image
  - to ponder or meditate

- Reflection:
  - a mirror image
  - a deep thought
Continuing Our Inquiry: What is RSC?

- A process that is uniquely individual
- A partnership requiring mutual regard, commitment & presence
- A relationship in which you search for meaning
- A relationship where worries can be shared
- A place in which one discovers his or her competence/confidence, not alone, but within a relational context
- A time to pause and share the thoughts, feelings and responses that I have about another (the infant, toddler, parent, supervisee, etc.)
Perspectives

• “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

Context

Content

Process
Context or Framework

- A regularly scheduled time to meet within a defined time frame
- A comfortable setting
- Private, quiet, without distractions or interruptions
- A “holding environment” in which all parties feel safe, contained and secure
- A safe base
Content

- Core Elements: C. Watson and Alliance, 2010-2016
  - 1. Attention to & understanding of the family’s story
  - 2. Holding the baby in mind: the baby’s development, experience, social and emotional capability and impact of the baby on those caring for the baby
  - 3. Attention to multiple relationships and the interconnection of these relationships (the infant, parent, professional, supervisor)
  - 4. Professional’s personal/professional emotional response to the work
  - 5. The Working Alliance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Sensitive, empathic, non-judgmental, patient, clear, firm, fair, understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Attentive, open, willing to explore and “not know”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Head &amp; Heart &amp; Body”</td>
<td>Thoughtful &amp; feeling-filled, balanced, aware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindful Attention</td>
<td>Able to consider and hold the infant, parent(s), relationship, the story and self in mind</td>
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Process

- Collaborative: supervisor and supervisee agree to work together, set goals together, enter into a partnership, ask questions, discuss strengths, risks and vulnerabilities

- Relational: a shared learning experience, each remaining fully present and emotionally open to the other, each contributing to the other

- A dual process: a time and place for gentle questioning, to wonder together about the child, the family, the story, one’s own emotional response to what is seen and heard in effort to guide our work with the family, to take the next step
A Continuous Process

TRUST

Observe

Listen

Wonder

Respond
**Observe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Supervisee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enter without judgment</td>
<td>Enter with an open mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain culturally aware &amp; sensitive</td>
<td>Allow supervisor to support you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask about beginnings (work, supervision); explore expectations; talk about safety within the relationship; assure confidentiality</td>
<td>Come prepared to share information about yourself; consider expectations; share observations honestly &amp; openly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite the sharing of details about the baby, parent, relationships, aware of pacing, timing and pauses.</td>
<td>Share enthusiasm, hesitations, worries or concerns</td>
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## Listen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Supervisee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remain quiet, follow supervisee’s lead</td>
<td>Acknowledge importance of consistent supervision meetings for reflective work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge what it takes to be open and vulnerable to babies, toddlers, families, relationships and events</td>
<td>Listen to your own descriptions of the baby, toddler, family, relationships and events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be accessible, genuine, caring, and emotionally available or present; hold the awareness of vulnerability</td>
<td>Listen for the feeling words that you choose to use and the emotions awakened in the presence of the baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect supervisory time from interruption</td>
<td>Let the feelings inform you about your work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen for themes that emerge and emotions that are awakened for supervisee and self; hold and contain them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Supervisee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be open to sharing stories or experiences about your own work</td>
<td>Ask questions that allow you to think more deeply about your work and self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain emotionally available &amp; fully present; hold the ambivalence;</td>
<td>Be aware of the feelings you have in response to the work and in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintain a sense of hope</td>
<td>presence of infants, toddlers, and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gently encourage exploration of thoughts &amp; feelings awakened by the work;</td>
<td>When you feel safe enough, share those feelings with your supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contain the feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder about the feelings expressed; wonder about your own feelings</td>
<td>Increase attention to “self” and “other” with a deeper attention to emotions felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder how feelings inform work &amp; enhance understanding of self; engage</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>in reflective supervision yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Supervisee</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain cultural awareness &amp; sensitivity</td>
<td>Allow feelings to inform your work</td>
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<tr>
<td>As trust between you grows, encourage greater reflection</td>
<td>Explore new insights about feelings and relationships as they have more personal meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize and understand supervisee’s feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, confusion, as well as strengths</td>
<td>Trust yourself to discuss what you need to discuss and use your growing awareness of self and other to enrich your work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder about, name, and respond to feelings with appropriate empathy</td>
<td>Remain curious, open, and content to “not know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain curious, open, and content to “not know”; focus on understanding, not “problem solving”, hold uncertainty</td>
<td>Feel free to explore the intersection of personal and professional</td>
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## Attributes That Support the Development RSC

### Alliance Leadership Discussion

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<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Message to supervisee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>I listen carefully without interrupting, slowing down the dialogue, pausing and reflecting. I will be content “not to know” and remain curious, open. I will refrain from commenting quickly and wait before you speak. I will take the pressure off both of us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindful</td>
<td>I will hold you and the experiences that are shared with me in mind and over time. I will work hard to remember the details of what is shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to “surprise”</td>
<td>I will stay open to the unexpected, for myself and for you. I will create a safe and open space in which we can think, have and express our feelings. I will try very hard “to not know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>I will make every effort to create a holding, containing environment in which you find it possible to be open when you are with me. I will appreciate your vulnerability and your strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>Message to supervisee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>I will accept what you have to tell me. I will listen carefully and respond as I am able. I will set limits for you that are clear, firm and fair. I will be available if you need me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>I will explain the work as I understand it and respond to you with care and concern. If something is not clear to me, I will ask you to tell me a little more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>If we have scheduled a meeting, I will make every effort to be there when I said I would be there. I will try to let you know where you can find me or when I am going to be away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful/Trustworthy</td>
<td>I will accept you and all that you tell me. I won't be judgmental. I will keep what you tell me between us and not share it with others without your permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>I will be open with you. I will let you know when I think things are going well for you and for the families you are working with. I will also let you know when I have concerns.</td>
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Considering Relationships:

- Because relationships are at the heart of Healthy Families America, building and strengthening them, it is fundamental to your work with families, too. In the face of supporting those relationships, what relationships are awakened in you? Many, I am sure – mothers, grandmothers, aunts, fathers, brothers, sisters, partners, friends.

- Take time to think about one of those important people with whom you had or have a close and secure relationship – one that made you or makes you feel strong and confident, feel really good about yourself. What did or does that person bring to you? What did or do you bring to him/her?

- Listening in pairs, 3 minutes each; the story teller talks while the other listens without comment.
Supervisory Behaviors

- The supervisor listens with concern but without judgment.
- The supervisor remains emotionally present, contains the anxieties, and invites exploration of what is seen or heard.
- The supervisor remains engaged, curious, open, compassionate.
- The supervisor may suggest how to organize presentation of observations and material.
- The supervisor looks closely at how the supervisee constructs meaning about what is observed and heard and encourages curiosity, questioning, uncertainty, the use of metaphor, creative and self-reflective thinking, e.g. What did that bring to mind? What do you find yourself thinking about or feeling?
Self-Reflection

What is self-reflection:

- Capacity to have and think about one’s own thoughts and behaviors and feelings
- Capacity to become aware of how one thinks and behaves and responds in certain situations and wonder why
- Capacity to think more deeply about oneself in relationship to others
- Capacity to consider the past as it relates to the present
- Capacity to grow and change
heARTful reflective supervision

- Establish a routine, agreeing to meet regularly, in a certain place and at a certain time
- Make sure there are no interruptions
- Invite supervisee to talk and then listen
- Follow supervisee’s lead, offering some guidance and support
- Offer reassurance as appropriate, but honestly
- Share some of your own experiences
- Problem solve when there is an immediate, urgent situation
- Create a context in which it is safe to have and express feelings: pleasures, fears, anger, distress
- Hold and contain the feelings; name them when appropriate
Part II of our time together moves us into an observer role in which we are asked to quietly and respectfully listen.

Kerrie Green – She will say a few things about her role in HFA and her thoughts about reflective supervision before we begin.
Responding to the Process

Some possible considerations in your role as an observer:

- What was awakened in you as you observed and listened closely?
- Did this RS match your expectation? Did anything surprise you?
- Did you notice particular behaviors that contributed to the reflective exchange?
- Did a metaphor or image come to mind?
- Were you aware of a connection or relationship building between the two?
- Modeling, teaching, questioning, encouraging curiosity, clarifying?
- Were there points where you wanted to jump in or might have asked a question or responded differently?
- What are you curious about?
- What new knowledge are you taking away?
A Real Time Reflective Conversation

- Introduce Kerrie Green who has graciously offered to sit with me to help us better understand what a reflective conversation can look like. It takes courage to do this. It is a great gift.

- Confidentiality: It is important to respect the confidentiality of families and of professionals. We agree in this room to limit our conversation about the details that are offered in this reflective conversation/supervision/consultation to this room. We will not refer to the family members by name.

- If we were a group that meets regularly for reflective consultation, we would sign a written agreement to this effect.
Responding to the Process

- Take a few minutes to reflect on what you saw/heard
- Some possible considerations:
  - What was awakened in you as you observed and listened closely?
  - Did this RS match your expectation? Did anything surprise you?
  - Did you notice particular behaviors that contributed to the reflective exchange?
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Challenges to RSC

- What challenges you about RSC?
- What are the barriers to building a culture of reflection?
- What are the rewards?
- What supports will you need?
It is this state of getting to know the other and for the other to be known that is at the heart of reflective practice.

Astrid Berg, South Africa, 2015
Reflections

- Missing
  - I am missing
  - Someone..
  - Something..
  - Who or what?
  - I cannot know.
  - A pink ribbon lies on the stairs
  - And a shoe beside it
  - Whose ribbon?
  - Whose shoe?
  - Gone.
  - But where?
  - I am missing
  - Someone..
  - Something..
Suggested Readings


