Reflective Practice

This guide focuses on one aspect of learning: reflective practice.

What is reflective practice?

In its simplest form reflective practice is thinking about
or reflecting on what happened, what you did, and what you would do differently next time. It's about 'learning as you go along'. It is an important part of your own professional development, but it might also provide learning that could inform project or service planning.

It recognises that front line practitioners have important perspectives on what works/ is important for people. These can be fed into improving services or into reporting on your learning about what works and helps people to achieve outcomes.

What's involved?

People use different methods, dependent upon what feels right and is practical. Sometimes you might want to reflect on your own and sometimes you might want to reflect as a group.

You can use some of the same evaluation methods that you use to ask people to evaluate your service. There are links to the method sheets and examples at the end of this guide.

Here are some ideas

- Think whilst driving/walking/cooking/showering
- Use a prompt to get you thinking (pictures, touchpoints, stretch statements)
- Keep a journal
- Reflect together at the end of a meeting/event (use appreciative questions)
- Doodle, create a mind map or a picture

Capturing evidence

The process of thinking/writing/talking can help you to sort out bits of knowledge, ideas and feelings, and raise awareness of your behaviour.

It might take the form of writing, mind mapping, modelling. You might use, for example, post it notes or your diary.

You could share your or others' story with colleagues at a team meeting or in support and supervision. You might capture your discussion in a note or minute.

It can be particularly important to note anything you change as a result of your reflections. Over time we can forget that we have developed the service or approach, and why. Funders might be interested to hear of any changes, and you might want to build your new thinking into your plans the next time around (change record sheet).

# Ideas for reflecting

Creative triggers or prompts

Choosing pictures

Use pictures/image to tune into how you are feeling about an incident or your work more generally.

Emotional Touchpoints

Emotional touchpoints can prompt your thinking about experiences and reflections around key points of contact with your service. This can be used to test your assumptions about your approach.
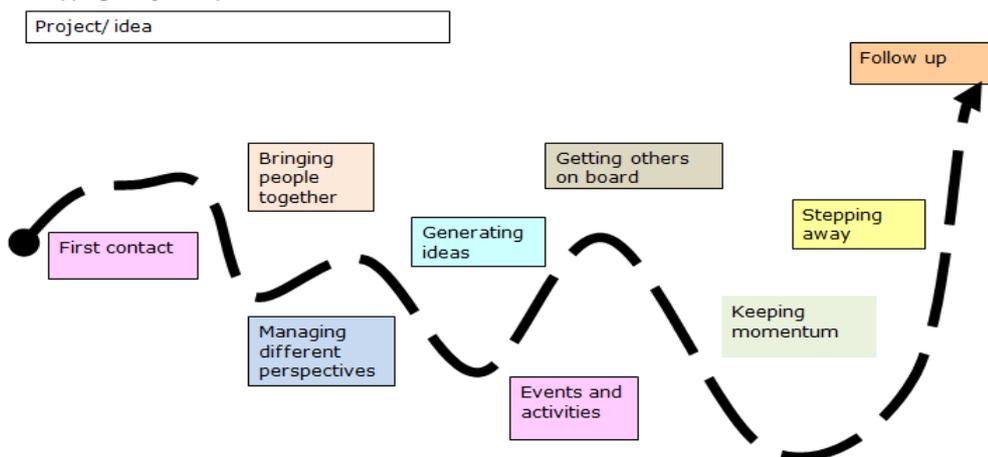
Stretch or positive statements

Use to prompt reflection times when things work really well (or don't).

Keeping a journal or diary

Three Column reflective journal

Divide your journal into three columns – below are a few prompts for reflection

Event	Reflecting on what happened	Reflecting on me
Who was there? What happened? What was said/done?	**What matters to that person/group?** What emotions are they feeling? What seems to be important to them? What do they seem to believe/want/find difficult? **Who else is involved?** Is there anything significant in their role? How is their role or support viewed by others? **What do we need to do about it?** Is there anything we can have done better or differently? Do we need to do anything now?	**What else was going on?** What was I thinking and feeling at the time? Did that make a difference to what I did (or how)? What assumptions did I make? Were there any surprises? **I'm not a robot so....** Did any of my personal biases make a difference to what I did? Did I pay more attention to some people? Why? Did anyone remind me of other people I have known/worked with? **What does this mean for what I do next?** Do I need to change my plan of action? What do I need to bear in mind next time?

Or divide your journal into 3 differently headed columns

What was said/done	What was behind that behaviour	Thoughts later

Or consider things from different perspectives:

Position 1 How do things look through your eyes?

Position 2 How do things look through other people's eyes?

Position 3 How do things look from afar from an interested observer's point of view?

What can we learn that will help us understand this situation better?

Or note things that seem significant (before you forget)

Capturing Casual moments See ESS's website **here** for this method sheet

Something I heard/ I saw/ I felt

Date _____

Context _____

Relates to
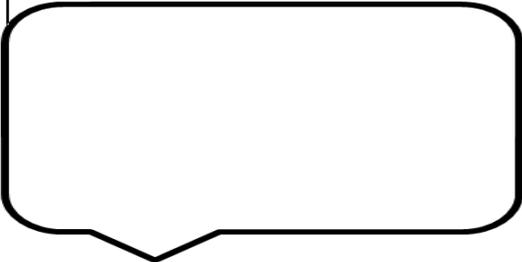
Reflect together at the end of a meeting/event/programme

Appreciative questions

To reflect upon what's worked well and less well.

What worked well for you?

What could we do together to make your experience even better?

Prompt discussion using an exercise

Rounds

As individuals, finish a statement, for example

The high point for me was….

I saw the biggest difference in …..

The biggest boo boo of the session was ….

Ask if there are any lessons?

Action replay

If this project/event were a video

Replay: Go over a particular bit again

Fast forward: How might this affect the future?

Rewind: How might it have gone differently?

Takeouts: Mistakes, funny bits, selected highlights

Voice over: How might an outsider have described it?

Keep or write a story board

To understand the steps in the journey for your project. An edited version might also be used in your report.

At the beginning Situation addressing Agreed outcomes People to involve	**Along the way** What we did What we learnt Next steps	
	Final Review Feedback and evaluation from range of stakeholders	**The moral of the story** Key messages Tips

Keep a record of any changes

Don't forget to record any changes to your service or approach as a result of your reflection. This is all part of your learning and you might want later to report on the changes you have made.

See change record template

What did you originally plan to do?	What didn't work about the original plan?
What did you try to do instead?	**What difference do you hope this change will make/has made? How will you know?**