**Questions to Enable Reflective Supervision**

1. **Focusing on experience**

These questions aim to support accurate and detailed recall of events. A partial description of the situation will cause problems later in the cycle, but the right questions can help workers recall more detail, more accurately. In these lists ‘you’ refers to the supervisee.

* What was your aim? What planning did you do?
* What happened before the interview/visit?
* What was your role?
* What did you expect to happen?
* What happened?
* Identify different perceptions of co-workers.
* What did you say and do?
* What methods or interventions did you try?
* What did the user say or show?
* What reactions did you notice to what you said/did?
* What surprised or puzzled you?
* Who behaved differently
* What stuck out for you?
* What were the key moments?
* What did you notice about yourself, the user, your co-worker?
* What words, non-verbal signals, interactions, sounds, images or smell struck you?
* What do you think the service user would have noticed about you?
* What or who was hard to observe?
* What observations or concerns do other agencies have?
* What went according to plan?
* What didn’t happen?
* What changes to your plan or choices did you make?
* What did you say, notice or do immediately after the session?

Use other methods to support these questions, such as video or audio recording, observation by a co-worker, live supervision, learning diaries, incident logs and process recording.

1. **Focusing on Reflection**

The questions aim to draw out feelings, partly because they may bring out further information or may reveal the worker’s underlying attitudes. They may also give clues about other personal factors complicating the worker’s responses.

Reflection helps the worker make links between the current situation and his/her prior experiences, skills or knowledge.

* What did you feel at the start of the interview/visit?
* What feelings did you bring to the interview/visit?
* Describe the range of feelings you had during the session.
* What did the session remind you of?
* What patterns did you see in this visit? Are these familiar?
* Where have you encountered similar processes?
* Describe a time when you last experienced this process. What happened?
* Who/what does this service user remind you of?
* What do you think the service user was feeling? Based on what?
* What feelings might you or your co-worker be carrying on behalf of the user/victim/other workers? What projection of feelings or emotions might be occurring?
* What other factors might influence how you, the user or the co-worker felt or reacted, for example, in relation to gender or race?
* Where and when did you feel most or least comfortable?
* Who seemed least or most comfortable? At what points?
* Who found it hardest to express their feelings?
* What thoughts/ideas went through your mind during the session?
* What are the similarities/differences between this contact and your previous contact with the service user?
* What did you tell yourself about what was happening, or about your feelings?
* What metaphor or analogy would describe your experience of working with this situation?
* What was left unfinished?

Other methods to help reflection are role play, sculpting, art work to draw feelings and perceptions, and genograms to draw out patterns, context and roles.

1. **Focusing on Analysis**

These questions help with analysis by probing the meanings given to situations by the supervisee and user, prompting consideration of other explanations. They may help you identify what is known or understood and lead to areas for further assessment.

* List three assumptions you, the co-worker or the user brought to the session.
* How do you define your role in this situation?
* How does ‘x’ agency define your role in this situation?
* How do the user and their family define your role?
* What aims/outcomes for this session were or were not achieved?
* What went well, or not well, and why?
* What family or community behaviours in this situation are acceptable to you?
* What behaviours or norms in this situation are acceptable to the family or community?
* What norms/standards do other agencies expect in this situation, and why?
* What do you understand this agency’s standards/norms to be in this situation?
* What other, possibly unexpected outcomes, did the session produce?
* How would the user explain what was happening in that session?
* How else could you explain what happened?
* How would you describe the power relationship during this session?
* Did power shift during the session? If so, why? What might this tell you about assumptions around gender, race, and sexuality and so on?
* How far did this session confirm or challenge your previous understanding or hypothesis about this situation?
* What new information emerged? What was the critical moment?
* What bits of theory, training, research, policy or values might help you make sense of what was happening in this session?
* How else might you have managed the session?
* What are the current strengths, needs, risks for the different users?
* What is not known?
* What areas of further assessment are required?
* What conclusion are you drawing from this work so far?

Other methods to assist analysis are sharing articles, references, identifying resources from the web, case presentations, external speakers, attending training as a team, presentations by staff who have been on training, group supervision and action learning sets.

1. **Focusing on Action Plans**

These questions help translate the analysis into planning, preparation and action by identifying outcomes and success criteria as well as considering potential complications and contingency plans.

* In the light of the reflection and analysis we’ve done, what’s your overall summary of the needs, strengths and risks for the service users in this situation?
* What are you responsible for in managing this situation?
* What training, supervisory, co-work and support needs have been raised for you
* What information needs to be obtained before proceeding?
* What are your aims in the next phase of work?
* What is urgent and essential?
* What would be desirable?
* What is negotiable and what is non-negotiable in this situation?
* What would be a successful outcome of the next session from your perspective
* What would be a successful outcome of the next session from the user’s perspective?
* What are the different ways in which you could approach this?
* What might be your strategy for the next session?
* What are the possible best or worst responses from the user?
* How can the user be engaged? What does he/she need from you?
* What contingency plans do you need? What is the bottom line?
* Who else needs to be involved (co-worker, supervisor, other agency)?
* What would you like from them?
* On a scale of 0-5, where 5 is total confidence, how confident are you with this case?
* How can you prepare for this? Mental rehearsal, planning, reading?
* What can I do that would be helpful at this stage?
* What and when does feedback and debriefing need to take place?
* Are there any safety issues for you or others?
* What can be done to minimise any dangers?

Other methods include role play, co-work planning, case planning and contacting other professionals involved.

Chapter 5 presents a six-stage framework for supervising assessment work which is supported by a shorter list of questions that can be used for each of the stages. You may want to cross reference to these additional questions (see page 142).