

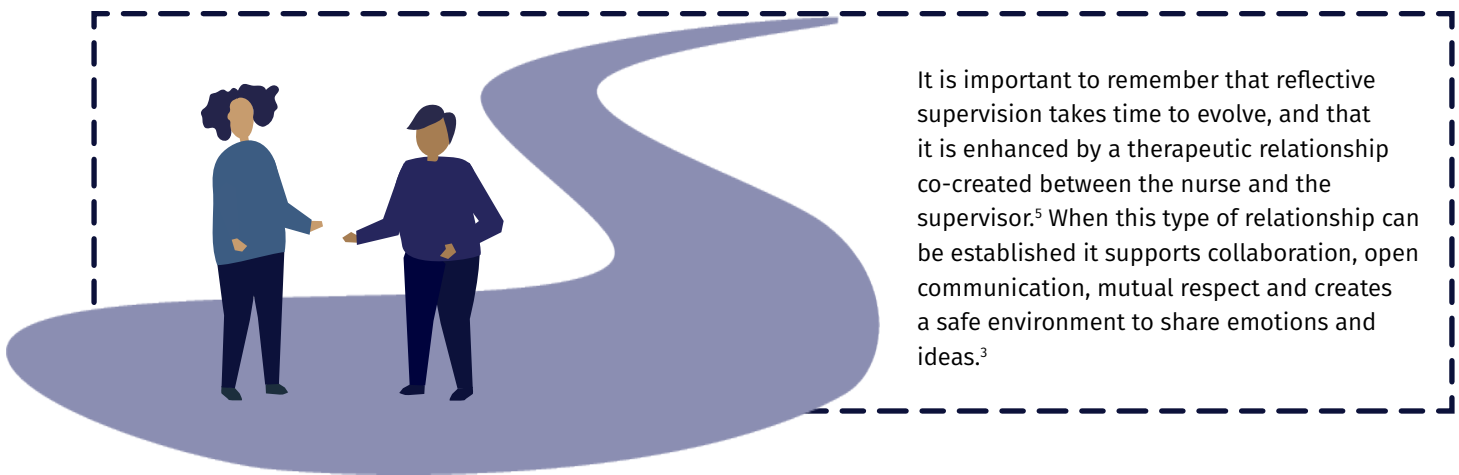


Reflective Supervision Checklist: Public Health Nurses

This resource provides evidence-informed guidance on how public health nurses can prepare for reflecting on their practice with their supervisors. It is important to ensure that all requirements for reflective supervision follow local agency policies and nursing practice standards.

The provision of high-quality reflective supervision in home visitation programs can protect public health nurses from the effects of vicarious trauma.⁵

Reflective supervision creates a space for nurses to be vulnerable and explore and then understand the emotional work of home visiting. With a deeper understanding of their relationships to families as well as their thoughts and feelings about this complex work, positive outcomes for nurses and the families they work with can be achieved. To maximize the benefits of reflective supervision, there are many things that public health nurses can do to prepare for, engage in, or debrief from their engagement with their supervisor.



Checklist for Preparing and Engaging in Reflective Supervision

Review and consider how these ideas might be used in a way that works best for you and your practice!

Scheduling Reflective Supervision

- ✓ When possible, book first thing in the morning before your busy day begins.
- ✓ Avoid booking too close to a lunch break or at the end of a busy day.
- ✓ If possible, schedule in a short transition time between reflective supervision and other activities such as home visits or meetings.

Preparing for Reflective Supervision

- ✓ **Establish a routine and make reflective supervision a priority.** Set a consistent time and place to participate in reflective supervision with your supervisor and do your best to keep these appointments.
- ✓ **Prepare yourself physically.** Eliminate distractions and tend to self care needs (shut doors, turn off phone and computer alerts, use headset if done virtually, have a snack).
- ✓ **Prepare yourself emotionally.** Be prepared and be aware of your emotional activations. We all have personal experiences that can activate uncomfortable emotions when working with families and hearing their stories. It is important that you are aware of these and seek appropriate help and support for yourself.
- ✓ **Be prepared to talk about a concern or experience** you had that activated discomfort or did not align with your values and expectations.² Read through your documentation to refamiliarize yourself with the situation and reflect on the actions you took in the moment.
- ✓ **Make notes.** These notes can be in point form to help guide you to share your experience. If you are using a model to guide reflective supervision make notes that reflect the model you have chosen to use (e.g., Gibb's Reflective Cycle- Step 1 is description of the event).⁴ You can make notes describing the event, the environment and what happened.
- ✓ **Set expectations for reflective supervision early in the relationship.** Work with your supervisor to develop strategies that work best for you, your needs and your learning style.

Transitioning to Reflective Supervision

- ✓ Immediately before the session, ground yourself to become present in the moment.
- ✓ Take some deep breaths, address any potential distractions, turn off phones or other devices.
- ✓ Conduct a quick meditation activity or state positive affirmations to yourself.

Engaging in Reflective Supervision

- ✓ **Discuss guidelines and boundaries.** Talk to your supervisor about what would be helpful for you during reflective supervision time. Discuss expectations and mutually agree on how this time will be spent together.
- ✓ **Plan to address other supervision needs.** When clinical or administrative supervisory tasks need to be addressed, explore if it is possible to address these tasks before or after the reflective supervision time.



Uncomfortable feelings can include:

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Grief
- Judgment
- Failure
- Conflict

Tips for setting expectations


- Use a consistent reflective supervision model.
- Discuss what you hope to get out of reflective supervision.
- Talk about who will lead the discussion.
- Suggest that your supervisor ask for permission prior to giving advice and feedback.

"In my experience, reflective supervision best meets my needs when we focus on one situation per session. I like when we start the session with you listening to my experience, and then work together to develop a plan of action for next steps."



Engaging in Reflective Supervision (continued)

- ✓ **Be open to new ideas.** Being open to different perspectives will enhance your critical thinking skills and help you develop a plan for moving forward.
- ✓ **Think about the feelings you had related to the experience.** Where do these feelings come from? How do your values and beliefs impact the care you provide to families? Be ready to talk about these feelings if you feel safe to do so or spend time on your own reflecting.
- ✓ **Think about what actions you took in the moment.** Think about what worked well and what did not. Think about what you would do differently if this situation happened again.
- ✓ **Accept the open-ended questions.** These questions come from a place of relational practice that is supportive of reflection and critical thinking.¹⁻³
- ✓ **Think about what knowledge gaps emerged from the experience.** What knowledge would be helpful to have in the future?³



Reflective supervision can be challenging when there is a lack of trust and safety in the relationship. This, plus imbalances in power, may leave the nurse feeling undervalued, judged and misunderstood.⁵ It can be helpful to acknowledge these power imbalances and reflect on how they can impact the reflective supervision relationship.⁵

Following Reflective Supervision

- ✓ Acknowledge that reflective supervision takes time. The skills and relationships required for effective reflective supervision take time to develop.⁶ Be kind to yourself and others while you try to understand what works best for you.
- ✓ Find formal and informal ways to engage in reflective supervision. This can include dedicated time with your supervisor, journaling and having time with your colleagues to talk about challenging situations.
- ✓ Practice self-compassion and self-awareness. Utilize mindfulness techniques to help you slow down and be present. These strategies can enhance reflection and help you develop new knowledge and understanding of experiences.⁶
- ✓ Take a break following your reflective supervision meeting, if possible. Enjoy some fresh air and move your body.

References:

¹Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. (2018). Best practice guidelines for reflective supervision/consultation. <https://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Best-Practice-Guidelines-for-Reflective-Supervision-and-Consultation.pdf>.

²Beam, R., O'Brien, R., & Neal, M. (2010). Reflective practice enhances public health nurse implementation of nurse-family partnership. *Public Health Nursing*, 27(2), 131-139.

³Department of Education. (2020). PSDP-Resources and tools: Using the supervision relationship to promote reflection. <https://practice-supervisors.rip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/KB-Using-the-supervision-relationship-to-promote-reflection.pdf>.

⁴Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. London, UK: Further Education Unit.

⁵The Reflective Supervision/Consultation Collaborative. (2018). *Reflective supervision: A guide from region X to enhance reflective practice among home visiting programs*. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/RegionX-ReflectSupGuidelines.pdf>.

⁶Zero to Three. (2019). *Reflective practice and reflective supervision*. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3883-reflective-practice-and-reflective-supervision>.

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