Critical Reflexivity in Practice

Session One

AIM OF THE MODULE: TO ENGAGE IN A CRITICAL REFLEXION OF PARTICIPANTS' FUTURE PRACTICE WITH REFUGEES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
BY THE END OF THIS MODULE PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO -

2 Evaluate their own multicultural competences

1 Explore a range of approaches to enable reflexive practice

3 Engage in a critical reflexive exercise alone or with others

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STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

Session 1 – Reflexivity and why and how we do it

Session 2 – Multicultural competences and ethical codes of practice

Session 3 – Practical exercises in reflexion

Learning outcomes: by the end of this session learners will be able to:

- Confirm the agreed ways of working in this module,

- Explain a range of theories and models of reflexive practice,

- Understand how reflexive practice works when engaging with clients in order to become more aware of their own world view and cultural perspective.

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How will we work best together in this module

This module will work best if participants feel safe and free to express themselves honestly. We need everyone to agree to be:

- Non- judgemental
- Listen respectfully to all
- Engage with all
- Maintain confidentiality
- Anything else?

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What is Reflection ? It is not….

- 'Navel gazing'

- Lacking in critique

- Accepting that I did my best in the circumstances

- Something I'm not really very good at, so I can't do it

- Something I'd like to do but don't have time

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Reflexivity is more than reflection; it is….

- Having a high level of self-awareness
- Being aware that there are issues of power in all relationships
- Being aware that we need tp practice in an anti-discriminatory way
- Being aware of our values and the assumptions we might be making
- Being aware that we all practice within a cultural context

Reflexivity is not…..

- Anything to do with a reflex action

- Shallow thinking

- Making assumptions

- Assuming we can be culturally neutral

- Blind to issues of power in relationships

Reflexion is a deeper reflection

- Why do I feel the way I feel?

- Why do I behave the way I do?

- How have my values and beliefs been formed?

- What impact does this have on my practice as a professional?

- What can I do to improve?

Reflection

Taking a look and being aware

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Theoretical models of Reflective Practice (1)

- Kolb (1984)
- Schön's (1983:54) 'swampy lowlands' of practice compared with the 'high hard ground' of research
- Reflection 'in action' rather than reflection 'on action' (Schön, 1983) should take us into the metacognitive space where we are thinking about thinking; not only about practice itself but about the reasons behind it.

- Brookfield (2005) focused upon social class, gender and culture and the context of practice in Western/Euro-centric assumptions. He reminds us that much of practice is grounded in an unconscious and dominant ideology.
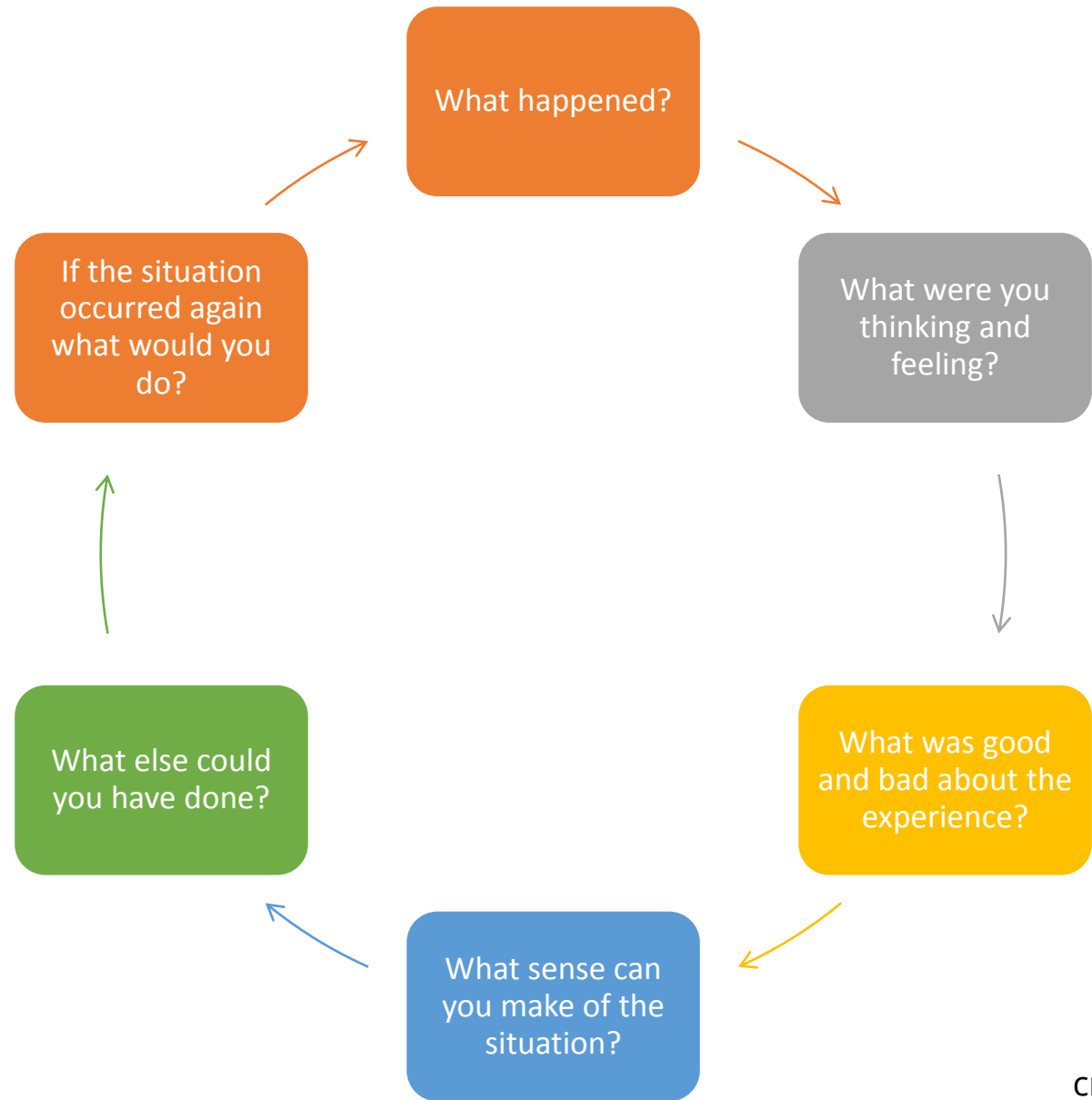
Theoretical models of Reflective Practice (2)

Having considered the political and social contexts there are some helpful models that embrace the need for criticality

- Gibbs (1998) – reflective cycle

- Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) Model of reflection- levels of reflection

- Argyris (1982) Ladder of Inference

GIBBS (1998) – REFLECTIVE CYCLE

What happened?

What were you thinking and feeling?

If the situation occurred again what would you do?

What was good and bad about the experience?

What else could you have done?

What sense can you make of the situation?

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- Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) Model of Reflection explores the attitudes and values that inform our frame of reference

Seven levels of reflectivity suggest that we examine our relationships with others and reflect upon what we have learned through experience:

1. Reflectivity – awareness of how we see things, how we think and act.

2. Affective reflectivity – becoming aware of our feelings about how we think and act.

3. Discriminant reflectivity – questioning whether or not our perceptions about people are accurate.

4. Judgemental reflectivity – becoming aware of our value judgements.

5. Conceptual reflectivity – questioning the way we think about people.

6. Psychic reflectivity – recognising when we are quick to make judgements about people on the basis of limited information about them.

7. Theoretical reflectivity – becoming aware that the reasons we are quick to make judgements about people are based on cultural and psychological assumptions.

Argyris (1982) Ladder of Inference explores how and why assumptions are made

1. I experience a situation
2. I observe selectively. I see what I want to see
3. I add meaning (cultural and personal)
4. I make assumptions based on the meanings I add
5. I draw conclusions
6. I adopt beliefs about the world
7. I take action based on my beliefs.

Putting theory into action

These theoretical models are useful in capturing reflections in a systematic way. In practice this can be done in a number of ways:

- Reflective writing (a journal is a good habit to get into)

- Stream of consciousness writing (writing without stopping and without concern for content, punctuation, spelling etc. The less you think about it the better as this accesses your unconscious mind.)

- Audio recording

- Talking to someone

- Drawing

- A mind map or spider diagram

- Other creative processes such as collage

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Understanding the concepts

- A multicultural approach requires a practitioner to be aware of any barrier that can have an impact on access to services.

- It is a way of being that welcomes diversity, strives for social justice and is anti-oppressive.

But:

- How do we balance a desire for social equity with individual freedom – a recognition that values and social mores vary across cultures?

- How do we achieve a social justice stance working within contexts of restricted resources and political systems that structure our work?

These are questions to think about, critically and reflexively

Diversity and difference

- Diversity can be viewed as 'variations on a theme'

- Difference recognises that differences cannot be included in some kind of 'tossed salad' approach

- Removing differences in the pursuit of inclusion (by more powerful others) can in itself be a kind of tyranny

- Career practitioners cannot resolve these problems, but we can take an ethical and social justice 'stance' to the issue in the ways we understand ourselves and the people we work with

- In order to understand a 'different' world view, we need to stand somewhere else to look. In other words, be aware of what influences our perspective, before we attempt to appreciate an alternative view.

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Being reflexive in a 'political' context

- Careers work is not neutral, i.e. it does not operate in a vacuum

- Within a broad political context, we need to reflect on whose needs are being served by the policies we are asked to enact in our practice

- But - without being cynical – politicians do want to help the 'less fortunate'

- Our critical reflexion however, alerts us to the ways work, employment and related concepts of human worth are structured in western societies

- Our views of social justice, multiculturalism and integration need to be examined, without critical examination practice is less likely to be effective

- But on the ground of career counselling practice we do need 'interventions' that can help refugee and migrant populations

Understanding the concepts

- **Multicultural** refers to a society that contains several cultural or ethnic groups. Each cultural group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other. In a city, different cultures may live together in particular, separate, areas of the city.

- **Cross-cultural** deals with the comparison of different cultures. In cross-cultural societies, one culture is often considered 'the norm' and all other cultures are compared or contrasted to the dominant culture.

- **Intercultural** describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together.

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INTEGRATION IS A GOOD THING, YES?

Pausing for a moment.

From the discussion so far, can we think about the intended aims of integration and its potential problems?

2.2 Multicultural learning - self and others

- Reflect on your own experience, where your world view was challenged

- In pairs, discuss a situation where you have learnt about yourself and others

- How was your understanding, your world view, transformed?

- Summarise the key learning point and 'post' on the flip chart
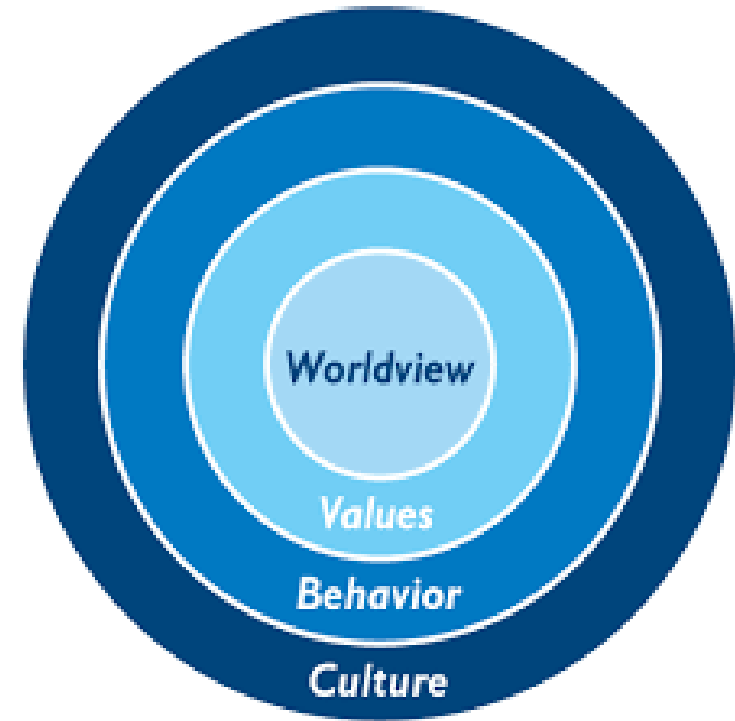
2.3 Ethical practice in a context of multiculturalism

- How do relevant codes of ethical practice help us in our work?

- What are their limitations?

What are the ethical issues and dilemmas we can encounter in work with refugee and migrant clients?

- What examples can we draw on from our experience?

- Recognising that values and social mores differ across cultures – are there any non-negotiable areas in terms of our ethical practice?

- Group discussion

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3.1.1 Practical exercise in reflexivity

- Think back to the different approaches to systematically capturing your reflections:
  - Reflective writing (a journal is a good habit to get into)
  - Stream of consciousness writing (writing without stopping and without concern for content, punctuation, spelling etc. The less you think about it the better as this accesses your unconscious mind.)
  - Audio recording
  - Talking to someone (do this in pairs, taking it in turns to speak/listen)
  - Drawing
  - A mind map or spider diagram
  - Other creative processes such as collage

- Which do you think would work best for you?

- When you have decided move into a group with others of the same approach and start to reflect on the following question….

How might your 'world view' influence your multicultural competences?

Reflect on this question in which every way you have chosen

3.1.2 Exercise examining your code of conduct or ethical guidelines

- *This slide should be completed to reflect the particular group, guidelines or code of conduct.*
- *A copy of the code or guidelines should be made available to each participant*

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- What are the boundaries of the code, challenges and ethical dilemmas

- What are the principles that are not negotiable and those that might be, and why?

Feedback

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Thank you for the Attention. Questions?

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