Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru
Social Care Wales

Reflective practice

Reflective practice is an important part of continuing professional development (CPD). It's about taking time to think about what you've learnt, recognise what's worked well and identify ways to develop your knowledge, skills and practice.

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Reflective practice is an important part of continuing professional development (CPD). It helps you think about:

- your learning and experiences
- what they mean for your role
- how they can improve your practice.

Reflection isn’t just about judging your performance. It’s about taking time to think about what you’ve learnt, recognise what’s worked well and identify ways to develop your knowledge, skills and practice.

Reflective practice can take place after any learning activity or everyday experience, and should become part of everyday practice.

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is the process of thinking about your learning, experiences and day-to-day practice.

It helps you understand what you’ve learnt, how it applies to your role and how it can be used to improve the care and support you provide.

Reflection is a key part of professional development and supports continuous improvement throughout your career.

Why is reflective practice important?

Reflective practice helps you learn from experience and apply learning in practice.

It can help you to:

- recognise what’s worked well
- identify areas for development
- improve your knowledge and skills
- make informed decisions in practice
- build confidence in your role
- improve outcomes for people you care for and support.

Taking time to reflect helps you turn what you learn into meaningful improvements in your practice.

Reflecting on your learning

Reflection can take place after any learning activity, such as training, supervision, professional discussions or everyday experiences.

When you reflect, ask yourself:

- what did I learn?
- why is it important?
- how does it relate to my role?
- how will I use this learning in practice?
- what difference could this make for the people I support?
- do I need to learn more about anything?

These questions help you understand how learning can improve your practice and support your ongoing professional development.

Sharing learning

You can reflect on your own or by talking with others during supervision, team meetings or professional discussions.

Taking time to discuss your learning during supervision can help you check your understanding and identify how learning can support your role.

Sharing your learning with colleagues lets you explore different viewpoints, share good practice and support learning across teams. This can help improve outcomes for people who receive care and support.

Tips for meaningful reflection

Reflection doesn’t need to be lengthy or complicated.

Meaningful reflection is:

- relevant to your role
- honest and constructive
- focused on learning
- linked to your day-to-day work
- used to support continuous improvement.

Reflection is most effective when you make it a regular part of your learning and professional development.

Using reflection in supervision

Supervision gives you a chance to discuss your learning and consider how it can support your professional development.

Reflective conversations can help you:

- discuss learning from training and everyday practice
- recognise strengths and achievements
- identify learning and development needs
- agree actions for future development
- consider how your learning has improved outcomes for people who receive care and support.

Reflection during supervision helps you put your learning into practice and supports continuous professional development.

Reflection tools and resources

Use these resources below to support your reflective practice. They can help you record your learning, prepare for supervision and identify opportunities to develop your practice.

Resources available include:

- Reflection template
- Example reflective accounts
- Reflective questions for supervision
- Learning log.

Related pages

- Understanding CPD
- Learning
- Codes of Professional Practice
- National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Pay and progression framework
- Qualification framework