

Sample of

THE REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION TOOLKIT

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2016

Companion volume to
Reflective Practice in Supervision

HELIUM BALLOONS REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Purpose: To reflect on what you've read, heard or experienced to help you to "get it"

HELIUM BALLOON METAPHOR

Imagine that there's nothing except hot air in your head from the level of your ears up. Information flows in one ear encased in a helium balloon. The balloon rolls around in the hot air and escapes out the other ear in just a few seconds. The only way to prevent it escaping is to tie it to your brain. To do this you need to attend fully to the information and process it in terms of what it means to you and how it could be useful.

If you simply notice it and think, "that's good", then all that you'll retain is "it was good". The actual content will be lost. Tie down what you want to keep by writing it in a helium balloon.

Tying it down is the first step, but helium balloons go flat within a few days. To retain the information it needs to be embedded in the brain and the only way to do that is to consolidate it by putting it into practice (E5).

How to use:

In training sessions – stop every hour or so (or after each module) and take a few minutes to "catch" some balloons. The learning is likely to be remembered even more if you then hear yourself tell it to someone else.

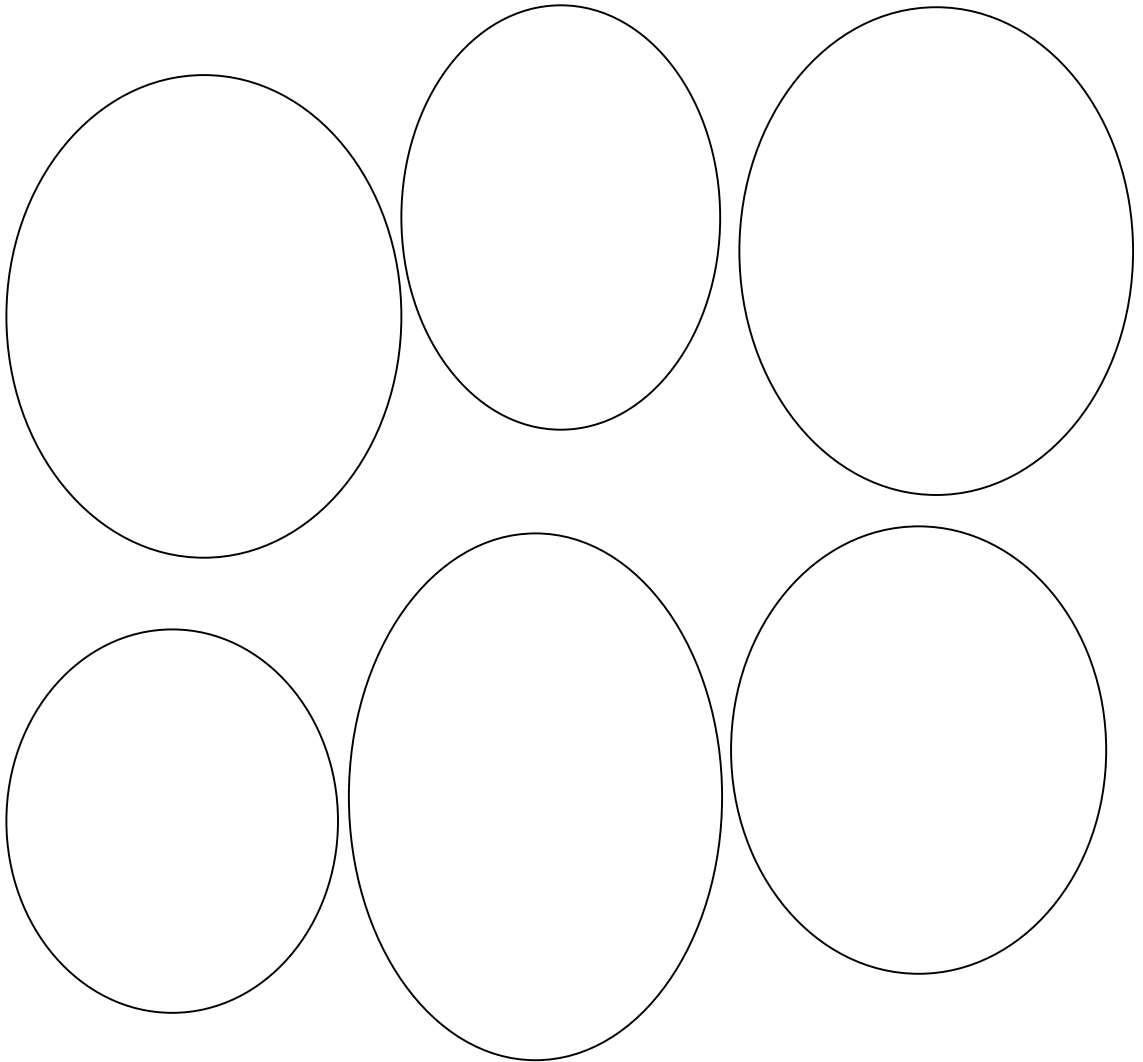
In supervision – stop now and then and either ask the two questions on the next page, or ask the practitioner to fill in one or more balloons. Discuss their choices to further "thicken" their understanding.

Follow up: Note the item "Action taken" at the bottom of the form. If the new learning isn't put into action it will be lost. It's worth coming back to the form at a later date and noting what action was taken and what more needs to be done to consolidate the learning.

Background: The helium balloon tool was developed by Daphne Hewson for use in supervision workshops. When the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) introduced the requirement of Reflective Journals to record learnings from peer consultation, the form was adapted (see www.reflectivesupervision) to a format to meet their requirement. Note that the Board only accepts Reflective Journals that have the "Action Taken" section completed.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

*What did you find most interesting or helpful?
What are the implications for your practice?*

The form consists of six large, empty ovals arranged in two rows of three. These ovals are intended for the user to write their reflections in response to the questions above.

ACTION TAKEN

SUPERVISION TRIANGLE

Purpose: The Supervision Triangle is a template of the areas that often need to be addressed in supervision.

Many supervision sessions seem to focus on the client and their problem (client-focused side of the triangle). If that's all that you consider, then supervision becomes case management (A2). The practitioner-focused side explores the practitioner's role and impact on the work, including reflexivity in the Self cell. The relationship-focused side explores the clients' relationships with the practitioner and their social system. It also shines a light on the supervisory relationship.

How to use: We suggest you work around the template systematically, starting from the Client-focused cell – Assessment and Conceptualisation and heading up to the apex, down the other side and then across the bottom (left to right), finishing with the Supervisory relationship cell.

If information comes up that's relevant to another cell, you could put it aside until later. It can be tempting to skip a cell, but that's often the very cell that has the most interesting ideas. The questions on the two pages after the triangle are guides to the sorts of things to explore in each cell.

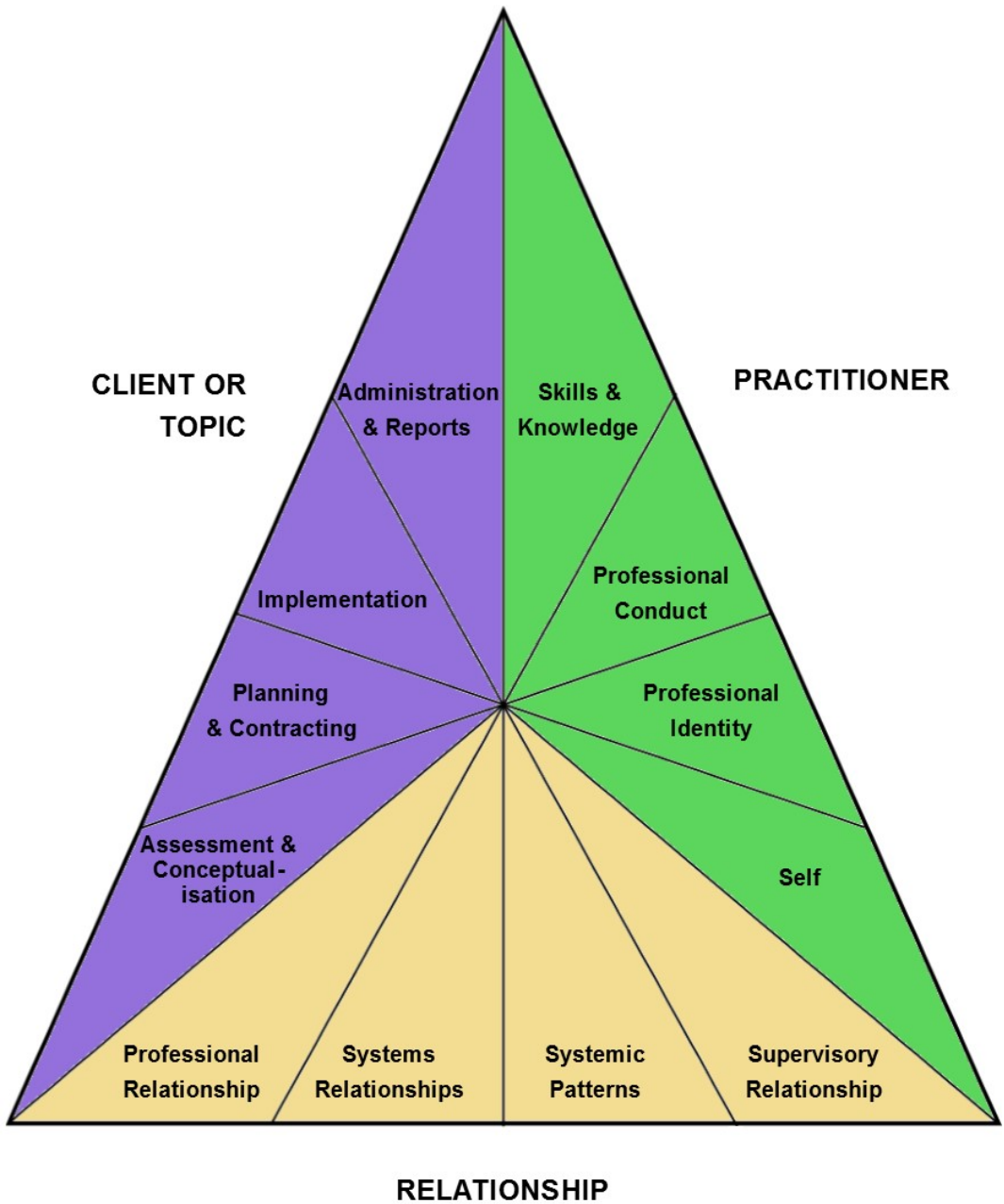
Gathering reflections in each cell is the Mindful Stance (noticing; E1). The next step is to analyse the material (Consideration Stance, E3). This can be done with a tools such as the *Pleased Platform*.

Background: Developed by Daphne Hewson (2002)

Video: A 50 minute supervision session demonstrating the use of the *Supervision Triangle* and *Pleased Platform* is available on youtube.com

Before you start: Ensure you are in a safe reflective space

SUPERVISION TRIANGLE



SUPERVISION TRIANGLE	
CLIENT FOCUSED or TOPIC-FOCUSED CELLS	
ASSESSMENT & CONCEPTUALISATION	
<i>If your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the topic/issue/presenting problem? • What methods have you used (will you use) to assess the situation? • Any other issues or problems? • What are the strengths and “non-problems”? • What is your conceptualisation (or diagnosis) of what is happening? • Is there another way of looking at it? 	
PLANNING AND CONTRACTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was (is) your plan? • If (<i>client's name</i>) was here now, what would he/she say about the plan? 	
IMPLEMENTATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's happened? • Do you need to modify your conceptualisation or plan? 	
ADMINISTRATION & REPORTING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the relevant admin, file and reporting issues? 	
PRACTITIONER-FOCUSED CELLS	
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills and knowledge are needed to implement the plan? • Have you had the opportunity to gain the necessary skills and knowledge? 	
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT	
<i>Every situation has legal and ethical challenges</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the legal, ethical and professional issues (e.g. duty of care) that need to be considered here? • How are they being addressed? 	
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY	<i>Personal social power (Hewson, 2016)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe you have the expertise needed to implement the plan? • Do you believe you have the legitimate right to take this role? • In what ways does this approach fit with your values and worldview? 	

SUPERVISION TRIANGLE

SELF

- What feelings have you been having about this client/your work?
- I noticed What are the feelings behind that?
- What's your "stuff" in this? How is it impacting on this work?
- Who were you being when you did this work?
- How does who you are affect what you notice?
- How effectively are you making "use of self"?
- Who does (*client's name*) remind you of?
- In what ways is this work triggering you or impacting on you?

RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED CELLS

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP

- Are you customers for each other?
- What needs to happen to strengthen your alliance?

SYSTEMS RELATIONSHIPS

- Who are the stakeholders in this work?
- Have they each been involved appropriately (boundaries)?
- Who/what is the person's "community"?
- What are their cultural needs?
- Who is influencing this situation?
- In what ways is their influence helpful and not so helpful?
- Who's missing from the story?

SYSTEMIC PATTERNS

- What parallel process is operating?
(recreation of a behaviour/ emotion from another relationship)
- What about complementary patterns?
(e.g. victim/rescuer, stupid/intelligent, disabled/able)
- Are you experiencing any contagion of behaviours/feelings?
- In what ways are these patterns helpful or unhelpful?

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

The supervisory alliance must be "good enough" to do the work at hand (B8)

- Do you feel safe enough for us to do this work together?
- What could I do to make it more helpful for you?
- What are we NOT talking about? Why?

PP PLEASED PLATFORM

Purpose: To surface the practitioner's preferred actions, values and principles as a platform from which to reconsider other aspects of the work. This is an example of a "scaffolding" approach (James et al., 2008).

Practitioners often focus on problems and what went wrong. They take what they do well for granted and don't recognise their strengths. This tool shifts their focus from what they're displeased about to what they're pleased about.

How to use: This is Daf's favourite tool. It seems to be adaptable to so many situations. Here are some tips for using it.

- Keep bringing the practitioner back to the "pleased" question despite their frequent shifts back to problems. You can make a note of problems they raise, promise you'll get to them later, and then repeat the "pleased" question
- Keep asking the "pleased" question when they hit a blank. The blank just means they've run out of the safe or superficial ideas of their conscious mind. Wait patiently. You can use focusing methods (Scan your body, what do you notice, sit with that, what comes up for you now?), ask them to guess what else there might be, or ask them to externalise the gaze (What would your elder be pleased about" or "What do you think I'm pleased about?"). Keep asking the "pleased" question at least three times after a blank. They'll start to unearth some interesting material!
- Thicken each response. You can write down their exact words and then ask for meaning, link them back to what they previously said, ask about how they managed to do what they did, ask how committed they are to an idea, etc.
- The "What would you like to do (to have done) differently?" question usually elicits from the practitioner all the suggestions you would have made and sometimes others that you hadn't thought of. By identifying them, the practitioner owns them and is more committed to them than if you suggest them.
- If you've asked "What else?" about 10 times and the practitioner hasn't named an issue that you think is important, raise it by "noticing" and then asking for their thoughts about it (e.g. I notice you seem to avoid eye contact with the client, but you use lots of good eye contact with me. I wonder why you chose to do it this way with the client?)

Background: Developed by Daphne Hewson

Before you start: Ensure you are in a safe reflective space

PP PLEASED PLATFORM

1. IDENTIFY ISSUES/CHALLENGES

- Brief outline of relevant information (e.g. using notable incident or supervision triangle)
- What did you find most interesting or helpful in our conversation?
- Which aspects are you most interested in focusing on?

2. PLEASED PLATFORM

- What are you most pleased about?
(or *Choose an esteemed person* – What would xx be pleased about in this work?)
- How did *you* do that?
- What else? (until list of 5+)
(Don't stop when they hit a blank – the next "pleased" is likely to be the most significant one)

3. DO DIFFERENTLY?

- What would you like to do (to have done) differently?
- What else? (until list of 10)
- Are any guidelines relevant here?

4. FEEDBACK

- I noticed that... (*positive or problematic behaviour*).
- In what ways is that helpful or not helpful for your clients?
- In what ways is that helpful or not helpful for you?
- What do you want to do about...?

5. CONSOLIDATION

- What have you found most helpful or interesting in our conversation?
- How will you refine your practice theory?
- What impact will this have on your actions?
- Why do you need to make this change?
- How do you plan to put it into practice?
- What are the restraints and how will you deal with them?
- What are you ready for now?