

A personal development

Technology, Development



Evaluate own knowledge, performance and understanding against relevant standards. Once you have begun to identify the major factors that have influenced your development, the next stage is to look at how they have affected the way in which you work and relate to the people with whom you work. This is the basis of developing into a 'reflective practitioner' – someone who evaluates what they do. When working in social care, to be effective and to provide the best possible service for those you support, you need to be able to think about and evaluate what you do and the way you work, and to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

It is important that you learn to think about your own practice in a constructive way. Reflection and evaluation should not undermine your confidence in your own work; rather, you should use them in a constructive way to identify areas for improvement. The ability to do this is an indication of excellent practice. Any workers in social care who believe that they have no need to improve their practice or to develop and add to their skills and understanding are not demonstrating good and competent practice, but rather an arrogant and potentially dangerous lack of understanding of the nature of work in the sector.

Becoming a thoughtful practitioner is not about torturing yourself with self-doubts and examining your weaknesses until you reach the point where your self-confidence is at zero. But it is important that you examine the work you have done and identify areas where you know you need to carry out additional development. A useful tool in learning to become a reflective practitioner is to develop a checklist which you can use, either after you have

dealt with a difficult situation or at the end of each shift or day's work, to look at your own performance. Your approach to professional development

A key factor is to be organised in your approach to professional development. You should know: Doing it well Checklist to evaluate practice

1. How did I approach my work?
2. Was my approach positive?
3. How did the way I worked affect the people I support?
4. How did the way I worked affect my colleagues?
5. Did I give my work 100 per cent?
6. Which was the best aspect of the work I did?
7. Which was the worst aspect of the work I did?
8. Was this work the best I could do?
9. Are there any areas in which I could improve?
10. If so, what are they, and how will I tackle them?

what you are trying to achieve how you are you going to achieve it how you will be able to tell when you have achieved it.

If, for example, you were planning to develop your communication skills, you might have the aim of establishing a degree of trust with someone you support. You would not be able to plan a set strategy to produce trust – it is a feeling that might grow and develop within a supportive relationship. But you could list some of the skills you would be using in your communication that would contribute to the development of a supportive relationship. You will need to have an understanding of relationships in order to be able to explain what you are planning. You should use theory during the planning stage of your work in order to identify how you will know if you have achieved your aim.

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Sandra Dowling, Jill Manthorpe and Sarah Cowley in association with Sarah King, Vicki Raymond, Wendy Perez and Pauline Weinstein An exploration of

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the relevance of person-centred planning in social care. This report explores why and how person-centred planning has spread from learning disability services to influence the whole of adult social care. The recent emphasis on self-directed support makes this a timely overview of the origins of person-centred planning. The study describes how person-centred planning began, discusses the existing evidence base and explains why many practitioners find it an effective way to support people with social care needs.

The authors take a critical but constructive look at the claims for person-centred planning in the context of current policy and service developments. They explore issues relating to service users, their families, frontline staff and implementation of the approach. The report concludes by identifying barriers to person-centred planning and possible ways to overcome them. Person-centred planning in social care is relevant to debates about individual budgets, self-directed support and In Control. It will be a resource for policy makers, social care practitioners and students on social work or learning disability nursing programmes who wish to explore new ideas or evaluate

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