Reflective Practice as a Mentalizing Skill Set

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Learning Objectives

To extend the attendee’s knowledge and application of the concept of parallel process

To define the elements that create safety in a reflective relationship

Deepen attendee’s self understanding of the strengths and limitations personal culture
Relationships Matter

Reflective practice relationship
Create positive change
Understanding Labels

Race - a social construct defined by governments or other organizing groups to classify individuals with similar physical traits

Ethnicity - Classification of people based upon common ancestry (real or assumed); the group holds a collective understanding of customs (religious, linguistic, tribal, behavioral or cultural)

Culture – behaviors and rituals that have shared meaning or a set of values that guide behavior (family culture, professional culture, childhood development culture, etc.)

- Culture is the enactment of your Ethnicity
Culture can be defined as the internalized construct children use to organize (make meaning of) external social feedback, family norms, environmental events shaping their world.

Personal Discussion John Hornstein, EdD
### The Multiple Labels that Define Us

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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Culture Informs Relationships

How did relationships in your family system teach you about culture? – *the rules in our house*

What was your home culture expectations for social behavior? – *how you behave with others*

How does your personal culture add to your knowledge of a family system?

How does your personal culture limit your vision or hamper your view of a family system?
Creating Conditions that Support Wellness

Physical and emotional safety in relationships and their environment

Primary relationships that are sensitive, responsive, & nurturing

Emotional support and assistance in the management of overwhelming affect, sensory input, and insensitive relationships

Others that hear, accept, and mirror back your needs and experiences

Narration of the emotional world of the individual
Tasks of Reflective Practice

- Maintaining mental flexibility and a balance emotional response
- Using the parallel process
- Mentalizing the needs of the other
- Skillful use of reflective questions
- Honoring cultural differences
Reflection Requires Mental Flexibility

Thinking Brain
Rational

Emotional Brain
Relational

Emotional Overload
Reactive

Mental Flexibility

* © 2017
How We Listen Can Change the Experience

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg
Parallel Process

**Build Supervisee’s Skills**
- Manager models a nurturing relationship
- The supervision process is guided by the needs of the staff member(s)
- Staff feels accepted and emotionally supported

**Build Parent’s Skills**
- Staff provides a nurturing relationship to the parent
- Goals of the session are focused on the needs and pacing of the parent
- Parent feels emotionally supported and capable

**Build Child’s Confidence**
- Parent provides a nurturing and emotionally regulating experience for the child
- Parent/Child interaction is guided by the needs of the child
- Child builds strong self-esteem, feels supported and emotionally nurtured
Managing Affect

Agitation can engulf staff in the moment

Calming flows down through reflective process
Let Your Behavior be the Model

**MODELING BY STAFF**

1. Demonstrate a relationship with the parent of nurturance and support
2. Celebrate the parent’s strengths but do not ignore their vulnerabilities
3. Offer assistance and direction in times of stress
4. Respect the personal goals of each family
5. Seek to build a relationship of equality with the parent

**SKILL BUILDING FOR CAREGIVERS**

1. Increase sensitive and responsive caregiving
2. Delight in your child’s success and teach to challenges
3. Provide calming and emotional regulation in times of stress
4. Respect the individual desires and developmental needs of each child
5. Empower children to feel important in their relationships with caregivers
Getting into Another’s Mind

Seeking to understand their world from the mind of the other

The world view of the speaker is the significant factor in a reflective practice relationship

The speaker uses the reflective relationship to better understand themselves – the listener is supporting the needs of the speaker, not of the self

Use of self – the listener’s subjective experience should inform reflective questions to the speaker – not direct the reflective process
Reflective Questions

Allow the speaker to think more deeply about the impact of the events in the session

Are often met with silence

Do not have right answers

Build on the ideas of the speaker vs introduction of a new idea

Are often feeling focused to understand the intersubjective of the speaker

Maybe used to refocus speaker to the needs of the client

Use of Reflective Questions requires the speaker to be emotionally well regulated – Emotional safety first
Reflective Questions Serve to . . .

Build Mentalizing Skills
◦ Imagine your experience from an objective lens

Increase Cultural Humility
◦ Imagine the other’s experience from their personal/cultural perspective

Connect Behavior to Emotional Needs
◦ We are focused more on the meaning than the behavior

Bridge Thinking and Feeling
◦ Assist the speaker to build mental flexibility – using both thinking & feeling brain

Make the Implicit Explicit
Balancing Multiple Needs and Ideas

Content vs Process
  ▪ The event or behavior vs the internal meaning of the event

Feeling vs Thinking
  ▪ Emotional brain vs Thinking brain

My needs vs your needs
  ▪ Professional agenda vs family/cultural agenda

Holding my feelings while honoring your feelings

Stopping my agenda to support your need
Emotional Wellness Made Simple

Feel Safe in Relationship
*Neuroception*

Be Seen & Validated in their Unique Cultural/Life Experience
*Fully Seen - Identity*

Be Heard in Their Truth
*Fully Heard - Validation*
“Multicultural competence ensures that all clients will be respected and their unique cultural identities will find a fitting place in clinical understanding.”

Presented by Barbara Stroud
Training & Consultation

Changing the world
One relationship at a time

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