

Massage therapy practice and Reflection

What is Reflection?

- Thinking about.....
- Pondering on.....
- Asking yourself questions about.....
- Discussing with yourself...
- Trying to work something out.....
- Making sense of things...
- Learning from experience...
- Helping you plan for the future.....

Reflective practice

- Reflective practice is one of the cardinal clinic massage therapists have in order to chart progress, develop new ways of working, and thinking about their actions and practices.
- Reflective practice is complex often demanding a delicate balance between experience and knowledge.
- John (2000), in his book “becoming a reflective practitioner” elucidates ten constructs for reflective practice development. These constructs help to position the practitioner within the practice and account for difficult spaces within the reflective practice process.

Reflective Practice

1. Commitment: Accept responsibility and be open to change
2. Contradiction: Note tension between actual and desired practice
3. Conflict: Harness this energy to take appropriate action
4. Challenge: Confront your own typical action, belief and attitude in a non-threatening way
5. Catharsis: Work through negative feelings.

Reflective Practice

6. Creation: Move beyond old self to novel alternatives
7. Connection: Connect new insights in the world of practice
8. Caring: Realize desirable practice
9. Congruence: Reflection as a mirror for caring
10. Constructing: Building personal knowledge in practice

Reflective writing

- Helps you learn from experience
- Helps you build on your expertise
- Developing your expertise is an important aspect of evidence based practice
- Reflective writing can be used as evidence to include in your portfolio to help you achieve your placement outcomes

Sources of reflection.

- Everyday events
- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Eventful incidents
- Unusual incidents
- Routine activities
- Important events
- Meaningful events

What might you reflect upon in day to day life?

- I'm always late for work
- That was a great holiday
- I've had a very productive weekend
- I keep running out of money before the end of the month
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So why is it important in massage therapy practice

Reflection is seen as helping to

- bridge the theory practice gap
- reduce practices based on custom and practice
- develop and understand your practice, decisions made, lessons learnt and implication of these for future practice
- ensure that care remains patient centred and based in the patient experience

Skills / attitudes for reflection

- Willing to learn from experience and change things
- Able to make time for reflection
- Being open and honest
- Willing to share and discuss your experiences
- Being motivated to replay / describe / analyse experiences
- Able to make an action plan

Starting reflective writing

- Have a pen and paper available at all times
- Be spontaneous
- Write down ideas as they come to you
- Don't worry about structure, order, spelling, grammar
- Be imaginative
- Make sense later with the help of a more formalised structure

Choose an incident / experience from the course so far

- Make notes on the following:
- Describe the experience - who? where? what was happening?
- What were your thoughts and feelings?
- What was positive?
- What was negative?
- What have you learned?
- Discuss with a colleague

Putting your thoughts on paper

- Discuss in your pairs the experience of putting pen to paper - transferring your thoughts into writing
- How easy was it?
- Did it change your views in any way?
- What is it like to see your thoughts written down?

Gibbs's Reflective Cycle (1988)

- Description
- Feelings
- Evaluation
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Action Plan

Description

- Where was I?
- Who else was there?
- Why was I there?
- What was I doing?
- What happened?

Feelings

- How was I feeling at the beginning?
- What was I thinking about?
- What did other people's actions make me think / feel?
- How did I feel about the outcome?
- What do I think about it now?

Evaluation

- What was good about the experience for me, the patient, others?
- What was bad about the experience for me, the patient, for others?

Analysis

- 'Breaking it down'
- What did I do well / not so well?
- What did others do well?
- Did it go as expected?
- Why / why not?
- What theory / research helps me understand the experience?

Conclusion

- Could I have done anything differently?
- What are the key things I have learned from this incident - about me, my performance, others and their performance?
- Can this be evidence of achievement of placement outcomes / competencies?

Action Plan

- What would I do in a similar situation in the future?
- What aspects of my knowledge / skills could I develop?
- How will I do this?
- What goals can I set myself for the future?
- What outcomes / competencies do I need to focus on now?

The What? Model of structured reflection (Driscoll 2000)

- **What....**
- ..is the purpose of returning to this situation?
- ..happened?
- ..did I see / do?
- ..was my reaction?
- ..did other people do?

So What?

- How did I feel?
- How did these compare with other people's feelings?
- Do I still feel the same?
- What were the effects of my actions?
- What are the positive aspects?
- What have I noticed about my practice?
- What have other people noticed about my practice?

Now what?

- What are the implications of this analysis – for me and others?
- What if I do nothing?
- What information / skills would I need to cope with similar experiences?
- What help would I need to acquire these?
- What is the main learning from this experience and reflection?
- Is this evidence of achievement of placement outcomes / competencies?

Basic things to put in place to be successful

- Experiment with different approaches until you find one that 'fits'
- Commit to giving time to reflection in whatever form you choose. See it as an essential aspect to your practice rather than an 'add on'.
- Start small and work up to the big issues
- Be open to new ideas and new ways of thinking
- Be willing to challenge your assumptions and practices

References

- <https://www.massagetraining.co.uk/files/reflective-practice-mw-issue-91.pdf>
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- Gibbs G (1988) *Learning by Doing. A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Further Education Unit, Oxford Polytechnic. Oxford cited in Jasper M (2003) *Foundations in Nursing and Health Care. Beginning Reflective Practice*. Nelson Thornes. Cheltenham