

Critical Self Reflection in Action

Critical reflection involves the identification of deep-seated assumptions, but with the primary purpose of bringing about some improvements in professional practice. (Fook & Askeland, 2006)

TENETS OF SELF REFLECTION:

1. Critique the assumptions on which our beliefs and values are formed
2. Understand how we can use knowledge emerging out of our reflection to enhance our practice
3. Understand our experiences in the social context
4. Challenge the validity of our assumptions
5. Focus on action



GUIDED REFLECTIONS

These guided reflections, adapted from Jan Fook (2002) on Social Work Critical Theory and Practice by Dr. Carol Wade (2022), will help you to develop a practice model emerging out of your experience with equity-deserving groups.

Guided Reflection #1: Deconstruction

- What are the main themes and patterns that are emerging from your understanding of the situation?
- Who are the people that are involved?
- Whose perspective was represented and present, and whose are missing?
- What was the interpretation/explanation of the situation, and whose were they?

Guided Reflection #2: Deconstruction

- How might the situation be interpreted differently, and how might it have been interpreted by different people in the situation?
- What are the knowledge and assumptions that are implied and used in your account?
- How do they relate to value and belief, human behaviour; moral and ethical codes; social and political systems and change; power; gender and cultural considerations?
- Where do these assumptions originate?
- What roles or positions do these assumptions support? What does everyone stand to lose from holding them, and what social and power functions do holding these assumptions perform?
- What practices, systems, or structures are upheld by these assumptions?

Guided Reflection #3: Reconstruction

- How does what happened in my situation compare with what I intended to do or what I assumed I was doing?
- How does my experience in this situation compare with past or other experiences? What are the common themes and patterns?
- What aspects of this situation can be applied to others of mine or my colleagues?
- What needs to be changed about my assumptions, theory, actions, interpretation, and skills due to my reflections?
- What strategies can I use to make these changes? How do these strategies fit with my changed theories or interpretations?
- What is my reformulated theory of (or assumptions about) power which has/have resulted from my reflection?
- How can I frame my practice theory so that what I have learnt from this situation is useable in other contexts?



Self Reflection Tip:

Identify a person with whom you can have discussions on critical reflection. Ask that person to check in with you monthly for the next 3 months to see how you embed critical reflection in your work.

REFERENCES

Fook, J., & Askeland, G. A. (2006). The “critical” in critical reflection. In *Critical reflection in health and welfare* (pp. 40-53). Open University Press.

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