



Reflective Supervision Best Practices In Clinical Psychology

Interactions With and Lessons For Lawyers & Legal Educators

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Basic Structure of Supervised Early Practice In Clinical Psychology

- A U.S. licensed psychologist typically completes:
 - 5–7 years of doctoral education
 - A full-time clinical internship (post-coursework, predoctoral)
 - Often a postdoctoral residency/fellowship
 - Required period of supervision post-grad
 - 3,000–6,000+ supervised clinical hours (varies by state) (pre and post doctoral)
- Ratio of supervision to clinical service hours
 - Predoctoral is between 1:4-1:8 (estimates from APA/APPIC accreditation literature)
 - Reflective practice of course just one part of supervision, but it is a significant part

Profession	Degree	In-program clinical training	Post-degree supervised hours	Common exam
Licensed Professional Counselor / Mental Health Counselor	MA/MS counseling	Practicum + internship, often several hundred hours	Usually 2,000–3,000+; some states range higher	NCE or NCMHCE
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	MSW	CSWE-accredited field placement, often about 900 hours	Commonly 3,000 hours over about 2 years; varies by state	ASWB Clinical
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist	MA/MS MFT or related field	Practicum/internship focused on couples/families	Often 3,000 total hours, including around 1,000 direct client contact and 100–200 supervision hours	AMFTRB exam



	American Psychological Association	Canadian Psychological Association	United Kingdom	Australian Psychological Association	New Zealand Psychological Society
Status of Reflective Practice	Recommended	Recommended	Required	Required	Required
Notes	Reflective Practice is a “competency benchmark.”	Included in the Canadian Psychological Association’s Code of Ethics.	Reflective practice is required in both training and continued professional development.	Documented reflective practice is required in both training and continued professional development.	Documented reflective practice is required in both training and continued professional development.

Table adapted from Lillienfield(2020)

.... So, why is this important ?

- The basic tenants of reflective practice in health fields in healthcare are similar to those already used in clinical legal education.
- Health and mental health fields have though more deeply about individual client/professional and patient/professional power dynamics
- Reflective capacity and related training and supervision are highly relevant to direct legal services providers
 - Trend in legal practice in the U.S. against direct representation (more lawyers, but they are increasingly and disproportionately concentrated in corporations and very large firms).
 - Attorneys providing direct representation to individuals (public and private sector) could be considered a separate “track” for training purposes
- Concept of “desk perpetrators” and legal ethics
- The need to develop reflection in the context of other competencies
 - Capacity for self awareness can impact initial skill acquisition (Bennett-Levy, [2006](#)), cultural responsiveness and bias avoidance (Smith et al., [2021](#)) and the continued development of other competencies



Works Underlying/Informing This Presentation

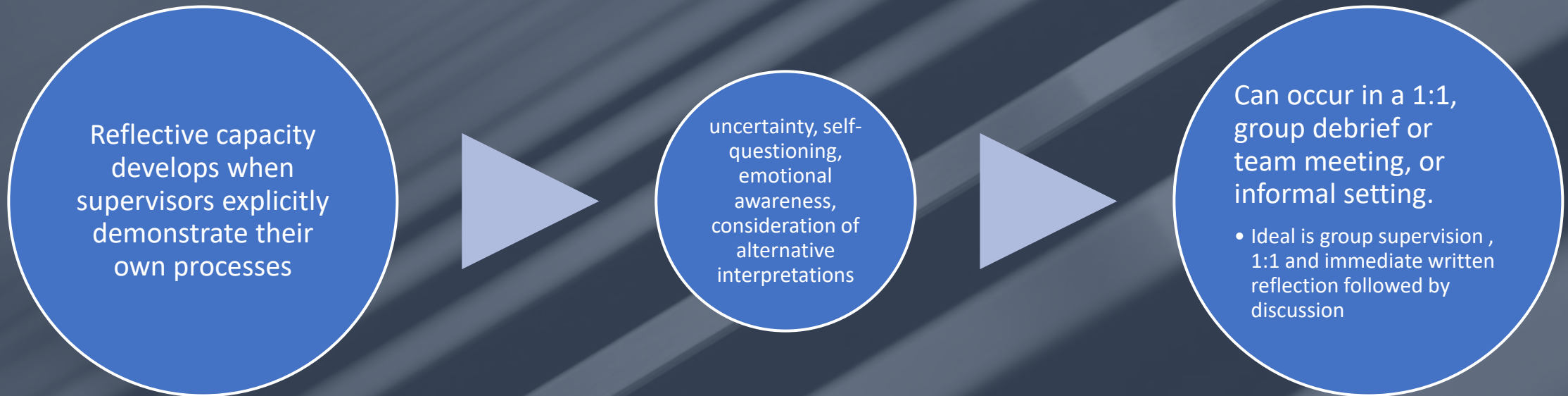
Ooi, C. C., Coker, S., & Fisher, P. (2023). *Clinical Psychologists' Experience of Cultivating Reflective Practice in Trainee Clinical Psychologists During Supervision: A Qualitative Study.* *Reflective Practice*, 24(4), 481–495.

McMahon, A. (2020). *Five reflective touchstones to foster supervisor humility.* *The Clinical Supervisor*, 39(2), 158-177

Calvert, F. L., Crowe, T., P & Grenyer, B. F. S. (2016). *Dialogical reflexivity in supervision: An experiential learning process for enhancing reflective and relational competencies.* *The Clinical Supervisor*, 35(1), 1-21

Supervisors Must Model Reflective Practice

→ not lecture about

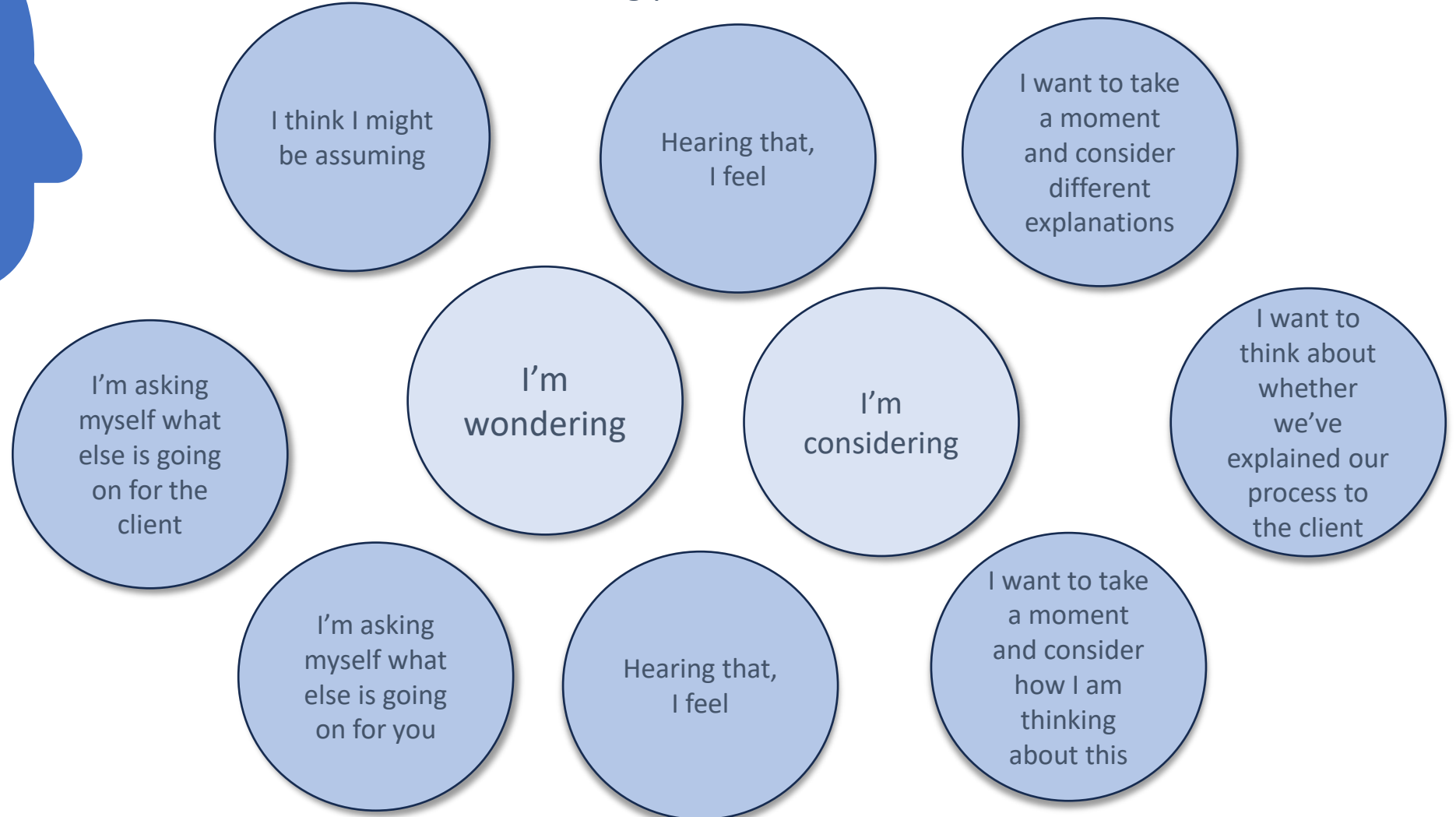




Modeling Reflective Practice



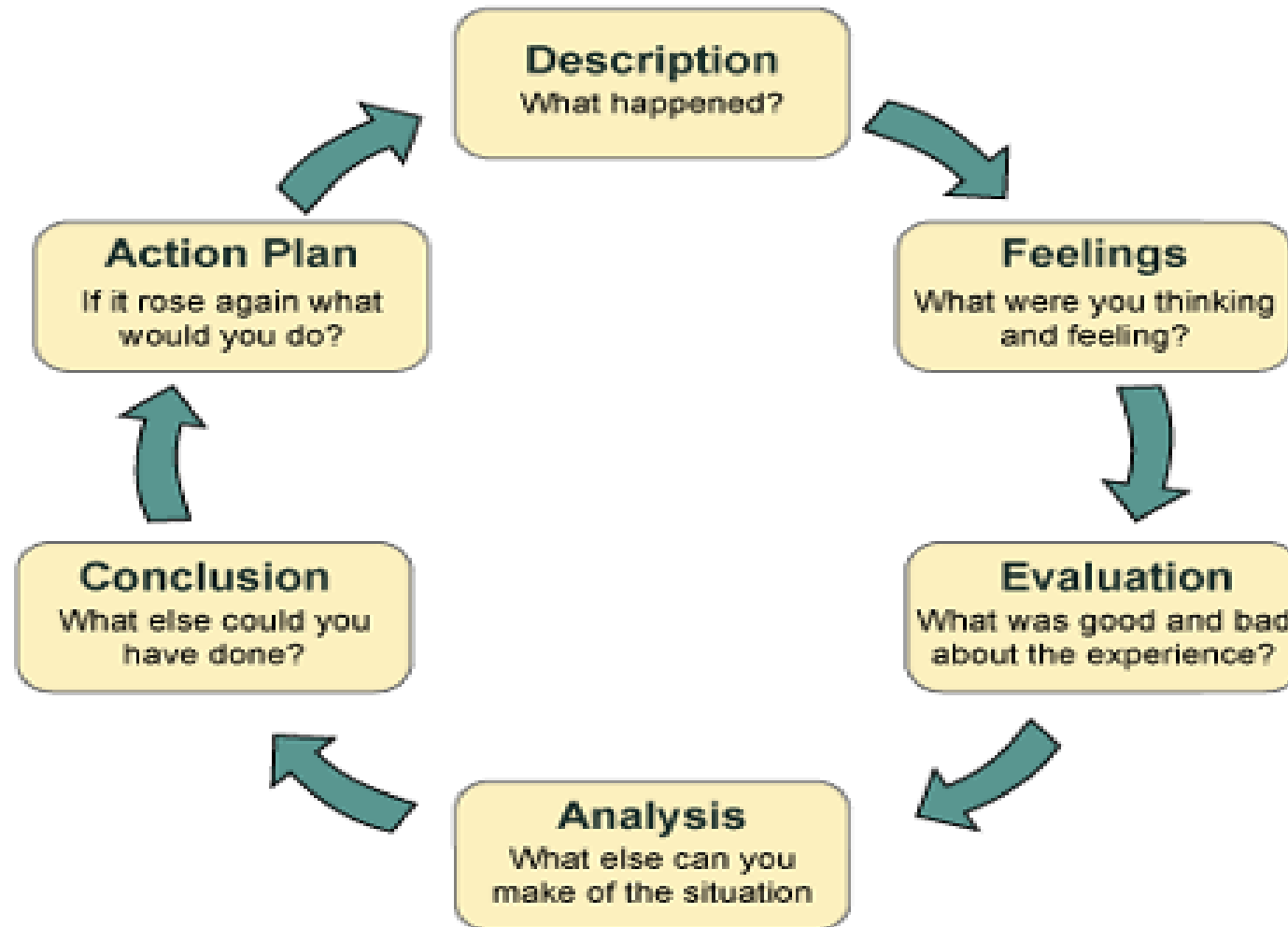
Rather than focusing exclusively on case formulation or strategy, effective supervisors model reflection by narrating processes





Scaffold

Gibbs Reflective Cycle





Gibbs Stage	Questions for Law Students/Lawyers
Description	What happened during the client interaction, negotiation, hearing, or interview?
Feelings	What emotions did I experience before, during, and after the event?
Evaluation	What aspects of my lawyering were effective? What was less effective?
Analysis	What legal, psychological, cultural, or systemic factors influenced the outcome or the client’s experience? How did my positionality influence the outcome or the client’s experience?
Conclusion	What have I learned about lawyering and professional identity?
Action Plan	What specific skill will I practice next time?

MULTI-PART GUIDED INQUIRY

Progressive scaffolding of reflective practice during the supervision process translates to the clinical legal setting

Descriptive Reflection

What happened?

What did the client do?

What did you observe about the client's behavior?

What information did you gain?

What stood out to you?

Emotional Reflection

What were you feeling during that interaction?

What emotions were most difficult to manage?

How did you notice your emotions interact with others?

Analytic Reflection

What assumptions were influencing your interpretation?

What alternative explanations might exist?

What further information do you need?

Transformational Reflection

What does this experience teach you about yourself as a practitioner?

How might this change your future practice?



Emotional Awareness & Reflective/Reflexive Development

Effective supervision encourages discussion of

Anxiety

Frustration

Helplessness

Rescue fantasies

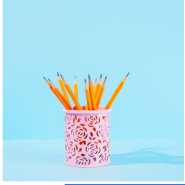
Anger

Identification with clients & personal triggers

Avoidance responses



Structure Writing Prompts with Scaffolding



- Describe an encounter that has stayed with you.
- Start from your perspective, and attempt a description of the client's perspective.



- Why do you think this interaction remains salient?
- What assumptions were activated?



- What does this reveal about your development as ethical professional?
- What might you do differently in the future?

Best Practice Summary



- Supervisor modeling
 - Including “supervision agreements” and regular check ins
- Guided reflective questioning
- Emotional processing
- Structured reflective writing
- Review of recorded work and processing through scaffolded states
- Reflexive & reflective examination of identity and assumptions
- Collaborative reflective discussions: group supervision
- Experiential self-practice activities

Further Reading (on Clinical Psych Supervision & Reflective Practice)

- Hawkins, P., & McMahon, A. (2020). Supervision in the helping professions (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill Open University Pres
- Beinart, H., & Clohessy, S. (2017). Effective supervisory relationships: Best evidence and practice. Wiley
- Scaife, J. (2019). *Supervision in the Mental Health Professions: A Practitioner's Guide* (2nd ed.).
- Ooi, C. C., Coker, S., & Fisher, P. (2023). Clinical Psychologists' Experience of Cultivating Reflective Practice in Trainee Clinical Psychologists During Supervision: A Qualitative Study. *Reflective Practice*, 24(4), 481–495.