

Using Reflective Supervision to Build Capacity

Roselia Ramirez: Hello, everyone. Thank you for coming to today's webinar session. We're going to go ahead and get started. Our session today is Reflective Supervision to Build Capacity. This is a part of the Education Manager Series.

I'm Roselia Ramirez from the National Center on Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning, and I'm so thrilled to introduce our presenter for today's topic, Dr. Sherryl Scott Heller. But before we hear from Dr. Heller, I'd like to go over just a few housekeeping items, as we will be using some of the ON24 features during our session today to engage with you. Some of this is review for many of you who have attended our webinars in the past, but we just want to just refresh everyone's memory. If you have any questions during the webcast, we ask that you please submit those to the purple Q&A widget.

Many of you have already found that widget, as we have had some responses introducing yourself in there, but we really encourage you to utilize the purple Q&A widget for any questions that you may have during our presentation.

Please know that we do capture all of the questions. If you have any tech questions, please enter those in the Q&A as well. A copy of today's slide deck, as well as some additional resources, are available in the resource list. And that is your green widget. So, those resources, as well as the slides, are available there for you. Throughout this session, we will be utilizing the blue group chat widget. This is where many of you have already introduced yourselves. So, thank you for that.

So, this is an opportunity where we can engage with one another. So again, that is the blue group chat widget. You also have a health widget. So, if you run into any technical issues, there is an area there where you can find some assistance. And then also wanted to mention that we do have closed captioning widgets. And those are both in English and Spanish. All of these widgets are resizable and movable so that you can customize those to make it a better experience for all of you. If you do run into any trouble, try refreshing your browser by pressing F5 on your keyboard. And then also, just a reminder, be sure to log off of all of any other browsers that you might have open because that may slow down the PowerPoint as well. Just want to go over our session objectives for today.

So, at the end of the presentation, you should be able to understand how reflective supervision can be used to improve program quality, know that reflective supervision process involves, and then understanding ways education managers can use reflective supervision in their work with education staff. So, this is our agenda for today. Just wanted to give you an idea of the flow. We'll be defining reflective supervision, introducing the three core components, as well as reviewing processes of reflective supervision.

OK. So, without further ado, it is such a privilege for me to welcome and introduce our guest speaker today, Dr. Heller. Dr. Heller is an associate professor of psychiatry at Tulane University Medical Center and Tulane's Institute of Early Childhood and Infant Mental Health. She has well over—more than 20 years' experience in the field of mental health, and her most recent work,

she has developed and led programs that provide reflective supervision to child care providers, child care administration, as well as mental health professionals. So welcome, Dr. Heller.

Sherryl Scott Heller: Thank you. I'm excited to be here. And I look forward to the next hour that we spend together talking about one of my favorite topics, which is reflective supervision. Just as we get started, I want to ask everybody to kind of think back to the different supervisors and mentors that you've had as you've worked forward in your career and what of those individuals did you feel were good supervisors or mentors?

Those that you felt really got you and really understood you and you really were willing to go that extra mile. I'd like you to go ahead and list adjectives that you would use to describe those individuals in the little ... In the group chat area so we can kind of see words you would use to describe your mentor. So, go ahead and submit those in there, and we'll get a chance to look at that real briefly. So, we have "flexible." Somebody typed in "flexible." Open, honest, empathic, supportive, and appreciative, great communicator, good listener, good communicator, good communicator, supportive, good listener, respect, empathy, understanding. All of these adjectives you all are listing are the exact kinds of things that you'd want to look for to be a good reflective supervisor—somebody who's inspirational, somebody who's a good communicator, trustworthy, appreciative. That's the kind of environment we want to create when we are creating our reflective supervisor relationship with our supervisees.

So, I would love it if you would keep these terms in mind and this person, this mentor in mind as we go through this presentation and we begin to think about reflective supervision. So, reflective supervision is a relationship, right? And all those great words you gave me were good relationship words. And it aims at creating a specific climate. Much of the climate is what you described—one that's trustworthy, one with open communication. And this climate's purpose is to consider both the needs of the provider, for the supervisee, as well as who the provider is serving. So, what are the needs of the helper, as well as the client? And when we do that, we know that the effectiveness of the intervention can be optimized, right?

So, that we want to make sure that if you're working with a teacher, you're going to be focusing on the needs of that child, right? And the effectiveness of the classroom management, and what's happened in the classroom is gonna work best when that teacher really understands that child and really can come and talk to you if they're struggling about that child. Same thing if you're doing home visiting. Your home visitor's going to talk to you about the family, about the mother, about the children in the family, and their relationship and where their struggles and where things are going well and they can come to you in an environment where they can talk about it openly. And the environment that we want to create is a partnership, a real true partnership.

And so, that's a supervisee, the person that you're providing support to never really feels alone, right? Oftentimes, we're talking about home visitors or we're talking about teachers. They're out there alone in that classroom. They're out there alone in that home visit. But if they feel like they got somebody who understands what's going on and somebody they've been able to really talk about their concerns, their thoughts, their fears, their uncertainties, how they're responding to a certain family. They don't feel completely alone. They feel like somebody's there with them and holding them and helping them to think about the situation. And that's

how we know that things can be optimized. The work that they're going to do can be done more careful. In this relationship, we learn more about ourselves as providers. We learn more about our clients. We also learn more about our co-workers and our colleagues and our relationships with them and how those can impact the work that we do. And then we learn more about the work. And this is a two-way street because I, as a supervisor, learn about this, as well as my supervisees.

So, it really helps us to understand our programs and what's going on and how people are doing in the program. So, in a nutshell, reflective supervision really can be described in one of these famous Jeree Pawl quotes: "How you are is as important as what you do." And that when you're in that environment, when you're creating that reflective supervision space, all those adjectives you gave me were "how" adjectives—that the person had a sense of humor, that the person was trustworthy, that the person communicated. That was all the "how." And that was not necessarily the "what." The "what" is important, but you really need to know that you're creating an environment where that person can feel safe and come to you and talk openly.

OK. Whenever you read about reflective supervision, they're going to come up with three core components of reflective supervision. And we'll go through these briefly. One's reflection, one's collaboration, and one's regularity. Before we go into those, I have a little question that I would like to ask everybody. I would like to know, just from the group—you can just respond to the poll—how do you provide reflective supervision? Do you provide individual reflective supervision, group reflective supervision, or both? I'll give everybody a few minutes to go ahead and answer. And we can kind of see where the spread is here. So, it looks like—when we look at our answers—most of you do both, which is wonderful. About 15 percent do individual. Nobody does group-only. And then a number of you do a combination, which is a real powerful way to have reflective supervision impact your program. The next question I'd like to ask is how often does each supervisee receive supervision from you?

So, when you're thinking about those supervisees, do they get it weekly? Do they get it three times a month? And this includes whether it's individual or group. Two times a month? One time a month? Or less than once a month? So, if we could just get an answer from everybody as to how often, on average, their staff gets reflective supervision. And here we go. It looks like weekly and once a month tends to be our highest answer. Wonderful that you can get it weekly. I know there's a lot of programs out there that require it. In my programs, we often do it, depending on the caseload they carry, but averaging like twice a month individual, with a once-a-month group so that our guys are getting it three times a month. It's the way most of my programs work. Good job, guys.

OK. So, now we'll go through reflection, collaboration, and regularity. So, what is reflection? Reflection is really taking the time to wonder what the experience really means, right? That's really when you get to sit back, slow down time a little bit, and think about an interaction that happened. It's usually going to be an interaction where maybe things didn't feel like they went right, or things didn't go too smoothly. It really allows the supervisee to unwrap that onion and to really talk about what happens and what goes on; really slow that movie down.

And when they talk about it, we can ask questions that are going to allow us to better understand what the situation, how the staff handled it, how the child responded to it, a home

visitor, how the family responded to it. And it lets the supervisee begin to understand themselves in the work and what types of things tend to have them respond on autopilot. Do they have any triggers? Are they carrying in any kind of preconceived notions that they were unaware of? Maybe those implicit biases that we read about. And this allows them to kind of peel that apart and talk about it. For example, one of the programs that I run is a fussy baby home visiting program. Well, I know that, believe it or not, fussy babies make the hair on the back of my neck stand up, that a crying baby or a whining kid tend to be my buttons. So, now I'm going into a situation where there's a lot of that going on.

So, I have worked with my reflective supervisor to develop a strategy that when I know I'm going into a situation where there's going to be a crying baby, that I have a mantra that I say, that I do my breathing and that I have a way to approach it so that I can stay in my calm state and be supportive to the family that I'm working with. So, one of the ways that we can do this, one of the strategies that I use with my families, with my supervisees, is something that I call BETH. And I'm going to show you BETH here. It's really a great friend to have when people are stressed. I train my supervisees in it so they can do it when they're out in the field, but we also will do it as part of our reflective supervision because it really is a reflective supervision session in a nutshell.

So, BETH is an acronym. And "B" stands for Belly Breath, right? So, the first thing you do is you want to take those nice, big three deep, abdominal belly breaths. I do this in traffic when things are getting hectic. I do this when I'm pulling into the office. I do this when I'm getting ready to go deal with a cranky teenager. Those three deep breaths, just in and of itself, can really help to center you and calm you down and activate the parts of your brain that need to be doing the thinking and not the reactive parts. "E" stands for Emotion. And so, really, you want to check in with, "What am I feeling in this moment?" Or if you're talking about a past moment, "What was I feeling in that moment?" You really want to use the emotion words, right? "How am I feeling then?" That's the amygdala. Let's lighten up those emotions. And we want to really start to regulate that because we know when the amygdala's regulated, then our frontal lobe part of our brain, where we do our best thinking, can be activated.

So, we identify those emotions, and then we look at the thoughts—"What am I thinking?" Right? "What negative thoughts am I having right now? So, if I've just come home and I have a cranky teenager, I might be thinking, "You know, they don't appreciate what I do. They don't value me. All they want is dinner." That's the first question that comes when I come through the house. I can be frustrated in all of that way. And so, now I can say, "OK, I'm frustrated and I'm angry, and this has to do with me feeling unappreciated." So, the fourth letter is "H," for Helpful Response. And now that I've teased out my emotions, right? I'm not responding through my anger or frustration. I'm not responding through my thoughts that my kids don't appreciate me. I've identified those.

So, what is the helpful response? Well, my helpful response is, "We've all just gotten home, we're hungry, let me take a breath, and let's just talk about a snack." Or, "Let me just ask them for a few minutes to kind of ground myself and be able to be in the moment." And so, that's one of the things that when I teach my teachers and my supervisees is one of the things they carry away with them and they really hold onto is that, "BETH has become our best friend." I'll

go back into a center I worked in five years ago, and they're like, "Oh, BETH is still my best friend." So, it's a really nice, little tool to carry with you to kind of help you keep in a reflective state. When I do train people on reflective supervision, there's a tendency or a fear that it's therapy because we're talking about feelings.

And yes, the emotions and feelings come up in both situations. But reflective supervision is not therapy. And if it even gets into that realm, it's really when you need to be directing your staff to possibly seeking therapy on their own. We do talk about emotions and feelings. We do talk about stress. But the goal of it is to allow the supervisee—this is the parallel process piece—to allow that supervisee to experience a relationship with their supervisor that's the kind of relationship we'd like them to provide to their clients, right? So, if they can feel safe with us and talk about their fears and uncertainties, they can then do that with their clients and help their clients, be it a student, be it a teacher, be it somebody they're home-visiting to be able to address similar challenges in their own life.

You will hear about stresses at home. You will hear about struggling with caregiving duties of their own parents, or struggling with a divorce or health. That's going to come up. That's normal. It's when it continues to be about that topic, and they can't relate it to their work and they can't get beyond it that you're beginning to worry about it becoming not reflective supervision anymore, but more of a therapeutic setting.

We really don't want to cross those boundaries into where we're getting into people's personal life and really, with any struggles they may be having—if they're having domestic violence issues at home, they're having issues with their own children at home. They may come up now and again to tap into, but it shouldn't be the main focus of a number of sessions. That's when you're kind of crossing a boundary. So, for reflection to be productive, we've talked about this a bit. You really need to have a foundation of acceptance and trust, right? That's the ground that's laid. And that can take some time to build. It can be very scary for a supervisee to kind of be vulnerable to their boss, right. To somebody who may be evaluating them. And so, it may take time to build that over—over time. When your supervisee comes to you, they need to know you're going to be the same person every time you're there, right? They need to know there's going to be safety, there's going to be calmness, and you're going to be supportive, right? A lot of those words are words that came up in the beginning, when we had the open discussion. And when we can create the foundation of acceptance and trust, where there's calmness and support, that's when people can do their best thinking.

That's when we can kind of get out of the amygdala, get into the frontal lobe, and do some of our most best and creative thinking. Whereas reflective supervision has really gotten developed and moved forward in infant mental health, through the work of ZERO TO THREE and a lot of folks who have been involved with ZERO TO THREE at different levels, there was some original writing and education literature by Donald Schon, and some of his wording and his information is still used as a basis for the reflective supervision we talk about today. So, I wanted to go ahead and give you a little background on it. One of the things he talked about is reflection on action, right. And so, that's what we do in reflective supervision, when we kind of think about past events. It's usually a planned reflection situation, right.

You're going to come in for your weekly—or your monthly—reflective supervision. You know an event that happened that you're going to want to discuss. And it's a very explicit and deliberate process. It's very laid out. We have our reflective questions and we talk and we try to kind of unpack—peel apart that onion—and get a real understanding of it. Another term that he coined was, "reflection for action."

So oftentimes, when we're doing reflective supervision, as we're talking about what happened in the past, some of our steps is planning or anticipating future events, recognizing that these are my triggers, right? So, if I'm going into a house where the baby is going to be really fussy, I'm going to have my strategies in place, right. So again, it's another explicit and deliberate process. It's very planned for, and it's knowing that this happened in the past and how I responded here or how this client responded. And this is where I'm going to go in the future. This is what I might try next time.

And then finally, what's come about is reflection in action. And that's really one of our goals of reflective supervision. That's when we can kind of be that third person in the room, and you kind of see when things happen and anticipate it and we can actually reflect in action and change our strategy in action. This tends to be done in the moment—and subconsciously—and it's just usually instantaneous. It's not kind of explicit and deliberate. But we get better and better at it the more we do reflection on action and reflection for action. Our goal is to eventually help our staff to be able to have good, positive, productive reflections in action.

One of those ways is using BETH that I talked about earlier. OK. The second component, right—so, reflection was the first component—our second component is collaboration. And we put the word "true" collaboration in here because it really does need to be a partnership. There needs to be open communication, which again, many, many people came up with in our first question earlier in the presentation. There needs to be open communication that's protected from outsiders. It's very important that your staff understand that what's said to you in reflective supervision stays in reflective supervision. I always urge reflective supervisors to get their own supervision. I get my own supervision. I think it's extremely beneficial. My supervisees know who I get supervision from.

So, they know that what we talk about in our reflective supervision I may talk about to my supervisor to help me be a better supervisor. But it's not going to be in a way of tattling or getting them in trouble. It's to help me be a better supervisor. If anything gets said in reflective supervision, it needs to get taken out of reflective supervision. Your staff needs to know that that's going to happen, and they need to know when it's going to happen. So, whenever I start reflective supervision with anybody, I'm really clear that if something happens that's a breach of policy or if there's mandated reporting that's needed, I'm going to have to break confidentiality, but if I do that, I will always tell them about it before it happens, and we'll discuss how it happens and we'll have a plan of action so that they can understand that. We've talked a bit about importance of trust and safety. You really need to be able to withhold judgment when you're working with your supervisees.

They really need to feel like they can share their concerns and share something that they feel like, "Oh, my gosh, I'm the biggest fool. Nobody's ever made this mistake before." They need to be able to say that to you. They need to be able to share that with you and not worry that

you're going to ridicule or judge. And that's a very important part of what we do. And the other part of collaboration is kind of what I consider the tone of the reflective supervision session. And that's when you really come across as just being curious, just trying to understand the world. I think of those little 2 year olds, all discovery and learn about butterflies and caterpillars and what's crawling under the rocks. We're just curious. That's it. We're not looking to blame. We're not looking to point fingers. We just really want to understand what people were thinking and what they were doing and how it felt. And if we can come across in that tone, we're creating a space that's much safer for people to be able to talk to us more comfortably.

The other part of collaboration is sharing the responsibility and control of power, right? Power is derived from a variety of sources. It's from the position in the organization, but it's also from your ability to lead or inspire, your sphere of influence, your network of colleagues, but also for, most of all, especially in reflective supervision, it's knowledge. It's understanding the families and the clients you serve. It's understanding the field that you work in, right? And it's understanding yourself in this work, your own self-awareness about what your strengths are and where your challenges are, right?

So really, we want to be able to share that, that the goal of this reflective supervision session is not for me as a supervisor to tell you what to do, but for us together to ask the right questions, to figure out what makes the most sense for you to do in this situation. It doesn't exempt us at all from setting limits or exercising authority, right. If we feel people are crossing certain boundaries or putting themselves in dangerous places or breaking policies, we need to kind of step up and say, "OK, you know, the rules here are this, and so, we cannot do that, but how can we help you to get to the space you want to get to? How can we help this family do this without breaking its rules? What are some other ideas?" We can't be driving them in our cars, or we can't go bring used clothes to them, but how can we help them get those things? OK. And it does allow for a balanced dialogue to occur because we're going to say, "This is the rule, but together we can figure out how we can provide the service that you need or how we can do that work together."

And then another component of collaboration that I found is that it offers—I learn as much from my staff as I hope they learn from me. I really get to understand what it's like for them to be out in the field. It really helps me to understand all the different tricks and strategies that they're using. So, it really is beneficial to me to understand my staff and their strengths when I do reflective supervision. It also allows me to understand who the leaders are. Who are the up-and-coming leaders? Who are the people who have special talents or skills that can be shared with the rest of the team? Do they have information, or do they have knowledge to do a good topic or training for me? If there's an opening coming up, is this something I want to recommend them applying for because I know they have the skills for it? So, it really helps us to cultivate leadership within the team.

And then the third part, or the third kind of core component of reflective supervision is regularity. And that has a couple of components to it. One is just a reliable schedule, right. Your supervisee needs to know that I'm going to get to talk to you with your undivided attention, and it's going to happen every other week. Or it's going to happen every week. It doesn't mean that it's going to happen every week at 9 o'clock on Friday because, certainly, things come up,

but on this Friday at 9 o'clock, if I'm not going to be there next Friday at 9 o'clock, we will schedule. "Oh, we can't do it on Friday at 9, but we can do it at 3 on Friday." So, they know they're going to get me in a week.

The advantage to this is that you have a lot less people coming into your office to dump stuff on you because they know they're only going to get 50 percent of your attention, whereas I can hold this information for four more days, and then I'm going to get 100 percent of your attention. I have an open-door policy in my office, and that people can call me off time, whenever they need for reflective supervision. And I've been doing this reflective supervision piece now for over 15 years, and I can count on two hands the number of times people have called me outside of their reflective supervision time. Once people start getting reliable reflective supervision and they can predict they're going to get it at the same time, you stop having these little crises that you have to put fires out because they save that information to talk to you about and you hear about it earlier.

They don't wait 'til the last minute, so they can plan for it, and they want to get your full attention. You want to make sure there's sufficient time. One thing you might want to consider is if you can only do reflective supervision once a month, maybe you make it a little bit longer than an hour so you have sufficient time to cover what you need to cover. And also, you need to be the same. They need to know that when I come into this room, that the Sherry that I got last week is the Sherry I'm going to get this week, that the tone is going to be the same, that the way I carry myself is going to be the same, that I will be calm, that the space will be safe. So, you really want to try to have it to be as predictable as possible. And then again, you want to project some unexpected cancellations because that can be very stress-producing, especially if your staff is holding information to share with you. Another quote here I have is that, "The result of inadequate supervision may not be starvation, but rather failure to thrive. Responsible staff can get by, but they won't grow." And the goal of reflective supervision is to optimize our intervention.

And the way we optimize our intervention is to help our staff to thrive. We want them to thrive, and we want them to be able to then carry that on to the clients that they serve and help the population we're working with to thrive. And so, by doing this, we need to really help our staff to grow and to be curious and to want to grow and to want to enhance. And this is one of the ways we can do this is through reflective supervision. So, we're going to go through some processes of reflective supervision. But before this, I've got two polls that I'd like you all to answer some questions. Which of the three components do you feel like you need to work on implementing? After we've gone on reflection, collaboration, regularity, which one would you define as your growing edge?

So, just pick one—one that you say, "This is what I'm going to try to focus on enhancing a little bit." And I'll give you all a few minutes to go ahead and answer. OK. So, we're kind of spread out all over the place, but it seems like a lot of you with regularity, and I get it. That's a common problem to kind of ... We always have things coming up, and it's hard not to kind of push off the reflective supervision sessions because it's just one person you're rescheduling. But really adhering to that is very, very helpful and makes a big difference in your staff, kind of maintaining their calm and being able to really focus and to eliminate crises. So, hats off to try

to attend to that a little bit more. So, our next poll—same three answers—but which of those areas do you think is your strength? So, which areas do you feel like you're implementing really well at this point in your work with reflective supervision? I'll be quiet and let people answer theirs.

OK, good. So, collaboration looks like that's the highest thing. That's awesome. Great. Good job with that. I'm happy to hear that. Reflection seems to kind of be in the middle on both, which is sort of interesting. I'll have to think about that. So, here are the processes of reflective supervision. Unfortunately, we're not going to have time to go through all of them in depth, but we'll tap on them. Parallel process, the importance of feelings, which we hinted at a lot up to this point in the talk, active listening, which is one of the answers that came up multiple times in the very first survey we did. The use of relationships to support learning, facilitating problem solving and critical thinking, which is a way that we really want to help our staff to grow. Support the use of self-reflection and self-awareness, and we've talked about that and how important it is to help staff to really understand where their strengths' growing edge is on.

We want to attend to process, as well as content. Both of those things are very important. Use of perspective-taking to help our staff to be able to understand different points of view and different perspectives, as well as we ourselves need to withhold judgment and help them to do that with the clients they're serving. And then acknowledging the complexity of the work because this work is hard work, and sometimes those guys out in the trenches don't get appreciated as much as they need to—our frontline staff. So, parallel process is an idea that we talk about, and it's the idea that the way a relationship is working at one level can kind of transfer to other levels, right. So, that having a really nice, positive, secure relationship with your supervisor is going to enable you to have those kinds of relationships with the clients that you serve, but also with your co-workers and your staff, right? And so, that's going to kind of trickle down. So, you know, it works two ways.

Hopefully, it's positive relationships influencing positive relationships, but the opposite can occur. Negative relationships are going to perpetuate negative relationships. So, we want to stick it in the positive. As I've gone around and trained on this, I've heard people use it in different ways.

Some people call it the ripple effect, right so that it kind of ripples out like a stone in some water. But the role of the supervisor is to really have that strong, secure relationship with staff so that staff can then have that kind of relationship with the folks that they're working with—and with their co-workers, right. We as the supervisors want to be the constant in our staff's lives. And our question should be, "How can I help you do what you need to do, right? How can we figure this out together?" That collaboration piece, which so many of you really feel good about. And that allows our staff to be constant, positive in the life of the parents they're working with, and then those parents can do it with their children, in the lives of the teachers they're working with, and the teachers can do it for the children they're working with, as well as the families they're working with.

There was a really interesting research study that had gotten done that looked at a child care center director's leadership style, and found that it was strongly related to the teaching style in the classroom. So, they did a number of surveys of the staff and of the directors, and they did

observations in the classroom, and what they found is that if a leader was rated—if a center director was rated as warm and flexible—their leadership style was described that way by their staff, that when they went to observe the teachers in the classroom, they saw higher levels of encouragement, sensitivity, and creativity, which are the kinds of things we want to see in a high-quality classroom.

It's also the kind of thing we want to see our staff doing when they're working with clients that they are caring for and providing services to. If that director's leadership style was described as arbitrary and lacking warmth when they did independent observations in the classrooms, those teachers displayed low levels of encouragement, a high degree of restriction, and emphasis on rules and restraint. And all of those things are things that we would not describe as high-quality, sensitive caregiving for a teacher or for a parent to be providing. So, that was simply just a difference in leadership style, but it's a really nice example of how parallel process can happen.

So again, we get back to Jeree Pawl and her quote I think that really highlights parallel process here is, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto others." And that's going to get our parallel process going. We also know that reflective supervision helps to facilitate problem-solving, right. We can do some role playing in reflective supervision. We can help people understand how to do conflict resolution, work together and share decision-making, right. We are role-modeling them when we're asking our staff, "Well, have you thought about it this way?" "How do you think this would happen?" "Have you ever tried this?" That we're having them have a part in that decision-making is helping them to understand how they can then turn around and do that with their co-workers as well as with their staff. We really want to help our staff to understand different perspectives. "How do you think the mother was feeling when the father came in and said that?"

How do you think she felt when you ... When the child did that? How do you think the child was feeling?" So really, "What is this person carrying into this experience? "How do you think the dad, the way he was raised, has impacted the way he's behaving now?" So again, it's really slowing that process down and having individuals really think about all the different players in these relationships and how their experiences and the way they were brought up and their beliefs and their values are impacting how they're behaving now. And using that to understand now. Just because we can understand, somebody's behaving a certain way doesn't mean that their way is right or wrong. It's just that we understand why they're doing it, and that can help us to better determine a helpful solution ... Is how to respond in a way that that person can hear what we're saying or could be helped to kind of get unstuck out of the situation.

So, perspective-taking ... We really want to help to withhold judgment, right. We are judgmental people. We are primed to be judgmental. When we were back in the times of cave people and being chased by tigers with sharp teeth, we didn't stop and say, "Oh, that tooth looks sharp. That tooth might hurt me." We knew right away sharp teeth, bad news, get out. And that's how we're primed to think. So, when somebody walks into a room, we may automatically have judgments. Nothing wrong with having the judgments. It's that you need to be aware, "That's a judgment statement, and I have no basis for that. I need to withhold that until I've got evidence one way or the other."

So, we need to really help as supervisors to withhold judgment and help our staff to understand when they may be making a decision that's a statement that's based on judgment and doesn't have any foundation and any evidence. So, attribution errors, as well as role-conflict resolution are the kinds of things we want to talk about. "Why do you think that happened? Why would that lead to that?" Those are the kinds of things we want to help our staff to think about. Supporting the use of self-reflection. ... We want to really help our staff to understand. What are their strengths, where are their challenges, where ... When they go into a situation, do they know might be a situation that's difficult for them to deal with, and how do they prepare to deal with that, right? So I, as an individual, may have been raised in a very traditional home with very traditional values, and really values those in the way I raise my children and how our world works.

But I may be working with a family that has less traditional values and doesn't have the same kind of standards set that I have. That doesn't make them better or worse than me. It makes them different. And I need to be aware when I'm going in if a mother is being a little more lax with her child than I would be, is my response to that my own implicit bias, or does that really have something to do with what the literature says or what the literature is going to support in my response? That's the kind of thing I'm going to want to bring to my supervisor to talk about. Balancing professional and home life. As much as we would like to have employees that have no lives, we don't want to ... When we hire somebody, we get their mother and their children and their husband or wife all in one hire, and whatever's going on there. And those things can impact the work.

So, we need to be aware that when there's stressors going at home, there's gonna be stressors going on at work, and we need to help balance and anticipate that. Somebody becoming a parent for the first time and figuring out how they're going to balance that load. There's a learning curve there. And we want to be able to give the space for that. And that's something that we can cover and focus on in reflective supervision. And then having people become aware of their own emotional state. So many people feel like, "Negative emotions means I'm weak." That's not it. It's being aware when you're angry or frustrated and then using that information to guide how you're going to make your next decision. "I'm feeling angry right now. Maybe I need to go sit down and take some deep breaths before I delve into this meeting, or before I address this issue." I need to be aware of what I'm coming into the situation with. If I've just gotten up late in the morning and rushed my kids out of the house, you know, sticking peanut-butter sandwiches in their mouths for breakfast, run a red light, get a ticket, now I'm late for work, and I'm rushing into a staff meeting.

I don't need to go straight into that staff meeting. because I'm going to be carrying all those stresses in with me. I need to take a few minutes to breathe, to calm myself down, to leave that stuff at the door before I go into that meeting. So, being aware that I'm coming in with these stresses means I'm going to respond differently in this meeting and probably in a way that's not helpful is very important. And these are the kinds of things we want to help our staff to recognize. Again, attention to content and process. It's very important that we're aware of our infant mental health theories or any theories of the work that we do and that we make sure our staff knows that, and that's going to come up. "Have you read this article? I remember reading about this. This might be something ... This webinar might be a helpful webinar for you to listen

to." So again, we want to make sure our staff's getting the content that they need. Sometimes we are going to provide suggested readings or whatnot.

We just need to be careful that we don't get caught up in the content and not attend enough to the process of what's happening. So, I see myself as a history keeper when I'm a reflective supervisor. A staff might start off with a family and be like, "Oh, this family's not going to ... This is going to be a tough one. I don't know how I'm gonna make this one. They're kind of really resistant." They're going to move at a different process than a family that really welcomes them in. And so, when a staff member starts to struggle further along, I'm going to say, "Hey, three months ago, you thought theyff weren't going to invite you back in, and you've been in there for three months now, and look at what she's sharing with you." Yeah, this is difficult to hear, but, wow, what process has been made on this, what we have learned here. So, we want to make sure that that's a component in what we do. So, are there any questions that I can answer? Any questions that the group might have for folks? Go ahead and type them in to the question box.

Roselia: So, Dr. Heller, this is Roselia. As folks are thinking about some questions that they may have, we actually do have a couple questions in the Q&A that I'd like to go ahead and ask of you. We did have Tenille—Tenille Albertson asks, "Do you feel it would be appropriate to have an employee meet with you outside of their work schedule so that you could at least have a guaranteed meeting for your staff?"

Sherryl: You know, I think that that's a slippery slope. Reflective supervision really should be part of the work process. I know that different workplaces have different cultural norms. So, if this is a norm, and that happens in your setting, then perhaps it can be appropriate, but I really feel like I'm really tied to it happening during the typical workday. Now, I know with home visiting and whatnot, we flex our time a lot, and so it may not be your 9 to 5, but if your home visitors are normally working 10 to 7, then that's different. So again, it really depends on the culture of these agencies.

Roselia: Great. We also had a question by Veronica, and she asks, "Is there a reflective supervision survey for supervisor and/or supervisee to fill out?"

Sherryl: There's several of them out there. Zero to Three—Stephanie, I don't know if you remember the date—but Zero to Three, and I think it was two Novembers ago, put out a journal on reflective supervision and some different measures you can use. Jordana Ash has a measure ... That a reflective supervisee can fill out about their reflective supervisor. That's written up in there. And then Sarah Shea has developed two measures. ... They're self-efficacy measures. One the reflective supervisor would fill out, and one the reflective supervisee would fill out. So, that's what I would go and look into.

Roselia: Great. OK. And then we had a question from Laura, and she says, "Do you know of any resources regarding time management?"

Sherryl: Regarding what?

Roselia: Time management.

Sherryl: Time management. Not off the top of my head. I do not know of any.

Roselia: OK. Yeah. OK, that might be something that maybe we could post something on the MyPeers.

Sherryl: Yeah, that would be great.

Roselia: Yeah. OK. And then we also had a question from Denise, and she says, "When doing group reflective supervision, do you have a specific agenda?"

Sherryl: Yes. There is an article, a 1999 article that The Portage Project put out. Annette Copa is the lead author on that. And they do a lovely, lovely job of laying out—and it's also in the Zero to Three Journal—of laying out how to do your group format. Typically, what I do is once everybody's together, we do some breathing or just some mindfulness to kind of bring us into the moment together, kind of let everybody release stuff.

Oftentimes, everybody goes around and does just an emotion word check-in. So, it's a word or a phrase as to where they are in this moment. It's just a way to increase self-awareness. Nobody comments on, "Oh, yay," or, "Oh, good," or, "Oh, I'm so sorry." They just kind of say, "I'm feeling tired right now," or, "I'm feeling a little flustered," and that's it. And then there's usually one person that's going to be the presenter. I often ask them to send out a week ahead of time a little description of what they're going to be presenting. And they do a presentation, be it on a center they're consulting with, be it on a family they're providing home visiting to. They present that case and they have some specific questions that they want to have us think about as a reflective group.

So, that usually takes about 20 minutes or so, and then the next 20 minutes or so, the facilitator, the reflective facilitator and the presenter dialogue about it. So, the facilitator will be asking some reflective questions to kind of help understand the situation a little bit better, maybe think about it. And then the last 20 minutes, the rest of the group is invited to be a part of it. And again, they do it from that reflective perspective of offering questions to understand or offering some thought. So, that's it in a nutshell. But would be Copa—C-O-P-A—1999.

Roselia: Perfect. We did have a question from Tiffany, and she asks, "How does this compare to practice-based coaching?"

Sherryl: I think that there's some difference. There are definite differences. So, reflective supervision is really going to be a supervisory relationship with somebody who you either employ or work under you. And the goal of that is more open-ended in helping them become better at the work that they're doing, as using that specific set goals. The coaching relationship tends to be shorter. There tends not to be that supervisory component to it. The coach tends to become an external, and they set goals in place, but it's done through a kind of reflective stance.

Roselia: OK. We did have ... Thank you for that. We did have another question. "How many visits should a supervisor make?"

Sherryl: How many visits should a supervisor make?

Roselia: I think this might ... Yeah, I'm wondering if this has to do with the regularity that you talked about. So, you may have already answered this when you covered the component of

regularity and making sure that they know what their protocols are—weekly, monthly. Or it may be related to maybe best practice, like, how often should you have supervision?

Sherryl: I don't think there's been ... Yeah, Roselia. I don't think there's been a best practice stated. I think you really look at your resources, right. How much time can you afford for staff to do in reflective supervision? What their caseload is, how intense their caseload is. So, a higher caseload, a more intense caseload, I would think you'd want to do it more often. Sometimes there's actual programs, like, I know Nurse-Family Partnership, and they have set amount of time that they want you to do, that they decided in their curriculum that you would automatically follow. I think the biggest piece is that it happens. I really am more ... I really like the model twice a month individually. That works well with my guys. And then we do once a month group. That seems to work very well for them. But I've seen plenty of other. I don't think there's one magic number that we know of yet. And I've seen plenty of different ones work.

Roselia: OK. So, this question came in, and it's regarding groups. And so, do you think that doing a group reflective supervision, who work in different contexts. So, for example, infant mental health consultants, home visitors, early childhood coaches. So, it looks like just asking if you can maybe group folks together doing different work to do reflective supervision.

Sherryl: I've seen it work both ways. And I think there's a variety of things you'd want to think about as you were forming the group for the purpose of the group and how experienced folks were and the overlap, but I have provided reflective supervision to individuals who've all been in the same role, as well as individuals who have been in very different roles but all serving similar populations. I've seen it work well both ways.

Roselia: We did have someone who asked, "If you know are there videos, examples that you can share?"

Sherryl: I can send the link to you, Roselia, to send out. There is one video example that I know you can access for free through—through Early Head Start's Learning Center. That's on there, but I've seen ... The other ones I know of would have to be purchased.

Roselia: And then one more question. "What are some questions to ask and reflect upon when you realize your supervisee has a strong personal bias? For example, it's a home visitor, doesn't see red flags in a family dynamic due to their own belief system."

Sherryl: Yeah, I think that's a slippery slope. Again, you would ask more roundabout questions about, "Why are they thinking this way" and, "What makes them ..." If you're seeing red flags that they're not seeing, I would say something like, "Hmm, the fact that the mother said this to the child is a little concerning to me. What are you thinking about this? Tell me more about when mom said this. I'm not quite sure I'm understanding it the same way you are." There's different ways to phrase it, but eventually, if you don't feel like they're getting it and there's blinders there, then you kind of need to say, "You know, I am really, really worried about this, and this is what I'm seeing here. How can we talk about it?" That is really a place, though, where I would be recommending you get your own reflective supervision because if you have your own reflective supervisor, you can be talking about this and about this struggle, and a lot of times, through that conversation, ideas and ways to approach it reflectively will rise to the

surface. And I can't strongly enough recommend that supervisors get their own reflective supervision.

Roselia: Great. We have a couple more minutes. Any additional questions or anything, please continue to enter those into the Q&A. If we do not get to them today, we will definitely get those responses out. Thank you, Dr. Heller. You've really provided us with a wealth ...

Sherryl: My pleasure!

Roselia: ... of information here to consider as we're thinking about building our own reflective capacity, as well as how we can utilize those skills to support grantees as they're building their own capacity. I did want to add there was a couple people that asked about the availability of the webinar. This webinar will be available shortly after our live presentations today on the Ed Leaders MyPeers Community, as well as the ECLKC. So, just wanted to let you know that that will be available for you if you're interested. I also would like to invite you to continue, if you're not familiar with MyPeers, this is a great platform for engagement. There are several opportunities for different communities.

What you see on your screen now are just a couple examples of the communities that are facilitated by our national center, and one of them is for education leaders. So, if you're not a member, we do encourage you to join. This is a place where you can continue this wonderful conversation with one another and share some of the things that are happening with your programs and learn.

So, an opportunity for peer sharing. I also wanted to share with you another resource that we have available, and that is the Curriculum Consumer Report. And it is updated and available on the ECLKC. This is a great resource for you to be able to search and review curriculum. They're broken down by home-based, infant and toddler, as well as preschool.

So again, this is available on the ECLKC, and I really encourage you to take a look at that.