



10 Top Tips for Reflective Practice

Aim:

Based on a previous study completed in South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust¹, 10 top tips have been compiled for reflective practice to help aid confidence and depth of reflections. This is to support all medical colleagues from medical students through to Consultant Psychiatrists.

Background:

All Doctors are subject to annual reviews of competencies (ARCP) and revalidation every 5 years to demonstrate continuing fitness to practice. This includes the use of reflective practice to demonstrate continued professional development as suggested by the Royal College of Psychiatry². All Medical professionals ranging from medical students to Psychiatry Consultants are encouraged to reflect and the GMC highlight that not only is it 'vital to personal wellbeing and development' but it is also fundamental to 'improving quality of patient care'³.

Macaulay and Winyard highlighted in a BMJ article the potential risk of reflection becoming a 'tick box exercise' and due to objectives and benefits of reflection often not being made explicit then subsequently reflections are not assessed constructively or are dealt with too fleetingly⁴. They made suggestions to address this issue which include; reflection objectives being made clear, making it easier to record reflections, and making reflective practice central to the clinical activity⁴. It has however been found that there is no data for the inferiority or superiority of any particular approach⁵.

The GMC specifically state that time should be made available for reflection although it can be questioned how often this is routine practice³. Individuals may have different preferences in how they reflect best however it is acknowledged that support and guidance does need to be given, especially to doctors in training³.



In Action Reflection:

Schon defines reflective practice as 'the practice by which professionals become aware of their implicit knowledge base and learn from their experience'⁶.

There are two types of reflection that he identified:

IN ACTION - reflecting on behaviour as it happens

ON ACTION - reflecting after the event to analyse the situation

Most teaching sessions focus on 'on action' reflective practice however it is also important to focus on 'in action' reflective practice in order to make reflective practice more valuable.

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Suggested Reflective Prompts for example of a teaching session:

- Three points I noted from the presentations and discussion with colleagues were...
- One example from the presentations and/or discussions that either confirm my practice or suggest I may do something differently...
- Something I will read or re-read...

The Royal College of Psychiatry training portfolio offer a template/guide for formal written reflections⁷.

References:

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