



DEVELOPING TOGETHER

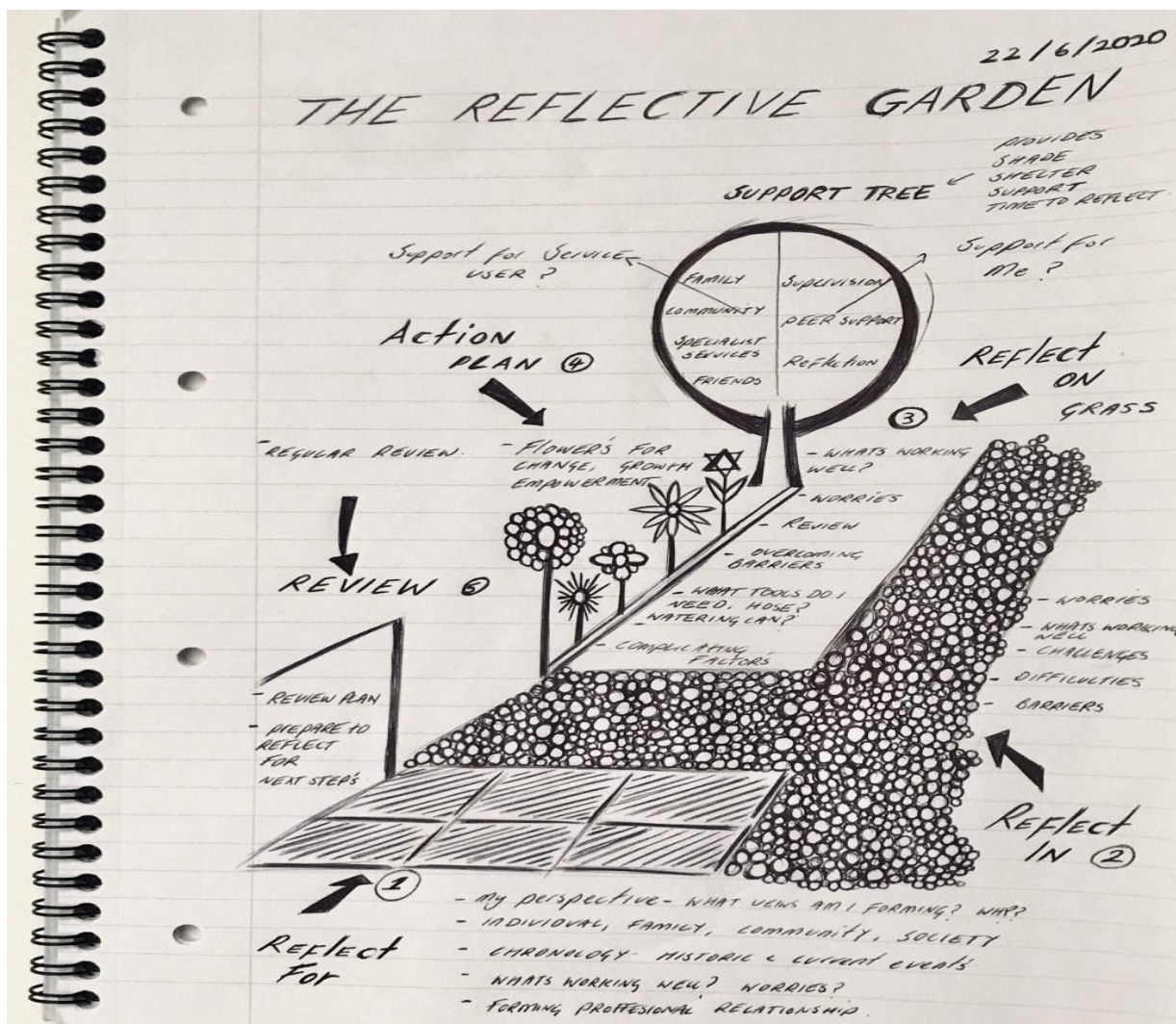
SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

By Chantel Kelly, Early help practitioner & Social Work student.

I have been working as an Early Help Practitioner for approximately 2 years and started my post graduate social work training just as the government announced the social distancing Lockdown. After many weeks working from home, Mid May became challenging and I started to feel a bit stuck with my coursework. My practice educator Josie encouraged me to attend the weekly webinars hosted by Siobhan and the team @sw_student_connect.

I attended the Reflective Practice in Social Work: Stages, Spaces and Structures and during the webinar a variety of personal reflection tools were shared. I came away realising that I hadn't previously given much thought to my reflective spaces and without being consciously aware of it, I realised that I have been spending most of my evenings excessively watering the grass in my garden.

I am now acutely aware that my garden has become the new reflective space where I go to wind down from a busy work day. I reflect and ruminate about all sorts when I am there...food, work, life, family, Covid-19 and most recently the #blacklivesmatter movement. I sketched out my garden "The Reflective Garden" and have been exploring how I can use this tool to reflect, FOR, IN and ON action.





I am currently doing lots of reflecting FOR action at the stage of initial case referral.

I stand on the paving slabs and take a holistic view of the garden. Whilst I have a good view, some things in the bushes and shade are not yet fully understood and require deeper exploration. I can see the flowers but do I recognise their individuality? Can I reflect on the weather; my past experiences, my current mood? Am I paying attention to my feelings? What views and opinions am I forming? Am I making assumptions? Do I recognise my unconscious biases? Am I thinking about why and how this will impact on my work with service users and professionals?

I am starting to feel confident that I have created a personal reflective tool that will continue to help me to make these considerations in a structured and progressive way.