DEVELOPING TOGETHER
SOCIAL WORK
TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

A Guide to

Being a Practice Educator in a 'Blended' Placement

Contents

Introduction

This guide has been a partnership project, developed in response to the challenges associated with supporting social work students on placement during CV19. It was acknowledged early in 2020, that everyone had to work differently and think more creatively about the contact and communication we have with others. This period has included spending more time at home and using considerably more technology to connect with and carry out work remotely.

Having a relationship-based approach at the heart of social work, it was clear that there would be significant challenges to 'do what we do' as Social Workers, in effectively supporting and promoting change with those using services. These challenges generated anxiety-provoking concerns for PEs, wondering how they would be able to provide students with the necessary learning opportunities in this new 'virtual' way of working, whilst supporting and assessing with the same standards i.e. Professional Capability Framework (PCF) and Social Work England (SWE).

Following successful facilitation of various PE workshops to those across our Social Work Teaching Partnership, it was evident a new workshop was needed. The Teaching Partnership team are minded to following SWE standards:

5.7 Practice educators will undertake regular training, which is appropriate to their role, students' needs, and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the course.
5.8 Students and practice educators will have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice based learning.

The popular 'How to be a PE in a Virtual Placement' workshop paved the way for developing this practical guide. As time passed, and circumstances changed, it was evident we needed to ensure our guide was current. As adaptable as social workers are, we have adapted our direction and now bring you this guide to a 'blended' placement i.e. a mix of virtual and face-to-face!

Josie & Sarah

An Introductory Blog 1

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT ABOUT BEING A PRACTICE EDUCATOR DURING THE PANDEMIC
BY ROSHILLA PILLAY

In March, it came as a shock, and sent us into a state of anxiety, when we went into lockdown, and the new normal began. The big worry for me as a Practice Educator (PE) was maintaining placements for students whilst working remotely, and ensuring that students obtain good learning opportunities to enable them to meet the PCF domains. 7 months into the pandemic, I can say that we are better prepared physically and mentally. We have taken a giant leap in using technology to enable our roles.

What I learnt as a PE was the importance of Self Care and Self Management. These two 'S' words are underestimated. Siobhan Maclean has talked about 'putting your own oxygen mask on first' and this is so true. PEs need to make time to network with their peers, who can support one another. This networking is not taking place naturally, but as a PE, you need to reach out to other PE's . Don't be shy, you will find that we all are in the same boat and can support one another (through sharing shadowing opportunities, learning opportunities, joint / group supervision.)

At Merton, we now have Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and have learnt to use this quite creatively in the past few months, but I have had PE's and Trainees express worry and uncertainty around supporting, teaching and assessing a student virtually.

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An Introductory Blog 2

My advice is: Don't be afraid of the technology. It can be used to build a working relationship, for example through encouraging one another to have cameras on. If face to face supervision is not possible, then the next best thing is using cameras to engage with the student in supervision.

We need to recognise that for students, combining the Personal and the Professional is a new concept, and some of us are better prepared for working from home and managing the dilemmas that come with it.

Looking forward I feel better prepared, armed with IT skills and Self Care techniques, and using the tools we have creatively to teach and assess, within the Safe Uncertainty Zone. We know that there will be gaps, like the informal learning that one gets from being within a physical team environment and face to face home visits. However, I hope that the tools we already have can enable us to create a learning environment to facilitate the student to meet all PCF domains. If there are gaps, these need to be stated and a plan in place to address this/PDP.

An Introductory Blog 3

Be creative

Reflective Tools

Use the technology

Being a PE in a Virtual world

Professionalism whilst working remotely- Knowledge, skills and Values

Connect with other PE's

Practical and Personal has become more important

Trust is important. Working from home means that boundaries can slip. Students can learn social work values and ethics around this - such as logging in on time, being visible and demonstrating professionalism even whilst operating virtually/via email/ virtual visits.

There are lots of opportunities to learn about maintaining boundaries, which can be easily blurred working from home. For example, not switching off at 5pm, taking calls after work etc. Working from home, we are also relying more heavily on emails, and skype calls, or messages. Be aware of this, as too many emails can be overwhelming for the student. How do you give instructions via email, is it too much, too lengthy? Take into account the student's learning style as this does not work for everyone. We also learnt that taking breaks between video calls is vital for everyone's concentration levels.

I have also seen that students need additional support with picking up the soft skills that one usually learns when in an office environment. Pay due attention to how emails are being used to communicate with professionals as not all students are prepared for this. Confidentiality via email is another aspect to consider as a data breach can occur if information is sent to the wrong person.

An Introductory Blog 4

Prior to the pandemic, we at Merton did not have students working from home, and we have had to adapt to accommodate this. The practicalities of setting up and arranging IT equipment can be the last thing on a busy PE's mind, however, there is usually a waiting queue at IT, so you do need to sort this out early. You might also want to ensure that your team has a prepaid oyster card ready for the student.

Find creative ways to ask 'how are you doing'? Make use of Reflective Models and tools available to get more out of the session. Connecting and building a relationship, teaching and assessing is possible, even though it is virtual.

Active Listening becomes more important than ever; as Social Workers we are skilled in this, and also are quite adept at working with Safe Uncertainty. Listen to tone of voice, use your intuition, and listen to what is **not** being said.

It felt daunting at the beginning to be a PE virtually, but now I can proudly say that it is possible, and don't be afraid to be creative, to draw on the people and resources around you.

We are now stronger than before, as we have regular team catch ups, Whatsapp calls, group supervision, webinars on wellbeing - all of this helps to give a sense of belonging for a new starter.

Yes, we have the usual changes and restructuring that comes with being in an organisation, and these are the additional challenges we manage along with working virtually.

Pre-Placement Planning

How can PEs facilitate and coordinate placements virtually?

Let's start with the same principles….

Billington (1996) identifies 7 characteristics of effective adult learning environments i.e. SW placement:

- Students feel safe and supported, their individual needs and uniqueness is honoured, and their abilities and life achievements are acknowledged and respected
- Foster intellectual freedom, encouraging safe experimentation and creativity
- Students are treated as peers - they must be accepted and respected as intelligent experienced adults whose opinions are listened to, honoured and appreciated
- Students take responsibility for their own learning i.e. self-directed learning
- Active involvement in learning - it's not a one-way system!
- Regular feedback mechanisms throughout the placement, so students achieve best learning opportunities
- Challenging students just beyond their present level of ability - NOT too much or too little!

Pre-placement Meeting

Consider your Pre-Placement Meeting with the student - virtual or face-to-face?

- ✓ Complete the relevant Covid-19 Risk assessment/s with student
- ✓ Pay particular attention to the remote working space that student has access to:
    - o Is the student in shared accommodation? Living with family, younger siblings or their own children? Do they have caring responsibilities?
    - o Does the student have a confidential space to work?
- ✓ Some offices are still open and CV19 safe, so consider whether the student can come to the office for 2 days per week to have the opportunity to develop Professionalism in the office and experience informal networking with others. This can help them get a sense of the working world, as well as allowing them to engage in networking discussions, obtain shadowing and other learning opportunities, within a Covid secure environment
- ✓ Be clear about each other's expectations of the placement
- ✓ You'll find this Pre Placement Meeting Guidance useful.

Tips for Pre-Placement Planning

✓ Make sure you've sorted IT arrangements ahead of time (mobile phone, Security Token to access the workplace network etc.)

✓ Inform the student of first day arrangements i.e. what time / whom to meet. Remember first days can be quite anxiety provoking for students, and even more so when people are working remotely

✓ Have you prepared your team for the student and decided how are they going to be introduced? One on one introductions with students can be more effective than a quick introduction during a Team Meeting

✓ Is there a Buddy with whom the student can connect when you are not around? Perhaps an early career social worker who is eager to take on a bit more responsibility?

✓ For those who can visit the workplace, you'll need to arrange to show the student the buildings, where your team sits, as well as access to a storage locker/cupboard.

✓ Identify other PEs who are going to be taking students and explore whether any aspects of Induction can be joined up

✓ Think about planning in some swapping of shadowing activities to give the student an idea of services across the organisation

✓ Ensure your student has invites to the team catch ups/check-ins, as well as team meetings, group supervisions, service catch ups. These are all opportunities to get to know people and services, as well as networking, to support the student to feel a sense of belonging on placement (see Maslow's triangle).

Takeaway points to remember
'Pre-placement planning'

★ Take time and plan ahead!
★ Make sure you include the team around you when planning the placement
★ Read the student's information, focusing on any support learning needs and self-identified developmental areas
★ Organise the student's IT & equipment as far ahead as possible

Student top tip – If possible, before we even start the placement, could you introduce the student to other team members, a buddy person or the Team Manager. We can start feeling included in the team by being introduced to people before we start!
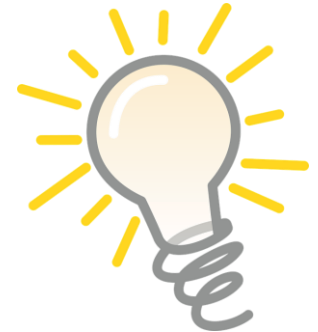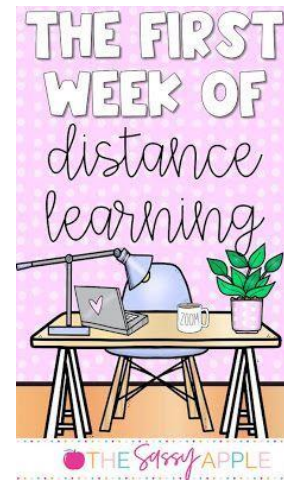
Induction

What does your induction usually look like?

Think:

➔ Checklist & Practical Arrangements - Introductions to key people;
➔ Shadowing opportunities;
➔ Visits to other agencies;
➔ Meeting those with lived experience & carers;
➔ Training e.g. IT training; Policies & procedures;
➔ Daily reflection time
➔ Supervision with you, with the OSS and a three way meeting

How will you 'virtualise' your current induction?

'Virtualising' the Induction

Here's some tips from workshop participants on 'virtualising' inductions:

Make sure student knows where they can access relevant information like team files, policies etc. And make sure they have access!

Check the agency policy on working from home and GDPR implications - we still need to protect confidentiality!

We know how IT can be a headache - organise IT equipment and training even further in advance than you would usually

Ensure students are talking to people / meeting members of the team on an individual basis

Set up a virtual social get together for new student/s to help make them feel part of the team

Link in with other PEs to co-ordinate the Induction and make it uniform for students. This will also be a more fulfilling experience for the student

Top tips for a virtual induction

- Set up video calls with members of the team - getting to know roles / specialisms etc.
- Provide links to policies and procedures - e.g. reporting sickness / absence etc.
- Meet other key teams virtually e.g. team meetings - you & student could arrange this
- Set out clear guidelines re: working from home, safety on visits (lone-working / safeguarding) & confidentiality
- Set up a shared diary so you can plan activities and the student has activities scheduled from day one
- Identify training e.g. IT systems and get this booked in advance - be as prepared as possible!
- Arrange shadowing of team members virtually (home visits, reviews, conferences etc.) - either through shared online calls and / or video assessments (WhatsApp, Google Hangouts etc.)
- Have daily check-ins with feedback of key learning / reflections / concerns & issues
- Can you set-up a buddy system? This provides you and the student with support and the student with even more learning opportunities
- Reflection time - use reflective models or exercises - see the TP's PCF Toolkit: PCF 6 Critical Reflection & Analysis (more on these later)
- Remember: it is difficult for anyone to absorb large amounts of information at one time! Introduce learning gradually & in a balanced way
- Make Time to get to know the student as a person (The Mandela Model, Dr Prospera Tedam). This is even more important since students will be working from home (combining the Personal and Professional).
- Getting to know each other activities e.g. bring an object or picture to describe you as a person; Similarities and Differences activities; Reflective Cards etc.

Top tips for a virtual induction cont...

- Encourage use of cameras as this will help build connectivity, allow you to pick up on non-verbal cues like facial expressions, and ensure that the student is engaged with you during supervision
- You are able to change the background with most video conferencing software which is an option if the student is unsure about sharing their personal space
- If there's been a long day of video calls, a simple phone call can sometimes be a better choice
- Discuss PCF 1: Professionalism and how to demonstrate this whilst working from home. What are the expectations? This will be new for the student, so you'll need to make this explicit i.e. ensure that they are appropriately dressed for a working day, even if it is from home. Treating it like a working day will also help with the working mindset, as it can be an isolating experience working from home
- Things that a student would usually pick up from working within the workplace may now not be possible, such as how to answer the phone in a professional manner. Perhaps use simulation to capture this or arrange for the student to shadow duty
- You/a colleague could book a video call to work 'side by side' with the student so they can observe calls and assessments, providing a sense of being in the office
- Lots of emails are being exchanged - check that these are written and signed off professionally
- Working from home provides another opportunity for the student to demonstrate trust, values and ethics. Let the student know that you will not be checking on them all the time, but this is an opportunity to develop skills in 'Self Management' e.g. use of digital skills in social work and trust.
- Encourage the student to access webinars and eLearning on remote working tips and good practice to ensure wellbeing and help them settle into the new normal.
- Discuss with the student how they can carry out work at home, ensuring confidentiality and the principles of GDPR are adhered to.

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Maslow's Triangle

Use Maslow's Triangle (adapted version by Roshilla Pillay) to consider how the student is feeling, settling in to the team, etc. What layer/s of the pyramid need strengthening and boosting?

People learn best when they feel a sense of belonging. How can you as a PE support a student to build their confidence whilst working virtually? Remember praise can do wonders to boost self esteem.

Covid-19- adapted: MASLOW'S Hierarchy.

Feeling fulfilled

Self actualisation

Self worth

Self esteem

Team meetings, Group s/n, whatsapp grps, quiz clubs, connections with others, PE to ensure

Social

Health and safety, confidentiality, virtual visits, PPE, Family problems ? Personal losses ?

Safety

Remote working, desk, space , comfortable working envm, taking breaks, lunch ,

Physiological

The Practice Learning Agreement (PLA)

✔ Start working on this document with your student from the start of placement
✔ Be clear about roles and each others' expectations
✔ The practicalities matter - think about working hours, equipment etc.
✔ Discuss and agree the frequency of supervision, the type and amount of work you will be expected to undertake
✔ Discuss how the student can learn about the organisation - be creative here (Domain A).
✔ Ensure all sections of this document are completed (see findings from the Teaching Partnership's Placement QA Report)
✔ Complete learning opportunities, providing as much detail as possible, referencing both PCF and KSS, ensuring that there are learning opportunities that will provide evidence for all domains
✔ Remember to include both face to face and virtual learning opportunities
✔ Reference specific theory and social work approaches that will be used in the learning opportunities
✔ Be prepared for the PLA to take longer during CV19 so make the time for this and allow additional time for processing information

Getting to Know your Student

What are the barriers / obstacles in getting to know your student in a virtual placement?

Click on the links below to take a look at these interactive whiteboards from our 'Being a PE in a Virtual Placement' workshops to find out what our PEs thought some of these challenges would be:

Whiteboard 1   Whiteboard 2

Getting to Know your Student

Overcoming these barriers:

- **Connectivity** ⇒ Spend a little more time 'connecting' in the beginning, whether that is via your agency tech, calls, face-to-face etc.
- **PLA discussions** ⇒ maximise this time with the student, PE / buddy / On-Site Supervisor (OSS) to talk about the expectations of the placement and how can it support the student's learning and development = this is going to be different! **Plan ahead!**
- **Meeting face-to-face** ⇒ with social distancing (agency risk assessment permitting)
- **Weekly supervision** (virtual or blended) ⇒ spend time asking questions to understand your student's life at home, work / life balance etc. More on supervision later…...
- **'Check ins'** ⇒ at beginning and end of day if possible (possibly decreasing over time)
- **Maintain contact** & be flexible for other adhoc contact for support and reflection via phone, video call & face-to-face etc.
- **Mandela Model & Social Ggggrraaaccceeesss** (Tedam (2010) & Burnham (1993) ⇒ for initial relationship building, see following two slides.
- **Getting to know the team** ⇒ Arrange for students to meet as many team members as possible on an individual basis.
- **Ask your team** - how do they think the student is getting on? It's a shared responsibility!
- **'Can I shadow you?'** ⇒ All students need to take responsibility for arranging such opportunities and getting to know team members.
- **Encourage online peer support** ⇒ Students can access a UK-wide SW student hub **here**

Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS framework

The Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS framework can be used to help you get to know your student - see the different ways of using this here.
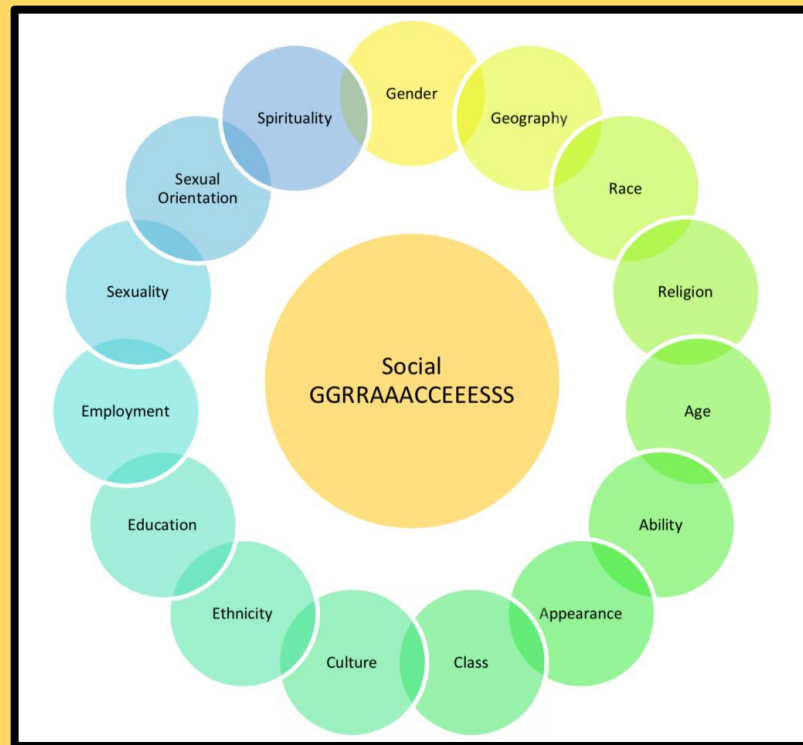
The Mandela Model

M - Make Time

AN - Acknowledge Need

D - Differences

E - Educational Experiences

L - Life Experiences

A - Age

You can hear from Dr Tedam herself, talking on Siobhan Maclean's Anti-Racist Social Work webinar [here](#).

- MANDELA is more than an acronym as "it symbolises values that may be important to African students of social work" (Tedam 2011, p. 70)
- Mandela conjures up words such as 'determination' and 'success'

For further information see [here](#).

Reference

Tedam, P. (2011). The MANDELA model of practice learning: An old present in new wrapping? Journal of Practice Teaching & Learning 11 (2)

Resources for Induction 1

Useful resources and webinars for induction:

- Updates on Covid 19 practice and health and safety guidance for social work
- Ethical Decision Making in Adult Social Care webinar: how adults' and carers' needs are best met through the application of the **BASW Code of Ethics** and **Care Act 2014**
- Social Work with Adults who have a Learning Disability
- The diverse roles and tasks of child and family social workers
- Family Group Conferencing (FGCs) and Relationship-based Practice in Social Work
- Covid-19 Webinars: Part 1, Part 2, Part 3
- 80-20 Campaign webinar series - Relationship-based practice: working with children and families: Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4
- Understanding and implementing the changes to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)
- Siobhan Maclean & 'Social Work Student Connect' webinars e.g. The Social Work Theory 'Fear Factor'

*Some of the webinars require a BASW subscription to access, however Kingston University pays for membership for all social work students

Resources for Induction 2

SCIE webinars & resources

- [Holding accessible and inclusive meetings](#) - includes SCIE's co-production principles, Top tips for holding accessible meetings including with children and young people, disabled people, people with learning difficulties, and practice examples.
- [Videos on strengths-based approaches in social care](#) e.g. Concept of a strengths-based approach under the Care Act 2014 & Supporting young people etc
- [Person-centred mental health transitions for young people](#) - Responding to concerns, Admission and discharge planning, Follow-up support etc
- [Mental Capacity Act (MCA) training series](#) - e.g. Introduction and supporting decision making, Assessing capacity, Best Interest decisions etc
- [Transitions to adulthood](#) - A collection of essays on different areas of life that challenge young people as they move into adult life (The Children's Society with several leading charities)
- E-learning Courses can be found [here](#) - [Dementia awareness](#), [Safeguarding adults,](#) [Personalisation,](#) [Tackling Child Exploitation etc](#).

Takeaway points to remember
'Induction'

★ Make time to get to know your student
★ Make time for your student to get to know your team
★ Be creative with virtual shadowing opportunities and connecting with other teams
★ Prioritise supervision and regular check-ins

Student top tip - when working remotely, having a staff structure chart, organogram and / or list of services, assists a student to develop knowledge on where to go, how and who to contact for information, support & services e.g. Housing, CAMHS, IT problems etc.
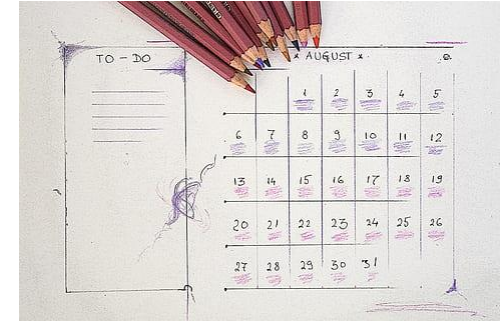
Supervision & Reflection

Supervision Check-Ins 1

Asking students to pick an image can start a more meaningful conversation about how your student is feeling, rather than simply asking how they are.

- Try using postcards for check-in - you can buy a set of these from Siobhan Maclean here but it's easy to build up your own collection
- Online images can be used for virtual supervision - check out the Teaching Partnership's collection here - feel free to use them!
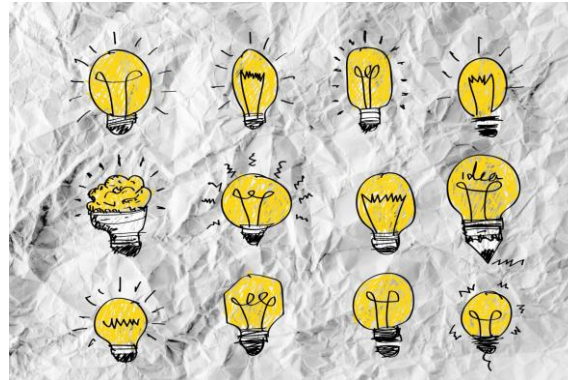
Supervision Check-Ins 2

Or you can ask the student to bring their own image along that 'speaks' to them.

Creating a 'safe' virtual space 1

Effective supervision is relational, emotionally literate, reflective and curious regardless of whether you connect virtually or in person.

How can you create a 'safe space' in a 'virtual' supervision?

Creating a 'safe' virtual space 2

A safe space can be created by you:

- Being open and honest in exploring issues of power early on in the placement - PLA / Social Graces
- Ensuring the student feels valued through listening skills, empathy, respect and understanding - check your environment / distractions / laptop working / camera & microphone / switch off your mobile etc.
- Providing constructive / supportive feedback respectfully and using mistakes as learning opportunities - allow more time

If a student feels safe they are more likely to:

- talk about uncomfortable feelings
- be able to review and challenge themselves and reflect
- be more open to constructive feedback
- be able to pay attention to instructions
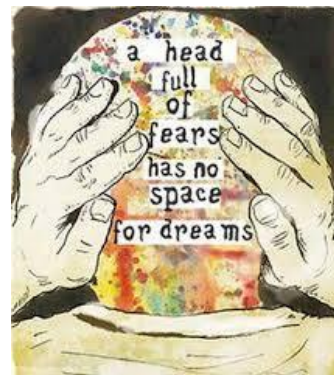
Supporting Online Supervision

- Give yourself space to mentally prepare to be in the zone for supervision
- Ring-fence time at the start to talk about the process of connecting remotely for supervision
- Pay attention to checking in - see previous slides!
- Make time to talk about working during a global pandemic (and put this high on the agenda) - model emotional awareness and acknowledge the huge challenges that dealing with CV19 brings
- Pay attention to checking out
- Make sure that you have your own space to debrief and get support

Full details can be found on RiP website here.

Other tips:
- Share the agenda via your screen;
- Ask your student to send you evidence prior so you can digest & share on your screen with feedback;
- Both plan agenda together & close with next steps

Modelling and Enabling Reflection

- Spend time getting to know your student and developing your relationship
- Enable the student to step outside particular experience/understanding about situation
- Ensure you have time in supervision to reflect
- Understand about relationships of power within narratives
- Not always providing answers, but asking student's view - in supervision and day-to-day
- Modelling by reflecting your own experiences as appropriate
- Create a safe space for the student in supervision - physically and emotionally
- Provide reflection models for the student to use

McClure's Reflective Questions
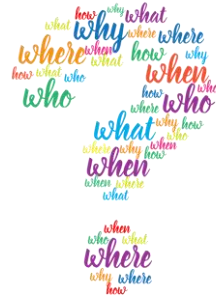
- What exactly did I do? (describe it precisely)
- Why did I choose that particular action?
- What was I aiming for when I did that?
- What theories and models informed my practice?
- What research informed my practice
- What was I trying to achieve?
- What did I do next
- What were the reasons for doing that
- How successful was it?
- What criteria am I using to judge success?
- What alternatives were there?

- Could I have dealt with the situation any better?
- How would I do it differently next time? Why?
- How do I feel about the whole experience?
- What knowledge and skills were demonstrated
- Did my values impact on my practice? How?
- How did the service user feel about it? How do I know?
- What sense can I make of the whole of the experience in light of my past experience?
- How has this changed the way I will do things in the future? How?

The Blobs

Reflective practice in a 'virtual' supervision

"The Blobs" - a simple way to deal with deep
issues by feelings and body language.

It is an all age resource. They are neither male
nor female, young nor old, European nor African,
ancient nor modern. They are outside of culture.

Use to open a conversation, rather than a problem to be
solved or a message to be agreed upon. If the people
you are working with read the characters in totally
opposing ways, that's fine. We each see the world
through our own eyes.
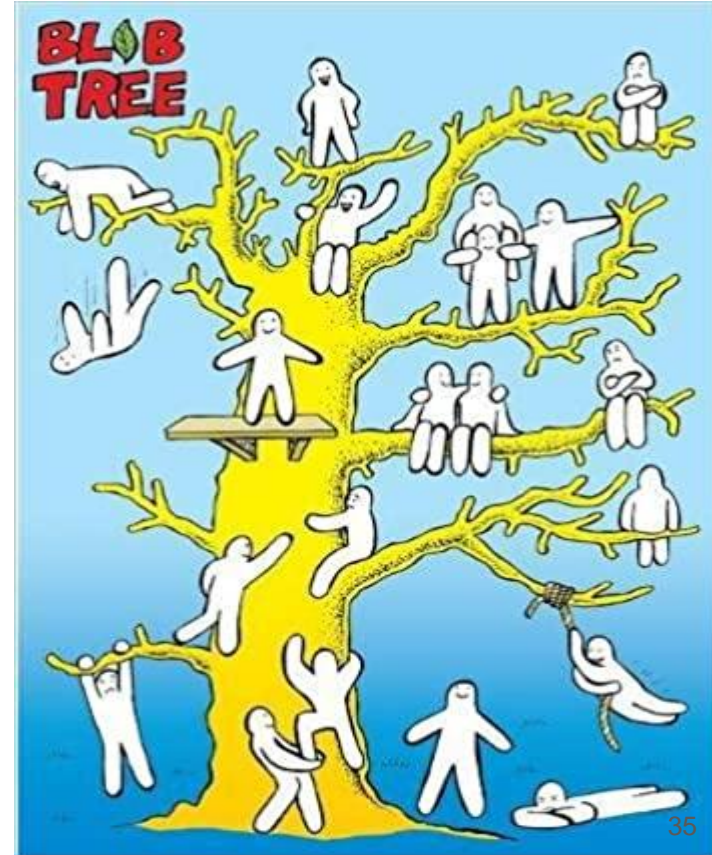
Reflective Practice Cards

Order [Siobhan Maclean's](#) or create your own!

How about creating a 'jamboard journey' with reflective cards?
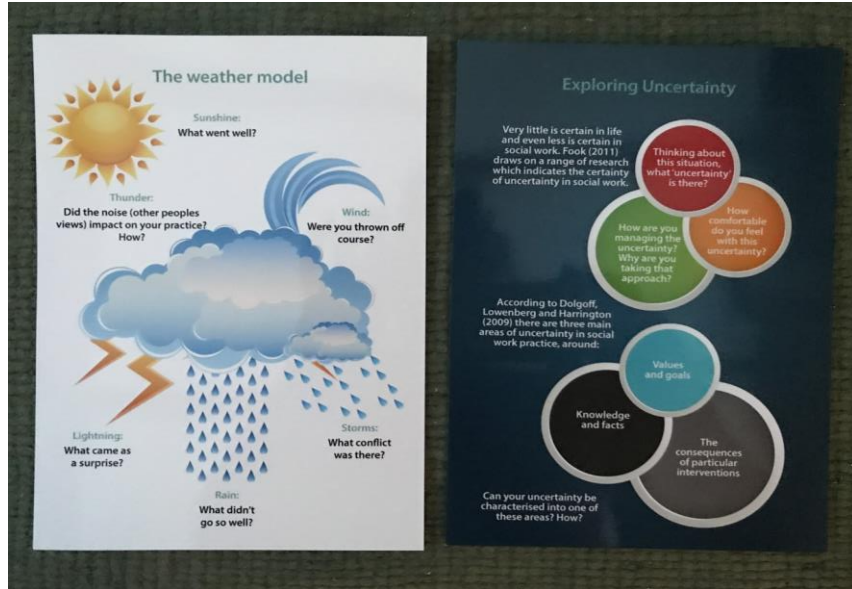
The student picks a card to reflect with at the start of each supervision. Each card can be saved on a jamboard*. Their placement journey is now a visual of thoughts, feelings, and experiences!

*A jamboard is Google's version of an interactive whiteboard, but you can use any software you like

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Ref: Maclean, S., 2015. Reflective Practice Cards. 1st ed. Kirwin Maclean Associates.

Comfort, Learning and Panic Zones

In order to learn we have to explore: we already know our environment, our **Comfort Zone** - this is where things are familiar, where we feel comfortable, where we don't have to take any risks. The Comfort Zone is important, because it gives us a place to return to, to reflect and make sense of things - a safe haven.

Yet, in order to get to know the unknown we have to leave our Comfort Zone and discover the **Learning Zone**, which lies just outside of our secure environment. Only in the Learning Zone can we grow and learn, live out our curiosity and make new discoveries, and thus slowly expand our Comfort Zone. Going into the Learning Zone is a borderline experience - we feel we're exploring the edge of our abilities, our limits, how far we dare to leave our Comfort Zone.

Beyond the Learning Zone lies the Panic Zone, wherein learning is impossible, as it is blocked by a sense of fear. This is why, in the transition from Comfort Zone to Learning Zone, we need to be careful when taking risks that we don't go too far out of our Comfort Zone - beyond the Learning Zone - into the **Panic Zone**, where all our energy is used up for managing/controlling our anxiety.

Importantly, these three zones are different for different situations and different for each person - we all have our own unique zones. This means that we must never push someone into their Learning Zone, as we cannot see where it starts or begins. All we can do is invite them into it, value their decision, take them seriously and give them support so they won't enter their Panic Zone.

Theories & Frameworks

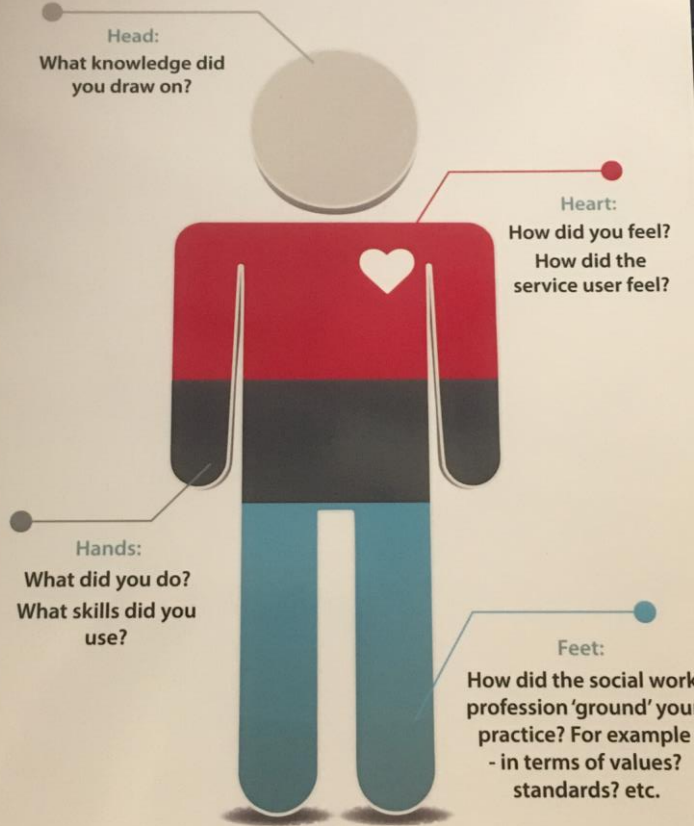**Theories and frameworks to aid students reflection and thinking:**

De Bono's decision making hats

French and Raven's 5 forms of power

The Theory Circle (a great tool to link theory to practice)

Siobhan Maclean Reflection Cards (see slide 39 for examples)

Head, Heart and Hands

Head:
What knowledge did you draw on?

Heart:
How did you feel?
How did the service user feel?

Hands:
What did you do?
What skills did you use?

Feet:
How did the social work profession 'ground' your practice? For example - in terms of values? standards? etc.

The great social work bake off

Preparation (the stage of reflection for action)

- What ingredients have you got? *(in social work – what is happening?)*
- What recipe are you using? *(what approach / theory will you use?)*
- How are you feeling about making the cake? *(how do you feel about the piece of work?)*
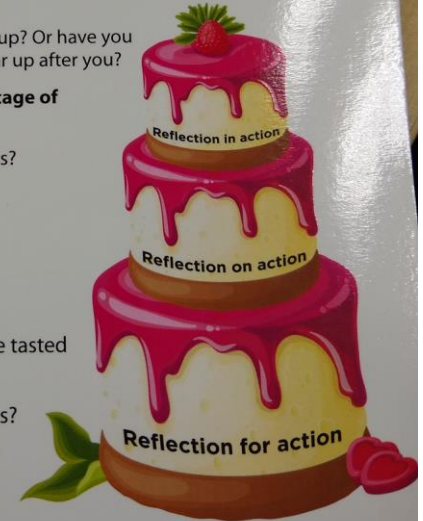
Making the cake (the stage of reflection in action)

- Did you follow the recipe?
- Did you add any spice?
- Did you make a mess?
- If so, how did you tidy it up? Or have you left someone else to clear up after you?

Digesting the cake (the stage of reflection on action)

- Did you burn your fingers?
- Did you share the cake?
- Did it sink or did it rise?
- What did it taste like?
- If you had changed the ingredients would it have tasted the same?
- Did you cater for all tastes?

**What was the icing on the cake?**

Reflection in action
Reflection on action
Reflection for action

Ref: Maclean, S., 2015. Reflective Practice Cards. 1st ed. Kirwin Maclean Associates.

Takeaway points to remember
'Supervision and Reflection'

★ Create and maintain a safe and confidential space
★ Allow for extra time for 'virtual' supervision
★ Be creative with technology for reflective supervision
★ Pay particular attention to each 'check-in' and each 'check-out' with supervision

Student top tip - Please make use of the available technology & get creative with interactive activities e.g. a Jamboard, use of polls, break out rooms etc. & explore with us our anxiety, fears & worries we experience about working remotely and on our own**.**
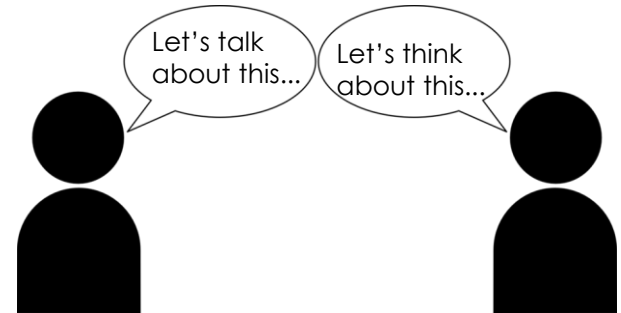
Wellbeing

Top Ten Tips for Filling Up the Tank

- Divide and conquer – one task/theme at a time
- Share the duty- there is always a team around – family, teachers, health visitors
- It's work. Put it down. Leave it in the computer
- Put it away – help the mind switch off by putting all your work stuff in the rucksack and out of sight every day
- Move around, little walks/bake some brownies
- Take some space/link with friends
- Remember where you are on the ladder of learning
- You're doing more than you think (& more than you should be)
- You're not 'only working' (but doing a whole lot of other tasks too/attending responsibilities etc.)
- Optimise ending (quality endings, succinct, paced)
- Try to work working hours most of the time

Building Foundations

- First things first - look after you! Encourage your student that wellbeing is a priority
- We can only do what we can do - encourage students to ask for help and talk things through
- Encourage students to support each other through the placement (peer support)
- Encourage good habits - make sure wellbeing is on THEIR agenda
- Use the Wheel of Life to discuss work/life balance
- Use Wellness Action Plans (MIND)

Promoting Wellbeing

- Knowing, Going & Showing - you need to model prioritising wellbeing to your student in this way
- Working SMARTly and setting realistic targets
- Sharing, Caring and Repairing - spend time with your student to talk, connect & resolve
- Encourage your student to recharge their batteries in order to give their best
- Fasten your seatbelt first - encourage your student to stop, think and prepare before they act!

A Little Extra Help

- Look up the Employment Assistance Programme for free support
- Occupational Health Reviews, Wellness Action Plans
- Remember Triggers can be Big, Little, Invisible
- Many layers at work, home, society can impact students
- Use your relationship with your student to support them
- Encourage your student to Buddy up / have a quick teams chat if they need some peer support
- Use the resources on the Teaching Partnership's Wellbeing Hub.

My Wellbeing Reminder

What does Emotional Resilience mean to me?	
What behavioural, physical or emotional reactions to stress have I experienced? **What has helped me manage these?**	
How can I reduce stress?	
Who can I speak to?	
What would help me to talk about my emotions?	
What can I do to develop my resilience?	

Takeaway points to remember 'Wellbeing'

★ Ensure wellbeing is on the agenda for every supervision
★ Acknowledge and explore the challenges when working from home
★ Encourage the student to prioritise their own wellbeing
★ In these difficult times remind the student: *it's OK not to be OK!*

Student top tips - Please factor breaks in when planning long meetings or supervision! & be explicit with the student about taking breaks from the laptop, not to sit at desks all day and encouraging a walk during their lunch break!

Direct Work

'Real' vs 'Virtual' World Opportunities 1

	In the 'real' world	In the 'virtual' world
1	Identify appropriate cases with manager	• Identify approp cases/task with manager • Consider existing cases first of all
2	Student would shadow at least 2 visits	• Video call to observe a colleague calling • Video call to observe a colleague on a visit • Role play • Undertake risk assessment for h/v
3	Student would need to read assessments, chronologies and case notes on the system	• Student asked to read info on the system, but then asked to highlight main points. • Initial daily check in to pick up problems
4	Student would go on a joint visit	• If possible, 3 way facetime call • Student to observe through video call, but to make the notes • Three way call with PE, student & s/user to introduce self

'Real' vs 'Virtual' World Opportunities 2

	In the 'real' world	In the 'virtual' world
5	Student would talk to team members	• Arrange times for student to speak to team members • Before the meeting, go through with students what questions they can ask
6	Student would learn from listening to conversations in the office	• Arrange some additional training in supervision ie processes, legislation etc • Can student observe duty? • Buddy system - can student catch up weekly with buddy & discuss their cases
7	You would find out about student's previous experience & build on strengths	• In supervision discuss learning needs • Properly read and discuss all info in student application/prev placement reports as you can't learn this from obs
8	Student would be able to have informal chat to you / colleagues before and after visit.	• Set up time to talk to PE/colleague before & after s/user phone calls for informal support • Early on in p/ment have regular catch up times

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Alternative Activities

Suggested alternative activities and tasks which could be set by the practice educator/supervisor, to assess capability where a student is undertaking placement remotely.

This is not an exhaustive list and students should expect to complete all tasks directed:

- Completing notes and reports
- Liaising with colleagues and with other agencies by telephone
- Telephone contact with people with lived experience of social work
- Attending virtual meetings
- Completion of reflective accounts set by the PE regarding use of theory or ethical issues
- Producing PowerPoint presentations to inform team members of research findings
- Reviewing and/or updating organisational policies and procedures
- Supervision/practice tutorials by telephone or other online method
- Research about specific issues relating to the people students are working with
- Flexibility and creativity in managing assessments will be required. Two short direct observations (for example of telephone duty calls) may replace a longer direct observation.

Takeaway points to remember 'Direct Work'

★ Virtual work with people with lived experience **CAN** provide enormous learning opportunities to develop and demonstrate Social Work skills
★ Be creative with assessments and interventions using the technology available to you
★ Build in time to meet with students before and / or after their initial virtual interventions
★ Using a buddy system can enable a student to broaden their scope of learning from different SW practice and scenarios

Student top tip - shadowing opportunities in other teams, is a good idea, so we learn about other teams & services.

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 1
(with thanks to Chandra Sanghavi and
Ruth Kirkwood)

As a parent of a son with a severe learning disability and a member of KU PLE group, Chandra shares her learning from experience in order to promote learning by social work students and those assessing and supporting their learning and development.

All feedback collected should be **meaningful** and **honest** and it is the learner's responsibility to promote this. It is nice to have positive feedback because it encourages you to continue the good practice, but negative feedback should not be discouraging.

All feedback should be anonymised in any work submitted to the university.

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 2

What is the importance of feedback from people you have worked with?

Feedback is important to know how well you are performing during your training or placement.

- PLE feedback is important to monitor your own performance.
- Negative feedback can also be constructive and help to achieve positive learning outcomes if you use it for reflection, self-evaluation of your own performance, identifying future learning needs and professional development planning.
- Aim for qualitative feedback. Ask **specific questions** on your professionalism, performance and areas of professional/personal development. Think about the specific areas you are required to demonstrate or want/need to develop, as well as your actual work with that particular person.

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 3

When is it best to collect the feedback?

- Try to get feedback as soon as possible after a particular encounter or piece of work.
- Feedback should be collected at different stages of the training or placement so that you know at the earliest stage what changes are needed.
- If you leave it to the end, sometimes people drop out (from the project/work) or are just not in a condition, position or mood to give feedback.
- Sometimes people take the questionnaires with them and do not return them. If you leave it till the end you might lose the feedback.
- Think about the timing for the person-best time of day/day of the week, beginning or end of a visit.

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 4

Who is responsible for collecting the feedback?

- This should be negotiated between all involved in the placement including Practice Educators, students/apprentices, onsite supervisors, mentors and the people themselves- perhaps whoever the PLE feels most comfortable with, is the most appropriate person to seek the feedback.
- People should be enabled to feel comfortable in giving feedback, so use the appropriate format, timing and surroundings. This can be formal or informal. Respect their choice and privacy and give them choice of if, how, when and where they would like to give feedback. Assure them that the feedback they provide will have no impact on their rights or their access to services.

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 5

How: Methods used for collecting feedback

- The methods used for collecting feedback should be highly **individualised**, meeting individual needs, and not a 'one for all' approach.
- The methods should be **appropriate** to the individual's communication and coordination skills; their patience and concentration; their confidence, culture, age and ability.
- Methods used should be **meaningful**, interesting and allow for maximum engagement of the person in the activity in giving feedback.

There are **different ways** of collecting feedback like questionnaires, informal and formal conversation, statements, playing games with children, doing colouring, using symbols, emoji's, balloons, pictures and poetry. Think about how you feel when asked to complete a feedback form-try to be creative in your approach!

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 6

- If the method used doesn't work and/or the person doesn't respond in the way that you had hoped, **change** the format, surroundings and/or the approach. It is your responsibility to find the best way to enable the person to share their views, in accordance with their skills, abilities, approach, needs or preferences.

- Always **appreciate** the efforts made by the people you have worked with in helping you to evaluate your own performance and professional development.

  - See also Slide 68

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 7
Tips on using Questionnaires

1. Include different types of questions for the required responses and be mindful of the length of the final questionnaire.

2. Always give clear instructions, like:

• Please circle O one of the following or Please ✔ one of the boxes

3. When you need a definite "yes" or" "no" answer, always use closed questions, but still allow room to write comments, like:

• Did I explain confidentiality?   (Please ✔ one of the boxes)
   Yes   No
Any comments:

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 8

4. If using a scale, limit the range from 1-5 and give clear explanations, like:

Did I clearly explain the purpose of my visit? (Please circle O one of the following)

1	2	3	4	5
Not clear				**Very Clear**

5. When you would prefer a person to express their own views and/or emotions in detail, use open questions and allow plenty of space for writing, like

What could I have done more or differently to provide better support to you and/or your family?

Any Suggestions:

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 8

6. When designing a questionnaire for children make it interesting, short, simple; use colours, shapes, balloons, age and gender-appropriate graphics and emojis for expressing emotions. Involve them in an interesting activity in order to gather the feedback.

| Awful | Not very good | Good | Really good | Brilliant |

Figure 2 The Smileyometer

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 9

7. Always use simple language; no jargon and abbreviations. Be careful how you phrase questions for children and /or people with limited vocabulary or other communication difficulties. For example, instead of asking 'How was my time keeping?', you could make it simpler and direct:

Did I arrive on time for my visits? (Please ✓ one)

Yes   No

8. Any pictures used should be self-explanatory, not confusing and culturally sensitive. For example, a 'thumbs-up' sign has different cultural interpretations.

9. Options are easy for some people who have limited co-ordination and/or writing skills. Using this option allows you to receive a definite response from them.

Seeking Meaningful PLE Feedback 10
Additional thoughts on working virtually

Seeking feedback by telephone or virtually can be both easier or more difficult, depending on the skills, mood and comfort level of the people with lived experience.

- Some PLE do not have easy access to computers or do not have IT skills.

- They could have sensory impairments which hinder this sort of communication.

- Some do not feel comfortable to talk on the phone, when they cannot see a face.

- Some feel so excited about talking (especially, when they feel lonely and feel the need to talk to someone) that it can be a lengthy process. For example, my son Sam is so desperate to talk to people at present, that he just waits for the opportunity for someone to ring and he runs to pick up the phone and starts talking about the subject of the day (no matter, who is on the line or what question you ask). He cannot distinguish between personal and official chat.

- The above can be true of any person people who maybe lives alone and desperately feels the need to talk.

Assessment & Direct Observation
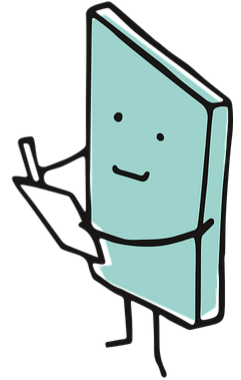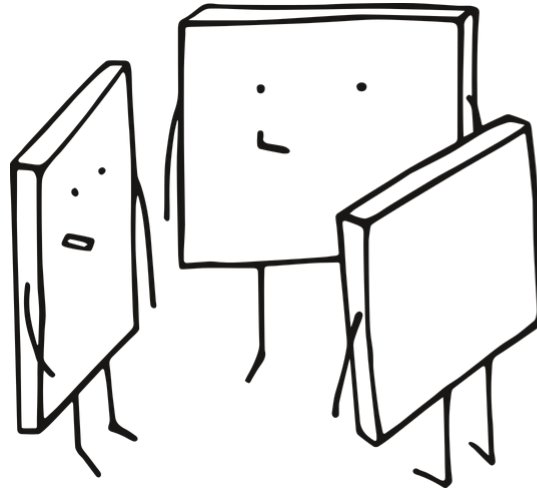
Virtual Direct Observation 1

Ways of undertaking a direct observation virtually:

- Video call to observe student making a phone call
- Video call to observe an actual visit
- Video call to observe a facetime call
- Video call to observe a student participate/chair a meeting
- 3-way facetime call
- Audio call to listen to a telephone call or facetime call
- Conference call

Virtual Direct Observation 2

Useful hints when undertaking a direct observation virtually:

- Switch microphone and camera off when observing to reduce distractions
- Make sure the observation isn't too long, as observing through a screen can be tiring
- Ensure arrangements are made for you to speak to the person user after the observation
- Ensure arrangements are in place for you to provide immediate feedback to the student

NB: Feedback from PLE and with student can take more planning when undertaking a virtual observation.

Virtual Direct Observation 3

Points to remember for Virtual Observations:

- Ensure the observation is not too long as it can be more tiring focusing on a screen and just what you are hearing
- Ensure the person is aware of the observation, even if they can't see or hear you
- Be clear beforehand what you are looking for - you are unable to read a student's body language in a phone interaction so it's even more important to plan intention of intervention and how student will demonstrate social work practice to cover which PCF domains
- After the observation - feedback and discussion - ask how the student felt it went, ask questions about why they said things in a certain way, feedback - all this can be used for evidence
- Remember to describe what you see/hear and link this to what this demonstrates

Feedback from People with Lived Experience

Tools that can help with gathering feedback from PLE:

- [Linking feedback questions to the PCF (or KSS)](#)
- [Core questions for seeking feedback](#)
- [Head, Heart, Tummy, Toes](#) - for gathering feedback from children following direct observations
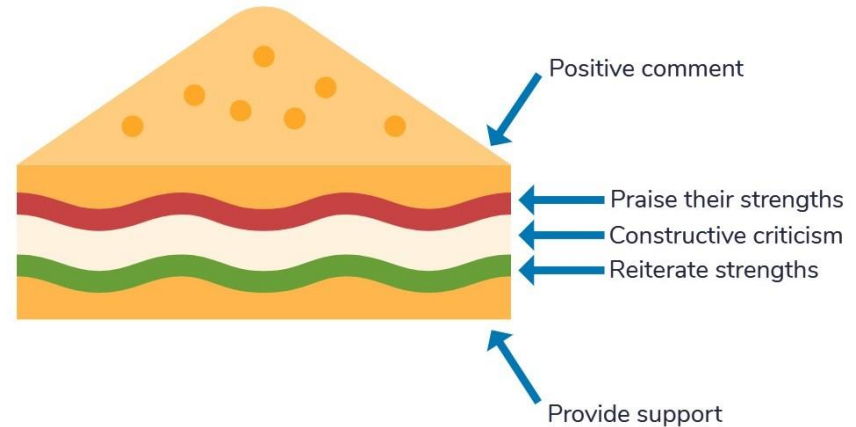- **BE CREATIVE** (ask for feedback as pictures/voice messages/Facetime/Text)

skillsforcare

Providing Feedback

Giving feedback to your student:

Siobhan Maclean notes that constructive feedback should be:

- Positive
- Specific
- Descriptive
- Actionable
- Prioritised
- Facilitative
- Clear
- Well timed

Positive comment

Praise their strengths
Constructive criticism
Reiterate strengths

Provide support

P. 155 'Share: A New Model for Social Work' Maclean, Finch & Tedam (2018)

Assessments in the 'Real' World

Assessing students in the 'real' world includes:

- Direct observation - formal
- Written tasks - assessments, chronologies, emails, case notes, referrals
- Panel presentations
- Service User feedback
- Professional feedback
- Team meetings - participation and student presenting to team
- Other Meetings - participation and chairing
- Supervision
- Colleague feedback
- Informal Observation
- See here for a useful Observation checklist.

Adapting Student Assessments

Colleague Feedback	Informal Observation
Useful to think about this early on, to **arrange** 'shadowing' or joint working with colleagues, as it may not just happen	Look at IT system - how long student has been logged on, when you are expecting them to be writing up
Speak to colleagues from other teams who have worked with the student - have some specific questions ready	Ask your student about breaks / when they log off to etc. to explore their work/life boundaries
Speak to colleagues who have allowed your student to shadow them - have some specific questions ready	Checking that students are logging on at 9.00am by arranging calls, or sending emails
If using a buddy, speak to the buddy	Arrange informal observations via Facetime/video calls

Takeaway points to remember
'Assessment & Direct Observation'

★ Direct observations can be undertaken virtually!
★ Plan when and how you will obtain feedback from the people involved in the intervention
★ Plan when you will be able to discuss feedback with your student
★ Draw on information from your team and your technology when assessing your student

Student top tip - During an observation, the PE turning their camera off, so the student continues with the online visit, forgetting the PE was there!

Struggling placements

Signs of a Struggling Student 1

What you see/experience as PE	Potential causes
- Not producing sufficient written work - Not easy to contact / unreliable - Disinterested / not asking questions - Confrontational attitude (masking fears) - Logged on for too long/not enough	- Demotivated due to struggling to work from home or placement experience not meeting expectation (frustration) - Lack of confidence - Anxiety about getting it wrong
- Poor quality of work - Asking same question repeatedly - Taking a lot of time off sick	- Need for further support (EASL) - Not knowing how to do something - Potential learning need (ie dyslexia)
- Unable to reflect in supervision - Unable to speak openly - Missing supervision	- Is home a safe/confidential space? - Distractions/childcare WFH - Finding remote working hard to build relationship with PE

Signs of a Struggling Student 2

Williams and Rutter (2015) identify the following indicators that
a student is struggling:

- Failure to fully engage with the learning process
- Personal or health issues that reduce a student's capacity to fully engage with or complete tasks
- Lack of confidence that affects autonomous practice, safe decision making and resilience
- Lack of the necessary critical reflection, analysis and self-awareness
- Lack of professionalism, which may include poor time keeping and a failure to follow procedures
- Issues with values, for example not recognising the impact of one's personal values on practice
- Issues with learning or assessment, for example not providing evidence of capability at the appropriate standard and not making the expected progress.

Having the 'Courageous Conversation'

Communicate and address the concerns you have with students by:

- **'Saying it as it is' -** Jo Finch (2017)
- Having **'Courageous Conversations' -** Beddoe & Davys (2016)

Finch (2017) - Before having the conversation, ask yourself:

- Are the expected standards set and clearly documented?

- Does the student understand the standards?

- In what ways are the standards not being met?

- What are the reasons for the standards not being met?

Maintaining Standards & Taking Actions

- Deal with issues as they arise and be clear about level of concern
- Practice Educator should be clear about concerns and have evidence for this
- Relate the issues to a specific need when appropriate
- Create an action plan that is agreed, recorded and signed by the student and Practice Educator
- Detail who will own what action
- Seek support from your organisation/manager
- Communicate with the university tutor

Takeaway points to remember
'Struggling placements'

★ Be mindful of how a struggling student may present when working from home and away from the team

★ Standards, performance and professionalism remain the same in a virtual placement

★ Be clear at the beginning of the placement what the standards are and how you will be assessing this

★ Address any concerns as soon as possible!

Before moving onto endings, here are some further thoughts from students

Encourage students to use supervision effectively and take everything on as it will benefit your learning!

Availability - alongside longer supervisions, knowing I can email and their PE responsiveness was very helpful.

Allow extra time in supervision for pleasantries and general chit chat. It helps you get to know each other better. This really put me at ease, it made me feel more relaxed, than if it had been rushed through

My PE has been very good in checking in on me, and I can call her at anytime. If she is not around, I have a Buddy person I can speak to

I need to know that it is okay to say that I am not sure and need additional support

Flexibility is helpful and reassuring! It can be stressful nearing the end of placement, but flexibility provided me with reassurance!

Remind your student to take advantage of any learning opportunities as they are only a student once!

Weekly team catch up calls has been helpful, and I can speak to any of the team members. It was quite lonely when I started as I did not know anyone

Endings

Quotes about Endings

An ending is a *process* and an *event* and a positive ending can help promote positive re-engagement

Endings are *transitions*

Every goodbye which is well done in the present can retrospectively help heal incomplete goodbyes of the past.....can help clients learn how better to negotiate life's many natural and unnatural endings in the future…

Preparation for termination begins at the very beginning... (Kadushin, 1990 p206 in Trevithick, 2004 p107)

# Good Practice using a Relationship-based Approach

Planning for ending starts at the beginning ⇒ make sure you build in time at the beginning to talk about the end of placement and record this in the PLA and account for endings in the placement timetable.

Process includes:

- **review and evaluation**: of placement process and learning achieved; acknowledging strengths, identifying continuing needs; updating PDP

- **reporting**: PE/OSS and student need time to prepare final report; case records/summaries and handover meetings to be arranged

- **quality assuring**: feeding back to the University, to PE, OSS, PA employer

Event includes:

- **celebration:** with the PLE, with colleagues and peers; marking

  ending of work/relationship with PLE

Life's a Journey
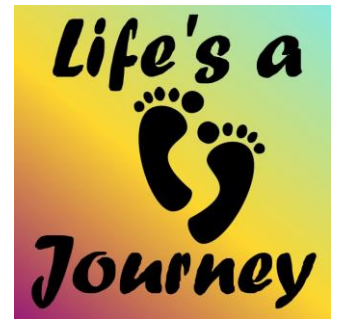
Unplanned Endings 1

What happens when things don't go according to plan?

We need to consider this possibility, especially given current circumstances and the potential need for support, which is likely to be provided only remotely:

- Unexpected and premature endings – may lead to feelings of shock, anger, disappointment

- Forced endings – may feel a loss of control or choice, discrimination or oppression

- Dissatisfying endings - lack of achievement

- Emotional content needs to be addressed and processed

- Consider benefit of restorative actions

Unplanned Endings 2

Tools/ideas:

- Reflect on the student's '[Jamboard Journey with Reflective Cards](#)'
- Creating a 'Sparkle' Box, end of placement reflection letters (PE and student) or Rainy Day letter (with PLE), Appreciative Present Poster.
- Arrange a celebratory/ending event with children/young people/adults or those with whom they have worked closely - this could be a virtual game or doing an activity together etc.
- Watch this video for many more creative ideas for facilitating endings in a relationship-based approach:
  https://youtu.be/_WVcheO2b0 (Maclean 2020)

Takeaway points to remember
'Endings'

★ Plan your endings ahead

★ Take time to do them well

★ Use a reflection model for the student to look back and review their progress, strengths and learning

★ Identify future learning needs for the student's onward journey

Final ideas….issues….reminders

- **Anxiety** of student - how will my PE know what I am doing?
- PEs need to be **more curious** about **connecting** with the student
- It is more important than ever to be **transparent** about what a PE is looking at - i.e. looking at work on the system / looking at the time a student is online etc., in order to **obtain evidence** for midway / final reports
- Ensuring student is given enough **time** - working virtually can mean it takes longer to do certain tasks
- You can support students with **virtual exercises / Placement Activities** that can provide additional evidence of practice against PCFs. The Teaching Partnership developed a simulated placement activities resource pack to help with this.
- Providing **articles** to read that can support learning, wellbeing and discussion on issues associated with **covid** and **working from home**
- It is more important than ever to create a **safe space in supervision** - and to explore how supervision can be safe and confidential when working from home

Tools for demonstrating social work skills across the PCF

Developing Together PCF toolkit (on the website)

This toolkit has a number of exercises and models which will support PEs to enable their students to demonstrate social work skills across the PCFs. They are divided into each domain.

Developing Together - South West London & Surrey Social Work Teaching Partnership

With special thanks to:

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