



## Space to Think: Reflective Practice Guidance in Salford

**Multi-agency reflective practice guidance to support professionals to create a safe and supportive space that encourages multi-agency reflection in the context of safeguarding children, young people, families, and communities in Salford.**



## Background and Purpose

Findings from reviews in Salford have identified the need for multi-agency professionals to have a space to reflect on the journey of a child particularly outside of the usual statutory processes. Similarly in a number of national reviews the importance of professionals needing the space and support to reflect on their practice to make better decisions for children and families has been highlighted ( Laming 2009, Munro, 2011)

Whilst agencies have their own processes and structures to support and supervise their staff and volunteers, the opportunity to be able to reflect on their practice with other multi-agency practitioners will have additional benefits. This collaboration can lead to improved practice, more effective and accessible services and build stronger relationships not only with each other but with children, young people and families.

The model proposed by the SSCP will also support a shift from a compliance-focused approach to one that values professional expertise and continuous learning. The approach fosters a 'blame free' safe space that encourages multi-agency reflection and mutual support.

The aim is to work in partnership with each other through creating a safe space to better understand the family strengths and needs in line with current thresholds to ensure a family centred approach is taken across all the [stages of help and support](#). This is a bit like creating an environment that is psychologically safe, where everyone feels safe enough to reflect and share their thoughts ensuring everyone feels welcomed and valued for their contributions.

We want to use this space to help us celebrate our successes and challenges so that we can work towards strengthening the services we provide to children and families on an individual and collective level.

## Who can request, facilitate and attend a multi-agency reflective practice session?

Any practitioner who works with children, young people and their families can request, attend and facilitate a session.

This task is not designated to one professional - anyone can take the lead. By taking a partnership approach we enable the opportunity to freely explore the existing strengths and needs of the family and unravel the family's story. This will not only support a healthy evaluation of the current issues but also help us share our working out/thinking and work towards co-producing solutions that have been informed by our families.

This approach will allow us to think through dilemmas and issues away from the pressures and constraints of formal meetings. It but gives us a space to reflect and develop our

individual and collective practice to better understand the different perspectives held by us all, and to help shape SMART shared outcomes for the children and families we work with.

It is recommended that practitioners ensure they have agreement by their manager to ensure oversight and support.

### **How can a multi-agency reflective practice session be used?**

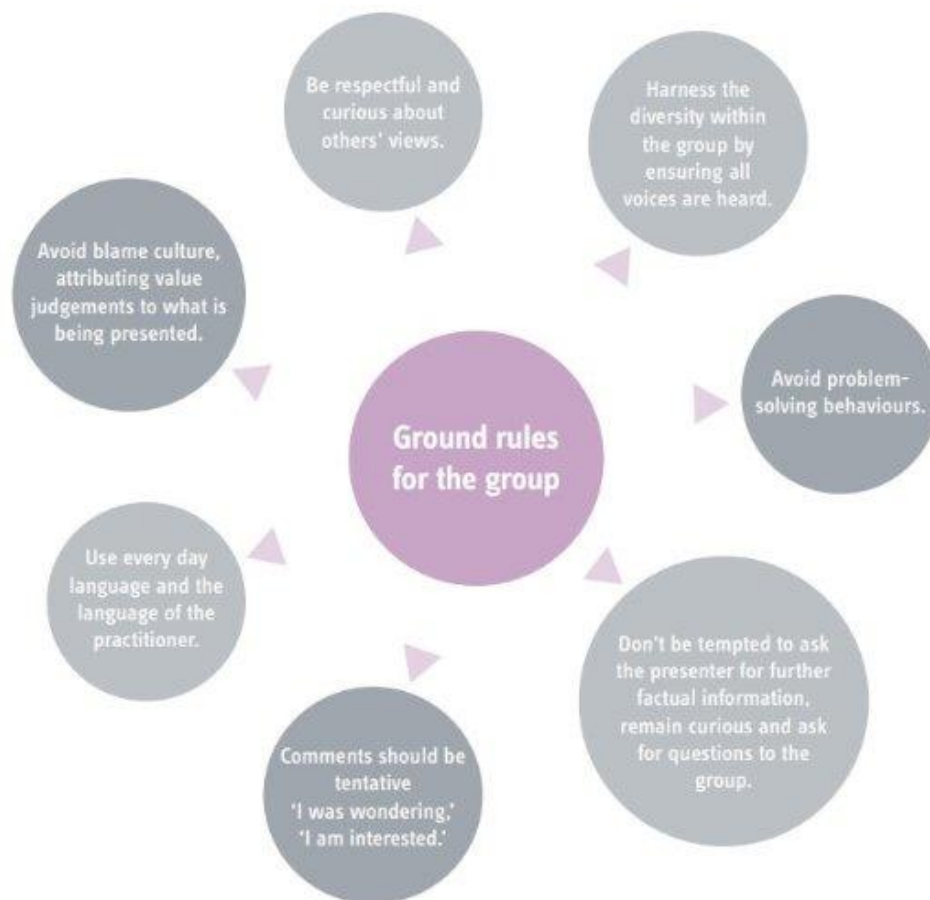
- A reflective space to think about what might be needed or helpful for a child, young person and their family.
- In situations where professionals feel 'stuck' or unclear about the systems, processes or decisions being made.
- A safe and supportive space to think about what you and your colleagues may need help or support with, to improve your practice with a child, young person, their family or other colleagues.
- A space to review the effectiveness of current interventions and consider the impact of the child or young person's current situation on their lived experiences and take account of other perspectives.
- Exploring how individuals and the network might support the child, young person and the family going forward.
- Reflection and debrief following a significant event to enable a safe space to process the event with other multi-agency colleagues encouraging self-care of yourself and others to support future planning.
- Can be considered where there are disagreements, professional challenge or a need for escalation - this should be aligned to the [SSCP challenge and escalation procedure](#).

### **What the multi-agency reflective practice session IS NOT**

- It is not about sharing new information or making case decisions, rather it provides a safe space and 'slows time' for practitioners to reflect on the child/children's experiences, review information across the partnership, review the impact of current interventions, identify any themes, trends or learning and agree collective solutions.
- Does not replace or fulfil the functions of statutory or single or multi-agency processes, guidance, systems or meetings i.e. TAF, CIN, Core Group, Child Protection Conference, multiagency strategy discussions/meetings, school forums.
- Should not be used in the place of single agency support, supervision or reflective practice provisions
- The sessions are not designed to involve children, young people or families. The views, voice and lived experiences should be sought by practitioners in the usual processes, to inform practice and forward planning.

## How should we facilitate a multi-agency reflective practice session?

- It is recommended to have face-to-face reflective sessions in a suitable venue identified and organised by the professionals who will be attending. However, this may also be facilitated virtually e.g. on Teams if appropriate.
- Although children and their families will not be present at the reflective practice sessions, professionals are encouraged to present information as though they are in the room in a respectful and blame-free culture.



- You may not always reach an outcome – it is an opportunity to reduce professional anxiety by building and strengthening relationships.
- You may identify that you want to hold further reflective sessions.

## Review, Reflect, Restore

The process of a Space to Think: Reflective Practice session is based on the Family Partnership Model reflective practice approach of:

- Offload
- Purposeful reflection
- Planning and action

### You will need to assign roles:

- The Facilitator
- Case Presenter
- Consultants

The group decides on a Facilitator: their role is to guide the session. The Case Presenter provides a brief outline of their case, and all the other members act as Consultants. The session should last for 30-35 minutes by following the timed guidelines.

1. **Case Presenter offloads:** including giving a brief overview of the situation and why they are bringing it to the reflective practice session.  
*Only the Case Presenter speaks and the group listens - 5mins*
2. **Checking of facts:** understanding the dilemma what help the Case Presenter wants.  
*Facilitator summarises what they understood and checks with Case Presenter - 3mins*
3. **Group exploration:** using the Listen Emphasise Summarise Share back method, the group are invited by the Facilitator to explore with the Case Presenter, keeping focus on the issue the Case Presenter would like help with.  
*Both the Case Presenter and the group speak - 10 mins*
4. **Sharing of strengths:** the Facilitator encourages the group to share the strengths, the qualities and skills they appreciated in the Case Presenter.  
*Group speaks and the Case Presenter listens - 2mins*
5. **Purposeful reflection:** the Facilitator invites the group to reflect on the situation, to then share ideas of priorities, next steps and possible strategies.  
*Case Presenter listens to the group and makes notes - 10 mins*
6. **Summary and next steps** - The Case presenter is invited by the facilitator to summarise and share action plan – by sharing what they have taken away from the discussion and what their next steps will be.  
*Case Presenter speaks and the group listens - 5mins*

\_\_\_\_\_ **End** \_\_\_\_\_

The process may be repeated again after a short break and roles can be reassigned

Please provide your **feedback** to the SSCP on how the model worked for you.

## Examples of Reflective Questioning (adapted from McClure, 2002)

- What exactly did you do?
- Why did you choose that particular action?
- What were you aiming for when you did that?
- What knowledge informed your practice?
- What research informed your practice?
- What were you trying to achieve?
- What did you do next?
- What were your reasons for doing that?
- How successful was it? What difference did it make? What was the impact?
- What criteria are you using to judge success? How are you measuring success/difference/impact?
- What alternatives were there?
- How would you do it differently next time? Why?
- What do you feel about the whole experience?
- Did your values impact in your practice?
- How did the child, parent, family member feel about it? How do you know?
- What sense can you make of the whole experience considering your past experiences?
- Has this changed the way you will do things in the future? How?

## Recording, Consent and Information Sharing

- You should inform families that this model exists alongside other systems and processes: to help agencies to support and safeguard children, young people and their families effectively.
- It is recommended that practitioners as a minimum make a note in the child's record and chronology that a multi-agency reflective session took place.
- Practitioners are encouraged to share the learning they have gained with their line manager/supervisor within their support and supervision processes. Careful consideration should be given to anonymising individual/agency comments so that the sole focus is on the practitioners reflections and the needs of the child and their family
- Always remember to record in a manner that a child and their family can easily understand the process taking place and the reasons for decisions and actions taken.
- Ensure that your records are clear about what and why you have shared or chosen not to share information. Ensure you evidence how you came to any decision, and who you shared what with.

- Where there are serious concerns which place a child at immediate risk of harm, local [child protection processes](#) should be followed. Where there are safeguarding concerns about an adult follow the [adult safeguarding process](#).
- For concerns or allegations refer to [Managing allegations against adults who work with children](#) and [People in Positions of Trust \(PIPOT\) & Whistleblowing | Salford Safeguarding Adults Board](#).
- Any identified multi-agency learning and/or themes should be shared with the Salford Safeguarding Children's Partnership: including any reflections and comments on strengths and areas for improvement to the model using the [feedback form](#).

## Further resources

1. **SSCP:** [Policies and procedures | Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
2. **Research in Practice: includes podcasts, resources and toolkits**
  - [The importance of reflective supervision | Research in Practice](#)
  - [Reflective supervision resource pack 2017.pdf](#)
  - [Anti-racist supervision matters | Research in Practice](#)
3. **Self-Care: Trauma Responsive Workforce - *Remember no matter how busy you are: make time to pause, reflect and take care of yourself.***

Alongside support, supervision and services available in our organisations to support you and your colleagues, you should also prioritise taking better care of yourself and pay attention to what you need. The following information and resources have been identified to support the wellbeing of our people and teams in the workplace: including how we look after ourselves.

- [Self care resources | Partners in Salford](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing | Partners in Salford](#)
- [Trauma Responsive Greater Manchester \(trgm.co.uk\)](#)
- [Greater Manchester Resilience Hub - health and care staff wellbeing service](#)
- [Greater Manchester Wellbeing Toolkit | Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership](#)
- [Stress - Every Mind Matters - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [Managing stress and building resilience - tips - Mind](#)
- [Six Degrees Social Enterprise – Supporting Your Mental Health \(six-degrees.org.uk\)](#)
- [WorkWell \(Health and Work Support\)](#)

If there are any comments or suggested changes required in this guidance, please contact Sharn Begum [SSCP@salford.gov.uk](mailto:SSCP@salford.gov.uk)