

Using the KOLB Cycle in Supervision

1. Focusing on Experience

Here the emphasis is on facilitating an accurate and detailed recall of events. A partial description of the situation will undermine the rest of the cycle. Supervisees can be assisted to recall more than they think they can recall if the right questions are asked. In these lists 'you' is the supervisee.

1. How are you today - what's your day been like so far?
2. What happened before the 'event' 'issue' 'situation' started?
3. What was your role in this situation?
4. What was your aim? What planning did you do?
5. What did you expect to happen?
6. What happened?
7. What did you say? What did you do?
8. What did the other people involved say, do or display?
9. What reactions did you notice to what you said/did?
10. What surprised or puzzled you? Who behaved differently?
11. What stuck out for you? What were the key moments?
12. What words, non-verbals, sounds, images struck you?
13. What did you notice about yourself, and the others involved?
14. What do you think others would have noticed about you?
15. If others involved had been describing this event, how similar or different to your account would their description have been?
16. What didn't you notice? What or who was hard to observe?
17. What observations or concerns do other agencies have?
18. What went according to plan? What didn't happen?
19. What changes or choices did you make?
20. What did you say, notice or do immediately after the situation?

2. Focusing on Reflection

Here the emphasis is on eliciting feelings, and patterns. These may bring out further information, or may reveal the supervisee's underlying attitudes. They may also give clues to other personal factors complicating the supervisee's experience. Reflection helps the supervisee make links between the current situation and his/her prior experiences, skills or knowledge.

1. What did you feel at the start of the situation?
2. What feelings did you bring into this situation?
3. Describe the range of feelings you had during the episode?
4. What physical sensations were you experiencing? Heart beat etc.
5. What did the situation/your feelings remind you of?
6. What previous work, processes, skills, knowledge are relevant?
7. What patterns did you see in this situation? Are these familiar?
8. Where have you encountered similar processes?
9. Describe a time when you last experienced that -what happened?
10. Who/what does the other people in this situation remind you of?
11. What did you think the other person(s) was feeling?

12. What feelings might you be carrying on behalf of the user/victim/other workers, e.g.: what transference or projection might be occurring?
13. What other factors might influence how you or the other people involved felt or reacted, e.g.: gender, race?
14. Where and when did you feel most or least comfortable?
15. Who seemed least or most comfortable - at what points?
16. What thoughts went through your mind during this situation?
17. What ideas came to you during the situation?
18. What are the continuities or discontinuities between this situation and the pattern of what's been happening before this situation began?
19. What did you tell yourself about what was happening, e.g. what was the 'self-talk' inside your head?
20. What feelings were you left with - is this familiar in these sorts of situations
21. What metaphor or analogy would describe your experience of this situation?
22. What was left unfinished?

3. Focusing on Analysis

Here the emphasis is on analysis and explanation, probing the meanings that the supervisee and others involved attribute to the situation. This includes consideration of other possible explanations, the identification of what is not known or understood, and areas for further exploration or assessment.

1. List three assumptions you/others might have brought into the situation?
2. How would you/others explain or understand what happened in that situation?
How else could you explain what happened?
3. How would the situation have been seen differently if you had been male/female; black/white; able bodied/disabled etc.
4. Who are the shareholders for this situation?
5. What tasks or responsibilities in this situation were or were not addressed?
6. What other, possibly unexpected outcomes, did the situation produce?
7. What was the nature of the power relations during this situation?
8. Did power relations shift during the situation - if so why?
9. How far did this situation confirm or challenge your previous understanding?
10. What are the current strengths, needs, risks for the different stakeholders in this situation?
11. What new information emerged?
12. What was the critical moment?
13. What went well, and why?
14. What did not go well and why?
15. How else might you have managed the situation?
16. What bits of theory, training, research, policy, values might help you make sense of what was happening in this situation?
17. What is not known?
18. What conclusion are you drawing from this situation so far?
19. How do you define your role in this situation?
20. How do others define your role in this situation: e.g. supervisee, other workers, user or other agency?
21. What would the organisation say your role is in this situation?
22. How clear is the organisation about its expectations in this situation?

4. Focusing on Strategies and Action Plans

The focus here is on translating the analysis into planning, preparation and action. This includes identification of outcomes and success criteria as well as consideration of potential complications and contingency plans.

1. In the light of the reflection and analysis we've done, what's your overall summary of where things are at, and what needs to be done next?
2. Can you identify what you are and are not responsible for in managing this situation?
3. What training, supervisory, mentoring and support needs have been raised for you?
4. What information needs to be obtained before proceeding?
5. What are your aims in this next phase of work?
6. What is urgent and essential?
7. What would be desirable?
8. What is negotiable and what is non-negotiable in this situation?
9. What would be a successful outcome to the next situation from your perspective?
10. What would be a successful outcome for the next situation from the perspective of the other key shareholders?
11. What do you need to do more of?
12. What do you need to do less of?
13. What do you need to start doing that perhaps you have been putting off?
14. What are the different ways in which you could approach this?
15. What might be your strategy for the next situation?
16. What are the possible best or worst outcomes?
17. How can the other key shareholders be engaged?
18. What contingency plans do you need - what is the bottom line?
19. Who else needs to be involved (other staff, other agency)?
20. What would you like from them?
21. How well equipped do you feel to undertake this?
22. Where do you feel more or less confident?
23. How can you prepare for this - mental rehearsal, flip chart map?
24. What can I do that would be helpful at this stage?
25. What and when does feedback and debriefing need to take place?
26. Are there any safety/ethical issues for you or others?
27. What can be done to minimise any dangers?

