


**Evaluating a Framework for Reflection on Practice:
Does Structured Reflective Activity Affect Clinicians' Practice?**

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Aims

- Report on evaluation of a structured framework for reflective practice implemented by qualified clinicians
 - Describe the framework
 - Outline research methodology
 - Summarise findings
 - Offer conclusions




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Framework for Reflective Practice




- Stage 1: Review one patient case; focus on assessment & treatment
- Stage 2: Structured, verbal dialogue with a colleague
- Stage 3: Notes & action points



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Prompters for Dialogue


- How did you go about identifying the patient's problems?
 - What data did you collect?
 - What other factors did you consider?
 - Was there any data you found difficult to deal with?
 - Was there any data you deemed not to be relevant?
- How did you decide which were the most important problems?
- How did you decide on choice of treatment?
- Did you consider any other kind of treatment?
- How do you think you handled this case?



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Implementation


- Two groups of clinicians including hospital and community-based practitioners
- Facilitated by Senior Clinician
- Regular engagement in reflection on practice over 6 month period



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Evaluation

1. Structured focus group interviews with clinicians
2. Individual structured interview with facilitator
3. Verbatim transcription of responses
4. Thematic analysis of transcripts



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Main Interview Questions

- What did you do?
- How often?
- What have you learned?
- Has this process influenced your practice?
- Does this process link with clinical decision-making?
- Do you plan to continue to implement the framework?
- Would you recommend others to use this framework in their own practice?
- What changes, if any, would you recommend?

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Outcomes for Practitioners

Three inter-related themes:

- Understanding own working practices
- Engagement in cognitive processes
- Awareness of affective benefits

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Outcomes: Practitioners

Understanding own working practices

- Assumptions
'I actually did make assumptions before I'd seen the patient, going on the history...'
'...if something was so obvious I just accepted that this was the problem,,,but it wasn't a thorough examination'
- Routine/habitual behaviour
'I realised I did a lot on automatic pilot.'
'Pattern recognition, sadly...if you're struggling you will go back to your old pattern.'

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- Decision-making
'It's made me aware that I make a number of decisions based on experience rather than analysing in a more open way exactly what's going on, maybe jumping in a bit too soon.'
- Need for evidence-base
'...9 times out of 10 it (treatment) was because of my experience, not because of evidence base...'
- Unclear case notes
'My notes, which I thought were adequate, weren't.'

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Outcomes: Practitioners

Engagement in cognitive processes

- Questioning what you do
'It makes us question what we're doing.'
'It makes you question and think and that's very positive.'
- Expanding thinking or thinking laterally
'It actually makes you question how you went through the assessment, how you might open your mind to other avenues...'

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- Thinking about thinking
'...thinking about your thinking, that's what it makes you do...I don't think about my thinking every day when I'm at work.'
- Challenging thinking about patients
'I guess it challenged the way we talk about our patients. It changed the way we were thinking.'

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Outcomes: Practitioners

Awareness of affective benefits

- Confidence

'It really increased my confidence.'

- Sharing practice & valuing each other

'It makes it OK to talk about what goes on behind the curtains.'

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Outcomes: Facilitator

- Confidence
- Self-awareness
- Need for evidence
- Learning from each other
- Personal development

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Changing Practice

Groups

- Regular, timetabled reflection on practice
- Regular sharing of practice
- Occasional joint treatment sessions

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Changing Practice

Individuals

- More confidence in practice
- Thinking about thinking
- Thinking about own practice
- Research-based practice
- Changes to note-taking

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'Now I try to stop, finish the assessment...give them something to work on...then really, really think through what it is, is there any other things I can do, is there something else I've forgotten about, something I've missed out, which I didn't do before...That's changed my practice.'

'...it's made me just think more on my feet...I think through the process and am thinking to myself, well if somebody was asking me why I have chosen this particular technique, can I justify why I have or why I haven't?'

'I'm doing more research based stuff now, I'm happier to speak to people about it, it gives you confidence...'

'...it stops me being complacent, it's too easy to stay in your own box, do your own thing...it makes me question and think and that's very positive.'

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Conclusions

- Regular reflection on practice is beneficial
- It can promote deep insight into practice
- It can lead to changes in practice

- Collegial dialogue is important
- A structure facilitates the process
- Protected time is necessary

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Publications

- Donaghy, M and Morss, K (2003) An evaluation of the effectiveness of a framework designed to facilitate reflection within the discipline of physiotherapy. *Proceedings, International Congress World Confederation for Physical Therapy, Barcelona*
- Donaghy, M and Morss, K (2000) Guided reflection in a framework to facilitate and assess reflective practice within the discipline of physiotherapy. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 16:3-14
- Morss, K and Donaghy (1998) Discipline-based academic development through a tripartite partnership. *International Journal of Academic Development*, 3(2): 136-145.

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