



# Reflective Supervision: A Guide from Region X to Enhance Reflective Practice Among Home Visiting Programs



# Reflective Supervision Guide: An Overview

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WASHINGTON ASSOC.  
Infant Mental



# WHY?



- Promote quality reflective supervision, accountability and consistency in Region X
- Promote consistency with requirements for evidence-based models
- Align with endorsement
- Enhance reflective practice across models

# REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION

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## KEY PRINCIPLES

### KEY PRINCIPLES AT-A-GLANCE



#### SUPERVISORS NEED AND DESERVE TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Reflective supervisors require ongoing training, support in the form of reflective supervision and/or reflective consultation provided to them, and administrative support.<sup>38</sup>



#### REFLECTION IS A LIFELONG DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

Reflection is a lifelong developmental process<sup>39</sup> that is influenced by past experiences, the current situation, and how one's neurological system processes information.

- This is true for babies, young children, parents, caregivers, home visitors, and supervisory visitors.
- Trauma also affects development and neurological responses, thus reflective capacity.<sup>40</sup>



#### REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION OCCURS WITHIN A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS CREATED OVER TIME

Reflective supervision occurs within a relationship that is created over time between the supervisor and the home visitor.

- The relationship must feel safe for both the supervisor and the home visitor in order for reflection to be effective.
- The dynamics of the relationship are intentionally recognized and explored during reflective supervision sessions.
- The supervisory relationship creates a holding space that allows for and supports reflection, and also ensures that the home visitor is not left feeling alone to carry the challenges encountered in their work.<sup>41</sup>



#### REFLECTION REQUIRES SLOW AND INTENTIONAL STEPPING BACK

Reflective supervision requires an intentional slowing down and stepping back to:

- Remember and attend to the details of a situation or interaction.
- Explore multiple perspectives and alternative possibilities.
- Re-experience the reactions that occurred as part of the interaction.<sup>42</sup>



#### FEELINGS MATTER

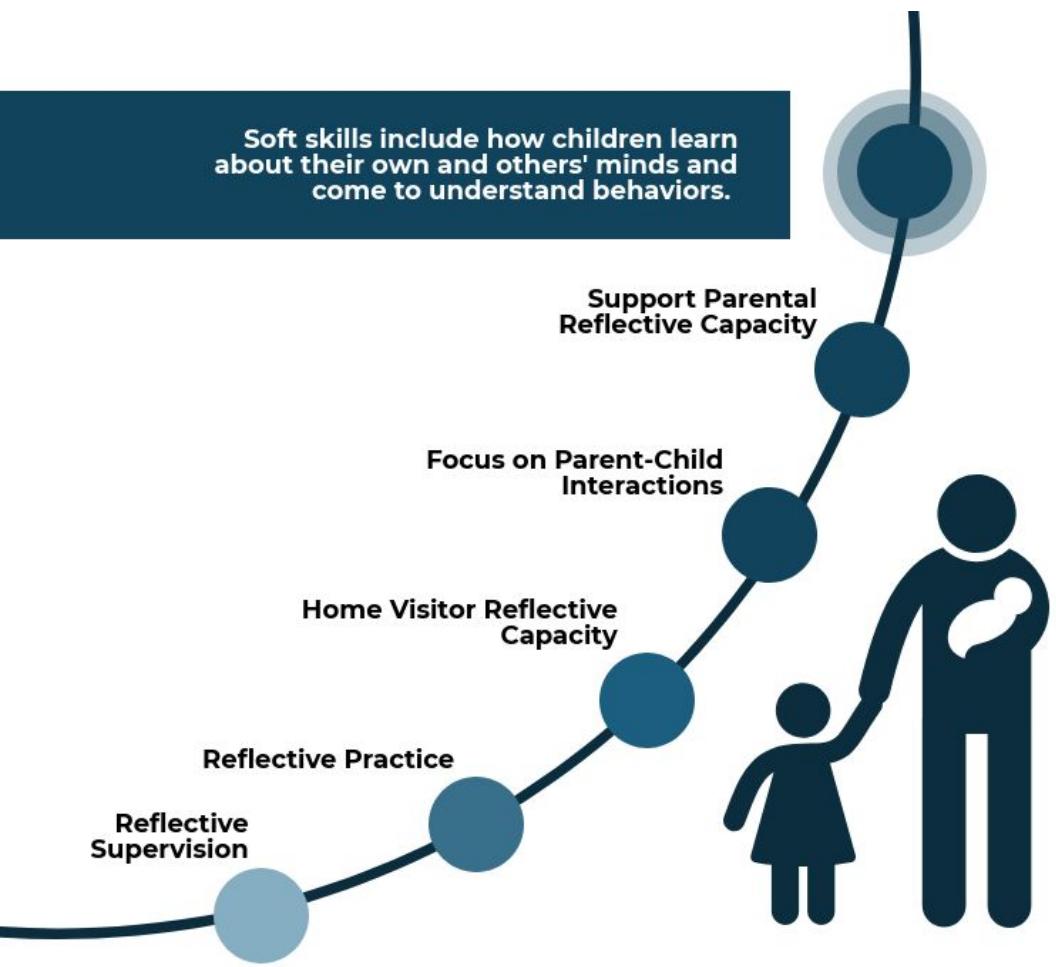
Relationships and interpersonal interactions (family, home visiting, supervision) bring up feelings. Reflective supervision recognizes and makes sense of this important source of information about our work.<sup>43</sup> Culture affects—often unconsciously—how, when, and in what social context we express, recognize, and respond to feelings.<sup>44</sup>



#### PARALLEL PROCESS IS EXPLORED: THE CHILD IS ALWAYS HELD IN MIND

Parallel process is intentionally explored through reflective supervision as a way of understanding how relationships (past and present) affect relationships. The relational experience of the baby or young child is always a central component of our exploration of the parallel process. In home visiting, we always hold the baby or child in mind.<sup>45</sup>

**Soft skills include how children learn about their own and others' minds and come to understand behaviors.**





## SUPERVISORS NEED AND DESERVE TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- Ongoing training
- Reflective supervision
- Administrative support

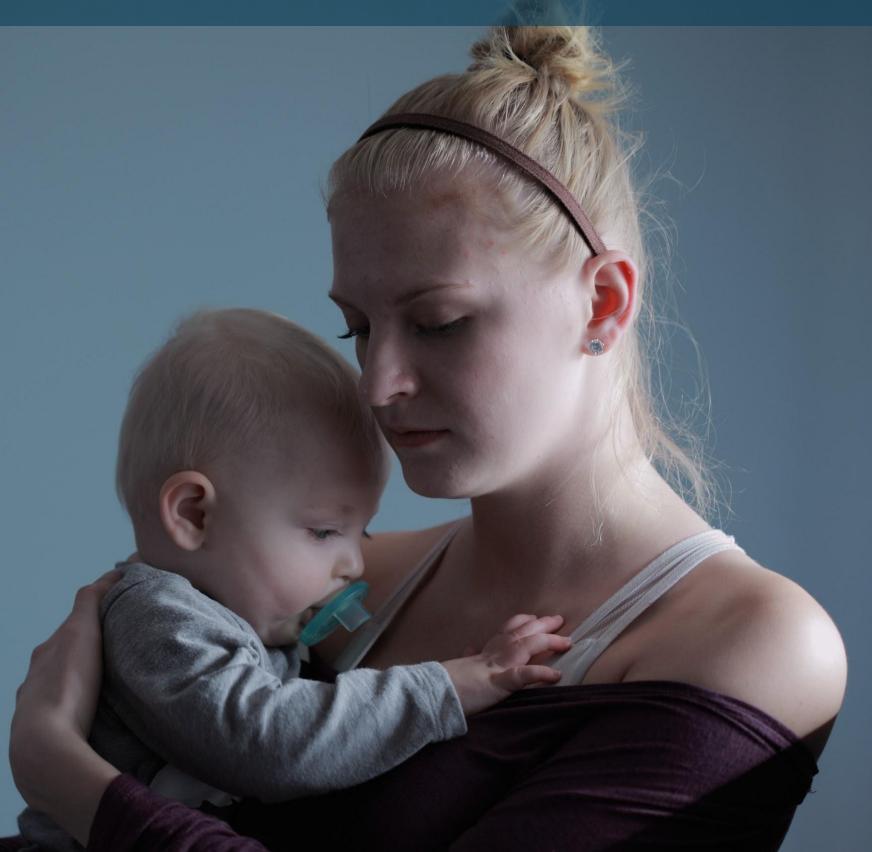




If you could receive training on  
any topic, what would it be?



## REFLECTION IS A LIFELONG DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS



Reflection is a **lifelong developmental process** that is influenced by past experiences, the current situation, and how one's neurological system processes information.

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## promoting professional growth...

*“I can sure understand why you were so upset with how the child was treated in that situation. It must have been hard to watch and listen to how the parent was talking to the child. In that moment, whose perspective were you most easily able to hold? How did that affect both how you felt and what you did next?”*

*“Wow! There was so much going on in that moment for you and for the parent and child. It sounds pretty intense. Do you remember what you did to get yourself a little grounded in that moment?”*

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## promoting professional growth...

***“As you describe what was happening, I almost picture you like a deer, frozen in the headlights. What do you remember about what was like for you in that moment?”***

***“Our autopilot can be a wonderful helper in some situations. In that moment, when you were feeling so strongly about what was going on, were you aware of making a choice about how to respond or did your autopilot kick in? Was that helpful?”***

# WHERE TO START





What kind of learning is best for you?  
Visual, auditory, kinesthetic?



REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION OCCURS WITHIN A  
RELATIONSHIP THAT IS CREATED OVER TIME

Reflective supervision occurs  
**within a relationship** that  
is created over time by both the  
supervisor and the home visitor.



# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS that build relationships...

*“These past few supervision sessions have felt different. I can’t tell if you are coming in more rushed and maybe a little flustered, or if I’ve been so focused on these reports that are due that I’ve been distracted and less here for you. What has it been like for you? What have you noticed?”*

*“How were you hoping to spend our time together today?”*

*Are we talking about what is most important to you today?*

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS that build relationships...

***“Are we getting to what is most important to you about this situation?”***

***“Do you think I might be missing something that feels important to you that I understand?”***

***“I think I might have shifted into advice-giving before I really understood what you were needing. Do we need to back up or slow down here?”***



Thinking about your favorite supervisor, what quality did they possess that impressed you most?



## REFLECTION REQUIRES SLOW AND INTENTIONAL STEPPING BACK

Reflective supervision requires an **intentional slowing down and stepping back** to:

- *Remember and attend to the details of a situation or interaction.*
- *Explore multiple perspectives and alternative possibilities.*
- *Re-experience the feelings that occurred as part of the interaction.*

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## that slow down the process...

*“I want our reflective supervision time to be as helpful as possible to you. Sometimes I might need to interrupt you as you are telling me about something that you’ve been experiencing with a family. I worry about what that will feel like for you. I can feel my grandma’s disapproving look as I interrupt someone who is speaking. Still, as we work together, there will be times when I want us to slow down and explore some details more fully. Do you have any thoughts about how we can handle the awkwardness of sometimes interrupting one another?”*

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS that slow down the process...

***“Whoa! I’m feeling overwhelmed and confused as I listen to all that you’re telling me. I feel like we need to slow down and focus in on one part of this complicated situation at least to start. Is there one part of this that seems more important to you than others?”***

***What helped you decide to ask that question in that moment?***



What do you do to intentionally slow down during your day?



FEELINGS MATTER



**Feelings Matter:** Relationships and interpersonal interactions (family, home visitor, supervisor) bring up emotions. Reflective supervision recognizes and makes sense of this important source of information.

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## that consider emotions...

***“What do you imagine mom might have been feeling or thinking during your visit last week?”***

***“What do imagine the baby was feeling or experiencing?”***

***“I noticed you got very quiet. Are you comfortable telling me what just happened for you?”***

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## that consider emotions...

*“There was a lot going on in that living room! What have you learned about how this particular family expresses anger? What typically happens after a big blow up like this? Have you thought about how this is similar to or different from how anger was expressed in your house as you were growing up?”*

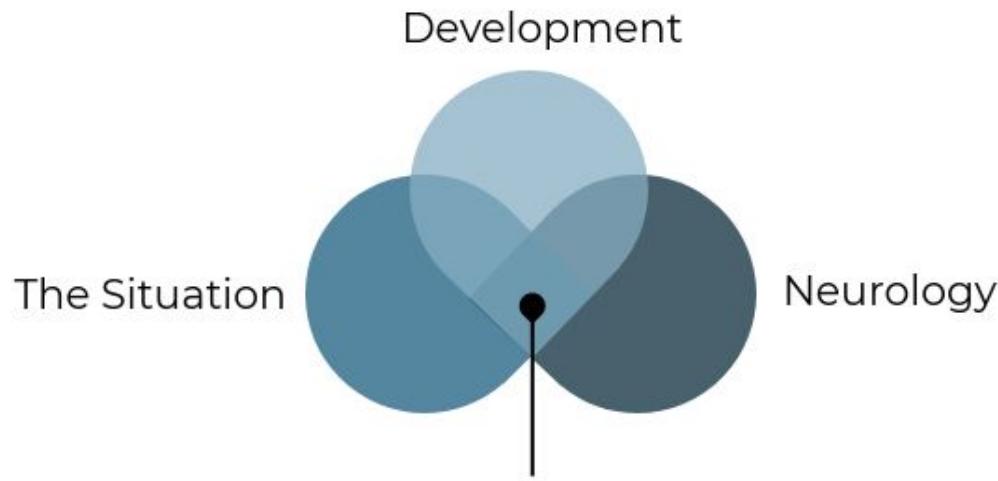
*“You describe this grandpa as an ‘angry man.’ Can you tell me more about what he does that gives you this impression?”*

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## that consider emotions...

***“You describe yourself as someone who prefers to avoid conflict. When you are with a family in conflict, do you notice anything about how your body feels in those moments? What’s that like for you? What do you do when you notice those sensations in your body? Is that helpful?”***

# REFLECTIVE CAPACITY



## **REFLECTIVE CAPACITY**

is the ability to understand, interpret, and make meaning of behavior (our own and others') by tuning in to the possible thoughts, feelings, and motivations behind the behavior.



Share a one minute version of a time  
you experienced a vulnerable  
emotion.

*Think about what emotions you are experiencing right now as you are  
recalling your past experience.*



## PARALLEL PROCESS IS EXPLORED: THE CHILD IS ALWAYS HELD IN MIND

Parallel process is intentionally explored through reflective supervision as a way of understanding how relationships (past and present) affect relationships and ultimately affect the babies and young children served through home visiting.



# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

## that consider the child...

***“Did you notice what the child was doing during this exchange?”***

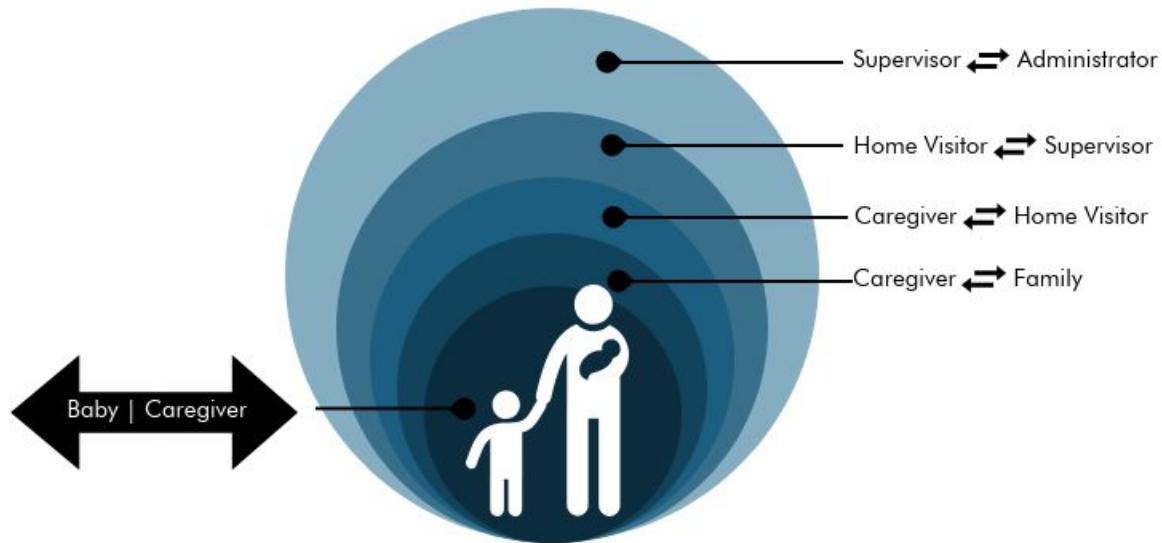
***“Where was the child during all of this?”***

***“Did the child seem to be reacting in any particular way?”***

***“How might this have been affecting the child?”***

***“You said the baby was napping in the other room. Do you find yourself wondering what she was experiencing even while asleep during the argument?”***

# MULTIPLE PARALLELS ARE EXPLORED

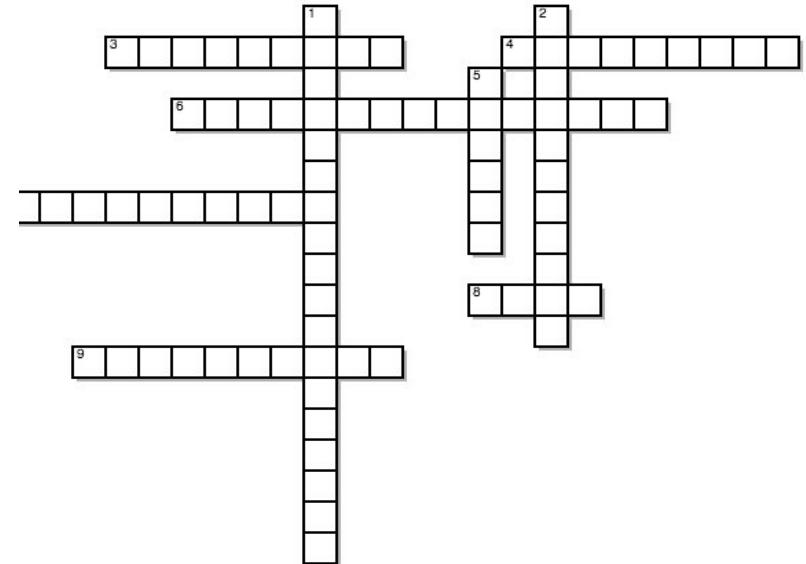




Share a tip that you use to keep the parallel process in mind during Reflective Supervision.

A close-up photograph of a smiling baby's face. The baby has brown hair and eyes, and is wearing a light-colored shirt. They are leaning against a yellow wall, with their right hand resting on it. The background is a warm orange color.

# DIGGING INTO THE DOCUMENT



# REFLECTION FOR GROWTH

Three distinct Assessment Tools are available for individuals and agencies

1. For supervisors
2. For home visitors
3. For managers/administrators

# ACTION PLAN

On a scale of 1 to 10 **how ready are you** to implement changes in your reflective practice?

Think about **what you might need** to move up one number on the scale, and how you would get that need met.

What will be your **first step** in using the Guidelines for Reflective Supervision?

**When** will you make this step?

# EVALUATION



## Region X Innovation Grant

AK • ID • OR • WA

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