Reflective Writing

What?
So what?
Now what?
Today

• A brief introduction to reflective practice
• Models of reflective practice
• Try it out
• Summary
What is ‘reflective practice’

“the ability to reflect on one’s actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning” (Shon 1983)

• Reflective writing is a key part of reflective practice

• It is how you think about, and analyse, events
• Your role in what happened
• What you could have done differently
• What you can learn for next time
You are already doing it

• 5 minutes with the person next to you
• Think about times and places where you reflect during a typical day

• This doesn’t have to be about work – it can be about anything in your life
• E.g.
  • Chatting with a friend over coffee
  • Travelling home after work
Models of Reflective Practice

• There are different models of reflective practice
• Each is a framework to help you structure your thinking

• No model is perfect
• Find one that works for you
Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle

- **Concrete experience** – what happened, new or reinterpreting a past experience
- **Reflective observation** – thinking about it & noting anything new
- **Abstract conceptualisation** – develop new ideas/concepts about what happened
- **Active experimentation** – apply to new situations
- And.. **back to the beginning**
Gibb’s Reflective Cycle

- **Description** – what happened?
- **Feelings** – what were you thinking and feeling?
- **Evaluation** – What was good or bad?
- **Analysis** – what sense can you make about the situation?
- **Conclusion** – what could you have done differently?
- **Action plan** – what will you do differently next time?
Driscoll’s What Model

• **What?** – describe the experience, what happened, how did you feel & act?

• **So what?** – reflect on the experience, what have you learnt?

• **Now what?** – how will you use this learning in the future?
Pros & cons?

**Pros**

- A starting point for reflection
- A way to structure your thinking
- Helps you consider all aspects of the situation or experience
- With practice it will become a part of everyday practice

**Cons**

- A linear process
- Tendency to ‘complete the cycle’ and stop
- To be effective – reflection must be a continuous and iterative process
Remember – reflective writing...

Is
• Written in the first person – I and me
• Analytical
• Subjective
• A tool to challenge your thinking and assumptions
• An investment of time for the future

Isn’t
• Written in the third person
• Descriptive – it goes beyond describing what happened
• What you think is the correct thing to say
• A waste of time
Reflective writing for portfolios

• Remember – knowledge, understanding and application

• Reflective writing will give structure to your narrative
• It will help to demonstrate understanding

• It will show that you are learning from what happened
• It will show that you are ‘continually developing your own practice’
Exercise – 10 minutes

- Using Driscoll’s model
- Pairs – person A & person B
- Person A needs to think of an activity they have recently taken part in
- Person B will ask the three what questions: what, so what, now what?
- Person A should note their answers
- After five minutes switch places so Person B is now describing an activity.
Summary

• Reflective practice is an essential part of public health
• This time - it is all about you...

• Reflective writing is an important part of reflective practice
• There are different models – find one that works for you
• It will take practice and discipline at the start
• The more you do it, the more automatic it becomes

• It will help with writing commentaries for practitioner portfolios
Resources


  https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/265159/MEM_ReflectivePracticeHandout_V4_20170616.pdf?sequence=1

• Faculty of Public Health (2012) Tips on Writing Effective Reflective Notes. FPH
  https://www.fph.org.uk/media/1283/fph-tips-on-writing-effective-reflective-notes.pdf

• University of Birmingham (2014) A Short Guide to Reflective Writing, UoB