



**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in Consolidation
of Social Work Practice
LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits
BMPF6044**

**LEARNER PORTFOLIO
(PORTH AGORED and UNIVERSITY OF WALES
TRINITY SAINT DAVID)**

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Task 1

Developmental review – Part a

Guidance:

This task should be completed by taking into account the work that you will have undertaken since qualifying, and discussions with your mentor and supervisor/line manager as part of your First Three Years of Practice Individual Plan.

Task one (part a and b) should incorporate the use of a model of reflection.

You must meet the Learning Outcomes for this task (see appendix 5 of the handbook).

Please answer the question below.

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your professional development since qualifying as a Social Worker. Make reference to the supervision, training, learning and research that has impacted on your work. Based on this and continuing to use a reflective model outline what you have identified and agreed with your manager and/or mentor for your development over the coming 12 months. You must demonstrate how you intend to meet all of the following learning outcomes:-

- applying analysis in assessment to inform interventions;
- working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers and other professionals;
- intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations.

750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Throughout this reflective account, the model developed by Driscoll (2007) will be utilised, which is based on Borton's (1970) cycle of reflection, and clearly breaks reflection into three simple questions, encompassing 'What', 'So what' and 'Now What'. These questions can appear to be over simplified, however the 'What' question encourages questions such as 'what' happened, 'what' was observed, and 'what' actions were taken. These questions support further reflection through the 'So What' question, such as 'so what' did I feel? which then leads onto 'Now What', whereby learning points can then be identified for future practice (Bassett, 2016).

I am currently based in a long-term team, supporting children and families to make changes within the home and assist in reducing the risk of significant harm. My experiences within my current role over the last year have given me the opportunity to collaboratively work with families and at a multi-agency level, which is an approach directed through the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2016). This collaborative working was particularly evident when given the opportunity to be involved in court proceedings. In terms of 'what' happened, I was in a position

whereby court statements and care plans had to be developed for a child. This work required the input of many agencies, including school, court guardians, and Independent Reviewing Officers, along with the family members of the child. During supervision I was able to discuss how I felt overwhelmed at the prospect of developing accurate, succinct court paperwork and felt I lacked confidence and experience within the court arena. In relation to the reflection on this event, and the 'now what' question (Driscoll 2007), I feel that future practice can be developed through shadowing senior members of staff during court proceedings, and furthermore, reading statements and care plans produced by experience social workers. I believe this will allow me to expand my skills for any future court proceedings and allow me to develop confidence in my ability and knowledge around the procedural aspect of court.

Whilst court is one area for my future development, another area is assessment skills. Assessments are a fundamental aspect of all social work and incorporate many layers of critical thinking within the process (Cottrell, 2017). I have undertaken many different forms of assessments within my role, one of which being a Parenting Assessment on a father who had previously displayed aggressive behaviour towards the mother of the children. The assessment required working with the family in a collaborative manner, whilst ensuring to ask questions that actively promoted the individual's narrative, as this is an essential element in any assessment (Kadushin and Kadushin, 2013). However, assessments are not simply a contemplative narrative, but a platform for the critical consideration of evidence (Mantell and Scragg, 2019). I felt the assessment was weak in terms of really unpicking evidence, and it was identified through my supervision that my assessment focussed primarily on fact and lacked any real analysis. Based on this identified area for improvement, I will aim to improve my skills through using supervision to discuss and develop my analysis, along with identifying further training targeted at applying analysis in assessment. Additionally, I will allocate time to read assessments completed by senior social workers and managers, with the aim of improving future practice.

The final area of reflection is on developing my ability to make professional decisions in complex situations. I was called to a family home with the assistant team manager, where parents were not able to care for their children due to ill health and alcohol misuse. The situation resulted in a multi-agency approach with the Police, to ensure the safety of the two young children in the home. The situation was more complex due to the parents' inability to speak English, and the duty I had as a professional, to ensure information was given to the family in the language of their choice, which is congruent to the Code of Professional Practice, which states we must work with individuals in a way that respects not only their dignity but their language preference (Social Care Wales, 2017). When reflecting on the event, I feel I relied heavily on decisions being made by the senior social worker, and failed to give my professional opinion or even question any decision. Based on this reflection, I feel that I need more confidence in my ability to reflect-in-action (Shon, 1983) and make decisions based on evidence and observation within the moment. These skills will develop not only through experience, but through observing practice within the team and shadowing emergency calls and crisis events.

Word count = 762

Task 1 (Part b) Developmental Review

Guidance:

Please ensure you refer to a reflective model and that you met the require learning outcomes for this task (See appendix 5 of the handbook).

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your development including reference to training, learning, research and use of supervision since completing Task 1 (part a) (when you began the programme).

Consider in discussion with your mentor/supervisor/line manager the extent to which your learning needs has been achieved. Identify any additional learning needs to support your development in the transition to becoming an experienced practitioner in your future career. You must include a reflection on feedback that you have received from individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers and how this feedback has informed your future professional development.

750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

A significant amount of time has passed since I reflected on my learning needs in task 1a. I will use the same reflective approach developed by Driscoll (2007), whereby the prompting questions of 'What', 'So What', and 'Now What', will be used to support reflection.

Three learning needs were identified in Task 1a, including :- Developing court skills, where there is a need to work collaboratively with professionals and families; Developing my analysis within my assessments; and furthermore, Developing my own self confidence and understanding, in order to make decisions within complex situations.

Firstly, when reflecting on the 'What' element of reflection (Driscoll, 2007), specifically in relation to court skills; I feel I have been able to develop my skills within the court arena through having court proceedings for two families, along with having the opportunity to be involved in private court proceedings for another family. Secondly, when reflecting on the 'So What' question (Driscoll, 2007), I feel that I have gained confidence and skills in relation to writing court paperwork, whereby information is accurate and succinct for a judge to make a balanced decision. Within one court case, the mother's barrister positively shared that the social work team had gone above what their job entails for the children, which was then echoed by the judge. This gave me the confidence that I was not only providing balanced court paperwork,

but that I was giving the support needed to all parties in proceedings. I have also attended further training in relation to Public Law Outlines, and have adapted working procedure to accommodate new timescales within the court arena. However, I have yet to give evidence within a contested hearing, which is an element of court work I have significant anxiety over.

Lastly, when reflecting on 'Now What', in relation to court work, I will ensure to shadow court proceedings that are fully contested, and where evidence is cross examined, so that I can gain a better understanding of what to expect when giving evidence, along with identifying further court proceedings training, in order to enhance knowledge and skill.

In relation to developing my analysis in assessments learning need, and utilising the 'What' element of reflection; I have had the opportunity to write various assessments, one of which being a Special Guardianship Assessment. When implementing the 'So What' question; I feel that within these assessments, my ability to provide clear analysis has developed significantly. I attribute the improvements down to having the opportunity for clear supervision and guidance from my senior, whereby I was shown the importance of clear analysis being the foundation of assessments, rather than just using a descriptive account. I understand the importance and need to assess service users in relation to their environment, so that intervention can be planned to improve or bring about positive change (Coulshed & Orme, 2012).

The final question within this developmental outcome is the 'Now What' question; I believe that my assessment skills, and more importantly, my analysis within the assessment, can be further enhanced through experience and confidence. I would like to attend further training on developing my critical analysis, along with reading books such as Assessment in social work by Milner, Myers and O'Bryne (2020), as to understand and apply analysis objectively, will allow for a better understanding of risk (Milner, Myers and O'Bryne, 2020).

Now looking at the final learning objective around making decisions in complex situations, and implementing the 'What' question; I feel that within my assessments and court work it was essential to make decisions around the care planning of the children involved. My skills have developed through gaining a more comprehensive understanding around procedures and furthermore, confidence in the form of service users feedback, whereby a parent has shared that although losing the care of her children was extremely difficult, she felt that they were now well cared for and safe.

Finally, reflecting on 'Now What', in terms of progressing this skill; I believe that further training, development and reflection will assist in my future decision making, and using regular professional supervision as the basis of this personal and professional development.

I feel that now I have gained experience and knowledge within Children's services, my next stage of professional development should also include completing the Practice Assessors course, as I feel I am now in a position to offer support and guidance to a student at the start

of their career path. Furthermore, I feel I am ready to complete training in relation to conducting Section 47 investigations, and will seek to complete this training within the next 12 months.

WORD COUNT = 764