



**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

Part a

Developmental review

Guidance:

Task 1 part a asks you to use a model of reflection to reflect on your past practice and future developmental needs. It should be completed by taking into account the work you have undertaken since qualifying. In discussions with your mentor and/or supervisor/line manager identify your future developmental needs as part of your First Three Years of Practice Individual Plan under each of the 3 learning outcomes below.

You must meet the Learning Outcomes for this task (see appendix 4 of the handbook).

Please answer all elements of the question below.

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your professional development since qualifying as a social worker. Based on this and in discussion with your mentor/supervisor/line manager go on to identify and justify your future developmental needs over the coming 12 months under each of the 3 Social Care Wales (SCW) learning outcomes listed below providing at least one developmental need for each of the learning outcome below:

- 1. Applying analysis in assessment to inform interventions.**
- 2. Working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers and other professionals.**
- 3. Intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations.**

This task must make reference to how the supervision, training, learning and research has and will inform your practice.

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

For this task, I will use Jasper's reflective model: The ERA Cycle (Jasper, 2013). The model uses three stages: **E**xperience, **R**eflection and **A**ction, to consider past experiences; reflect on the outcome; and discuss future actions to improve practice.

Since qualifying I have worked in the transition team, supporting young people transitioning from children's to adults' social services. The clients are predominantly from the children with disabilities team, although some are from the long term childcare team.

Experience: In relation to assessments, it is my responsibility to collate and analyse information during meetings with clients and their carers, to create suitable care and support plans. Prior to the role, I was not experienced in assessing adults and I did not know what questions to ask to ensure an effective care and support plan was developed, especially regarding young adults with disabilities.

Reflection: I am aware that at times in my new role, I have forgotten to ask pertinent questions that were vital to the person's care needs, and have needed to re-visit, thus delaying the assessment and care needs being met. The Social Care Wales Code of Professional Practice [SCW COPP] states you must respect the views and wishes, and promote the rights and interests of individuals and carers (SCW COPP, 2017, s.1). In order to be person centred, it is important to undertake thorough assessments and analyse the information effectively. I have reflected on this in supervision with my senior and have received support and advice regarding what needs to be included in the assessments. In response, I have created a cue card including relevant questions and health domains, which I use during assessments to prompt myself.

Action: Going forward, I will utilise my supervisions, to discuss my assessments and ensure the information gathered is thorough and relevant, to ensure the necessary support is provided. To support the analysis of my assessments, I will attend training courses pertaining to disabilities, to increase my understanding of the challenges young people and their family's experience.

Experience: Due to speech and language barriers and a number of my clients being non-verbal, I have found communicating with young adults with disabilities challenging at times, especially in the beginning. I didn't know how to effectively communicate with them to best understand their needs.

Reflection: In order to work collaboratively with people, communication must be effective. Not only do language barriers need to be considered, for example, using the active offer to ensure those who would prefer to speak Welsh can do so during any correspondence (Welsh Government, 2022b), but also the method of communication is critical (Trevithick, 2005).

Action: I will attend training on communication, including using talking mats and the core signs of Total Communication signing. Both are widely used within the local authority area in education and social settings. I am going to build my relationships with: colleagues who are already trained in speech and language; family members who are attuned to the needs of the individual; and professional advocates

who are experienced in alternative communication methods. This collaborative working, will support my assessments and ensure I am sourcing the necessary support for both my clients and their carers, resulting in thorough person centred assessments and care and support plans. To be in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) 2014 principles, of ensuring a person's wellbeing, and having a voice and control over their support (Welsh Government, 2015a).

Experience: When assessing young people with learning disabilities, it is often necessary to undertake capacity assessments, in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Having no previous experience with regards to capacity, I have found it difficult to know how to complete the complex assessments and apply my professional judgement.

Reflection: I realise how important it is to obtain the correct outcome during a capacity assessment. To wrongly deem someone to lack capacity, resulting in others making decisions for them is oppressive, potentially against their human rights, for example, their right to liberty (European Convention on Human Rights, 1950, article 5), and would not be in line with section 3 of the Social Care Wales [SCW] Code of Professional Practice (SCW, 2017) which states you must promote the well-being, voice and control of individuals and carers while supporting them to stay safe.

Action: It is vital that I am confident in applying my own professional judgement when undertaking capacity assessments. I will source training regarding capacity assessments and shadow as many as possible being undertaken by more experienced social workers in my team, to increase my knowledge of what to ask during assessments. I will also seek support during my supervisions to ensure my execution of capacity assessments is correct.

[778 words]

Task 1
Part b
Developmental Review

Guidance:

Task 1 part b is a 2-part question and a continuation of task 1 part a and you **must** refer to a reflective model in this task.

Please ensure that you meet the required learning outcomes for this task (See appendix 4 of the handbook) and that you answer both parts of the question.

Please answer all elements of the question below.

Question

Use a reflective model to critically reflect on the learning needs you identified in task 1 part a under each of the 3 SCW learning outcomes.

This must include reference to training, learning, research and supervision and reflection with your mentor/supervisor/line manager on the extent to which your learning outcomes have been achieved.

Identify your learning needs to support your development in the transition to becoming an experienced practitioner in your future career following the completion of this programme.

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

For Part B I will again use Jasper's ERA reflective model (Jasper, 2013). Since completing Part A of this task I have changed roles to The Family Support Team (FST). A preventative team, providing support to parents and carers who have voluntarily sought advice and guidance, mainly around managing their children's behaviours. Although no longer in transitions, I have learned many transferable skills adaptable to my new role.

Experience: Since highlighting my learning needs and setting actions during Task A, I have attended various courses, including Understanding Autism; Person Centred Practice - Learning Disabilities and Autism; Signs of Safety; Report Writing Skills- Childcare; Mental Capacity - Undertaking Assessments, and; Learning Disability Awareness. I have attended supervision regularly and have been open and honest with my supervisor, asking for support and advice when necessary.

Reflection: While reflecting during Task A, I realised I lacked experience in transitions. I have been proactive in improving my practice and gaining new skills. A year later, I am increasingly confident undertaking assessments and communicating with people. Training has taught me effective communication methods and a deeper understanding of disabilities and the potential needs of clients. Regular supervision has continued to provide me with advice and support to analyse a person's needs and improve my assessments. I agree with Rogers et.al. (2017, p.162), that supervision is a vital part of establishing actions to best support clients.

During supervision we have discussed theories and approaches that lend themselves well to the FST. I have learned, by implementing Systems Theory (Leighninger, 1978) and elements of Signs of Safety (Turnell and Murphy, 2010), families can be proactive and support themselves, drawing support from already established sources, including family, school and local third sector organisations. We have also discussed motivational interviewing techniques (Miller & Rollnick, 2013), to support families' autonomy and enhance motivation to change behaviours. When undertaking assessments I realise I need to assess and analyse in a way that facilitates these approaches.

Providing suitable care and support plans can be challenging at times due to lack of resources and funding. I have enjoyed sourcing imaginative and original person centred plans in collaboration with clients, carers and advocates to meet specific needs. The intrinsic satisfaction I have experienced is reflected in Antonopoulou, Killian and Forrester's research (2017), which found social workers report high satisfaction in the ability to help families.

Now in the FST, I work collaboratively with parents, navigating difficult situations identified by the families. I recognise the importance of delivering correct and current advice. For example, since 21st March 2022 it became illegal in Wales to physically punish your children (Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020). I must remain alert to changes in legislation and best practice, to ensure I am working with families effectively.

Reflecting on complex situations, the FST does not require the undertaking of capacity assessments as in my previous role. However, I must be competent in recognising when family situations are concerning and statutory services may need to be involved. I need to be able to use my professional judgement and intervene when necessary, by referring to the safeguarding team. It is important therefore, that I remain vigilant and demonstrate professional curiosity at all times to ensure the safety of children and families. Research by Burton and Revell (2018) highlights the lack of guidance and definitional points to professional curiosity, due to the culture and multifaceted nature of child protection. I will need to remain vigilant and build resilience to ask difficult questions when necessary. I do not want to miss potential indicators that a child is in danger.

Action: I will continue to attend regular supervisions with my line manager, to discuss and analyse cases and my assessment methods. I want to ensure I deliver the best service possible to families. I will implement my signs of safety training to support my assessment analysis and seek motivational interviewing training.

I will work collaboratively with families to ensure parents, carers and children's needs are met, and remain vigilant to complex cases that may need to be escalated to statutory child safeguarding. I will attend training regarding professional curiosity, which will offer an opportunity to learn how to remain attentive yet inquisitive regarding family dynamics and situations, to best protect children and vulnerable adults.

[713 words]

Question

Reflect on feedback that you have received from individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers and explain how this information has helped shape your practice and future professional development.

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

I was concerned about a 23 year old, diagnosed with autism, severe learning disabilities and non-verbal, regarding how his mother was managing his finances as his appointee. When I questioned her, she filed a complaint against me. Management justified my concerns and are investigating. I am proud of myself for asking. Even though it was a difficult conversation to have, such precarious conversations with clients, carers and families will inevitably happen and I must be prepared for this. I therefore continue to seek support from management, and am sure that I will become increasingly confident and assertive in time, to always prioritise what is in my clients' best interests.

[109 words]

Total task 1 part b 750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).