

USING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR WELL-BEING.

Slides kindly supplied by Catherine
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ACTIVITY ONE

- Find an image or a photograph that sums up how you are feeling about your progress now. Then, explore this and try to process how this feels for you.
- Use the 6-minute reflective writing practice as a guide for this activity.

AIMS



To think about how you might develop professional confidence



To explore the management of change



To explore the management of stress



To introduce the integrative reflective cycle



To examine how you might use past reflections to delve deeper into your personal understanding.



BUILDING PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENCE

- Being confident in work can be challenging. It is not something that we can label, nor can we really put our finger on what it is. But we know when we have it! Equally we know when we don't. Confidence can be fragile and can often take many years to build. But it can also be very easily destroyed.
- Being a resilient Counsellor is an important aspect of the role. Knowing how to build your confidence can be helpful.
- The following slides suggest ways in which you can build up your confidence in order to feel comfortable and assertive in your work.

TAKING RISKS

- We have mentioned this in a previous session. We need to take risks in order to build our resilience, however they need to be manageable. Risks are not intended to be tasks that you will fail at. Instead, they are tasks that may push you out of your comfort zone but have a chance of success if you try.



CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Don't feel that just because you have newly graduated in a programme that it needs to be the end of your learning. The opportunities for further development and learning within Counselling are enormous. There are further post-graduate training programmes that you can attend, as well as short day or week courses that will help you with your knowledge, understanding and practice of Counselling.
- Being skilled and up-to-date with your knowledge is a significant route to building confidence, resilience and assertiveness.





PROJECT WORK

- Being a Counsellor can often feel like a lonely profession, as you are usually working on your own with one client at a time.
- If the opportunity arises, get involved in small group work or project work. Or join networks that will allow a greater degree of discussion and meetings.
- This will enable you to learn from others, particularly those that have been working in the Counselling field for longer. It will also enable you to build your own network of trusted colleagues.

FIND A MENTOR



- When you newly qualify you can feel a little lost or uncertain. Having a mentor can be helpful. They can support you when you're unsure, they can also give you valuable feedback. In some ways your Counselling supervisor can be your mentor. When you newly qualify as a Counsellor, it might be worth speaking to your Supervisor to work through a contract where you feel fully supported.

READING!

- Continue to engage in reading, even after you become a trained therapist. If you decide to join the BACP you will receive monthly Therapist magazines. These magazines provide articles written by therapists in practice. By reading you are keeping up-to-date with new materials, engaging with the most recent research and continuing your learning. Continue to engage with this throughout your practice.



MAKE A FUTURE PLAN?

- Your goal now might be to become a professional psychotherapist....but what happens next? As you reach your goal you might like to think about your future. There is nothing wrong with writing a plan or a goal list. They are not set in stone, but they do keep you focused. In addition, as you reach your goals your confidence will bloom even further. You can see your path and you can see your journey; it helps to build confidence.



COPING WITH CHANGE – ACTIVITY TWO

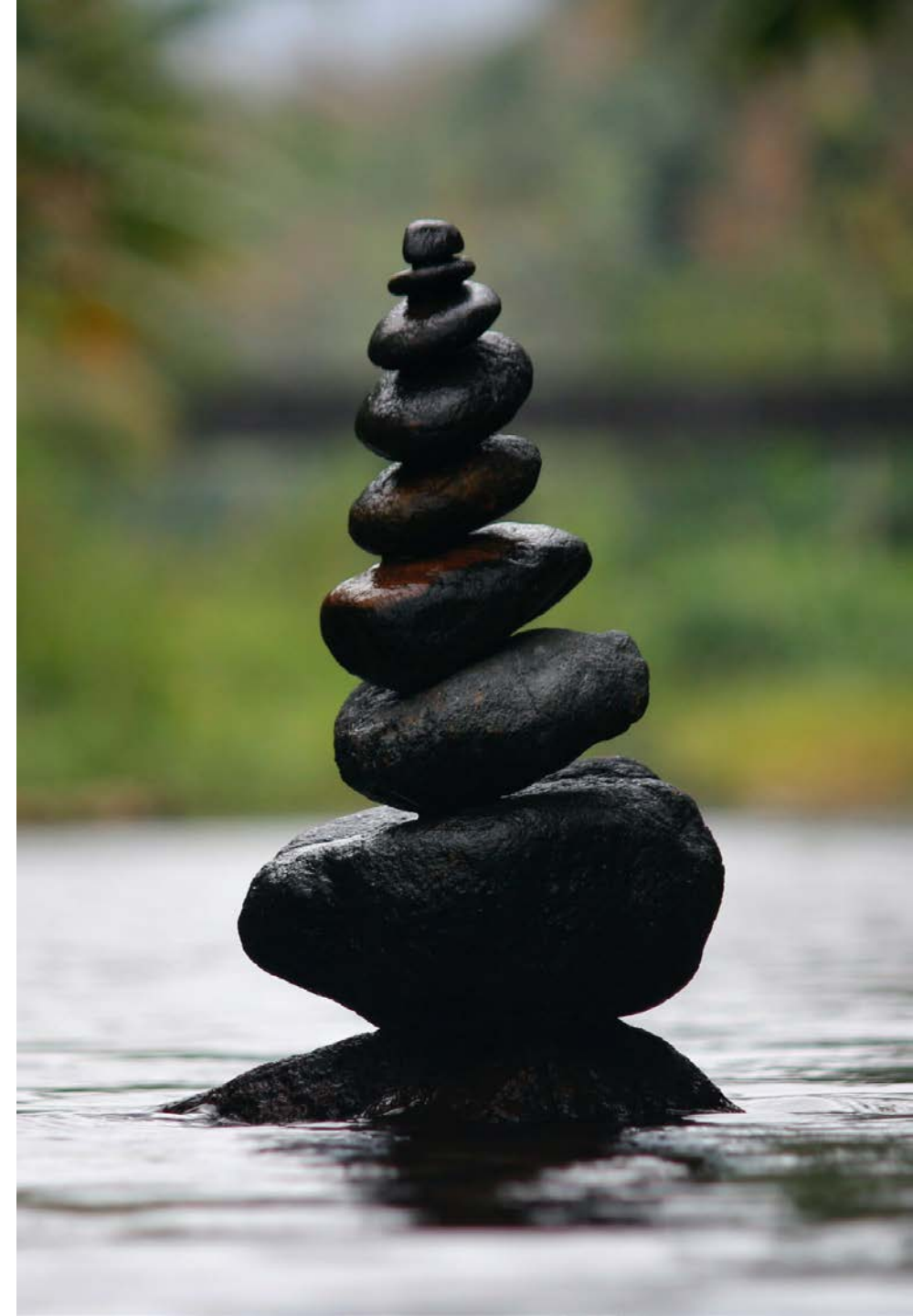
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- Before we move on to the next section, I'd like you to spend a few minutes just thinking about your feelings regarding change.
 - Do you respond well to change, do you take it all in your stride...or do you really struggle to cope with change?
 - Just spend a few minutes recording your thoughts. You can either write your ideas down, record them, or work through them creatively.

COPING WITH CHANGE

- You are on the path to gaining a new qualification. This may have meant changing aspects of your life, such as finding time to study, learning how to use new technology, making yourself available for any tutorials or classes.
- When you're embarking on a career change, or a new professional development programme it can be helpful to consider how you anticipate change and how you cope with it.
- Lewin suggested two theories that can be useful when thinking about change. These are discussed across the next few slides.

FIELD THEORY (LEWIN, 1951)

- In his theory Lewin (1951) suggested that there were driving forces that allow change to happen and restraining forces that work against change. An event or situation is held in balance by the two forces. He called this the 'quasi-stationary equilibrium' and this is the present state. For any change to happen all effort must be put into the driving forces, and the restraining forces needs to be minimised. If this all happens together the greatest change can occur.



To compliment his ideas, Lewin also created a three-step model:

Step 1 - **UNFREEZING** – this means reducing the restraining forces

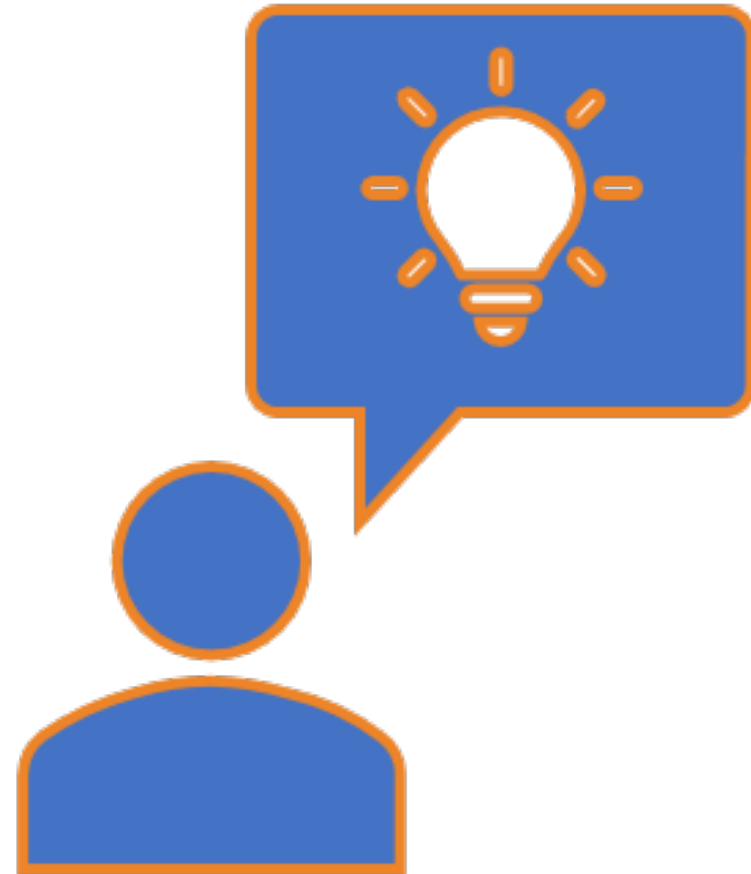
Step 2 – **MOVEMENT** –
Enabling the development of new ideas, creativity or development which will allow the focus to be on the driving forces.

Step 3 - **REFREEZING** - This means stabilising the practice, ensuring the quasi-stationary equilibrium to avoid returning to old patterns of behaviour.

3-STEP MODEL (LEWIN, 1951)

LEWIN'S THEORIES

- Lewin's ideas have become quite popular in the field of organisational behaviour, but they can be applied here to our understanding of reflective practice. We do need to be aware of what holds us back, but also the need for stability in our lives. We need to think about how we feel if we experience too much change in too short a time.



ACTIVITY THREE

- See if you can apply Lewin's three-step model to your own experience of change. Consider whether you can apply the methods of Unfreezing, Movement and Refreezing to your own experience. Think about whether the concepts apply, or whether there have been other elements that you sense are missing from the model.

MANAGING STRESS



- Within Counselling there will be times when we feel under pressure. It might be because the workload is too much, or because you are getting a lot of clients with similar experiences. It may be because a client's narrative has triggered your own story.
- Too much stress can cause burnout. This can happen if you take on too many clients, or if you're trying to fit too much into a short time. In addition, providing empathic, nurturing and compassionate care can also cause burnout.
- However, we can also experience a different form of stress. This stress is caused when we feel bored, with limited engagement, stagnation and lack of care.
- We need to monitor our stress levels and know what to do when they are becoming too high.

FONTANA'S (1989) THEORY OF STRESS

Fontana
(1989)
suggests
that there
are three
symptoms
of stress:

Cognitive: Changes in our thought patterns and processes can mean that we forget things or become easily distracted.

Emotional: We become emotional. We become sensitive and easily upset.

Behavioural: Our behaviour changes, we behave in ways we wouldn't normally do.

WELL-BEING AND STRESS



If we notice that we are feeling stressed and anxious, there are some useful methods that can be utilised to maintain a healthy balance:



Looking at our time management (avoid putting too much pressure on ourselves).



Not being afraid to say 'no' in situations where you feel your health and well-being will be impacted.



Practicing relaxation techniques (e.g., mindfulness or yoga).

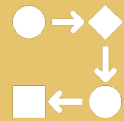


Looking at our support networks (work colleagues, friends, family).



Healthy routines (sleep, eating well, exercise)

WELL-BEING AND STRESS CONT'D



Looking for new challenges (these can be different to work, but something different that allows a re-engagement with something different).



Focusing on what is working well and looking at why this is.



Looking at what we can change and being aware of what we cannot change. Look at the former.

SEEKING SUPPORT

- The suggested activities can all be helpful support strategies when we have a sense of mild stress. However, it's important to note that if the stress levels become overwhelming then it is important that professional help is sought (either GP or Therapy).

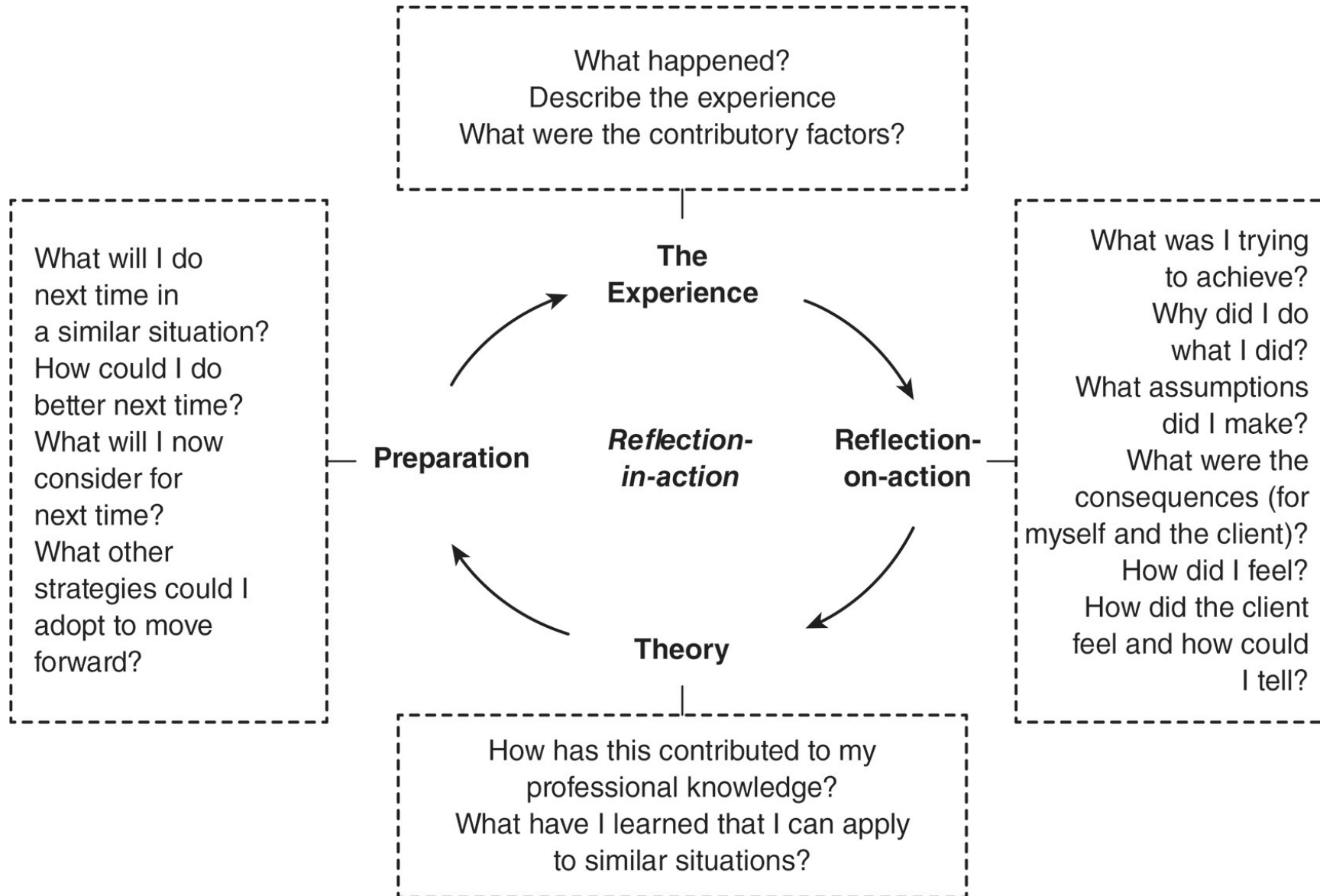
ACTIVITY FOUR

- Think about how you can reduce your own stress levels. What helps you to relax and unwind? What do you need to do more of when you're feeling stressed or anxious?
Spend a few minutes just thinking about this before moving on to the next section.



THE INTEGRATED REFLECTIVE CYCLE

- Within this module we have looked at a range of different models to support reflective practice. We looked at models that support our reflections when we're considering our professional practice, we explored models that allow us to engage with our feelings as we reflect. And we also considered models that allow us to explore our own assumptions.
- Bassot (2013) has created an Integrated Reflective Cycle that draws on several of these different approaches.
- In this cycle she's looked at the various models that are available and examined where their strengths lie. She has then taken these and created a new model that allows you to consider your reflective practice, using the questions that she has provided to support your process.
- The next slide shows this model.



CRITICALLY EXPLORE THIS NEW MODEL

- Think about this new model and perhaps apply it to a new experience. As with all models it's important that we critique, that we don't take it at face value. So, explore this integrated model and examine whether you feel it will be effective, or if you can see limitations within its process.

DIGGING DEEPER!

As a final section to this module, we're going to look at how you might use past reflections to look for further areas of development.



DEEPER REFLECTION

- In the last session I mentioned that you could look at old reflections to consider how you might learn from past experiences. This is worth discussing again. Looking at patterns of behaviour or looking at how you might change in the future allows us to engage in deeper processing.
- Cowen and Stroud (2016) suggest that further questions can help us to dig deeper in our reflective process:



FURTHER QUESTIONS:

- Reflection-for-action (Thompson and Thompson, 2018) suggest that we look ahead to experiences that might occur in the future. To do this we engage in questions that enable us to think about what happened in the past. E.g. What did I do in the past? What can I change? What were my options? How did I make those choices?
- Reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) thinking in the moment, during the experience... 'is there anything that I can take forward into a new experience?' 'how might this be useful in the future?'.
- Reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983) looking back at the experience and processing it: 'what can I learn from this to make me an effective practitioner?' 'What can I take from this to help my development?'.

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- Looking at our past experiences and considering them with hindsight can be helpful as we develop professionally. It can be painful; it can take time. But it can also help us to avoid repeating unhelpful patterns and be useful as we develop as Counsellors.

DIGGING DEEPER CONT'D

FINAL ACTIVITY

- Look back over your learning throughout this module, perhaps look at some of the activities that you have engaged with and see where your main areas of growth have been. Think about your own learning and development.
- Also think about the future, what happens next?

REFERENCES

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