



**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).

Reflection is vital in social work. Social Workers should not see it as a single event or skill, but as a process that allows you to constantly learn and develop, aiding critical practice (Blackwell, 2019). Adams, Dominelli and Payne (2009) state that critical practice should never be exhausted by Social Workers, it should be continuous moving cycle of reflection. Moreover, Thompson (2005, p196) explains that “*Reflective practice is an active process of constructing solutions.*” To be active in my reflection in my professional development since qualifying as a Social Worker, I will use the four stages of Kolb’s Experimental Learning Cycle (1984): Concrete experience (the practice event/experience), reflective observation (my response to my practice event/experience), abstract conceptualisation (my identified learning/future learning needs), and active experimentation (how I propose to meet my learning needs).

Concrete Experience:

When I qualified, I was allocated cases which required me to carry out single assessments on children. This was a daunting task as the outcome of a single assessment determines what should happen next in the child's life, whether the case is closed, stays open, or if there is a need to escalate. It involves using legislation, chairing multiagency meetings, using assessment tools such as Signs of Safety (Signs of Safety, 2019), carrying out direct work with children, and having confidence in gaining evidence and in my decision making.

Reflective Observation:

I used my knowledge from university around legislation and researched more on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. I used supervision for support and guidance. I shadowed other members of staff, whilst reading through their past single assessments. I attended training on the theory of 'Signs of Safety' which is a strength based and solution focussed model, which gave me valuable knowledge of assessment tools and how best to carry out direct work with children. I chaired meetings with families and professionals which my manager observed.

Abstract Conceptualisation:

I realised early that confidence is key in being a Social Worker. However, being too confident without knowledge-based practice and evidence-built working would be dangerous. There is a constant power struggle in social work. I know I need to work with families not to families, whilst always having a child's safety in the forefront of my decision making. It is hard finding that balance when professionals look to Social Workers to safeguard when safeguarding is everyone responsibility (Irranca-Davies, 2017).

Within some multiagency meetings, I need to reflect there and then to determine what my role is, and have confidence to challenge professionals and families to advocate for children

on my caseload. At times I find it difficult to delegate tasks and will often be doing more than I should be. As a newly qualified Social Worker, when challenged by other professionals or family members, I will often feel nervous and question my judgement as I am still learning in my role.

When considering the Social Care Wales three outcomes: Applying analysis and assessment; I will read up on the legislation and research the theories around assessments to ensure evidence-based practice. Working in collaboration with people in need of care and support and carers and professionals; I will uphold the Code of Professional Practice (Social Care Wales, 2017) ensuring I use vital skills of listening and advocating. Intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations (Social Care Wales, 2017), these are vital outcomes, as these are judgments that make life changing decisions in people's lives. Therefore, I will need to be continuously improving my knowledge of the law and best practice theories such as the ~~new-born~~new-born into care research, to be the best Social Worker I can be for the children I work with.

Active Experimentation:

Having this self-awareness of my uncertainty at times in my judgement will only improve my practice in the long term. I will continue to use my supervisions to reflect on my practice and obtain vital feedback from my practice lead. I will ask for feedback from families and professionals as well as from my team members to improve my practice. I will use my peer support groups for guidance and advice such as 'mapping sessions' where we look at cases together to gain different perspectives on the best ways to work with families. I will work on my time management to make sure I have the necessary time to research and enhance my knowledge base. This in turn will boost my confidence and reflective skills. I will gain more knowledge into other professional's roles so I will feel more confident in delegating tasks to them when I am fully aware of what comes under their remit. I will attend courses that will aid my practice, such as court work training and Public Law Outline training so I will feel more confident in my judgement, especially when dealing with more complex cases. I need to be mindful of my own personal well-being, making sure I have a good work life balance as this is vital not to get overworked and burnt out as a Social Worker.

Word count – 823

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).

I feel I have been reflective in my practice since starting my Social Work degree and become more reflective since starting this program and writing Task1-part A.

I will use the four stages of Kolb's Experimental Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984).

Concrete Experience:

Since being qualified and considering Task1-part A and the single assessments, ~~which~~ I found 'daunting', ~~as well~~ Aswell as direct work with children and gaining confidence in my decision making. I now feel more confident in these areas. I have learnt that Social Work is an ever changing, ever learning profession where no two cases are the same, therefore, it is vital to reflect continuously to learn and adapt to each case. When applying analysis in for example single assessments, it is vital to work collaboratively ~~bertatory~~ with people who need care and support, as well as with their carers and professionals. Moreover, when using my professional ~~judgment~~, ~~judgement~~, I must remain open-minded and unbiased whilst gathering and interpreting information/evidence to inform any assessments, whether this be a single assessment, Public Law Outline (PLO) or court assessments (Blackwell, 2019).

My case load has increased and with it the complexity of my cases. I now feel I lack confidence/experience in my knowledge of court work and cases that are in PLO.

Reflective Observation:

I feel that my ever-growing experiences from dealing with different types of cases, has made me more confident in my decision making. I still believe, that to be overconfident is dangerous in Social Work and that all decisions need to be evidence based (Blackwell, 2019). However, I feel I have been fully supported and guided by my team. Moreover, I have used my supervision constantly for advice and reassurance in my practice this has been tailored to my needs and helped me to reflect in times of stress and organise the prioritises in my caseload (Community Care, 2020).

In response to my more recent concerns around my practice with my more complex cases, I have attended court skills training, adoption transition training and shadowed others to gain experience/knowledge of court work and the PLO process. After visiting the court rooms and meeting the Local Authorities legal team whom lecture the court skills training, I felt relieved and therefore more confident in my practice.

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Abstract Conceptualisation:

When considering my practice in applying analysis and working in collaboration with people. I feel it is vital to make sure a child's voice is heard, even pre-birth, ~~and~~ new-born babies should be heard in their assessments, advocating for the child, carers and professionals involved, using interventions and my professional judgement in increasingly complex situations within my case load. I feel more confident in challenging families and/or professionals if I feel a child is at risk of harm, using an evidence base for my decision making. ~~Moreover~~, using my supervision and management for support. For example, within Child Protection Conferences, I've been accused by parents 'for taking their children away', I still feel anxious when parents become hostile, but I am becoming more confident in my respectful responses based upon my evidence-based assessments (Webb , 2001).

Within COVID pandemic my shadowing opportunities and courses have been online, I am adapting to working face-to-face in court and legal meetings in person. I now reflect in the moment and afterwards, such as improving my time management, and assessments of risk of face-to-face meetings with families who are sometimes in turmoil within legal proceedings. Three of my cases are double staffed, for which I use my supervision and co-work with a support worker to keep safe, this is a constant learning curve as the more complex the case the more chaotic a family's life can be, or has been in the past. I am reflective that although I am case manager, it is a joint responsibility with professionals and families to make needed positive changes, remembering that even in PLO and/or court proceedings, I should be still working with families not to them.

Active Experimentation:

I will continue to develop resilience; I will use my supervisions to off-load and reflect. I will continue to ask for feedback from families, professionals, and my team to improve my practice. I received feedback from families that I am open and honest, I listen, respecting their family goals. I been in the Local Authorities weekly comms for good practice, and had Social Workers

shadow me on challenging cases for experience. However, I have also had feedback that my assessments are hard to understand, and families struggle with the PLO process. Therefore, I reflected that even though families have solicitors in PLO we still need to work [collaboratively](#) ~~collaboratory~~, listening to children and their families.

I will attend the weekly 'mapping sessions', discussing my cases when needed, and listening to other cases, so I can gain insight and awareness into the different techniques and support that might be available that I am not aware of. I will continue to enhance my knowledge/practice by attending courses, shadowing others, using my supervision and studying up to date legislation and research, because as stated earlier Social Work is always changing.

Word count – 832

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