

## Reflective Practice Case Sharing

Reflective practice means taking time to “step back” to consider possible meanings of what has transpired in relationships, events, and behaviors in our work with families. It is the discipline of regularly pondering questions and possibilities deeper than our initial reactions and assumptions. It is a time to reflect on our personal and professional responses to families, for the purpose of developing more nurturing relationships and tailoring our future interventions to a family’s needs.

**Goals of the case sharing experience** are to create space/time for a provider to:

- explore their work with a family from different angles from the telling and exploring
- consider what their initial reactions and interpretations have been – put them into words
- gain a fuller understanding of the family and their role with them
- think about the relationship they are building with the parents
- see more clearly what a family might need

**The role of the group is to:**

- “think with” the provider about their work with a family
- be deeply curious, interested and attentive to the provider’s experiences and their thoughts, feelings, reactions, wonderings
- notice our own internal feelings and reactions as they arise, and then go back to listening
- serve as a “holder” or sounding board for the story, not a “doer” or “answerer” or “solver”

\*Try to notice “pulls” you experience that distract from deep listening and use them as signals to stop and listen more deeply. Examples:

- a “rush to reassure” or “help” the presenter feel better
- judgments, assumptions or urges to “diagnose”
- urges to share a similar experience you have had
- wanting to advise or teach or give information
- ideas of community resource suggestions that fit a situation
- desires to protect the provider or the family

**Format for case sharing:**

**Provider** shares story about a practice situation/family, personal experiences of working with them

**Group** helps provider explore the issue at hand / ask for clarification / explore with open-ended questions and reflective statements (*example questions below*)

- Set aside our minds/opinions. Instead, think about the focus person’s mind/experience
- Mirror, listen, contain - stay with the story

**Group check-in:** If needed, stop and ask, “How are we doing?” Reset if needed to a more reflective approach

**Explore:** Perspective taking (all the minds)

- Strengths (“What’s going well?”)
- Challenges (“What is in the way of progress for this family?”)
- Hypothesis building (“Why might things be happening this way?” “What additional information would help?”)

**Wrap up:**

- Ask the focus person, “What was helpful?”
- Ask the group, “How did we do?” “What kind of reactions were you having?” “What were the highlights – what went well?” “What things could we have done differently?”

\*At this point there may be a pull to get back into the story. Bring it back to wrap up.

**Examples of questions to ask the provider:**

- What are you thinking about as you drive to visit this family?
- Who do you think you are to the caregiver?
- What do we want for this caregiver?
- How are you making a difference in this family?
- What is the caregiver getting from the visits?
- What does it feel like when you think about going back there?
- What have you already done?
- What is this change about?
- What do you think the caregiver wanted you to do with this information?
- Based on your knowledge, understandings, and relationship with this family –what do you think would be helpful?
- What else could it be?
- How does it feel to talk with the caregiver about depression, etc.?
- What was it like for the caregiver when...?
- What are your goals here or with this family?
- What are your ideas on this?
- What information is missing?
- What does the caregiver do that bothers/frustrates/hurts you?
- What do you think the caregiver’s experience is?
- How is baby developing?
- What else is worrying you?
- What do you think the caregiver enjoys most about providing care?
- What will be important next/emergent in this baby’s development?
- What are the possible reasons the caregiver did not answer the door/phone/keep the visit?
- What else could it be?
- How is the caregiver supporting the child?
- How are you supporting the parent-child relationship?
- How are you supporting the caregiver’s strengths?