

BSc (Hons) Social Work

**Practice Learning
Resources Handbook
(Book 2)**

Level 3 Placements

2013-14

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to supplement the *Module Handbook* and the *Practice Learning Assessment Guidelines*. It gives additional guidance to assist students and practice educators in identifying and producing evidence for the units of the key roles and values set out in the National Occupational Standards. Information is provided to enable students to think about anti-oppressive practice and critical reflection. A toolkit at the end of the book is designed to help students both record and reflect on their work. The toolkit is a developing one and students and practice educators may also devise their own tools. If you have any tools that you have developed on placement that could be included in this section please send them on to the module leader.

There are 3 sections to the handbook:

Section 1: Additional Guidance

This section builds on the information provided in the Practice Learning and Assessment Guidelines in Book 1.

Section 2: Toolkit

The tools in this section will help students to develop their skills and to critically reflect on these.

Section 3: Groupwork Guidance and Resources

This section outlines the requirements relating to groupwork, gives some theoretical background, suggestions for further reading and tools to help plan and evaluate groups.

In addition to the resources provided in this book remember that there are a range of publications and e-learning resources that can assist student's learning in practice.

SECTION 1

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

- **Critical Reflection**
- **Research and Reading**
- **Planning a piece of work**
- **Guidelines for writing a reflective journal**
- **Developing and assessing anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice**

CRITICAL REFLECTION

What is reflection?

Critical reflection is integral to social work practice so students and qualified practitioners need to engage in this process and provide evidence of this. A key part of reflective practice is learning from experience. Reflecting on practice provides an opportunity to learn and develop knowledge and skills in an individual way, which has real meaning to the individual and so will be better remembered. It encourages a 'holistic' approach, engaging the whole person so that learning is maximised and stretches across the range of cognitive, affective and behavioural approaches. So reflective learning is about looking at what you do as a practitioner and turning that experience into learning. It will help you to transfer learning from earlier experience, to develop self-appraisal skills and to be able to respond to the rapidly changing world of practice by developing skills for lifelong learning.

The traditional 'academic' approach (which emphasises learning from accepted knowledge/research/theory) is put alongside and related to learning based on 'doing'. In addition, reflection offers a particular emphasis on personal knowledge and 'affective' learning, where the impact of feelings, emotions, values and personal perspectives is acknowledged and worked with. This is especially important in social work where the professional role is often emotionally demanding, carrying high levels of stress, involving as it does vulnerable and disadvantaged service users whose needs often cannot be met within the limited resources available. Recognition of the personal within the professional is a key element in setting appropriate boundaries and working effectively and creatively. What you have to do as a social worker is complex. You use a sophisticated blend of skills, knowledge and experience to relate in a way that is most enabling for the person or people you are working with while also meeting the needs expectations of the agency in which you are placed.

Various tools to help you reflect are provided in this book and the forms that you are required to include in your portfolio, such as for the direct observation, interim and final review ask you to critically reflect. Supervision and team discussions also provide opportunities to reflect and you can also record these reflections in the notes that follow.

Why reflect?

The benchmarks for social work (**Statement 4**) outline four themes (or outcomes of assessment):

- Awareness raising and knowledge acquisition
- Conceptual understanding
- Practice experience – the student applies theoretical models with new understanding and skills to ‘relevant activities’ and receives feedback on performance enhancing their critical self-evaluation
- Reflection on performance – the student reflects on past experience, recent performance and feedback and applies this information to the process of integrating awareness (including impact of self on others) and new understanding, leading to improved performance.

Statement 4 also says that **Academic Assessment** draws on the context of practice, case studies, practice focussed assignments, essays and project reports. **Assessment of Practice** is not a series of practical tasks but an integration of skills and knowledge within your reflective analysis.

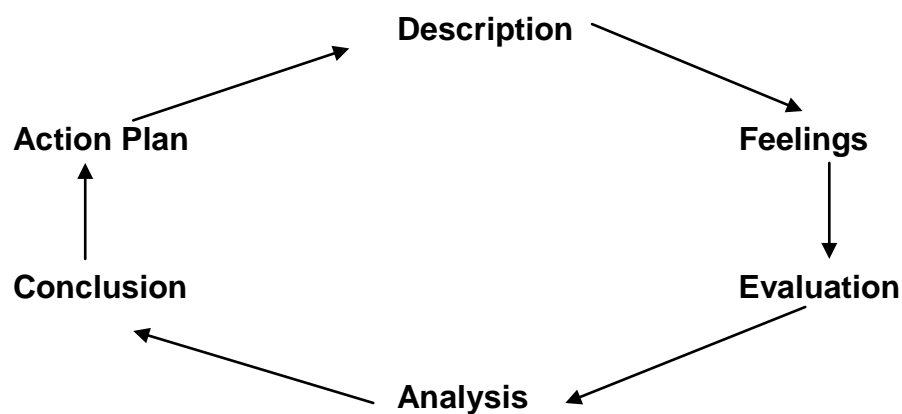
Reflecting on your practice will enable you to learn from it so that you can understand what you are doing and explain why you are doing it. This can help you to repeat things that seemed to work well and avoid things that didn't work quite so well. Paying attention to what you do can over time help you fine tune your skills although in the process you are likely to feel deskilled and exasperated as what you do and what you ideally would like to do sometimes seem very far apart. Reflecting on practice often involves seeing the gap between values and actions but paradoxically seeing the gap is often the first step towards closing it.

How to reflect

There are different ways to reflect as the cyclical model in the diagram that follows shows. After the action, event or incident the first step is to express your immediate reaction, off load to someone else or on paper and identify the immediate feelings or impressions. This is sometimes all we have the time to do, however to learn more effectively from practice the next stages are important. At this point we can look at the incident in more

depth and make connections with knowledge from theory and our life experiences. From this we can place the incident, event or situation in a broader political context.

Taking time over these sees help us to see our actions in a different light and so allows us to identify ways of approaching similar situations or taking subsequent action. The last step, before the circle starts again, is to identify the action to take in the light of reflections and then try it out.



(Gibbs 1988)

Often reflection happens after the event: **reflection on action**. Arguably a more dynamic way of reflecting is **reflection in action** when the individual reflects on what is happening in the midst of experience (Schon 1993; Boud et al 1985).

Reflection makes explicit what was only implicit, enabling the practitioner to write in more depth about their practice, and encourages the consideration and evaluation of alternatives. There can sometimes be a tension between providing evidence of competence and demonstrating learning. Earlier practice may fall short of the standards required, but it is the learning which is drawn from this that is important. This forms part of the formative assessment during the course of the placement and the role of the practice educator is to verify when the practice, through reflecting on that practice, has reached the required standard.

What makes reflective learning work?

Experience has shown that for reflective learning to be effective a combination of individual and context related factors need to be present:

- **Individual motivation.** The individual learner needs to be a self-managed learner, committed to personal/professional development, be self aware and prepared to work with others, to have clear goals and conceptual abilities.
- **Structured time.** Unless time is specifically set aside and ring fenced then it is likely to be overtaken by other demands. Short term thinking can see reflection as a luxury.
- **Interaction with others.** ('Critical friends'). Reflection is stimulated by discussion, questioning, challenge from trusted others. This needs to be within a 'safe' learning context, where the individual feels valued, able to be open and make mistakes, Discriminatory factors which operate in society must be recognised, and not replicated within the relationship.
- **Learning is relevant** e.g. it relates directly to the work and current issues important to the learner.
- **The whole person is engaged.** Learning takes account of cognitive, behavioural and emotional aspects.
- **A relevant range of learning activities is used.** The content and process should be responsive to the learners' needs, their preferred learning style, and maximise learning and application.
- **Organisational context.** Reflection, professional development, challenge and innovative practice is welcomed and not subsumed within an over-emphasis on 'toe-ing the agency line'.

Writing a reflective account

Writing reflective accounts requires a different style of writing to one used for social work reports and traditional academic work. It is not an easy way to write and often experienced social workers can find it difficult to write in a critically reflective way. Social workers are used to writing reports that focus on facts and the interpretation of those facts. This leads to an emphasis on description followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Students are more used to writing work for assessment where 'one' is often expected to write in a way that distances 'one' from the situation. In essays and assignments ideas are discussed in an abstract way using words and phrases such as 'it can be seen'.

For reflective accounts a different writing style is needed. The table below outlines ways to help students write more reflectively. The left hand column identifies the area, the middle one ways of writing that undermine effective self evaluation and the right hand column some ideas that will be helpful to guide writing.

INDICATIONS OF SELF-EVALUATION EFFECTIVENESS		
	Less helpful ways of writing reflectively	Ways of writing that help evidence reflection
Subject	Writing in the third person – using phrases like ‘It is important that’ or ‘social workers always need to listen to people’.	Writing in the first person. Using ‘I’ .. ‘I made sure that I...’, I prepared for the session by...
Focus	Just describing what happened or being anecdotal which means telling a story or giving bits of the story with out explaining the significance of how this relates to your learning or understanding of the situation.	Being reflective, analytic - saying why you did something and evaluative – saying what the results of your actions were.
Evidence	Being abstract or general and not giving specific examples.	Being concrete and specific.
Cross referencing	Not making links with other evidence that would evidence what you are saying – like a record of a supervision session or notes of a meeting,	Systematic cross referencing to other documents, highlighting the section that you are referring to. Drawing on any other relevant evidence that is available, like service users feedback.
Academic referencing	Making very general references or not giving any, for example talking about oppression and just in putting an authors name like Thompson 2001 without being specific about the detailed point from Thompson you are referring to.	Consistently backing your views with details of theory or research that provides further insight into the area that you are discussing. Acknowledging sources by providing full details of publications with page or details of chapters.

FURTHER AIDS TO REFLECTION AND LEARNING

The Practice Learning Assessment Guidelines, and the Toolkit in this Resource Handbook set out frameworks for reflective accounts that students should or can present in their portfolios. A range of other frameworks that may aid personal reflection and learning, but are not best suited to providing evidence of the NOS in the portfolio follow this advice.

RESEARCH AND READING

This tool can be used when you are reading to inform or reflect on your work or when you are undertaking research.

Name of article or book/ research. Author, publisher and date:

Key Points from the book:

What struck me most from my reading / what I have learned:

How this changes the way I look at a piece of work I have done:

How I will use this learning with current pieces of work:

An aspect of my practice that will change or I will think about differently as a result of this reading:

PLANNING A PIECE OF WORK

Before you begin a new piece of work with a family, take up a new case, or begin a piece of group or community work, or go out on a visit take time to plan your work.

In what ways do the service users experience oppression / disadvantage?

What is the legal context for this work? Which agency policies will I be working to?

From the information I have, what new knowledge will I need to work with this person, family or group? What steps will I take to gain this knowledge?

What are the overall aims of this piece of work?

What do I want to achieve in this visit?

What are my aims for learning from this piece of work?

SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Reflective journals are a useful way of recording your experiences and capturing the learning and development that evolves from these experiences. These ideas will help you to get started. The points below relate to keeping a journal for your own personal use so if your practice educator or practice supervisor have asked you to keep a journal it is worth clarifying what their expectations are and how you will use it in relation to supervision and assessment.

- The journal is a personal document, there is no right or wrong way of writing it
- Trust the direction and authority of your writing
- Writing is a gift to yourself
- Forget about grammar, syntax, spelling – they may potentially block the creative and inspirational flow
- The writing does not need to follow a format like a story it can be a ramble, be supplemented by drawings, poem, doodle, responses to happenings
- Have a positive approach to the journal, treat it as a friend not an enemy
- Be honest in your entries, write it as it is rather than how you think it should be
- Use your own words – do not try and get it right
- Focus on issues that are important to you
- As you feel more confident you could explore sharing your journal with others
- Include your 5 senses and experiment e.g. using a reflective model, writing from another's perspective
- Reflect on the entries – leave some spaces to go back and see on reading if any more thoughts are stimulated.
- Look for connections and patterns which emerge
- You don't have to come to an answer or a question.
Clare Hopkinson based on the work of Boud, D., Keogh, R., Walker, D. (1985)
Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning London: Kogan Page Bolton, G..

(2001) Reflective Practice Writing and Professional Development: London: Paul Chapman Publishers Ltd

FURTHER READING

- Adams, R. *Social Work and Empowerment* Birmingham, BASW see pages 37 - 55
- Adams, R, Dominelli, L & Payne, M (1998) *Social Work Themes, Issues and Critical Debates* See Ch 10 'Social work theories and reflective practice'
- Boud, D., Keogh, R., Walker, D (1985) *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning* London: Kogan Page. In this book the following chapter looks at the political/social dimension of reflection. Kemmis, Stephen (1985) 'Action Research and the Politics of Reflection' pp 139 - 165.
- D'Cruz et al (2007) Reflexivity, its Meaning and relevance for Social Work: A Critical Review of the Literature *British Journal of Social Work* **37**, 73-90
- Eby, M (2000) 'Understanding professional development' in Brechin, Brown and Eby (eds) *Critical Practice in Health and Social Care* London: Sage
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- Fook, J. (1996) (ed.) *The Reflective Researcher* St. Leonards, Australia, Allen and Unwin
- Fook, J. & Gardner, F. (2007) *Practicing Critical Reflection: A handbook* Maidenhead, Open University Press
- Gibbs, (1988) *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning*. Further Education Unit
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- Jones, K, Cooper B and Ferguson H (2008) *Best Practice in Social Work: Critical Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave)
- Knott C & Scragg, T (2007) *Reflective Practice in SW* Exeter: Learning matters
- Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning* London:Prentice Hall.
- McClure P (date not given) *Reflection on Practice* available from www.practicebasedlearning.org accessed 26/3/08
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- Rai, L (2006) 'Owning (up to) Reflective Writing in Social Work Education' *Social Work Education* Vol 25 no 8
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- Schon, Donald. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner* London: Temple Smith.
- Schon, D. (1993) '*Reflection-in-Action*' in *health and Welfare Practice*' ed Walmsley et al London Sage
- Taylor, I. (1997) *Developing Learning in Professional Education: Partnerships for Practice* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Taylor C and White S (2000) *Practising reflexivity in health and welfare: Making knowledge* Maidenhead, Open University Press
- White, S, Fook, J. & Gardener, F. (2006) *Critical Reflection in Health and Social Care* Maidenhead, Open University Press
- Yelloly, Margaret and Henkel, Mary (1995) *Learning and Teaching in Social Work: Towards Reflective Practice* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

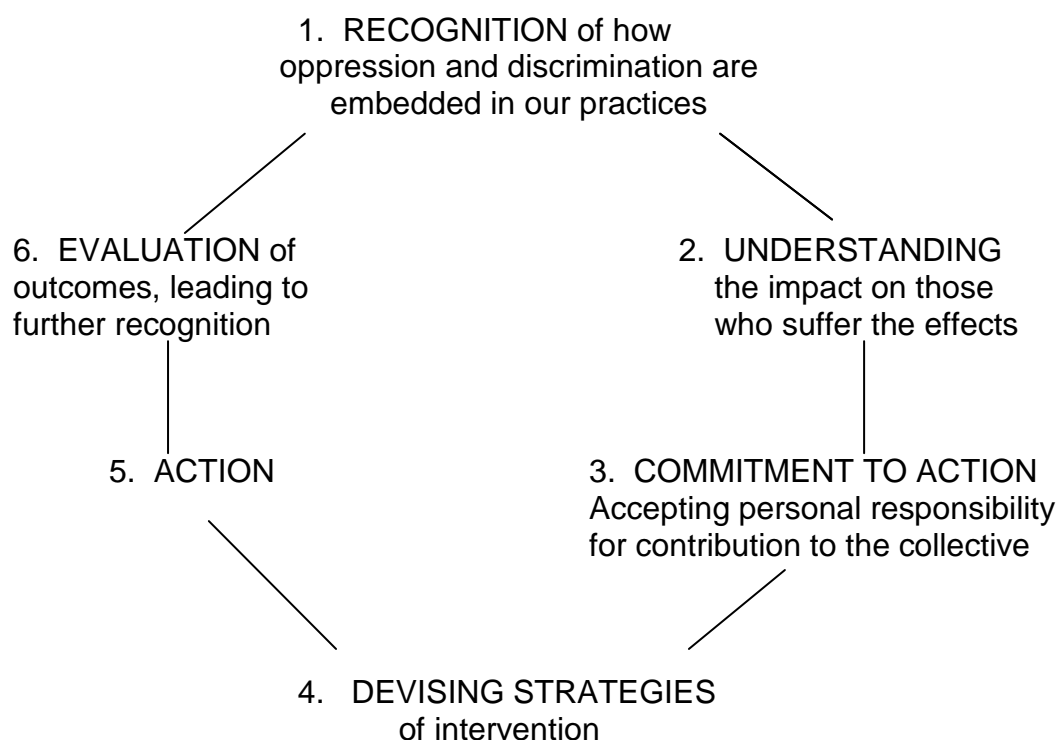
Also check in journals such as the British Journal of Social Work and Social Work Education as new articles on reflection are published regularly.

DEVELOPING AND ASSESSING ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

Assessment of action taken over issues of discrimination and oppression relies on an assessment of what is feasible. It is difficult to legislate for the action of others, because raising issues about racism or other forms of discrimination in a given situation may be feasible for one person and not for another, according to a combination of situation and personal style. Nevertheless, the learning opportunities for the identification, analysis & taking action to counter racism & discrimination should be clearly outlined in the placement agreement and the student should regularly review their practice in relation to the plan. We suggest that students and Practice Educators should discuss definitions and ideas about anti-oppressive practice early in the placement to enable students to draw up their action plan in order to identify ways in which their learning and competence in this respect might be developed.

A Model of Understanding and Action

The three levels of awareness identified earlier in these guidelines have been expanded into a developmental cycle of six stages of positive action. Entering the cycle entails making an active choice.



The assessment of competence in this regard will take account of whether the practice assessed is at Level 2 or Level 3. The emphasis at Level 2 is on demonstrating competence in understanding and at Level 3 on demonstrating competence in action.

Identifying Possible Ways of Taking Action

Being culturally alert and considerate on a personal level makes no impact on oppression and discrimination. So we suggest that it will be useful to consider taking action at five different levels: personal, service user, professional, agency and structural levels. We think that action on all these levels is an essential component of good practice.

Suggested Action Plan

LEVELS OF RESPONSE	i	ii	iii	iv	v
ACTION	PERSONAL	SERVICE USER	PROFESSIONAL	AGENCY	STRUCTURAL
1 Recognition	E	E	E	E	E
2 Understanding	E	E	E	E	E
3 Commitment	E	E	E	E	E
4 Strategies	E	E	E	E	E
5 Taking Action	E	E	E	D	D
6 Evaluation	E	E	E	E	E

Key: E = Essential for obtaining professional qualification
 D = Desirable for obtaining professional qualification

Examples of Action Plans

Some examples of Action Plans that could be drawn up at the different levels of intervention are listed below. They are general and would need to be made specific in any particular placement. This list is far from exhaustive. The best ideas for action are going to be those generated by imaginative thinking based on experience within the placement by student and practice educator.

Personal

1. Constantly and actively evaluating the basis for your assessment of groups, individuals, situations. Are they based on stereotypes and assumptions, or facts and opinions checked out with users?
2. Being aware of the potential for using power to enforce individual will and impose control. Being clear about the legitimate use of authority and the potential for abuse.
3. Using supervision to discuss levels of personal responsibility.
4. Being aware of the potential for language to be used to discriminate and oppress.

Service User

1. Doing a Community Profile to ascertain for example whether there is equal access for all the population to your service.
2. Being aware of the agency's Equal Opportunities Policies and putting them into action.
3. Appropriately seeking the user's view of their circumstances, and making this an integral part of your assessment.
4. Asking for user feedback on the service offered. Does it meet their needs?

Professional

1. Challenging negative or stereotyped views of users, or others in the community.
2. Observing and questioning other people's practice.
3. Using supervision to question the practice of the Team and workplace in detail.

Agency

1. Raising issues in Team Meetings or other forums.
2. Observing aspects of organisation and service delivery; using knowledge of discrimination to evaluate these; making comment, either verbal or written (eg placement study), to feed back to the Agency.
3. Seeking out policies of the Agency that cover discrimination eg anti-racist, equal opportunities etc, and evaluate them in practice.

4. Using supervision to understand the Agency better - its structure, its written policies, and its unwritten ethos. This includes understanding organisational and team culture - what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice.
5. Enabling users to challenge policies of the Agency; learning about the complaints procedure.

Structural

1. Political action in a community work setting.
2. Pressure group activity in the voluntary sector.
3. Enabling individuals or groups to pressurise powerful bodies, eg writing a letter to an MP or Minister.

Skills involved in raising issues

We can react with fear and anger when our basic assumptions are questioned. Many of us are prepared to open our thinking to doubt and uncertainty only some of the time, if at all. Raising issues provokes a level of discomfort, which we can understand through our own personal experience of how uncomfortable the issues can be. Similarly, we are all familiar with our own strategies of avoiding this discomfort. Thus the skills needed for raising issues of discrimination and oppression are those of raising any other difficult, uncomfortable and personally challenging issues with other individuals, eg timing, knowing when not to press the matter, and coping with the anxiety, anger and guilt of inaction.

Many people react unpredictably if they feel threatened. Raising issues can create a dynamic which can rebound upon the person who raises them. There is also a difference between raising difficult issues with those perceived as less powerful than ourselves, and those perceived as more powerful. Students undergoing assessment are in an especially vulnerable situation.

In addition, students will often have personal discrimination issues, which may be difficult to disentangle from general discrimination issues. It must be acknowledged that raising issues in which we have a direct personal interest is extremely difficult.

The position of students from oppressed groups

Oppression and discrimination are multi-faceted, and students may be affected by a range of oppressions. We are exploring ways of ensuring that students particularly likely to experience discrimination and oppression have positive learning opportunities, within the framework of the university's equality strategy.

In the meantime, if students become concerned that they are not being treated fairly in their practice settings, they should discuss this with their practice or academic tutor, or the module leader – whoever they feel most confident in – and they will explore ways to address this, principally by taking it up with the agency, but also by linking students with appropriate sources of support.

In situations like this students often feel reluctant to comment, as they fear it may prejudice their progress within the placement. We will respect students' wishes in how such matters are taken up. However, experience suggests that trying to leave it to the end of the placement, without addressing it promptly is generally harmful to students' overall well being, and should be avoided if at all possible.

Some Recommended Reading

A number of texts include chapters that consider elements of anti-oppressive practice, both more generally and in relation to working in particular settings. The following general texts are particularly useful:

Dalrymple, J. & Burke, B. (2006) *Anti-Oppressive Practice: Social care and the law*. Maidenhead, Open University Press

Dominelli, L. (2002) *Anti-Oppressive Social Work Theory and Practice*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

Nzira, V. & Williams, P. (2009) *Anti-Oppressive Practice in Health and Social Care*. London, Sage Publications

Thompson, N. (2003) *Anti-discriminatory Practice*, 3rd edn. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

Thompson, N. (2003) *Promoting Equality: Challenging Discrimination and Oppression*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

SECTION 2:

TOOL KIT

The tool kit is designed to help students provide evidence for the National Occupational Standards. Please use and adapt the tools we have suggested to suit your own styles and practice learning opportunities.

- **Planning Induction**
- **Incident Analysis**
- **Interview assessment schedule**
- **Feedback from colleagues**
- **Interviewing and interpersonal skills**
- **Weekly supervision and feedback sheets**

PLANNING INDUCTION

The table overleaf provides a checklist for planning and recording an induction programme. Some agencies will already have a standard induction programme. However this tool provides a template to start the planning process and may be adapted to take account of particular practice learning opportunities and student needs.

Formal and Informal Elements

Formal activities help the student to get to know the agency and its structure, policies and procedures and the local community. These activities help the student to become part of the team and to begin to contextualise the lives of people using the placement agency.

It is particularly important that students are aware of health & safety policies and procedures and any risks that may be present.

Informal activities help students to become familiar with the daily life of the office which staff will take for granted e.g coffee and tea rituals, where and when people go to lunch, what they are known as and so on.

Internal and External Elements

Equally important is the need for the student to understand the context of the lives of the people served by the agency. Students are advised to carry out a community profile. While it is necessary and important for students to go to places and meet people, care must be taken to be sensitive to the needs of other agencies especially user-led groups, community groups and voluntary agencies who may not have the resources to facilitate regular student visits. It is important therefore that the induction programme is well planned by the Practice Educator or supervisor and the student together.

PLANNING INDUCTION

	FORMAL	Source	INFORMAL	Source
INTERNAL	Policy documents (e) Procedures (e) Recording (e) People in the team (e&d) Filing systems (e) Signing in (e) Resources (e&d) IT resources Agency mechanisms for obtaining service user feedback		Coffee, tea, lunch times (e) Messages (e) Names (d) Dress (d)	
EXTERNAL	Multi-disciplinary procedures (e) Case conference protocol (d) Court behaviour (d) Resources: - day care - residential - other professionals (e&d) Community profile including visiting web site for local government and local area Local service user organisations		Dress when visiting (d) Names (d) Parking (d) Lunch in hospital canteen (d)	
READING CHECKLIST				

e = essential

d = desirable Taken from Baldwin*

* Baldwin, M. (1992) Induction programmes for students on placements *Journal of Training and Development* Vol 2 No 4

RECORDING INDUCTION

The induction programme is likely to be a diary of events with a checklist of required reading. Identified events might be meetings and visits. Additional visits and reading may be identified depending on the student's learning needs and particular pieces of work undertaken. The final programme would ideally show how student has managed the process and indicate where evidence has been gathered. For example:

May	Event	Source	Evidence	Date
2	Attend safeguarding meeting with J.D (senior practioner)	J.D	Sup notes 1	07/05/04
3	Visit advocacy project	Townsville Advocacy Service for Young People	Leaflet about advocacy & commentary on how used	17/06/04
4	Obtain info about local user led groups	Web & resource directory (see W.P)	How agency links with user groups	21/05/04

In this example the student goes to a safeguarding meeting with a colleague of the Practice Educator (JD). The colleague knew in advance that this would be a Practice Learning opportunity and had sought permission from the chair of the meeting and the service users for the student to attend. The student discusses this visit and learning about the impact of such meetings on service users, in supervision the following week (evidence supervision notes). The student arranges to visit a local advocacy service for children and young people and uses this information to assist a young person later in the placement (evidence is short reflective account attached to a leaflet for young people). During the first two weeks of placement the student develops a community profile of the area recording information about local user-led groups (evidence: community profile).

GUIDELINES FOR STRUCTURED REFLECTION

Context

Set out the circumstances in which you came to be involved in the piece of work you are discussing. How did your agency come to be involved with this work? What was your role at the time it came to your attention? How did it come to your attention (e.g. by chance, your own initiative or formal decision by the agency)? What information did you have about the identity and circumstances of the service users (or others) you were to work with. What information did you have about their concerns? What other people or agencies were involved at this stage? How and why did you decide to take it on?

Purpose and Plan

In beginning the work, what did you see as your main purpose? How did you decide this? How did you decide you could best achieve this? What legal and policy frameworks informed your purpose and plans? What previous experience, other knowledge and/or models of intervention did you draw on? What other information or preparation did you think you needed?

Process

Discuss what happened in implementing your plans – what you did, what others did, how you responded to them, how you worked together. Say what you felt in the course of the work and how this affected your thinking, purpose and plans (i.e say something about the process of your reflection *in action*).

Evaluation

How effective was your work? Say what you know about the opinions of different parties in the work – yourself, the service user, the agency, anyone else who seems relevant. What was achieved or not achieved and why? How does this relate to your original purpose and plan, or any revision of it? Distinguish between the work you were responsible for and that which was carried out by others.

Reflection

Use this section to reflect *on action*. Discuss what you learnt from this piece of work, and reflect on you own intervention – in particular, your use of values, theory, methods and strategies etc. This might refer to a discussion of your own practice and use of self, and areas for development that the work has suggested to you, as well as issues around policy and practice that were highlighted for you?

INCIDENT ANALYSIS

Think of an "incident" from your placement experience. The incident or event can be a simple, every day situation which made you think about what you did and why. Such as:

- Something you were doing for the first time.
- Meeting a person or a group of people for the first time.
- An occasion where you felt that your intervention really made a difference.
- Something that went unusually well.
- An incident where there was some sort of "breakdown", i.e. where things did not go as planned.
- An incident that you think captures the essence of anti racist and anti discriminatory social work practice.
- An incident that was particularly demanding.
- An incident that made you question your own practice.

Analysing the Incident

Using these headings briefly outline the incident/event/situation- try not to go into too much background detail - just give enough to put it in context.

- What led up to it and who was involved,
- Brief but specific details of what happened,
- What you were thinking about as it was taking place,
- What you were feeling during and after the incident,
- What you wanted to accomplish in dealing with the situation,
- What you found most demanding,
- Why the incident seems important or "interesting" to you,
- How your practice may have:
 - contributed to oppression
 - be failing to identify the potential for oppression
 - be anti-oppressive
- The social work theories you used that help you understand some of the issues.
- What 'gaps' have you identified in your understanding of the issues raised and what can you do about them,
- What you have learnt about social work from considering the incidents,
- How can you develop your practice and that of the service within your work setting?

CRITICAL INCIDENT ANALYSIS FOR INTERPROFESSIONAL WORKING

Start by thinking generally about the context in which you are working and the strengths and limitations of interprofessional (IP) working in this setting.

Think of an example of some work either with a specific service user or carer or an event, such as a meeting, where you observed or were part of IP working.

- What are your first impressions of IP working in relation to the incident?
- What was effective about the way different professions worked together?
- What hindered interprofessional working?
- Where did this happen? (Details of room, setting, physical environment and so on)
- What did you notice about the way people communicated with each other?
 - Did everyone who wanted to, contribute to the discussion?
 - Was anyone excluded or ignored?
 - Did anyone dominate? If so, how and why?
 - What did you notice about the non-verbal communication?
 - What did you notice about the use of language – was it specialised?
- Was there any profession or person *missing* who could potentially have made a useful contribution?
- What did you notice about the *relationships* between those involved? Was there any particularly strong connection or rapport between particular people?
- What were the service user and carers' views, expertise and strengths?
 - How central were they to the discussion?
- What was the *atmosphere* like? (Identify conflict, humour, routines, refreshments)
- What was the main content of the discussion?
 - Diagnosis/identification of problems, progress, future planning?
 - Did any of the discussion consider how professions had or could potentially work together?

- What was your *role*?
 - How clear were you about this?
 - What role conflicts did you experience or observe?
 - Did you understand the role of others present?
 - If not why not and what can you do about this?
- Which of the following *skills* did you use and how effectively did you use them?
 - Active listening.
 - Sharing your views
 - Being aware of other people
 - Using eye contact
 - Using silences
 - Summarising
 - Asking open questions
 - Acknowledging other contributions
 - Challenging
- How did *power* and *leadership* operate?
 - Was there a formal leader and if so why did this person take the lead?
 - Were there any shifts or changes in leadership during the process if so why?
 - What were the power dynamics?
 - What did you notice about the way in which formal and informal power operated?
 - How did you use your power and influence?
 - Did you feel able to challenge others?
 - Were any viewpoints or contributions ignored or undermined?
 - Was there conflict, if so how was this resolved?
 - What else did you notice about power?

- What *learning* occurred?
 - For you?
 - For others?
 - How did this happen? (For example, discussion in group, follow up discussion with practice educator, mentor, supervisor, clinical educator etc)
- Did any new practices or ways of working emerge from the situation?
- How can you apply the understanding you have gained from this situation in the future?
- What gaps in your knowledge, understanding and skills can you identify and how can you bridge these? Think about who you may need to talk to, what you might need to investigate further and what skills you might need to practice.

(Taken from Thomas, J (2005) Issues for the future in *Interprofessional Working in Health and Social Care: Professional Perspectives* Barrett, Sellman and Thomas (eds.) Palgrave)

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

Planned or unplanned practice assessment

(Please do not use this as the main form of feedback for a planned observation)

STUDENT:

SERVICE USER(S):

ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY:

DATE:

5 = Very Good 4 = Good 3 = Satisfactory (minimum competence) 2 = Skills Need Developing 1 = Poor

1 Preparation Skills

Comments

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | Clear understanding of role and task | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b | Had a provisional interview plan | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c | Ensured environment was conducive to the interview plan | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d | Arranged, as far as possible, for the interview to be uninterrupted | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

2 Engagement

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | Introduced him/herself | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b | Clearly explained purpose of interview | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c | Identified and encouraged a participative process | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d | Negotiated a realistic agenda having regard to agency priority, client need and time available | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3 Non-verbal style

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | Appropriate eye contact | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b | Position and posture communicating interest and attention | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c | Body language congruent with service user(s) and aim of interview | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d | Positive use of silence | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

4 Emotional response

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | Acknowledge and respond to service user affect | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b | Attempt to establish an appropriate emotional tone for the subject of the interview (e.g. appropriate use of humour) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c | Identify and try to explore a noticeable lack of service user affect | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE (continued)

5 = Very Good 4 = Good 3 = Satisfactory (minimum competence) 2 = Skills Need Developing 1 = Poor

5 Verbal Communication

a	Addressed service user(s) appropriately	5	4	3	2	1
b	Communicated clearly	5	4	3	2	1
c	Asked relevant questions	5	4	3	2	1
d	Asked questions one at a time	5	4	3	2	1
e	Used open and closed questions as appropriate	5	4	3	2	1
f	Used plain language in place of professional jargon	5	4	3	2	1
g	Explored or identified issues as planned for agency priorities	5	4	3	2	1
h	Acknowledged and explored issues as presented by service user(s)	5	4	3	2	1
i	Checked regularly that he/she understood service user(s) perspective (paraphrasing, clarifying, summarising)	5	4	3	2	1
j	Checked things unsaid (prompting, probing)	5	4	3	2	1
k	Checked regularly that service user(s) understood worker/agency perspective	5	4	3	2	1

6 Interview Process

		Comments				
a	Facilitated service user(s) to express themselves	5	4	3	2	1
b	Showed insight into service user(s) needs/situation	5	4	3	2	1
c	Able to maintain interview plan whilst responding to service users' needs/situation	5	4	3	2	1
d	Able to maintain or re-establish interview plan despite distractions, interruptions, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
e	Was able to use his/her authority as necessary	5	4	3	2	1
f	Ensured the interview had a structure (beginning, middle, ending)	5	4	3	2	1
g	Did not reach premature conclusions	5	4	3	2	1
h	Offered appropriate social work advice/perspective	5	4	3	2	1
i	Was able to admit "I don't know" where necessary	5	4	3	2	1
j	Set and kept time boundaries	5	4	3	2	1

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE (continued)

5 = Very Good 4 = Good 3 = Satisfactory (minimum competence) 2 = Skills Need Developing 1 = Poor

7 Endings

a	Summarised clearly at the end of the interview	5	4	3	2	1
b	Agreed a focus for the next interview with the service user(s)	5	4	3	2	1
c	Discussed and agreed tasks to be completed by student and service user(s)	5	4	3	2	1
d	Made an appointment for the next interview	5	4	3	2	1
e	Ensured that service user(s) understood how, where and when to contact student if necessary.	5	4	3	2	1
f	Ensured that service user(s) understood agency/ supervisory structure, if necessary.	5	4	3	2	1
g	Ensured that service user(s) was aware of agency complaints procedure, where appropriate	5	4	3	2	1

8 Values Requirements

a	Awareness of your own values, prejudices, ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest and their implications on your practice	5	4	3	2	1
b.	Respect for, and the promotion of: · each person as an individual · independence and quality of life for individuals, whilst protecting them from harm · dignity and privacy of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities	5	4	3	2	1
c.	Recognise and facilitate each person's use of the language and form of communication of their choice.	5	4	3	2	1
d.	Value, recognise and respect the diversity, expertise and experience of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities	5	4	3	2	1
e.	Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities by communicating in an open, accurate and understandable way	5	4	3	2	1
f.	Understand, and make use of, strategies to challenge discrimination, disadvantage and other forms of inequality and injustice	5	4	3	2	1

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE (continued)

5 = Very Good 4 = Good 3 = Satisfactory (minimum competence) 2 = Skills Need Developing 1 = Poor

	Comments
9 List any particular difficulties or constraints presented in this interview and rate students ability to respond/adapt	
_____	5 4 3 2 1
_____	5 4 3 2 1
_____	5 4 3 2 1
10 Identify any aspects of student's performance not covered above (e.g. use of humour, self-disclosure) and rate its effect	
_____	5 4 3 2 1
_____	5 4 3 2 1
_____	5 4 3 2 1
11 Any other comments and general impression of the interview with regard to stage of first or second year placement.	

NOTES

1. Observe the interview conducted by the student directly or use video-audio tape. Ring the number which corresponds most closely to the student's performance.
2. This schedule can also be completed jointly with the student, or the student and practice teacher can assess separately and compare their ratings.

FEEDBACK FROM COLLEAGUES – UNPLANNED OBSERVATION

Student's Name:

Date Work Completed:

What work was observed/worked jointly?

Was this a single event or an ongoing piece of work?

What were the particular challenges of this piece of work?

What strengths and abilities did the student bring to it?

What learning points were there?

What might have been done differently?

What, if any, was the feedback from service users or carers?

What areas does the student need to develop?

What strengths and skills did the student demonstrate?

Have you any further comments?

Signed:..... Job Title..... Date.....

NB: This may be completed by student during/after a discussion or completed by colleague.

GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE USER AND CARER FEEDBACK / EVALUATION OF PRACTICE

Principles

Service users and carers should be informed at the beginning of your work with them (or as soon as possible) that you are a student

You should ask them if they would be willing to comment on your work and for their comments to be seen by placement colleagues, teaching staff

You should agree this with them well in advance of getting their comments

You should make it clear that your work with them will not be affected in any way by the decision (or the comments) they make

If possible, you should give them the choice of making their comments either directly to you or to a third party – eg your practice supervisor or educator

You should think carefully about what would be the most appropriate way for them to record their comments – in writing, or in some other format (which may include speaking to someone who notes their comments and discusses them)

When you include service user feedback in your portfolio it should not identify the service user, and should be verified by your practice educator. You should add your own comment and reflection.

Issues for comment

Possible topics for comment are given on the next page. They are given as guidelines and have not been prepared in a questionnaire format, so you will need to decide how best to present them to service users.

If you use them you should give those commenting an opportunity to give more than yes or no answers.

You will also need to think about how you will seek clarification on any comments you are surprised about or want to know more about.

Begin by seeking written or recorded consent for comment to be included

Other issues

Consider how far service user and carer feedback is part of the agency's culture. Explore this as part of placement induction.

Possible topics for comment by service users and carers

When you first met the student

- Did they introduce themselves to you?
- Were they able to show you a form of identification?
- Did they explain why they were meeting you, and what help they might be able to offer?

In all of your dealings with them did the student

- Treat you with courtesy
- Treat you respect?
- Communicate with you in a way that you could understand?

When you discussed things with the student, did they

- Attempt to find out what your concerns were?
- Attempt to find out what other people's concerns were?
- Show that they understood what your (and other people's concerns) were?
- Explain clearly the different arrangements they thought could be made?
- Attempt to find out what you (and other people) thought about the alternatives?
- Make plans and decisions together with you? (If not, did they explain why not?)
- Make sure that you knew what you would need to do?
- Keep you informed of what they would do?
- Do what they said they would do?
- Make clear arrangements as to when they would next contact you?
- Keep appointments and arrive on time?

Overall did you think tha the work the student did with you was

- What you wanted?
- What you needed?
- Effective?

Please say what you most liked about how the student worked with you.

Please say one thing that you think the student should try to improve on in their future work

WEEKLY SUPERVISION AND FEEDBACK SHEET

Links with NOS |

Date:
Student:
Practice Educator:
Agenda:

Action from the last session:

Workload Management:

Reflection on practice and learning

What links have you been able to make in your practice with University based learning?

What dilemmas and ethical issues have you encountered this week:?

What have you learning this week about anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice ?

Development of portfolio evidence

Planning ahead (practice, practice learning and portfolio)

Name of Note Taker:

Signed:

Student:..... Date:

Practice Educator/Supervisor:.....Date:

SECTION 3:

**GROUPWORK GUIDANCE AND
RESOURCES**

WORKING WITH GROUPS

**By David Henchman and Sue Walton
with
Celia Keeping**

Editor Judith Thomas

Working with groups

Introduction

The ability to work in and with groups is fundamental to social work and is reflected in the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (Topss 2004). Key roles 1, 2 and 3 all mention working with groups, units within key roles 3.5 also specifically refer to groups and group work is also relevant to unit 6. There have been direct and indirect opportunities during the programme to learn about the development and functioning of groups e.g.

- Preparation for Practice module – groupwork session
- Social work practice 1 - communication skills sessions
- Interprofessional Modules.

On these modules you have been provided with copies of articles and book chapters and other relevant reading has been suggested. Many of these learning opportunities have been experiential and you have lots of experience on other modules to work as part of a group and to consider the importance of groups in social work. To meet the group work requirements we suggest you revisit the written and workshop material and consider it afresh with your particular placement situation in mind.

NOS Unit 8 focuses specifically on group work and requires students to:

Work with groups to promote individual growth, development and independence

- 8.1 Identify opportunities to form and support groups
- 8.2 Use group programmes, processes and dynamics to promote individual growth, development and independence, and to foster interpersonal skills
- 8.3 Help groups to achieve planned outcomes for their members and to evaluate the appropriateness of their work
- 8.4 Disengage from groups appropriately

(National Occupational Standards Key Role 2, Unit 8)

By the end of Level 3, students must meet this key role.

Where students have met this at Level 2 the Practice Learning team should review any evidence the student may have produced for unit 8 in their Level 2 placement. If the Level 2 training team agreed the unit was satisfactorily evidenced at Level 2 then no further evidence need be produced at Level 3 and the practice educator should endorse the student's evidence summary chart with the words 'Met in previous practice learning'. However, as noted, working with groups is covered in various aspects of the NOS and so should form part of the evidence for other units. Although group work may not be the main intervention carried out by an agency or team it should be possible to link with other settings or support service user self advocacy or service monitoring groups to achieve the outcomes of unit 8. It may also be possible for more than one student to work together on a group project.

(NB the wording 'Met in previous practice learning' could also be included for units 15 and 21. There should therefore be validated evidence for all 21 Practice Units in the final year portfolio.)

What is a group?

Groupwork is central element of social work practice, in some settings e.g. family settings groupwork is an integral part of practice. In other settings e.g. intake teams an assessment may indicate that some of a person's needs are best met through a group and so opportunities for joining a group would be discussed as part of the care planning process. Social workers generally work in teams where group dynamics will always influence the effectiveness of the team but these dynamics may or may not be consciously worked with. Groups, consisting of different combinations of service users, carers and professionals are increasingly used as part of monitoring and service development. Some social workers specialise in working with groups and develop specialist skills in this area; however during the course of day to day practice groupwork skills are part of an essential tool kit all social workers need to develop.

Groupwork can be seen as an event or practice method that has to be staged and managed by the worker and that **Groups** are "the service user" in the context of this work. Groupwork can thus come to be seen as something different and discrete from "ordinary" practice. Workers who do it can come to be seen as specialist and their work can acquire a mystique that can be de-skilling for others. The reality is that we all work with or in groups every day and thus there are numerous opportunities for everyone to learn from their own involvement in the process of these groups.

Like any aspect of social work, the more conscious of your involvement in group processes that you are and the more that you reflect on it, the better you will be able to develop confidence and skills when working with and in groups.

Students on placement who do not have the opportunity to facilitate or lead groups **on a formal basis** often express concern that they will not be able to meet Unit 8. Part of the problem arises because of how we define Groups and Groupwork.

Consider the following definitions of **Group**... "*a number of persons near together or placed or classified together, a cluster, or throng*" (Collins New English Dictionary (1970) p433) and "*A number of persons or things located close together or considered or classed together*" (Oxford Concise Dictionary (1990) p522).

Also consider the following definition of **Group dynamics**... "*the nature, development and interactions of human groups*". (Oxford Concise Dictionary (1990) p522)

Using these definitions it is evident that you are likely to be operating within, influencing and have the opportunity to influence groups all the time, whether you are conscious of it or not.

Recognising that you are in many different groups is the starting point for the understanding and application of the theory. The theory provides a structure to help

you identify, understand and influence these groups. Our expectation is that in most cases during Level 2 or 3 placements students would have the opportunity to work with service users in a group. Opportunities to do this need to be fully explored early and may involve creating a discrete learning opportunity alongside the main placement setting. Although group work may not be the main intervention carried out by an agency or team it should be possible to link with other agencies or support service user self advocacy or service monitoring groups to achieve the outcomes of Unit 8. It may also be possible for more than one student to share work in a group project.

Where this has been explored and is not possible then the student, practice educator and tutor can develop alternative plans to fulfil the required components of unit 8. However, these alternatives should only be used in very exceptional circumstances and the arrangements need to be clearly negotiated and agreed as part of the student's learning agreement and reviewed by the panel at the interim stage.

Different Sorts of Groups

Keeping (2003) refers to the nine categories of groups outlined by Preston-Shoot (1987 p, 11):

1. **Social groups.** Purpose may be to overcome members' social isolation, provide opportunities for pleasure or positive relationships. The content is social or recreational. Group workers may be responsible for the programme or members may be wholly or partly responsible e.g. youth clubs, social clubs for older people, social clubs for people with mental health problems.
2. **Group psychotherapy.** Aims to bring about personality change through individual goals. Members bring personal problems and interpersonal coping difficulties. Rely on good verbal communication skills. Group orientated towards present events in the group, thereby helping people to change by recognising how they relate to others in the group. Bion (1961) and Yalson (1975, 1985) are major contributors.
3. **Group Counselling.** Members usually share a common problem which can be practical e.g. looking for employment; emotional e.g. dealing with loss; or interpersonal e.g. assertiveness training. The task of the group worker is to help members clarify the problem, share solutions and develop problem-solving behaviours.
4. **Educational groups.** Provide information and impart skills. Two types e.g. practical skills such as daily living skills, and preparing people for life-stage transition – from work to retirement, adoption of a child etc. Main emphasis is on learning transferable skills with some information giving.
5. **Social treatment groups.** 4 types (a) maintenance of existing adaptive behaviour; (b) modification of unhelpful behaviour; (c) problem-centred groups; (d) provision of compensatory experiences for people with earlier deprivation.
6. **Discussion groups.** Focus on matters of general interest to members rather than specific problems
7. **Self-help groups.** Worker's role minimal or non-existent. Often the members organise the group themselves or draw on the worker for occasional advice.

8. **Social action groups.** Utilisation of collective power to campaign for social change e.g. road safety, welfare rights, or protests to stop local developments (Sutton 1994).
9. **Self-directed groups.** Similar to self-help groups, workers are only present to help members determine the direction of the group and achieve its aims.

Group Work: Tool 1

Applying the principles of working effectively with and in groups.

This tool will help you become and remain reflective about the groups that you are involved with.

Start by considering what groups you can identify, be part of and/or facilitate during your placement (8.1)

e.g. team groups, interprofessional groups, group meetings, group presentations, family groups, groups of residents, carers groups, groups of service users in a day centre, advocacy groups, community groups, focus groups, learning sets, internet based groups, discussion forums etc.

Who is in the group?

Next consider the following aspects of groups and accompanying questions that will help you to establish how they are relevant to the identified unit components.

- **Group processes (8.2, 8.3 and 8.4)**

Identify one or two of the groups you are part of use the 'Stages of Group Development' (Tuckman 1977) apply it to your identified group by answering the following questions.

What stage of development do you think this group has reached?

What is your evidence in terms of group members' behaviour in the group?

What could you do or/and how do you contribute to the development and/or conclusion of this group?

With reference to the Statement of Expectations by service users and others in National Occupational Standards. (Topss 2004) consider what issues are raised and what are your responsibilities?

- **Ground rules (8.2 & 8.3)**

Ground rules are a fundamental aspect of group development. It is our experience that all groups have ground rules whether they are explicit or implicit. Some groups create their ground rules, they are formally written and agreed and referred to when the group comes together. They become a working tool that helps to enable the group to achieve its aims and objectives and are regularly reviewed with this in mind.

Within other groups an unspoken code of behaviour develops that determines practice and informal interactions between group members such as who does what,

who sits where and who uses which cup. Implicit ground rules can inhibit group development, alienate individuals, prevent the achievement of aims and objectives and result in dysfunction (constant storming).

What are the ground rules of the groups you have been thinking about?
Are they explicit (How are they made explicit?) or implicit?

How do they affect the behaviour of group members?

Are they ever referred to?

When are the ground rules reviewed?

What have you done or what could you do to promote the use of ground rules in groups in which you are involved?

With reference to the Statement of Expectations by service users and others in National Occupational Standards (Topss 2004), what issues are raised and what are your responsibilities?

- **Aims and Objectives (8.2 & 8.3)**

Many groups do not have explicit aims and objectives but seem to function reasonably well without them. However our experience is that groups can only reach their **full** potential when everyone knows what they are doing and why (i.e. they are working to agreed aims and objectives) and all members have had a part to play in agreeing what they are. The aims and objectives are regularly subject to review and form the basis of evaluating the effectiveness of the group (if the group does not have aims and objectives, how else can it be evaluated?). *The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts* and we call this stage “well-functioning” but some groups we have worked with have preferred to call it “group actualisation”.

Groups and facilitators often find it difficult to address the issue of aims and objectives but to persevere can be liberating. The clarity of purpose and boundaries, the growth in confidence that comes with achieving what the group sets out to achieve and the ability to demonstrate success promotes the empowerment of individuals and enhances creativity in the way that aims are met.

What is the difference between aims and objectives?

Does your group have aims and objectives?

What are they?

How were they arrived at? (e.g. are they imposed, inferred, assumed or created by the group?)

How are they used?

Do they change?

What can you do to promote the development and use of aims and objectives in groups you are involved in?

With reference to the Statement of Expectations by service users and others in National Occupational Standards (Topss 2004), what issues are raised and what are your responsibilities?

- **Leadership styles (8.1, 8.2, 8.3 & 8.4)**

The leader or facilitator of a group has power and the application of this power will clearly have an impact on the group. There are a number of theories that seek to explain this process (e.g. Lippitt and White (1953), French and Raven (1967), Johnson and Johnson (1987)).

If you have the responsibility as facilitator of a group you should have an awareness of how you apply the power through your leadership. As a member of many groups your awareness of the leadership style of the facilitator can help you to understand what is going on in the group and how to be a positive contributor to the process.

Lippitt and White's model (1953) (cited in Brown 1994 p70), identifies three broad styles of leadership:

- Autocratic,
- Democratic
- Laissez-faire

The book provides a useful and accessible means of reflecting on leadership styles. However, our experience is that the effective group facilitator/leader has to be able to adopt each of these styles so we would advise caution about using labels that are value laden.

In the group you are considering:

Who is the group leader?

How is the group led?

Referring to the stages of group development what is the impact of the leadership style on the group?

With reference to the Statement of Expectations by service users and others in

National Occupational Standards (Topss 2004), what issues are raised and what are your responsibilities?

- **Applying group work theory to work with individuals**

Groupwork theory is useful and relevant to understanding and influencing the dynamic between two people. Unsurprisingly then the principles of good Groupwork

that derive from the theory have obvious parallels with the principles of good one to one work e.g.

- *“have boundaries”* (one to one) and *“have ground rules”* (groups)
- *“plan outcomes”* (one to one) and *“have aims and objectives”* (groups)
- *“be aware of the power invested in your role as social worker* (one to one) *and “be aware of your leadership style”* (groups)

The principles of Groupwork theory are particularly helpful when understanding groups of more than two people because of course there is more dynamic and therefore more complex dynamic. It would not be sufficient just to use work with individuals to demonstrate unit 8 but you can draw on this as part of your evidence.

David Henschman and Susan Walton
August 2005

Group Work: Tool 2

How do I perform in groups?

A behaviour checklist	Yes	No
Do I help others to express their ideas?		
Do I listen alertly and with understanding to what others are saying?		
Do I communicate my ideas well?		
Do I avoid conflict when I shouldn't?		
Am I overly stubborn about my opinions?		
Do I often provide leadership for our group?		
Do I seek and use other people's ideas well?		
Am I overly aggressive?		
Do I give in too quickly when I am opposed?		
Am I sensitive to other people's feelings?		
Do I take responsibility readily?		
Am I more often disruptive than constructively?		
Am I too quiet?		
Do I participate enough?		
Do I appear to believe people?		
Am I tolerant of opposing viewpoints?		
Do I dominate the conversation?		
Do I appear willing to support other people's ideas?		
Do I 'own' my ideas and feelings?		

Source: The Faculty of Medicine, University of Newcastle, New South Wales

Group Work: Tool 3

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS SELF ASSESSMENT FORM

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Your estimates of current level of skill</i>				<i>Evidence and examples that illustrate why you have rated your current skill level as you have</i>	<i>Priority for</i>			
	<i>high</i>		<i>low</i>			<i>high</i>		<i>low</i>	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Work constructively and productively as a member of a group to agree and understand group goals									
Actively seek and listen to the contribution of others									
Apply relevant knowledge and concepts to situations and problems									
Develop and justify own opinions									
Organise and clearly present relevant information to suite purpose, subject and audience									
Critically reflect on own performance									
Use of IT e.g. world wide web									
Able to access electronic documents									

Group work tool 4

INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE LOG:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can incorporate examples of interprofessional collaborative practice witnessed or missed opportunities for interprofessional collaborative practice 	
Briefly describe the nature and context of the collaborative working	
Who was involved? For example, service users, professionals, other organizations, family, friends etc.	
What skills were required for the identified collaborative working?	
What were the benefits and barriers to collaborative working?	
What was your involvement? For example, were you an observer or were you actively engaged in the process. If you were involved, what was the nature of your involvement?	
What have you learnt from this experience?	

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Journals

Groupwork is a useful journal to locate as it publishes articles written by practitioners in a range of Groupwork settings.

Websites

www.infed.org This is the informal education encyclopaedia that has lots on the search for 'groupwork'.