

Reflection

What is Reflection?

Doctors are committed to life-long learning, both in and from their practice which includes repeated clinical experience. As a foundation doctor, you need to develop your critical thinking and your professional judgement, especially where there is clinical uncertainty. The skill of reflecting on your practice (performance) is vital in gaining a sense of how a method or actions can be improved upon when similar situations arise.

Reflection is more than just a description of what's happened; it is a systematic process of careful consideration and analysis of previous experiences and actions, a skill which does not come naturally. This is the tricky bit which needs practice so that you can develop and apply standards (the research evidence) to your performance, and identify your own learning needs. This will help you develop skills, understanding and clinical acumen to improve what you actually do!

How to use this form

You should reflect on and learn from both positive and negative experiences in order to demonstrate consistently good performance.

Based on the Gibbs Reflective cycle (Prof Graham Gibbs, 1988, 'Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods') this form has been designed as a framework for you to use. This should encourage you to think systematically about the phases of your experience. You should use all of the headings to structure your reflection. Remember to write in the 1st person and to refer to yourself as 'I' and when writing about something involving yourself and colleagues, refer to it as 'we' or 'our'. Reflection is subjective; it is about you.

Description: - Return to the experience

What happened?

Avoid waffle, be concise

Feelings: - An awareness of thoughts & feelings

How did you feel?

Why did you feel this way? What were you thinking? How did the patient feel?

Evaluation: - Making sense of the situation

What influenced your actions?

What were you trying to achieve?

What was good about the experience and why?

What was bad about the experience and why?

What were the consequences for the patient, their family, yourself and colleagues?

Analysis: - Examining the components of the situation in detail coupled with critically analysing the evidence is an essential stage in learning

What sense can be made of the situation?

Assess your knowledge

Evidence = provide relevant up-to-date information (literature/research)

Synthesis = integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge

Identify and challenge assumptions and beliefs

Explore alternatives – how would you do things differently in this situation? Or upon reflection would you do the same again?

If you were to do things differently, what might the consequences have been?

Conclusion: - May result in new perspectives and/or knowledge

What else could you have done? And what would be the consequences of the options?

What have you learned from reflecting on the experience which will change future practice if a similar situation arose?

Action Plan: - May result in a change of behaviour

If the situation arose again what would you do?

Are there any preventative strategies which could be implemented (if appropriate)? What do you need to learn?

How will you go about gaining this new knowledge and/or skills?