

An exploratory study on facilitation of reflective practice skills for Grade 1 Occupational Therapy clinicians

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Background: Clinical supervisors play a key role in facilitating reflective practice (RP) processes in their supervisees. Through RP supervisees can make sense of their clinical experiences to develop their clinical reasoning and clinical decision making skills. The purpose of this exploratory study was to understand Western Health Occupational Therapy supervisors' knowledge, skill and confidence facilitating RP in their Grade 1 Occupational Therapy supervisees. It was expected that the facilitation of RP processes could be an area warranting further development

Methods: A mixed method study design was used through a combination of surveys and focus groups. 32 clinicians completed an online survey and 14 clinicians participated in two focus groups. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data was subject to thematic and descriptive analysis.

Results: Data from focus groups suggest that supervisors collectively have a comprehensive understanding of the dimensions of reflective practice, except for reflective practice models. It appears that the more regularly reflective practice is facilitated, the richer the supervisees understanding of the concept of reflective practice and the benefits associated with using it. However, results suggest that supervisors are not always regularly using opportunities to facilitate RP in their supervisees. Fifty per cent of supervisees reported that their supervisors facilitated reflective practice with them 'rarely' or 'sometimes'.

Discussion: Although supervisors and supervisees value the concept of RP, the implementation of RP processes are not being regularly facilitated through supervision. This may influence the development of clinical reasoning and clinical decision making skills in novice clinicians. Results are being used to determine the need for the implementation of appropriate strategies to support supervisors to more consistently facilitate RP in their supervisees.