



**Health Workforce Initiative**

**Hi-Touch Healthcare: The Critical Six Soft Skills**

*Grab-N-Go Independent Training Module:*

# **Self-Reflection**

HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CALIFORNIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



# Self-Reflection

## Grab-N-Go Independent Training Module

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# Self-Reflection

## Background Information

The origins of reflection can be traced back to John Dewey, a philosopher of education, who explained that reflection is an “intentional, active progression of learning.”<sup>i</sup> Learning and reflection can be experienced in an academic setting or in the work environment. Johns (2013) described self-reflection as a window through which healthcare practitioners can view themselves within the context of their own lived experience which allows individuals to learn ways to help them to confront, understand, and work towards resolving contradictions between what is desirable and what is actual practice.<sup>ii</sup>

Boomer and McCormick (2010) described reflection as a method for healthcare workers to take personal responsibility for their actions and then to develop strategies for sustainable change.<sup>iii</sup> Learning takes place and action for change occurs when individuals are encouraged to discuss, debrief, and reflect upon experiences in their healthcare environments.<sup>iv</sup>

Self-reflection can be recognized as an important tool for development of growth and satisfaction in the workplace, and should be encouraged by colleagues and supervisors alike. The ability to perform self-reflection must not be assumed, but should be developed. This ability must be nurtured in a safe environment that will enable healthcare workers to feel comfortable to honestly examine their own behaviors and decisions. If reflection is not appreciated and practiced in the



workplace, employees will remain passive in their practice. If reflective practices are not an integral part of workplace culture, sustainable change will be hindered.<sup>v</sup>

"Self-reflection is the cornerstone of adult educational principles" and through "environmental scanning" a structured approach to reflection can be promoted.<sup>vi</sup> Environmental scanning is best described as a method by which an individual examines the context in terms of internal and external factors of his/her surroundings or situation. Internal factors include things such as individual knowledge and skill level and the attitude toward the task being performed. In addition, internal factors address whether or not the individual feels s/he has the proper approach to certain experiences. Individuals can ask themselves "Am I being professional? Appropriate?" External factors include asking "How does my knowledge compare with my colleagues?" or "Do I know the latest research or policy?"<sup>vii</sup>

Self-reflection is an important tool to assist healthcare workers in improving their practice. An effective workplace culture that promotes and supports intentional environmental scanning must provide training, practice, and opportunities for discussion with others. This module will focus on how to define self-reflection and will provide tools to develop a framework for learning how to be self-reflective in the workplace environment.



## Training



**Overall Goal:** This training provides participants an understanding of how the ability to self-reflect in the healthcare setting allows improvement in overall employment satisfaction and personal growth.

**WIIFM: What's in it for me?** Strengthening the understanding of self-reflection will improve overall satisfaction with the work environment and will promote the ability to learn and grow from experiences in the workplace.



### **Materials Provided:**

1. Self-Reflection PowerPoint.
2. Activity # 1 - Personal Self-Reflection
3. Activity # 2 - Self-Reflection Depth Perception
4. Activity #3 - What, So What, Now What?
5. "What, So What, Now What?" worksheet



**Directions for the Trainer:** Activity preparation information is included in this document and/or within the PowerPoint presentation notes. Each PowerPoint slide, as appropriate, includes detailed explanations and instructions for the trainer. As with all Grab-N-Go Modules, you can use it all for a more detailed training, *or simply use one or two of the many activities—a la carte style!*



## ACTIVITY #1

### Personal Self-Reflection



**Goal:** This activity provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on a recent incident that occurred at work **and** at home. The goal is to evaluate whether or not the act of self-reflection facilitated learning and prompted change of perspective and/or the development of strategies to guide more productive decisions in the future.



**Materials Needed:**

- PowerPoint slide # 9.
- One 8 1/2 X 11 inch piece of paper and a pen/pencil for each participant.



**Procedures:**

1. Hand a piece of paper and a pen/pencil to each participant.
2. Have participants mark the paper into four equal parts (two upper boxes and two lower boxes).
3. In the upper left-hand box write "Incident at work and the way I handled it."
4. In the upper right-hand box write "Incident at home and the way I could have handled it."
5. Give participants 5-7 minutes to honestly describe each incident, including details about both the external (environmental) factors and the internal (emotional/psychological) factors that influenced how the person handled the situation.
6. On the lower left-hand box write "Incident at work and the way I could have handled it."
7. On the lower right-hand box write "Incident at home and the way I could have handled it."
8. Divide groups into pairs. Give participants the option of working independently if they are reluctant to share the details of their incidents.
8. Allow the participants 10-15 minutes to discuss the incidents. For each incident, participants should try to list at least 7-10 alternatives. These alternatives could be change tone of voice, take a deep breath, ask clarifying questions, etc.



## ACTIVITY #1

### Personal Self-Reflection

9. When everyone has completed the activity, invite discussion on the following points:
  - a. After reflecting on the incident, what kinds of things would you change if the incident were to happen again?
  - b. Would it be possible for you do actually do those things?
  - c. Do you think the outcome may be better if you tried those things? Why?



## ACTIVITY #2

# Self-Reflection Depth Perception



**Goal:** This activity provides an opportunity for participants to discover ways to manage barriers to achieving personal goals



**Materials Needed:**

- One 8 1/2 X 11 inch piece of paper and a pen/pencil for each participant.
- PowerPoint slide # 14.



**Procedures:**

1. Hand a piece of paper and a pen/pencil out to each participant.
2. At the top of the paper write down a major goal (either personal or professional) that you would like to achieve in the next five years.
3. At the top of the page write "The biggest obstacle(s) I see right now in my life that prevents me from achieving my goal is(are)..."
4. Have participants ask themselves the following questions:
  - a. Is the obstacle within my control? Yes? Go the next question. No? Redefine the biggest obstacle into something that can be controlled.
  - b. What are concrete steps that could help decrease and/or manage this barrier:  
in the next couple of weeks?  
in the next couple of months?  
in the next year or so?
  - c. Develop an action plan: What is a reasonable time line with specific strategies for overcoming this obstacle?
5. Report out: After participants have completed this exercise, invite discussion about what they wrote down. Some may not want to share due to the personal nature of this exercise. Encourage the participants to take this paper home, read it frequently and re-evaluate if you are closer to reaching those goals.
6. Pledge: conclude the activity by asking participants to publically make a pledge to do one specific thing within a specific time frame.



## ACTIVITY #3

### What, So What, Now What?



**Goal:** This activity provides an opportunity for participants to discover ways to manage barriers to achieving personal goals.



**Materials Needed:**

- A copy of the “What, So What, Now What?” worksheet for each participant
- A pen/pencil for each participant.
- PowerPoint Slide #17

*(Note to Trainer: if time is limited, this activity can simply be changed to an individual activity where each participant fills out his/her own worksheet then reports out as desired.)*



**Procedures:**

1. Distribute a copy of the “What, So What, Now What?” worksheet and a pen or pencil to each participant.
2. Have participants think of an incident that happened at work that they thought could have been handled in a better way. Have them complete the What? portion of the worksheet.
3. Divide participants into small groups of two or three.
4. **Focus Groups:** Explain that there will be three (or two depending on group size) rounds of this activity. For each round, one person will act as the presenter while the rest of the group helps guide the “What? So What? Now What?” process to help the presenter reflect on his/her experience. The presenter will use the worksheet to take notes during the brainstorm. Once the round is complete, a new presenter will go through the process.

**What? So What? Now What? Process:**

- a. **What?** – the presenter will describe what happened, what s/he saw, what s/he felt, and the interactions s/he saw or had.
- b. **So What?** – The group will ask the presenter questions to encourage self-reflection. The group will also offer observations and suggestions



## ACTIVITY #3

### What, So What, Now What?

to expand the presenter's perspective on his/her own experience. Some questions include:

Did you make a difference?  
Why or why not?  
What impact did you have?  
I noticed that you said . . . what if . . . .

- c. **Now What?** – Again, the group should provide support and encouragement for self-reflection. At the same time, the group should try to expand the presenter's perspective by offering other alternatives. Questions include:  
What more needs to be done? What will you do now? Did this change how you will respond in the future?
5. **Focus Group Round 1:** Announce that Round 1 is about to begin and that the group must decide who will be the first presenter. Give groups 5-7 minutes to complete the process. To make sure all three steps are completed, give time warnings at half way and when 1 minute is left.
6. **Focus Group Round 2:** Repeat the process with a new presenter.
7. **Focus Group Round 3 (if needed):** Conclude the process with the final presenter.
8. If needed, provide a few minutes for participants to complete their worksheet if the process group process felt rushed.



## What? So What? Now What?

### **What? -**

Briefly describe what happened, what you saw, what you felt, and the interactions you saw or had.

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**DO NOT COMPLETE UNTIL THE GROUP PROCESS**

Note: the group should provide support and encouragement for self-reflection. At the same time, the group will try to expand your perspective by offering other alternatives

### **So What? -**

Did you make a difference? Why or why not? What impact did you have?

### **Now What? -**

What more needs to be done? What will you do now? Did this change how you will respond in the future?



## References

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- <sup>v</sup> Filmlalter, C., & Heyns, T. (2015, March 9). Requirements for Reflection in the Critical Care Area. *Curationis* 38(1). doi:10.4102/curationis.v38i1.1202.
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