



Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health (COAIMH)

Developing Reflective Supervision and Consultation Skills

A defining cornerstone of infant and early childhood quality services is reflective practice. Reflective practice is the practice of taking time to think about our work deeply and to apply all we know, including our emotional responses and parallel processes, to developing intentional interventions that will benefit young children and their families. Practitioners demonstrate reflective practice by the use of reflective supervision or consultation (RS/C).

RS/C is a learning experience that requires interaction with someone who is a more experienced practitioner who can be responsible for our work at initial stages of our professional development and mentor us as we become more experienced.

As the *Infant Mental Health Endorsement* expands across Colorado, there is an increased demand for qualified and recognized reflective supervisors and consultants – professionals with skills and experience in facilitating reflective process. CoAIMH provides access to a number of trainings each year in this area.

This document provides several additional models for developing reflective supervision/consultation skills. Following any of these models can count toward training hours in applying for or renewing your Endorsement.

Models for Developing Reflective Practice Supervision/Consultation Skills

Direct Training by an Expert: Training in Facilitation of Reflective Practice including reading professional literature and attending intensive seminars of one to two days. During the seminars an experienced reflective facilitator will provide didactic information, review of recorded reflective supervision/consultation sessions and experiences with reflective process. This may include listening exercises, demonstrations of facilitating reflection with a volunteer or co-trainer, time for practice and reflection during the training.

Supervision of Supervision: Supervision by a more experienced provider of the trainee's supervision of others via face to face meetings and including review of recorded supervision sessions. These hours may be submitted as supervision hours as well as training hours for endorsement applicants.

Group Study and Practice with Peers: A small group of practitioners with similar levels of experience may choose to study and practice together to develop reflective facilitation skills. These hours can be submitted in an endorsement application as training hours, but not as supervision hours. Study and practice group guidelines parallel the process of reflective supervision and consultation:



1. Meet on a regular schedule, at least twice a month.
2. Share leadership of the group through a division of responsibilities.
3. Keep the group size small enough (4-8) so that you can build trust and have time for each member to receive reflective supervision/consultation by the group.
4. Set the structure of the group. Include agreed upon norms regarding confidentiality.
5. Determine a plan for each meeting that includes discussion of didactic materials followed by a practice time exploring case or supervision issues brought to the group by members.
6. Use the Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation to guide the structure and process of the group (see COAIMH website).
7. Choose didactic materials from recommendations on the COAIMH website, basing the decision on the level of knowledge and experience of the group.
8. Keep a written record of the structure that the group agrees upon, any changes the group makes in the structure as learning deepens and a log of readings completed. Also keep a written record of who receives and who provides reflective facilitation. The written record of the group study and practice will be used to support Endorsement applications training hours.
9. It is recommended that a group meet for a period of one to two years to provide the depth of experience and learning necessary.