**Reflective Writing for Librarians and Library Staff**

Slide 1

I am Tracey Pratchett, Knowledge and Library Services Manager at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and I’d like to welcome to this webinar which will explore how you can use a reflective writing approach to support your Quality and Improvement Outcomes Framework submission, as well as undertaking professional registration such as Chartership or revalidation

Slide 2

In this webinar, we are going to look at how you can use reflective writing techniques to enhance your submissions. We will consider what reflective practice is and think about how it can be used as a methodology to support your submissions. We will look at a model that you can use for reflective writing and think about what an example piece of reflective writing might look like.

Slide 3

So what is reflective practice?

The Chartered Institute for Professional Development defines reflective practice as “the foundation of professional development” They highlight that it makes meaning from experience and transforms insights into practical strategies for personal growth and organisational impact. So reflective practice is a personal learning journey, where you consider your experiences and think about the changes that you might want to make in the future.

Slide 4

In his book “The Reflective Practitioner”, Donald Schon states that reflection can happen in two ways. Reflection in action is the process of reflecting during an experience or learning activity. This may happen unconsciously and is likely to be an immediate response to the situation. We may make a change as a result of the experience and it is likely to be in the moment. An example of this might occur during a teaching session, where the group isn’t engaging with an activity so we cut it short and try something else.

Reflection on action happens after the experience. It is a more conscious and in depth process which involves consulting with others and reviewing evidence before making changes to practice. This is likely to be the most useful approach for bringing together our submissions for the Quality and Improvement Outcomes Framework. An example of this is where we have trialled a new training programme over four months. At the end of the programme we review the evaluation forms received, look at the number of attendees for each session and consider which days and times the most successful courses ran. We use this combination of data to make recommendations to improve the training programme.

Slide 5

David Kolb talks about learning as being a cyclical process. After the experience, you reflect on it, then move into the abstract conceptualisation stage where you form new ideas based on your reflections. The final stage of this process involves applying the new ideas to practice. This becomes the concrete experience for the basis of the second cycle of learning where we reflect on the changes made and consider whether any further adaptations are needed. This is an ongoing evaluation which is improvement focussed and mirrors the process of the Quality and Improvement Outcomes Framework.

Slide 6

Reflective writing is the process of capturing learning and identifying areas of improvement. CILIP embed the process of reflection into their Chartership and Fellowship development routes and provide guidance on reflective writing for candidates. They define reflective writing as an opportunity to outline “your response to experiences, opinions, events or new information. It is a way of thinking to help you to explore your learning and gain self-knowledge. Most importantly it is your personal reaction to the situations you encounter and is invaluable when aiming to get the most out of your learning experiences. Reflective writing is not pure description, judgement, or instructions.”

Slide 7

Terry Borton developed a simple model for reflective practice which you may be familiar with if you have completed your Chartership or Fellowship portfolios. This model includes three simple questions: What happened? So What? What next? By working through each of these stages for each of the outcomes, you can think deeply and critically about the services you offer and identify areas for improvement that you can apply and report back on for the next submission.

Let’s take a look at each of the stages and the questions that we can ask to delve into the learning.

Slide 8

The first question you should ask yourself is what happened? This stage of the process is more descriptive, you are just telling the validator what you did. It wouldn’t need to be long, but should outline what was involved in the task, who was involved from the team and who from the organisation asked you to implement this service or project.

Slide 9

The next question you ask yourself is So what?, what does this service or project mean for the organisation or the person who approached you. This area is where you undertake a deeper analysis of the situation – think about why this is important, who was impacted by the service and what were the tangible outcomes? This aspect is about making sense of what happened and thinking about what could have been done differently.

Slide 10

The final question that you will ask yourself is what next? Think about what aspects of the projects or service worked well and what didn’t work so well. You would think about what areas you could change and what aspects of the service you will keep. This is all about the outcomes and you could use this area to map out your action plans of things you will need to put into place for the next submission.

We’re now going to consider what a simple reflection about a bespoke training programme that we developed for junior doctors might include.

Slide 11

The first question is what happened? This is the most descriptive part of the reflective process, and needs a clear statement about what you did and who was involved. In this example, we were approached by the programme lead and the clinical librarian developed 3 sessions that were delivered throughout the year.

Slide 12

The second question is where most of the reflection happens - so what did this mean for the library service and the organisation? In this case we need to think about what difference the training made to participants and whether it met the needs of the programme coordinator. Some of the session evaluated really well, but the critical appraisal session was too short and wasn’t of interest to a large number of the group. Conversations with the trainees coupled with evaluation forms indicated that sessions on reflective writing and writing for publications would be more useful for the group. Meeting with trainees saw an increase in usage of our services, so this direct contact had a positive input on service use as this group were one that we had identified as low users of the service.

Slide 13

The third question looks at the improvements that we made to the programme following these discussions. We worked with the programme lead to develop sessions that the trainees requested and embedded these into the following year. Although the majority of trainees were not interested in critical appraisal training, a small number were, so we invited them to our day long training session for all staff.

Slide 14

You can use Borton’s model to reflect on a single project, or to pull together a number of strands to write an evaluation for each of the outcomes. It gives you structure to work with to ensure that you close the learning loop and identify areas for improvement.

Slide 15

In summary reflective practice is a way of exploring a situation, it helps us to make meaning from our experiences and using this to develop opportunities for growth and improvement. Whilst reflective practice is an approach that we use for individual learning and personal development, we can also use it to show how our services have developed. It helps us to think critically about the outcomes of our services and identify areas where we can make improvements. It can help us to pull together different strands of evidence into a narrative that will help us to make it clear to the validators what we do in support of each dimension and what steps we can take to make improvements.

Slide 16

Here are some useful references that have been used to pull this webinar together.

Slide 17

This concludes this presentation, thank you for listening.