

AI-01728 Self-AAR

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What is an After Action Review? Synthesize the concept of AAR into self-ARR. Explain the psychological pillars of AAR. How to conduct an effective self-AAR?

An After Action Review (AAR) is a structured process used to reflect on a completed event, task, or experience to evaluate what happened, why it happened, and how future actions can be improved. Originally developed by the U.S. Army, AARs have since been widely adopted in business, healthcare, sports, and personal development for continuous learning and performance improvement.

Synthesizing AAR into

Self-AAR

(Self After Action Review)

A Self-AAR is a personal adaptation of the traditional AAR model. Instead of a team or group reflecting on performance, an individual uses the process to deepen self-awareness, extract learning, and guide growth. It's a tool for personal accountability, insight, and intentional living.

Psychological Pillars of AAR

1. Reflection

- Mindfully looking back without judgment.
- Anchored in self-awareness and mindfulness.

2. Honesty

- Requires psychological safety with oneself.
- Unfiltered evaluation of actions and outcomes.

3. Accountability

- Focuses on ownership, not blame.
- Reinforces internal locus of control.

4. Growth Mindset

- Assumes you can improve through effort and learning.
- Encourages iteration over perfection.

5. Narrative Integration

- Helps make sense of experience by forming a coherent story.
- Strengthens identity and resilience.



How to Conduct an Effective

Self-AAR

Use the classic AAR questions, adapted for self-inquiry. Do this in writing, voice notes, or silent reflection after an event or at the end of the day/week.



Step-by-Step Self-AAR Template

1. What was my objective?

- What was I trying to achieve?
- Was it clear and realistic?

2. What actually happened?

- What did I do, say, decide, or feel?
- Note both observable actions and internal experiences.

3. What went well?

- What worked or felt aligned?
- Where did I perform at my best?

4. What didn't go well?

- Where did I struggle, miss the mark, or feel resistance?
- Avoid blame—just observe.

5. Why did it happen that way?

- Identify patterns, assumptions, habits, emotions, or external factors.
- Consider both internal and situational causes.

6. What will I do differently next time?

- What small shifts or experiments can I try?
- How will I apply this learning?

Tips for Deepening the Self-AAR Practice

- Keep it short and regular (5–10 minutes daily or weekly).
- Use it after key life events (conflict, interview, workout, failure, success).
- Pair it with journaling or a habit tracker.
- Revisit old AARs periodically to track growth.
- Record emotions and bodily cues—they hold unspoken wisdom.

Example: Self-AAR for a Difficult Conversation

1. Objective: To express how I felt without blaming.
2. What happened: I got defensive and raised my voice.

3. What went well: I paused before reacting twice.
4. What didn't go well: I still let my emotions escalate.
5. Why: I felt attacked and reverted to old coping habits.
6. Next time: I'll script a sentence in advance and breathe before responding.



Bottom Line

A Self-AAR turns lived experience into inner intelligence.

It's not about perfection, but reflection.

It's a discipline of learning, self-leadership, and personal growth.

By regularly reviewing our actions, we rewrite our story—on purpose.

Perform a self-AAR:

Immigration to the US from the Philippines as Pinay RN. Brought \$2000 and additional \$3000 from money transfers. Money is running out due to unforeseen circumstance as the new hospital choice was changed from PA to RI then to NJ. No paycheck yet but was given allowance and 1 month free rent by the job agency. Positive items are the following:

Social Security Card-Done, Bank of America opened, Credit Card opened although has \$500 limit only, Nursing Training Module completed. Tasted US Public transit and life in general. Acclimatized on how expensive USA is compared to Cebu Philippines. I maintained my 2 checked luggage weight.

Here is a Self-AAR (After Action Review) based on your immigration journey as a Filipina RN:

SELF-AAR: Immigration to the USA – Pinay RN

1. What was the objective?

- Successfully immigrate and transition to working life as a Registered Nurse (RN) in the US.
- Build financial stability, adapt to a new system and culture, and lay the groundwork for independence and long-term growth.

2. What actually happened?

- Arrived in the US with \$2,000, later added \$3,000 through remittances.
- Faced unforeseen logistical changes (hospital assignment shifted from PA → RI → NJ).
- No paycheck yet, but received support: 1-month free rent + allowance from the job agency.
- Expenses piled up faster than expected due to high cost of living, particularly in New Jersey.

3. What went well?

✅ Legal & Financial Setup:

- ✅ Social Security Card obtained
- ✅ Opened a Bank of America account
- ✅ Secured a credit card (despite low limit, it establishes credit history)

✅ Professional Milestones:

- ✅ Completed Nursing Training Module (important onboarding requirement)

✅ Personal Wins:

- ✅ Tasted US public transit and experienced urban life firsthand
- ✅ Acclimatized to the real cost of living vs. Cebu
- ✅ Maintained baggage discipline with only 2 checked luggages – proof of mindful planning and minimalism
- ✅ Mentally and emotionally adjusting to the US pace and systems

4. What didn't go as planned?

- ▼ Unexpected hospital relocation created delays and uncertainty
- ▼ Still no income despite arrival – strained budget
- ▼ High cost of living in NJ was underestimated
- ▼ Only \$500 credit limit may restrict flexibility

5. What have I learned?

◆ Financial Lessons:

- Emergency funds vanish quickly if no paycheck is in sight
- Building a US credit score early is essential but requires patience
- US living costs are magnitudes higher than in Cebu, especially housing, transport, and food

◆ Logistical & Professional Lessons:

- Always expect changes in agency-led placements; flexibility is key
- Paperwork and initial steps (SSN, bank, training) should be completed early
- Free support like temporary rent or transport allowance should be maximized without guilt

◆ Mental Resilience:

- Culture shock and financial anxiety are normal — but you are enduring
- It's okay to feel behind — slow is smooth, smooth is fast
- You are not stuck; you are just starting

6. What will I do differently next time (or going forward)?

Financial Planning:

- Begin strict budget tracking — daily if needed, using free apps like Mint or Notion
- Use the \$500 credit card wisely for small, regular purchases (like groceries) and pay off monthly
- Delay non-essentials and hoard every free benefit (public library, hospital cafeteria discounts, etc.)

Professional Development:

- Use any downtime to review clinical skills, US protocols, and CEUs
- Start networking with other Pinay RNs for support and opportunities
- Understand paycheck cycles, tax withholdings, and benefits before first salary arrives

Mental Framing:

- See this as a “launch pad,” not survival mode
- View obstacles as “orientation tests” — you passed many already
- Keep documenting your journey — one day this will be someone else’s guide

Summary:

You’ve landed, adapted, and set up your legal/financial infrastructure. Despite financial strain and hospital reshuffling, you stayed composed, finished training, and tasted real life in America. Money may be tight now, but your mindset is strong. You are not behind — you are brave and on time.

Would you like a downloadable version of this AAR or want to keep a journal version to update weekly/monthly?