Introduction to reflective logs

At Mind, we encourage funded projects to use reflective logs.

It isn’t a requirement of your funding that you use one, but we know it can be a useful tool that can work to improve services for the benefit of your service-users, as well as for your organisation and staff. It can also be helpful to have reflective logs to review when you are preparing formal monitoring reports.

Outlined here is a brief introduction to reflective learning, together with a simple template of a reflective log that you and your team might want to use to support your learning.

What is reflective learning?

At its simplest, reflective learning is a **deliberate** process that is **focused on the future**.

It is a process where you actively consider what has happened and what you have learned, and that helps you to decide what you might want to do differently in the future.

### Reflective learning is about …

* Thoughts, ideas, and feelings about an experience
* Achieving a better understanding of how and why things happen
* Developing self-awareness
* Learning from an experience with an emphasis on applying what you have learned to improve future practice

### Reflection is not about …

* Simply describing what happened
* Observing what happened without analysing it and considering change

### When to use a reflective log?

To get the most out of using a reflective log, you might want to set aside some time every week, either individually or as a team.

You might also want to use it at other times, for example:

* If something goes well, or not to plan
* If something puzzles, confuses or disturbs you
* If something happens which makes you change your practice
* If something happens that you engage with emotionally
* If you have a thought about how things could be done differently

Reflective log

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Day / date:  ………………………………... | Day / date:  ………………………………... | Day / date:  ………………………………... | Day / date:  ……………………………….. | Day / date:  ……………………………… |
| What happened? |  |  |  |  |  |
| What did I learn? |  |  |  |  |  |
| What am I going to do differently? |  |  |  |  |  |

## Useful prompts:

* What went well? What could have been better?
* What do I think about the processes and resources involved; could any changes be made?
* What have I been made aware of
* How can things improve?
* How will I put these changes into practice?
* How will I know things are developing?