



TRAUMA-SENSITIVE REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION

Reflective supervision, as influenced by Heller & Gilkerson (2009), is a collaborative relationship that meets in a predictable way to support the educator's professional growth. We can think of it as a mentor partnering with someone who has less experience whether that supervisor is an actual manager or not. Ms. Jen's phases of reflective supervision and the skills that go with them are listed below. Learn more in her blog post on the same topic at MsJenAlexander.com.

PHASE 1: BUILD A CARING SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP.

Get to know your mentee as a person and let them know you too! How? Start with one of these three ideas.

1. Chit chat together about who you are, your people, and things you love. Ask and tell proportionately!
2. Share and talk about personal photos.
3. Offer to help or join them in their classroom and vice versa.

PHASE 2: LEARN ABOUT THE EDUCATOR IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR WORK ROLE WITHOUT TRYING TO FIX OR CHANGE THEM.

You may be thinking, "But isn't my goal to help them grow and change?" Answer? Yes, and... You must know them professionally before you move in that direction. These three communication skills will help you.

1. Ask open ended questions, meaning ones that can't be answered with a one-word answer (e.g., "What shall we focus on?" "What's going well?" "Challenging?" "An example of that is..."). Then wait for them to reply—you may need to wait longer than is comfortable for you.
2. Listen for what's said and what's not said, especially for feelings (e.g., "What's that like for you?" "How do you feel?" "Is there anything else you notice?").
3. Slow things down to promote shared understanding—paraphrase and summarize (e.g., "It seems like..." "You're saying that..." "Did I get that right?" "What am I missing?").

PHASE 3: HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES BY SIMULTANEOUSLY HOLDING YOUR OWN PERSPECTIVE AND THEIRS TOO.

Hint: You're still not focused on change. Not yet! Try these actions.

1. Invite observation re: what's on the outside in the situation and what's going on inside them too (e.g., "Let's explore your strengths;" "What did you notice outside of yourself in this situation?" "What'd you notice inside yourself?" "Has this come up before?").
2. Look for patterns, and share how their approach may be different from others' (e.g., "I've noticed a pattern; when ___ happens, you tend to ___;" "Other folks may ___ instead;" "It's something to reflect on").
3. Work toward shared goals so that your approach is empowering, not disempowering (e.g., "Is that something you'd like to work on?" "Is there another goal you prefer for now?" "What do you need?" "How can I help?").

PHASE 4: TEACH NEW SKILLS.

Here's where you get to focus on change; try the three types of examples below!

1. Offer suggestions (e.g., "Here's what tends to work for me/others;" "Want to try it?" "Let's practice;" "Do you need a reminder card to help you?").
2. Reflect and troubleshoot together (e.g., "What did you try?" "How did it go?" "I wonder if it would help to..." "Thoughts on next time?").
3. Celebrate successes (e.g., "You worked on ___, and it's leading to ___;" "I'm proud of you; are you proud of yourself?" "What's next?")!