



Reflective Practice Groups Project

Call for expressions of interest

Background

CfSWP is a small national charity which was created to promote relationship based social work practice. During its 6 year existence as a charity the centre has provided a range of services and events in pursuit of these aims. One of its core projects has been to promote Reflective Practice Groups including delivery and evaluation of these.

Reflective Practice Groups

CfSWP believes that reflective practice is an essential part of relationship based practice and that the perceived absence of skilled and consistent provision of reflective spaces, both individual and group based, in most social work and social care organisations is one of the most frequently identified obstacles to the advancement of good practice. RPGs are generally small facilitated groups informed by therapeutic principles but focused on supporting staff in relation to their practice or management tasks and roles.. The groups can be open or closed but usually meet on a regular basis. There are different models of delivery including work discussion, case reflection groups and action learning.

CfSWP has been actively engaged since 2014 in the research, delivery and promotion of reflective practice groups.

Evaluation of Reflective Practice Group Project: Brighton & Hove Children's Services

Since Nov 2015 CfSWP have been providing a whole system RPG project to Brighton and Hove children's social care. This includes facilitation of RPGs by CfSWP associates to senior managers, managers, and lead practitioners who then deliver RPGs to the rest of the field work social workers meaning all social workers and senior staff have access to a once monthly RPG group.

One of the principal findings of the Centre's initial report on RPGs was that although there was much positive anecdotal feedback there was little research or systematic evaluation of the impact of RPGs. In order to strengthen the evidence base CfSWP commissioned and implemented an evaluation of the impact of systematic RPG

delivery within the Brighton and Hove project. This has included qualitative and quantitative measures. The preliminary report demonstrated that for example, 61% of staff felt the RPGs had helped them develop better understanding of complex problems in their cases and strengthened their professional identity, 67% believed it had helped them manage the emotional impact of their work and 85% thought it further developed their ability to reflect upon their work. The Brighton and Hove Social Work Survey 2018 received feedback that 85% of social workers felt 'safe and supported' at work and 81% thought their RPG provided emotional containment.

Individual and focus group feedback included-

"I think the sense the RPG promotes of being part of a committed service is positive."

"The group really helped me process my feelings, gave me ideas for how to work the case. I felt less overwhelmed by emotion afterwards."

"The purpose of the reflective groups, what the outcomes we're going to get is ... dual sort of purpose of emotional containment and practice development."

"Our facilitator, I feel she listens, cares and contains; challenging different perspectives on work and cases [it] feels like a 'courageous group' willing to take risks; time/space away from practice to think about the bigger picture"

To read the full report go to:

<http://cfswp.org/paper-11-05-2015-a-report-from-the-centre-for-social-work-practice-on-reflective-practice-group-models-in-social-work.php>

The Future

As part of our continued efforts to strengthen the RPG evidence base and to encourage the spread and delivery of this model in other areas and organisations CfSWP is seeking a new site and partner with whom to deliver a whole system RPG project. We are open to expressions of interest from providers of social work and care including local authorities and unitary authorities who believe they have the commitment and resources to work with us to deliver this innovative model and to improve the working practice of individuals, teams and their overall organisation.

If you want to know more about the RPG model and to discuss the possibility of becoming involved in working with us please contact admin@cfswp.org