

IMPROVEMENT *Burst*

Helping Staff Become More Reflective



what is it?

Helping staff become more reflective fosters a learning culture and leads to better problem-solving, decision-making, and professional growth. In human services, where staff face emotionally charged situations, reflection helps them process experiences and continuously improve their approach.



why it works?

- Encourages **critical thinking** instead of knee-jerk reactions.
- Helps staff **learn from experience** rather than repeating mistakes.
- Expands **awareness of existing assumptions and other perspectives** that may clarify issues.
- Improves **client outcomes** by promoting thoughtful decision-making.
- Reduces **burnout** by creating space to process challenges.

Reflection: Why this matters to you ?

Before implementing these strategies, take a moment to reflect:

- **Why is it important for my staff to be more reflective?** Have I noticed rushed decisions or repeated mistakes?

- **What assumptions guide our decisions and actions?** How aware am I of these assumptions?

- **What has prevented me from fostering reflection in my team before?** Time constraints? Assumptions that they already reflect on their own?

- **What will be different now?** How can I build in reflection without overwhelming my team?



How to Use It Right Now ?

1. Incorporate Reflection Into Meetings

- Start team meetings with a **“What’s one thing we learned last week?”** question.
- Use **case reviews** where staff analyze a situation and discuss alternative approaches.

2. Ask Reflective Questions in 1:1s

- Shift from “What’s going on?” to:
 - What’s something that challenged you this week?
 - What did you do well? What might you do differently?
 - What support do you need to grow in this area?

3. Use a Simple Reflection Framework

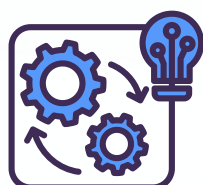
- Teach staff **“What? So What? Now What?”**
 - **What happened?** (Describe the situation.)
 - **So what?** (Why does it matter? What are the takeaways?)
 - **Now what?** (What will you do differently next time?)

4. Model Reflective Practice

- Share your own reflections:
 - “I realized I could have communicated that expectation more clearly.”
 - “I learned something valuable from a mistake this week...”
- This normalizes reflection as a **growth tool**, not a weakness.

5. Encourage Peer Reflection

- Pair staff to **debrief difficult situations** together.
- Use a “5-Minute Reflection” at the end of the day where teams discuss one insight before leaving.



Example in Action

When helping staff with general problem-solving, Lee built the “What? So What? Now What?” process into their conversations with staff for a couple of weeks. Near the end of the 2nd week, Lee noticed that staff entered these conversations already having thought through “What? So What?” and were ready to explore the “Now What?” options.



Make It Stick

- Try one new reflection practice per week.
- Recognize staff who share insightful reflections to reinforce the habit.
- Keep it low-pressure—reflection should be **a tool for learning, not a test.**