What is reflection and reflective capacity?

Why is it important to health professionals?

How does one build reflective skills?
Some reflective capacity is hard wired

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/mirror-neurons.html
Reflection

- Review, interpretation, and understanding of experiences to guide present and future behavior.

- Reflection occurs before, during, and after situations with the purpose of developing greater understanding of both self and the situation so that future encounters with the situation are informed from previous encounters.

- Purposeful critical analysis of knowledge and experience, to achieve deeper meaning, thus moves to **insight**—not just stopping to think.

- **Reflective capacity**: the ability to reflect
3 common elements of the reflective process

- A trigger: an awareness (either positive or negative)
- Critical analysis: to extract deeper meaning from an experience
- Development of a new perspective

Atkins and Murphy: meta-analysis, 1993
BLUF: Ask good questions

- Not to recall/recite, but to synthesize and evaluate
- Not just about the content (What?) of the experience, but also the process (How?) and the premises (Why?) of the experience.
- To practice and develop critical thinking
WHY IS SELF REFLECTION IMPORTANT TO HEALTH PROFESSIONALS?

- To learn from one’s experiences
- To learn for others’ experiences
- To develop professional identity, understanding one’s beliefs, attitudes and values in the context of one’s professional culture
- To link new to existing knowledge and skills, extending beyond what is known
- To develop insight and increase self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-regulation
Levels of reflection
- Describes learning
- Analyzes learning
- Verifies learning
- Gains new understanding
- Indicates future behavior

Self reflection development does not discriminate by age, discipline, setting.
STAGES OF INCREASING DEPTH OF REFLECTION

- Non reflectors
- Reflectors (attention to feeling, association, integration)
- Critical reflectors (changed perspective, relationship seeking, behavior change)

Boud, 1985; Mezirow 1991
ACTIVITY

WWW.MCHNAVIGATOR.ORG

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PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

EMPATHY  EFFECTIVE USE OF FEEDBACK

CULTURAL COMPETENCE  INSIGHT

INCREASED REFLECTIVE CAPACITY

REFLECTIVE NARRATIVE  SMALL GROUP INTERACTIONS

SELF REFLECTION
WAYS TO BUILD REFLECTIVE CAPACITY

- **Portfolio, blogs, professional journaling**
  - Research implies that educational portfolios provide a structured forum and stimulus for reflective thinking and narrative. Enhanced by supportive trainer, clear objectives, and sufficient time

- **Mentoring relationship**
  - Someone who guides a learner through self-reflection and make their own reflective activities explicit

- **Small group interactions; reflective blogging**

- **Authenticity**

- **Interference with self-reflection**
  - Fatigue
  - Sense of “busy work”
  - Time constraints

Mann, et al, 2009
Interview: What additional questions were asked by others that I did not consider? Did I bring a bias into this conversation? Was I misunderstood? What would I do differently next time?

Community experience: What was new? How is this relevant to my discipline? Did this activity challenge my pre-existing knowledge, skills, or attitudes?

Lecture: Name one thing that you heard for the first time in this lecture. This information will be most relevant in what settings? What is something you would like more information about?
Supervisor creates a safe and welcoming space for staff members to reflect on and learn from their own work with a trusted mentor at their side.

Reflective supervision builds reflective capacity in its staff.

Three core principles: regularity, collaboration, and reflection.
Perhaps, “Things are not always what they seem to be”?

Perhaps, this situation is especially “feeling/emotionally laden”?

Perhaps, I am not looking for the “strengths based skills” in this situation?
Reflection
“looking back to move forward”

- Allows one to
  - reframe a problem
  - Question assumptions
  - Process ambiguity
  - Look at situations from multiple perspectives
  - Seek knowledge gaps that need filled