



REFLECTIVE PRACTICE 101

Early Years Conference
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WHO AM I?

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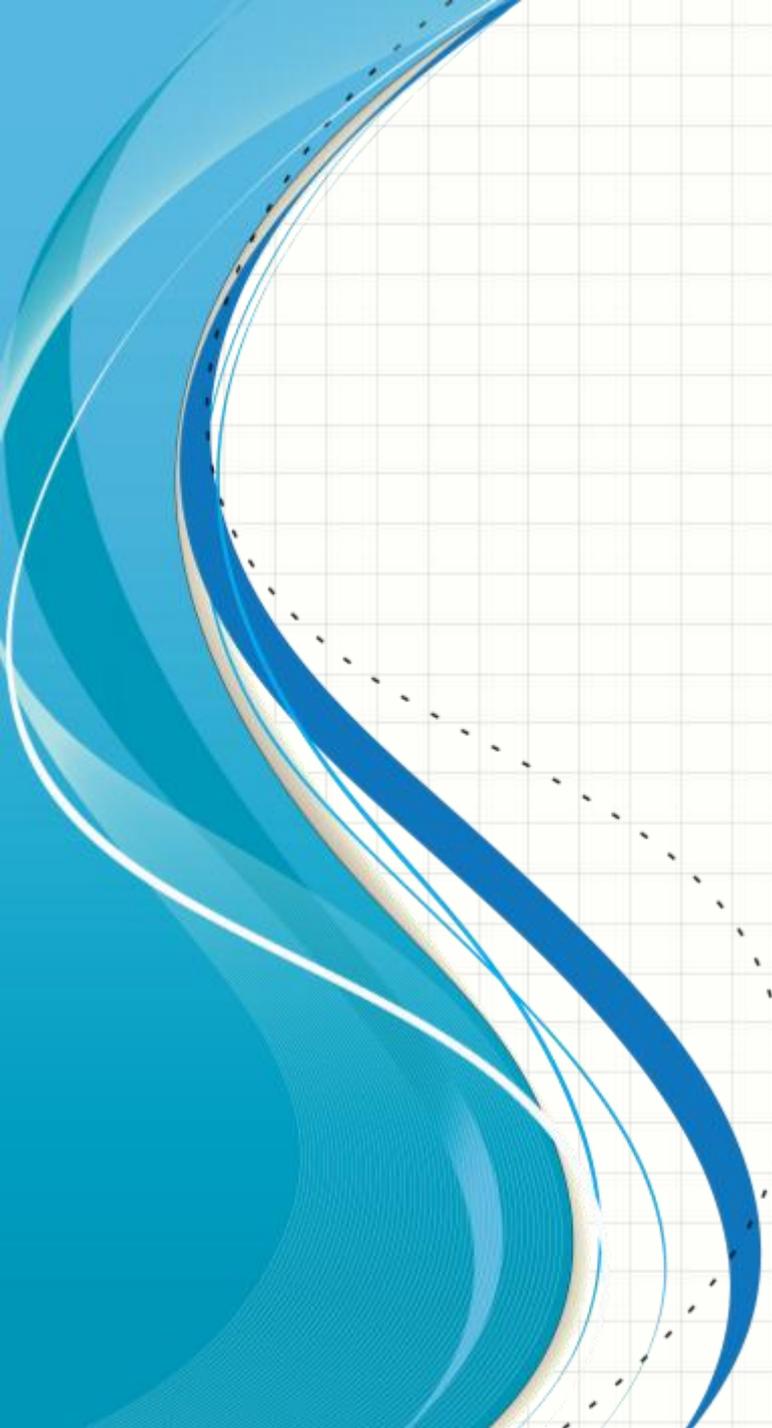


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WHO ARE YOU?

Name?

Work?

What you hope to learn here today.

Objectives:

- Understand the term reflective practice as it pertains to working with expectant families and families with infants and toddlers.
- Understand the importance of Reflective Leadership as an element of reflective practice.
- Define the term “parallel process” and its relationship to reflective practice
- Identify overarching principles and key skills utilized in reflective practice.
- Provide opportunity to practice reflective practice skills.

Competencies We Will Address

Theoretical Foundations

Knowledge Areas

- Infant/young child & family centered practice
- Relationship-focused, therapeutic practice

Competencies We Will Address:

Working with Others

Skill Areas

- Building & Maintaining Relationships
- Supporting Others/Mentoring
- Empathy & Compassion

Competencies we will address:

Direct Service Skills

Knowledge Areas

- Observation & listening
- Responding with empathy

Competencies We Will Address:

Communication

Skill Areas

- Listening

Thinking

Skill Areas

- Analyzing Information

Competencies We Will Address:

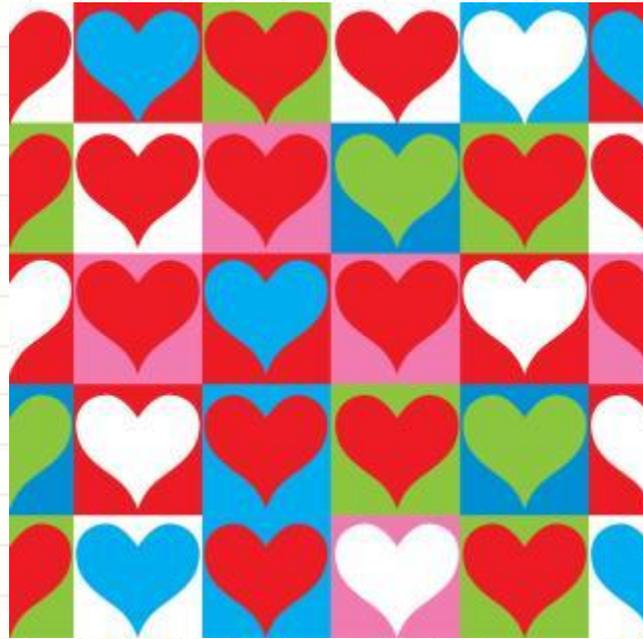
Reflection

Skill Areas:

- Contemplation
- Emotional Response
- Parallel Process



Foundations of Reflective Practice



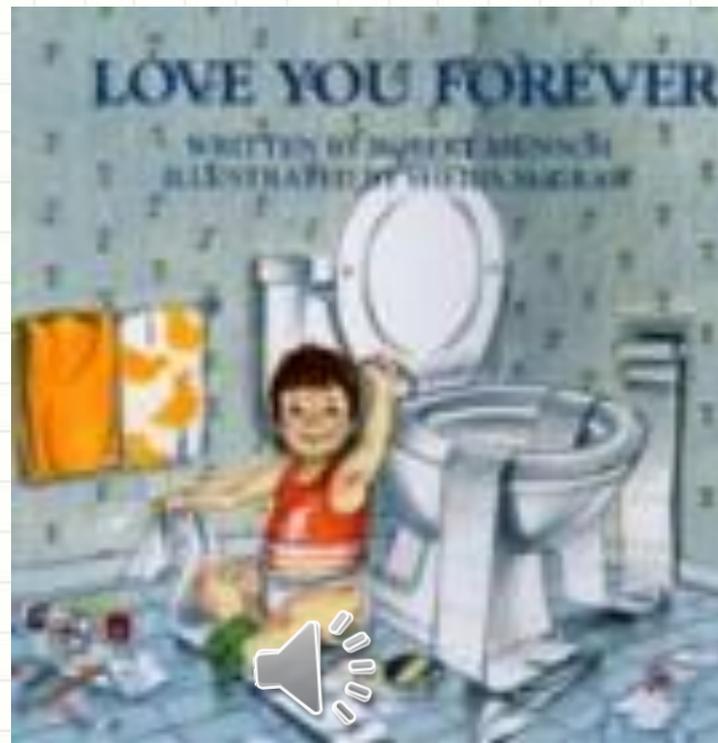
Relationships are at the HEART of Reflective Practice

Organizational Relationships

Relationships between supervisors & supervisees

Relationships between co-workers

Relationships between staff and enrolled families.





**“ALL LEARNING TAKES PLACE IN THE
CONTEXT OF RELATIONSHIPS & IS
CRITICALLY AFFECTED BY THE QUALITY
OF THOSE RELATIONSHIPS”**

Norman Murch, MD 1996



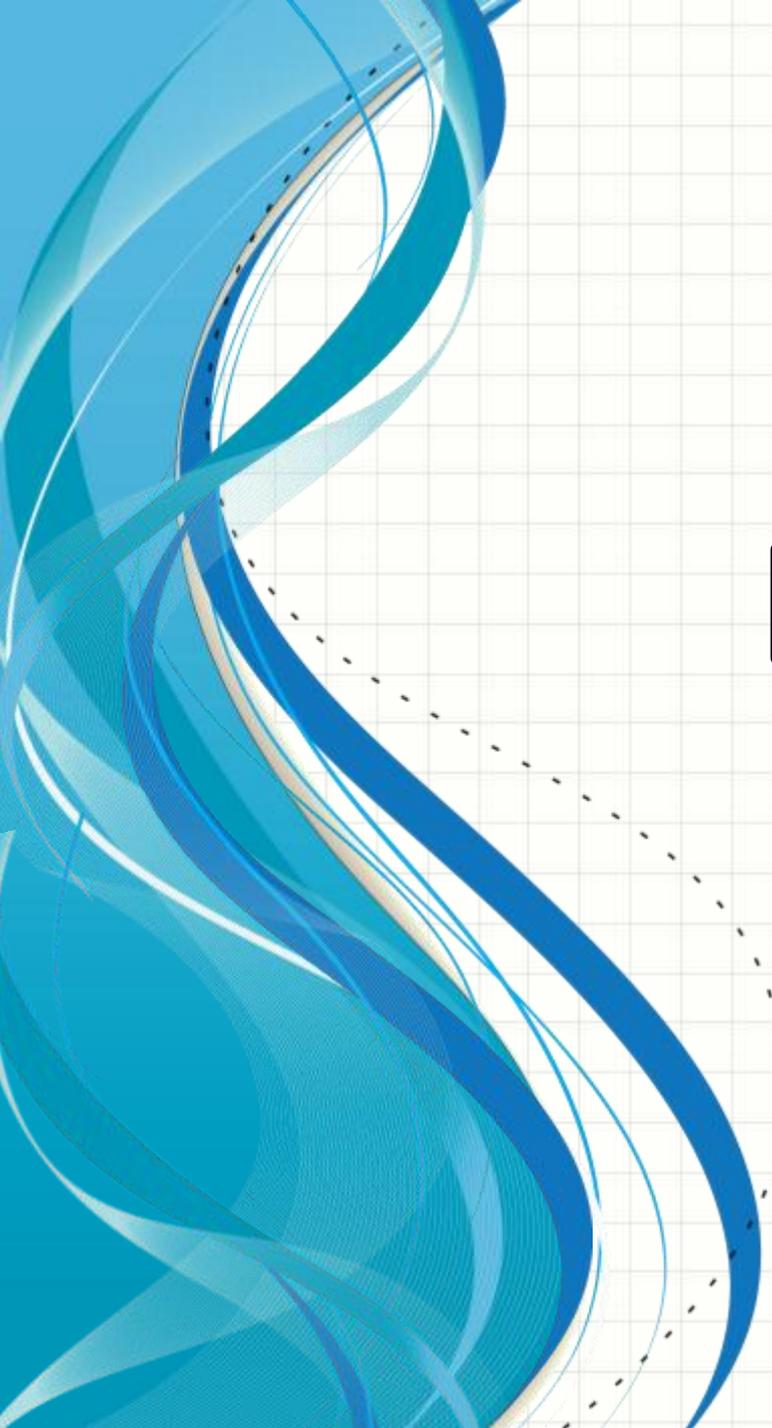
Reflective Practice refers to a way of working that spans disciplines and encourages staff members to ...

- 
- Consider the possible implications of their interventions while in the midst of their work
 - Slow down, filter their thoughts, and more wisely choose actions and words
 - Deepen their understanding of the contextual forces that affect their work
 - Take time afterward to consider their work and the related experiences in a way that influences their next steps.





Relationship focused practice values early developing relationships between parents and young children as the foundation for optimal growth and change; directs all services to nurture early developing relationships within families; values the working relationship between parents and professionals as the instrument for therapeutic change; values all relationship experiences, past and present, as significant to one's capacity to nurture and support others.



Donald Schön

Foundations of Reflective Practice

Donald Schön (1930-1997)

- An influential thinker in developing the theory and practice of reflective professional learning
- Reflection-in-action: the ability of professionals to “think what they are doing while they are doing it”
- Schön asserts this is a key skill for professionals, the ability to think on your feet, and apply previous experience to new situations.

According to Schön (1983)

The reflective practitioner does need to be technically competent, but that it is in the relationship with the client that *he/she* must be able to manifest *his/her* special knowledge.

A Few Key Components

1

- Reflection-in-Action

2

- Reflective Practicum

3

- Willing Suspension of Disbelief

Reflection-in-Action

- The kind of reflection that takes place while a problem is being addressed.
- It is “action-present” and is often in response to a surprise – where the expected outcome is outside of our knowing-in-action
- Challenging our assumptions

Reflection-in-Action



Reflective Practicum

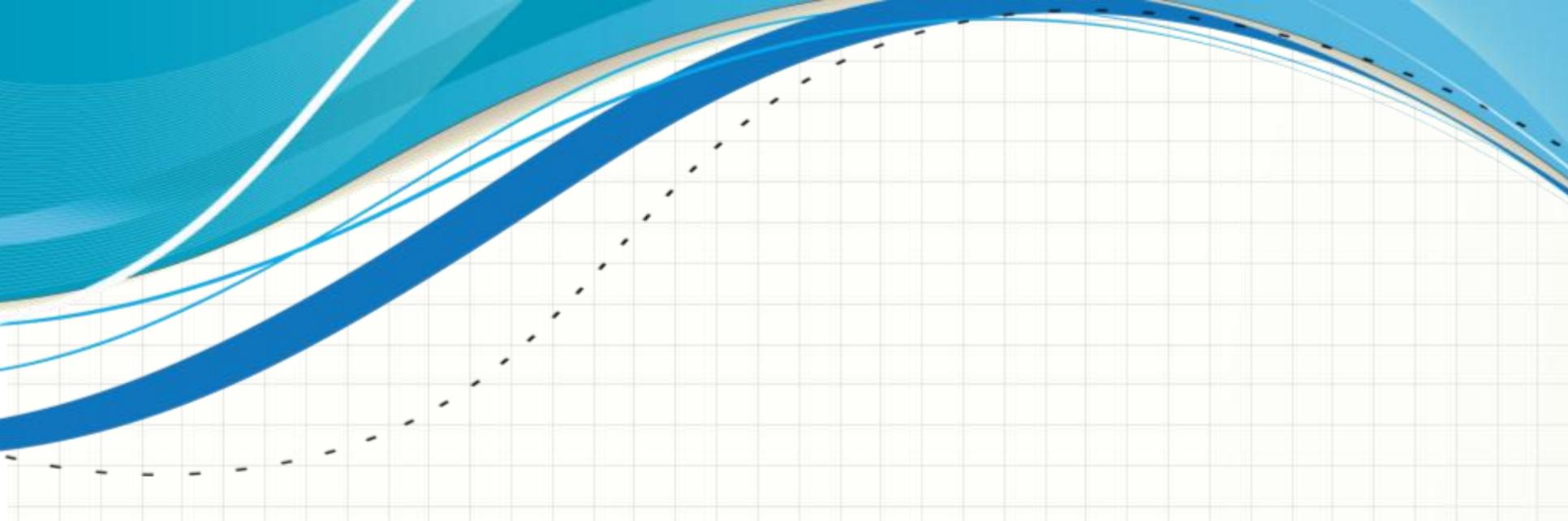
- A setting designed for the task of learning a practice
- Learn by doing with the help of coaching
- The “learning by doing” provides opportunities to develop “reflection-in-action”, and
- The dialogue between “coach” and “learner” becomes a form of reciprocal “reflection-in-action”

Willing Suspension of Disbelief

- **Suspension of disbelief** or **willing suspension of disbelief** is a term coined in 1817 by the poet and aesthetic philosopher [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](#), who suggested that if a writer could infuse a "human interest and a semblance of truth" into a fantastic tale, the reader would suspend judgment concerning the implausibility of the narrative.
- It describes the process of entering into an experience, without judgment, in order to learn from it. Schön uses the term in relation to the idea of learning by doing. One cannot will oneself to 'believe' until one understands. But understanding often will only arise from experience. So it is necessary first to allow the experience to happen.

SMALL GROUP REFLECTIVE PRACTICE EXERCISE A





**PRINCIPLES OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN WORK
WITH INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Summary of Reflective Practice Skills

- Listen carefully
- Demonstrate empathy and concern
- Promote reflection
- Observe and highlight parent-child interactions
- Respect role boundaries
- Respond thoughtfully in emotionally intense interactions
- Understand, regulate, and use one's own emotions (Gilkerson, Taylor Ritzler 2005)

Overarching Principles

- Trust in parents
- Mutual Clarity
- Hearing & Representing all voices.
- Hypotheses, not truth.
- Maintaining boundaries/appropriate role
- Knowledge, beliefs, biases, & meanings.
- Inclusive interaction

Jeree Pawl

Trust in Parent

In the face of a parent's anger or distress or the parent being upset, we need to believe that the parent has some investment in the well-being of his child.

It is our responsibility to pull together the threads of hope & the evidence of possibility.

“...without real trust, we convey despair ... which all parents will apprehend ...”



Mutual Clarity

We need to reach an understanding of what we will actually be doing together.

This must be clear in our minds and we must work towards a mutual understanding with each particular family about the purpose of our being there with them.

Mutually developed goals/objectives.

Hearing and Representing **All** Voices

According to Pawl, we are “always dedicated to attempting to hear and represent all of the relevant voices.”

Parent, baby, toddler, child, home visitor ...

Who else???

Hypotheses, not truth.

Our professional technical knowledge is best considered hypothesis in its relevance to each particular family and baby.

“When we understand that those with whom we work have all the information we need ... then our attitude conveys this & the parent (and child) can sense themselves as sources, partners, rather than as assessed & judged recipients.”

Maintaining Appropriate Roles

Pawl emphasizes flexibility as important. Maintain an appropriate role and adhere to boundaries, but be comfortable and flexible

Maintaining appropriate roles serves to maintain & contain the appropriate nature of the relationship so that “unhelpful confusions, difficulties, and breaches are avoided.”

The sense of working **with** a person rather than doing something to a person, is a crucial attitude that protects everyone.

Knowledge, Beliefs, Biases, & Meanings

- Recognize our own beliefs and knowledge
- Recognize that the other person's beliefs and knowledge is equally strongly embraced.
- Our ability to be respectful of difference or sameness is terribly powerful; it enables us to be curious and understand

Inclusive Interaction

Pawl defines this as “the capacity to continue to embrace and hold all of those with whom we are involved together at a particular time.”

This is not just the ability to attend to several people at the same time but also being aware of our own feelings, reactions, urges and so forth, i.e. reflective functioning

What is Reflective Functioning

- The capacity to recognize mental states, feelings, thoughts, intentions-- in yourself and others
 - *I'm feeling anxious about this home visit.*
 - *I wonder if she meant to do that.*
- The capacity to link mental states to behavior
 - *I think I'm irritable because I'm so behind in my paperwork*
 - *I wonder if that mom is "no showing" because she is worried I will judge her*
- A necessary skill for reflective practice



**REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP IS KEY TO
DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP BASED
ORGANIZATION, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**



Key Components of Reflective Leadership (reflective practice!)

- Self Awareness
- Careful Observation
- Flexible Responses

Self-awareness

Refers to a leader's ability to know herself, her strengths, and her limitations.

It implies that a leader is interested in, and committed to, examining her own reactions, thoughts, and feelings about the work.

Self-awareness

Refers to a **home visitor**'s ability to know herself, her strengths, and her limitations.

It implies that a **home visitor** is interested in, and committed to, examining her own reactions, thoughts, and feelings about the work.

Careful Observation

Means that leaders are skilled at deciphering the meaning of what they are seeing and hearing. Leaders wonder about the meaning of their own and other's behavior, tones of voice, body language, or reactions.

They ask themselves, "Why might this be happening?" and solicit more information.

Careful Observation

Means that **home visitors** are skilled at deciphering the meaning of what they are seeing and hearing. **Home visitors** wonder about the meaning of their own and other's behavior, tones of voice, body language, or reactions.

They ask themselves, “Why might this be happening?” and solicit more information.

Flexible Responses

Require that leaders know their staff – what their personal styles are, how they work best, what motivates them. Leaders can then approach each professional in a way that reflects *that particular staff member's* needs, strength, and areas for development.

Flexible responses are the most basic – and sometimes most difficult – expression of mutual respect in our relationships with staff members.

Flexible responses

Require that **home visitors** know their **families** – what their personal styles are, how they work best, what motivates them. **Home visitors** can then approach each **family** in a way that reflects *that particular family member's* needs, strength, and areas for development.

Flexible responses are the most basic – and sometimes most difficult – expression of mutual respect in our relationships with **families**.

The Parallel Process

“Relationship-based work makes one conscious of one’s feelings in interactions, one’s emotional world – and that is the one place non-clinicians have been trained to avoid”

Gilkerson, 2004

The Parallel Process

The concept of parallel process is a foundational aspect of relationship-based work.

Parallel process describes the interlocking network of relationships between supervisor, supervisees, families, and children.

Reflective Supervision and Leadership in Infant and Early Childhood Programs
Mary Claire Heffon and Trudi Murch

Leadership & The Parallel Process

Leaders' relationships with staff can serve as a mirror for staff's work with families.

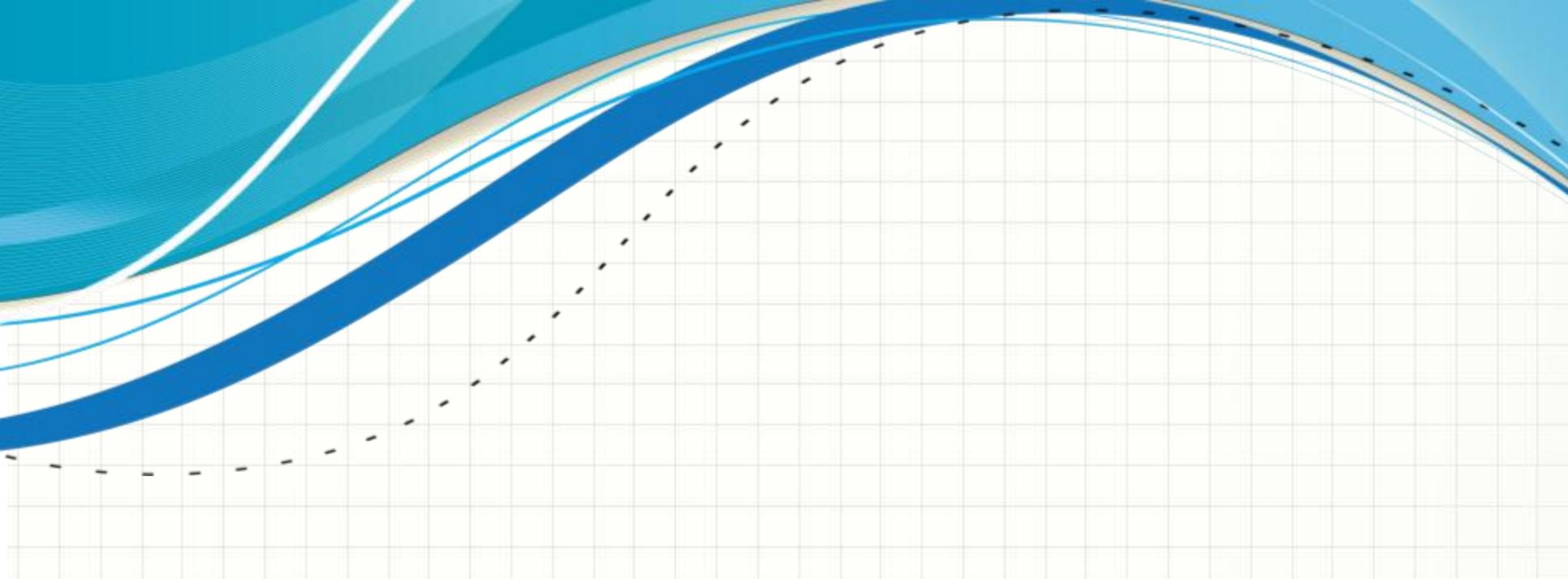
How we are with them – whether respectful, interested, and nonjudgmental, or suspicious, quick to judge, and uninterested – strongly influences *how they will be* with the families they serve.



Staff cannot create with families what they have not experienced themselves.

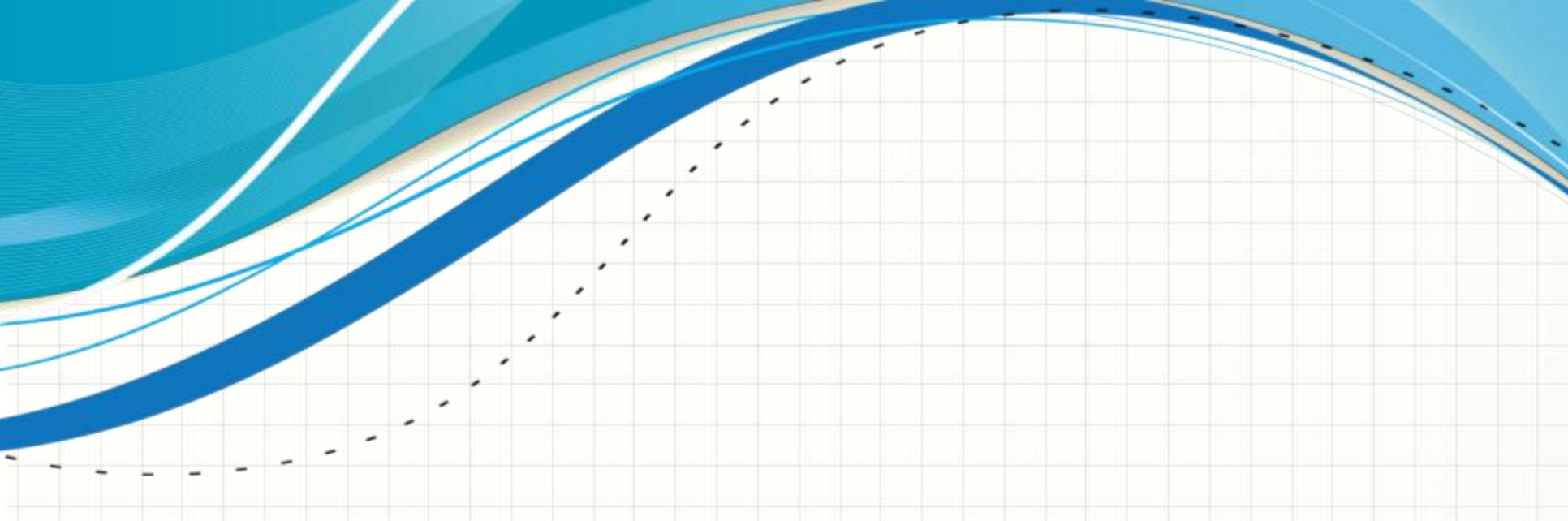
When staff feel supported in their work (even when they make mistakes or struggle with difficult situations), the experience of having a safe place to learn is powerful: It gives them a model of how to support families in the same way.

This dynamic, in which leader-staff relationships mirror staff-family relationships, is referred to as a parallel process.



LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

Is My Supervisory Style Reflective?



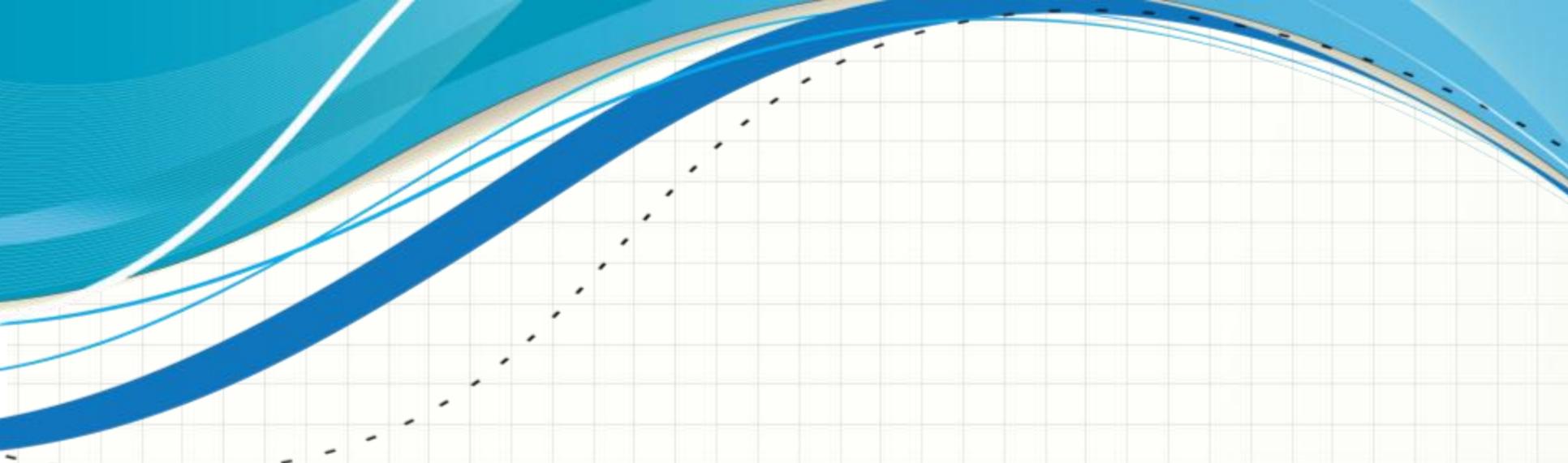
HOME VISIT WITH AN AT RISK FAMILY

Discussion

- In what ways did you see the home visitor using reflective practice principles?
- What did you notice the most during the video?
- Questions? Comments?

Summary

- Key components for the reflective practitioner
- Components of Reflective Leadership
- Introduced the concept of the Parallel Process
- Key principles of relationship-based interventions
- Defined the term reflective functioning
- Opportunity to practice these skills through observing a high risk family



**QUESTIONS?
NEXT STEPS?
EVALUATIONS!!**