



# PSDP—Resources and Tools: Social GGRRRAACCEEESSS and the LUUUTT model

## Social GRRRAACCEEESSS: Introduction

This learning tool accompanies a short presentation called, 'Using the GRRRAACCEEESSS and LUUUTT models in supervision', which explains what is meant by these terms (Burnham, 2012; Pearce and Pearce, 1990 respectively), which have been further developed by Partridge (forthcoming). Please watch the presentation before using this tool.

The term social GRRRAACCEEESSS is an acronym that describes aspects of personal and social identity which afford people different levels of power and privilege:

**Gender**

**Geography**

**Race**

**Religion**

**Age**

**Ability**

**Appearance**

**Culture**

**Class/caste**

**Education**

**Employment**

**Ethnicity**

**Spirituality**

**Sexuality**

**Sexual orientation**

This learning tool introduces a number of exercises and activities you can use to explore the social GRRRAACCEEESSS and the LUUUTT model with your team as a whole and in supervision discussions.

The activities are designed to help your team to understand how we all have different experiences of power or powerlessness, and that our views can be influenced by the social GRRRAACCEEESSS. Given this, we need to think about and be aware of how the social GRRRAACCEEESSS impact our understanding of and approach to children and families.

Divac and Heaphy (2005), talk about the importance of exploring positioning in terms of power and the social GRRRAACCEEESSS. This is important as it begins to deconstruct the power relationship between supervisor and social worker, and social worker and family members.

Power differentials can never be obliterated but making positions explicit and exploring their effects enables people to make better choices in their future actions.

## Exercises and activities for exploring the social GRRRAACCEESSS in teamwork and supervision

It is important to 'warm the context' before introducing any of these exercises or discussions (Burnham, 2018) and set ground rules, given that people in the room will have different experiences of power and powerlessness. It is also very helpful for practice supervisors to model transparency by talking first about their own experiences of power and the social GRRRAACCEESSS (Roberts, 2005).

### Exercise one: 'line of privilege'

This is a useful whole-team discussion exercise.

1. Imagine there is an invisible line of privilege across the room. At one end is the most privileged position. At the opposite end is the least. Position yourself on the line according to how privileged you feel in relation to any aspect of your social GRRRAACCEESSS.
2. Speak from that position, share your story of what it was like to occupy that position.
3. Then change positions and see what it is like to try and speak from another place, using the social GRRRAACCEESSS to compare and reflect on the experience.

## Exercise two: 'Monica's fifty questions' (McGoldrick, 2004)

This is a useful whole-team discussion exercise. It is taken from an exercise used by McGoldrick, one of the important contributors to address issues of race in supervision and practice.

In the original exercise, McGoldrick developed fifty questions. Participants in the group were asked to stand up if they answered yes to any of them. The questions included things like:

- > Do you remember the day Martin Luther King died?
- > Do you earn more than your partner?
- > Were you ever turned down by a school?
- > Have you changed class / social status through marriage?

You could use the same principles to develop questions of your own based around power and the social GRRRAACCEEESSS, which will help team members to understand the complex ways in which social differences may be experienced in a team.

## Visible / invisible and voiced / unvoiced social GRRRAACCEEESSS

Figure 1 below shows how the social GRRRAACCEEESSS can be voiced / unvoiced and visible / invisible (Burnham, 2012).

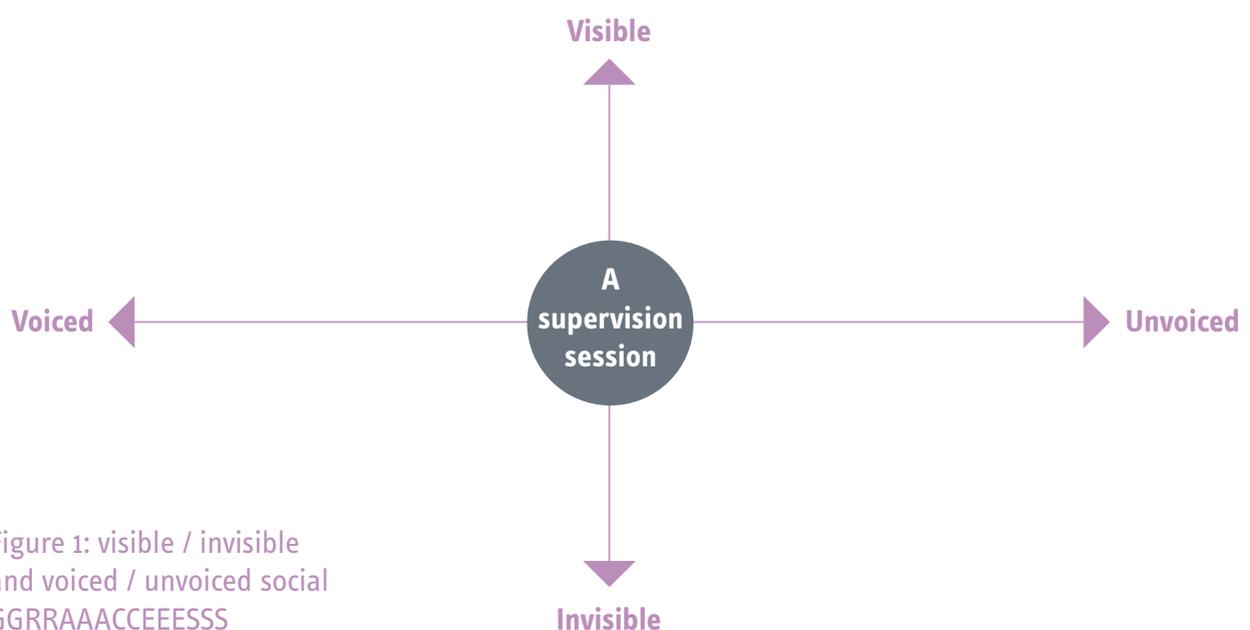


Figure 1: visible / invisible and voiced / unvoiced social GRRRAACCEEESSS

However, the social GRRRAACCEEESSS may be more visible than others at different times and can be shifted into different quadrants by talking about them as illustrated in figure 2 below.

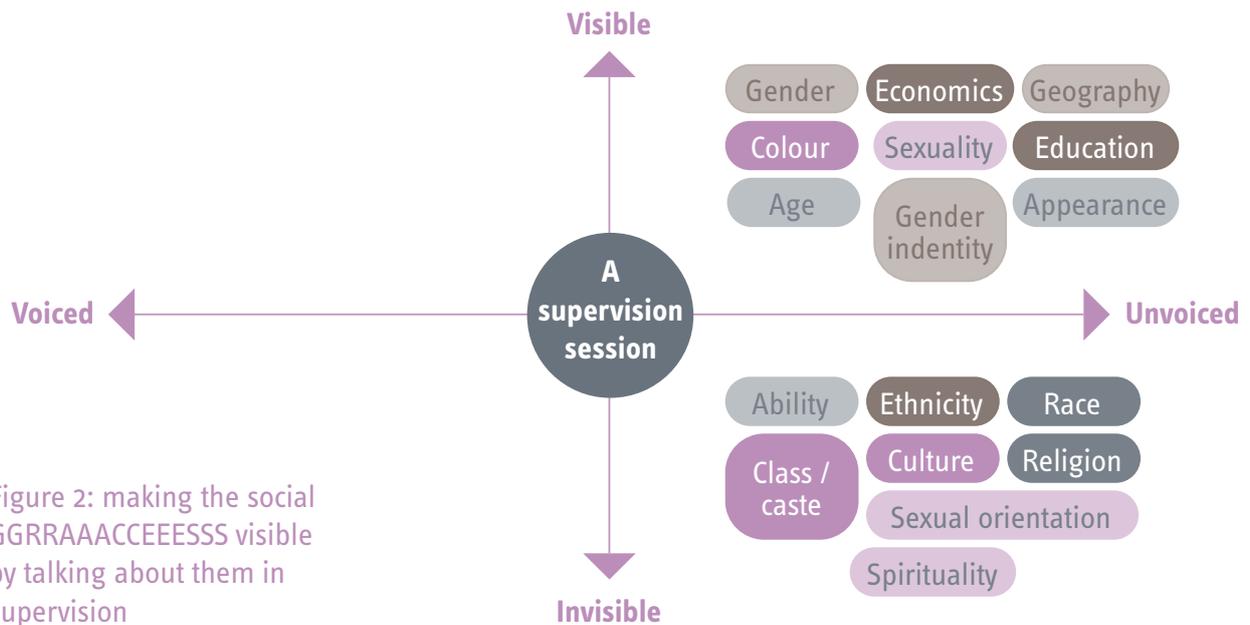


Figure 2: making the social GRRRAACCEEESSS visible by talking about them in supervision

The next exercise explains how you can explore the social GRRRAACCEEESSS in one-to-one supervision discussions in order to better understand voiced and unvoiced experiences.

### Exercise three: place the grace

Social workers can be invited to fill in the grid for themselves in relation to their work, which can lead to interesting discussions about transparency and self disclosure (Roberts, 2005). For example, asking what is helpful and when and what to share with children, families or other professionals you are working with.

A useful exercise may be to plot the social GRRRAACCEEESSS of the worker in one colour and those of a child or family member in another to explore the interactions between them.

It is also helpful to plot the social GRRRAACCEEESSS in the supervisory relationship to explore the differences and similarities between the supervisor and supervisee, and for the social worker and supervisor to explore the impact of these differences and similarities (what is helpful and what is not, how challenges can be resolved, and so on).

### Questions to explore in this exercise:

By posing questions about the effects of the social GRRRAACCEEESSS on the social worker and families' experiences, you create a shift to build awareness of visible / voiced and invisible / unvoiced experiences.

If your relationship is strong, you might take a relational risk and invite your supervisee to explore what else might be invisible and unvoiced. As with all systemic questions, it may be most useful to phrase the questions with openness and sensitivity, i.e. 'I wonder if...?', 'What would it be like if...?' 'Have you ever thought about...?'

For example:

I am wondering what it's like for you as a black woman having a white supervisor?	What do you think would be useful for me to understand about these differences between us?	How do you think racism impacts on this piece of work?
How might that show in this relationship?	What do you think this family's religious or spiritual beliefs are?	If the mother knew that her son was gay, what impact do you think that would have?

## Exercise four: dominant and subjugated stories in our daily lives

This exercise is a brief activity to inspire discussion in teams about dominant discourses in society and the way in which they shape all our lives and impact on children and families and social workers.

It invites social workers to have a go at deconstructing text as a researcher might if doing discourse analysis, a qualitative research method that explores how language is used and what it conveys. The idea is to bring forth what is not being said in the text, as well as what is:

- > A useful learning exercise is to collect the daily papers and invite workers to cut out dominant stories in the headlines.
- > Next, invite them to think about what stories are hidden in the subtext.
- > What other stories are untold, unheard or unknown.
- > How do these told or untold stories influence our responses to the children and families we work with?

### The social GRRRAACCEEESSS and reflexivity

The social GRRRAACCEEESSS help us to develop greater reflexivity, i.e. the ability to reflect on action and use it to inform future action. The presentation accompanying this learning tool outlines three different kinds of reflexivity:

- > self reflexivity - being reflexive about your own ideas and social GRRRAACCEEESSS
- > relational reflexivity - being reflexive about relationships and how they are constructed
- > epistemological reflexivity - how knowledge is constructed and the way in which our understanding of reality is culturally bound.

These concepts are picked up in more detail in the next exercise.

## Exercise five: speed dating reflexivity

This exercise can be used to explore further aspects of a piece of work with a family or a teamwork issue or an organisational dilemma. Once the topic has been decided, three or four team members form a circle seated on chairs facing outwards. A further three or four team members create a circle facing inwards so that four pairs of interviewers / interviewees are created. The person sitting on each chair asks questions in relation to the dilemma about:

- > **chair 1:** self reflexivity
- > **chair 2:** relational reflexivity
- > **chair 3:** epistemological reflexivity
- > **chair 4:** reflections on the experience of being interviewed.

The conductor of the exercise informs the group when five or ten minutes have passed (depending on the available time) at which point the external circle of people move on one seat and are interviewed on the next topic by a different person.

This continues until everyone has moved around each seat, at which point the participants swap roles and those who have been asking the questions are now interviewed in the same way.

This is a great way to explore and develop personal professional connections, which will strengthen the identity of the worker, increase their reflexivity and improve their ability to understand family / team or organisational experiences more deeply.

You can use the questions on the next page to encourage a discussion reflecting on learning from this exercise.

## Questions to explore self reflexivity

What personal stories does this connect to for me?	What professional stories does this connect to for me?	What are my duties, rights and responsibilities in this context?
What would my manager / supervisor / colleagues say about this?	How does my own experience of the social GRRRAACCEEESSS impact on my understanding of and contribution to this exercise?	How does this fit with the way I see myself as a professional and as a person?
What professional and personal values does it connect with?	How does it fit with my ethical position?	How do issues of social difference influence this?
How am I managing differentials of power in this relationship?	If I continue with this development, what sort of person and professional will I become?	If I continue with this development what sort of service will I help to create?

## Questions to explore relational reflexivity

How would you like me to ask you questions?	How would you like me to support / challenge you?	What sort of social worker / supervisor would you like me to become?
How might this difference between us influence the way we work together?	How will it influence our relationship if we continue to talk like this?	How does this fit with the way you see yourself as a person?
What values does it connect with?	How does it fit with your ethical position?	If you continue with this development, what sort of person will you become?
Is that the way in which you like to think of yourself?		

## Questions to explore epistemological reflexivity

How does this context impact on the child or family's experiences?	What are the dominant discourses in this context?	What gets subjugated?
How does this context reinforce or challenge dominant societal discourses of health and illness, happiness and despair?	How does this context reinforce or challenge individualisation versus collectivism?	How does political policy influence this context?
How does behaviour make sense within this context?	In what ways could behaviour be viewed as resistance in this context?	What is the construction of the person in this context?
What is the construction of problems in this context?	What is the construction of change in this context?	What theories or research are privileged in this context?
What other theories might be useful?	What personal stories does this connect to for me?	What professional stories does this connect to for me?
How do I embody or resist these discourses in my work?		

## Questions to explore strengths and resilience

The following questions can be helpful in supervision to strengthen the professional identity of the social worker. The intention is that the questions asked in supervision mirror those that the social worker might then go on to ask children and families, so that social work practice and supervision are coherent.

Again, it is important to 'warm the context' for these questions (Burnham 2018) and 'less is more', so perhaps only one or two might be asked at any one time. It can also be powerful to ask them in a group context where colleagues could add their reflections and observations (with the consent of team members and ground rules clarified).

How is your view of yourself influenced by the social GRRRAACCEEESSS? How have these contributed to any strengths and areas of resilience you have?	What do you think are some of your strong points?	How would you describe your abilities? What are you good at?
What would your best friend or a parent say about you?	Who supports you in your life? What resources have you got in terms of relationships?	Who or what can you rely on? People, friends, religion, faith?
When something difficult happens to you, how are you likely to respond?	Can you think of an example?	Can we really unpick what you did, with your body, your actions, your thoughts and feelings?
Who would have noticed these responses in you?	Who supports you in using these responses, family, friends, professionals?	Who or what helped you develop these ways of responding?
How do these responses fit with what you value in life?	What do you hold dear?	What keeps you going in life?
What makes life meaningful for you?	What activities support those important ideas and values?	

## The LUUUTT model: Introduction

Pearce and Pearce (1990) invite us to think about different types of stories using the LUUUTT model, an acronym that summarises them (see figure 3 below).



Figure 3: the LUUUTT model

**Stories lived** are the actions of our lives which cannot be changed, like moving house, getting married, being taken into care etc.

**Stories untold, unknown and unheard** are subjugated stories that may not be conscious, represented by the grey cloud.

Being sensitive to these possible untold stories will enable deep listening in the client or supervisory relationship. The social GRRRAACCEEESSS are often interwoven throughout these stories. It is useful to think about these in supervision in order to help your supervisees be more agile in noticing and exploring different kinds of stories when working with families.

**Stories told** refers to the meaning we make of these stories, which inform our future action. Through our work, we aim to change the stories that people tell themselves to make their version of their lives more empowering.

**Story telling** thinks about the way in which people tell their stories.

## Using the LUUUTT Model

### Exercise six: exploring unheard, untold and unknown stories

Here are some examples of questions that could be asked to explore these stories in supervision. You might also want to generate more of your own or with your team:

What stories do you have, as a supervisor, about your social worker? What are their strengths and abilities?

What are you curious about that you never dared to ask?

What stories does the social worker have about the child or family?

Are they positive or negative, empowering or constraining?

How does the social worker tell these stories, with certainty or curiosity?

What stories are not being heard?

What might be useful to explore which has not been talked about?

The exercises above are a good way to explore your own practice and development as a supervisor, and to elaborate your repertoire of questions. However, when working with social workers, children and families, it is important to remember that a little reflexivity goes a long way and you might only want to use one or two of these questions at any one time.

Too many questions about reflexivity can become annoying for the recipient. As John Burnham says, 'Too much self reflexivity becomes spaghetti!'

## Other ways you can use this tool

These exercises and questions are intended to be used in supervision discussions or in team scenarios to develop reflexivity. But they can also be used by social workers to explore their own practice and individual development.

For example, a social worker could be asked to think through one or more of these activities as part of their development and discuss them again at the next supervision. Or the whole team could discuss these themes at the next team meeting.



**We want to hear more about your experiences of using PSDP resources and tools. Connect via Twitter using #PSDP to share your ideas and hear how other practice supervisors use the resources.**

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