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Tool

PSDP—Resources and Tools:

A visual tool to explore evidence-informed practice in supervision

Introduction

This is the second of two linked tools which focus on ways in which practice supervisors can embed the principles of evidence-informed practice within supervision discussions. The first tool 'Promoting evidence-informed practice in supervision' provides you with an opportunity to think further about evidence-informed practice frameworks and prompts you to consider how you can draw on these ideas in reflective supervision discussions with the practitioners you line manage. We recommend you read the tool 'Promoting evidence-informed practice in supervision' first.

In this tool we explore how you can use the evidence-informed practice triangle (Research in Practice, 2003) to ask questions in supervision which allow your supervisees to reflect on how each element of evidence-informed practice helps you to think further about practice with children and families. This will allow you to facilitate critical analysis and reflection on different forms of evidence which inform our decision-making and what these might mean within the context of a specific family, and to generate and test alternative hypotheses.

You can use the diagram shown in figure 1 as a visual prompt in supervision to help you and your supervisee to critically reflect on the different forms of evidence that inform their decision-making when working with children and families.

Using a visual prompt like this can be useful in generating creative ideas to help you explore different forms of evidence in supervision. Not only does this prompt you to make sure that you as practice supervisor ask questions about all three areas of evidence-informed practice, it also enables you to identify any gaps in your supervisees' use of evidence, and to work with them to address these.

Research

Academic and local authority data

Expertise

Skills and knowledge from practice

Evidence-informed practice

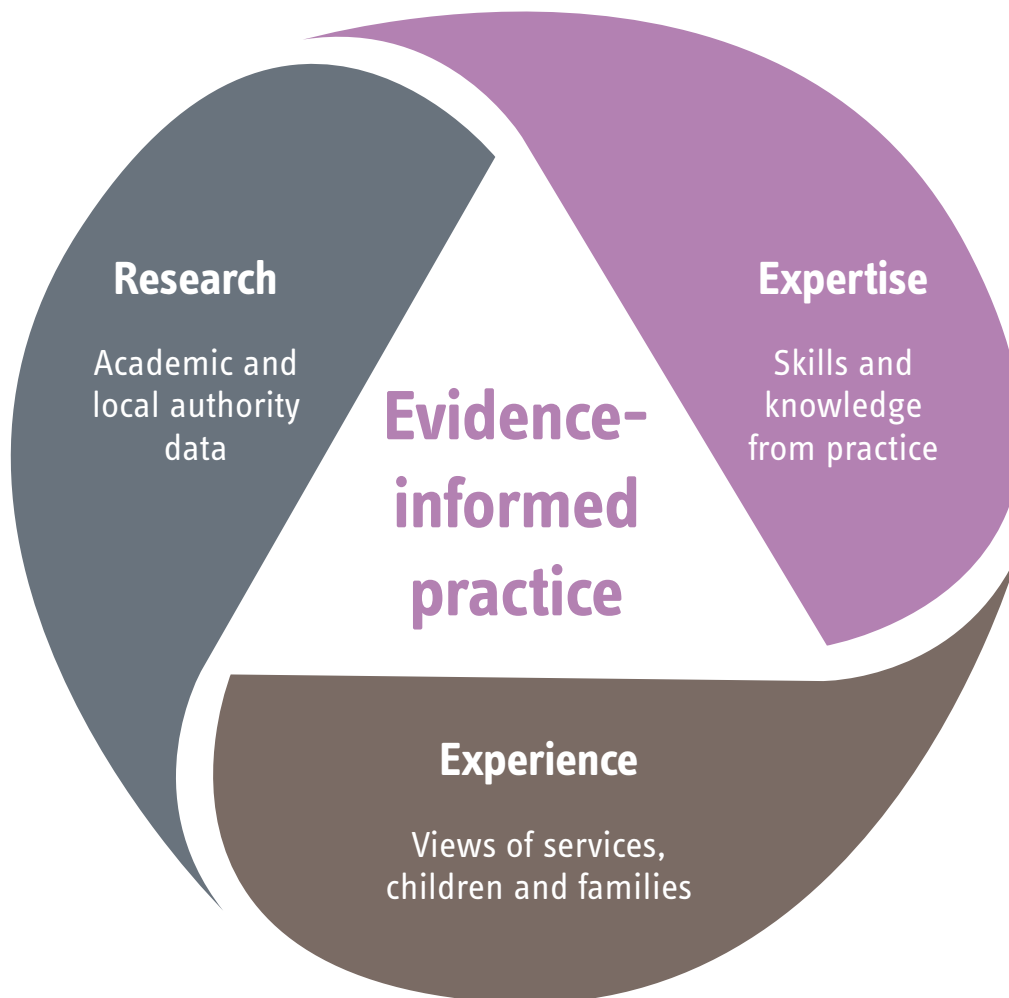**Experience**

Views of services, children and families

Figure 1: Evidence-informed practice triangle (Research in Practice, 2003)

Using the evidence-informed practice triangle in supervision

Examples of how you might use this tool (either during individual supervision or as a group learning exercise) are provided below.

Option a:

> Introduce the evidence-informed practice triangle and ask your supervisee(s) to look at it as you explain what it is. Look at each of the circles and invite your supervisee(s) to provide examples of evidence they have used (in work with any child or family) that fit with each one.

> This can then lead into broader learning or child / family-specific discussion about the use of different forms of evidence in practice.

Option b:

> Invite your supervisee to present information about a family they are currently working with. Then use the framework to help the practitioner identify different forms of evidence they have used in their work with the child and family, and to identify other forms of evidence that might be helpful in their decision-making.

> Map the different forms of evidence against each of the circles of the tool as you talk about the work.

> Discuss where there are gaps in the evidence and ask the supervisee to reflect on any challenges they have faced in gathering different forms of evidence, and what they might do to overcome these challenges.

> Ask your supervisee how the evidence they have gathered has informed their decisions to date. Invite them to think about alternative hypotheses and the information they would need to gather to accept or reject these.

You may wish to conclude these discussions by exploring what the supervisee has learnt about using different forms of evidence in their practice and by reflecting on any gaps that exist in their current use of evidence.

Prompt questions for exploring evidence-informed practice in supervision

A number of prompt questions are provided below that might be useful in exploring the different domains of evidence-informed practice in supervision.

General questions:	
> Which form of evidence in the triangle do you feel most confident gathering and using?	> Where do you feel less confident and why? What support might help you feel more confident?
> What are your 'go to' pieces of research?	> Who are your 'go to' researchers / authors? How can we work together to widen our knowledge of a more diverse range of research / researchers?
> Are there any areas of research that you feel you need to learn more about?	> How confident do you feel in citing research in your reports?
> What support do you need to improve your experience of accessing, appraising and using research?	> How confident do you feel in eliciting the views of children and families? Are there some areas where you are more / less confident?
> What methods do you use to ensure that children and families' views are gathered and used?	> How do you gather information from children and families who have speech and language problems?
> How useful is the additional information presented in figure 2? How might you draw upon this and expand your ideas about what evidence-informed practice looks like?	

Questions focused on work with a particular child or family

Research evidence:

> Is there any particular research evidence that has informed your thinking around this particular child and family? Or the way you practice with them?

> Is there any evidence from local or organisational data that has informed your thinking about your work / your approach to working with this child and family?

> How has this evidence informed the way you work with the child and family? Are there any other interpretations or uses that could be relevant which you might have missed?

> How have you used research evidence alongside your professional expertise and the views of the child and family? How have you combined and made sense of these different elements, particularly if they say opposing things?

> What have you learned as a result of using research evidence in your work with this child or family? What might you do differently next time?

The views and experiences of the child and family:

> How are the voices of the child and family routinely reflected in your assessments / reports / decisions? How did you gather these? Are there any other creative ways you could do this?

> How do you communicate to the family that you are keen to hear their views and experiences (even when they might say things you'd rather not hear)?

> How do you check with a child and family that your understanding of what they have told you is correct?

> What might get in the way of you being able to hear and connect with a child and family's experiences?

> How might your own social identity and personal / professional experiences impact on your relationship with the family and your interpretation of their situation and decisions? Thinking about the social GGRRAAACCEEESSS is helpful here (the GGRRAAACCEEESSS are a model which describe aspects of personal and social identity which include gender, geography, race, religion, age, ability, appearance, class, culture, education, ethnicity, employment, sexuality, sexual orientation and spirituality) (Burnham, 2013).

> Have you considered how issues of culture and diversity might impact on the way the child and family work with you and you with them, including how they may or may not express their views to you?

Professional expertise:

> What professional skills have you used to engage the family to learn more about their situation?

> How significant and reliable are the different strands of information and evidence you have collected?

> Are there any gaps in the evidence?

> What further evidence would be helpful and how might you go about collecting this?

> What is your working hypothesis about this family? What is this based on?

> Do the different strands of evidence create a holistic picture of the child and family which can inform your work with them? What helps to achieve or gets in the way of achieving this?

> What further support (formal and informal) would help you to develop your skills in gathering, bringing together and critically appraising different forms of evidence?

> Are there any competing / contradictory perspectives? What evidence would you need to test these alternative hypotheses? How would you gather the necessary information?

Other ways you can use this tool

You could use the evidence-informed practice triangle:

As the basis of a whole-group discussion at a team meeting or away day.

To structure discussion during group supervision by inviting team members to ask questions of each other while exploring each area of the triangle, and then to reflect on their learning.

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.

References

Burnham, J. (2013) 'Developments in Social GGRRAAACCEEESSS: visible-invisible, voiced-unvoiced' in I. Krause (ed.) *Cultural Reflexivity* London: Karnac.

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