

Case study Simon

Simon is an NQSW in an integrated mental health team. The team manager, Varsha, is acting as Simon's assessor. There is an index of the evidence items at the bottom of this page.

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Evidence development

Varsha has directly observed Simon on a number of occasions during his first six months in practice. Following each observation Varsha has engaged in a reflective discussion with Simon, where he has presented as a critically reflective practitioner. In these discussions Simon was able to evaluate what took place and consider what alternative approaches might have been used. [Varsha has used her own questionnaire to gather feedback from the person being supported after each of the direct observations of practice and has recorded this and shared it with Simon.](#)

Some other team members have also observed aspects of Simon's practice and they have provided written feedback to Simon, which he has shared with Varsha.

Varsha has also drawn on evidence from her supervision discussions with Simon. Simon is personally reflective in supervision discussions - he is able to highlight the challenges he faces and the way that he has addressed these, drawing on a range of knowledge. [Varsha has been recording supervision notes, and while reflection has permeated the sessions she has also been including a separate heading on critical reflection.](#)

Varsha has also drawn on the products of Simon's work - for example she has reviewed one of the [Mental Health Tribunal reports completed by Simon.](#) Varsha feels that Simon's report writing skills are at a high standard. The report demonstrates that Simon has gathered evidence from a range of sources, he details provenance and shows how his recommendation is based on evidence based decision making. The report provides holistic evidence against the domains of the PCF.

Simon has completed a [reflective account on his work with the person being supported referred to in the Mental Health Tribunal Report.](#) Varsha has considered this and reflected on it in the context of the other evidence generated to date.

Consideration of the reflective account

Varsha notes that the reflective account is written in a good academic style. She knows that Simon did do well academically on his degree course. She makes sure that she looks beyond the academic style to ensure that it is sufficiently personally reflective. Varsha feels that the reflective account provides evidence of Simon's progression. He demonstrates how his confidence has improved, particularly in terms of challenging other professionals and maintaining the central focus on the person's wishes and rights. To ensure that she sees beyond the excellent academic style and to validate that the account reflects Simon's capability, Varsha reads the account with the domains in mind. Varsha feels that the account provides holistic evidence against all nine domains.

Professionalism - Simon refers to his role as a social worker in collaborative working and demonstrates progression in his professional development and commitment to the profession.

Values and ethics - Simon refers to his use of social work values and the conflicts between his personal and professional values. He also refers to some conflicting inter-professional values and the way he reflected on these to reach principled decisions.

Diversity - Simon demonstrates his understanding of the way that the person being supported has been discriminated against in previous service delivery and the way that he works to ensure that this person is recognised as a unique individual.

Rights, Justice and Economic wellbeing - Simon refers to some of the challenges he faced in terms of upholding the person's rights. He also reflects on some of the dilemmas around economic wellbeing. Additionally he demonstrates some of the dilemmas around upholding rights and falling into a risk-averse approach.

Knowledge - Simon refers to the knowledge he drew on in his work. He also references the way he needed to develop his knowledge at the outset of his work.

Critical reflection and analysis - the account meets a number of the principles of critical reflection. Simon reflects on the specific models of reflection he has made use of in considering the work. (This links to The College of Social Works' [principles for critical reflection](#).)

Intervention and skills - Simon demonstrates aspects of his intervention in the development of a care plan and risk assessment.

Contexts and organisations - Simon refers to the challenges of collaborative working and the different perspectives of other professionals and organisations.

Professional leadership - Simon demonstrates how he shared information about the Mental Capacity Act with service providers to promote the person's rights. What Varsha notes on reviewing the reflective account is that Simon does not specifically draw on feedback from the person being supported to evidence his reflection. While he refers at the start of the reflective account to that person completing a self-assessment / feedback form (required by the agency), and he

briefly refers to this having an impact on his practice, it is not feedback about Simon's practice. Reflecting on this shortfall, Varsha recognises that feedback from people being supported is a missing component in her holistic assessment. While she has obtained feedback from people supported by Simon after each direct observation of practice, she realises that she has recorded this and shared it with Simon, but that they have not discussed the feedback reflectively.

Recognising the need to triangulate evidence and to ensure holistic assessment, Varsha discusses her thoughts with Simon in their next supervision session. Varsha encourages Simon to reflect critically on the reasons that feedback from the people he has been supporting does not figure strongly in the evidence generated so far.

Simon says that he had not noted this previously - he has been more focused on demonstrating his capability in relation to the domains. He wonders whether he has subconsciously avoided seeking direct feedback on his practice from the people being supported and says he will reflect on this further before the next supervision session, suggesting that he will bring a reflective account about this. Varsha advises Simon that she is interested in his personal reflection and thoughts about feedback from the people he works with and that the reflective account does not need to be written in an academic style.

Completion of the assessment

Simon's brings a further short reflective account to the next supervision session. Simon also talks about the way he has sought further feedback from both the people he has been supporting and carers, and he discusses the feedback he has generated with Varsha.

Simon and Varsha agree that the generation of such feedback is not a priority within the team. They recognise that the culture in the team relies on people they support completing the self-assessment form at the start of intervention, as this is an agency requirement, but agree that practitioners do not revisit this as the intervention progresses and that they do not seek feedback on individual practitioner's work from people.

They realise that when Simon was observed by his team colleagues the reports they provided to him made no reference to feedback from the people he was supporting. Together they consider the 'Principles for gathering and using feedback from people who use services and those who care for them' and decide that in the final scheduled observation they will discuss the feedback generated after the observation in a more reflective way - especially drawing out how Simon's practice might be further developed based on the feedback. Simon says that he would like to discuss his reflections about the lack of a commitment to seeking and using feedback from people being supported, in the next team meeting. He is keen to explore whether team and agency culture can be changed in relation to understanding how important feedback is.

Varsha and Simon agree that this will be useful and decide to take to the meeting the material they have found on the importance of feedback from people who need care and support. Varsha reflects that one of the benefits of working with NQSWs through the assessed and supported year is that it enables time for reflection and learning on

issues and practice that can have much wider implications for team development and improving social work practice.

Summative assessment judgement

Following their discussions about the central nature of feedback and Simon's work to address this within the evidence generated, feedback from people being supported and from carers becomes a key aspect of the evidence which Varsha can draw on in her summative assessment. In fact, as Simon's awareness that his critical reflection has previously missed reflection on the feelings of the people he has been supporting increased, he did take this issue to a team meeting for discussion. This has prompted reflective discussions within the team about the central importance of the experience of people being supported, and this provides further evidence of Simon's capability, particularly in terms of the leadership domain.

Varsha feels confident that her professional judgement that Simon should pass the assessed and supported year is valid and robust.

Varsha starts to think about what she herself has learnt about the experience and what she might do differently with the NQSW who is just about to start on her team. Varsha thinks about how she has provided reflective supervision in the past. She recognises now that discussing feedback from people who need care and support is central to reflective supervision and recognises in particular the way that the process of critical reflection links with the process of gathering feedback. She decides to make this a much more significant feature of all her supervision in the future.

Links to evidence to go with this case study

1. [Service user feedback](#)
2. [Supervision notes \(extract, critical reflection\)](#)
3. [Work product evidence \(Mental Health Tribunal report\)](#)
4. [Reflective account 1 on work with service user](#)
5. [Reflective account 2 on service user feedback](#)