

# Reflective thinking

**This type of thinking is essential in counselling, social work and other community service fields.**

This is because reflective practice together with evidence based practice means better decision making, and thus better outcomes for clients as well as practitioners.

This complex process of reflection is enhanced when a structured, evidence based model is used to frame the process. There are a few respected models available in the literature; among them is a model introduced by Gibbs in 1998 that is still relevant today. It may be a good starting point for your reflective thinking.

Gibb's (1988) framework of reflective learning is a useful starting point.



*(Williams, Woolliams, & Spiro, 2012)*

**Tip:** Remember your Educator will want to see how well you

reflect on your learning, your life experiences, and/ or your use of skills together with how well you interpret these reflections using theory and research, and how well you make assessments of, and decisions about interventions, according to the relevant theory.

# Assignments and reflective thinking

Assignments that ask you to reflect on your learning and/or lived experiences, usually also ask you to interpret aspects of your learning and experience through the lens of relevant theories and research.

**There are different situations where you may be asked to think reflectively.**

**Here are two examples. In each example, Gibb's (1988) framework has been used to create questions which focus the reflective process.**

<p><b>Example 1</b>  <b>Reflect on your practice counselling session</b></p>	<p><b>Example 2</b>  <b>Reflect on the influence of your family system on your development</b></p>
<p><b>Unit content:</b> Firstly, you need to have an overview of the theories and frameworks studied in this course and know the basic counselling skills studied. To help you reflect on your counselling session, write down some questions based on Gibb's framework that you can ask yourself, for example:</p> <p><b>Experience:</b> What happened in the counselling session? What skills did I apply?</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> How did I feel in the session? How do I feel now?</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> What did I do well? What could I improve?</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> How did the theories or frameworks apply to the client or to me? (How does this apply to the session?)</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> What would have worked better? What else could I have done differently?</p> <p><b>Action Plan:</b> What would I say or do with this client in a future session? What would I do in a similar situation in the future? What did I learn about myself?</p>	<p><b>Unit content:</b> Firstly, you need to understand family systems and stages of development. To help you reflect on these topics, write down some questions based on Gibb's framework that you can ask yourself, for example:</p> <p><b>Experience:</b> What were my family's systems? How did I fit in my family's systems? What stage of development am I at currently?</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> How did I feel then and now about my family system and at this stage of my development?</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> How did my family system influence my development?</p> <p><b>Analysis:</b> How does my experience fit the theory and what does not? Does the theory match my reality?</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Does my experience and examples support or refute the theory? What difference will this make to how I will live my life or how I understand my life or other people's lives?</p> <p><b>Action Plan:</b> Does this make any difference to how I will live my life or how I understand my life or other people's lives?</p>
<p><b>Ready to start writing a reflective assignment?</b> Check out the information on the Student Learning Support webpage: <a href="http://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/reflective-essay">http://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/reflective-essay</a></p>	