

Centre for Academic Development

Reflective writing: A health visitor at work

First, read through our account quickly:

You are a qualified health visitor. You have knowledge, skills and a lot of experience under your belt. You're going to visit a family with a child who is obese. From past experience, you plan to propose a diet, a food diary and a schedule of visits. You visit, talk to mum, and agree your plan.

One week later... second visit...

Nothing's happened. No change. Very disappointing... frustrating You look back at what you did and wonder what you could have done differently and why the mother didn't take your advice. You have a chat with colleagues. Have they experienced this? What would they have done? Any ideas?

One colleague said she used some approaches used in family therapy. Interesting... but you want more than just her word for it. Coincidentally, you saw a programme on TV which left you thinking about the complex nature of eating habits in a family context, and the difficulty of change. You go and read some studies that used systems theory. *You decide to arrange a case conference with social services.(?)* You set up a family meeting with all members. The sister confesses she sneaks the obese brother crunchies and chips. Aaahhh you think....

Looking back, you realise that your earlier intervention had limited value – you were coming at it from a direction that didn't see all aspects of the situation. You still need to help the family to make changes, but you have different strategies to try... and the cycle of

action starts again, driven by reflection...

We have used three common models to structure reflection on this (simplified) account:

- Gibbs' reflective cycle
- Johns' model of structured reflection
- Holm and Stevenson 'A student's own framework...'

Go back to the main page and click on the links to see each of these models in action.