# **CRITICAL REFLECTION TEMPLATE**

## STAGE 1: DECONSTRUCTION

### **Step 1:**

* Decide on a critical incident (CI). A CI is anything that is of significance to you for whatever reason (traumatic, mundane, unresolved, posed a dilemma, a lightbulb moment) and that you want to learn something from this. We use this as a practice tool to reconstruct your personal practice. The incident and its ‘telling’ become the narrative for deconstruction. The **goal** through the deconstruction/reconstruction process **is to identify the unexamined, subconscious or automatic assumptions and judgements that were present**.
* When selecting the CI it needs to be something concrete that actually happened and you were involved with or observed – not abstract. For example, part of an encounter with a client/service user that you were involved with; a meeting you were part of as a participant or observer; an activity you were part of for example a group activity or assisting a client in undertaking a task. You can have observed this but we need you to have an active part in terms of thinking about what happened in the situation and the impact this had on you.

In writing your Critical Incident include:

1. Brief details of the social, organisational, and personal context and background of the incident as you see relevant to assist an outsider understand.
2. Reasons the incident is critical to you, e.g. why you have chosen it, why is this important and why you want to learn from it. This can be as simple as you walked away feeling uncomfortable, feeling confused, powerless, you had an epiphany etc about the particular incident.
3. Brief description of the actual incident from your own perspective – emphasis on concrete description NOT analysis. This involves describing the incident as it happened.

*This should not be more than one typewritten page*

### **Step 2:**

Unpack the CI by responding to the following deconstruction, resistance and challenge questions. Your paper will include your responses to these questions.

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| * *When considering the incident and your narration of it, what main themes or patterns emerge that appear important to you? What word patterns of communication, do you use frequently? (this considers the importance of discourse)*
* *What labels or categorisations do you apply to the events, people etc?*
* *Is there evidence of any binary opposite categories that emerge in your account (that is an either / or, right/wrong, always/never)?*
* *Whose perspectives are represented here and whose are missing? In doing so think about whose position or perspective is privileged*
* *How do you present your perspective in the story? Where does your own perspective sit? (that is, is it the dominant perspective, the minority perspective etc)*
* *What does that say about power?*
* *In thinking about the situation what interpretations or explanations did you make about what happened? What were these based on, ie are they all yours or were you influenced by someone else or from somewhere else (e.g. context)? Did you own these as yours or someone else’s? How did your interpretation influence the situation or what you thought or did?*
* *How might you have interpreted the situation differently? How many different interpretations could you have made? How might it have been interpreted by different players in the situation?*
* *What assumptions do you imply and use in your account? That is what value and belief systems, experiences of human behaviour, moral and ethical codes, social & political systems, power, gender, cultural considerations were present?*
* *What knowledge do you imply and use in your account? That is what practice theory, moral and ethical codes, social & political systems, power, gender, cultural considerations were present?*
* *Where do these assumptions come from e.g. your family, academic training, and cultural background? What role or positions of yours do these assumptions support? What players stand to gain or lose from holding them; what social and power structures are upheld by these assumptions?*
* *What holes, gaps or biases are there in the description? What perspectives are distorted or devalued? What actions or assumptions support these biases?*
* *What is your understanding or knowledge of power arising from this account? Where does this come from and why have you developed it or taken it on board?*
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## STAGE 2: RECONSTUCTION

Having undertaken a reflective analysis of your critical incident, your focus now is on taking this insight and knowledge and developing a reconstruction as you create a new narrative. In doing so you are changing your existing constructions and creating new ways of seeing and understanding these and your related practices. This is essential in order to achieve our aim of social justice working from a critical social work philosophy.

#### Reconstruction questions to guide your analysis

Respond to each of these questions

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| **Step 3*** *How does what happened in your incident compare with what you intended to do or what you assumed you were doing? Was the theory or approach you claimed to be using different from what was implied in your actions and interpretations? Did your actions fit your theoretical perspective? (e.g. was your intent to use anti oppressive theory but in fact you were not using this but were very procedurally focused?)*
* *How do the different knowledge and theory you used in this situation relate to each other? (i.e. were they compatible? if not why and how?)*
* *What were the main assumptions that you identified that you now wish to interrogate/change/challenge?*
* *How do the main assumptions that underlie your practice compare with the more formal theoretical perspectives you used or wish to use? What do you need to change about the way you see these theories or how you use these as a result of your reflection? (e.g. your desire to rescue or help counteracts your anti oppressive practice; your own self-doubt took over)*
* *What strategies can you use to make these changes?*
* *If you identified binary opposites in your story (i.e. only black and white; no grey), what is the middle ground of reconstructing what happened?*
* *How would you now explain your practice perspective or value base as a result?*
* *What is your reformulated understanding (your practice theory) of power that has resulted from your reflection?*

**Step 4***From this analysis now develop a summary discussion of the following:** What are your main assumptions? How does your thinking change as a result of being aware of these?
* What function does/did your construction of your identity serve?
* What are the dominant discourses that you have accepted and why have you done so?
* How does your practice need to change as a result? *(Adapted from Fook, J. 2016, p. 130).*
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| Step 1: Description of critical incident |
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| Step 2: Deconstruction (including resistance and challenge) – (*select key aspects you want to unpack)*  |
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| Step 3: Reconstruction – (NB *this is something that you can add to following discussion in supervision)* |
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| Step 4: Summary of key learning |
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