BASW Capability Statement for Social Work with Older People

Supervision Tool

This tool is designed to support supervision discussions in relation to the capability statements for older people.

You can begin by using the self-assessment tool to reflect on your practice in relation to specific elements of the capability statements, this may support a reflective conversation with your supervisor.

As the capability statements map onto the Professional Capability Framework Domains, this supervision tool invites reflection on those specific areas.

You can apply Kolb's (1984) reflective cycle to facilitate your critical reflections, or choose to use a different model to support your reflection.
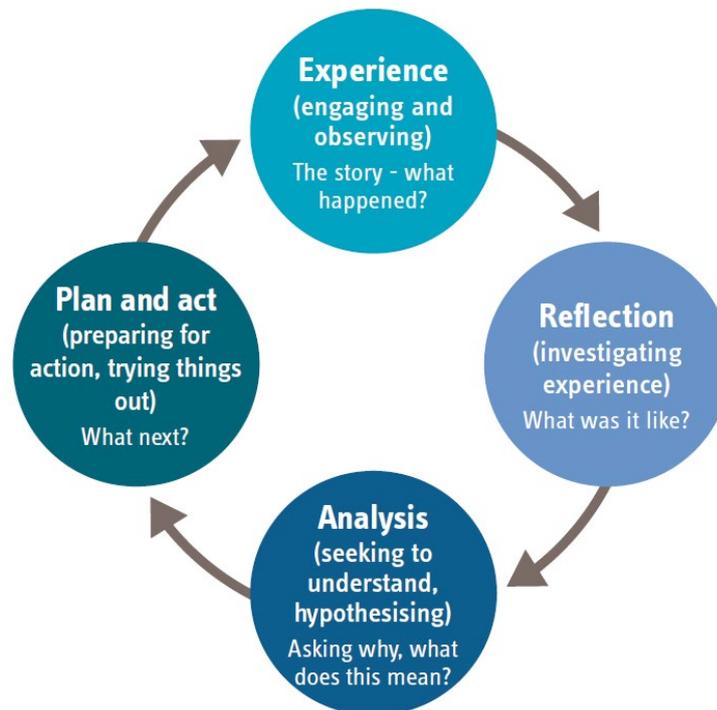
Values and Ethics

Considering the capability statements in relation to Values and Ethics, which include:

I take a strengths and rights based approach in recognising and responding to the complexity and uniqueness of experiences of ageing for older people and for their relationships

I manage ethical dilemmas of conflicting views, aspirations and opportunities relating to older people.

Think about a situation or experience, and talk about: (you can use Kolb's reflective cycle to support this discussion)

What exactly did I do?

Consider reflective questions such as:

> What beliefs do I have about this kind of situation?

> What ethics and values did this situation fit with?

> What ethics and values did this situation contradict?

> What other experiences in my life does this remind me of?

> How did I feel about the other people?

> How did I impact on the situation?

Think about questions relating to analysis such as:

> What do I think was going on for the other people?

> What do I know from evidence about this kind of situation?

> What might another worker do?

Consider questions about planning and acting:

> What additional information do I need?

> What else should I consider?

> What do I do now?

> What support do I need?

Diversity and equality and Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing

This section relates to the statements that talk about diversity and equality and the statements relating to Rights, Justice and Economic Wellbeing including:

I recognise the impact of age discrimination and its interaction with other areas of discrimination and oppression

I challenge age discrimination, including structural discrimination in resource allocation, and its interaction with other forms of discrimination and oppression

I understand how age discrimination can intersect with other dimensions of social inequality such as sexism, racism or other oppressions. I address the interrelated impacts on health and well-being of disadvantages across the life course, long-term physical and/or mental ill health, frailty, poverty, vulnerability, uncertainty, change, risk, and transition. I understand the intersection of religion, spirituality and ageing. I work explicitly against abuse of power and age discrimination, and promote empowerment, equality and social inclusion. I challenge limitations on older people's choices, for example about sexuality, sexual identity and gender identity. I support others to recognise and challenge age discrimination.

I recognise the impact of powerlessness on older age, for example from poverty, social exclusion or lack of capacity to make a decision, and start to explore the role of social workers in countering this

I recognise the combined impact of experience across the life course, societal attitudes to older people, and loss – including of capacity to make specific decisions – and I uphold older people's rights to make decisions and choices
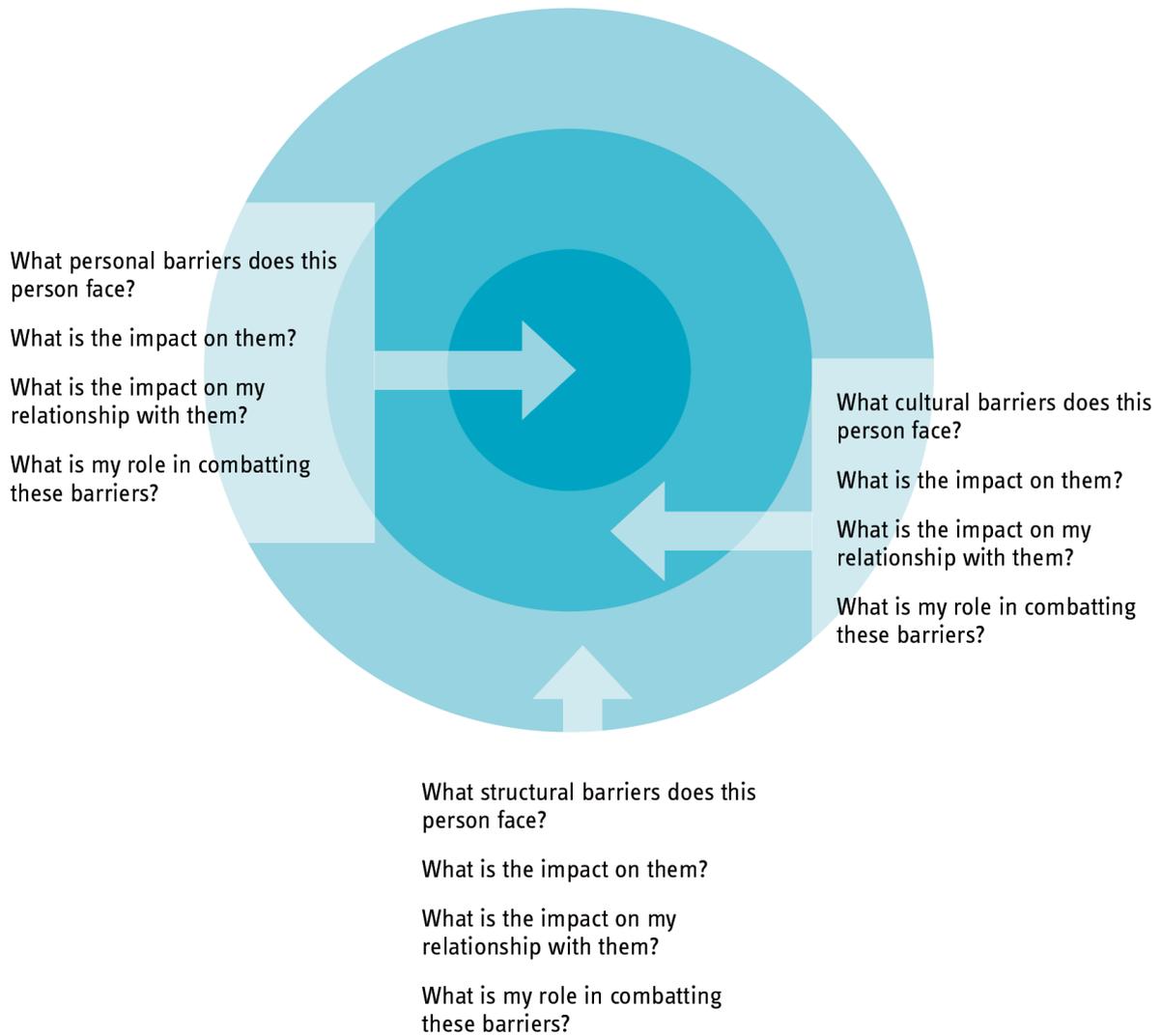
Anti-oppressive practice means that we take account of the impact of power, inequality and oppression on people, and actively combat these (Nosowska 2014). In supervision discussions, it is important that we adopt an anti-oppressive practice approach which includes:

> Recognising the Personal, cultural and structural barriers that people face

- Personal barriers are the way that personal characteristics are used to stereotype or limit people
- Cultural barriers are the way in which we are socialised to think of some people as normal and others as not
- Structural barriers are the way that we set things up to make it easier for some groups and harder for others

> Recognising our own characteristics and our own place in the culture and structure – and how this might impact on someone

> Working to understand someone's experience of oppression, understand and appreciate their attributes and contribution, and empower them to realise their rights (Thompson 2016).

A useful question to ask is: What is holding this person back?

The tool below helps you to consider the oppression that may be experienced by people that you work with.

Barriers

What personal barriers does this person face?

What is the impact on them?

What is the impact on my relationship with them?

What is my role in combatting these barriers?

What cultural barriers does this person face?

What is the impact on them?

What is the impact on my relationship with them?

What is my role in combatting these barriers?

What structural barriers does this person face?

What is the impact on them?

What is the impact on my relationship with them?

What is my role in combatting these barriers?

Knowledge and Skills & Interventions

This section considers the Capability Statements in relation to knowledge and Skills & Interventions, they have been grouped for the purpose of this supervision tool, as the structured reflective conversation with regard to both of these, can take the same form. So you can consider Knowledge separately from Skills & Intervention in a reflective discussion, but following the same structure. You may choose to consider the two together in the same discussion.

The capability statements on Skills and Interventions include

I have developed expertise in rights and strengths-based work with older people and their carers, families, networks and communities - based on gerontological research and theory, practice experience and older people's views, and I act as a role model for others.

I recognise the complexities arising from ageing and the life course, and I use this understanding to overcome barriers to forming a relationship, to inform my interventions and to work co- productively in partnership with older people

The statements in relation to knowledge include

I understand and apply knowledge about: the impact of ageing, changing health and transitions in older age; the most common age- related physical and mental health issues – including dementia – and their nature and impact; law, policy and systems relating to older people; and relevant gerontological theory and research

I have extensive knowledge about specific practice, research, theory, and law and policy relating to ageing

You can use Kolb's (1984) reflective cycle to frame your discussion, or choose your own model.

<u>Preparation</u>

Think about a situation and identify the main issues

Identify the law, theory and research that might apply to the situation

<u>Discussion</u>

Describe the situation.

Consider questions about experience: For example –

> Who was involved?

> What happened?

Consider: How does this situation compare with the main messages from law, theory and research? Answer questions about reflection:

For example –

> How did the situation impact on you?

> What do you think the impact was on others?

Consider: What do we know from law, theory and research about how this situation impacts on people? Think about questions in relation to analysis:

For example –

> What were the causes of the event?

> What did the event mean to people involved?

Consider: What do we know from law, theory and research about what this situation means? Take 5 minutes answering questions about planning and acting

For example –

> What else do I need to know?

> What should be my next step?

Consider: What do we know from law, theory and research about how we can respond to this situation?

Consider: What else do I want to find out from law, theory and research?

Critical reflection and analysis

This section relates to the statements on Critical Reflection and Analysis

I start to develop a critically reflective understanding of how people discuss age, as well as my own beliefs and biases around ageing, and tailor my practice in response

I grasp the complexity of older people's lives. I undertake clear analysis, critical thinking, decision making, planning and recording with older people. I recognise and combat the tensions between policies and the realities of older people's lives in order to promote service improvements.

The tools and exercises within this supervision tool all invite critical reflection and analysis. This section invites you to consider levels of reflection.

Tool: Levels of reflection
Gillian Ruch (2000) has identified four levels of reflection.

This tool helps you to consider what level of reflection you use and how to increase the depth of your reflection

You can use this in supervision to identify what level of reflection is needed for a particular situation. You can also use it to deliberately engage a deeper level of reflection when you had been using technical or practical reflection. This tool supports critical reflection on cases and also development of your professional capability.

Technical reflection – This is a pragmatic form of reflection that compares performance with knowledge of 'what should be done' as set out in standards, policies, timescales and procedures. This is often used as a quick response to a question of 'what should I do?'

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Practical reflection – This is reflection on how we are making sense of situations. By helping the practitioner to look back and learn from practice experiences, supervisors build practitioners' capacity to 'reflect in action' and 'reflect on action'. This may be the level that is used in a 'reflective discussion.'

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Critical reflection – This deep layer of reflection includes a focus on power relationships and social and public contexts. It recognises the impact of the practitioner on the situation. The term 'reflexivity' often refers to this type of reflection.

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Process reflection – Drawing on psychodynamic theory, this deepest layer aims to explore conscious and unconscious aspects of practice and how these shape judgements and decision-making. Emotions and unconscious responses generated in engaging with people are surfaced and managed to contain their impact on practitioners' wellbeing and on their ability to assess risk.

> When do I use this level? When is it appropriate?

Contexts and Organisations

The statements on Contexts and Organisations include:

I demonstrate awareness of changes in the social, cultural, political and economic context for older people, in demography, and in welfare, and how these impact on social work with older people and the availability of resources

I understand the perspective and values of social work in working effectively with other disciplines within gerontological interdisciplinary practice.

I work at local and national levels across boundaries to champion socially just practice and to leverage resources to optimise services for older people, and I build collaborations across disciplines, services and systems to ensure continuity and reduce gaps in services to older people

The following questions can support you to reflect on the elements of this capability statement:

In considering the available resources, reflect on how working within those resources fits with social work values.

In thinking about the context that you are working with you can use the dartboard below, to identify what is within your control, what you can influence and what is outside your control. Consider your own organisation and the partners you work with.

Use the dartboard to identify: What is in our control; what we can influence; what is outside of our control.

What I/we can do to manage ourselves in this change

What I/we can influence

Outside my/our control
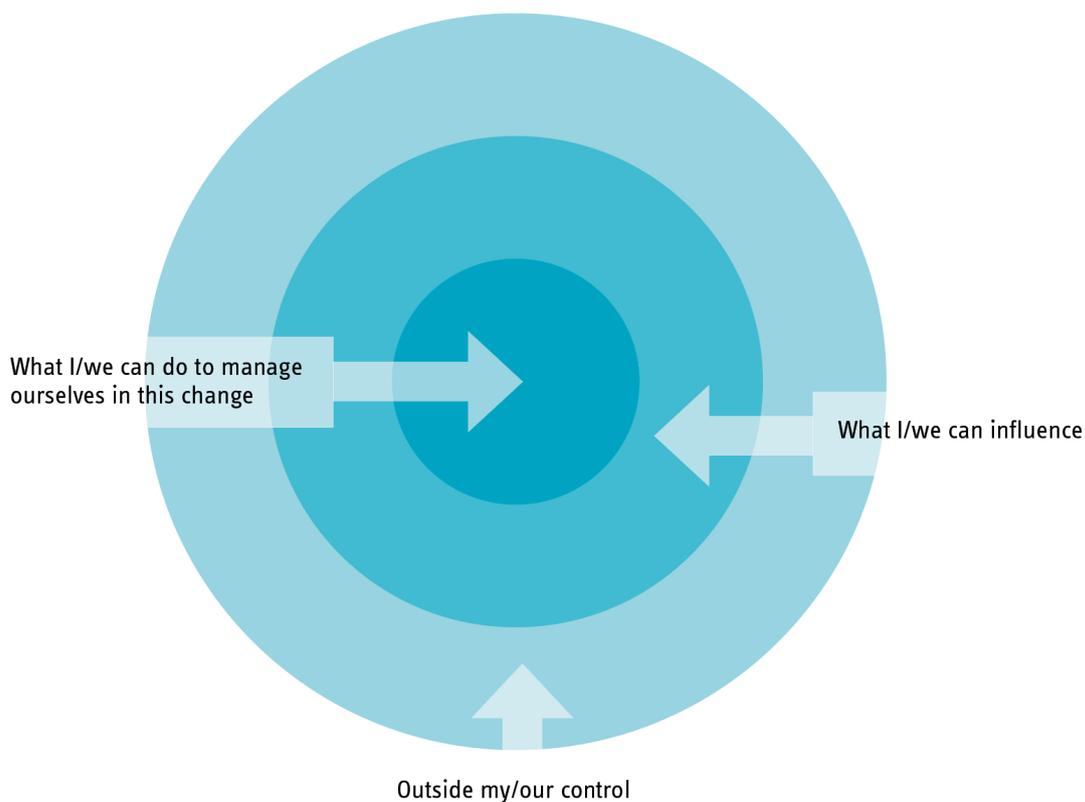
Professional Leadership

The capability statements in relation to professional leadership include

I actively advocate for social work with older people as a distinct area of practice within a generic social work profession

I work co-productively with older people and their advocates.

I act as a role-model for positive change in how services work with older people across social care and other agencies. I oversee, mentor and educate other social workers working with older people.

How do you consider yourself as a leader?

In what ways are you able to demonstrate that you work co-productively with people?

The ladder of participation may help to frame your discussion: INSERT

Thinking about social work with older people, reflect on how you describe it to others, and consider the ways in which you advocate for this as a distinct area of practice.

Professionalism

The capability statements in relation to professionalism include:

I recognise that social work with older people has distinctive elements due to the impact of life course experiences and of ageing

I am able to explain and demonstrate the purpose and value of social work with older people within the wider care system and to develop my own expertise

I develop, promote, model and embed practice that demonstrates specific capabilities for rights and strengths-based social work with older people

Thinking about demonstrating professionalism you can use this short 'stop, start, stay' tool to consider

What do you need to continue to do that is demonstrating your professionalism (how are you demonstrating the purpose and value of social work with older people, for example)?

What do you currently do? (and how might you share this with others, this supports the professional leadership statement also)

What stops you, or makes it difficult, for you to demonstrate professionalism?