
***Reflective practice approach:
Supporting professionals & organisations
who work with people from refugee
backgrounds***

Conrad Aikin, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST), VIC



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Presentation Outline

What is reflective practice?

Rationale

What happens in reflective practice groups?

Organisation Case Study

Questions



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

What is reflective practice?

Self-reflection proves difficult:



Bennett Chattanooga Times Free Press



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

What is reflective practice?



Rationale

The challenge of responding to clients' experiences of violence

The challenges of working cross culturally

The challenges of working with people who are re-settling or seeking safety



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Organisational Case Study

Provider of settlement and asylum seeker support services

Existing relationship with Foundation House

Expressed needs

Staff support

Professional development



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Organisational Case Study: Aims

Safe space

Linking feelings, thoughts, experiences of interactions with clients

Sustainable practice

Reflective skills & capacity building

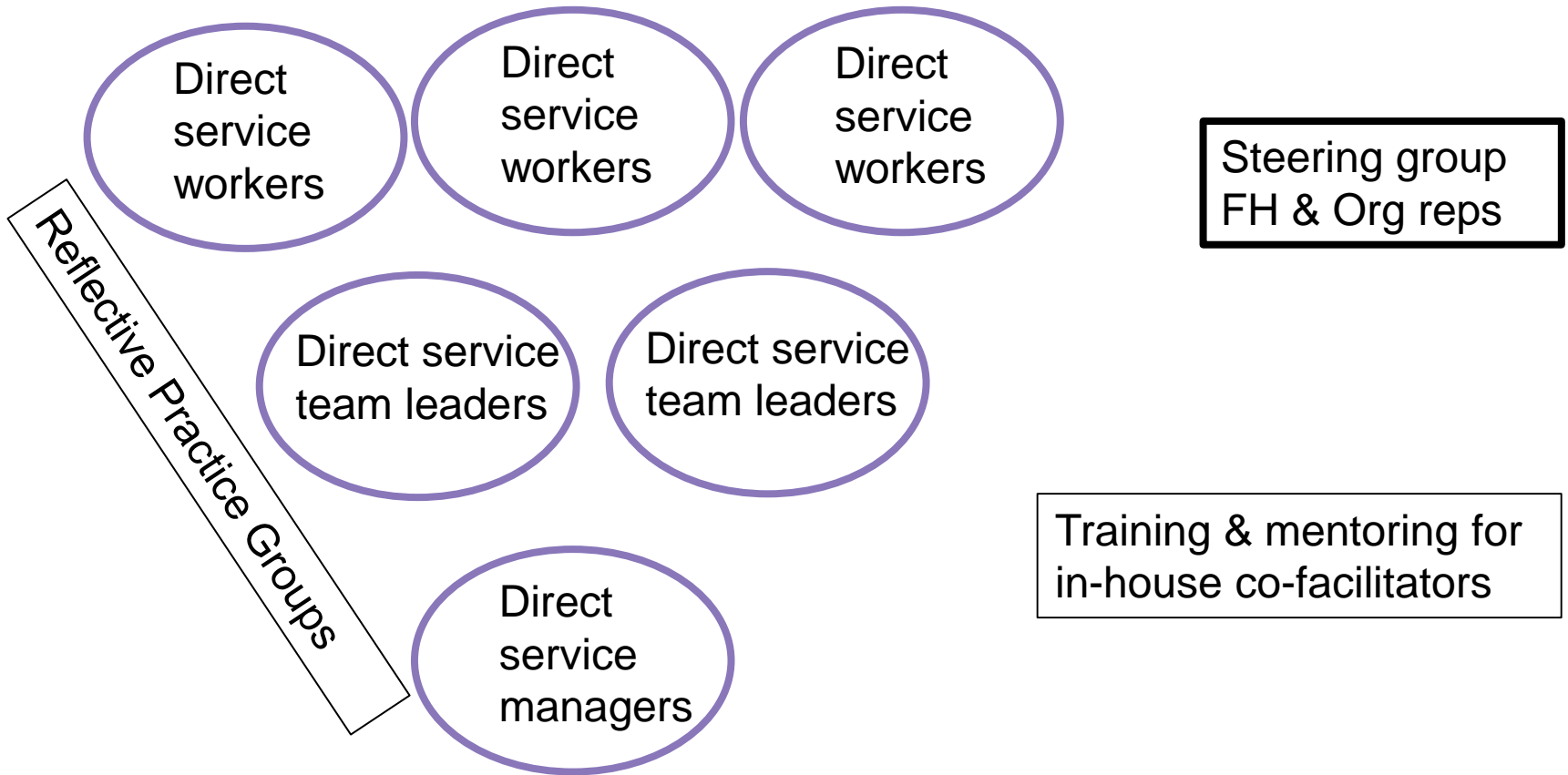
Working culture



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Organisational model



What happens in a reflective practice group?



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

In the groups...

Content

Case or experience based

Topic based



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

In the groups...

Case or experience based

Explore emotional responses

Sharing experiences and mutual support

Individual & shared meaning making

What does this tell us about what is important?

What is missing?



In the groups...

Topic based

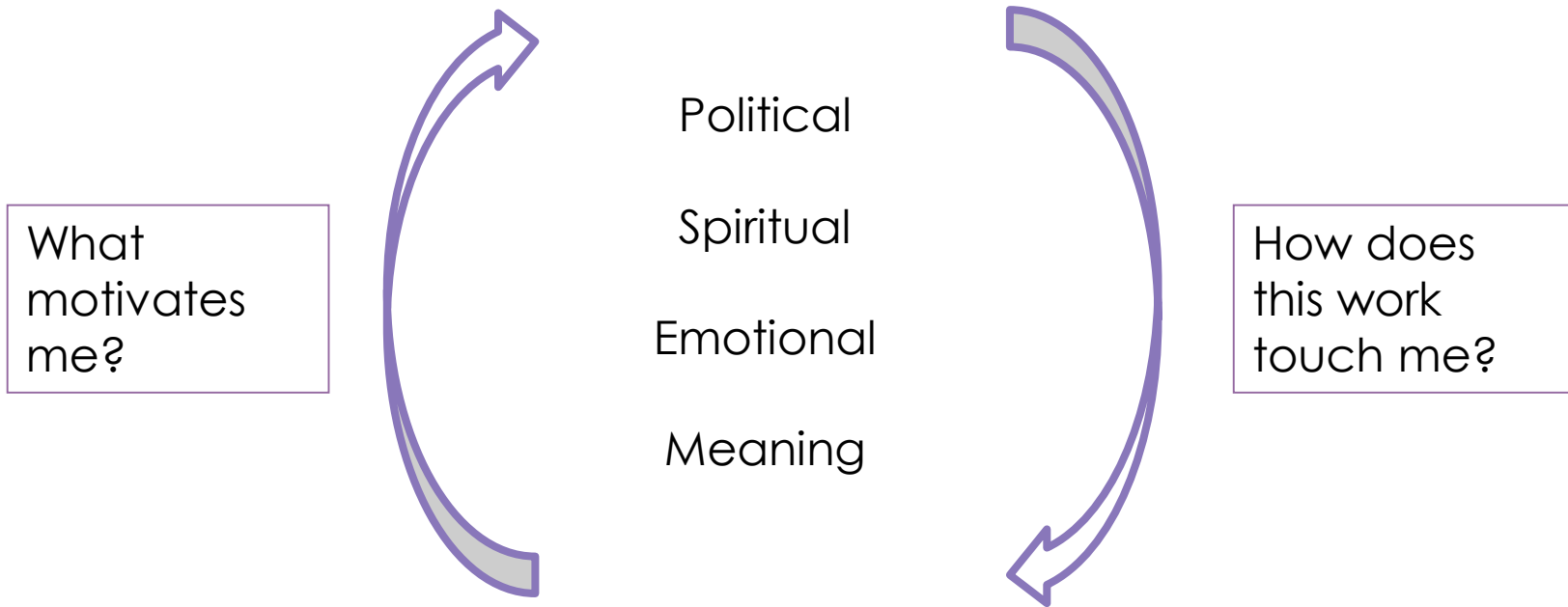
E.g. Connections between values & experiences



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Who am I in this work?



Organisational Case Study. Emergent Themes

Isolation & connection

Integrity & responding to injustice

Similarities & differences with clients' experiences

Organisational changes

Emotional responses: helplessness, guilt, anger, fear, joy, relief

Spiritual aspects, faith, beliefs

Highly demanding, tightly prescribed roles



Organisational Case Study Challenges

logistics/scale

contract constraints and forward planning

competition with organisational priorities

outsider cf in-house facilitation

role specific or generic



Organisational Case Study Lessons

need to get the oversight structure set up early

“partnership” or “service provider/client organisation

”

need for our ongoing reflective practice for facilitators



Presentation Outline

What is reflective practice?

Rationale

What happens in reflective practice group?

Organisation Case Study

Themes

Questions



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

Questions

