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Mindful Practices to Enhance Diversity-Informed Reflective Supervision and Leadership

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Abstract

Program leaders and supervisors have an ethical obligation to actively endeavor (a) to deepen their capacity to create safe and inclusive spaces for reflection and inquiry and (b) to intentionally acknowledge how topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion arise in themselves, their communities, their staff, their supervisees, and their clients. Mindfulness practices have shown promise as strategies (Choudary, 2015; Lueke & Gibson, 2016) to effectively reduce reactivity, implicit bias, and stereotyping and introduce more considered, open discussions. This article describes some of the ways that mindfulness and diversity-informed practices can expand awareness to greatly strengthen individual and group reflective supervision, thereby supporting open, perceptive, attuned work in a variety of programs across systems that support the relational health of families and young children.

An experienced, knowledgeable leader of a large home visiting program wonders how strengthening her reflective supervision team might help to address the ever-increasing rate of home visitor turnover. Could a more reflective leadership style and better supervision skills help retain and grow a more stable staff? As she listens to supervisors describe the demands of their work and notes some tension among staff members, she wonders how a broader embrace of diversity-informed practice (See Box 1 for a glossary of terms used in this