A SOCIAL GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS TOOL IN PRACTICE

Contents:

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1) CASE STUDY: REFLECTING ON IDENTITY IN SUPERVISION THROUGH THE SOCIAL GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS TOOL

Background:

Michael is a 50-year-old white male supervisor at a youth services organisation in the UK. Having grown up in a middle-class household, he identifies as an atheist. Michael is tasked with supervising Jamie, a 25-year-old Black female social worker. Jamie, having grown up in poverty, is deeply involved in her Baptist church community.

Using Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS:

Before their first supervision session, Michael utilises the GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS tool to introspect on his personal identity and how it might influence his supervisory relationship with Jamie:

1. *Gender:* As a male, Michael recognises potential gender dynamics in his interactions with Jamie, a young female.
2. *Geography:* Having always lived in suburban areas, Michael tries to understand Jamie's experiences growing up in different settings.
3. *Race:* As a white individual, Michael acknowledges the racial differences between himself and Jamie.
4. *Religion:* Michael is an atheist, while Jamie is deeply rooted in her Baptist faith. He aims to understand and respect her religious beliefs and values.
5. *Relationship Status:* Michael's marital status wasn't mentioned, but he would reflect on any potential biases arising from his relationship experiences.
6. *Age:* There's a significant age difference between Michael and Jamie, potentially resulting in generational differences in perspective and communication style.
7. *Attraction:* Michael would reflect on his orientation and its influence on any biases or perceptions.
8. *Ability:* There's no mention of any disabilities for either, but Michael would consider how ability could play a role in their interactions.
9. *Accent:* Given the diverse accents across the UK, Michael's accent might differ from Jamie's, which could affect their communication dynamic.
10. *Class:* With Michael's middle-class upbringing contrasting Jamie's experience with poverty, class dynamics might play a role in their interactions.
11. *Education:* Michael would reflect on their educational backgrounds, especially how it might shape their professional expectations.
12. *Ethnicity:* Beyond racial differences, the cultural implications of their ethnic backgrounds might influence their interactions.
13. *Sexual Orientation:* Reflecting on their orientations might give insight into potential biases or differences in perspective.
14. *Socio-economic Status:* Michael's middle-class background contrasts sharply with Jamie's upbringing in poverty, impacting their worldviews.

15. ***Spirituality:*** Beyond religious beliefs, Michael would consider how their spiritual values might differ or overlap.

Outcome:

Aware of the power dynamics inherent in his role as an older white male supervisor, Michael makes a proactive effort to foster an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect with Jamie. He initiates a candid conversation about their contrasting backgrounds, aiming to ensure Jamie feels valued, heard, and understood. By seeking perspective from a Black colleague, Michael also showcases his commitment to creating an inclusive supervision environment where Jamie can express her authentic self.

Discussion:

This case study underscores the significance of supervisors recognising and reflecting upon their identities and biases. By leveraging tools like GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS, supervisors can be better equipped to foster inclusive and productive professional relationships.

2)   A CASE STUDY FOR A STUDENT SOCIAL WORKER

Background:

Sara, a 22-year-old South Asian woman, is in her last year of a social work degree at a UK university. She's now doing her practical experience in a community health clinic in a mainly white suburban area. Guiding her there is Karen, a white woman in her mid-30s.

Reflection using Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS:

Early on, Karen introduces Sara to the Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS tool, thinking it'll help Sara understand herself better. When Sara uses the tool, she finds:

- She sees herself as middle-class, straight, and without any physical disabilities. She also feels connected to her background as someone whose parents migrated to the UK. Her family follows the Hindu religion.
- She's worried that people at the clinic will see her as too young, or as someone from another country. She also thinks they might misunderstand her religion.
- She's the only non-white person at the clinic, and this makes her feel a bit lonely.
- She feels her accent stands out more at the clinic than when she's with her friends.

Discussing the differences:

Karen and Sara chat about how some parts of their backgrounds are more obvious than others. They think about how this could change the way they work together. Sara shares that she's worried about being left out. Together, they come up with ways to make sure everyone feels included.

Questions for students to think about:

- How can the Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS tool help Sara and Karen work together better?
- What are Sara's strong points that will help her in her job?
- What more can Karen do to make Sara feel supported?
- If Sara and Karen don't understand each other because of their backgrounds, how should they sort it out?

3)   A CASE STUDY: REFLECTING ON IDENTITY WITH SOCIAL GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS IN SUPERVISION

Background:

Emma is a 35-year-old social worker with eight years of experience at a local agency. She supervises a diverse team of five junior social workers: Noah, a gay man in his late twenties; Lily, who recently moved from India; Ava, who uses a wheelchair; and Mia, a young Black woman. The team also includes Jack, who is the same age as Emma, white, and from a similar socio-economic background as her.

While Emma believes she treats everyone fairly, she understands it's essential to consider her own identity and how it may influence her supervisory role.

Using Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS:

Emma uses the GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS tool to reflect on herself and her supervision dynamics. Here's a breakdown of her reflections:

1. *Gender:* Emma identifies as female. Does this affect how she relates to the men and women on her team?
2. *Geography:* Emma was brought up in the countryside and moved to the city for university. How might her rural background affect her understanding of urban issues?
3. *Race:* As a white person, how might this affect her relationship with Mia? Are there any biases she's unaware of?
4. *Religion:* Emma is Christian. Might she make assumptions about her team's beliefs?
5. *Relationship Status:* Emma is married with kids. How might this shape her views or expectations of team members without families?
6. *Age:* In her mid-30s, Emma might relate differently to younger or older team members.
7. *Attraction:* Identifying as straight, Emma should consider any biases she might have, especially in understanding Noah's experiences.
8. *Ability:* Without physical disabilities, is she understanding of Ava's experiences?
9. *Accent:* Emma has a slight regional accent. Does this ever become a topic of conversation or make her feel out of place?
10. *Class:* From a middle-class background, how does this affect her understanding of financial struggles?
11. *Education:* Holding a Master's, Emma is one of the most qualified in her team. Might she inadvertently prioritise education?
12. *Ethnicity:* Emma's grandparents were Polish migrants. How does this heritage influence her rapport with Lily?
13. *Sexual Orientation:* Given her straight identity, she should reflect on potential biases.
14. *Socio-economic Status:* How does coming from a middle-class background shape her views?
15. *Spirituality:* How do Emma's spiritual beliefs, separate from religion, influence her views?

Outcome:

Emma recognises the importance of being more informed in some areas, confronting her biases, and initiating conversations with her supervisees. She opts for unconscious bias training and encourages her team to discuss their identities and experiences to build mutual respect.

Discussion:

The team might reflect on their identities using the GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS tool and think about the potential impacts on their professional roles and relationships.

4) Case Study: Understanding the Martinez Family through Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS

Background:

Maria is an experienced social worker assigned to the Martinez family. The family includes Roberto (40), Isabella (37), their daughter Rosa (16), and their son Miguel (12). They recently moved from Mexico to the UK and have faced difficulties settling in. Rosa is finding it hard at school, and Miguel's behaviour has led the school to suggest a social work intervention.

Using Social GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS with the Martinez Family:

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the family's identities and challenges, Maria employs the GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS tool:

1. *Gender:* Maria reflects on potential gender roles and expectations within the Martinez family due to their cultural background.
2. *Geography:* The family is now living in a new urban setting, quite different from their rural origins in Mexico.
3. *Race:* Identifying as Hispanic, they might experience biases or stereotypes in their new neighbourhood.
4. *Religion:* Being devout Catholics, how might their faith impact their daily life?
5. *Relationship Status:* Roberto and Isabella's 18-year marriage provides context for understanding their family dynamics.
6. *Age:* Recognising the generational differences, Maria considers how each family member might adjust to a new culture.
7. *Attraction:* Rosa has recently shared with a teacher that she's questioning her sexuality. This is significant considering her family's cultural background.
8. *Ability:* Miguel has ADHD, affecting his behaviour and schooling.
9. Accent: Their pronounced Mexican accent might lead to misunderstandings or biases from locals.
10. *Class:* Financial struggles are apparent, especially after Roberto's recent job loss.
11. *Education:* With only basic education, Roberto and Isabella may find some UK systems challenging.
12. *Ethnicity:* Their Mexican heritage shapes their values and traditions.
13. *Sexual Orientation:* While not openly discussed, Rosa's exploration of her sexuality may become a significant topic.
14. *Socio-economic Status:* Roberto's unemployment and their limited savings place them in a challenging financial position.
15. *Spirituality:* Apart from Catholicism, they hold other spiritual beliefs central to their identity.

Outcome:

Utilising the GGRRAAAACCEEESSSS framework, Maria tailors her approach to assist the Martinez family. She introduces them to local resources that respect their culture and faith, offers counselling for Rosa's and Miguel's specific challenges, and sets up sessions to help Roberto and Isabella familiarise with the UK's education and employment systems.

By valuing every aspect of their identity, Maria builds a trusting relationship with the Martinez family, ensuring they feel recognised and supported.

Discussion:

This case study can be a reference for social workers to gain insight into the varied identities of families they work with. Understanding these nuances can lead to more effective and compassionate interventions.