



University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee  
Division of Student Affairs  
**Supervisor Leadership Development Program**

## Reflection Journaling

### What Is It and Why Do Reflection Journaling?

You are invited to utilize journaling as you go through our development program. Reflection journaling is a well-known and effective method for deepening learning and finding personal strategies for applying skills and concepts from educational experiences.

A Reflection Journal is not a diary of events or a place for traditional note taking during sessions. Rather it is a place to capture personal insights about yourself and your efforts to apply learning. Many benefits can come from Journaling, including awareness, clearer thinking, self-evaluation, goal setting, improvement planning, discovering connections between new and existing knowledge, and in strategies to meet barriers to learning. Journaling can also help you recognize your strengths and celebrate progress and success!

Your journal is private and entirely yours to share or not share as you choose with your colleagues during follow up discussions. There is no requirement to use the hand-written notebook -- you may prefer using your computer, tablet or even voice recording.

### Possibilities for What to Reflect On:

- Observations: What behaviors you and others have engaged in.
- Self-awareness: Thoughts and reactions. Beliefs, values, emotions. Ideas about what “should” be.
- Questions: Upon reflection, why did you do / not do something? What assumptions were you making?
- Discoveries: Recognition of patterns, habits, automatic actions. Ah-ha insights and new knowledge.
- Critique: Application of skills and achievement of goals. How well you did and how you can do better.
- Interpretation: Find meanings for you in what you notice and conclude.

### Some Prompting Questions:

- What happened? What were my expectations? -- What were my reactions? (thoughts and feelings)
- What are the positive and negative aspects of the situation? -- Which aspects are puzzling, unclear?
- What did I learn? What insights can I gain? -- How can I bring new skills and abilities to this situation?
- How has this experience challenged my biases / stereotypes / assumptions?
- What were my motivations / intentions? -- Did I fear /avoid something? Why? Are those fears justified?
- Based on what happened, what does this tell me about my strengths and areas I need to work on?
- What can I do differently next time? -- What can I do to move closer to my goals?
- How have I changed? -- What am I finding possible, even easier?

### A Few Tips:

- Write freely. Grammar and spelling are not important here. -- Try to write something daily.
- Be honest and open with yourself. At the same time, be compassionate towards yourself... and others.
- It’s OK to capture random thoughts and come back later. -- Look for the joy of learning, even if difficult.