**Relationship based and reflective practice**

Social worker → Service user

Relationship is the bridge between them.

**Multiple roles of relationships in Social work practice:**
- way of engaging service user
- main source of information about service user
- relationship as a tool for affecting change
- as the aim or object of our intervention

‘Professional use of self’
- requires awareness on the side of the social worker to:
  - verbal and non-verbal communication
  - what and how we communicate

**Building professional relationships**
- What qualities does a social worker need to build working relationships?
  - Empathy, warmth, openness, courage, honesty, reliability, care and concern, sense of humour?

Being in touch with your own feelings.
- “The capacity to be in touch with the client’s feelings is related to the worker’s ability to acknowledge his or her own.”
- Before a worker can understand the power of emotion in the life of the client, it is necessary to discover the importance in the worker’s own experience.” (Shulman 1999: 156)

Self-management = “Service users are highly attuned to the emotional demeanour of those they depend on. (Morrison 2007) Especially those that have power over their lives.
- Our emotions are conveyed non verbally through posture, facial expressions, tone of voice as well as through what we say or do.
- We need to tune in to our own emotions and to regulate our practice.

**Professional Capabilities Framework** → Domain 6: Critical reflection and analysis.

HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers → Standard 11: be able to reflect on and review practice.

Basic elements of reflective process = questioning what, how, and why we do things?

**Characteristics of a reflective practitioner** (Brockfield 1998)
- Contextual awareness: recognition of social construct of beliefs and practices
- Assumption analysis: challenging own beliefs and values
- Imaginative speculation: ability to imagine in a different way
- Reflective scepticism: challenging or suspending existing knowledge and beliefs.

What do definitions of reflection suggest: (Carroll & Gilbert 2002:64-65)
- Reflection is an ‘internal’ activity, where I harness my thoughts and feelings to consider, to think about what happened.
- The purpose of the activity is to ‘hold up to the light’.
- Reflection is a process of examination, inquiry, self-interrogation.