

Reflection Rounds

Intellectual Output 4

National Report

Belgium

Pilot 1

Prepared by Obelisk NV
2020



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1. Introduction

- **Aims & objectives of the Reflection Rounds:**

Because the feedback from the training sessions showed that the programme was quiet packed, we gave the participants as the main goal of the reflection rounds that we want to work with cases from their daily reality in which they can reflect on their own actions and behaviour and above all learn from the input of the others.

- **Dates & Venue of the reflection rounds:**

- Reflection round 1: January 9th – Obelisk NV – Interleuvenlaan 74 – 3001 Leuven
- Reflection round 2: January 29th – Obelisk NV – Belpairestraat 39 – 2600 Antwerpen
- Reflection round 3: February 19th – Obelisk NV – Belpairestraat 29 – 2600 Antwerpen

- **Facilitators**

- Helen Goovaerts
- Goele Vanhelfmont

Goele and Helen are both experienced trainers who facilitate and train personal development projects within Obelisk.

1.1. Overview of Reflection Rounds Purpose and Methodology

Overview of the purpose and methodology of the Reflection Rounds:

- Reflection Rounds were inspired by the Mentoring Circles™ methodology developed by Inova Consultancy.
- Reflection Rounds enable public sector managers to reflect on their problems, issues, opportunities and challenges with others going through similar experiences and supporting them to reflect on wellbeing at work.
- Reflection Rounds provide a safe yet challenging environment where ideas for managing stress at the workplace can be discussed and explored.
- Possible options for action can be generated and discussed.
- Encouraging development of self-reflection and self-belief.
- The individual is helped to find the next steps forward in focusing on their mental wellbeing.

For a full description of Reflection Rounds methodology, please see the Reflection Rounds Facilitator's Guide.

1.2. Recruitment

Because we find a safe learning environment very important in all our coaching sessions and especially in reflection rounds, we have chosen to focus only on the participants present at the training session.

2. Overview of Participants

A summary of background data from each participant can be seen below:

Participant	Background
1	Manager of the youth department of a local authority
2	HR Manager at the HR department of a local authority
3	Manager at the VDAB, a public organization for job seekers
4	In between jobs, wants a management position

3. The Format and Process of Reflection Rounds in Belgium

The first pilot of Reflection Rounds delivery in Belgium was attended by 4 participants. All sessions took place at the office of Obelisk.



Sessions overview:

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Name of the session	Reflection round 1	Reflection round 2	Reflection round 3
Date	09/01/2020	29/01/2020	19/02//2020
Number of participants	4	4	4

3.1. First Session

At the end of the last pilot session of IO2 Training we gave an assignment to the participants. Participants have to present a case to the other participants on the first pilot session. They also have to send their case to the facilitators in advance. The intention is to work with this case during the first reflection round. Participants also had to indicate to which module their case is linked

- **Case 1**
“During the first day of training I found out that I always want to do good for others, that I am more conflict-avoiding and therefore avoid more difficult conversations with colleagues. If I want to grow into a management position, it is of course important not to avoid these conversations. I would like to work on this during the reflection rounds: what stops me from not saying what I want to say? For me this is about the module connect and give.”
- **Case 2**
“I hear from many colleagues that one colleague is not functioning well: he does not respect deadlines, he makes mistakes, he is not involved, ... I don't notice this in the things he has to do for me. I do notice that during conversations he is not always sincere and does not show the back of his tongue. How do I handle this the best? For me this is about the module connect and give.”
- **Case 3**
“As project manager I am supported by a consultancy agency. The cooperation does not run smoothly. I have already spoken to my contact person about this. He says he takes my feedback into account, but doesn't really do anything with it. In my opinion I have tried everything. I don't know what else I can do to optimize the collaboration.”
- **Case 4**
“At my children's school, I chair the parents' committee. I don't want to do this anymore because I notice that not everyone has the same commitment and that

there is actually little initiative and involvement. If I'm going to resign, I find it hard to say the real reason”

During the first reflection round, each participant was given 20 minutes to explain their case, other participants could ask additional questions to understand the question/case in even more detail, then participants could make suggestions to get started with their question/case. Finally, the participant who told his/her case could reflect on what he/she has learned about him/herself so far and whether he/she wants to put certain things into action or what is holding him/her back.

To facilitate this we have used the rating scale exercise.

3.2. Second Session

At the start of the second session we looked back at the first session: what have you converted into action? What do you notice going well? What are you still running into? Again we used the rating scale exercise to see if participants think they have grown between sessions 1 and 2.

In addition, it emerged during this session that they do not find it easy to apply the GROW model correctly in coaching conversations. The difficulty lies in asking the right questions. That is why we have decided to pay extra attention to this in this 2nd session. Through role-plays we have practiced extra on applying the GROW model and asking the right questions.

3.3. Third Session

During the last session we started working with circles of influence. After we explained Covey's theory and gave some examples, participants drew the circles individually and had to fill in the circle.

After that, each participant explained their circles. Again, we gave enough time to the personal story of each participant (20 minutes per participant):

- What can you do to let go of what's not within your control?
- What can you do to get more control over your thoughts, behaviour, feelings around the elements you do control?

4. Impact of Reflection Rounds

4.1. Soft Skills Development

The participants found it difficult to complete the self-assessment questionnaire. The topics dealt with in the self-assessment questionnaire do not cover the topics dealt with in the reflection rounds. The focus in the reflection rounds was on self-knowledge in the field of their management skills and how they can use their management skills optimally in relation to their employees: how to coach my employees optimally, how to give feedback, how to work on my team, how to deal with the pressure I experience from above and the pressure I feel from my employees and the pressure I put on myself.

4.2. Participants' testimonials

- “The small group is a real added value for the reflection rounds.”
- “It's nice to work with our own cases.”
- “I find it striking much you can learn from the other participants' cases. It's all very recognizable”
- “It makes you think extra about how you look at a person and how you yourself stand in life. When things get a bit more difficult, it's not necessarily up to the other person, but which glasses you use to look at reality and the situation.”
- “Increased self-confidence.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Both for the training and the reflection rounds the participants had to fill in a lot of documents and evaluation forms.

Because the evaluation of each reflection round provided more valuable input, 2 participants only answered the rating question.

5.1. Facilitator's Comments

- What also emerged from the evaluation forms, the 2 most valuable things are:
 - Working with cases from the daily reality from the participants.

- Learn from the input from the other participants, but also learn from the other participant through their cases.
- As a facilitator, the challenge is not to be the expert and to do mainly process-based interventions.
- We found it a real added value that in the reflection rounds there were only participants who also participated in the training. Because the participants followed a training course for 2 full days, there was a lot of trust in each other, there was enough safety to share vulnerable topics with each other, the threshold was less to occasionally confront each other.

6. Annexes

In separate documents:

- ANNEX 1: ATTENDANCE LISTS
- ANNEX 2: EVALUATION FORMS – REFLECTION SESSIONS
- ANNEX 3: FINAL EVALUATION FORM