

## PRACTICE TOOL

# How to run a Journal Club





This resource aims to support you to facilitate a Journal Club session with the following learning outcomes:

- > To appraise a piece of research on a key practice topic and identify the main messages
- > To understand how reliable and robust the messages are, and how they can be used in practice
- > To use the evidence to support reflection on a case
- > To identify learning, as well as actions to transfer that learning into practice.

### Before the session you should:

- Publicise a date, location and time; these notes are tailored to a 90-minute session
- Circulate or signpost participants to the research reports you will be discussing, and ask them to read them before attending. You could use RiPfa's monthly Research and Policy Update (RPU)
- Remind participants to print out and bring along a copy of the research you will be discussing
- Signpost participants to **reason** tools for analysing research – for example the *Using Good Quality Research* checklist and guide helps with critiquing and evaluating research. It is available from [www.reason-network.org.uk](http://www.reason-network.org.uk)

### Suggested agenda:

-  **15 minutes**  
Introduction to the Journal Club
-  **30 minutes**  
Discussion and appraisal of research
-  **30 minutes**  
Reflective case discussion
-  **15 minutes**  
Learning and actions

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# How to run a Journal Club

## Session facilitator's notes

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### Step 1



#### 15 minutes on: Introduction to the Journal Club

- Welcome: Ask attendees to introduce themselves – name, role and service area
- Remind attendees of the learning outcomes and agenda for the day (see front page)
- Remind attendees of the benefits of using research and other evidence in practice.

*Evidence-informed practice is a way of doing social care and includes:*

- > A continuous focus on service users
- > Continually posing questions that directly and practically relate to service users
- > Searching objectively for the best evidence relating to each question
- > Taking appropriate action guided by that evidence

*Evidence informed practice draws on:*

- > Research evidence – what is likely to be effective?
- > Practice experience – how does this work in practice?
- > Service user views – what's it like for the individual?

*Using research and other evidence supports practitioners and managers to increase their competence and confidence around a particular topic, supports organisations to learn and improves the experiences and outcomes for service users and carers.*

- Remind attendees of the benefits of attending a Journal Club:
  - > We know from research and from experience that it is hard to find time to look at research. This session gives us the time and space to consider some important research
  - > We also know that research needs to be applied to practice to be useful, so this session gives us the opportunity to discuss what the research means for us in practice and to apply it to a case
  - > We also know that it can be hard to transfer learning from a session like this back into our daily work, so at the end we will identify the learning we want to take back and how we will do this.

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### Step 2



#### 30 minutes on: Discussion and appraisal of research

- Remind attendees of this month's research report. Check whether everyone has had a chance to read it, and whether there are enough copies of the report
- Hand out 'Feeling comfortable with research' card
- Remind attendees of the main things to be aware of when looking at research.

*Evidence is never neutral – it should be clear where it came from, who was involved and why.*

*Context can have a great impact – do we know what else was going on and what might have influenced the evidence?*

*Evidence can be ambiguous or unclear – can we see what it is about, how it was gathered, why it led to particular conclusions?*

*It needs to be relevant – it's unlikely that our situation will be exactly the same. What are the parallels and how can we transfer the learning?*

- Ask attendees in groups of four to six to look at the research report, to consider what the main messages are and:
  - > How reliable the research is – where did it come from?
  - > How robust the research is – is the way the research was done clear?
  - > How relevant the research is – do the main messages fit with what is happening in our team?
- Allow a short time at the end to feed back the main points from each group.



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## Step 3



30 minutes on:  
**Reflective case discussion**

- Remind attendees of the reflective cycle:

*Experience* –  
something happens to us

*Reflection* –  
we consider how the experience felt  
and how we reacted to it

*Analysis* –  
we consider what the experience means

*Action* –  
we plan what we will do as a result  
of the experience.

*It is important to do all four steps, and not to jump from experience to action without understanding our response to the experience and what it meant.*

*We can use research and other evidence to help us understand what the experience meant (analysis) and to help us to plan what to do (action).*

- Ask attendees to split into groups of three to four people and to use the RiPfa *Reflective tool* (copies enclosed with these notes) to discuss a particular case that they have. Ask them to pick a case where they think the research they have looked at is relevant, and to use the research when they are reflecting on what the experience meant and what to do
- Allow a short time at the end to feed back the main points from each group.

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## Step 4



15 minutes on:  
**Learning and actions**

- Remind attendees of the importance of transferring learning into practice so that this discussion and reflection helps them in their day-to-day work.

*Training transfer research shows that it is important to have a clear intention of what to do as a result of learning and when you will do this, that it helps if this is relevant to your role, that sharing this with colleagues and your line-manager in supervision can support you to do the action, and that you need to think about what is reasonable to do within the context of your organisation.*

- Ask attendees to complete the *Learning and Action tool* (copies enclosed with these notes) to identify something they will take away and something they will do that is realistic and to share this with their colleagues and line-manager.

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