



PIVOT Stage 2: Professional and Personal Values in Practice

This activity can be viewed in action. See the  video clip 'PIVOT Stage 2' in the related resources section of the website.

Purpose

This activity encourages deeper reflection upon your professional and personal values in your practice. It encourages you to capture what is really important to you now, and to think about aspects of practice to which you aspire. It may bring out ideas and values that you weren't aware of holding dear to you – a sort of 'I didn't know I knew it' experience.

When

This second stage of PIVOT is not a stand-alone activity. Stage 1, Personal Constructs of Practice, and completing the grid needs to be done first.

Therefore, as with the first stage of PIVOT, this activity is particularly helpful near the beginning of training. It is also recommended at, or near, the beginning of any post-qualifying studies or in any situation where there will be a personal focus on professional growth, development and learning (for example a new supervision relationship).

Where


This is a learner-centred activity involving dialogue between two people. As with PIVOT Stage 1, it can be a peer-to-peer exercise between a pair of students as well as a good activity built into time between a tutor and a student. The activity can establish or facilitate a 'learning' relationship between tutor and student as it helps both participants to understand practice values from the student's perspective.

Facilities and equipment

- The completed Personal Construct Grid from the Stage 1 activity.
- Four (one as a spare) PIVOT Values Ladder Sheets for each student. (This has been provided as a pdf for you to print out – see the documents section of the website.) Expanding the Values Ladder Sheet up to A3 size gives a greater writing space (some photocopiers enable this from A4).
- Quiet space for two people/pairs to think and discuss (see setting and style below).
- Instruction sheets.
- Pens and spare paper or notebook for any extra reflective thoughts or jottings.

Time required

A brief re-acquaintance with the Personal Construct Grid from PIVOT Stage 1 is necessary before commencing this activity. We recommend that you spend twenty minutes either the day before or just prior to the exercise re-reading the constructs on the grid you produced.

Twenty minutes will also be required to view all of this exercise in action. 

After these preparations, and once set up with the relevant pieces of paper in front of you, between forty-five minutes to fifty-five minutes is needed for each participant. Again, you will be thinking quite hard, so go at a relaxed pace and allow yourself some silent reflective time if necessary.

Setting and style

- Try to guarantee freedom from disturbance.
- Have a table for you both to sit at, side by side or at the corner of one end, with good elbow room available for both of you.
- Whether this activity happens between peers – student to student – or between a student and a tutor, a brief but clear discussion about confidentiality and, where applicable, anonymity needs to take place.

Again, the PIVOT process is designed to help you explore and reflect *in your own words*. This is a central aim of the exercise from which you will gain most benefit. There are no ‘right’ or ‘factual’ answers. It is your personal meanings that are important and, as the student participant, you can choose how much detail to go into.

Activity



Remember you can view this activity in action between two people. See ‘PIVOT Stage 2’ in the related resources section of the website.

To begin you will need to have in front of you:

- Your Personal Construct Grid from the previous PIVOT activity.
- Four PIVOT Values Ladder Sheets (expanded to A3 if possible but not essential). One of these is a spare just in case. (A pdf containing the Values Ladder Sheet is available from the documents section of the website.)
- Pens and spare paper or notebook for any extra jottings.

- 1 Read through all the instructions first, with whoever is facilitating.
- 2 Now refer back to your Personal Construct Grid and choose the three constructs that are most meaningful or important to you that you want to reflect upon further. (We suggest you work with three only because of time. If you have more time you can develop other constructs.)

- 3 You will be using a different Values Ladder Sheet for each construct. Write one of your chosen constructs in box (or rung) number 1 of the Values Ladder Sheet (it's at the bottom of the page). The box is divided into two: one side for the similarity construct label and the other side for the contrasting/different construct label (illustrated below). Notice that you need to write the label that you value most in the left-hand side of the box.

Understands the child's position	Doesn't think through the child's position
1. Most valued	Least valued

It doesn't matter whether it is the 'similarity' or the 'contrast' that you value most but it will be this most valued label that you will be thinking about more and using as the basis of your ladder.

- 4 The facilitator reads out loud to you your 'most valued' statement and then asks the question:

'Why is this important to you?'

(Although both you and the facilitator will be following the instructions on the sheet it is important that the facilitator asks the question aloud.)

The facilitator may say **'tell me'** or **'please explain'** in front of the question. That is fine as long as the words **'why is this important to you'** are asked.

- 5 When you have thought about the question and verbalised your response, you (or the facilitator) should write your response in box (or rung) number 2.

You will notice that in each box (or rung) of the ladder there is space for you to think **'what is its opposite?'** See the box below as a reminder about why this is important.

Do you remember, from the first PIVOT activity, that constructs are made up of two contrasting labels or poles (they are bipolar)? This means that asking what the opposite is, in terms of its meaning to you, at each stage or 'rung' of the ladder will help you to clarify and distinguish your important values.

- 6 Continue to move up the rungs of the ladder. The facilitator will ask the same question about why a particular value statement is important to you. You will see on the ladder sheet that on each rung the question is worded slightly differently but the core words **'why is this important to you?'** are always there.
- 7 You stop moving up the ladder when you feel you want or need to stop. This process of laddering will reach a point where you think 'I can't go any further'. At this point you will have reached a very important or 'core' construct. However, you may choose to stop on any rung because you do not wish to share further comments with anyone else. That is fine – you are in charge of this process. See the special note on laddering below.

A special note about laddering for the student and the facilitator

These instructions may seem to be about technique. However, the process is a special one about creating a ladder or hierarchy of values. This starts out as professional values important to you in practice. As you go up the ladder you may find that you uncover more personal and core values that are important to you.

When you ask someone about their values, or when you are being asked, you touch on matters that are personally important. You, the student, may begin to think about and express values important to you but that you didn't realise you held.

Laddering, therefore, should be carried out with sensitivity and delicacy. If you, the student, feel that you have 'laddered up' high enough, then it is time to complete that particular construct ladder and begin a new one.

- 8 When you have finished one ladder repeat steps 3-7 with the other two constructs so that you end up with three 'laddered' constructs, each on a Values Ladder Sheet.
- 9 When you have completed three of these ladders you have almost completed the activity and you will have been engaged in a profound discussion about social work practice and values for a considerable length of time. Sometimes important thoughts are triggered by these activities that have not been captured on paper. To close this exercise the facilitator asks the following question:

'You have talked about several of your constructs and values about social work. Is there anything further that you want to say about what is important to you in terms of social work practice, or a value you hold dear, that has not arisen in these discussions?'

Find a space on the Values Ladder Sheets to add any further reflections.

- 10 Keep these Values Ladder Sheets safely in a folder, together with your Personal Construct Grid, as you will require them all for the final stage of PIVOT, 'Generating Learning Aims for Practice'.



This activity can trigger a lot of thoughts about what you value and what you see as important, not only in social work but also in life generally. Allow yourself some thinking time afterwards and jot down any reflections you want to capture or keep from these moments.