



# **SUPERVISION**

## **MYTHS AND FACTS**



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## **WHAT IS SUPERVISION?**

It is often suggested that the word **SUPERVISION** is misunderstood and that it would be better to define it as two separate words, ie. Super/Vision. That is, being able to see beyond or through what is immediately apparent and to allow what is hidden or is in the process of 'becoming' to fully emerge.

**SUPERVISION** is a dynamic enabling process.

**SUPERVISORS** oversee and support the work of **SUPERVISEES** in a way which allows the **SUPERVISEES** to reflect critically on their work and to make changes where necessary.

### **SUPERVISION IS:**

- Job related personal support
- Trust between the Supervisor and Supervisee
- Mutual learning
- Challenging
- Problem solving
- A negotiated contract
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Planning
- Relating theory to practice
- Communicating
- Positive
- Exploring values and priorities
- Creativity

### **SUPERVISION IS NOT:**

- Personal counselling
- Conscious modelling "Do it the way I do it"
- Job instruction

The **SUPERVISION** task involves a quest for what ought to be "an ability to work with others; and a belief that it is important to have time and opportunity to think widely rather than be focused on problem solving in a narrow restrictive way.

## WHERE DOES SUPERVISION FIT INTO THE STRUCTURE OF AN ORGANISATION?

Overall supervision and support procedures should be built into organisational structures. Smaller organisations may however work on a person-by-person basis, offering each worker a choice of options. Supervision can be organised on an internal or external basis. External supervision may be provided through a contractual arrangement between employer and supervisor. The employer (not the employee) pays the supervisor's fee and is provided with a report.

### BENEFITS OF SUPERVISION

Reasons for Supervision	Main Categories of Focus
To provide a regular space for the supervisees to reflect upon the <i>content and process</i> of their work	Educational
To develop understanding and skills within the work	Educational
To receive information and another perspective concerning one's work	Educational/Supportive
To receive both content and process feedback	Educational/Supportive
To be validated and supported both as a person and as a worker	Supportive
To ensure that as a person and as a worker one is not left to carry, unnecessarily, difficulties, problems and projections alone	Supportive
To have space to explore and express personal distress, restimulation, transference or counter transference that may be brought up by the work	Managerial/supportive
To plan and utilise their <i>personal</i> and <i>professional</i> resources better	Managerial/supportive
To be pro-active rather than re-active	Managerial/supportive
To ensure quality of work	Managerial
People working with people. That is, what we all do!	

Supervision in the Helping Profession by P Hawkins and R Shohet

Supervision has educative, supportive and managerial components, although in different settings some aspects will be more prominent than others and also the differing aspects are not totally separate but are combined in much of the supervisory focus.

## **WHAT IS A SUPERVISOR?**

*(Take heart, no one is expected to have all these qualities)!*

- ✓ **A Leader**
- ✓ **Is perceptive**
- ✓ **Has knowledge**
- ✓ **Is Intuitive**
- ✓ **Is non judgemental**
- ✓ **Is honest**
- ✓ **Is caring**
- ✓ **Is aware of limitations**
- ✓ **Is empathetic**
- ✓ **Is able to self disclose**
- ✓ **Respects confidentiality**
- ✓ **Is Human**
- ✓ **Is able to make a time commitment**
- ✓ **Has a sense of humour**
- ✓ **Has communication skills**
- ✓ **Is respectful**
- ✓ **Is able to delegate**
- ✓ **Has management skills**
- ✓ **Has appropriate practical experience**
- ✓ **Is mutually chosen**
- ✓ **Is an encourager**
- ✓ **Is accepting**
- ✓ **Is sensitive**

## WHO DOES SUPERVISION?

**INFORMALLY** we all do it but **FORMALLY**

- Workers with experience in the field
- Workers who wish to do it
- Workers who are sought for the job because they instil confidence and allay fear
- People who have experienced positive Supervision themselves

## WHY VOLUNTARY AGENCY WORKERS NEED SUPERVISION

(Any or all my apply)

- Isolation
- Lack of feedback from people you are working with
- Burnout
- To re-energise
- To challenge your work
- Different perspective
- Emotional and personal support
- Confidential discussion of things that matter
- To advocate for you personally
- Sounding board
- Skills learning and resource providing
- “Time out for you”.

## SUPERVISION CONTRACTS

It is important to form a clear contract for every supervisory relationship, and in this contract to decide what managerial, educative and supportive responsibilities the supervisor is carrying. The first step in contracting is to be clear which of the main categories of supervision is being requested by the supervisee and being offered by the supervisor and what sort of match or mismatch exists. The main categories are:

### **Tutorial Supervision**

In some settings the supervisor may have more of a tutor role, concentrating nearly entirely on the educative function, helping a trainee on a course explore his or her work with clients, where someone in the trainee’s workplace is providing the managerial and supportive supervisory functions.

### **Training Supervision**

Here the supervision also emphasis the educative function and the supervisees will be in some form of training or apprenticeship role. They may be student social workers on placement or trainee psychotherapists working with training clients. The difference from tutorial supervision is that here the supervisor will have some responsibility for the work being done with the clients and therefore carry a clear managerial or normative role.

## **Managerial Supervision**

We use this term where the supervisor is also the line manager of the supervisee. As in training supervision the supervisor has some clear responsibility for the work being done with the clients, but supervisor and supervisee will be a manager-subordinate relationship, rather than a trainer-trainee one.

## **Consultancy Supervision**

Here the supervisees keep the responsibility for the work they do with their clients, but consult with their supervisor, who is neither their trainer/nor manager, on those issues they wish to explore. This form of supervision is for experienced and qualified practitioners.

In forming the contract it is also necessary to be clear about the boundaries of the supervision. This includes the practical boundaries, such as the times, frequency, place, what might be allowed to interrupt or postpone the session, and clarification of any payment that is involved.

Another boundary that often worries both supervisees and new supervisors is the boundary between supervision and counselling or therapy. Clearly working in depth in any of the helping professions can restimulate personal feelings, distress, anger or unhappiness. These feelings need to be shared and explored if the worker is going to be able to function well and learn from the re-stimulative event.

The basic boundary in supervision sessions should always start from exploring issues from work and should end with looking at where the supervisee goes next with the work that has been explored. Personal material should only come into the session if it is directly affecting, or being affected by, the work discussed, or if it is affecting the supervision relationship

(Maps and models of supervision author unknown)

## **TYPES OF SUPERVISION**

<b>INFORMAL</b>	We all do it.....Support Networks
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	Individual supervision formally or privately
<b>TANDEM</b>	Two colleagues supervise each other/each responsible for own decisions. Suitable for equal experience.
<b>TAG</b>	Worker “shadows” experienced worker to learn and
<b>SUPERVISION GROUP</b>	Workers with identical needs/resources meet regularly with a supervisor.
<b>PEER GROUP</b>	As about but share responsibility and supervise each Other. Can be a natural development from a supervision group which is no longer facilitated by a Supervisor.
<b>TEAM</b>	All team members regardless of differing needs/resources. Focus is on team work rather than worker’s needs.

## SUMMARY OF SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

ARRANGEMENT	FEATURE	WHO IS INVOLVES	
		WORKERS	SUPERVISOR
Individual or (1) Tutorial	The team or unit leader supervises an individual worker formally and privately. This may be backed up by informal modelling on a job	Individual	Yes
Pair (2)	The team leader supervises two staff together. Both formal direct supervision and modelling on the job are likely. Often used for new or inexperienced staff	Two similar workers	Yes
Tandem (3)	Two team members supervise each other. Each remains responsible for their own decisions. Suitable for two equally experienced workers	Two similar workers	No, only as monitor
Tag (4)	One worker is attached as a shadow to an experienced worker to learn from observation		Yes
Supervision (5) Group	A group of staff with identical needs and/or resources works together on a limited agenda related to those needs. The role is no dissimilar from that carried in individual tutorial arrangements		Yes
Peer Groups (6)	As above, but where the group members share the responsibility for the work more easily identified as belonging to one individual. May well be a natural development of the supervision group, the team leader having facilitated this.		No, only to monitor
Team (7) Supervision	Differs from 5 & 6 above in that all team members included regardless of disparity of the needs or resources of individuals. It is essentially focused on the wo of the team itself rather than work with individuals in the context of group of peers.		Yes

## SUPERVISION MODES

<b>FORMAL MODE</b>	
<p>1 Supervision takes the form of planned meetings on an individual or group basis; with an agreed agenda and methods for reaching objectives. Such meetings can be arranged for a limited or indefinite period of time, for general or specific purposes.</p>	<p>2 Supervision takes the form of unplanned discussions on an individual or group basis, where the agenda has to be agreed on the spot; often when an unforeseen crisis or problem has arisen. However some space and time is created away from service-delivery to work on the problem.</p>
<b>PLANNED</b>	<b>AD HOC</b>
<p>3 Agreements are reached between individuals and members of a group to give help, advice, constructive criticism and other forms of feedback, while working with clients or carrying out other service delivery tasks. These agreements are made in advance, according to predetermined objectives and made subject to monitoring and regular review.</p>	<p>4 Supervision is tacitly given while individuals are working with clients or engaged in service delivery tasks. It may take the form of help, advice, constructive criticism or offered through demonstration and example. This activity may become the focus for discussion in a more formal context or developed into an explicit supervision agreement; but first occur as unplanned activity because of needs and circumstances.</p>
<b>INFORMAL MODE</b>	

## PEER SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

**Many community groups do not have resources for individual supervision and more and more peer supervision is being used. Gather with 3 or 4 like minded people and follow the procedure outlined below, we hope you find it successful.**

### **Practice Review (Illuminative Incident Analysis)**

- Present a piece of your professional practice (an incident, dilemma) 5 minutes
- Peers ask clarification questions 3 minutes
- Peers take the role of the Devils advocate and advocate any uneasiness, anxieties, slight concerns or challenges. You listen in silence and discriminate.
- Peers express positive feedback – what impressed them about your performance, your attitude, your being, your presentation.....
- You have the option of reviewing your original presentation in the light of feedback – making an action plan.....

### **Critical Incident**

- 1 Present a critical issue from recent or current professional practice, something that presents a challenge.
- 2 Hear a statement from each of your peers, listening in silence except for clarification on any of the following:
  - The group/class/other involved party
  - Your intervention
  - The relationship between you and the group
  - The wider context
  - Your presentation – the story the choice of language, tone of voice, non verbals.
  - Their inner reactions
  - Similar experiences they've had
  - Relevant information
  - Practical strategies
- 3 You do one or more of the following
  - Review your opening presentation
  - Make an action plan
  - Personal development work
  - Practice or projected rehearsal in front of the group

### **Debriefing/Confessions**

Members share a traumatic or upsetting incident  
Peers listen without interruption, give full attention and unconditional support  
**Usually positive feedback only is appropriate (if any).**

**PERSONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM**

Here are some of the types of support we all need from time to time. Indicate what support you want from them.

**COLLEAGUES**.....

**CLOSE FRIENDS**.....

**FAMILY**.....

**GROUPS** you are part of that are important to your sense of identity (such as race, sex, occupation, union, church).

.....  
.....

**CHALLENGERS**.....

**PEOPLE WHO RESPECT YOU**.....

**APPROVERS:** (Who praise what you do).....

**ENERGISERS:** (Who gives you energy or inspiration).....

**EVALUATORS:** (Who let me know how I'm doing).....

**SUPERVISOR:**.....

**YOUR STRNGTHS** (Write as many words as you can thin of to describe your strengths)

.....  
.....

**You have decided what types of support you want, are there any personal changes you need to make** (eg Time Management, goals, stress management etc.)

.....  
.....

**Now you know what you can do, who can help you, what changes you need to make, and your strengths.**