



The Two Hands of Supervision: Connection with correction as an approach to supervising in a social work context

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Introduction

- Supervision is highly important for social care staff as it is recognised as a protective factor against secondary trauma, burnout and compassion fatigue, resulting from daily exposure to trauma in families.
- It is also found to improve service user and organisational outcomes.
- However, supervision in social care is often described as managerial and inconsistent. It is recommended that more resources should be directed towards ensuring effective supervision.

Aims:

- To explore how supervisors within social care viewed their role as a supervisor, following completion of an attachment- and trauma-informed supervision workshop.
- To increase understanding of, and make recommendations for, provisions that need to be put in place to support the delivery of effective supervision.
- To trial a new data collection method which may be more practical for use within the social care arena.

Method

Ethical approval: Granted by ABUHB R&D.
Sample: 11 supervisors working across a variety of child social care contexts in Gwent.
Research context: Participants had completed an attachment- and trauma-informed supervision workshop run by the Gwent Attachment Service (GAS).
Data collection: Five Minute Speech Samples (FMSS) "How would you describe your role as a supervisor?"
Data analysis: Thematic Analysis

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those who completed interviews.

1: A split supervisory role
 Supervisors reflected on the challenge of holding two elements of supervision – supervisee wellbeing and line management. Subthemes were: balancing the split role, the hand of connection and the hand of correction.

Findings
 Core question: How would you describe your role as a supervisor?



2: Providing a safe base
 Supervisors reflected on the importance of promoting safety within supervision. Subthemes were: safe space, safe person and safe supervisory relationship.

3: Availability to supervisees
 Supervisors reflected on the importance of making themselves available to supervisees, ensuring supervision was prioritised and ongoing. Subthemes were: prioritising clinical supervision and an open-door approach.

4: Facilitating learning
 Supervisors reflected that their role involved passing on knowledge to supervisees, alongside identifying person-focused learning needs and opportunities, to encourage professional development.

Conclusions

- A supervisor's role is complex, varied and integral within social care contexts.
- This exploration of the supervisory role emphasises the need for resources to be directed towards training supervisors appropriately, for example in attachment- and trauma-informed supervision, and ensuring sufficient space is made in both supervisors and supervisees job plans for high quality supervision.
- It is hoped this will help improve supervisee wellbeing and facilitate professional development, in turn making them better able to support the young people and families they work with.
- The study was novel in using FMSS to collect data. The short amount of time required for this method worked well within the busy social care context.

Future work:

- The GAS will continue to provide attachment- and trauma-informed supervision workshops. FMSS will be taken pre- and post-workshop to see if supervisors' view of their role becomes more attachment-informed as a result of the workshop.
- In addition to the workshop, GAS will offer attachment- and trauma-informed supervision to supervisors and evaluate the impact.