

Reflective Supervision

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What is Reflective Supervision?

- What it's not:
 - Therapy
 - Complaining
 - Forced thoughtfulness
 - A way to make someone change

Why is RS important?

- Evidence it helps staff cope with job-related stress and burnout
- Contributes to overall job satisfaction
- Contributes to overall job performance
- Supports staff ability to manage emotional responses to their work
- Contributes to staff ability to form and maintain positive relationships with co-workers.
- Increased perceived competence
- Increased professional development
- *Despite increases in work-related stress over time

Evidence

- Comes from early childhood services
- Associated with greater staff resilience
- Lower rates of turnover and greater success in work
- Staff retention and client outcomes

Reflection



Reflective Practice

- Thinking about and analyzing your actions in order to improve your professional practice.
- Involves exploring and explaining events, NOT JUST DESCRIBING THEM.
- Involves analyzing your emotions in response to the work, your errors and weaknesses, as well as your strengths and successes.

Why is Reflective Practice Important?

- Identify learning needs
- Identify new opportunities for learning
- Identify new courses of action
- Clarify the situation
- Develop a new attitude/way of thinking
- Make an informed choice
- Explore the consequences of our actions
- Demonstrate our achievements to ourselves and others
- Help us make decisions or resolve uncertainty.



The Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988)

Reference Gibbs, G (1988) Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods.
Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford

What makes an effective supervisor?

- Communicates a shared vision
- Is confident
- Exhibits a can-do attitude
- Facilitates
- Compromises
- Involves staff/team-based
- Flexible
- Adaptive

- Motivates
- Provides support and encouragement
- Respectful
- Sets clear goals
- Shares achievements
- Trusts employees
- Uses humor

Styles vs Models of Supervision

Models of Supervision

Administrative

Clinical

Reflective

Administrative Supervision

Concerned with oversight of federal, state and agency regulations, program policies and procedures.

Supervision that is primarily administrative will involve the following content:

- Hire
- Train/educate
- Oversee paperwork
- Writing of Reports
- Explain rules and policies
- Coordinate
- Monitor Productivity
- Evaluate

Clinical Supervision

Clinical Supervision is case-focused but does not necessarily consider what the practitioner brings to the intervention nor does it necessarily encourage the exploration of emotion as it relates to work with others in an intense manner.

Clinical Supervision

- Review Casework
- Discuss diagnostic impressions and diagnosis
- Discuss intervention strategies related to the intervention
- Review the intervention or treatment plan
- Review ethical boundaries
- Review and evaluate clinical progress
- Give guidance/advice
- Teach

Reflective Supervision

- Attends to the *emotional* content of the work and how reactions to the content affect the work.
- Reflective supervision relates to professional and personal development within one's discipline.
- Greater emphasis on supervisor's ability to listen, wait, allowing the supervisee to discover solutions, concepts, and perceptions on his/her own without interruption from the supervisor.
- Goes beyond clinical supervision to shared exploration of the parallel process

- Form trusting relationship between supervisor and practitioner
- Establish consistent and predictable meetings and times
- Ask questions that encourage details about the client(s) and relationship with worker
- Listen
- Remain emotionally present
- Teach/guide
- Nurture/support
- Integrate emotion and reason
- Foster reflective process to be internalized by the supervisee
- Explore the parallel process and allow time for personal reflection
- Attend to how reactions to the content affect the reflective process



My role
is _____

THE WORKER

THE MAN WHO
MANAGES THE
WORKER

THE MAN WHO
MANAGES THE
MANAGER WHO
MANAGES THE
WORKER

WHO MANAGES THE
MAN WHO MANAGES
THE MAN WHO MANAGES
THE WORKER

THE MAN
WHO...

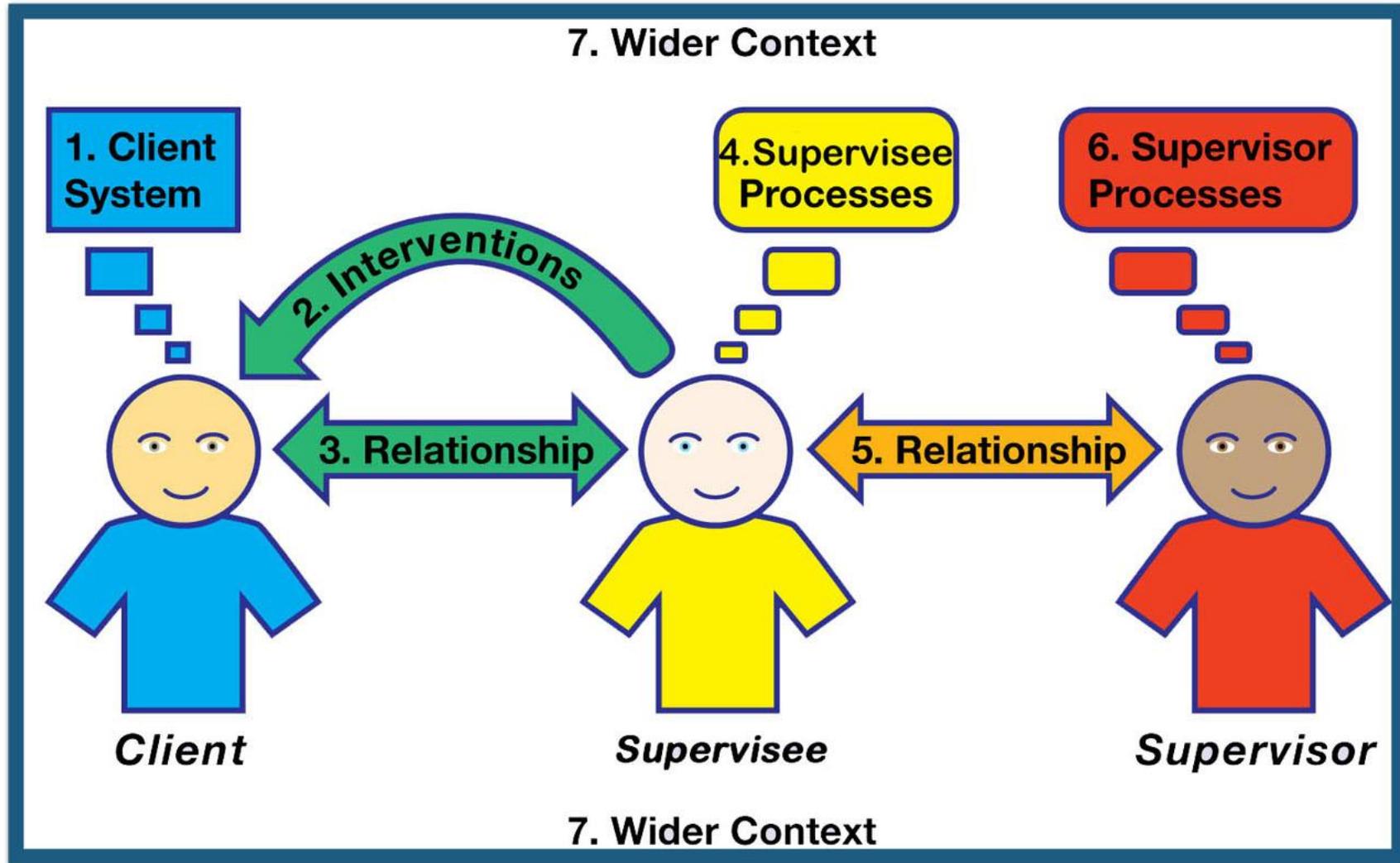


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Parallel process

- The experiences, emotions, and interactions in the client/worker relationship that can be recreated in the worker/supervisor or worker/agency relationship



Examples of Parallel Process

- Mary feels frustrated that a parent she is working with hasn't made the calls or completed the paperwork for the pediatrician, and has started to feel exasperated that she isn't taking things seriously. Meanwhile, Mary's supervisor feels frustrated that Mary hasn't completed several of her family assessments, and feels exasperated that Mary isn't prioritizing her time.

Parallel Process Example

- Dan feels as if he is having a hard time connecting with several of his new families he is working with at his new job. They often cancel or ask to reschedule. When they do meet, Dan describes the visits as awkward, that the families don't say too much or seem preoccupied with other activities. Similarly, during down time at the office, Dan often takes breaks outside by himself, or eats at his desk instead of in the break room where most of his colleagues are. While completing paperwork he listens to music with headphones on or works in a back office by himself. Coworkers are sharing with you, his supervisor, that they are having a hard time connecting with him.



**BEING A SUPERVISOR
IS EASY.**

**IT'S LIKE RIDING A BIKE.
EXCEPT THE BIKE IS ON FIRE.**

**YOU'RE ON FIRE.
EVERYTHING IS ON FIRE.**

Three
Building
Blocks of
RS

Reflection

Collaboration

Regularity

Reflection

- Stepping back from the immediate
- Wondering about what the experience really means
- Examine our thoughts and feelings about the experience and identify the interventions that best meet the **client's** goals
- Requires foundation of honesty and trust
- Goal is to create an environment in which people do their best thinking – safety, calmness, and support
- Active listening and thoughtful questioning by both parties
- Explore the range of emotion (pos and neg) related to the clients and issues that the supervisee is managing
- Work as a team to understand and identify appropriate next steps

Reflection

- Supervisor's role is to help supervisee answer their own questions and provide support and knowledge necessary to guide decision-making.
- Provide empathetic, nonjudgmental ear to the supervisee.
- Work through complex emotions in a "safe place" allows supervisee to manage the stress he/she experiences on the job
- Scaffold or support acquisition of new knowledge through self-analysis.
- Empower staff to assess their own performance.
- Increase awareness of one's strengths, limits, vulnerabilities, and allows for mid-course corrections.
- Allows staff to experience the very sort of relationship that she/he is expected to provide to clients.

Three
Building
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RS

Reflection

Collaboration

Regularity

Collaboration

- Emphasizes the sharing of responsibility and control of power –
- Sharing of power does not exempt supervisors from setting limits or exercising authority – these are firmly within the supervisor's domain
- Collaboration allows for dialogue to occur on issues affecting the staff person and the program
- Allows for a clear understanding of the expectations of each partner
- Allows staff to express interest in taking on new tasks and challenges
- Staff feel empowered to exercise control over the terms and conditions of their work (within limits of the organization)

Collaboration

- Supervisors can learn from staff, and teach staff
- Sharing of responsibility and decision-making so as to cultivate leadership talent from within.

Three
Building
Blocks of
RS

Reflection

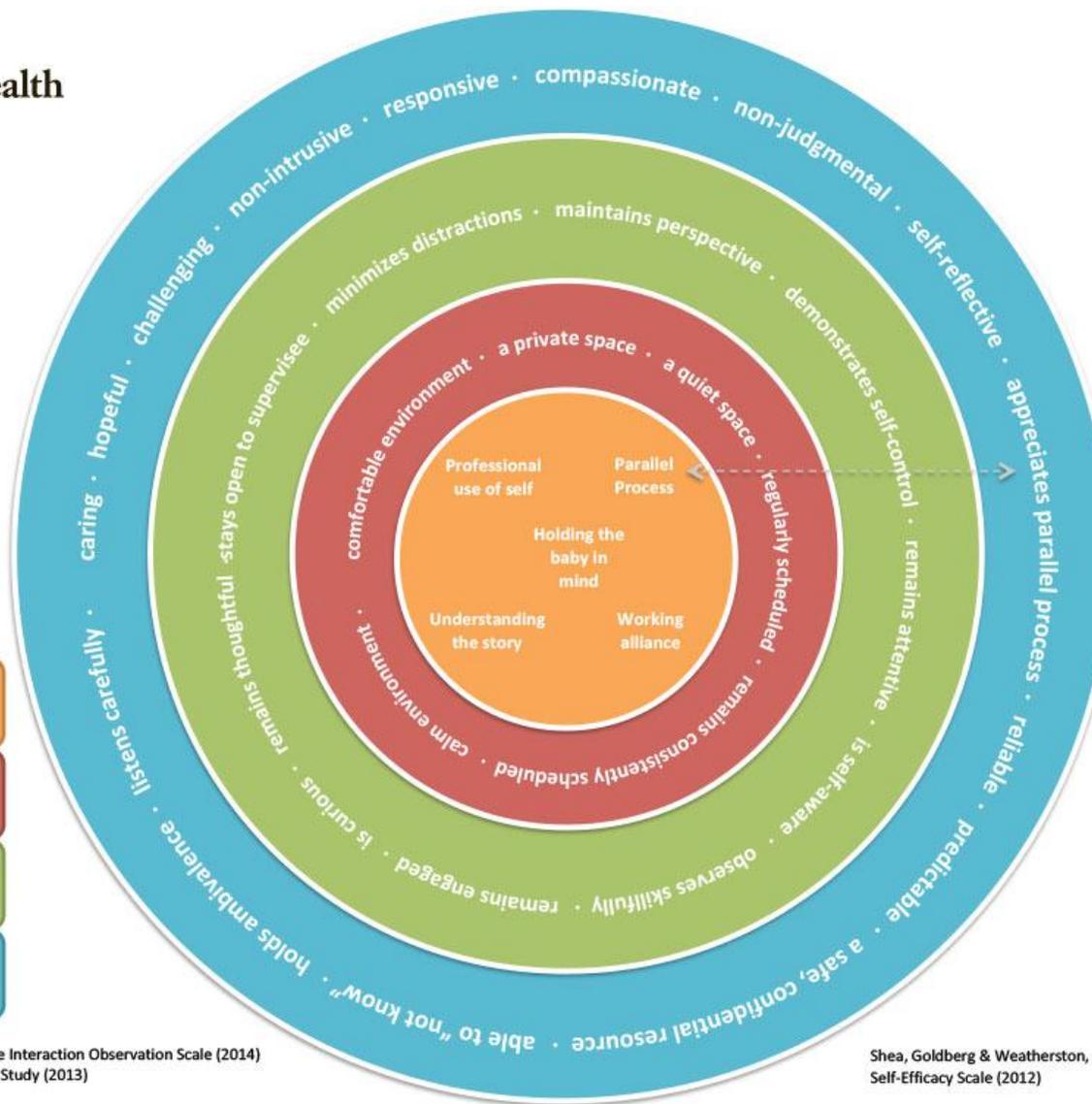
Collaboration

Regularity

Regularity

- Neither reflection nor collaboration will occur without regularity of interactions
- Supervision should take place on a reliable schedule, with sufficient time that is protected from cancellation, rescheduling, procrastination or interruption.
- When cancellations happen, reschedule as soon as possible.
- If the need to reschedule arises frequently, it makes sense to consider why this is happening – reflection
- Takes time to build a relationship – an investment worth making.

REFLECTIVE Supervision



¹Watson, Hennes, Harris & Cox. Reflective Interaction Observation Scale (2014)

^{2,3}Tomlin, Weatherston & Parkov Delphi Study (2013)

Shea, Goldberg & Weatherston, Self-Efficacy Scale (2012)

Best Practices – Setting the stage

- Mutually agree on regular time and place to meet
- Arrive on time
- Protect against interruptions
- Set agenda together before you begin
- If first starting, review the format of RS, and expectations of both supervisor and supervisee
- “The thing you want to say the least, is the thing you need to say the most”
- Review of confidentiality
- Review separation of administrative/clinical/reflective

Best Practices – Supervisor’s Role

- Remain open, curious and emotionally available
- Respect supervisee’s place/readiness to learn
- Ally with supervisee’s strengths, offering reassurance and praise as appropriate
- Observe and listen carefully
- Suspend harsh or critical judgment
- Invite the sharing of details about a particular situation, client, their behaviors, interactions, strengths, concerns
- Listen for the emotional experiences that the supervisee is describing when discussing the case or response to the work: anger, impatience, sorrow, confusion, etc.

Best Practices – Supervisor’s Role

- Respond with appropriate empathy
- Invite supervisee to have and talk about feelings awakened through the work.
- Wonder about, name and respond to those feelings with appropriate empathy
- As supervisee appears ready or able, encourage exploration of thoughts and feelings that the supervisee has about their clients.
- Encourage exploration of thoughts and feelings that the supervisee has about the experience of supervision as well as how that experience might influence their work
- Maintain a shared balance of attention between child/parent/client/supervisee

Best Practices – After the supervision

- Reflect on supervision session in preparation for the next meeting
- Remain available throughout the week if there is a crisis or concern that needs immediate attention
- Engage in reflective practice around your own responses to supervision – tight stomach or shoulders, urge to interject, judgmental thoughts, urge to correct
- Engage in reflective supervision with your own identified mentor/consultant

Best Practices – Supervisee's Role

- Agree with the supervisor on a regular time and place to meet
- Arrive on time and remain open and emotionally available
- Come prepared to share the details of a particular situation, visit, assessment, experience or dilemma
- Ask questions that allow you to think more deeply about your work
- Be aware of the feelings that you have in response to your work and in the presence of your client
- When able, share feelings with supervisor

Best Practices – Supervisee's Role

- Explore the relationship of your feelings to the work you are doing
- Allow your supervisor to support you
- Remain curious
- Suspend critical or harsh judgment of yourself and others
- Reflect on the supervision session to enhance professional practice and personal growth.

Supervisor's role – separating our roles

- If contracted, supervisor will only engage in reflective and clinical discussion, but will discuss administrative content only when it is clearly indicated in the contract.
- If a staff member, structure time together to have clear beginning and ending points of each type of supervision: reflective/clinical vs administrative.
- Disciplinary actions should always be addressed by supervisor – preferably outside of a regularly scheduled meeting.
 - Never should occur in a group session

*Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health

Phases of a Supervisory Session

- Preparation
- Greeting and Reconnecting
- Open the Dialogue and find the agenda
- Telling the story and focusing on the details
- Understanding perspectives and generating hypotheses
- Considering next steps
- Closing
- Post supervision reflection

Three types of paraphrasing

Acknowledge and clarify

Summarize and organize

Shifting level of
abstraction

Three Types of Paraphrasing

- Acknowledge and Clarify
 - You're thinking about...
 - You're concerned about...
 - You're frustrated with...

- Staff: “I don’t know how I will get everything done. I’ve got to finish the assessments because they are due this week and I still have to fit in several more visits.”
- Supervisor: You are feeling overwhelmed by all you have to do this week.

Three types of paraphrasing

- Summarize and Organize
 - So there are three issues...
 - First you're going to... then you will...

Staff: “I am so confused. The parents are totally engaged in activities and will jump right in and do role play one week and then the next, act like they have no interest in the home visit.”

- Supervisor: You are noticing significant differences between how families react to home visits from week to week.

Three types of paraphrasing

- Shift level of Abstraction
 - Up-values, beliefs, identity, assumptions, goals
 - So, its important to you that...
 - So, a belief you hold is that...
 - So, your goal is to...
 - Down-example and non-example
 - So an example of what you are talking about is...
 - So this is not about...

- Staff: “The parent is having trouble completing the paperwork and putting off or avoiding finishing it.”
- UP: “So one of your goals is to help this parent become more self-reliant?”
- DOWN: “So you think this parent isn’t committed to the program?”

Use of Parallel Process

- Using the parallel process to highlight key interactions while giving a different perspective
- Shifting across the varying relationships to find examples
 - Parent/child
 - Client/staff
 - Supervisor/staff
 - Agency/staff
- “Is this similar to...”
- “I remember us discussing similar themes when...”

Powerful Questions

- Open-ended
- No right or wrong answer
- Help supervisee to step back and reflect
- Invites the supervisee to “wonder” about events or interactions that were described
 - “What are all the possibilities?”

Ethical
Dilemmas

