

# Supervision and reflective practice

## REFLECTIONS ON SUPERVISION

### INTRODUCTION

*Reflections on supervision* is a trigger to encourage both practice teacher and student to examine their expectations about the content and functions of supervision. The practice tutorial (supervision session) is the linchpin of the student's learning and the assessment of their practice abilities, yet it has complex purposes and may reflect very different understandings of these purposes.

### Purpose

Supervision and Reflective Practice is concerned with the way in which supervision is put to use. There are a number of different functions and purposes which need to be untangled, otherwise it is difficult to achieve the best use of the practice tutorial.

### Method

Ask the student to read *Reflections on supervision*, explaining that each of the 25 statements is taken from a collection of articles on supervision (*Community Care*, 1992)

Ask the student to make a quick response to each statement, pencilling a number from 0-10 to indicate their responses (from 0= strongly disagree to 10=strongly agree). (Blue coloured circles around statements from 0-3, green from 4-6 and red from 7-10 will give an immediate, graphic summary of the student's views). Do the exercise yourself, too.

Where are the student's highest scores?

A grouping of high scores towards the top of the page (i.e. more red circles in this area), indicates an emphasis on the managerial and administrative functions.

Highest scores in the middle region suggest a focus on the educational and developmental functions.

High scores in the bottom third of the page indicate most concern for the supportive and nurturing functions.

How do the students' clusters of scores compare to your own?

### Variations

If you ask the student to complete *Reflections on supervision* early and late in the placement, you can gauge if there has been any change in emphasis as a result of the experience of the placement. It is also an opportunity to get feedback from students about your supervision style and practice, and to explore any wide differences in your expectations.

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## SUPERVISION REFLECTIONS Activity

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Rate each one from 0-strongly disagree to 10-strongly agree

Supervision means being able to demonstrate that what is expected from the student is actually achieved. 1	Supervision is where objectives and tasks are agreed to produce a required level of service. 2	Supervision must ensure that clients get an even service. 3	Assessment is a major area of the supervisor's role. 4
Supervision must ensure that the best use is made of the skills, time, and resources available. 7	Having created a trusting relationship, the practice teacher should use supervision to present the priorities, philosophies and policies of the agency. 6	The needs of the client should be the starting point for all the work done in supervision. 5	It is important to draw up a contract which acknowledges the joint expectations of student and practice teacher. 11
Student and practice teacher have shared responsibility to ensure supervision sessions take place. 8	As supervision requires two parties with unequal power to make an effective working relationship, issues of values, rights, responsibilities, and goals have to be explored. 10	Supervision enables students to consider different ways of handling situations. 13	Supervision acts as a powerful role model for the management of difference and the use and abuse of authority. 14
Supervision is intended as guided self-observation which gives shape to that which the student experiences as fragmented. 9	Supervision is a deep well from which to draw strength and wisdom. 17	Practice teachers must establish how the student learns and adapt according to that style. 16	Supervision provides the opportunity to look at work critically in a way that is professionally developmental. 15
The practice teacher should create a climate that enables and empowers the student to talk about thorny issues, especially race and racism. 12	Supervision is not about giving false reassurance, but providing an opportunity to replenish and motivate students, valuing their strengths, effort and commitment. 18	Good practice teaching, as well as being stimulating, can also be painful. 19	Supervision is a helicopter that lifts from danger. 20
Supervision is intended as guided self-observation which gives shape to that which the student experiences as fragmented. 9	A practice teacher who says: "just tell me about the case," invites unconscious misrepresentation as to what went on between the student and client, therefore invalidating the whole thrust of the session. 22	Supervision is a helicopter that lifts from danger. 20	Supervision is the student's most essential helping relationship. 21
The practice teacher should create a climate that enables and empowers the student to talk about thorny issues, especially race and racism. 12	Supervision is a warm wall to give support in bouncing ideas off. 23	The practice teacher should be able to say "I don't know." 24	The practice teacher can help the student to discover how, in the implementation of the rules and policies, the victim inside the student may have colluded with the victim inside the client. 25

The statements above are taken, in a modified form, from 'Staff Supervision' in *Community Care*, 30/7/92. Contributors were: Jean Moore, 'Staff supervision: are you satisfied?'; Tony Morrison, 'A question of survival'; Chris Payne, 'A map for different models'; Elizabeth Ash, 'Piggy in the middle'; Jane Metcalf and Clive Curtis, 'Feeding on support'; Anne Hollows, 'Resources for courses'; Joy Francis, 'Results without racism'