An International Agenda for supervision research: where shall we start?

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An International Agenda for supervision research: where shall we start?

- What do we already know about supervision?
- Is our knowledge reliable?
- What are the questions that are yet to be explored and answered through supervision research?
- Three suggestions for taking forward a world agenda for supervision research
Systematic review: Wheeler and Richards, 2007
What is supervision?

- A working alliance between the supervisor and counsellor in which the counsellor can offer an account or recording of her work; reflect on it; receive feedback and where appropriate, guidance. The object of this alliance is to enable the counsellor to gain in ethical competence, confidence, compassion and creativity in order to give her best possible service to the client. The supervisor is accountable to the professional body to which the supervisee has allegiance and the agency in which they work.

- Inskipp and Proctor (2001)
A classic definition of supervision that is often quoted: "supervision is an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member of that same profession. This relationship is evaluated, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person, monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients seen, and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession."

Empirical Definition

• "The formal provision, by approved supervisors, of a relationship-based education and training that is work-focused and which manages, supports, develops and evaluates the work of colleague/s. The main methods that supervisors use are corrective feedback on the supervisee’s performance, teaching, and collaborative goal-setting. It therefore differs from related activities, such as mentoring and coaching, by incorporating an evaluative component. Supervision’s objectives are ‘normative’, ‘restorative’ and ‘formative’. These objectives could be measured by current instruments."

• Milne, 2007.
Supervision

• Supervisor has many roles and responsibilities with respect to:
  – the therapist
  – the client
  – the organisation in which the therapist works
  – and the profession

And is a major support in managing the vicissitudes of therapeutic relationships
Systematic review: Wheeler and Richards, 2007
Impacts of supervision:

There is some evidence that

- Supervision enhances the self-efficacy of the supervisee.
- Supervision has a beneficial effect on supervisees, the client and the outcome of therapy
- that both individual and group supervision increases the therapeutic skills of the therapist.
- Supervision increases supervisee’s self-awareness of working therapeutically although some change may be attributable to other aspects of training.
- that transfer of understanding from supervision to therapy occurs for supervisees.
• supervision that focuses on working alliance can influence client perception of alliance
• supervision enhances treatment outcome in the brief psychotherapeutic treatment of depression.
• the timing of supervision can influence what is dealt with in supervision
• the trustworthiness of the supervisor is an important factor in effective supervision
• supervisees feel safer in individual rather than group supervision.
• there is thematic transfer of an appropriate kind from supervision to therapy.
Plenty of other research on supervision that tells us that:

- there are a range of models of supervision that have some validity
- trainees value supervision
- there are a range of supervisory styles with variable acceptability to trainees
- there is a parallel process between supervisor and supervisee that mirrors the relationship between therapist and client
- the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is important
- supervisees do not disclose all they could in supervision
- ‘good’ supervision can be distinguished from ‘bad ‘supervision.
- supervision can cause harm
- supervisors can make a difference to multicultural competence
- supervisor disclosure seems to be helpful
## Countries Research Undertaken in (Systematic Review)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA (one with Canada)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
• Many studies are analogue studies, presenting fictitious or hypothetical scenarios or videos.
• Few practitioner network studies that explore supervision as it is routinely practised.
• No coherence about the use of measures, and little replication with different populations.
• Questions are often convoluted. Not practitioner friendly.
• There is a reliance on self report measures.
• Lack of clarity about the role of the researcher,
• Lack of a definition of supervision,
• Little information provided about the clients of the therapists in the studies.
What are the problems and how reliable is our knowledge?

- Supervision research is difficult.
- Most of the research has been conducted in the USA and is almost exclusively focused on trainees.
- Only one attempt at a randomised controlled trial.
- Few studies that measure the impact on clients.
- Most studies are cross sectional taking just one point in time, often retrospective.
- There are few longitudinal studies.
A few questions:

• How often do supervisors take action to prevent harm to clients and intervene when counselling goes wrong?

• How confident are supervisors that their supervisees are behaving ethically and providing a competent treatment for their clients?
• How do supervisors manage ruptures in the supervisory alliance?
• Is there a difference in outcome for clients who are discussed in supervision and those who are not?
• Does supervision affect counsellor well being?
• Does supervisor training make a difference to supervision competence?
• Does feedback on client progress to supervisors enhance client outcome?
• How do we understand the difference between therapists who consistently do well with their clients and those who don’t. Is supervision a factor?
Ladany’s Agenda of primary general research questions

• How does supervision influence trainee outcome?
• How does supervision influence client outcome?
• How does supervision influence trainee learning?
• How do external events outside of supervision influence supervision and counselling
Interrelationships among supervision process and the outcome and counselling process and outcome variables

Bradley and Ladany, 2004, Counsellor supervision: principles processes and practice, 3rd Ed
A world wide agenda for supervision research: where shall we start?
## Therapists currently in supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>no</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series1</td>
<td>2444</td>
<td>2234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who in the world has supervision

Percentage of therapists

Countries

USA, Canada, Spain, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Germany, New Zealand, South Korea, Portugal, UK

No

Yes
Percentage of therapists who do not have supervision

The image shows a bar chart representing the percentage of therapists who do not have supervision in different experience level categories. The x-axis represents experience level categories: <1.5, 1.5-<3.5, 3.5-<7, 7-<15, 15-<25, and 25-<55. The y-axis represents the percentage in each category. The chart indicates a significant increase in the percentage of therapists who do not have supervision as the experience level increases.
Comparison between men and women

Percentage who have supervision

- Men: 40%
- Women: 50%
- Yes: 50%
- No: 40%
Supervision by specific profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay therapist</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supervision by specific profession

Percentage

Profession

University of Leicester
Who has supervision by theoretical orientation

- No salient orientation
- Analytic
- Cognitive behavioural
- Humanistic
- Systemic
- Broad spectrum

Theoretical orientation
International Study of the Development of Psychotherapists

- Collaborative effort by a group of practitioner-researchers (CRN).

- Survey using Common Core Questionnaire (CCQ).

- Comparative cohort, cross-sectional, and longitudinal perspectives.

- Current database of 7500 therapists from 20+ countries.
What do we study?

Therapist characteristics:

• professional
• personal
• Mutual influence of therapists and therapeutic work
• Work settings and conditions
News from the UK. £170m for psychological therapies!
Adults must be supervised at all times!
Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)

- £170 Million
- Competency Framework for CBT
- Competency Framework for Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic competences
- Competency Framework for Supervision
Core Competences for Supervision of Counsellors and Psychotherapists
Supervision competences

• [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/competence_frameworks.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/competence_frameworks.htm)

More coming

• Humanistic/Process Experiential
• Systemic/family therapy
Generic supervision competences

- Ability to employ educational principles which enhance learning
- Ability to enable ethical practice
- Ability to foster competence in working with difference
- Ability to adapt supervision to the organisational and governance context
- Ability to form and maintain a supervisory alliance

Specific supervision competences

- Ability to help the supervisee practice specific clinical skills
- Ability to incorporate direct observation into supervision
- Ability to conduct supervision in group formats
- Ability to apply standards

Applications of supervision to specific models/contexts

- Supervision of clinical case management
- Supervision of Low Intensity interventions
- Supervision of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy
- Supervision of psychoanalytic / psychodynamic therapy
- Supervision of systemic therapy
- Supervision of humanistic - person-centred / experiential therapy

Metacompentences

- Supervision metacompentences
Generic Supervision competences

Ability to:

- employ educational principles which enhance learning
- enable ethical practice
- foster competence in working with difference
- adapt supervision to the organisational and governance context
- form and maintain a supervisory alliance
Ability to:

- structure supervision sessions
- help the supervisee present information about clinical work
- help supervisee’s ability to reflect on their work and on the usefulness of supervision
- use a range of methods to give accurate and constructive feedback
- gauge supervisee’s level of competence
- for supervisor to reflect (and act on) on limitations in own knowledge and experience
Specific supervision competences

Ability to:

• help the supervisee practice specific clinical skills
• incorporate direct observation into supervision
• conduct supervision in group formats
• apply standards
Applications of supervision to specific models/contexts

- Supervision of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy
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- Supervision of psychoanalytic / psychodynamic therapy
- Supervision of systemic therapy
- Supervision of humanistic - person-centred/experiential therapy
Metacompetences
International Agenda questions

- Does this competences framework fit the worldwide practice of supervision?
- Can it be used to inform the syllabus for supervisor training worldwide?
- Can it be used to inform assessment of supervisor competence worldwide?
- If so, we have a framework that we can use to have a common understanding of what supervision is and how it is practised.
Supervision Research Network (SuPraNet)

The mission statement for the Network is to promote good quality supervision research and practice both nationally and internationally. The Network will both seek funding and conduct supervision research themselves and also support others in developing and organising supervision research projects.

http://www.bacp.co.uk/research/supervision_research.php
Opportunities

- SuPRaNet  Supervision Research Network
- Website for information
- Invitation to collaborate in projects
- Suggestions for Masters and PhD student projects
- Offer of consultancy on proposed projects
- Presentation and workshop at BACP Annual Research Conference, Portsmouth, May 2009
- Assessment of measures used in supervision research
Our projects

• Application for an ESRC Seminar Series on supervision research
• To evaluate the impact of supervision on service delivery in the IAPT programme
• Supervisors awareness of boundary violations of their supervisees
• The impact of supervisor training on supervisor competence and confidence