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**PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION PRACTICE UNDER NEW PUBLIC
MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF THE PERSPECTIVES OF
PROBATION OFFICERS AND SERVICE MANAGERS IN THE
COMMUNITY PROBATION SERVICE**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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KIERAN BARRY O'DONOGHUE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines professional supervision practice under new public management from the perspectives of probation officers and service managers in the Community Probation Service. In particular, the research explores the participants' philosophy of professional supervision, their recent supervision experiences, and their aspirations and expectations with regard to professional supervision. In order to provide a background for an informed analysis and discussion of the research findings, the thesis discusses the key themes in the social service supervision and new public management literature. It also examines the Community Probation Service's context and the history of new public management and professional supervision in this organisation.

The thesis is a qualitative study that is informed by social work practice theory and utilises the phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches. The research findings show that amongst the participants there was: (a) an unclear philosophy of supervision; (b) minimal recent experience of supervision and little ownership or support for the agency supervision project; (c) a belief that the context increased their need for supervision, but at the same time reduced their ability to receive or participate in it; (d) an expectation that professional supervision would assist them to work more effectively with clients and staff; (e) an expectation of good committed supervisors who would support and help them develop; and (f) an expectation that the agency would support professional supervision through resourcing, guidelines, accredited supervisors and the establishment of a learning culture.

The major implications of these findings are that: (1) there is a need for staff to be socialised into professional social service supervision; (2) that the professional supervision programme within the Community Probation Service, as currently implemented, is unlikely to be successful; and (3) that professional social service supervision needs to be focused upon persons and their environments, rather than upon the agency.

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Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement I have received from Merv Hancock, who has been my professional social work supervisor over the past two years. Merv has been an excellent role model and I am certain that Kadushin (1992: 339) is writing about Merv when he stated that: "Good supervisors are available, accessible, affable, and able."

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The State Sector Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989 facilitated significant changes in the management of government departments. These changes affected both professional practice and management, and resulted in both greater managerial accountability and an emphasis upon quantifiable output measures and performance targets, rather than professional process accountability which had previously occurred through professional practice supervision (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; O'Donoghue, 1994; 1995). In the Community Probation Service the managerial changes resulted in an increase in private sector business management practices, which has had an influence on the practice of professional social service supervision (Garwood, 1994; O'Donoghue, 1995; Dale, 1997).

Research Aim and Objective

Given the above changes the aim of this thesis is to investigate professional social service supervision practice within the new public management context of the Community Probation Service. The primary objective is to investigate the phenomenon of professional supervision practice in terms of the philosophy, experience, aspirations and expectations of both practitioners and managers in the environment of new public management in the Community Probation Service. Aside from the literature review (Chapter 2), the development of this objective was influenced by the following two factors. The first was the author's experience of the changes in public social service management over the past ten years and the effect these changes had on professional practice and the management of statutory social service agencies. The second factor was an assertion made by Payne (1994:54-55) that the future of professional social service supervision in the new managerial environment would result in one of three scenarios, namely that: (a) there would be a separation of the professional and managerial aspects as part of a professional revival; (b) there would be a reconciliation between these two aspects through the quality movement; or (c) there would be a complete rejection of the professional aspects of social service supervision.

Underpinning the primary research objective are the three major research questions.

These questions are:

- What is the participants' understanding of professional supervision?
- What is the participants' recent experience of professional supervision?
- What do the participants' want from supervision?

These three questions provide the foundation and basic points of reference for Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

Researcher's Interest in the Topic

My interest in new public management and professional social service supervision began in 1994 when I was appointed to the position of Unit Manager (Probation) in the Probation Service. In this role, I found that I was both a line-manager and a professional practice supervisor. In addition, I was influenced by personal study undertaken towards the Diploma in Social Sciences in social policy and social work. A paper on management and social change (in which I wrote an essay on the impact of new managerialism on the Community Probation Service) was particularly influential together with my final fieldwork placement which was focused on social work supervision. During that placement, I produced a handbook for supervisors of probation officers (O'Donoghue, 1995).

In 1997, after leaving the Probation Service to take up a position in MidCentral Health's Mental Health Services, I joined the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. Within a few months of joining the Association, I was a member of the Education and Training standing committee, and involved in drafting the Association's policy on supervision. Around the same time, I wrote a monograph on the supervision of social workers. The School of Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University published this monograph (O'Donoghue, 1998a). The monograph and my work with the education and training committee, as well as contributing to my interest in this topic, emphasised the dearth of research in Aotearoa/New Zealand on social work supervision. It also revealed that no research had been completed in New Zealand on social work supervision and the effect of new public management.

Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 discusses the major themes related to the research found in the social work supervision and new public management literature. This chapter has two sections. The first discusses themes from social work supervision literature, namely the evolution of supervision, recent research and supervision approaches. The second section discusses new public management in terms of its origins, the New Zealand model, the critiques found in the literature, and its effect on professional social service supervision. In the chapter's conclusion the implications of the issues raised in the literature review are discussed in terms of their influence on this study.

Chapter 3 explores the agency context in terms of its historical setting, new public management and professional supervision. The significance of exploring the agency context was emphasised by Bracey (1981:118), who found in a previous study of supervision in the probation service that it was difficult to abstract supervision from the context in which it was practised. This chapter's aim is to set the scene for the participant's perspectives outlined in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Chapter 4 identifies social work practice theory as informing the research and the concepts that sensitised the research methodology. The link between social work practice theory and the qualitative research approach is explained through reference to the reflection in action process. Also discussed in this chapter is the research methodology: its philosophical underpinnings; the rationale for its choice; the research design (which includes the ethical considerations); the profiles of the participants; and a description of the data collection process. The process by which the data was organised and analysed is referred to towards the end of the chapter.

Chapter 5 is the first of three chapters that presents the research findings. This chapter explores the participants' understanding of supervision and considers the following: their definition of professional supervision; their understanding of the main functions and

processes involved; their perspectives on the place of theory; their knowledge of supervision theory; and their perspectives on the role and place of professional supervision for themselves, the agency and the clients of the Community Probation Service.

Chapter 6 discusses the participants' experiences of professional supervision and the environment in which professional supervision is practised. The areas discussed include: their recent participation in professional supervision, their experiences in relation to the development of agency policy and its implementation; and their experiences of the supervision environment, which includes management practices, organisational culture and the effects of social policy experienced in supervision.

Chapter 7 outlines the participants' desires in regard to supervision. The chapter focuses on their expectations in regard to the following areas: the content, process and structures of supervision; their ideal supervisor, and the roles and responsibilities they wanted this person to undertake; and agency support and organisational culture.

The conclusion (Chapter 8) presents a review of the research objectives, the methodology and the key research findings. It also discusses the implications of these findings and makes suggestions concerning the future practice of professional supervision in the Community Probation Service and wider social service environment. The thesis concludes with a discussion of areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the major themes related to the research questions found in the social work supervision and new public management literature.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses social work supervision in terms of its evolution, recent research, approaches and models. The second section discusses the new public management literature in terms of: its origins; the New Zealand model of new public management; the literature critiquing new public management; and the effect of new public management on professional social service supervision. The chapter's conclusion summarises the main points and examines the implications of these points for this study.

Professional Social Work Supervision

Within the field of professional supervision in the social services there is an extensive, established body of literature (Bennie, 1995). Authors from Great Britain and the United States of America dominate this literature with the significant authors being Kadushin (1976; 1992a), Munson (1979; 1993), Shulman (1993; 1995), Middleman et al. (1985), Hawkins et al. (1989), Morrison (1993) and Brown et al. (1996). Kadushin's (1992a) *Supervision in Social Work*, (Third Edition), is generally recognised as the leading text, both locally and internationally (Payne, 1994; Bennie, 1995). In New Zealand there is a developing tradition of literature which has been strongly influenced by the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers and the New Zealand Social Work Training Council (Bennie, 1995).

What Is Professional Social Work Supervision?

The literature offers a plethora of definitions. Rich (1993: 137) points out that "no single definition or theory exists by which to describe its meaning, methods or purpose uniformly." That said, within the literature Kadushin's (1992) definition is argued to be the most comprehensive, and is used by a number of authors as the starting point for their own attempts at offering a definition (Brown et al., 1996; Bennie, 1995; Shulman, 1993; 1995). Kadushin (1992: 22-23) defines social work supervision in the following

terms:

The supervisor is an agency administrative-staff member to whom authority is delegated to direct, coordinate, enhance the on-the-job performance of the supervisees for whose work he is held accountable. In implementing this responsibility, the supervisor performs administrative, educational and supportive functions in interaction with the supervisee in the context of a positive relationship.

The supervisor's ultimate objective is to deliver to agency clients the best possible service, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in accordance with agency policies and procedures. Supervisors do not directly offer service to the client but they do indirectly affect the level of service offered through their impact on the direct service supervisees.

This definition emphasises that supervision occurs within an agency context, and it recognises that supervision has a place in both agency management and structure. Essentially, the three functions of supervision- namely; administration, education and support- reinforce that the supervisor is the bridge between management and the professional. The objective of the best possible service to clients emphasises that supervision is a quality control process and the indirect service element highlights that the supervisors role is akin to that of a coach who prepares, observes, shares in, guides and assists (from the metaphorical side-lines) the supervisee in their work. Shulman (1993; 1995) adds to Kadushin's definition through reference to the supervisor's role as a mediator between the management and professionals.

Within New Zealand, professional social work supervision is defined by the national social workers Association (NZASW, 1998b: 1) as follows:

Supervision is a process in which the supervisor enables, guides, and facilitates the social worker(s) in meeting certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are competency; accountable practice; continuing professional development and education; and personal support.

The local definition's emphasis differs from that of Kadushin (1992a) in that it constructs supervision in terms of a professional relationship that takes place within both an organisational and professional context. Kadushin (1992a), on the other hand,

emphasises that supervision is a professional relationship that takes place within an organisational context.

The Evolution of Social Work Supervision

The international literature reviewed, argues that social work supervision is as old as social work itself, and that the history of supervision is inseparable from the history of practice theory (Tsui, 1997a; 1997b; Munson, 1993). Nevertheless, the literature indicates that two important factors have shaped the development of social work supervision: namely, the practice environment and the process of social work professionalisation (Munson, 1993; Tsui, 1997b; Brashears, 1995). These two factors have been most apparent in the shifts in emphasis between the administrative and professional aspects of social work supervision during its history (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993; Tsui, 1997b).

The origins of social work supervision are unclear, (Munson, 1993). Munson (1993) speculates that it was most likely based on a model of supervision developed in England by the medical profession, a model which was subsequently exported to America. Whilst this argument seems plausible, there appears to be little in the recorded history to support it. The early history of supervision can be traced back to the Charity Organisation Societies Movement, which began in Buffalo, New York, USA in 1878 (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993; Tsui, 1997b). The supervision itself involved the paid agents of this movement being supervised as part of their apprenticeship (Munson, 1993). The extent to which this supervision included both administrative and professional aspects is debated (Munson, 1993). Tsui (1997b) covers this debate well and asserts that the supervision began with an administrative emphasis because the first visitors of the Charity Movement were the employers, who were untrained volunteers from the upper class and were not supervised. These employers recruited paid agents towards the turn of the century from the middle and working classes. They then provided administrative supervision to the paid agents as a means of maintaining accountability (Tsui, 1997b). When a number of paid agents were established, Tsui (1997b) argues, the professional aspects (namely education and support) began to be addressed as the paid agents implemented an apprenticeship approach.

In 1898, the first recorded social work training course was offered by the New York Charity Organisation Society. This course marked the beginning of agency-based education and training, and evolved in 1904 into the New York School of Philanthropy.

This school later developed into the first school of social work- the Columbia University School of Social Work (Kadushin, 1992a), with the first course in supervision being offered in 1911 (Kadushin, 1992a; Tsui, 1997b).

In the 1920s, social work training moved from the agencies to universities. As a result of this move, the professional aspects of supervision were further promoted as supervision became viewed as an educational process for learning social work practice (Munson, 1993; Tsui, 1997b). The viewing of supervision as an educational process also contributed to the development of the individual conference as the primary mode of delivery (Munson, 1993; Tsui, 1997b). From the 1920's onwards a social work supervision literature base began to develop. Kadushin (1992a:11) emphasises this point by stating that thirty-five articles on social work supervision were published between 1920 and 1945 by the *Family Casework* (now *Social Casework*) journal. In 1936, the first book on social work supervision, *Supervision in Social Casework*, written by Virginia Robinson, was published (Kadushin, 1992a). In this book, supervision was defined as “an education process” (Tsui, 1997b: 194).

The emergence of the professional aspects of social work supervision, through an increased emphasis on education, was further assisted by the integration of psychoanalytic theory into social work practice from the 1930s to the 1950s. This integration resulted in practice theory having a significant influence in supervision, and the led to the rise of the notion that supervision was a “parallel process” of casework (Tsui, 1997b; Munson, 1993; Kadushin, 1992a).

Tsui (1997b: 195) argues that the next major historical theme was the debate from 1956 to the 1970's between “interminable supervision and autonomous practice”. This debate arose from the increasing professionalisation of social work, and the view espoused that a social worker's professional status was compromised by interminable supervision (Tsui, 1997b). One result of this debate was that a trend began to develop away from interminable supervision to a defined period of supervised practice which was then followed by autonomous practice (Munson, 1993). This debate also arguably gave rise to the concept of consultation in social work, and the view that the autonomous practitioner would consult in particular cases, rather than have an ongoing supervision relationship (Kadushin, 1977).

It appears that as the professional aspects of social work supervision reached their apex, that the profession's desire for professional legitimisation resulted in the devaluing of the professional aspects of supervision.

Kadushin (1992a: 14) argues that in the 1970s two further factors emerged. The first was an increased preoccupation with accountability due to the fiscal constraints of publicly funded agencies' and the beginnings of the shift from Keynesian-based demand economics to the economics of laissez-faire (Easton, 1997; O'Donoghue, 1998a). The natural result of this factor was an increased emphasis on administrative supervision. The second factor was the discovery of burnout, which emphasised the importance of the supportive aspects of supervision (Kadushin, 1992a). The type of supervision that these two factors brought to the fore in the period immediately prior to the new managerial era, was one focused on administrative accountability and support of the worker, rather than directly upon professional practice.

Since the 1980s the international literature highlights that accountability has had an emphasis in social work supervision (Tsui, 1997b; Munson, 1993; Morrison, 1993, Kadushin, 1992a; Coulshed, 1990; Glastonbury et al., 1987; Bamford, 1982). This emphasis reflects the effect that new managerialism has had on the social services and social work supervision. Initially this emphasis appeared to increase the dominance of the managerial aspects of supervision over the professional aspects (Kadushin, 1992a; Payne; 1994; Tsui, 1997b). The reaction to this managerial emphasis, however, has led to the professional aspects of supervision becoming reasserted in the literature, as social work practitioners and academics have tried to redress the balance. Bunker et al. (1988:xi) reflected this reassertion of the professional aspects, when they made the following statement that linked the supervisor's role to both the management system and professional practice:

We view the role of the supervisor as imbedded within both the management system and the professional practice system, as a key element in each and as an essential link between the two systems.

Generally, the reassertion of the professional aspects of social work has occurred through the social work profession's reemphasis on social work supervision. One example of this was the publication of a book titled *Interactional Supervision* (Shulman, 1993) by the National Association of Social Workers in the United States of America. This reemphasis is also evident in the volume of recently published literature (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993; Shulman, 1993; Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; Hughes et al., 1997; O'Donoghue, 1998a). A strong theme present in this literature, is the argument that supervision, through its interactional focus (which

includes the interactions between the practice setting, the client, the social worker, the supervisor, the agency and its context), provides professional process accountability through the medium of reflective practice (Munson, 1993; Shulman, 1993; 1995; Rich, 1993; Van Kessel et al., 1993; Tsui et al., 1997). The reassertion has been further supported by the establishment of *The Clinical Supervisor* Journal in 1983, and by the conceptualisation of the phenomena of Clinical Social Work Supervision by Munson (1993). The strongest assertion of the professional aspects of social work supervision was made by Brashears (1995), who argued that a false dichotomy had been created between social work practice and supervision, and that supervision is social work practice and needs to be reconceptualised in this way.

The Evolution in New Zealand

Compared with the international literature, the published literature reviewed in New Zealand is somewhat brief and recent. This literature, however, like the international literature, reveals how supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand has been shaped by the professionalisation of social work and the changing social environment.

The recorded history of social work supervision initially reveals an educational focus. This focus is evident in the 1966 report of the first supervision in social work course in the *New Zealand Social Worker* (NZASW, 1966), and the publication of a collection of papers as a monograph shortly afterwards (NZASW, 1972). Bracey (1978a) appears to mark a change in emphasis, with his paper tending to emphasise accountability and a lack of both published material and research in the area of supervision in New Zealand. Bracey's (1978a) paper is also notable because he attempts to introduce themes from the international literature into the local setting. This is particularly emphasised by Bracey's (1978b) book review of Kadushin's (1976) first edition of *Supervision in Social Work*.

In the 1980s the local published literature reveals a return to the professional and educational focus. Read (1983) outlined how her personal views about supervision had changed as a result of her study towards a Certificate in Social Service Supervision and the New Zealand Social Work Training Council (NZSWTC) published their *Supervision Resource Package* (NZSWTC, 1985). This package was comprehensive and contained a position paper, development planners, an extensive bibliography, and a brief outline of practice models from a number of practice settings. Included in the practice models, were a bicultural model and a feminist model. These inclusions appear

to be the first formal recognition of the influence that culture and gender have in social work supervision. It also reflects the changes that had occurred within the profession and society during this period (Shannon, 1991; Cheyne et al., 1997). Towards the end of the 1980s, the issue of low levels of professionalisation amongst social workers and its effect on the professional aspects of supervision was raised. The particular concerns identified were an increasing identification by social workers with their agencies, and an emphasis on administrative supervision. The implications of these concerns were the erosion of social workers' professional identity, professional development, and critical reflection on social work practice (Taverner, 1989; Blake-Palmer et al., 1989).

In the early to mid 1990s, the literature has focused on reclaiming the professional aspects of supervision in the new managerial environment, which did not seem to value, understand, recognise and support it (Young, 1993; Beddoe et al., 1994; Cockburn, 1994; Bennie, 1995). Amongst this literature, Volume VI, Numbers 5/6 of *Social Work Review*, and the annotated bibliography of local and international supervision literature since 1985, written by Bennie (1995), stand out. Towards the end of this decade it appears that a new era for professional social work supervision is emerging in New Zealand (Beddoe, 1997a). This new era appears to be characterised by both agencies and the profession developing policies on supervision, tertiary education providers offering diploma programmes, and a renewed interest in the process of supervision, particularly in relation to culture and gender (Beddoe, 1997b; O'Donoghue, 1998a).

Research Since 1970

Thirty research articles on social work supervision were published in international journals between 1970 and 1995 (Tsui 1997a). The focus of these 30 studies ranges from basic descriptive studies, through to studies on eight specific supervisory issues: namely; functions, context, structure and authority, relationship, styles and skills, job satisfaction, training of supervisors and gender issues (Tsui, 1997a). Twenty-eight of the research studies reviewed by Tsui (1997a) were cross-sectional sample surveys. The only exceptions were Harkness et al. (1991) who conducted an experiment, and Melichercik (1984) who conducted an in-depth study in which 60 supervisors used daily logs to record their activities over a one-week period. Tsui (1997a: 48) bemoans the heavy quantitative emphasis of social work supervision research, and argues that it reflects "that the development of empirical research on social work supervision is still in

the embryonic stage". He argues strongly that future research should include qualitative research methods.

The local research reflects this embryonic stage, with only four research studies having been completed. Three of these studies were Masters theses, whilst the fourth was an unpublished paper.

The first study (Bowden, 1980) was based upon interviews with 15 senior social workers from the Department of Social Welfare. The thesis examined the position of senior social workers in the Department of Social Welfare and found that whilst they experienced satisfaction in the performance of their task, they also, had difficulty balancing agency requirements with those of their supervisees.

The second study Bracey (1981) was an exploratory and descriptive study of casework supervision in the probation service. The methodology employed involved the use of a structured questionnaire, which was completed by 68 probation staff. The major findings of this study were that: (a) casework supervision was not rated highly by basic grade and senior staff; (b) the ideas and beliefs about supervision were idiosyncratic, and that differing supervisory experiences led to a lack of uniformity or consistency in the participants' responses; and (c) most field staff were unfamiliar with the probation service's policy statement on casework supervision (Bracey, 1981: 118-119). Bracey (1981:118) identified that a major problem encountered in his study was "to abstract supervision from the context in which it was practised or experienced." In this regard, Bracey (1981: 118) recommended that more research was needed into casework supervision and organisation, particularly in state social work organisations.

The third study was Drew's (1987) thesis. Drew (1987:148) argued that social work supervision was a political activity constructed from the ideological perspectives of those involved. Drew (1987) used Habermas' theory to explore how social work supervision was a political activity formed from different cognitive interests and conditioned by the capitalist welfare state. He identified three models of social work supervision, namely- the apprenticeship, the professional, and the radical. The radical model was described as explicitly political, whereas the other two were implicitly political and maintained the capitalist welfare state. Drew (1987:145) asserted that supervision in New Zealand was based in both the apprenticeship and the professional models of supervision, and argued for an alternative form of supervision. This assertion was based upon a previous case study which involved interviews with forty-five social workers employed by the then Auckland Area Health Board (Drew, 1987).

The fourth study, by Young (1993) canvassed the perspectives of five supervisors and two social workers from the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Service, on supervision in child protection work. This paper found that consistently available and supportive supervision was absolutely fundamental to effective child protection social work (Young, 1993). Young (1993) drew attention to the environment in which supervision was practised, by highlighting the lack of priority assigned to the supervision needs of social workers. Young (1993) also found that the environment did not facilitate or recognise the importance of supervision.

Approaches and Models of Social Work Supervision

The majority of literature published on social work supervision is devoted to approaches or models of supervision (Tsui, 1997a; 1997b). Munson (1993: 21) asserts that there has been a proliferation of approaches and models of supervision in recent times, which is due to a practice theory explosion whereby over 130 different theories of social work practice are competing for use. One result of this theory explosion and the proliferation of supervision models and approaches, has been a call for a moratorium on new supervision models (Rich, 1993).

Within the literature a number of classifications have been made of the various types of approaches and models (Tsui et al., 1997; Rich, 1993). Two of these classification systems appear to capture the themes found in the literature. The first system is that of Tsui et al. (1997: 187) which argues that supervision models or approaches focus on one or a combination of the following five elements: (a) practice theory; (b) the structures and functions of supervision; (c) the structure of the agency; (d) the interactional process between the supervisor and supervisee; and (e) feminist partnership approaches. The second system, that of Payne (1994), is more simplistic and conceptualises supervision approaches on a continuum, with managerial approaches at one end and professional approaches at the other. Payne (1994: 44) argued that in social work supervision, either the managerial or the professional aspect is dominant. Payne (1994: 44) also asserts that authors generally distinguish between the two aspects, but differ in their emphasis and in the importance of each aspect.

New Public Management

Changes both internationally and within New Zealand since the early 1980s by governments in the way they run public organisations has led to the emergence of the phenomenon of “New Public Management” (Boston et al., 1991; 1996). New public management is the successor to what was previously called public administration. As a term, new public management refers to the location and the nature of management activity. The location of public management is within government or state organisations in what is now called the public sector. Recognition is given to the fact that public sector management takes place within a political context and political constraints, that also involves both management within the organisations and the management of the public sector as a whole (Boston et al., 1991; 1996). The management activity aspect of new public management relates to “the optimal utilisation of resources towards desired results; that is, the creation of things of value” (Boston et al., 1996: viii).

Origins of New Public Management:

New public management, or new managerialism, derives its roots from the late nineteenth century work of Frederick Taylor, who founded the scientific management movement which became known as Taylorism (Boston et al., 1991; 1996). The phenomenon of new public management (also known as neo-Taylorism) resurfaced in the 1980s, and had significant influence on the public service in a number of liberal democratic western countries, particularly Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Pollitt, 1990; Ginsberg and Keys, 1995). These countries also embraced “New Right” or “Anti-collectivist neo-liberal ideology” in a quest for the holy grail of a smarter and smaller state sector (Boston et al., 1991; 1996).

The arrival of the new public management in Aotearoa/New Zealand came in the form of two significant pieces of legislation, namely the State Sector Act 1988, and the Public Finance Act 1989. Both pieces of legislation were significantly shaped by earlier Treasury documents -*Economic Management* and *Government Management* (Treasury, 1984; 1987; Walsh, 1991).

Walsh (1991: 52-80) argued that the State Sector Act 1988 was driven by

managerialist concerns, which sought to import private sector management practices into the public service, in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. It also clarified the roles and powers of Ministers and heads of departments, and in so doing, placed the chief executives of departments on short-term contracts, thereby making them no longer permanent employees of their respective departments. The State Sector Act also made the chief executive the employer of all departmental employees.

The Public Finance Act 1989 allowed organisations to free up capital investments, and changed financing from the national vote to departmental budgets. It also shifted accountability from inputs to outputs, i.e., from the resources used in producing outputs, to the goods and services that the agencies produced. The result of the changes initiated by these two pieces of legislation, was the radical restructuring of the public service from a service provided for the public by the state, to a sector of business controlled and managed by the state (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; O'Donoghue, 1994).

The New Zealand Model of New Public Management

The new public management model permeates the organisational culture of public sector agencies and provides the context within which professional supervision in public social service agencies is conducted. A body of literature has developed in New Zealand related to the phenomenon of new public management (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Boston, 1995; Kelsey, 1993; Easton, 1997). This literature examines and critiques the New Zealand model in terms of its theoretical underpinnings, and its impact upon the public provided services.

New public management is based on the belief that management is generic, and its principles can be applied to public business, as well as private business (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Easton, 1997). This notion has resulted in the view that a capable manager is able to manage any agency, be it private or public (Easton, 1997). The central features or doctrines of new public management are well summarised by Boston et al. (1996:26), and are outlined in a slightly adapted form below:

- a) a belief that there are no differences in management between the public and private sectors and public organisations can and should be managed in the same manner that private organisations are;
- b) a change in direction and emphasis from process accountability (i.e. from input controls and bureaucratic procedures such as the

- public service manual and internal control) to accountability for results (i.e. quantifiable outputs such as the percentage of court orders complied with and performance targets such as less than one percent variance on budget);
- c) a distinct emphasis on management rather than policy, with a particular stress on management skills in preference to professional skills;
 - d) the devolution of management responsibility and the resultant development of improved reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms;
 - e) the break-up of large bureaucratic organisations into separate stand-alone agencies, (e.g. the Department of Justice into the Department for Courts, Department of Corrections and Ministry of Justice) in particular the separation of the commercial from the non-commercial functions, policy advice from delivery and regulatory functions and purchasing from providing functions;
 - f) a predisposition towards private provision, contestability, and the contract management for most publicly funded services;
 - g) a change from relational to classical modes of contracting (i.e. from long-term and poorly specified contracts to very explicit and tightly specified shorter-term contracts);
 - h) the imitation and importation of private sector management practices such as the use of short-term labour contracts, the development of strategic plans and corporate plans, performance agreements and mission statements, the introduction of performance-linked remuneration systems, the development of new management information systems, and an increased concern about corporate image;
 - i) a clear preference for monetary incentives, (such as bonus payments) rather than non monetary incentives, such as ethics, ethos and status; and
 - j) an emphasis on cost reduction, efficiency and cutback management.

The chief feature of new managerialism, is its concern with control (Pollitt, 1990)

primarily, the detailed control of measurable activity through the quantification of outputs, planning tools, performance agreements and rewards. Control is also maintained through the deregulation of the employment relationship with managers exerting greater control over the conditions and performance of individual employees (Pollitt, 1990).

Boston et al. (1996) argue that the New Zealand model is more complex than managerialist doctrines. Their argument is that these doctrines were only a part of the New Zealand model, which in turn was part of a broader plan of economic, social, and political reform, aimed at improving the nations economic performance (Boston et al., 1996: 2-15). It is argued that the plan was the result of an alignment between economic pressure and political opportunity, an ideological shift to the “Right”, the quest for increased political control over the public service, and the application of specific brands of administrative and economic theories (Boston et al., 1996). The particular theories that were identified as influential were public choice theory, organisational economics, and managerialism (Boston et al., 1991; 1996).

Critique of New Public Management

Authors providing critiques of new public management generally do so from two perspectives. The first perspective focuses on new public management’s achievements in terms of improving the reported efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. The second perspective critiques the new public management’s theoretical underpinnings and the effects of its rigorous application.

Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness

Proponents of the New Zealand model of new public management emphasise the coherence and rigour of the reforms together with the improved financial management performance of the public service (Scott, 1993). The literature also emphasises New Zealand’s standing in the international community as world leader in the area of reinventing government and public sector reform, with particular emphasis placed on the *World Competitiveness Report* (1993), which ranked New Zealand first for its quality of government (Boston et al., 1996: 3). The highest praise for the New Zealand public management model has come from Osborne et al.(1993: 330) who state that:

New Zealand has gone the farthest along the entrepreneurial path...In one fell swoop, New Zealand did away with its old civil service, freeing

department managers to negotiate their own contract with employees. It eliminated regulations that inhibited competition in both private and public sectors - forcing government-owned business...into more competitive markets. And it adopted a budget system focused on performance ...and an accrual accounting system modelled on business accounting.

Within New Zealand, the Logan Review (Logan, 1991) endorsed the reforms and the public management approach. Scott (1993:3) argued strongly against critiques which denigrated the importation of private sector management practices on the basis that the “management reforms are about organising resources efficiently to achieve clearly specified objectives.”

The critics who challenge the notion of improved efficiency and effectiveness of the new managerial reforms, claim that the reforms only give the appearance of improved efficiency and effectiveness through the use of targeted output definitions and accrual accountancy. These critics argue that the social outcomes resulting from the management reforms and the social policy which supports them, have resulted in: increasing poverty; continuing unemployment; significant social problems; less access for people of limited financial means to essential health services; as well as less support for families in need (Shannon, 1991; Boston et al., 1992; Kelsey, 1993; O’ Brien et al., 1993; Cheyne et al., 1997; Easton, 1997).

The Theory and its Application

The literature critiquing the theoretical underpinnings of new public management argues that the theories are not congruent with the nature, ethics and ethos of the public service (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Kelsey, 1993). The literature also asserts that the application of these theories has resulted in a public production culture in which outcomes are secondary to outputs (Garwood, 1994; Gregory, 1995).

Public choice theory, agency theory, transaction-cost economics and managerialism, are identified in the literature as underpinning the New Zealand model of new public management (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Kelsey, 1993; Cheyne et al., 1997). As stated previously, the context in which the New Zealand model developed was one imbued with “neo-liberal” or “New Right” ideology (George and Wilding, 1985; Kelsey, 1993; Cheyne et al., 1997). The core social values of neo-liberal thought

are identified as freedom (in the sense of freedom from coercion), individualism, and inequality (George and Wilding, 1985). Neo-liberals seek to reduce the role the state has in the lives of people on the basis that they believe that state provision of services should be limited to those deemed to be essential for the maintenance of the free market (such as the police and the military). State provision of other “non essential services” is viewed as reducing individuals freedom to choose (Upton, 1987: 22-38). Essentially this ideology conflicts with the public service’s traditional values of the public interest, service to the community, justice, fairness, impartiality and equity (Martin, 1991). The nature of this conflict in values becomes even more apparent in the specific theories that underpin new public management.

Cheyne et al. (1997: 86) describe public choice theory as the “libertarian critique of government”. Public choice theory views individuals as opportunistic and prone to self-interest seeking and argues for the individual’s freedom of choice (Boston et al., 1991; 1996).

Agency theory (which is closely related to public choice theory) asserts that social and political life can be understood as a series of contracts or agreed relationships, where one party, known as the principal, enters into exchanges with another, known as the agent. Agency theory also assumes that individuals are self-interested (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Kelsey, 1993).

Transaction-cost economics is primarily about minimising transaction costs related to production, or in other words, reducing overheads (Boston et al., 1991; 1996). Like agency theory, transaction-cost economics views principals and agents as self-interest seeking. It also involves a mechanism whereby the comparative cost of planning and completing a task can be worked out as if the task were completed by public or privately contracted provision (Boston et al., 1996).

The final theory is that of new managerialism or neo-Taylorism. As discussed above, new managerialism is based on the presumption that there is an activity called management which can be applied to any context through the application of a set of generic principles (Boston et al., 1996; Easton, 1997). This presumption leads to the belief that the same principles that apply to run a private business such as a brewery are applicable to running a public organisation such as the Department of Corrections. Easton (1997) highlights the extremes of this approach when he discussed the appointment of a brewery manager to the position of chief executive officer of New Zealand’s largest hospital.

These four theories emphasise a change in the ethos of the public service from one focused on civic responsibility, to one focused on managerial accountability for outputs (Boston et al., 1996; Martin, 1991). The implications of this ethos include the development of a “get it done” production culture in which significant critique and ethical questions are not given due consideration (Boston et al., 1996; Martin, 1991). A clear example of this according to Easton (1997), was the health reforms that took place in 1993.

The impact of these theories upon the public service has been considerable, and has resulted in changes in the language used in public policy, as well as the manner in which issues of public management are constructed, defined and critiqued (Boston et al., 1996; Easton, 1997). Gregory (1995: 56-77) argues that the New Zealand model imposed a public production culture on the differing cultures of the public service. He asserts that this culture is incompatible with a number of the differing cultures present in the public service – cultures he crudely identifies as procedural, coping, and craft cultures. Gregory (1995: 59) identified the Community Probation Service as a coping culture in which the outputs and outcomes are not observable, and the work is indirectly observable. This culture differs markedly from a production culture in which both outputs and outcomes are observable and the work itself is directly observable (Gregory 1995:66). According to Gregory (1995:71), the imposition of a production culture upon other cultures leads to low morale and the increased likelihood of personal and official corruption, because “more public officials may be expected to behave as if they were untrustworthy, self-seeking, opportunistic, morally hazardous and adversely selected neo-Taylorites.”

Garwood (1994) also argues against the imposition of the production culture upon the public service. He asserts (Garwood, 1994: 63) that the preoccupation with output production does not necessarily result in the desired outcomes espoused by government. The effect of new public management's preoccupation with output production rather than the wider achievement of outcomes, has led, in Garwood's view, to public servants being separated from the public they serve, in favour of the purchaser who is now viewed as the primary customer.

The New Zealand model of new public management also does not recognise that the private and public sectors differ in terms of the use of political power, accountability, context, performance measures, risk management and interdependencies (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Kelsey, 1993). Rather, it attempts to import private business

management practises into the delivery of government policy (Boston et al., 1991; 1996). The literature indicates, however, that the governance and management structures of the public sector do differ markedly from those of private sector businesses, particularly in terms of political influence, the use of coercive power, multiple interdependencies and accountabilities, public scrutiny and constitutional authority (Boston et al., 1996 ; Gregory, 1995).

Two examples of the differences between private and public sector management were the Jeffrey Chapman and the Perry Cameron affairs. The former involved Mr Chapman (a former Auditor-General) resigning because he owed \$156,753 in unauthorised personal expenses to the Audit Office. The Serious Fraud Office subsequently charged Mr Chapman with fraud. Boston et al. (1996: 331) noted that the then State Services Commissioner was, “very mindful of threats to ethical principles and to citizen’s trust in government”. Boston et al. (1996:332) also stated that the Commissioner was reported to have commented in regard to the “Chapman affair” that “there isn’t any doubt there is a cost for [improved management in the public sector] and the price is the old ethic.”

The second matter, the Perry Cameron affair, involved Mr Cameron, a former Chief Executive of the Department of Internal Affairs, resigning over a conflict with the Minister concerning a personnel matter- (namely, the appointment of Frank Sharp who was responsible for cost overruns on the infamous house at the Ohakea airforce base). This example emphasised the extent that politicians may influence the day to day running of the public service. It also stressed that public sector managers are required to deal with the political as well as the managerial ramifications of their decisions (Boston et al., 1996; Boston, 1994).

The above examples not only emphasise that both the public and private sectors differ markedly, but rather that the differences have a critical impact upon the management of the public service, the use of public power and the implementation of public policy. It is on this basis that it is argued that the public sector should not follow the pattern of private sector management structures. Rather, the public sector should develop its own management and governance structures which are characteristic of the culture within which it operates (Boston et al., 1991; 1996; Gregory, 1995). In essence, the argument is that the principles underpinning new public management do not address the complexities of political philosophy, administrative theory and constitutional law, nor do they recognise and take seriously the difference in cultures between the private

sector and the public sector (Boston et al., 1996; Gregory, 1995).

The Effect on Professional Social Service Supervision

The changes heralded by new public management have had significant impact upon professional supervision. Hughes et al.(1997: 7) describe the context under which supervision takes place as the “turbulent environment in which the tensions between needs and resources, and creative and destructive accountability come to the fore”. Essentially, the changes have resulted in economic concerns dominating social concerns, with fiscal restraints determining the response to social problems (O’Brien et al., 1993; Munson, 1993; 1998; Brown et al., 1996; Cheyne, et al., 1997). Locally, public social services have been deconstructed and replaced by a business model in which generic managers run social service agencies like private sector businesses and where management theory tends to dominate and influence social work and other professional theories (Cockburn, 1994; Payne, 1994; Boston, 1996; Easton, 1997). Beddoe et al.(1994: 20) poignantly expresses the effects of these changes in the following statement:

Most social service organisations have experienced a decade of major change with much public and political scrutiny. It can be argued that this scrutiny plus the drive for greater accountability in state funded organisations has led to a concentration of types of organisational cultures... Social Service Organisations in NZ are simultaneously operating both bureaucratic and crisis cultures. There is a striving for efficiency, consistency, and tightly focused task orientation which is constantly undermined by staff shortages, managerial change, political interference, intensified public scrutiny and other internal and external threats

In this context the literature argues that new managerialism has caused an increased emphasis on the managerial aspects of social service supervision to the detriment of the professional aspects (Kadushin, 1992; Munson, 1993; 1998; Cockburn, 1994; Payne, 1994; Beddoe et al., 1994; Beddoe, 1997b). This shift in emphasis has promoted reductionist practice with supervision in some cases being reduced to a checklist based approach (Beddoe, 1997a; 1997b).

Local critiques of the managerial emphasis in supervision argue that in professional social work supervision the notion of best professional practice is a prerequisite for the achievement of the best possible client outcomes (Beddoe et al., 1994; Cockburn, 1994). It is further argued that best professional practice is derived from social work practice theory rather than from management theory (Cockburn, 1994).

Future of Professional Supervision

The effect of new managerialism upon professional supervision has raised discussion in the literature about the future of professional supervision (Payne, 1994; Bennie, 1995; Munson, 1993; 1998). This discussion tends to indicate that in the new managerial environment the future of social work supervision seems uncertain, particularly, since the profession finds its knowledge and skill base devalued by other professions, particularly business management (Beddoe et al., 1994; Cockburn, 1994; Payne, 1994; Brown et al., 1996; Munson, 1998). Furthermore, the dominance of the cost control model places supervision in a vulnerable position because it is considered by generic managers not to be an essential step in the output production process. The result of this perspective is that supervision is viewed as an overhead or extra that they can't afford (Hughes et al., 1997; Ellis, 1998; Munson, 1998). Munson (1993:18) particularly highlights this issue when he argues that management's "recent emphasis has focussed on decreasing costs by eliminating supervision".

Payne (1994) is the only author who directly speculates about the future of social work supervision. He paints three possible futures for social work supervision. The first sees the separation of the professional and managerial aspects as the result of a professional revival. In this future, the profession reclaims supervision as central to social work practice. Payne (1994) argues that central to this revival is the need for an approach that enables supervisors to access the detailed process interactions between the social worker and clients.

The second future sees a reconciliation of the professional and the managerial aspects through the vehicle of quality assurance. This future essentially involves social service management being reclaimed by social work practitioners who can reconcile the quality movement with social work practice theory.

The third portrays a complete rejection of the professional aspects of supervision resulting in supervision being reduced to managerial supervision. The prospect of this

future sees the social work profession reduced to technocrats who adhere solely to agency policies and procedures without question. Supervision in this future would be based on achievement of output targets and adherence to procedure (Payne, 1994).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the major themes related to the research question found in the social work supervision and new public management literature.

The social work supervision literature revealed a significant body of literature that dates back to 1920. This literature indicates that the social work practice environment and the process of social work professionalisation, have shaped the evolution of supervision, with shifts in emphasis occurring between the administrative and professional aspects of supervision. The recent literature indicates that the administrative aspects of supervision have dominated, to the detriment of the professional aspects, which arguably seem to be beginning its resurgence. The literature reviewed also indicated that social work supervision research was at an embryonic stage and in need of studies that include qualitative research methods (Tsui, 1997a). The final theme that emerged from the literature reviewed, was the proliferation of approaches and models of supervision.

The new public management literature revealed its origins in the scientific management (Taylorism) movement of the late 19th century. It also outlined the link between new public management and “neo-liberal” or “New Right” ideology. The State Sector Act, 1988, and the Public Finance Act, 1989, were identified as introducing new public management to New Zealand as part of a broader social and economic reform package. Critiques of new managerialism were discussed from the perspectives of its improved efficiency and effectiveness, and its theoretical underpinnings. The claims of improved efficiency and effectiveness found in the literature seemed to be made on the basis of accrual accounting and task completion, rather than on any improvement in social outcomes or social well-being. On the other hand, the discussion of the theoretical underpinnings indicated that theories were not congruent with the nature, ethos and ethics of the public service and had resulted in a production culture, which had not resulted in improved outcomes. This discussion also indicated that the new public management model did not adequately address the political environment in which public sector management occurs.

The final theme discussed was the impact of new public management on

professional social service supervision. This discussion revealed that new public management had resulted in an emphasis on managerial aspects of supervision to the detriment of the professional aspects. This discussion also indicated that the future of professional social work supervision in this environment was uncertain.

The implications of these matters for this thesis are that they together-with Chapters 3 and 4, set the scene for the participants' perspectives which will be examined in the three empirical chapters (Chapters 5,6 and 7). They also indicate that professional social service supervision cannot be investigated separately from the environment within which it is constructed and practised (Bracey, 1981). In terms of the research design, the key implication which arises from the lack of previous qualitative studies and studies in this subject area, is that of exploring new and uncharted terrain with few reference points. The final implication relates to the interpretation of data, and in this regard the literature review provides the foundation for the sensitising concepts described in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY PROBATION SERVICE'S CONTEXT

The aim of this chapter is to explore the Community Probation Service's context. The topics covered include the historical setting, new public management and its influence. The professional supervision context is also discussed with a particular focus upon recent supervision policies. The importance and influence of context in a study that is focussed on supervision is emphasised by Bracey (1981) who also studied supervision in the Probation Service. His study found that it was difficult to abstract supervision from the context in which it was practised and experienced (Bracey, 1981:118). The three topics under discussion in this chapter are considered to have a direct bearing on the research question and set the scene for the discussion of the research participants' perspectives in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Historical Setting

The current Community Probation Service is the heir to one hundred and twelve years of history. The organisation originated as a part-time addition to the police and prison service following the Offenders Probation Act 1886, and was further developed by the New Zealand Offenders' Probation Act 1920, which established that the duties of probation officers were to supervise, to make enquiries as to the character and personal history of the offender, with the special duty to recommend probation where appropriate (Department of Justice, 1981). One outcome of the latter act was the appointment of the first full-time probation officer in 1926. However, the growth of this fledgling profession was slow, and by 1950 there were six full-time probation officers with volunteers playing an important role in service delivery (Coyle, 1986). The organisation's transformation into a full-time professional service under the auspices of the Department of Justice occurred with the introduction of the Criminal Justice Act 1954 (Coyle, 1986). By 1975 there were 210 full-time probation officers who managed a service-wide caseload of 8519 people on probation and parole (Coyle, 1986).

Another sign of this transformation was the establishment of the New Zealand Probation Officers Association (NZAPO) in 1960 (NZAPO, 1984). As a professional body the association represented probation officers' concerns and issues, maintained a training fund, and presented training workshops. It also worked closely with the Public Service Association on matters related to pay and conditions that affect members' ability to work professionally. In 1980 NZAPO developed a code of ethics for probation officers (NZAPO, 1984).

The Probation Service continued to develop as an organisation through to 1992 when it was renamed the Community Corrections Division (Department of Justice, 1992). This name change reflected two major changes the first being the impact of the Criminal Justice Act 1985 which expanded the range of activities undertaken from probation to four types of community-based sentences and parole orders. The second major influence involved a change in the internal structure of the Department of Justice brought about by the introduction of group and unit management (Garwood, 1994). Rather than being a separate branch of the Department of Justice, the Probation Service was subsumed as a Division of what was termed the Corrections Operations Group. This internal structural change essentially split the Department of Justice into three areas Operations, Policy Analysis and Development and Support (Garwood, 1994).

The change from the Community Corrections Division of the Department of Justice to the Community Corrections Service, within the Department of Corrections occurred on 1 October 1995. It arose out of the review, which resulted in the Department of Justice being replaced by the Ministry of Justice, the Department for Courts and the Department of Corrections (Department of Corrections, 1996). The Ministry of Justice essentially serves a policy and advice function, whereas the Department for Courts and the Department of Corrections are primarily involved in the delivery or provision of services (Boston et al., 1996). The Community Corrections Service existed as one of three services within the Department of Corrections with the other two being the Public Prisons Service and Psychological Services (Dale, 1997).

In 1996 the Community Corrections Service was internally restructured with the new structure coming into existence from 1 January 1997. The purpose of this restructuring

was to place a greater emphasis upon service delivery to clients and customers (Dale, 1997). The key features of this change were a reduction in the number of administrative and management positions; the devolution of management responsibility and accountability; a greater emphasis upon business management through the creation of seventeen specialist finance manager positions; and the promotion of self-managing teams for direct service delivery (Dale, 1997). Finally, the Community Correction Service changed its name again on 1 July 1998 to become the Community Probation Service (Department of Corrections, 1998a).

New Public Management in the Community Probation Service

Generally, the origins of new public management in Aotearoa/New Zealand are attributed to the Treasury's post-election briefing documents Economic Management and Government Management (Treasury, 1984; 1987). However new public management in the Department of Justice appears to have begun in 1979 with the introduction of a "resource acquisition and management system" into the department by the then Secretary for Justice (Garwood, 1994). This system, called the Justice Management System initially operated at Head Office level and was the prelude to the implementation of other business management practices within the Department. The success and effective operation of the Justice Management System led to the Department of Justice recognising in 1985 that it needed to align its divisional business units within the one system and therefore set about providing management skills training for 700 of its Managers (Garwood, 1994).

The new system, the Justice Performance Management System (JPMS), was developed by consultants in conjunction with Department staff. The core mechanics of JPMS were based on the following management process of

→ Direction → Action → Feedback and Correction → Review →

Garwood (1994:91), in explaining JPMS described it as, "Much the same thing as management by objectives". JPMS had three distinct sub-systems. Strategic planning, described by Garwood (1994), as broad and long-term ranging from three to ten years and was undertaken at Senior Management level. Management planning covered the output performance during the medium term of one to three years. Management plans included

such items as mission, clients, descriptions of desired results and objectives and action plans for the achievement of set objectives (Garwood, 1994). Performance Planning consisted of a negotiated performance agreement between a manager and each staff member of a year's duration, against which the staff member's annual performance would be measured and reviewed (Garwood, 1994).

In 1988 the Probation Service produced its first management plan which identified its mission, clients and its output results. It was from this plan that the performance indicators and objectives were drawn for the individual performance plans. From 1988 onwards the impetus for the adoption of other "new public management" practices was derived from the Department's need to adapt to two significant pieces of legislation; namely, the State Sector Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989 (O'Donoghue, 1994).

Between 1989 and 1994 the implementation of new public management was largely confined to the development of the JPMS system with the dominant influence being the need for managers to remain within their budget allocation. The importance of fiscal restraint as the governing management principle of this period is emphasised by Garwood (1994: 110):

Senior managers interviewed preferred to describe resourcing problems as the need to provide 'value for money', and none of them saw it as an acceptable strategic planning objective to seek extra financial resource to carry out the mission of the Community Corrections Division. The principle of cost neutrality or shifting money to areas of greatest need was the only resource acquisition strategy that they could foresee within the context of the Division's management planning.

Another sign of the influence of new public management was found in the changes to organisational structure that occurred in 1993. These changes saw the Probation Service become the Community Corrections Division within Corrections Operations Group with the Department of Justice being divided into the three distinct areas of Operations, Policy Analysis and Development and Support (Garwood, 1994). Job titles changed from District Probation Officer and Senior Probation Officer to Manager, Community Corrections and

Unit Manager, Community Corrections (Garwood, 1994). The introduction of the word “Manager” into the Community Corrections Division appeared to signal the beginning of the separation of the managerial from the professional functions. This change was particularly highlighted with the appointment of a generic manager to the position of Manager, Community Corrections, Masterton in late 1994 (O’Donoghue, 1994). Likewise the split of the Department of Justice into the areas of Operations, Policy Analysis and Development and Support signalled the beginning of both the purchaser – provider split and the deconstruction of the Department of Justice (O’Donoghue, 1994).

The separation of policy and advice from service delivery together with the breaking up of large bureaucratic structures, have been previously discussed as essential components in new public management (Boston et al., 1996). For the Department of Justice these changes occurred later than in other Government Departments, which is particularly interesting when one contrasts what occurred between 1989 and 1994 with the review conducted by Strategos Consulting (1989:x) which proposed:

- A Ministry of Justice, responsible for law reform, policy and research, Treaty of Waitangi policy, cultural advice, contract enforcement and some administrative/corporate services;
- A Corrections Agency, as envisaged by the Roper report, with penal and community-based divisions;
- A Courts and Tribunals Agency;
- A Public Registries Agency.

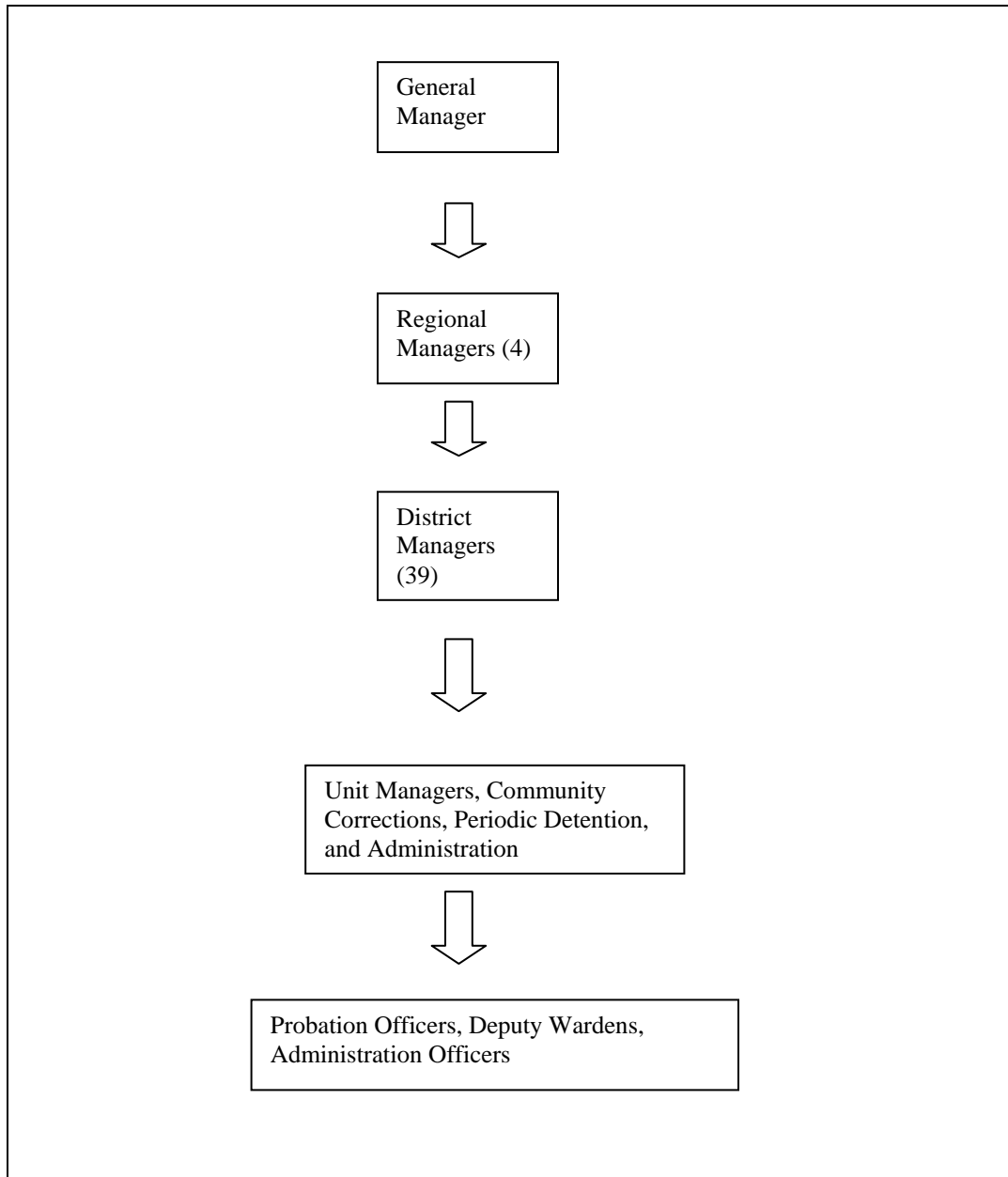
With the new Department of Corrections came new managers. The new Chief Executive, was previously a Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, whilst the General Manager, Community Corrections came from the Community Funding Agency (State Service Commission, 1995). One of the significant outcomes from these appointments was the internal restructuring conducted in 1996. This restructuring resulted in greater emphasis upon business management through the creation of seventeen specialist finance manager positions and the promotion of self-managing teams for direct service delivery (Dale, 1997). Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 below diagram the structural changes from this internal

restructuring. The changes from Figure 3.1, to Figure 3.2, also highlight the attempts to multi-skill the workforce. This is apparent in the expansion of the Probation Officer's role to include that of the Deputy Warden (Community Corrections, 1998a). The loss of specialist Unit Managers in Periodic Detention, Administration and Community Corrections marked a shift towards generic management skills rather than professional skills. This shift is illustrated by the Service Manager's job description person specification which had only one aspect out of twenty-five related to specialised knowledge found primarily in the corrections field - namely, "Knowledge of the Criminal Justice Act" (Community Corrections, 1996a).

The internal restructuring also brought with it the introduction of performance payments to all managers together-with all managers being placed on individual contracts whilst the professional staff remained on a collective contract (Community Corrections, 1996b; Community Corrections, 1998a). Prior to the restructuring the Unit Manager's role was included in the Community Corrections Collective Employment Contract and was essentially the top of the professional grade. This separation of professional practice from the managerial line in Community Corrections is further emphasised in the professional supervision policy, (Community Corrections, 1997b: 13-14) which states:

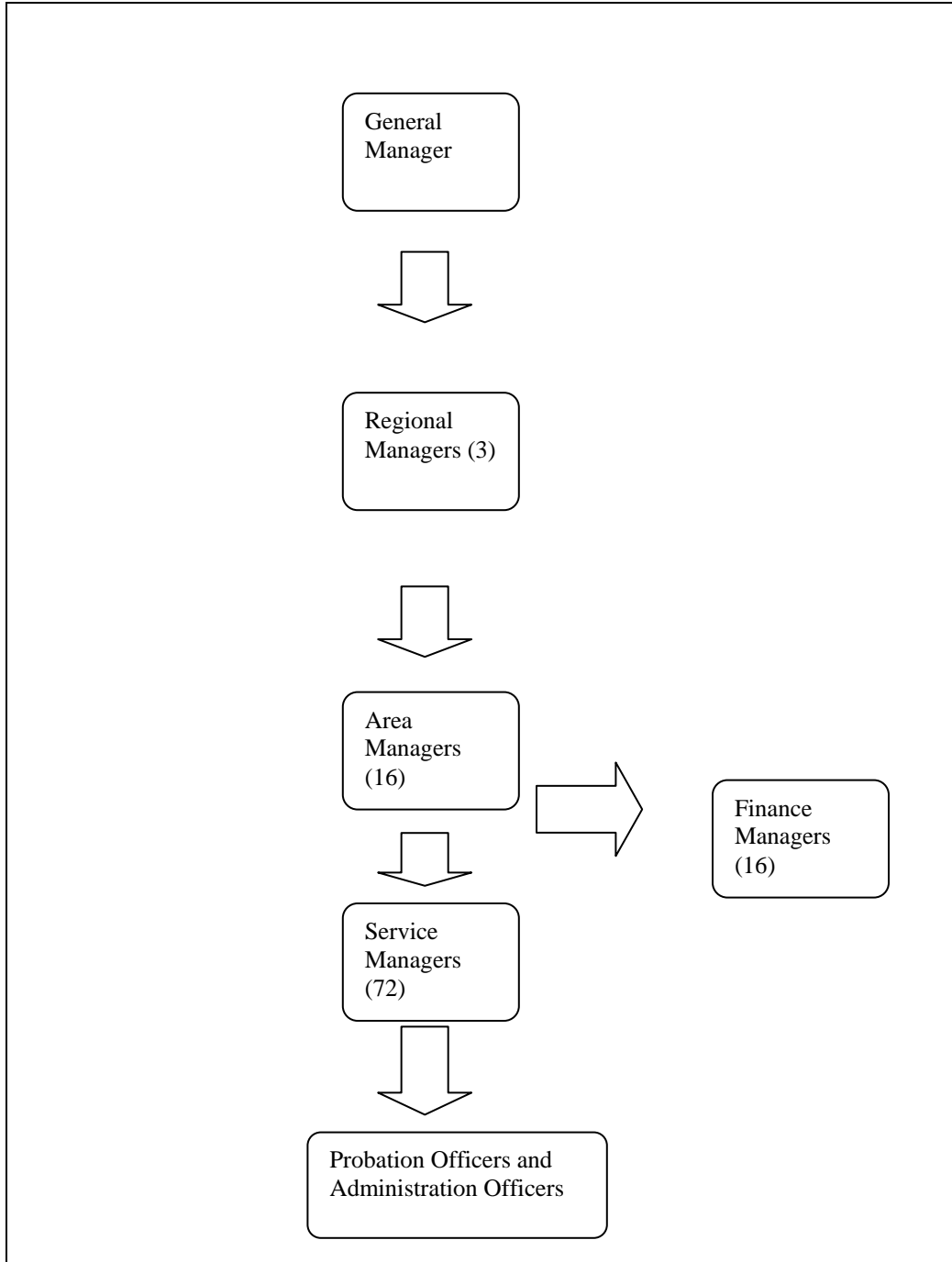
Probation Officers will be the main providers of professional supervision...Service Managers will not provide professional supervision.

Figure 3.1. Community Corrections Service Structure as at 31 December 1996



(Source: Dale, 1997:20)

Figure 3.2. Community Corrections Service Structure from 1 January 1997



(Source: Dale, 1997:20)

Professional Supervision within the Community Probation Service

Traditionally probation officers have identified with the social work profession. In the 1966 State Services Commission (SSC) booklet “Training for Social Workers in the Public Service” a section on probation officers is present (SSC, 1966). This professional identification with social work is further reinforced by Bracey’s (1978a: 9) assertion that the first public statement on social work supervision made by a social work agency was the Department of Justice Annual report to the House of Representatives for the year ending 31 March 1968 which states:

In the main centres the District Probation Officer must devote more and more time to administration, and staff training and case-work supervision needs to be taken over by Senior Probation Officers. The number of Senior Probation Officers must be increased and if they are to be effective they must have reduced caseloads. New Zealand lags well behind other countries in casework supervision, a remark which applies to other social services as well as the probation service.”

Bracey (1978b:17), a Senior Probation Officer in Auckland, also reviewed the landmark text *Supervision in Social Work*, (Kadushin, 1976) for *New Zealand Social Work*. The probation service’s link with the social work profession and social work supervision is further supported by Austin (1972), who refers to a re-planning of staffing in the probation service during 1967 which was designed to increase the frequency of supervision available for probation officers. Austin (1972) also highlights the commitment of the probation service to supervision through the provision of three short courses in casework supervision for District and Senior Probation Officers by the end of 1970. In the 1980’s, Bracey (1981) completed his Master’s thesis on casework supervision and two Senior Probation Officers are listed as contributors to the New Zealand Social Work Training Council’s *Supervision Resource Package* (NZSWTC, 1985). In 1992 the Community Corrections Service introduced a recruitment policy which made a level B social work qualification the prerequisite requirement for all probation officer vacancies. This requirement clearly

aligned the work of probation officers with the social work profession (O'Donoghue, 1994). Also in the early 1990's two policies on staff supervision were produced.

The first of these two policies was issued on 8 November 1990 and came in the form of Probation circular 1990/95, which included an amendment to the Probation Manual. The policy introduced by this circular which endorsed "that all staff should receive ongoing and structured supervision", also introduced the initiatives of written supervision contracts and an evaluation form for the participants to use in their supervision (Department of Justice, 1990). The manual amendment itself constructed supervision in terms of the following functions:

Administrative/Management, Educative/Teaching, Supportive/Enabling,
Reconstructive/Creative.

This construction of supervision bears a close resemblance to that found in the New Zealand Social Work Training Council's (1985) *Supervision Resource Package* and emphasises the link between professional social work supervision and that of probation officers. In terms of the content the manual amendment contains the following sections: mission statement; policy statement; supervision principles; supervision functions; supervision standards and appendices. Included in the appendices are a bibliography and book reviews on supervision literature.

In 1993 the Staff Supervision section of the Probation manual was amended. This 1993 amendment is smaller than the previous policy and does not define supervision in terms of its functions nor include in its appendices a bibliography and book reviews on supervision literature. The 1993 policy put a greater emphasis upon the managerial aspects of supervision than its predecessor does. This is particularly evident in the 1993 policy's linking of supervision to the achievement of outputs and the omission of professional development from the policy statement (Department of Justice, 1993). The shift towards more managerially orientated staff supervision is also evident in the 1993 policy's clear linking of supervision with performance management (Department of Justice, 1993:P5.2).

The content of the supervision session will include:

- 1) Performance feedback and evaluation which are non-negotiable because of the co-relation of individual performance with the requirements of the management plan;
- 2) Other important aspects, which may be negotiated but should be linked to career development, training, and the management plan.

In reaction to the above managerially oriented approach to staff supervision between 1994 and 1997 a number of attempts were made to enhance the standing of supervision within the organisation. The New Zealand Association of Probation Officers (NZAPO) was at the forefront of these attempts, lobbying both publicly and with management for professional supervision. The most hard-hitting of these attempts was that made by Chris Gilbert, (President, of NZAPO) in 1995 in the editorial of the Association's official journal. Gilbert (1995:2) attributed a number of recent retirements- ostensibly due to ill health, untimely deaths and staff going on extended sick leave or becoming burnt out- to high workloads and a lack of professional supervision.

Another attempt to improve the standing of professional supervision was the production of the 48 page *Supervising Probation Officers: A Practical handbook for Supervisors* (O'Donoghue, 1995). This handbook was forwarded to the Community Corrections General Manager, the Lower North Island Regional Manager and the President of NZAPO, but there was little evident follow up.

In May 1997, the Service established a Professional Supervision working group. The terms of reference of this working group were as follows "To produce a framework for the professional supervision of Probation Officers" (Community Corrections, 1997a: 2). The outputs the working group was asked to produce included the following (Community Corrections, 1997a: 2):

- A clear definition of the objective of professional supervision.
- A description of the methods of professional supervision.
- A definition of the links from professional supervision to training and development planning.

- A model contract for professional supervision.
- A methodology for deciding on internal or external supervision.
- A cost-effective framework for the delivery of professional supervision.
- A costing for the proposed framework.

The process for policy development involved the project group initially meeting for three days in Christchurch from 28-30 May 1997 to consider the terms of reference. The result of this meeting was a draft report, which was forwarded to Area offices for consultation. The consultation included a questionnaire about the draft report. According to the project report, the response to the questionnaire was disappointing (Community Corrections, 1997a: 3):

Fewer than a quarter of Probation Officers throughout the country responded to the questionnaire, which was a disappointing return rate. It was clear from comments received that a number of factors contributed to this, including the very tight timeframe for responses, a low energy level resulting from high pressure of work, the pace of change within the Service, and in some cases the lack of a culture of good supervision which has led to a degree of cynicism.

The project team met to consider the 133 responses on 19-20 June 1997 and produced its report for management on 25 June 1997. The report recommended that (Community Corrections, 1997a :5):

1. The principles of professional supervision described in their report are accepted as a benchmark.
2. The resources provided by the department enable a high standard of professional supervision to be implemented.
3. The supervision needs of managers and administration staff be identified and provided for appropriately.
4. A Code of Ethics is developed for the Community Probation Service.

5. The model of professional supervision to be implemented included the following:

- The appointment of two people to implement the project for the next 12 months.
- The creation of 14 full-time equivalent positions for supervisors.
- Supervision for probation officers with less than two years experience is provided internally.
- Seventy-five percent of supervision for all other probation officers is provided internally and twenty-five percent provided externally.
- Training for supervisors is contracted externally and supervisors receive one hour per fortnight external supervision.

The project group's definition of professional supervision identified it with clinical supervision and described the elements of supervision as accountable practice, professional development, personal support and mediation/advocacy. This definition bears a clear resemblance to that contained in the New Zealand Children, Young Persons & their Families Service (NZCYPFS) policy (CYPFS, 1997). Essentially, it would appear that both definitions are derived from Morrison (1993). However, what is interesting is that the similarity ends there because the models constructed by the two agencies differ markedly. NZCYPFS' model keeps the managerial or administrative aspects of supervision together with the professional, whereas the Community Probation model does not. It is also interesting to note that NZCYPFS corresponded directly with Morrison, whereas the Community Probation Service did not (CYPFS, 1997; Community Corrections Service, 1997a).

The policy that resulted from the work of the project group was published in November 1997. The following statement from the General Manager introduces the policy (Community Corrections Service, 1997b: 2):

Professional Supervision is:

- Crucial to effective interaction with offenders to achieve the reduction in re-offending.
- An initiative which is complementary to the competency framework and performance management.
- We are committed to resourcing it by prioritising time use and the dollars to ensure the result is effective.

The above statement links professional supervision clearly to the Community Probation Services' mission, performance measurement and performance management systems. It also signals management's commitment to the policy and subsequent programme.

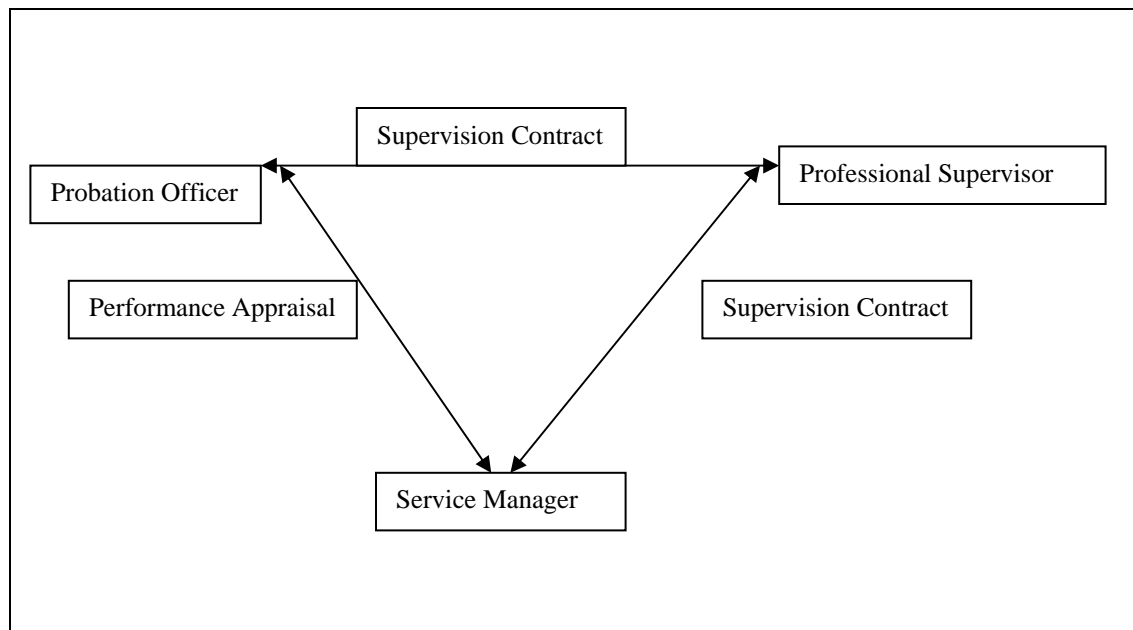
Within the policy itself professional supervision is defined as (Community Corrections Service, 1997b: 3):

Accountable practice;
Professional Development;
Personal support;
Mediation/advocacy.

The Policy establishes professional supervision within a triangular arrangement involving the probation officer, the professional supervisor and the service manager (Community Corrections, 1997b). Figure 3.3 below presents a diagram of this arrangement. The arrangement reveals the relationship between the three parties involved in the professional supervision programme. The service manager is responsible for conducting the probation officers' performance appraisal, which includes their assessment of competence against the Community Probation competency framework. The service manager is also responsible for selecting and contracting professional supervisors who are in the main to be probation officers. There is provision for some professional supervision to be provided by service providers' external to the Service. The service manager's responsibilities also include the assessment of the supervisor's level of competence against competency standard 27 (Community Corrections Service, 1997b; Community Probation Service, 1998a). The

professional supervisor is responsible to both the service manager and the probation officer in terms of supervision provision. Their role is to establish, implement, close, review a supervision contract with the probation officer, and advise the service manager where appropriate of any significant matters pertaining to the above (Community Probation Service, 1998b).

Figure 3.3. Supervision Arrangements



(Source Community Corrections, 1997b:12)

The probation officer appears to have dual accountabilities. They are accountable to the service manager in terms of their overall work performance, management and task completion and in terms of their professional practice and professional development they are accountable to the professional supervisor (Community Corrections Service, 1997b).

The policy separates the managerial or administrative functions of supervision from the educational and support functions of supervision within the Community Probation Service. It also separates the professional practice of the Community Probation Service from the managerial business and in one sense moves the clients and service delivery they

receive from the Community Probation Service one step further away from the management of the organisation (Gowdy et al., 1993).

In terms of the implementation of this policy a project team led by Warwick Duell, (Regional Manager, Southern) was established. This team's terms of reference were to implement the recommendations of the previous working party by 30 June 1998. As at 15 April 1998 they had arranged training to be provided for supervisors during May consisting of three day long workshops to be followed up by a fourth day at a later date provided by Dynamics Consulting (Duell, 1998). The project team were also reviewing the processes associated with professional supervision, updating the human resource manual, developing a screening selection device for people who want to be professional supervisors and looking at issues associated with monitoring the first year of professional supervision (Duell, 1998). A separate monitoring group was also established to advise and monitor the implementation process (Department of Corrections, 1998a).

Summary

This chapter has discussed the general historical, the new managerial and professional supervision elements of the Community Probation Service context.

The historical development reveals voluntary origins, which were slow to develop into a fully-fledged professional organisation. As a fully-fledged professional organisation the Probation Service remained relatively unchanged from the 1960's to 1992. Since 1992, it has undergone significant change and has been renamed three times and subjected to restructuring at different levels.

The discussion in regard to new public management emphasised that origins of new management practices in the Department of Justice can be traced to 1979. The 1980's were a decade of management training and systems development. From 1989 to 1994, most of the practices of new public management were introduced into the service through the JPMS system. The dominant management principle of this period was fiscal restraint (Garwood, 1994). Since 1994 the service has been restructured and the separation of the management and professional functions has been further reinforced.

The discussion of professional supervision showed identification with the social work profession and its tradition of supervision dating back to 1968. The professional social work elements appeared to give way to a managerial emphasis in the agency's 1993 policy. The 1997 policy attempted to redress the professional elements of supervision. It did this through replicating the service structure of separating management activities from professional activities and making the provision of professional supervision a probation officer activity. A further point is that the 1997 professional supervision policy was driven by management and not by the professional staff or the professional bodies. The policy also makes service managers, the managers, purchasers, and assessors of supervisory competency.

Two factors stand out from this discussion of context, firstly the rate of recent managerial and structural change and secondly the increasing separation of the professional and management functions within the organisation.

CHAPTER 4

THEORY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the theory and research methodology utilised in the study. Social work practice theory, identified as the body of theory informing the research and the concepts that sensitised the research methodology, will be discussed, together-with the link between social work practice theory and the research methodology. This is explained through a discussion of the reflection in action process from social work practice. Also discussed is the research methodology: its philosophical underpinnings; the rationale for its choice; the research design, which includes the ethical considerations; the profiles of the participants; and a description of the data collection process. Finally, the process by which the data was organised and analysed is discussed towards the end of the chapter.

Social Work Practice Theory

This section outlines how social work practice theory provides the basis for what Patton (1990: 391) calls “sensitising concepts”. According to Patton (1990:391), these concepts provide the researcher with a “general sense of reference and provide directions along which to look”. Sensitising concepts generally come from the literature, the researcher’s theoretical perspective, experience and involvement in the area under study. In this study the sensitising concepts have been applied inductively. In other words, they are applied in the interpretation of the participants’ perspectives and like lenses they bring the subject under study into a sharper or clearer focus. The concepts that will be discussed are the social construction of social work theory, the extensiveness of social work practice theory, and the person(s) and their environment(s) paradigm.

Social Construction of Social Work Practice Theory

It is argued that social work practice theory is socially constructed and that theories of social work practice are products of the social and cultural contexts in which they are developed (Payne, 1997; Rein et al., 1981). It is further argued that theories of social work practice also affect the context from which they have arisen (Payne, 1997; Rein et al., 1981).

The argument that social work practice theory is socially constructed is drawn from the ideas of Berger et al. (1971), who asserted that reality is knowledge which guides our behaviour, and that we all have different perceptions of reality. They further asserted that we arrive at shared perceptions of reality through the sharing and organisation of knowledge. These shared understandings of reality, when held by a social group, form the basis of human objectivity. Essentially, the social construction process is an interactive one in which individuals contribute through institutionalisation and legitimisation to the creation of social meaning within the social structure of societies, and societies (through the participation of individuals in their structures) create conventions by which people behave (Payne, 1997).

The social construction of social work practice theory is based upon the three elements that construct social work; namely, the social worker, client, and context. In essence, social work is constructed by the forces that control and create social work as a profession, the forces that create clients and the social context in which social work is practised (Payne, 1997). In all cases, social work includes distinct patterns of behaviour, a certain range of expectations and specific cultural norms derived from the social context. Social work practice theory develops from within social work from interaction with social work practice. Rein et al.(1981:37) strongly support this view when they state that:

The knowledge that social work seeks cannot be made in universities by individuals who presumptively seek timeless, contextless truths about human nature, societies, institutions, and policy. The knowledge *must* be developed in living situations that are confronted by the contemporary episodes in the field...it is necessary to enlarge the notion of context to include not only the client's situation but the agency itself and more broadly the institutional setting of practice. This involves the intersecting network of offices, agencies, professionals, government structures and political pressure groups that all act together on the agency.

Rein et al. (1981) also support the argument that social work practice theories are open systems that develop, change, grow and adapt from interaction with both the practice setting and the social context in which practice takes place (Turner, 1996). Moreover,

social work practice theory like social work is considered to be reflexive because it develops in response to demands made by clients upon social workers and the social work profession. It is constantly changing in response to practice constructions by its participants and responds to the current social situation, its interests and concerns as well as the histories of theoretical traditions, profession and service context. By its very nature social work practice theory is not universal, rather it is an agreed perspective that is accepted within a social group as a reasonable representation of the terrain that it covers (Payne, 1997; Turner, 1996).

In terms of being a sensitising concept in this study of professional social service supervision the social construction of social work practice theory provides a frame for considering how professional supervision practice is socially constructed. The importance of this is that professional supervision practice is argued to be a field of practice within social work and is therefore constructed within this framework (Brashears, 1995; Munson, 1993; Kadushin, 1992a).

The Extensiveness of Social Work Practice Theory

Social work practice theory is an extensive subject. It consists of two major elements - namely, formal theory and practice theory – with the latter sometimes referred to as practice wisdom (Rein et al., 1981; Munson, 1993). Formal theory is organised and explanatory and is generally found in texts (Munson, 1993). Practice theory, on the other hand, is individualised and begins with descriptions of practice experiences and what is done in the practice setting. From this position connections are then made to formal theoretical concepts (Munson, 1993). The relationship between formal theory and practice theory in this social work setting is best understood through reference to concepts of “espoused theory” and “theory in use” (Argyris et al., 1974). Formal social work practice theories equate with “espoused theory” whilst practice theories or practice wisdom equate with the concept of “theory in use”.

The social work theory literature outlines the formal espoused theory of the profession. This literature reveals an extensive formal theory base with Turner (1996) identifying 27 major systems of social work practice theory whilst Munson (1993:21) argues that there are “now over 130 different theories of practice” competing for use.

Formal social work practice theories have been classified into three primary human activity focus areas, namely: those that focus on the person and their attributes;

the person's use of attributes; and person and society (Turner, 1996). The focus area of the person and their attributes includes theories that view the person as a biological being (e.g., Neurolinguistic Programming theory), as a psychological being (e.g., Functional Psychoanalytic theory), as a learner (e.g., Behavioural theory), and as a thinker (e.g. Cognitive theory). The area of the person's use of their attributes views the person as a contemplator (e.g., Meditation theory), as an experiential being (e.g. Gestalt theory), as a communicator (e.g., Communication theory) and as a doer (e.g., Task Centred theory). Finally, the person and society focus area conceives of the person as an individual (e.g., Ego Psychology), as a communal being (e.g., Transactional Analysis), as a societal being (e.g., Role) and in relation to the universe (e.g., Systems) (Turner, 1996). The range of areas outlined reveals that social work practice theory is inclusive of aspects of biological, psychological and sociological reality, and it explains why in some social work circles reference is made to the bio-psycho-social approach (Austrian, 1995; Turner, 1996).

As a sensitising concept, the extensiveness of formal social work practice theory contributes to the study in three main ways. Firstly, it provides concepts for questioning the complex range of issues and interactions that occur within the entire spectrum of the person's bio-psycho-social reality. When social work practice theory is applied in this study it is on the basis that supervision is a specific field of practice that is informed by social work practice theory (Turner, 1996; Brashears, 1995). Secondly, it accentuates the holistic and interconnected nature of social work practice through the inclusion and linkages of so many different theoretical systems (Turner, 1996; Payne, 1997). Thirdly, it contributes to the espoused theory for this study, which is the researcher's attempt to describe or explain what is done in the practice situation. This "espoused theory" is always related to the "theory in use", that is the theory that the researcher uses whilst actually working in the situation (Munson, 1993; Fook, 1996). For the relationship between the "espoused theory" and the "theory in use" to be effective it is important that they have a good degree of congruence (Munson, 1993; Fook, 1996).

Person(s) and their Environment(s) Paradigm

It is argued that there is a dominant paradigm that links both formal theory and practice theory. It is further argued that this paradigm is shaped by the dual focus of

social work upon persons and their situation or environment (Turner, 1996; Payne, 1997). The persons and their environment paradigm provides a frame of reference for incorporating the multiple interactions that occur within peoples' bio-psycho-social realities (Turner, 1996). In short, the person and their social context are always considered together. This paradigm was recently reinforced by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in their draft definition of social work (NZASW, 1998d: 10), which stated that:

Social work is a profession which operates at the interface of people and their environments and addresses itself to the multiple transactions that occur at that interface...social work intervention incorporates and balances the dual focus on persons and their situations.

As a sensitising concept, the persons in their environment paradigm contributes to the study by providing a contextual frame of reference that helps organise the discourse between the actual reality of the social work practice situation with the extensive conceptual material of social work practice theory. In short, the paradigm facilitates the discourse between the "espoused theory" and the "theory in use". In this study the person and their environment paradigm provides a frame of reference that organises the discourse between the participants' perspectives and the conceptual theory drawn from the social work supervision literature.

Social Work Practice Theory and the Research Methodology

The relationship between social work practice theory and the research methodology employed in this study, is based on the reflective or reflection in action approach of social work practice and the inductive research paradigm (Payne, 1997; Fook, 1996; Babbie, 1995; Schon, 1991; Patton, 1990).

The reflection in action approach argues that theory is normally implicit in peoples' actions and that the "theory in use" has a relationship with the theory that is reported (Argyris et al., 1974; Fook, 1996). The effectiveness of this relationship is established through a process of articulating the implicit "theory in use". The reflective approach develops theory inductively upon the basis of specific experiences; in other words, the practitioners' reflection upon the experience leads to explicit connections with theoretical concepts (Fook, 1996; Munson, 1993). This reflection process starts

with the particular experience then seeks to understand or make sense of this through reference to theoretical concepts (Fook, 1996; Babbie, 1995). Schon (1991: 295) encapsulates the essence of reflective practice when he states that it “takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation.” Likewise, it is argued that social work practice, particularly professional social work supervision practice, is a reflective conversation between the parties (Schon, 1991).

The most obvious link between this reflective process and the research methodology was in the research interviews themselves, which could be described as reflective conversations. Ellen, a probation officer, provided an example of the reflective nature of the interviews when at the end of her interview she stated:

You’ve set off my pattern of thinking...it’s really working through it. You see I’ve not focused on this at all. I knew I didn’t want to be a professional supervisor from the ranks, but this process has made me realise why and I just don’t see how it can work and I’m not going to buy into that whole thing for the organisation.

Ellen’s comments also appear to relate to Pilalis (1986) who asserted that the reflection in action approach is based upon two continua: the first involves the movement from reflex action to purposeful action, whilst the second involves the movement from non-reflective thought to reflective thought. The above comments by Ellen appear to capture that movement which took place on both continua towards reflective thought and purposeful action.

The linkage between the reflection in action approach found in social work practice theory and the inductive research paradigm of qualitative research used in the research methodology of this study is that in both approaches the understanding and the outcomes emerge from the experience within the setting (Patton, 1990).

Research Methodology

In this section the philosophical underpinnings of the qualitative research approach will be discussed together with the reasons for choosing this approach.

Philosophical Underpinnings

The philosophical underpinnings of the research methodology are found within the qualitative inquiry paradigm. This paradigm according to Patton (1990:37) is based

upon phenomenological inquiry, which uses both “qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context-specific settings.”

Phenomenological inquiry focuses on the structure and essence of people’s experience of a particular phenomenon. The phenomenological perspective also argues that there is no objective reality; rather, there is only what people know their experience is and means and this subjective experience incorporates both objectivity and peoples’ reality (Patton, 1990). In relation to research approaches, Patton (1990:70) emphasises that a phenomenological perspective can mean both or either of the following:

- 1) a focus on what people experience and how they interpret the world (in which case one can use interviews without actually experiencing the phenomenon) or (2) a methodological mandate to actually experience the phenomenon being investigated (in which case participant observation would be necessary).

The type of phenomenological approach employed in this study corresponds to that of focussing on what subjects’ experience and how they interpret their world, without actually participating in the phenomena oneself. The approach used focused on the subject matter of service managers’, and probation officers’ perspectives of professional supervision within the specific context of the Community Probation Service.

The phenomenological approach seeks data that is qualitative. This kind of data is detailed and contains direct quotations that capture peoples’ perspectives and their experiences. Patton (1990:24) argues that the research task for the qualitative researcher “is to provide a framework within which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their points of view about the world”. The particular challenge that arises from the nature of the data is for the researcher to read the findings out of the data rather than read their preconceptions into the data.

The naturalistic element of qualitative research involves the researcher not attempting to manipulate the natural setting and being open to what ever emerges from the research (Patton, 1990). The inductive element of this kind of inquiry is based in the researcher’s attempts to make sense of the situation without the imposition of

predetermined criteria or expectations on the subject under study. In the inductive approach the understanding of the subject under study emerges from the experience of the setting, and theories about what is occurring are grounded in the reality of the situation (Babbie, 1995; Patton, 1990; Glaser et al., 1967). The final element listed in Patton's (1990) description of the qualitative inquiry paradigm is that of a holistic perspective. This perspective understands that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and also demands that consideration is given to the social context of the subject under study.

Hermeneutics underpins the research methodology through informing the interpretist framework used in the study. The hermeneutic approach recognises that researchers construct the reality based on their interpretations of the data with the assistance of the participants who provided the data (Patton, 1990). This approach argues that to place any study in its proper context one must know about the researcher as well as those researched, and that the meaning of the research can only be interpreted from the particular position of its context (Patton, 1990).

Rationale for Choice of Research Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was chosen for this study on the basis that it was the best approach to identify and examine the perspectives of probation officers and service managers on professional supervision.

Furthermore, the methodology employed parallels that employed by social work supervision practitioners in their supervision practice. It is argued social work supervisors' focus upon the phenomena of the supervisees work whilst not actually participating in the work themselves and they are also interested in supervisees' perspectives and experiences (Kadushin, 1992a). Supervisors are also challenged not to read their preconceptions into the material that emerges and through the reflection in action process they use induction to reason from the particular to the general, abstract and theoretical (Fook, 1996; Shulman, 1993; Munson, 1993; Kadushin, 1992a; Schon, 1991). It is further argued that social work supervisors also interpret the material placed before them by supervisees from within their particular social context and in a very real sense are constructing the reality upon the basis of their interpretations (Payne, 1997; Brown et al., 1996; Shulman, 1993; Munson, 1993). A further reason for choosing this research methodology is that it aligns or interlocks

with the “espoused theory” of this research. This alignment is based upon a reliance on inductive reasoning (Fook, 1996). Finally, a qualitative research methodology was chosen because the previous reported studies found on social work supervision were quantitative studies and predominately survey research (Tsui, 1997a). It has previously been argued in Chapter 2, that “the development of empirical research on social work supervision is still in the embryonic stage”, due to the lack of qualitative research in this field (Tsui, 1997a: 48). With this in mind the researcher has responded to Tsui (1997a) suggestion that qualitative methods should be included in future studies of social work supervision.

Research Design

The research data was primarily collected through in-depth interviews with probation officers and service managers. This section will discuss the ethics, sampling process, the participants selected, and the data collection process.

Ethics

An application was made to the Human Ethics Committee at Massey University (see Appendix A). This application and the subsequent interview with the committee helped to clarify ethical issues, particularly in the areas of access to participants, confidentiality and conflicts of interest and role.

Access to Participants

Access to the participants was achieved via the Central North Island Regional Manager of the Community Probation Service, who provided a list of the probation officers and service managers in the Central North Island Region. This list of names included a letter confirming that she was able to make the list available. In return for access to potential participants, the researcher signed a deed of agreement. In this agreement the researcher undertook to consider the work of the competency and professional supervision projects introduced to the Community Probation Service in November 1997. He further agreed to provide access to the research findings to the Community Probation Service as well as forwarding copies of the findings to the Regional Manager and the professional supervision project team.

The initial approach to all potential participants was made in writing and included the Information Sheet (which explained the nature and purpose of the study

and specified their rights), the Consent Form and the Regional Manager's letter of approval (which assured participants that their identity was known only by the researcher). The potential participants were asked to contact the researcher should they wish to participate in the study. The envelopes were marked personal and confidential. In those cases where no response was received from potential participants after two weeks, the researcher telephoned the participants and asked them whether or not they wished to participate. Where the participants agreed to be interviewed an interview time and venue was arranged and then confirmed in a letter, which also enclosed the interview guide. Each interview was only commenced once the participant had completed the Consent Form.

Confidentiality

The researcher maintained confidentiality by ensuring that all identifying features such as a participant's name and location remained confidential to the researcher and transcript typist, and by writing up the research findings in a manner that ensured that the participants would not be identified. The latter included assigning fictitious names to each of the participants and the omission of details that were likely to lead to their identity being revealed (e.g. length of service and professional affiliation). Confidentiality was also maintained through the secure storage of all research data, and the typist who transcribed the interview tapes signed a deed of confidentiality.

Conflict of Interest or Conflict of Role

The researcher does not believe he had any conflict of interest or conflict of roles in this research. Having stated the above I will be explicit about my context both historically and during the course of the research.

I worked for what is now the Community Probation Service for almost six years in the roles of probation officer in Taranaki, and unit manager/service manager in Palmerston North. I resigned from the Probation Service in March 1997 to take up a position at MidCentral Health. During the period of my employment with the then Community Corrections Service, I undertook study that was sponsored by the Service towards the postgraduate Diploma in Social Science (Social Policy and Social Work). My final fieldwork placement for this diploma was undertaken within the then Community Corrections Service with the focus being the professional supervision of probation officers. At the end of this placement I produced a handbook for the

supervisors of probation officers (O'Donoghue, 1995). The handbook was an attempt to contribute to the recognition of “the professional nature of probation work” and for the assistance of staff who consider “professional supervision of probation officers to be vital” (O'Donoghue, 1995:3).

Upon completing the diploma I maintained a keen personal interest in professional social work supervision. This interest is manifest in my current position with MidCentral Health Limited where I am involved in the professional supervision of social workers both within the Mental Health Service and in the Social Work Unit. It is also present in my involvement with the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Education and Training Standing Committee. As a member of this committee I have been involved in the drafting of the Association's policy statement on supervision and standards on supervision courses (NZASW, 1998b; 1998c). During the course of this research, a monograph I wrote prior to commencing the thesis entitled *Supervising Social Workers: A Practical Handbook* (O'Donoghue, 1998a) was published by the School of Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University.

On the basis of the above, it may be said that the particular bias that I bring to the research is one derived from a professional interest, study and passion for social work practice and social work supervision, rather than roles undertaken currently or historically.

The Sample

The sample of ten probation officers and five service managers was purposefully selected. The aim in purposefully selecting the participants was to obtain information rich cases and a cross-section in terms of their experience and professional background. From the 15 respondents initially invited, one probation officer and two service managers declined. A third service manager initially agreed to participate but was subsequently unable to be contacted and was therefore replaced.

Table 4.1 Participant Characteristics

Probation Officers	Gender	Cultural Identity	Age	Qualifications	Supervision Training
Angela	Female	New Zealand Pakeha	40-49	None	None
Kiri	Female	Maori	40-49	DipSW	None
Ellen	Female	New Zealand Pakeha	50-59	BSW	Department Course
David	Male	First generation New Zealander	40-49	BA	One off sessions
Jack	Male	European	50-59	RN	None
Grace	Female	Australian with Irish and English background	30-39	MA	CIT course
Mary-Jane	Female	Pakeha	20-29	BSW	None
Joseph	Male	New Zealand Pakeha. Scottish, Irish	50-59	None	None
Ernest	Male	New Zealand Pakeha	40-49	BA, DipSW	Short Course Private Provider
Tania	Female	European	50-59	BA and three Certs.	Short Course Community Probation
Service Managers	Gender	Cultural Identity	Age	Qualifications	Supervision Training
Nicholas	Male	European	50-59	DipCrim	Short Course Private Provider
Sofia	Female	New Zealand Pakeha	40-49	Dip BusStud	Short Course Private Provider
Neil	Male	New Zealander	40-49	None	None
Joan	Female	New Zealand European	40-49	None	None
Susan	Female	New Zealander, Irish and Scottish	40-49	BA	Short Courses CIT Course

With each refusal, replacements were sought. From the replacements a further service manager declined to participate. The total response rate was 75 per cent (90 per cent for probation officers and 66 per cent for service managers).

The demographic details of the participants' are outlined in Table 4.1. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a fictional name and extraneous personal details were omitted. Also omitted from Table 4.1, to protect the identity of participants, is their length of service, which ranged from 3 to 26 years. Among the probation officers there were 3 with less than 10 years service, 4 with 10 to 14 years service, 1 with 15 to 20 years and 2 with more than 20 years service. Two of the service managers had less than 10 years service, 1 had 10-14 years and the other 2 had more than 20 years service experience. Individual details such as membership of professional associations were also omitted from Table 4.1 on the grounds that they might lead to the participants being identified. It may be noted, however, that one probation officer was a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers and that another was a member of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors. One service manager was an associate of the New Zealand Institute of Management.

Individual Interviews

The ten probation officers were interviewed first, followed by the five service managers. The interviews were conducted in June 1998, using a semi-structured interview guide developed with knowledge gleaned from the literature and the researcher's own experience as a provider and recipient of professional supervision. The interview guide was structured around four main areas: the participants' background details; philosophy of professional supervision; their recent professional supervision experiences; and their aspirations and expectations of professional supervision. Two pre-test interviews were conducted, one with a probation officer and the other with a service manager. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview settings were generally away from the person's work, apart from three probation officers and a service manager, who requested that they be interviewed in their office. All fifteen interviews were audio-taped and 277 pages of single-spaced transcript were produced for analysis. The participants were sent the transcript of their interview, to review and correct any errors or alter any comments.

Generally, the fieldwork went to plan. Only one significant problem was encountered, namely, the need to replace the tape-recorder after the third interview when it was discovered shortly after the interview that the speed of the recording

varied from very fast to very slow. Fortunately after a lot of pain-staking patience from the transcription typist about ninety-five percent of this interview was transcribed.

Data Analysis

Issues in Analysing Qualitative Data

Qualitative research methods generate voluminous amounts of data for the researcher to analyse, interpret, and finally to synthesise into a coherent report. In wading through the large amount of data the issue for the researcher includes minimising his/her selective perception, personal bias and theoretical preferences, each of which could inappropriately influence the analysis and interpretation of the data (Patton, 1990: 472-477).

In regard to this issue there are two arguments that can be made. The first is that it is not possible to be totally neutral and impartial and that all researchers bring preconceptions and interpretations to the subjects they study, irrespective of the particular method employed (Denzin, 1989a: 23; Patton, 1990: 472-477). Because research is not value-free it requires the researcher to be explicit about his/her prior assumptions and involvement with the phenomenon under study (Denzin, 1989a: 23). The second argument follows on from the first and asserts that once it is accepted that every researcher brings preconceptions and particular interpretative perspectives to the subject, then the issue becomes one of the researcher's credibility and competence rather than the researcher's subjectivity. Essentially, the concern in regard to credibility is about the extent to which the researcher can be trusted, whereas the concern in regards to competence is demonstrated through the use of verification and validation procedures that ensure the quality of the analysis (Patton, 1990: 460-494). In this study, some of the procedures used were: data triangulation, in which direct observations, interview data and written documents were considered; testing out rival explanations; looking for cases which did not fit the patterns or themes that were emerging; discussing the analysis with my thesis supervisors through the submission of drafts of the work in progress; and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of the research process.

Organising the Data

The organisation of the data essentially involved reducing the volume of information, identifying themes and patterns, and developing a reporting framework for communicating the findings (Patton, 1990).

In preparation for the analysis a data analysis folder was created with four files - namely (a) background, (b) philosophy, (c) recent experience and (d) aspirations. These four files corresponded with the four areas of the interview guide. The analysis of the 15 interviews began with a cross-case analysis (i.e., the grouping together of answers from different people to common questions or analysing different perspectives on key issues). In this case, the answers from the participants' transcripts were cut and pasted into the four above-named files under the sub-areas of the interview guide (Patton, 1990: 376). From there the key points in each participants answer were highlighted and bullet points were made. Further files containing the bullet points were then created and analysed for each of the two groups (probation officers and service managers), and themes, patterns and exceptions were identified. More files containing the themes, patterns and exceptions were then created. These theme files formed the basis of the reporting schema for each of the three empirical chapters (see Chapters 5,6 and 7). Having established the reporting schema, quotations that illustrated the points made were then identified.

The writing up of the data involved a further process of interpretation with each of the three empirical chapters presenting the participants' perspectives. Patton (1990:423) describes the interpretation process well when he states that:

Interpretation, by definition, involves going beyond the descriptive data. Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meanings, imposing order, and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases, and data irregularities as part of testing the viability of an interpretation.

In this case the interpretation involved the structuring of the chapters, the explanations, inferences and connections made in the presentation of the participants' perspectives. Also, the commentary sections were wholly interpretative and designed to connect the participants' perspectives to the supervision literature. Each chapter whilst standing on

its own was also intended to build on those previous and lead towards the conclusions of Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 5

PHILOSOPHY OF PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

The objective of this chapter is to explore probation officers' and service managers' understanding and philosophy of professional supervision. The areas considered include: their definition of professional supervision; their understanding of the main functions and processes involved; their perspectives on the place of theory; their knowledge of supervision theory; and their perspectives on the role and place of professional supervision for themselves, the agency and the clients of the Community Probation Service. The chapter concludes with a summary, which also considers the implications of both the probation officers' and service managers' philosophy of professional supervision.

Definitions of Professional Supervision

Within the literature, which some commentators describe as a “supervisory jungle”, there exists no comprehensive definition or mega-theory of professional supervision that describes its meaning, method or purpose (Tsui, 1997a; Tsui et al., 1997; Rich, 1993; Munson, 1993; Middleman et al., 1985). Munson (1993) suggests that there are four dominant perspectives from which supervision is discussed; namely, the organisational, the situational, the personality and the interactional. According to Munson (1993) these perspectives do not exist in a pure form. In fact he asserts that it is common for them to be intermingled. In addition to these perspectives there is also the contextual perspective which recognises the ecology of supervision and the influence of context mediated through the various systems in which supervision is embedded. This perspective represents an emerging trend in the supervision literature in which writers consider the role of both ecology and context upon supervision practice (Kadushin, 1992a; O'Donoghue, 1998b; Tsui et al., 1997; Holloway, 1995).

The participants' responses to the research question “What is your definition of professional supervision?” varied considerably and did not reveal a common definition from either probation officers or service managers. What was evident though was that professional supervision was being discussed from differing perspectives.

Probation Officers

Within the definitions of the probation officers all of the above perspectives were present to some degree. The most common was the organisational perspective, which discusses supervision in terms of the functions, roles and goals of the organisation. This perspective was evident in the definitions of five of the ten probation officers (Angela, Ellen, Jack, Mary- Jane and Ernest). Angela spoke of supervision as a necessity for providing a quality service. Jack's definition emphasised the classical understanding of supervision as oversight. Mary- Jane linked her definition to the attainment of the organisation's goals, whereas, Ernest defined supervision as an aid that allows the worker to "work effectively in the department". Ellen's definition best illustrated the organisational perspective:

It [supervision]... makes sure that you're carrying out the functions, roles, etc., of the organisation.

The definitions of Grace, Tania, and Angela reflected the situational perspective. Grace saw supervision as providing a "second opinion" when she became stuck on problems, and Tania spoke of supervision keeping her on the right lines in her work through helping her solve problems with clients. Angela focusing on specific situations and problems stated that supervision was:

To clarify issues as they arise that may relate to us... that may impact on our work with clients. To provide support, encouragement, and to give feedback. Ideas for change and handling things differently. Positive reinforcement of things we're doing.

The personality perspective, which constructs supervision from the viewpoint of the traits and experiences that people bring with them and which influence both practice and supervision, was emphasised by Kiri, Grace and Joseph. Kiri's focused upon client and worker safety. She asserted that the purpose of supervision was "to discuss anything of a personal nature" that would influence the professional relationship between the probation officer and client. Grace also emphasised safety but, framed it in terms of "accountable practice"; ensuring that the probation officer and client were safe involved knowing "why we're doing what were doing" and being explicit about this with clients. Finally, Joseph's

definition illustrated the personality perspective through his reference to himself as the major tool in his work.

For me it's on the premise that the major tool in my role as a probation officer is in fact myself. There's probably one or two warts that come with this tool and that I hopefully am aware of the worst warts, and in my interaction with clients work to ensure that I don't tip the balance of whatever's going on according to my personal predilections and things like that...

Joseph's example also includes elements of the interactional perspective, that is how people interact and how their interactions are varied to fit with specific content. This perspective becomes more explicit in Joseph's next sentence:

I expect from supervision to be continually challenged to be the best probation officer I can, ... to be aware of myself as a person, and also to be aware of the currency and so on of styles of interaction.

Aspects of the contextual perspective, in which the ecology and the supervision context are mediated and understood through the interaction between the various systems which affect supervision, were only present in the following quote from Mary-Jane's definition:

One of my supervisors would always link me into the bigger picture; what's going on in society as well as what's going on in the organisation. Which was really good because often you get waylaid in doing the day-to-day monotony, and you sort of forget why you're doing it and how come you're changing the way you do things.

Service Managers

The five service managers interviewed offered definitions that revealed the organisational, situational and personality perspectives. Of these, it appears that the situational was the most common, being present in three of the five service managers' definitions, (Neil, Joan and Sofia). Neil defined supervision as assisting the probation officer "to provide alternative models of treatment for clients." Joan had a similar perspective defining supervision "as a link between theory and practice" which included "things such as

mentoring, support, practical ways of working and professional development.” Sofia couched her definition in terms of “safe practice”, stating that supervision involved “helping them [the supervisee] to see there might be other ways of dealing with issues.”

Sofia and Neil also revealed elements of the personality perspective in their definitions. Sofia, for example, spoke about looking at “the personal things that are happening for a probation officer”, particularly, where the officer “might be ... interpreting what’s happening for the client because of their [own] experiences.” As well as highlighting, the personality perspective Sofia seemed to be drawing attention to the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and counter-transference and how these are raised, managed and worked through in supervision (Kadushin, 1992a; Shulman, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; Streat, 1996). Neil’s perspective, on the other hand, related to personal bias; supervision helped “ensure that they [supervisees] ...don’t bring to their work any personal bias.” In essence, Neil was drawing attention to the role that values and beliefs have in social work practice and seemed to highlight that supervision ensured that the values of the worker did not unduly colour interaction with the client (Biestek, 1961; Egan, 1990; Munson, 1993).

Susan and Nicholas were the two service managers whose definitions revealed the organisational perspective. Susan emphasised both accountability and safe practice, whereas Nicholas appeared to emphasise the traditional managerial construction of supervision within the agency setting. He stated that:

I would see professional supervision encompassing not only casework supervision, which I suppose is the historical definition in this organisation, but it would encompass administrative areas, managerial responsibilities...That is an opportunity for a case work supervisor to spend time with a probation officer to make sure that the agency’s policies are being adhered to in terms of monitoring and case notes

Commentary

What is immediately apparent from the above is that the probation officers as a group defined supervision from wider perspectives than the service managers did. However, despite this difference it is also clear that the organisational, situational and personality perspectives were the most dominant with the interactional and contextual perspectives

being quite minor. One implication of the dominance of the first three perspectives is that professional supervision was mainly defined in terms of its content. Munson (1993:14) asserts that each of these three perspectives relates specifically to content drawn from the agency, the work itself and the persons involved. Whereas the interactional perspective relates specifically to the process and the contextual perspective relates to the interaction between persons and the environment (Munson, 1993; O'Donoghue, 1998b). The dominance of the organisational, situational and personality perspectives highlights that the respondents were more aligned with those in the literature who construct professional supervision in terms of its functions (Kadushin, 1992a; Middleman et al., 1985; NZSWTC, 1985), as opposed to those authors who are more process oriented (Munson, 1993; Hawkins and Shohet, 1989; Brown et al., 1996; Rich, 1993; Von Kessel et al., 1993; Tabbi, 1995).

A further point of interest was the concept and theme of safe practice, which appeared in three probation officers' and three service managers' definitions. Morrison (1993) particularly highlights this theme. He believes that supervision provides protection to vulnerable groups (including staff and clients) and that without it they would be at greater risk of professionally dangerous practices.

The Community Probation Service definition of professional supervision as being "synonymous with clinical supervision" and encompassing "accountable practice, professional development and personal support and mediation/advocacy" (Community Corrections, 1998b:3) was not articulated in full by any of the respondents. However, when looking at the elements of the Service's definition the picture is somewhat different: two probation officers and one service manager made reference to accountable practice; four officers and four managers referred to professional development; three officers and four managers spoke of personal support; and two officers included both mediation and advocacy, while a third probation officer included only mediation and a service manager included advocacy in her definition. Susan was the only participant who discussed professional supervision's link with clinical supervision. She stated that:

I see supervision lying in three areas. I see that there is an administrative component to supervision...a personal component. But there's also what we would call a clinical component. And I think, when our department

talks about professional supervision, in effect they're meaning clinical supervision.

Obviously neither the probation officers nor the service managers share the Community Probation Services' definition of professional supervision. While, there was some agreement on professional supervision encompassing professional development and personal support, the respondents gave little recognition to the elements of mediation/advocacy and accountable practice. Finally, there was also a difference of opinion as to the role of administrative or management supervision within professional supervision. The wider implications of the participants' definitions are that they appear to mirror Kemshall's (1995:139) finding that "Field staff and managers [lack] either clarity or agreement over the purpose, function and process of supervision."

Main Functions of Professional Supervision

There is a clear history in the literature of identifying the functions of professional supervision (Kadushin, 1992a; Rich, 1993). Again, however, the participants' perspectives revealed no consistent shared understanding within each group or overall, and showed a tenuous connection to the functions identified in the Community Probation Services' policy.

Probation Officers

Whilst varied, the probation officers' responses did identify some functions that were common; namely, education, professional development and support. These functions were identified by four of the ten officers (David, Grace, Ernest and Mary-Jane). David spoke of these functions as part of a "four-leaf clover model" in which the stem or the common link was increased development and better practice. Grace, in her identification of the functions, appeared to concentrate her thinking on the personal support function and saw this in terms of gaining insight into how her private and professional lives influence each other. Ernest also seemed to concentrate on the support function, however his emphasis was more in regard to affirming the worker and monitoring their overall well-being in the workplace. Mary-Jane, on the other hand, placed her emphasis on education and training rather than support. In this regard she stated that "you need to be looking at education and training a lot". The next most common functions identified were mediation and advocacy .

Three probation officers (Ellen, David and Grace) identified mediation, two of whom linked mediation with advocacy.

The only participant to name all the functions identified in the Community Probation Policy was the probation officer that was involved in the working party that produced the June 1997 report:

Well that whole thing about accountable practice. The personal support... I mean obviously whatever you do, your personal life impacts on that. So that whole linking of what's happening for you in your daily life, and how it might be affecting you...the whole thing of further training. You know, promoting further training and learning. And I guess that if issues come up, then your supervisors are there to sort of help you and mediate for you and advocate for you if necessary.

Two other themes are of interest in terms of the officers' responses. The first was the inclusion of management or administrative functions by Ellen and Ernest. This appears to reinforce a brief point made in the previous section concerning a difference of opinion between the Community Probation Service and some participants in regard to the place of the administrative function of supervision within professional supervision. The second theme, that of monitoring the well being of the worker, was illustrated by Mary-Jane and Tania. Mary-Jane emphasised the influence that the officer's emotional stability could have in practice when she said:

I suppose checking out you're emotionally stable, I think is important. You wouldn't want to be running around here being psycho and no one knowing about it. Ruining peoples lives.

Tania, on the other hand, spoke of the need for workers to be assisted to keep healthy and to be examined by someone "who has some ideas of what you're talking about." Tania and Mary-Jane, in other words, both appeared to be raising the matter of the interface between personal and professional issues, particularly in relation to the personal support function of professional supervision. Another officer (David) seemed to outline the dilemma present within this area when he said that:

I'm aware that most winters I go into a sort of depressed phase. I get down. And I'm aware that most winters also ... performance at work slips. So I tend not to meet deadlines. I tend to mope around. Now that's definitely a personal issue for me. To what extent that's also a professional supervision issue, as against an administrative supervision issue, I'm unsure about. ...I'm also unsure about ... what should my supervisor be saying to me if he notices that or what should my supervisor be doing? Yeah ... is it their role to support me or is it their role to refer me or what?

David seemed to raise the question of whether therapy was a function of professional supervision. The literature reveals a mixed response to this matter. Some authors from the counselling and psychotherapy disciplines support the notion that therapy is an important aspect of professional supervision (Rich, 1993), but there is quite a strong tradition of opposition amongst social workers to therapy as a function of supervision. This opposition is based on the argument that therapy changes the purpose, focus and power relationship within supervision (Kadushin, 1992a). Itzhaky et al. (1996) provide the middle way through this issue by proposing a guiding principle of the least or minimum necessary intervention.

Service Managers

In contrast to the probation officers there was considerable divergence in what the service managers identified. Nicholas drew from Proctor et al. (1988) for his functions and named her normative, formative and restorative tasks. These tasks have a clear correlation to the traditional construct of supervision in social work offered by Kadushin (1976; 1992a) of administrative, educational and support functions (O'Donoghue, 1998a; Beddoe et al., 1994). Joan identified testing, improving and practical instruction as her main functions, whereas Susan identified the enhancement of credibility through an examination of practice. Sofia and Neil both included safety in their functions but appeared to differ in other areas. Sofia emphasised the linking of theory with practice, the management of the personal issues and professional development. Neil, on the other hand, tended towards problem solving, affirming, and values clarification in his identification of the functions.

Commentary

The literature does not have any clearly agreed concept of the main functions of professional supervision. The most commonly accepted construction of the main functions is Kadushin's (1992a:23) "administrative, educational, and supportive" functions (Tsui, 1997a; Shulman, 1993; 1995; Payne, 1994; Shulman, 1993).

Rich (1993:150-151) reviewed twenty-six authors' differing constructions of the functions of clinical supervision and developed an integrated model of clinical supervision. He asserted that the functions of clinical supervision were "facilitation, staff development, staff socialization and service delivery". Rich (1993) defined the facilitation function as fostering a work environment that encourages creative thinking, autonomy, communication and increases staff competence. The staff development function involved a training/teaching environment in which skill learning is encouraged and opportunities for skill development and growth were provided. Staff socialisation was the process by which new and existing direct care staff were integrated and socialised into the desired set of organisational and professional values, ethics, standards and culture. Finally, the service delivery function involved assuring the ethical and competent delivery of client services in accordance with the organisation's and the profession's standards.

Overall, the functions identified by the participants in the present study, though not uniform in their presentation, do appear to fit within the broad functions outlined by Kadushin (1992a) and Rich (1993).

Processes Involved in Professional Supervision

Two main areas are covered in this section: first, the extent to which the processes involved in professional supervision parallel those used in practice; and second, the role that gender and culture play in the processes used in professional supervision.

Parallel Processes

The concept of parallel process or mirroring has been identified as significant in the literature (Shulman, 1995; 1993; Munson, 1993; Morrison, 1993; Kadushin, 1992a). It involves the recognition of parallels between the dynamics of professional supervision and any other helping relationship. Based upon this recognition, the behaviour and process

exhibited in the practice setting by client and worker may become mirrored by the worker and supervisor in the supervision setting.

The perspectives of the participants in this study, supported the concept that the processes involved in professional supervision paralleled those in practice. Fourteen participants (9 of the 10 probation officers and all of the service managers) stated that the process used in professional supervision was similar to the process of direct client work. Areas of similarity identified by the probation officers were the relationship, learning, problem solving, boundaries, role, setting, purpose and task-centred approach. The use of practice approaches as a basis for professional supervision is well documented. Payne (1993:50), for example, specifically identifies the ‘Task-Centred’ social work approach as the key form of both professional and managerial supervision. The following responses from David and Mary-Jane provide clear illustrations:

There’s some preparation before hand from both parties. So that issues or any recent potential conflict are identified already. There’s a contracting period, where issues of time and issues to be dealt with are discussed.

There is a clear understanding of what steps will follow from the supervision afterwards and what obligations there are on the two parties. The bulk of the time is devoted to the content of the supervision session.

Well, establishing a relationship I guess is the first part...The contract, I think you need to have a contract if you’re doing supervision. Like setting ground rules. And I guess we do that with our clients as well. We tell them what we expect, and tell them what they can expect from us. And we even have written down case plans. What we’re going to do, to achieve, just so we stay focussed. We’d do that in supervision too I would assume. Note taking. You know, so you’d write maybe tasks or goals. That would be the same. All that emotive and encouraging stuff. That would all be the same I guess.

One link not made by the probation officers that was explicitly made by two service managers (Nicholas and Susan) was to the Integrated Supervision Model for Offenders, known commonly as ISM within the Community Probation Service. According to Dale

(1997) all probation officers and unit managers were trained in 1996 in this model, which consisted of four key elements: namely, a standardised risk assessment; a humanistic counselling style; a pro-social behavioural approach; and a task-centred problem solving method (Trotter, 1993).

Whilst the main thrust of the responses related to similarities, there were nevertheless differences identified by Kiri, Ellen, Ernest and Sofia. The first difference related to the purposes of professional supervision and client practice. In this regard, Kiri stated that supervision and client practice are “totally different” in terms of power. Kiri believed that “the supervisory relationship is an equal one”, whereas a client/probation officer relationship was not. She emphasised this by referring to the role of the law in the probation officer/client relationship, and the need “to enforce conditions.” Ellen, for her part, made reference to the level of expertise present in each relationship and argued that the probation officer/client relationship was one in which clients had deficits and needed to learn, whereas in the supervisory relationship the level of skill or knowledge was more even. Ernest identified differences in terms of depth, motivation and goals. He stated that in supervision “you’d probably get a bit deeper”, because the worker is “more motivated than the average client to develop themselves.” Ernest also made the point that the goal for officers was to try to get their clients “to take responsibility for themselves...in an acceptable way in society”, whereas workers’ goals were more professionally orientated. The final difference was that of the voracity of sanctions for non-compliance. In this regard, Sofia essentially reinforced the difference highlighted by Kiri, but instead of talking about it in terms of power. She emphasised the consequences when she stated that:

Our role is a bit different from just plain social work ... because if the client doesn’t come we take them back to court. So that’s where we’d deviate... the consequences are more severe.

The differences highlighted above appear to emphasise the greater degree of coercion in the probation practice process than the professional supervision process, and the challenge for officers in balancing the social control aspects of their role with the helping process (Trotter, 1993; O’Donoghue, 1995). The supervision literature also identifies a similar challenge for supervisors in balancing the administrative and professional aspects of their role. What is interesting in this regard is that, according to prior research, supervisors in the

main are reluctant to use the authority and power vested in the administrative function (Kadushin, 1992b) and that the principal source of power in the supervision relationship is the personal expertise of the supervisor (Kadushin, 1992c; Munson, 1993).

Gender and Culture

The literature indicates that very little research has been undertaken in relation to the influence of gender and culture upon the supervision process (Tsui, 1997a; Munson, 1993). Despite this lack of research, there is a body of supervision literature that promotes anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice (NZASW, 1998a; Morrison, 1993; O'Donoghue, 1998a; Brown et al., 1996).

Gender

The responses from both groups of participants varied in respect of the influence of gender. Two officers (Angela and Grace) tended to indicate that gender was generally not an issue for them and that they thought that it was largely dependent on the parties involved and the content of the supervision. Another perspective was offered by Tania who asserted that gender was important but not absolute. She did not “necessarily [need] to have a woman supervisor” but she did not want a male chauvinist supervisor who did not have “some understanding” of women’s issues. Mary-Jane’s reflection on the influence of gender stressed that the supervisee ought to choose their supervisor and that gender may be a factor in the choice made:

I think it is important that people get to sort of have a bit of stipulation. Our clients get to choose ethnicity and male/female for some of their counselling. So I guess it’s the same for us and our supervisors. Because you can go on to some personal kind of stuff, can’t you. You can get there. And maybe you have to feel comfortable with that particular person, otherwise there could be a lot of blocking, barriers and stuff like that.

Another issue raised was whether the organisation took enough care in matching gender in terms of supervision. Joseph, for example, was concerned about the match between the gender of officers and clients, and he stated that he “would see with supervision that a similar care or opportunity for matching ought to be there.” This issue appeared to be reinforced by Ernest when he noted that the dominance of patriarchal power

structures had been significantly challenged in society and the majority of people in the agency were female. Because of these factors, he felt that it was not easy for male supervisors:

It's another messy one for male supervisors... Replicating society, you know, the power structures and all those things come in to it. You know I don't want to be in the firing line...reflecting male dominance.

Ellen considered gender to be significant and referred to a feminist approach for supervision developed by Diana Crosson, who used to work for the Department of Corrections. The approach Ellen outlined covered “the whole thing about how power is organised” between a supervisor and supervisee, and noted that this was particularly significant for women. She also stated that this approach considered “the way that women learn” and how it differed from male approaches.

The paper by Crosson (1981) referred to above, and a two page feminist model of supervision in the New Zealand Social Work Training Council's (1985) *Supervision Resource Package* were the only local literature found on this topic. Both documents highlight challenging stereotypes, patriarchal hierarchy and power structures. They also emphasise that the personal is political and collective/collaborative work processes.

The Service Managers' responses in general terms tended to mirror those of the probation officers. Joan, however, outlined reasons why she had changed her view and now had a supervisor of the same gender and culture:

I used to think that that didn't matter, until I needed ... professional supervision myself. And then it was extremely important that I had a pakeha woman, but it was also important that I had somebody from outside the organisation. Because I didn't feel that anybody, any other manager in the organisation, would be able to see things objectively, clearly.... So I have to change my views... and I'd have to say that it's very, very important that that supervisor is the appropriate one.

Neil, emphasising that as individuals we “bring our own history, experience, biases and others to the job”, discussed the need for a non-biased approach. He made the point that in both practice and supervision it is a challenge to “don't love the sin, but love the sinner”.

In other words, Neil was saying, put the bias aside and focus on “how can I help this person?” Finally, Nicholas emphasised the role that difference plays in professional supervision. He made the point that difference was present through the nature of the relationship, the people themselves who come from different backgrounds, and “...have perhaps cultural, gender differences that they bring to the relationship.” The last difference he identified was in terms of how people relate and communicate with each other.

Culture

It is worthwhile at this point to consider how the Community Probation Policy itself actually addresses the influence that gender and culture have on the process of professional supervision. The policy document (Community Probation, 1998b) and the contract do not in fact include an explicit statement about anti-discriminatory or anti-oppressive practice. The closest they come is by outlining (a) a list of cultural attributes which are deemed to be appropriate for a professional supervisor, and (b) a list of factors to consider when providing supervision to Pacific Island staff (Community Probation 1998b: 9-10).

The participants’ responses concerning the influence of culture on professional supervision processes were varied, ranging from no affect to important, and were quite similar to the responses about gender. The general theme appeared to be that the influence of culture depended on the people involved.

Jack stated that both gender and culture have no influence on the processes used in professional supervision. “...gender and culture doesn’t mean anything to me really. People are people.” For Grace, however, the affect of culture was dependent upon the parties involved and their relationship. She did not see culture as being necessarily important, but did concede that “there may be things that come up in supervision” that need cultural input. A lot depended on her relationship with her supervisor. Ellen, on the other hand, considered culture to be important in terms of process and appeared to promote an explicit dialogue acknowledging differences in the case of cross-cultural and cross-gender supervision:

If you're looking at culture, ... it's pretty important.... I think if they're out in the open, down on the table and clarified, ...particularly if it's mixed gender or culture.

Mary-Jane also spoke of differences in terms of the supervision process for people from different cultures, and advocated that the supervisee choose their supervisor so that they can gain appropriate supervision.

In contrast to the above responses, the only Maori probation officer (Kiri) interviewed had this to say about the influence of culture upon professional supervision process:

For me, because I'm Maori, unless I have a specific cultural matter that I want to discuss, it doesn't matter... As long as they can give me what I need in terms of the client. I'll clarify the Maori part. If I have a client who is Maori, and I have a genuine "I don't know what to do", "this is worrying me" etc etc, the process for dealing with Maori people in a Maori way is entirely different to dealing with Pakeha people... The Maori people who want to be dealt with in the usual Pakeha way, that's fine as well...but dealing with Maori people in a Maori way is entirely different...I've been lucky enough to have outside people in the community to be able to go to. I've used professional supervision with a Maori supervisor in the past, and the Department's paid. I think there should be more of that. But because that's been too hard to access easily, I've given up and just used people out there whom I know, and they've done it before. Just for the good, for nothing and from the heart.

When she finished, I saw Kiri's head and her eyes become downcast so I asked her how she felt about that? She replied:

Okay in one way because they're willing to give. Not okay in another, because we're using them. This Department, this statutory Department is using them and I feel bad about that. But in order to do what I can do, I have to do that. You know? So I'm compromising basically my Elders, or people who know better, and not giving them anything, in order to get something for my client.

The above statements, both from the Pakeha officers and the Maori officer, arguably correlate with a number of the areas discussed by Jackson (1988). The first of these is that

the criminal justice system within which probation officers work is mono-cultural and Westminster based and provides limited scope for working with Maori according to Maori values. The impact of this is that the role of probation officer tended to be defined and constructed from this mono-cultural position. Jackson (1988) also argued that probation casework approaches were individually focused and foreign to the primacy given to the wider group influences in Maori values. Another point that Jackson (1988) made was in relation to social reintegration, arguing that this term was frequently understood by probation officers as re-fitting their clients into the wider Paheka community, rather than finding the most appropriate means of establishing their place and identity within Maori society. Jackson (1988) emphasised the role that a dominant context plays in influencing peoples' understanding of an issue. In regard to professional supervision, Tsui et al. (1997) argue that traditional supervision in the social services has been embedded in the organisational context. They state that this context has been viewed as the sole influence upon professional supervision with the result that culture has been overlooked as a major context in supervision (Tsui et al., 1997).

The service managers' responses to the influence of culture generally mirrored their responses about the influence of gender. One notable exception was that of Sofia, who recognised a need for cultural input when dealing with cultural dynamics and said that:

I think where it matters is if that person is really wanting to find out more about, and check out ... cultural dynamics, then I think it's most likely to [warrant]... a culturally appropriate supervisor.

Theory and Professional Supervision

Two distinct areas are covered in this section, the place of theory in professional supervision and the participants' knowledge of theory and models of professional supervision.

Place of Theory in Supervision

Thirteen of the participants believed that theory had a place in professional supervision. Eight of the ten probation officers held this view, while the two remaining did not feel qualified to answer the question because they were not social work trained. Amongst the probation officers a variety of reasons were given as to why they believed theory has a

place in supervision. Ellen made the point that having a theory base was what differentiated professionals from volunteers, a point that implies that formalised theory is linked to professional identity. Jack, on the other hand, asserted that “theory is the basis of all practice” and that you can’t provide practical assistance unless you have “the theory to go with it”. Grace believed that theory had a place in “accountable practice” and emphasised the value of using “what works” according to research with clients. She also stated that it was important for supervisors to have a good knowledge of theory, particularly “in terms of the professional development” of their supervisees. Mary-Jane, made the point that “it would be really helpful if her supervisor had a knowledge of theories”, particularly behavioural and psychodynamic theories, because it would facilitate understanding of where she was coming from in her work with clients. Finally, Tania argued that theory is important because it provides “focus”, “direction” and “guidelines”. In this regard she commented that:

I know since we’ve had the Trotter model, and now this CRIMPS has come in, which I think is really wonderful, it gives you guidelines. It give you a direction. It gives you a way to go, instead of wondering off on a whole lot of side things, without having an idea of what you’re actually trying to achieve. Theory can do that.

The managers also thought theory had a place in supervision and their reasons were similar to those of the officers. Sofia saw theory as providing a “framework” and an “anchor” that keeps things in perspective, and Neil argued that theory was important for learning whereas Joan thought that it was “the greater part of supervision” and provided a background upon which to test the actual practice. Susan, in common with Sophia but extending the point, spoke of theory as helping to maintain focus and providing meaning and a rationale for practice decisions. She also argued that “If you can’t articulate what base you’re coming from” then you don’t actually know what you’re doing.

Overall, the participants’ views generally reflected the professional supervision literature which gives theory a significant place in professional supervision (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993; Rich, 1993; Tsui et al., 1997). One further point which emerged from their responses, however, was that when they spoke about theory they seemed to lack

any differentiation between formal theory and practice theory, and espoused theory and theory in use (Argyris et al., 1974; Munson, 1993).

Knowledge of Supervision Theory

When the participants were asked about their knowledge of professional supervision theory and models, their responses revealed that they had either little or no knowledge or were unable to articulate their knowledge of such theory. Kiri, who had just finished a social work diploma, stated that she knew “something about it, but ask me to recite something and I can’t.” Ellen and Grace, on the other hand, had both had either training or study in supervision but still experienced difficulty outlining their knowledge. Ellen was able to name “Kadushin”, who’s name came up in an old study guide she brought with her to the interview, but in the next breath said, “Don’t ask me what he’s on about, but it looks good.” Grace gave a similar response, stating that she had completed the Central Institute of Technology’s short course in clinical supervision, which trained people in the TAPES model, but then said, “Don’t ask me about it.”

The service managers appeared more knowledgeable, especially Nicholas who articulated the Brigid Proctor (1988) model of supervision:

What springs to mind is Proctor’s model of supervision which was the three-pronged formative, restorative and normative elements of supervision....The formative being the sort of training, or rethinking plans, that sort of thing. Normative being the standards of practice, and monitoring case management assessment role, and restorative being the opportunity for a probation officer to ventilate, to discuss feelings, that’s the supportive element of the role.

Sofia and Susan linked practice theory to supervision. Sofia did this through reference to motivational interviewing, task-centred practice and reflective approaches. Susan, on the other hand, spoke of supervision using a problem-solving model that starts with:

The professional, it’s their session, the supervisee comes to the session, they come prepared with whatever they’re bringing, and you help them elicit their own solutions ... if it’s an issue or if it’s a piece of good practice you can examine it and actually give them the credit for doing that.

Skills Important in Professional Supervision

The predominant theme which emerged from 14 of the 15 participants was that the skills that were thought to be important in supervision were those associated with interpersonal relationships (e.g., listening, empathy, and communication skills). Joseph illustrated this theme well when he said:

Basically ... similar skills to what we'd expect in a social worker.... the good old things like empathy and being nice to clients, unconditional regard, respect and whatever those things are about saying "You're a person, and I accept the person as a person. Accept him or her as in charge of ... their own destiny." I do expect that of a supervisor toward me.

Joseph, Jack, Mary-Jane and Sofia all linked these interpersonal skills with social workers, whereas Tania identified them as skills associated with counsellors. Generally, the picture presented by the participants of the skills that were important seemed to correlate with Kadushin's (1992a) research in which the majority of strengths that supervisees identified in their supervisors related to the expressive aspects of the supervisory relationship.

There were, however, two specific skill sets identified which were not related to the expressive aspects of the supervision relationship. The first of these, identified by two service managers (Nicholas and Sofia), involved the skills of challenging supervisees, and getting them to think about their work practice. Sofia particularly emphasised the role that questioning played, whereas Nicholas emphasised behavioural aspects such as the positive reinforcement of good work and "confronting the work that has not been done or not been done to standard".

The second skill set, which Ernest identified, included strategic vision, foresight and advocacy. Ernest thought that it was important for supervisors to be able "to see into the future" and plan how best to manage change and any potential problems that may arise from change with their supervisees. Upon reflection, I think that he may also have been indicating that it was important for supervisors to be able to assess where the agency, the profession and society were heading rather than just the supervisor's team. An indication of this broader perspective was evident in Ernest's discussion of advocacy skills:

A good supervisor is sort of tussling with the organisation ... Not just a lackey to a higher level....they will put pressure on when they see things that aren't maybe ethical or practical, they will kind of have an energy to change those things...that sort of advocacy.

Ernest's description of advocacy skills appears to link to Shulman's (1993: 294-308) "Third force function" with its emphasis on mediating between staff and the administration. Shulman (1993: 295) states that "work in this area requires confrontation and advocacy", particularly when the system is unresponsive to issues that impact upon staff and their practice.

Role and Place for Participants

The participants' responses with regard to the role/place of professional supervision for themselves revealed that all but one of them considered supervision to be important.

Probation Officers

All the probation officers thought that professional supervision was important. The reasons expressed were safety, reflective and accountable practice, to reduce complacency, to deal with job-related stress, to enhance motivation and for efficiency in practice.

Kiri and Ellen believed that professional supervision was important for safety reasons; namely, their safety and that of their clients. Kiri emphasised both the "nature of the work" and her professional identity as a counsellor in her response, whereas Ellen spoke more personally and said she "would feel very unsafe" if she did not have regular supervision.

For David, professional supervision was important as a means by which he could reflect on his practice, reduce any complacency present and be held accountable. He also appeared to be saying that the space provided by supervision to reflect on practice enabled him to develop professionally:

My experience is that if I continue to practice without reflecting on it, then I tend to repeat both the good and the bad things that I do. If I reflect on it, I require the discipline of a structured process and a structured time ... because otherwise I'm going to leave it as too difficult...not that it's not important, but there's always something more urgent to do ... And for me

also the fact that I know that I'll be accounting to my supervisor for my own practice, probably puts an edge to the work that I do, rather than sitting back and saying "this will be good enough".

David's last sentence emphasises how the process of explaining one's practice in supervision challenges complacency. This was echoed by Jack who stated that job-related stress can lead to becoming "really stuck in a rut in relation to your professional practice". He also said that, "You tend to find shortcuts and do the easy stuff because it's less stressful." Jack believed that professional supervision was important because it helped "bring you back into line" and provided a means by which burnout could be prevented or managed.

For Grace supervision was important because it could provide her with motivation and a means by which she could improve her practice. Mary-Jane also identified motivation as important and pointed out that supervision was an important anchor that "keeps us grounded and focused on our work", particularly when agencies and society are continuously changing. She thought that supervision did this through "keeping us in touch with what is happening, and supporting us in all the changes". In regard to helping her work more intensively with clients, supervision was needed to encourage and support probation officers in the use of "CRIMPS, which is cognitive restructuring, relapse prevention and motivational interviewing". Mary-Jane seemed to be making the point that supervision had a role, for her, in terms of ongoing learning and the implementation of new practice models and techniques. Tania added to this point when she spoke of supervision being important in terms of efficiency, ensuring that practice time was used to its optimum and encouraging officers to use practice models that facilitated this.

Service Managers

Four service managers considered professional supervision to be important, whereas the fifth (Neil) stated that he had not given the role and place of supervision much consideration:

I've only really started thinking about that since you actually asked me into this and after I read your Information Sheet...I would have said up until the

time you contacted me, I would have said, “No”...However, I think it’s mainly...to deal with the stresses.

The other four service managers argued that supervision helped manage risk, aided safe practice, helped in the management of staff, assisted with professional development and provided support. Nicholas, for example, linked supervision to the management of risk, and spoke of it as “the first line of protection” both for the agency and himself. He argued that supervision enabled the service manager to prevent, minimise and manage risk through giving him knowledge of his staff and their work.

In a similar vein, Sofia stated that supervision was important because it aided safe practice. She made the point that as a service manager she was involved in training probation officers and generally provided supervision to them when a crisis arose and they did not have immediate access to their supervisor. Sofia also outlined the difficulties she had had in maintaining the external supervision budgeted for her staff, and in doing so revealed how important she felt supervision was for both her and her team:

I basically stood my ground ... for ethical reasons I was totally supported by my team. For one thing, I had a little out, because I could say probation officers aren’t even trained in this yet anyway... and I’m not going to have them having nothing. And seeing we’d started it, I don’t want to stop it.

Susan’s reason for holding that professional supervision was important concerned its place in the management of staff. Whilst service managers do not have a client caseload they do “carry caseloads” in that they manage staff. Susan seemed to emphasise the isomorphic or parallel process aspect of supervision and asserted that the modelling shown by managers influenced probation officers who in turn influenced clients. In these terms, the management role of supervision can be linked to both the reduction of risk and maintenance of safe practice.

The fourth service manager, Joan, stated that professional supervision had an important role and place because it assisted professional development and provided her with support as a woman working in an all male management team that she would not otherwise have. The key element for Joan was mentoring, which she spoke of in terms of helping her to plan future career prospects.

Commentary

The research literature generally indicates that professional supervision is considered to be of prime importance to practitioners and supervisors in terms of facilitating professional development, and providing support, safety and accountability (Shulman, 1995; 1993; Payne, 1994; Kadushin, 1992, 1992a; 1992b; Rich, 1993; Morrison 1993; Beddoe, 1997a). In these terms the findings outlined above are consistent with the perceptions presented in the research literature.

Role and Place of Supervision Within the Agency

Responses in regard to the role and place of supervision within the agency reflected a range of views. Overall, the participants' perspectives reflected the themes of supervision being contracted out to external providers, internal provision, organisational culture, and its role and place in the organisation's strategic direction. Each of these themes is addressed in the following pages.

Contracting Supervision Out

Two officers (Kiri and Joseph) and one manager (Sofia) argued for the external provision of supervision. Kiri believed that a supervisor "should be from outside the immediate work environment" on the grounds that internal supervision was not safe, particularly if you had "something to spill". She was also of the opinion that a supervisor within the agency would have difficulty finding time for supervisees. Joseph, on the other hand, argued for external professional supervision based on his understanding of the supervision philosophy espoused in the initial policy development document produced by the Community Probation Service (Community Corrections, 1997a). He wondered whether the change in direction from external to internal supervision was based on "monetary restraint", and outlined his belief that internal when provided in a peer relationship could be collusive.

Sofia also thought that professional supervision ought to be paid for and provided externally. Her concerns about the agency's policy were focused on unsafe practice; "training up probation officers to do it, on their own peers...is compromising both the probation officer... and the person supervising them." Based on her own experience, Sofia asserted that external supervision was better in both professional and monetary terms:

I reckon what I'm doing is still more cost effective than a probation officer doing it... I got a really good price with qualified people.

A further point made by Sofia was that external supervisors were more likely to have a clearer perspective on practice situations because they were not directly involved in either the practice situations or the agency context. As an agency supervisor in the past, she found that:

You can't see the wood for the trees, because I'm really really busy.

They're [probation officers] really really busy. So you can miss some of the tell tale signs.

Internal Provision

Both Angela and Ellen recognised that the Community Probation Service had attempted to highlight the role and place of professional supervision within the agency but expressed concerns about the implementation of the supervision programme. Angela pointed out that the separation of professional supervision from casework administration was a new initiative and her particular concern about the implementation of the supervision programme was the process by which people volunteered to be supervisors. Some of these volunteers had not received supervision "for maybe 20 years, if ...at all."

For her part, Ellen felt that the emphasis on having supervision provided by peers was "dangerous". Supervision was best provided by the service manager, who Ellen considered to be:

By both rank and financial reward ... in a position, not necessarily of authority, but of speciality, where they have the ability to have the overview of everyone's work...and also be privy to what's happening for that person in a professional way, like you might know that they've had the flu, so are not going to be able to function that well.

Organisational Culture

Two probation officers (David and Ernest) and one service manager (Nicholas,) expressed concerns in relation to the organisational culture and its affect on the role and place of professional supervision. David's concerns related to the change culture that he perceived

in the Community Probation Service, in particular the General Manager's desire to change the culture so that everyone would "be as self-driven... as she is." What David appears to be highlighting was the self-responsibility ethos found in the business management literature, whereby employees are to act as business persons (Peters, 1993: 40). He made the point that this ethos was contradictory to the traditional role and place of supervision, and also pointed out that the ethos and values of probation officers differed from those of business people. In doing so he argued that:

I'm not sure that's a realistic expectation...like [do] I need the discipline of somebody as my supervisor saying "Hey how're you doing this?" Or, "What's wrong with this?" ...I need somebody behind pushing and so for me and others like me, the temptation is to do the same things in the same old way without necessarily improving.

The issues Ernest raised relate to those outlined by David. Ernest felt that there was a "lot less energy" put into supervision and attributed this to "a move away from ... social work ... principles" to a "paint by numbers" or follow "the road map" approach. For Ernest this type of bureaucratic approach was contrary to the body of knowledge and expertise he had accumulated as a social work professional and it left him thinking "the people who drive the organisation see us not as social workers ... [but] as income support type workers."

Nicholas, a service manager, saw risk management as the role and place of professional supervision, and appeared to highlight this aspect of the organisational culture and its influence on supervision. Nicholas believed that professional supervision is the first-line of protection against things that have the potential to embarrass the Service. One of the inferences that can be taken from his concept of supervision as a risk management system is that it can transfer risk from the agency to individual managers and practitioners because the agency has a supervision policy and system.

Strategic Direction

Susan, a service manager, raised the issue of the role and place of supervision in the Service's strategic direction via reference to her participation in the Integrated Offender Management project. She saw the "appointment of interim professional supervisors from the main grade staff as being very much a stopgap measure" and thought that there needed

to be a commitment to good outside professional supervision, or up-skilling managers for supervision, particularly since the Integrated Offender Management project was “contingent on having good professional supervision in place.” The project would require “probation officers to up-skill in some areas such as behavioural interview”. Supervision was important, she believed, because it reinforced the new learning by helping to maintain a focus on “coaching, training and targeting on-going training.”

Commentary

The four themes identified above portray different views of the role and place of supervision within the Community Probation Service. The first theme, external supervision, emphasised the role of ensuring safe practice and the provision of supervision as a service to agency personnel by external consultants. This theme highlights two developing areas in the supervision literature; namely, whether the administrative or managerial aspects of supervision should be separated from the professional aspects (i.e. education and support), and the influence of agency theory and the purchaser-provider form of contract management. The literature in regard to the separation of the administrative from the professional functions is conflicting. Kadushin (1992a: 496-498) argues that opinion appears to be against separation, whereas Erera et al. (1994) argue that the role conflict involved makes the combination of administrative and professional supervision incompatible. It is also worth noting that the separation of managerial and professional accountability is a hallmark of new public management (Boston et al., 1991:9).

The influence of agency theory and its reliance on the purchaser-provider form of contract management for service delivery and supervision provision is discussed by Brown et al. (1996: 182-183) who state that the contracting of consultants is likely to occur for the developmental components of supervision. They argue that the main advantage would be in terms of the removal of mistrust and suspicion caused by the duality of the supervisor’s role. The disadvantages they list as potential problems with consultants understanding the agency context, the supervisee’s day-to-day work and the likely outcome that contracting will have on social work management – that is, its disappearance.

The second theme, internal provision, revealed the participants’ recognition of the agency’s commitment to professional supervision, but they were concerned about the way

it was fulfilling its commitment. In the literature, Morrison (1993) stresses the importance of agency supervision policies and an organisational commitment. He does this through reference to a number of major reports on supervision in the child protection field in the United Kingdom, which revealed serious organisational problems in regard to policy implementation.

The theme of the influence of organisational culture appears to reveal a culture that is unlikely to be supportive of professional supervision. Hawkins et al. (1989:131-139) address the role that organisational culture has on supervision, with particular attention to cultures where bureaucracy, crisis and a “watch your back” mentality dominate. They argue that these cultures have a negative influence, and assert that only a learning/developmental culture fully supports professional supervision.

The fourth theme, supervision’s role and place in the organisation’s strategic direction as a support mechanism for the Integrated Offender Management project, provides an insight which essentially views the current programme as a useful preparatory training and development exercise, one which addresses immediacies and supports a core strategic initiative. The literature on this theme of supporting strategic initiatives seems to be sparse. Indeed, the only item found was a study by Rapp (1998:163-194), who argued that group supervision focused on the case-manager’s practice using the strengths model, was essential for providing a supportive case-management context and that it facilitated successful use of the model, ongoing fine tuning and (ultimately) successful client outcomes.

Arguably, the four themes identified stress that the organisation is, for the participants, the dominant context which influences the role and place of professional supervision. This perspective is consistent with the literature which has historically constructed professional supervision as embedded within the context of social service organisations (Tsui et al., 1997; Gibelman et al., 1997; Rich, 1993).

Role and Place of Supervision for Clients

Thirteen of the 15 participants interviewed (9 officers and 4 managers) considered that professional supervision was significant for clients. Their reasons were that it helped maintain professional boundaries and ethics, protected clients and provided a means of

quality assurance. The other two participants expressed the view that clients were unaware of and uninformed about the supervision of probation officers.

Maintenance of Boundaries and Ethics

Two probation officers (Angela and Ellen) and two service managers (Neil and Susan) thought that supervision had a role and place for clients in the maintenance of professional boundaries and ethics. According to Angela there wouldn't be supervision without clients and she emphasised its role in helping workers separate themselves and their issues from clients and their issues. Angela made the point that "it's going to be much harder for us to help them with stuff, if we've got our own stuff that we haven't dealt with yet." Ellen, for her part, believed that supervision was critical and that it would not be ethical to see clients if you were not being supervised. However, she did not elaborate or give any reasons as to why she held this view. Susan's support of supervision for ethical reasons, related to the fact that what occurred in practice with clients was rarely directly observed, and she stated that "a lot of probation officers ...are reticent about having their practice examined." She expressed the view that it was difficult for staff to assert that "we're modelling good pro-social behaviour" if no-one actually sees them doing that. Finally, Neil's perspective was related to the influence that personal biases had on certain cases. His point was that supervision provided protection for clients against the discriminatory practice of probation officers.

Protection

David, Sofia, Nicholas, Mary-Jane and Joseph all emphasised the role and place that supervision had in protecting clients from unsafe and poor practice. David, for example, thought that supervision ensured that clients were not sold short by their probation officers. It was potentially dangerous for clients "if we sell them short", argued David, because the sentencing "tariffs ratchet up" with repeated offending. Sofia supported the perspective of not selling clients short and accentuated the role and place of supervision in working more "intensively with ... high risk people...and really trying to reduce reoffending" by targeting the offending behaviour.

Nicholas believed that supervision was very important for client protection. If staff were well trained, aware of their role, secure and well supported - not only by the

supervisor but also by other staff - “ the chances of clients being mistreated, mishandled, call it what you will, is less.” Nicholas further asserted that the on-going learning and training provided by supervision was pivotal because it presented the opportunity to learn from other more senior members and thereby equipped “staff with the many skills to cope with the job.”

Mary-Jane and Joseph seemed to reinforce Nicholas’ points from the perspective that the work of probation officers’ with clients is generally unobserved. Mary-Jane stressed this when she said that “basically we’re left to do our own thing, so we could be doing terrible things to people, or if we had our own agendas.” She also made the point that supervision provided a check on the worker’s well being and helped limit the damage that “dysfunctional” workers can wreak on clients. Joseph expressed a similar view. Supervision was needed for client safety because in its absence “clients are left very much at the whim of individuals...who...are ... not sufficiently self-aware when it comes to dealing with other people.” What Joseph seemed to be saying was that supervision offered an opportunity for practitioners to examine and modify their behaviour and in doing so afforded clients safer practice.

Quality Assurance

Jack and Ernest thought that supervision had a quality assurance role for clients, keeping the worker up to speed and providing a check on the quality of their work. In Jack’s view supervision provided the “reinforcement” and “correction” needed from time-to-time, and was a guard against “short cuts” and sloppy work practices. Ernest, on the other hand, thought that it was important for clients to understand that the people seeing them are competent, overseen and accountable to someone for their behaviour.

Unaware and Uninformed

Kiri argued that clients were unaware that probation officers have professional supervision, and claimed that they don’t care whether their probation officer is supervised. Accordingly, Kiri saw supervision as helping her “ to give my best to the client. Even though they mightn’t be aware, and they might abuse me, it’s still a must as far as they’re concerned.” Joan, on the other hand, thought that clients were uninformed and therefore in no position to judge the competence of their probation officer:

I think we're in a different sort of organisation. If it was a business organisation, where you're working with, you know ...marketing products for instance, to a perceptive client base, there would be a higher degree of expertise required by those clients. But to be honest, I don't really think that our clients are in a position to evaluate our skills, whether or not we're good or bad. I think as long as they get what they think that they are there for, then that's as far as their judgement goes.

Commentary

The themes outlined above have a clear link to the literature which emphasises supervision's role and place for clients in terms of assuring the quality of practice, protecting them from unsafe, discriminatory and unethical practice (Brown et al., 1996; Kadushin, 1992a; Morrison, 1993). The points raised by Kiri and Joan about clients being unaware and uninformed in terms of supervision highlights the view that clients are generally invisible in the supervision arena. Only one relevant study was found in the literature search. This study, conducted by Harkness et al. (1991), involved clients in the supervision loop, and stressed that client satisfaction with services increased when the supervision of workers was focused upon the client's problems and the worker's interventions.

Summary and Implications

The objective of this chapter was to explore the professional supervision philosophy of probation officers and service managers through the presentation of research findings. This objective involved discussing how both groups defined and constructed professional supervision in terms of its functions, processes, theory, and its role and place for them, their agency and the clients of the Community Probation Service. Overall, the findings presented indicate the absence of a shared philosophy of professional supervision amongst the participants.

In terms of how professional supervision is defined, the research findings, revealed that probation officers defined professional supervision from wider perspectives than the service managers – in particular the organisational, situational and personality perspectives (Munson, 1993: 13-14). The dominance of these three perspectives in the definitions accentuates the content and functions of supervision, rather than its process and context.

The findings also indicated that the alignment between the respondents' definitions of professional supervision and the Community Probation Service's definition was limited to the areas of professional development and personal support. This general lack of alignment or restricted alignment was also evident in the participant's identification of the main functions of professional supervision. The functions they identified showed little shared or common agreement other than those of professional development and personal support.

The findings in relation to the processes involved in professional supervision were mixed. Fourteen of the 15 respondents thought that the processes used were similar to those employed in direct client work. This feature clearly supported the concept of mirroring or parallel process found in the supervision literature (Kadushin, 1992a; Morrison, 1993; Shulman, 1995; 1993; O'Donoghue, 1998a). However, when the participants were asked about the influence of gender and culture in the processes used there was a considerable degree of variation in their responses. The general view seemed to be that the influence of gender and culture depended on the individuals concerned, the specific context and their relationship. Arguably, the findings in relation to gender and culture were not reflective of the strong anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice strand found in the professional supervision literature (Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; NZASW, 1998a; O'Donoghue, 1998a). Rather, they reflected the monocultural Westminster system within which the Community Probation Service operates, and supported the view that the processes used in professional supervision are significantly influenced by the dominant context of the organisation (Jackson, 1988; Tsui et al., 1997).

The findings in terms of theory and professional supervision were contradictory. Thirteen of the 15 participants thought that theory had a place in professional supervision and considered it to be important. However, when asked about their knowledge of professional supervision theory the responses revealed surprisingly little knowledge. Despite this contradiction the findings are consistent with the professional supervision literature which highly espouses theory, yet is described by commentators as being poorly organised and poorly understood by practitioners (see Rich, 1993: 173-174).

The skills identified as important in professional supervision by both the service managers and probation officers were generally those ascribed to interpersonal communication and appeared to relate to the expressive aspects of the supervisory relationship (Kadushin, 1992a).

In relation to the role and place of professional supervision for the participants themselves, the Community Probation Service and the clients of the agency, the findings indicated that the participants believed that professional supervision had an important role and place for both themselves for clients in relation to the delivery of quality service and as a protection against unsafe and unethical practice. However, in regard to the Community Probation Service, whilst the majority indicated that it had a role and place there were differing opinions with respect to its specific role and place within the Service. These differing views tended to reflect concerns related to the external and internal provision of supervision, the separation of managerial from professional supervision, the organisational culture and the strategic direction of the Community Probation Service.

To sum up, the findings indicate that a clear philosophy of professional supervision was lacking amongst the participants, whose knowledge and understanding was at an elementary level. Furthermore, there was an obvious lack of alignment between the participants' philosophy and that espoused by the Community Probation Service. In terms of their implications, these findings signal a need for the agency to socialise and educate its staff in both (a) the functions, processes and theory of professional supervision, and (b) its philosophy of professional supervision. The findings presented also raise questions about the likely success and effectiveness of the professional supervision programme introduced by the Service, particularly as the findings suggest that the Service does not have a culture in which professional supervision is a common and shared experience.

CHAPTER 6

EXPERIENCES OF SUPERVISION AND ITS CONTEXT

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the respondents' experiences of professional supervision and the environment in which professional supervision is practised. The areas covered for both the probation officers and service managers include their recent participation in professional supervision, and their experiences in relation to the development of agency policy and its implementation. Also discussed are the participants' experiences of the supervision environment, which includes management practices, organisational culture and the effects of social policy experienced in supervision. The chapter concludes with a summary, which considers also the implications of both the probation officers' and service managers' experience of professional supervision and the supervision context.

Recent participation in professional supervision

Both the service managers' and the probation officers' recent participation in professional supervision was variable. From the fifteen interviewed only four were currently receiving professional supervision and seven stated that they did not have professional supervision. The latter group of seven participants included two service managers who were currently providing supervision to members of their own teams. The four remaining participants' had recently finished supervision and their supervision needs were either partially met through informal supervision arrangements or not met at all.

Probation Officers

Amongst the probation officers interviewed, only three probation officers (Grace, Tania and Angela) stated that they were receiving formal professional supervision.

Grace and Tania received their supervision from their respective service managers. In Grace's case the supervision was administrative and this led her to feel annoyed, particularly when she thought about issues related to her safety. During her interview, Grace recounted an incident when she turned up at a house to find everyone on the premises drunk and she was verbally abused. When she informed her supervisor of the

incident his response was unsatisfactory and for her there was no “acknowledgement” of how scary and difficult that incident would have been for her. Summing up, Grace stated that, “He quite honestly didn’t give a toss.”

Tania was meeting monthly with her supervisor. She reported that she was having more supervision now than she had had “for quite a few years.” Tania knew the service manager well and rated her supervision as being all right.

The third probation officer, Angela, was receiving external supervision. Angela came into the probation officer role with no background in social or community work practice. Angela recognised her need for external supervision and stated that she approached a clinical psychologist and then put her case to management who granted her six paid sessions. At the time of the interview, Angela expressed feelings of disappointment and frustration. Angela had recently attended her fifth supervision session and management had advised her that she was not going to receive any further external supervision after her next session. Angela stated that her external supervision was helpful in improving her practice with clients, (thereby helping clients to achieve better outcomes) and in the management of her work-related stress.

I did find at one stage, that I was going home, and things were going over in my mind and I’d wake up in the night...so the psychologist was able to give me specific ways of dealing with those things, which were really helpful. Not necessarily the day to day things that arise, but more like the overall patterns.

Angela’s only form of professional supervision after her next session would be fortnightly meetings in a peer supervision group with two other colleagues. Participation in this group, according to Angela, involved casework discussion with a focus on working better with the clients through examining the issues and options. Angela stated that this group was very much about “getting ideas from each other.” The external supervision, however, was more personal and was where Angela felt she was able to discuss things that had affected her and might affect her clients. She was reticent about taking certain things to peer group due to ‘safety aspects’ and because she was not qualified. She said she felt that, “If I bring this

[matter to the group] they will think, ...fancy not knowing that or, haven't you got over that."

A fourth probation officer, Joseph, stated that until recently he had received external professional supervision paid for by the agency. In his case, the supervision was agreed to after he had been "reborn" as a probation officer following twenty years as a manager. Joseph saw a clinical psychologist, on a fortnightly basis for about a year, until the agency decided they could not afford to pay for his supervision. According to Joseph the external supervision received was:

The best supervision that I've had in my total of around about seven years as a probation officer...I don't know what it is in terms of theories, but she [the external supervisor] certainly switched me on to looking at the narrative therapy area, amongst others.

Joseph believed that this supervision had improved the quality of his practice, particularly in the areas of his "roles, boundaries" and "acknowledging client decision."

Another area in which he gained was in terms of his role adjustment from "being a manager to being a probation officer." In this area, his supervision encouraged him "to keep out of certain things" which in his former role he would have felt responsible for.

When discussing the end of his external supervision, Joseph expressed feelings of being "absolutely devastated" and "bloody annoyed." He stated that the only participation in supervision he now had is a peer group, which he described as "a bit of peer support on ...a formalised basis". At the same time as having his external professional supervision terminated, he was invited by his managers to become a professional supervisor! Joseph decided to become a professional supervisor so that he can access external supervision for himself for his own survival.

A further two probation officers, Ellen and Ernest, said that until recently they had received professional supervision from their respective service managers. In Ernest's case he reports that his last session was four months prior to the interview, in February 1998, whereas Ellen's last session was only a month ago in May 1998. According to Ernest, he had been having a professional supervision session once every six or seven weeks until February 98, and that the next planned session did not occur due to his supervisor's

unavailability. Shortly afterwards the supervisor then resigned. Ernest expressed mixed feelings about his supervisor's resignation; on the one hand he was "saddened by what has happened" and on the other hand, he was "a bit angry" with the organisation, believing that her departure was "a direct result of poor supervision".

Ellen's professional supervision changed when she changed teams and had a different service manager. Before changing teams, Ellen had supervision monthly and spoke highly of her supervisor:

She certainly offered support. There was good support for safe practice and the professional side of things...we did work on a few cases...and I think I learnt some things.

In contrast to the above, she expressed dissatisfaction with her current service manager, stating that he:

Doesn't have the skills for professional supervision so I tend to take charge and play games....Nice person, bad supervisor...I think because he's been in management for so long, he's terribly behind. In fact, I don't think I've ever had any meaningful input about where he is on the whole scale of skills and knowledge. And in the future it won't matter anyway because his job won't be that.

David stated in his interview that his last supervision session was in August 1997, ten months prior to the interview. That session was predominately administrative in focus and he had had less than twelve supervision sessions in his ten years with the agency. David also expressed feelings of ambivalence about his situation. On one level, he felt "cheated" because it was important, and on another level he was anxious about the prospect of supervision:

I go into supervision sessions, I suspect, with a certain amount of fear and trepidation about what might be expected of me afterwards ... the idea that I might be required to step outside of my comfort zone to try things differently, to look at new perspectives, is one that I am not looking forward to eagerly.

Finally, three probation officers (Kiri, Jack and Mary-Jane) reported that they were not receiving any professional supervision and expressed a variety of feelings about this. For example, Jack stated that he has not had any professional supervision in his nineteen years as a probation officer because it had “never been set up”, and was disappointed that the department had never given him the support that he “should have had”. Similarly, Mary-Jane expressed considerable frustration at not receiving professional supervision despite asking for it. In her opinion the situation “suck[ed]” as there was “only one supervisor for the whole area”, which had almost thirty probation officers. Mary-Jane’s reported experience as a newer staff member was that the Community Probation Service was more interested in its finances than its staff and clients.

Service Managers

The service managers’ participation in professional supervision was also varied. Only Joan was in receipt of supervision when interviewed, but did not provide professional supervision, and none of her team received professional supervision. Two others (Nicholas and Susan) stated that they provided supervision to their team members but did not receive any themselves. The other service managers (Sofia and Neil) also did not receive supervision, but their teams did from external providers.

Joan was offered external supervision as an outcome of an harassment claim finding in her favour. The claim was against Joan’s manager. Joan started her supervision in September 1997, had on average one session per month, and summed up her experience as follows:

I think it’s wonderful. It’s been a life-saver for me...it’s made me feel more positive about my job, about my relationship with my manager, about the organisation.

She also acknowledged its value in terms of the tools it provided to manage work-related stress, work relationships and different ways of working with her team. Joan claimed that she would continue her supervision at her own expense if the Department decided it would

not pay for it. Her reason was perfectly simple, “It’s very important for me as a woman manager, because I don’t have those supports otherwise.”

According to Joan none of her team of probation officers had professional supervision despite offers of external supervision paid for by the Department. Two of her staff had had “set up contracts with two providers, but neither of them went ahead and had it.” She expressed concern that her staff found their roles as probation officers to be stressful but would not, even when the opportunity was offered and the providers were of their choosing, grasp the nettle of professional supervision.

As noted above Nicholas and Susan did not receive any professional supervision, but did provide it to their respective team members. In Nicholas’ case this involved formal casework supervision for five probation officers with varying levels of experience. The frequency of this ranged from weekly sessions for the newer, less capable staff members, through to monthly meetings for the very experienced and highly capable officers. He believed that on most occasions he performed the role of a casework supervisor “pretty well.” As for his own need, Nicholas appeared to be somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand he acknowledged that he would probably have to have outside supervision and “would find it useful”, but on the other hand, perceived that due to the changing nature of his role there is less opportunity for him “to practice pure casework supervision.” Moreover he was candid in admitting that due to his extensive experience in supervising staff, he was “probably fairly well set” in his way of working and “it would take quite a bit to actually change it.”

Susan reported that she provided or tried to provide “at least monthly supervision” for a team of ten probation officers, all of whom, were on supervision contracts. She also spoke of her open door policy whereby staff members could consult with her when and if they needed. In an illustration of the open door policy, Susan cited a particular probation officer that avoided formal supervision, but appeared at her door every Monday and gave an account of his recent work and his plans for the forthcoming week. According to Susan, “He didn’t realise it was supervision, and as long as I didn’t tell him it was supervision, we were fine.”

Susan’s perspective on her own supervision needs and situation was interesting. At one point she said that if she really needed to discuss any matters she would see the

industrial chaplain that visited her work-site, a person who had previously been her supervisor at the Department of Social Welfare in the 1980s. At another point, however, she admitted that due to her change eighteen months ago from being a practising probation officer to being a manager, her needs were not being met. As a probation officer, she and her colleagues found their “own level of supervision among our peers...and although it wasn’t formal, we had a lot of informal discussion and ideas floated.” On the other hand, as a service manager, she claimed she had “been floundering...very close to resignation...[and] felt completely debilitated,” because of an acute lack of both support and mentoring.

The remaining two service managers, Sofia and Neil, neither provided nor received professional supervision, though Sofia, did say that she provided administrative supervision. Both have had ongoing arrangements with external sources to provide professional supervision to their respective teams. In Sofia’s team, the probation officers’ received team supervision one month from an external supervisor that they had chosen and agreed to, and the next month each team member received individual supervision with a supervisor that they have chosen. Sofia approves the chosen supervisors (“People that have a good reputation at supervising”) and provided them with the Department’s code of conduct, “so they see how a probation officer has to act.” The supervisors verbally contracted by Sofia were members of a professional body with the exception of one who provided cultural supervision for a Maori staff member. Sofia made the point that there was sometimes a crossover between the administrative supervision that she provided and the externally provided professional supervision. Sofia highlights an example of this “overlap” in relation to her role of reviewing case plans and case notes:

If case plans are way off target, or if silly things are showing up in the case notes, I just can’t leave it and think ‘that is not my business, I’m just purely administrative.’ I mean, that would be unsafe practice.

This point relates clearly to the dialectic found in the literature between the professional and managerial aspects of social service supervision. The essence of Sofia’s point is that neither professional nor managerial supervision exists in a pure form or in isolation from the other (Kadushin, 1992a; Morrison, 1993; Rich, 1993; Shulman, 1993; 1995).

In relation to her own experience of not receiving any professional supervision, Sofia expressed the opinion “it’s terrible”, and stated that she believes that service managers should receive professional supervision. Her reasoning was that service managers train the probation officers, supervise them on a day-to-day basis and are generally around when crises occur, whereas professional supervisors are generally not as available on the spot.

Neil’s experiences differed from those outlined by Sofia. His team participated in monthly group supervision with a clinical psychologist, an arrangement that was in place before he became the manager. Neil had been asked to attend the sessions, but declined to do so. “Personally I don’t see a need for myself, so I don’t bother”, though he “sat in” on a couple of sessions when “the office was going through periods of very high stress.” He reported that the sessions were “alright”, “feel good” sessions that were effective in managing an individual probation officer’s stress and the stress of the team by helping people “to put things into perspective.”

In terms of his own professional supervision needs, Neil said he “only started thinking about it” after being invited to participate in the research and after he had read the information sheet. His thoughts were that he would like to have it “if it was available” and if its focus was to assist him to deal with the stresses of the service manager’s role. Neil also expressed his concern that support for managers, such as professional supervision and the employee assistance programme, may be viewed by superiors “as a weakness” which could have a “detrimental effect” on future career prospects.

Commentary

Only three out of the ten probation officers received formal professional supervision at the time of the interview, and one of the three also participated in an informal peer group. One probation officer had just finished participating in external supervision, and only participated in an informal peer group. Two others had recently ceased having what they called professional supervision, one because she was transferred to another team where the manager provided only administrative supervision. The other had received no professional supervision since his service manager resigned. Finally, of the four remaining probation officers, one had not received supervision since August 1997 and had had less than twelve

supervision sessions in ten years as a probation officer, and the three others stated they did not receive professional supervision.

In relation to the five service managers, only one service manager received supervision. Two service managers provide supervision to members of their teams but were not supervised themselves, and another two, also not supervised, had the professional supervision of their team members carried out by an external provider.

Overall, for both groups of respondents, the most common recent experience was either no or inadequate professional supervision. A finding of this kind appears to be unmatched in the research literature available (Tsui, 1997a; Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993). However, Morrison (1993:9) stated that the consequences of inadequate supervision have been “reflected in a number of major reports” in Great Britain. Morrison (1993: 9) argues that the consequences of inadequate supervision seriously affect an agency in three areas: the management of client casework; the well being and professional development of staff; the health and culture of the agency.

Of the fifteen participants only four reported positive recent experiences of professional supervision, (Angela, Joseph, Joan and Ellen), and three out of these four, (Angela, Joseph and Joan) received their professional supervision from external providers. This finding would appear to support Erera et al. (1994) who suggest that managerial supervision be separated from provision of professional supervision. However, Ellen’s experience of a service manager that provided her with good supervision seems to contradict Erera et al. (1994). Her experience, perhaps, raises the question whether supervisory competence rather than the supervisory functions are related to positive supervision experiences (Munson, 1993).

In terms of the provision of supervision, the findings indicate that there was no consistency or standard method of providing professional supervision. In fact, as Angela and Joseph highlighted earlier, the provision of supervision seemed to rely on the managers’ commitment to either provide or purchase it. To an alarming extent the findings also mirror Payne (1994) who found that recent reported experiences of supervision in social services are a considerable distance from the ideals portrayed in the professional supervision literature. Indeed the lack of professional supervision experience outlined by

the respondents poses a significant challenge for the agency in terms of the development and implementation of its professional supervision policy.

Experiences of Agency Policy Development

Ten of the fifteen respondents reported they participated in the development of the professional supervision policy. The extent of their participation ranged from those who put in submissions, to those that participated in regional presentations and became the identified liaison person between their office and the project implementation team. One probation officer (Grace) participated in the initial project group, which produced the initial report and recommendations to management.

Probation Officers

Generally the probation officers interviewed reported a greater level of participation in the policy development process than the service managers did. Seven of the ten probation officers interviewed appeared to have participated in the policy's development. The three remaining Jack, Kiri, and Tania stated they did not participate, they did not know about it, they were not concerned, or had too much client work.

Four probation officers, Angela, David, Joseph and Ernest, indicated that their participation in the policy's development involved providing written feedback on draft documents. Angela stated that the project group sought comments only about staff preferences in regard to the different types of supervision. Angela also commented that there was no opportunity to comment on who should provide the supervision. David recalled that there was "either a questionnaire or ... a call for input" into the policy. He reported that he expressed his concerns in writing about line management and the situation of smaller rural offices where he believed that the staff did not have the "skills" or "level of personal development to supervise others". As a result of his written feedback, David was asked by a member of the working party to attend a presentation on the policy and to then present it to the other staff in his office. Joseph advised that he also provided written feedback on the "draft reports" and he said that at the stage of the draft reports he felt "quite enthusiastic about where our agency was going," only to find that the agency "shifted the goal posts halfway" through the project. Ernest commented on the timeframes

for consultation. He recalled putting “some kind of submission in” which he prepared in a hurry. He felt that the consultation was “pretty minimal”.

Ellen and Mary-Jane both advised that they attended presentations on the policy in late 1997 and indicated that the presentations involved an outline of what professional supervision was and what the Community Probation Service General Manager thought it was.

Another probation officer recalled time spent as member of the initial working party in May and June of 1997 and advised that the working party reviewed documents from the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Service, health agencies, and from the Department of Social Work at Canterbury University, as background to the project. This probation officer outlined that the group attempted to define what they thought professional supervision was, the contracting arrangements between supervisor and supervisee, and the frequency of supervision sessions. The probation officer also felt concerned whilst participating in the working party, that the professional supervision project would be driven by money. The probation officer remembered thinking at the time that:

I'd be disappointed if...it was driven by money, because I ...think...the department could find fifty bucks a month...they spent twenty million dollars on computers, quite honestly they could actually find the money.

The probation officer's recollection of the working party's recommendations was that the Department provides professional supervision within a certain timeframe, that newer staff members receive more supervision than other staff and that staff members have some choice in their professional supervisor.

Service Managers

Three of the five service managers indicated that they participated in the process that resulted in the development of the professional supervision policy. The two managers who did not participate, namely Neil and Sofia, gave different reasons for this. Neil stated he did not participate because he believed “the decision was already made” and “They were going ahead with it. It was a done deal.” Sofia on the other hand, indicated that she was

excluded from the policy-making process and she felt “very pissed off” about this. Sofia also made the point based on discussions she had had with someone on the working party, that it was “never recommended” that professional supervision be provided internally.

Nicholas also spoke of the difference between the policy and the initial working party report. He believed that the initial working party report included resourcing that would have supported the purchase of supervision from external providers. Joan also revealed this difference when she said that:

I think the project team at the time were quite clear that it should be provided externally ...All we know as staff is that a year ago we were all going to get an hour a month supervision provided externally, and now we're not.

The three service managers (Nicholas, Joan and Susan) who participated in the policy development process did so in a rather limited fashion. Nicholas' participation was to forward a letter that his area's management team prepared, and to send other correspondence as the policy developed. Joan stated she had “no more input than anybody else” and was not specific about her participation. Susan stated she participated through completing a feedback sheet on professional supervision from the New Zealand Association of Probation Officers (NZAPO). Susan believed that NZAPO produced a report about the professional supervision policy. According to Susan, this report and its recommendation had been “watered down” by the Department's policy.

Commentary

The respondents' participation in the policy development process revealed that there was the opportunity for the majority of participants to contribute to the policy's development. Some of the participants indicated dissatisfaction with the extent of the consultation and the “very tight time-frame for responses” particularly in regard to the questionnaire and the draft documents (Community Corrections, 1997a:3).

The issues raised by Sofia, Nicholas and to a lesser extent Joan and Joseph, concerning the difference between the project team's report and the policy, particularly, the change in direction were interesting. The first two respondents (Sofia and Nicholas) posit

that what appeared to be the path of external supervision in the project team's report ended in a "U-turn" which embraced a predominately internal provision. However, the actual report recommends that, the bulk of professional supervision be provided internally (Community Corrections, 1997a:5). The difference between the project report and the views held by Sofia, Nicholas, Joseph and Joan that the goalposts shifted and the project teams brief changed, raises questions about the policy-making process, particularly in regard to:

How transparent or open was it?

What were the givens (e.g. in terms of outcome, cost and quality)?

What attempts were made to ensure that the key stakeholders (probation officers and service managers) would have ownership of the policy?

The question of the transparency or openness of the policy development process seems to be the major one raised by the participants whose views that were divergent from the report. In regard to supervision policy development, O'Donoghue (1998a: 9) asserted that supervision policy-making involved a partnership between the management, supervisors and supervisees, and the support of each was needed in the development of a supervision policy. The primary way of gaining such support is identified in both the social/community work literature and the management literature as through the involvement of key parties in an open and transparent process (Craig, 1983; Barndt, 1991; Covey, 1991; Bartol et al., 1991; Peters, 1993; Creech, 1994; Payne, 1997).

The Community Probation Service policy development process findings and the documentation available to the researcher, indicated that the policy development process was not particularly transparent or open. Firstly, it appears that the rationale for the recommendations of the project team and the subsequent management decisions, particularly in regard to the internal peer mode of supervision, were not clear to the participants. Secondly, the givens or the limits of the professional supervision project appeared not to have been made explicit to the participants. Thirdly attempts made by the participants during the policy development process to gain ownership were unsuccessful. It is argued that these three matters were likely to have had a considerable impact on the implementation of the policy.

Experiences of the Policy and its Implementation

Fourteen of the 15 participants displayed some knowledge and experience of the Community Probation Services' policy of professional supervision. However, the level of knowledge and experience of the policy was varied and ranged from those who knew it existed, through to those who knew details, such as, who would provide professional supervision, the standards required, the specialist provisions and details of the training and implementation programme.

Probation Officers

Nine of the ten probation officers had knowledge of the policy. Only Jack stated that he was not familiar with it, but indicated that he was aware that "they're talking about providing it".

The other nine probation officers all knew that the policy stated that most of the professional supervision would be provided internally by probation officers and they expressed various opinions about the agency's decision to choose an internal peer mode of professional supervision rather than an external one. Seven of these nine probation officers disagreed with the mode of delivery of professional supervision outlined in the agency policy. From those seven, five (Angela, Kiri, Grace, Mary-Jane, and Joseph) disagreed with the internal provision of supervision and thought that the agency should have purchased external supervision. Another two (Ernest and Ellen) disagreed with the peer arrangement outlined in the policy, and thought that service managers should be the professional supervisors. The two remaining probation officers, Tania and David were not adverse to the internal peer mode outlined in the policy. Tania, thought a supervisor for her should come from within the service and didn't mind if it was either a peer or a service manager. David indicated that he was comfortable with the peer arrangement and thought that not having his service manager as his supervisor was positive.

Not surprisingly, David was the most positive of the probation officers about the policy. He thought that, "it's a damn good idea", which, "in practice I can see lots of practical difficulties with it." The practical difficulties he outlined were travel, recruitment, increased workload, and self-nomination. Travel was a difficulty for those officers who were required to travel over an hour to either provide or receive supervision.

The recruitment of supervisors was a considerable obstacle, particularly, since only one person in David's area had volunteered to be a supervisor. The workload issue came from David's belief that the supervisors chosen from the probation officer ranks were likely to have their direct client work reduced so that they could supervise. The outcome of this reduction was an increased workload for the other probation officers. David also expressed reservations about probation officers self-nominating to be supervisors, and thought a better process would be to have each team nominate people. David's final thoughts on the policy were that it was "high time and under resourced as usual".

Ellen also outlined logistical difficulties. She referred to the prospect of travelling to another office and stated that it was one of the reasons why she did not volunteer to be a supervisor, particularly since she was unwilling "to supervise anyone" in her own office. Ellen was unimpressed with the selection process for supervisors. She thought that those that had volunteered did not have the background, knowledge or skills that she and other experienced probation officers had. In summing up this point, Ellen stated that the knowledgeable and highly skilled staff were not volunteering to be supervisors because they had "to fit it in" with the rest of their work.

This issue of the staff volunteering or being selected as supervisors, and a perceived shortage of supervisors, were clear themes in the probation officers responses. Mary-Jane, particularly, highlighted the issue of supervisor selection by reference to the "stringent interview" process that prospective supervisors in her area had to go through. According to Mary-Jane, this process passed only one supervisor for the "twenty probation officers" in her area. Contrary to Mary-Jane's experience was that experienced by participants in other areas, whose experience of the volunteering process was that very few staff volunteered to be supervisors. Tania captures the essence of this problem when she described the call for volunteers to be "very unsuccessful... because, not enough people are putting themselves forward" and those that do are "not necessarily the best people". In a similar vein, Ernest thought that the process of volunteering was "terrible", and stated that he would "never go near" the person who volunteered in his area. He also reflected on his previous experience as a Senior Probation Officer, a role which Ernest felt involved "mainly supervision of staff". He compared his past experience with the recent policy, which had staff volunteering to be supervisors and said that it "horrifies me really". Ernest

felt that the professional supervision policy and its implementation reflected the new ethos of the Community Probation Service, which he said had developed because:

The people running the organisation come in from outside...we're not like a social work agency now, we're more like a factory...factory processing of people.

Joseph who was to be trained as a professional supervisor in the week following the research interview stated that his problem with the policy was that it had “muddied the waters” of professional supervision. He believed that this was because the policy supported internal supervision and that “most of the people who will be supervisors haven't experienced professional supervision”. Joseph also expressed concern about the potential for collusion between peers against and with management. He reported that his experience of external supervision had led him to think that the Community Probation Service policy was a “buddy” and “mentoring” system, which is likely to buy into “mentoring rather than supervising”. Joseph also expressed concerns about the training he was due to receive as a professional supervisor. He stated that the training outline indicated a “four day programme was being delivered in three days”. This condensing of what he hoped was initial training seemed to confirm for him “an unhappy message...about the commitment to supervision or...the understanding of those that designed it.” He thought that a more effective long term method of policy implementation would have been for the service to have had waited twelve months before commencing internal supervision and have:

“All persons who are going to be trained as supervisors receive outside external professional supervision in that twelve months, probably that they undertake the Massey diploma or something of that nature.”

Joseph made the point that the only supervision that staff in Community Probation had experienced was “dual-role” supervision from their managers and they had no experience of professional supervision in any other form.

The point made by Joseph about having experience of professional supervision before becoming a professional supervisor was important, particularly, in view of the reported findings thus far, and the supervision literature. The supervision literature gives

strong support to the role of adult learning theory and the view that supervisors developed their conceptualisation of supervision from their experiences of receiving supervision (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson; 1993; Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; Van Kessel et al., 1993). The literature also indicates that supervisors' practice tends to be modelled on their experiences of receiving supervision (Hawkins et al., 1989; Kadushin, 1992a; Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996)

Service Managers

All of the five service managers were knowledgeable about the Community Probation Service policy on professional supervision and also espoused various views on the provision of professional supervision through an internal peer arrangement. These views ranged from Susan's statement that internal peer provision was "lacking in integrity", through to Joan's statement that professional supervision should "be provided externally because it needs to be objective". None of the five service managers were satisfied with the policy's statement that the bulk of professional supervision is provided internally by probation officers. Two service managers (Nicholas and Susan) thought that service managers should provide professional supervision, but also stated that they would settle for external provision rather than the internal peer form, which Nicholas described as "doing it on the cheap."

The other three service managers believed that professional supervision was best provided externally and expressed concerns particularly about the policy's implementation. These service managers' concerns like those of the probation officers were about the practical implications of the policy. Their main concerns were the selection or volunteering process, the potential safety risks of providing professional supervision internally, and the training provided to supervisors.

Four of the five managers (Nicholas, Sofia, Joan and Susan) raised the matter of the volunteering or selection of professional supervisors. Nicholas expressed frustration about the process by which staff were becoming professional supervisors. He said that the process did not have "any validity" and it was "transparently the wrong way to go about it". Nicholas went on to state that in his area only one person has accepted the role of professional supervisor, and that person was not a popular choice amongst the staff, and

was only able to supervise two people. Summing up, Nicholas said that this situation “makes the whole thing a nonsense”. Sofia’s concerns were closer to home. She was considerably uncomfortable with the prospect of a particular person who had volunteered to be a supervisor in her area supervising probation officers. Sofia candidly said, “I wouldn’t touch her with a fifty foot barge pole. God she’s a bloody useless PO, now she’s a professional supervisor”. Joan raised a further issue in relation to the “self promotion or peer promotion” selection process, which was that she did not consider probation officers to be in an “informed position to select” professional supervisors. Joan believed that probation officers do not have a “consistent” or “clear understanding” of professional supervision. Susan, on the other hand, spoke of her experience on the selection panel which interviewed prospective professional supervisors, and required them to give a demonstration of their work as a supervisor. Susan reported that from four applicants only “one person just passed the benchmark”. She expressed concern about the lack of standardisation in the selection process and the amount of “shoulder tapping” that had gone on in other areas. Susan seemed worried about the prospect that service managers would allocate supervisors to probation officers. Her concern was that she might have to tell a probation officer to have supervision with someone who they may or may not be comfortable with. Susan felt that this situation was “unsafe.”

Sofia, who considered the peer arrangement an unsafe practice, which left people feeling extremely uncomfortable, also took up the safety theme. She also felt that the peer arrangement watered down the challenging aspect of professional supervision. Neil’s concerns were that there were potential safety risks from peer supervision, particularly, in areas of safe practice and confidentiality.

The training of the professional supervisors was a concern of three of the five service managers (Nicholas, Sofia and Joan). All three expressed the opinion that three days with a follow up day was insufficient. Joan’s statement that “I don’t think that you can pick up the qualities of a supervisor ... in two or three days” generally reflected the perspective of these service managers.

Commentary

Twelve of the 15 respondents disagreed with the mode of the delivery of professional supervision espoused by the Community Probation Service policy on professional supervision. This level of disagreement and dissatisfaction was concerning and raised questions about the level of commitment from staff to the policy and the extent to which the staff have ownership of the professional supervision policy.

The commitment of key stakeholders to organisational goals is strongly emphasised in management literature as central to goal attainment (Nelson et al., 1996; Covey, 1991; Bartol et al., 1991; Peters, 1993; Creech, 1994). This literature suggests that if probation officers and service managers were not committed to the policy, then its goals are unlikely to be achieved.

In regard to the policy implementation the participants described an unclear implementation programme which had significant “practical difficulties”. The most alarming of these was the selection or volunteering process for supervisors, which was contingent upon which area you happen to work in. This process correlated with the concern expressed by Brown et al. (1996:182) that plans to improve the delivery of professional supervision in the social services were not supported by an appropriate infrastructure. Another related issue was that there was no formal route and very few formal qualifications available for professional supervisors. The literature in this regard identifies a need for formal accreditation processes for professional supervisors (Brown et al., 1996; Beddoe, 1997a). Interestingly, the Community Probation Service draft manual amendment (1998a) appeared to provide an accreditation framework for supervisors through the use of the professional supervisors’ competency standard. However, the participants’ experiences indicated that this process was not in place.

Of further concern was the limited investment by the Community Probation Service in the workforce development of its supervisors and supervisees, particularly, when the participants indicated that there was no “consistent” and “clear understanding of professional supervision” and given the extent of the change that this policy appears to herald. The respondents considered the training investment in supervisors of a three-day

training event for supervisors followed by a further day, to be insufficient. In the literature Brown et al. (1996: 164-179) raised concern about the lack of comprehensive training and development for supervisors and they described supervisor training as mainly occurring on an ad-hoc basis. In relation to the supervisees, the participants' responses and the Community Probation Service policy and training documentation indicated that there had been no training provided to them in how to use professional supervision to gain the optimum benefit for them and their clients. It seemed that probation officers and service managers were informed of the policy and the definition without any recent formative experiences of professional supervision (Community Corrections Service, 1997a; 1998a). The issues raised in this section also evoke the question: How supportive was the organisational environment for professional supervision?

Experiences of the Supervision Environment

A recent trend in the supervision literature has been to consider the influence the environment has upon professional supervision (Tsui et al., 1997; Holloway, 1995; Beddoe, 1997a; 1997b; O'Donoghue, 1998b). In this section the respondents' experiences of management practices, organisational culture and social policy in relation to professional supervision are discussed.

Management Practices

All fifteen respondents stated that management practices influenced both the professional supervision delivered and the implementation of the professional supervision programme. Both groups identified management practices of concern to them. The probation officers were focused on their experience of their immediate managers, whereas the service managers appeared to be focused more upon the practices of senior management.

Probation Officers

Five probation officers, (Angela, Kiri, Jack, Mary-Jane, and Tania) focused on the changes ushered in by the development of the service manager role and their experience of that role. Three others (David, Grace and Ernest) spoke about divisions that had developed between management and workers, and between teams. Ellen, on the other hand, spoke of her experiences of a managerial preoccupation with technology and recording, whereas

Joseph spoke of his experience of the management practices of cost cutting and short-term planning.

Angela found the changes that followed the restructuring resulted in little supervision except for that provided by “outside supervisors” for a “few people” or that provided by local management. Angela believed that the managerial trend was “very much hands off cases, hands off clients”. This trend, according, to Angela had reduced the service managers’ availability for case consultation, because, they were “very busy doing their budgets and forms for head office and stuff”. Kiri made the point that the new structure was designed so that the service managers did not provide supervision like they used to and that this had resulted in, “minimal supervision”. Kiri emphasised that service managers seemed “a lot more administrative than practising”. Jack’s statements seemed to echo Kiri’s particularly in regard to the administration focus of managers and their “being too busy fiddling with paper ...to know what’s going on around the place.” Jack commented also about the “shovelling” down of work which had developed as a result of the combination of the district manager, senior probation officer/unit manager roles into the role of the service manager. He emphasised that the work once done by those roles had now been “shovelled right down to the probation officer level” and that professional supervision was one example of this. Mary-Jane was highly critical of management practices and stated that there was a push to “produce outputs, and produce really good statistics”. Mary-Jane characterised management as highly directive, non participatory and unsupportive. In one of her strongest statements Mary-Jane emphasised the inequities of the Community Probation Service practice of rewarding managers through bonus payments, as a key change which had implications for professional supervision.

People are feeling like management really sucks,...they’re wanting us to do all these things for them, so they can get their bonuses, and we get nothing. We’re not being rewarded for our good work, and we’re not being punished for bad work either. People can get away with blue murder round here really!

Mary-Jane seemed also to suggest that these management practices had resulted not in better quality work but rather coercion, collusion and corruption (Gregory, 1995).

The divisions created by management practices in the Community Probation Service are a theme that was raised by David, Grace and Ernest. David expressed “real qualms” about the management practices within the Department of Corrections. He was particularly concerned about the emphasis found in bonus payments and individual employment contracts, which recognised “the individual rather than the team”. This emphasis he linked to the “notion of divide and conquer”, which he considered was both “divisive” and “destructive” and created a culture of: “Stuff you, Jack, I’m looking out for me.” Grace spoke of divisions that were a direct result of the management structure and the development of teams. She suggested that the way the area she worked in had structured its teams had resulted in the management practice of “that’s not my job, that’s not my responsibility... you’ll have to see your service manager”. The point Grace made was that the structure had resulted in a patch-mentality amongst service managers, whose clear interests and performance are measured in relation to their teams’ output production and budget variance. The divisions Ernest identified were in two areas. The first area was related to measurement and performance, which Ernest stated had been divided by management into “practice” and performance “measures”. He seemed to be drawing attention to the new managerial practice of separating professional process from the product. This practice placed accountability on the product produced rather than the process involved in production (Boston et al., 1996). The second area Ernest identified was related to the management practice of reducing work into defined quantifiable units. Ernest’s point was that management had separated, “the management of a case” from “the supervision of the case”. Ernest stressed that his experience had been that the social work aspects of probation practice were subordinated to the managerial agenda. Summing up Ernest said that:

“The department isn’t interested in the social work part to be honest. It’s kind of like, you know, covering the management stuff, and getting the numbers through in the least time that you can, and I still try and do the other [social work] stuff, but its not valued.

Ellen’s experience of management practices emphasised that they had, “really gone technology mad”. She reported that more significance was given to what was recorded on

the computer than the client practice itself. Upon reflection, the point Ellen was making in regard to professional supervision was that the interest from managers will be on what is recorded rather than what actually transpires in the professional supervision.

Joseph believed that the current programme of internal supervision did not assist the Community Probation Service achieve its mission. He thought that the professional supervision programme was “supervision on the cheap” and he believed by saving money in the short-term the service would not develop in the manner that it aspired to in its “written documents”. He said that this was because they had not utilised, “the talents of our staff to the best of their ability”, and did not, “provide the best service we could provide.”

Service Managers

The five service managers presented an unflattering perspective of their experiences of management practices. Nicholas discussed three areas namely, the basis of changes initiated by management, the short-term political agenda of the general manager, and difficulties in communicating with senior managers. Nicholas said that the changes initiated in the Community Probation Service, “have often been for reasons other than... quality outcomes for probation officers and clients.” He believed that, “The agency’s priorities are in some other area than dealing with re-offending of our client group” and that they were “politically driven”. Nicholas also made a connection between the “political agendas” and the senior management of the department and said that:

Those in power in the agency, are there for the short term often. They have no mandate for enhancing the probation officers role. They are there for a defined period of time to perform according to the political agenda and then move on.

Nicholas contrasted the above with his experience of previous senior managers, who all served, “their apprenticeship in the organisation”. Nicholas conceded that whilst, “they may not have been particularly good managers at times”, they at least spoke the same language and understood the nature of probation work, which was something he had not experienced from the new breed of generic senior managers. Nicholas surmised that one of the consequences of generic managers not understanding probation work and not speaking

the same language, was, from his perspective, the development of “an element of distrust right throughout the organisation” about where the organisation was going.

Sofia felt that management practices had a considerable impact on professional supervision, particularly, in terms of how they were implemented. She stated that her managers were generally unwilling to discuss issues once they had made a decision and that they would “just dictate” and if you tried to critique the decision you were “reprimanded.” Sofia reported that the managers above her had never been employed as probation officers and that some of the decisions they had made were “off the planet, bloody bananas”. She also noted that there was only one person in Head Office who had been a field probation officer and that this person was a “lonely voice” amongst a chief executive officer who was “Ex-Treasury” and the general manager who was “Ex-Community Funding Agency”. Sofia’s experience of her senior managers who had never been probation officers and never experienced professional supervision was that they weren’t willing to listen to her or other staff’s opinions in relation to the potential problems with the professional supervision programme.

Joan similarly raised issues about senior management’s responsiveness to staff concerns. She stated that the one thing that was clear to her from listening to probation officers, “in team meetings, staff meetings, surveys, climate surveys... even the business plan process,” was that they wanted external professional supervision paid for by the agency. Joan believed that the people holding the purse strings weren’t “listening to what the staff want.” She reiterated that senior management’s role throughout the project had been to hold “the purse strings” and according to Joan this resulted in the project changing “from external supervision at a cost of \$90 an hour to internal or peer supervision at very little cost”. Joan, however, was quick to point out that this very little cost was in terms of what was readily accounted for in monthly budget accruals, and that the cost of internal supervision would be in terms of reduced output production, increased production pressure and decreased quality of the work. Joan also believed that there was a strong link here with the priorities of the organisation, which she stated were that, the organisation was “developing into more of ...a competitive business in the work place and less of a social agency.”

Neil spoke about the level of management support for the professional supervision project and difficulties he had experienced with generic senior managers.

He thought that there was little management support for the project and that “unless somebody in senior management drives it and continues to drive it, it will fall by the wayside, particularly if we use the current policy.” Neil also expressed frustration with generic senior managers who knew little about what probation officers do, yet readily made statements on how they should practice. He outlined an example of a discussion that he had with a manager in which he advised that his staff had found the computer system cumbersome and had difficulties keeping their case-notes up to date on the system. The response given by the more senior manager was that the probation officers type on the keyboard, whilst interviewing and counselling the clients. The clear message that this senior manager gave was that the computer was more important to attend to than clients are. Neil summed up this experience in the following statement:

They don't actually know anything about what the person does...It's like me trying to tell a mechanic how to strip an engine and put it back together.

The fifth service manager Susan, spoke of management practices impacting in terms of change, cutbacks, and in regard to the long term strategy of the Department, which she sees as the Integrated Offender Management project. Susan stated that change “happens very quickly” with short timeframes for consultation, which was rushed and not good. Susan thought that what occurred with professional supervision was that documents were sent out for comment with a short timeframe and people “don't often have time... to comment on the ramifications.” She believed that this management practice and the cutback policy had also impacted on the professional supervision programme through the small numbers of applications from staff to be professional supervisors. Susan makes the point that the people that should have applied to be professional supervisors weren't because, “they're just too busy” due to the “reduced staff ceiling and the add-on tasks that are happening”. Susan asserted that the changes were additional to the core business of the Community Probation Service and that they were managed within the current budget and staffing allocations. She firmly believed that the professional supervision programme was only an interim measure and that the longer-term strategy was the Integrated Offender

Management project. Susan said that this project had “really given the argument for ongoing supervision to maintain your practice level, a lot of weight” and that the Department was, “very aware that ...professional supervision” was a must for the success of this project.

Commentary

All fifteen respondents’ experience of management practices revealed aspects of what Boston et al.(1996:9) called the New Zealand model of new public management or new managerialism (Easton, 1997; Boston et al., 1996; O’Donoghue, 1998a; Gregory, 1995; Kelsey, 1993). This is particularly evident when the key aspects of new public management are linked to the findings from the respondents as outlined in Table 6.1 below.

The respondents’ experience portrayed new public management as having a detrimental impact on professional supervision and the implementation of the professional supervision programme. The most interesting finding outlined in Table 6.1 was the most common theme namely, the separation of the professional workers from management. The separation of management from workers and clients was discussed in the literature by Gowdy et al. (1993: 8) who asserted that the consequences of this separation in social service agencies results were “chronic and acute goal displacement where the organisation’s means becomes its end”. Gowdy et al. (1993) elaborated on this point through emphasising that agencies prefer to use outputs based on production tasks rather than clients outcomes as the measures of successful performance. Further points made by Gowdy et al. (1993) related to the results of this separation were that managers, practice reactive management, indulge in management fads which uses significant resources and use problem solving methods which resolve issues but don’t improve performance. Finally Gowdy et al. (1993:8) make the point that the separation of managers from workers and clients was the main reason why management was viewed as extraneous and non contributory to better client outcomes as well as the primary contributor to poor morale, burnout and low levels of job satisfaction.

Table 6.1. New Public Management Linked to Findings

Aspect of New Public Management	Number of respondents	Probation Officers	Service Managers
Service restructuring	Six	Angela, Kiri, Jack, Mary-Jane, Tania, Grace	-
Separation of professional workers from the management	Eight	Angela, Kiri, Jack, Mary-Jane, David, Ernest	Nicholas, Sofia
The use of private sector management practices	Three	David, Mary-Jane	Joan
Devolving and delegation of previous management functions to frontline practitioners	Two	Jack	Susan
Generic managers to run services like businesses	Four	Ernest	Nicholas, Joan, Neil
Production culture	Four	Mary-Jane, Grace, Ernest	Joan
Greater use of information technology	Two	Ellen	Neil
A focus on product accountability rather than process accountability	Six	Mary-Jane, Grace, Ernest, Ellen	Joan, Neil
Cost cutting and fiscal restraint	Three	Joseph	Joan, Susan
A focus on the short-term political agenda	Two	Joseph	Nicholas

Gowdy et al. (1993) assertions appear to relate to the issue raised by four service managers (Nicholas, Sofia, Joan and Neil) about senior managers' limited ability to receive feedback, listen, understand and empathise with staff. This finding along with those outlined earlier by the respondents seem to signal that the organisation's culture may not be a supportive environment for professional supervision.

Organisational Culture

The fifteen respondents were not positive about the organisational culture of the Community Probation Service and its impact on professional supervision. The clear theme that emerged was that at the time the interviews were conducted, the organisational culture was not supportive of professional supervision.

Probation Officers

The probation officers made a number of comments about the impact of the organisation's culture. The major theme was that identified by four probation officers, (David, Joseph, Tania and Ernest) who commented on the impact of change and highlighted that the service had a culture of continuous change in which the rate of change was described as "horrendous". The other views expressed tended to be those of individual probation officers and seemed to reflect an organisational culture in a state of crisis.

Ernest was unsure whether there was one organisational culture within the agency, and he wondered whether two cultures had developed, namely the "Old hands" and the "New". Joseph on the other hand, believed that the next cycle of restructuring was on the horizon and that this was likely to mean that the personal support aspects of professional supervision would be emphasised instead of the client work. He made a further point that few people had "responded with passion" to professional supervision and that there was not a professional supervision culture in the agency. Kiri commented that the organisation's leadership had promised much but delivered little and had not met her needs as a Maori. Kiri highlighted that the culture of the organisation forces her to "fall into the trap of being pakeha" and "dealing with things in a pakeha way." Kiri's final comments in this section were about experiences she had had of the agency not valuing her and not recognising her cultural needs particularly in regard to supervision. Ellen spoke of a clash of cultures between periodic detention staff and probation staff and felt that this was

“divisive”, whereas Grace commented on how professional supervision was threatening to some probation officers who tended to view themselves as “elitist” and “precious.” Jack expressed the view that the culture has been “fairly negative for a long time”, and that the organisation needs to shed some of its staff who had been there “so damn long ...and who are dragging all this baggage along with them.” Mary-Jane felt that the culture had little enthusiasm and that the implication of this was that professional supervision would probably be superficially put in place. Conversely, Angela believed that the current culture accentuated the need for good professional supervision and made the need for supervision more pressing than it had been previously.

Service Managers

The five service managers were more critical than the probation officers about the impact of organisational culture on professional supervision. Three of the five Service Managers (Joan, Neil and Sofia) made comment about the results of a recent climate survey which portrayed the culture as “being quite cold, unsympathetic, unsupportive of staff.” Joan felt that the climate survey portrait of the organisational culture indicated that it would not support the professional supervision project. Joan believed that there was a “level of dishonesty in the organisation” that was experienced by both probation officers and service managers and was contributing to the culture developing in a “sinister dishonest fashion”.

Nicholas believed that the organisational culture was “breeding a lot more cynicism” and that this influenced morale. He also thought that there is a tick the box mentality present in the organisation, which resulted in outcomes that were far from the best possible, and that professional supervision had:

Obviously been put on someone’s performance ...contract, and it’s a box to be ticked and it’s time-bound and it’s been done without due care and attention, thought, for the results.

Susan thought that in the current culture “professional supervision as it’s envisaged will die...and die very suddenly.” Susan said that this was because “staff are really not treating it seriously” due to the lack of credibility of the peer arrangement.

Commentary

The experiences reported of the organisational culture in the Service, indicated that it was not supportive of professional supervision and seemed to correspond with descriptions given by Hawkins et al. (1989) of bureaucratic and crisis cultures. Hawkins et al. (1989:135) described a bureaucratic culture as one which was problem focussed with an ethos of a “mechanics checklist”, with little time or space for understanding in its frenetic search for simple neatly packaged solutions. A crisis or reactive culture was described as one that is in a continual state of reaction to a sea of troubles in which supervision is seldom a high priority and will not occur regularly due to very important reasons (Hawkins et al., 1989). The correspondence between these two cultures and the experiences of the respondents was clearly apparent in the comments made about the climate survey made by the service managers and the discussion on the horrendous rate of change highlighted by the probation officers. The outcome of professional supervision in such an environment was that it becomes a rush for quick fix solutions amidst a host of competing demands (Beddoe, 1997a; Beddoe et al., 1994; Hawkins et al., 1989). Those competing demands include matters generated by the politics within the Community Probation Service and the politics that act on the agency from the outside.

Experiences of the Effects of Social Policy

Thirteen of the 15 respondents (8 probation officers and 5 service managers) reported that they had experiences of current social policy, which they considered impacted on professional supervision in their agency. Very little difference was reported amongst both probation officers and service managers with the exception of two service managers who raised issues related to the mental health system.

The most common theme outlined by seven of the 15 participants was the reduction of money for public provided support and services and the influence that this had on the workers in the Community Probation Service. Mary-Jane emphasises this through stating that “the more they cut the budgets...the more our clients get into trouble...the more we have to deal with, the less we get support.” Mary-Jane mused further that it is not a “very good cycle” and “it breaks down in the middle”, which she identified was “the supervision part.”

The impact of increased accountability was a theme raised by three respondents, Angela, Joseph and Ernest. Joseph and Ernest seem to raise two sides of the accountability issue. Joseph believed that accountability was clearer and it offered workers greater protection and made supervision in both its managerial and professional forms important, whereas, Ernest thought that the risk management approach of agencies left the individual worker more exposed to public censure and litigation. The matter of individuals being more exposed seemed to link David's concern about the thrust in social policy towards individual responsibility. David believed that the implications of this thrust may result in the contracting out of professional supervision with a reduced role for agencies focused on purchasing and contract management.

The final theme, which was raised by Neil and Nicholas, was about the impact of clients from the mental health system and upon professional supervision in the Community Probation Service. Neil believed that probation officers were dealing with greater numbers of people who were "coming out of the mental health system." He thought that probation officers "were not qualified to deal with people who have psychiatric and other disorders." Neil believed that where this had a bearing on professional supervision was when the probation officer did not know what to do with these clients and was getting "stressed out" about it.

Nicholas made a similar point and emphasised the effects of the social policy of de-institutionalisation, which promoted community care of mentally unwell people. Nicholas stated that his staff had been "traumatised" over recent months by clients who were mentally unwell. He felt that the influence of this on professional supervision was related to:

An increasingly anxious community, and by definition the people we see are the most stressed for whatever reason, then if the stress level rises in the community, then it's gonna rise inside these four walls too.

Commentary

The themes identified by the respondents of reduced public and social support services, greater accountability, increased public scrutiny, the emphasis on individual responsibility and the impact of the de-institutionalisation of mental health services were also key themes

found in the social policy literature of Aotearoa/New Zealand (Shannon, 1991; Cheyne et al., 1997). These findings highlight that fieldworkers and their managers in the Community Probation Service were faced with the stresses of this “turbulent environment” on a daily basis (Hughes et al., 1997). In essence the findings of this section revealed clearly the paradox outlined by Mary-Jane, in which the results of the social policies identified increased the need for supervision whilst at the same time diminishing the resources available to provide it. The supervision literature recognises the influence this environment had on both workers and the culture of an organisation and emphasises the role professional supervision has in management of work-related stress, and it promotes a mediation and advocacy approach through the raft of conflicts experienced in the work environment. It also promotes the establishment and maintenance of safe professional boundaries (Hughes et al., 1997; Morrison, 1993; Munson, 1993; Shulman, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; O’Donoghue, 1998a; 1998b).

The findings also give weight to Kadushin’s (1992a) construct of an ecology of supervision particularly in regard to the social setting’s influence on the supervisory system. In this regard the participants’ responses seem to indicate that professional supervision is constructed and shaped by forces both internal and external to social systems of those who are engaged in supervision sessions. Another way of framing this is the saying that, “There are more people in the room during supervision than those physically sitting in the chairs” (O’Donoghue, 1998b).

Summary and implications

The objective of this chapter was to explore the respondents’ experiences of professional supervision and the environment in which professional supervision is practised. The presentation of the findings involved discussing firstly, the participants’ experience of professional supervision in terms of their recent participation, their experiences in regard to the development of the agency’s policy, its content and implementation. Secondly the participants experiences of the supervision environment and its influence upon professional supervision were discussed. The environment explored included management practices, organisational culture and social policy, and considered the influence of these on professional supervision.

The findings in relation to the experience of professional supervision in the Community Probation Service revealed a very limited experience of professional supervision amongst both the probation officers and service managers.

The respondents' recent participation in professional supervision showed only three out of ten probation officers (Angela, Grace and Tania) participated in formal professional supervision with a fourth probation officer who had recently finished participating in external supervision, and was participating in an informal peer group arrangement. The service managers' recent participation revealed only Joan as participating in supervision as a supervisee. Two other service managers Susan and Nicholas participated as providers of professional supervision but did not receive any.

The last two service managers Sofia and Neil purchased external supervision for their team.

The findings also revealed that there was neither a consistent form of delivery of professional supervision nor a standard method of provision experienced by the respondents. The provision of professional supervision appeared to rely on the manager's commitment to purchase or provide. It was apparent that the respondents' recent participation revealed inadequate professional supervision which had implications in terms of the agency's work with clients, in the professional development of staff and health and culture of the agency (Morrison, 1993).

The recent experiences of the participants emphasised the need for a change in the Community Probation Service's professional supervision policy and delivery. However, the findings in relation to policy development, the current policy and its implementation revealed that the policy development process was not transparent and reflected the cognitive interests of management rather than clients and field staff of the organisation (Drew, 1987). This was particularly emphasised by twelve out of fifteen participants disagreeing with the mode of delivery outlined in the professional supervision policy.

The policy implementation process was found to be unclear and fraught with practical difficulties. The most concerning of these for participants was an inconsistent selection or volunteering process for professional supervisors and limited investment made by the agency in the workforce development of its supervisors and supervisees. These difficulties were particularly significant, given that the findings showed that the

participants had not experienced a culture of professional supervision. There was also a clear indication that the participants had been informed of the policy without any formative experiences of professional supervision (Community Corrections Service, 1997a; 1998a).

The experiences of professional supervision, the policy, its development and implementation indicated that there was little experience of professional supervision and little evidence of a professional supervision culture. Significant issues were identified with the way the agency had sought to change this situation and the changes proposed in the policy together with the inconsistent manner in which the policy was implemented. The most significant implication that can be inferred was that the professional supervision programme as described by the respondents was unlikely to achieve its objectives.

The participants' experiences of the supervision environment and its impact upon professional supervision revealed that the management practices experienced were reflective of, "new public management" (Boston et al., 1996). The most significant of the management practices, identified by eight out of the fifteen respondents was the separation of professional workers from management. The likely implications of this for social service agencies had been identified in the literature by Gowdy et al. (1993) as: serious goal displacement with the organisation focusing on its activities or outputs as the measures of success; reactive management practices; a flirtation with management fads; the use of problem solving methods; and the view that management is irrelevant and the main source of stress and burnout for direct service workers.

The implications of the separation described above were also apparent in the findings related to organisational culture in which the participants seemed to describe a bureaucratic and crisis culture unsupportive of professional supervision. This type of culture results in professional supervision becoming a rush for quick fix solutions amidst a host of competing demands (Beddoe, 1997b; Beddoe et al., 1994; Hawkins et al., 1989).

In regard to the impact of social policy, the findings reflected themes found in the literature on social policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand, namely, reduced state services, greater accountability, increased individual responsibility and the results of de-institutionalisation. The findings highlighted that in this "turbulent environment" there was a greater need for supervision, however, this need was met by a paradoxical reduction in

resources available. The findings also highlight that the policy context had an influence upon supervision practice (Hughes et al., 1997; Kadushin, 1992a).

The implications of the respondents experience of the supervision environment were somewhat paradoxical in that each element reinforced the need for professional supervision, yet at the same time demonstrated that it was unsupportive of that need. In regard to the professional supervision programme the implications from the respondents' experience of the environment in which supervision was practised were that the environment was unsupportive of the programme.

This paradox of a recognised need for professional supervision shared between the agency and the participants which was not met raises the questions of what type of professional supervision do the respondents want? And what environment will be supportive of professional supervision? These questions will be taken up in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

In the literature the aspirations and expectations of supervisors and supervisees has a significant place. Brown et al. (1996:51-52) and Morrison (1993:27) consider the clarification of aspirations and expectations as central to the establishment of effective supervision, whereas Munson (1993: 40-41) lists rights and expectations that supervisees and supervisors should have. He argues that only through open realistic expectations of supervision can supervisors and supervisees optimise the opportunities that it provides.

With the above points in mind, the aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings concerning the probation officers' and service managers' aspirations and expectations of professional supervision. The three main areas covered are: the respondents' expectations about the content, process and structures of supervision; their expectations of their ideal supervisor, and the roles and responsibilities they wanted this person to undertake; and finally their aspirations and expectations of the agency's support and organisational culture. The chapter concludes with a summary, which will also outline the implications of the findings.

Expectations of Supervision Content

All fifteen participants expressed expectations in relation to the content of professional supervision, and it was clear that the expectations of the probation officers were somewhat broader than the service managers' expectations.

Probation Officers

Among the probation officers the dominant content expectation concerned the area of clients or client work. Ten stated that they expected the content of their professional supervision would involve discussion of their clients and their work with clients. There were however different descriptions of this particular aspect of content. Four officers, (Angela, Jack, Grace, and Tania) spoke of their work with clients in terms of bringing cases, discussing their caseload, and case reviews. The use of the word 'cases' by these

four officers links them back to the strong tradition of casework supervision which dates from the 1930s (Kadushin, 1992a). Five others (Kiri, David, Mary-Jane, Joseph and Ernest) used the term ‘clients’, whilst another (Ellen) used the concept ‘practice’ to describe her work with clients. These differences in descriptions in relation to the same material, emphasise that supervisees’ expectations can differ in accord with their personal constructs of supervision (Solas, 1994).

Two respondents, Jack and Ellen, expected theory and practice techniques to be part of their professional supervision content. Ellen expressed a strong expectation that her supervision would include research and the latest practice developments. Jack, on the other hand, wanted a more technically related content in which he could learn “different types of practice techniques” that he could use “to modify behaviour in individuals.” He also expected that feedback would be based on clinical observations made by his supervisor. These observations would focus upon his application of theory.

Mary-Jane and Tania also expected feedback based on observations. Mary-Jane wanted clinical observation through the use of video and audio recordings of client work (after the client had given their informed consent) and the opportunity to discuss these recordings with her supervisor. Tania referred to observation in a more general (rather than the clinical) sense and wanted feedback about what the supervisor observed that was “possibly the problem”. For example, was she was using her time appropriately and where could she do better.

Tania was one of five officers who expected to be able to discuss herself in relation to her work. She wanted space to express her feelings if she felt that she was not coping. David expressed similar expectations and hoped that his supervision relationship could be developed to the point where:

I would be able to walk in and say ‘I’ve had a shit of a week’ and it’s not because of anything they’ve done, ...it’s something else that’s going on.

Kiri also wanted to talk about her feelings in supervision, however, her emphasis was on her feelings about clients, particularly in terms of who and what she felt uncomfortable with and the reasons for that. Both Joseph and Ernest recognised that there was an

association between their personal and their professional relationships and expected this to be reflected in the content of their supervision.

Mary-Jane, Grace, Ellen and Ernest, stated that they expected professional development to be part of the supervision content. The first three wanted areas identified where their skills and knowledge could be further developed through training and education. Ernest appeared to have a wider perspective, one which involved helping him prepare for “new changes or new challenges”. In essence, it appeared that the content that he was wanting was focused on his development as a professional rather than development in terms of knowledge and skill acquisition.

Another area of content was identified by Joseph, who expected “every now and then” to discuss “work focussed” issues related to his “colleagues or bosses”. Finally, a further theme identified by four probation officers (Joseph, David, Angela, and Tania) was that the content of their supervision would be based on an agreement between themselves and their respective supervisors.

Service Managers

Among the service managers the most common expected content related to staff and their work with staff. Sofia expected the content of her supervision to be centred on how she could get the best out of staff. She envisaged this happening through being challenged to consider new ways of working with her staff and by reflecting on her work. The staff content Neil wanted was centred upon his relationships with staff and the relationships that his staff had with each other. He wanted to be able to discuss how he could meld different personalities into a team and made the following comment on this matter:

It gets very difficult when you’ve got ...some people who are assertive, but they’re aggressive assertive and then ...others who say no, but they’re very quiet and then get offended because of the aggressive assertive person and so on.

Susan’s expectation was focused upon and included discussion of any staff issues she had and any concerns she had about her supervision of staff.

The next most common content item expected was the person themselves in relation to their work. This was mentioned by both Susan and Neil, whose perspectives differed considerably. Susan wanted to be able to discuss “a little bit of personal stuff” but was clear that she “did not want it to generate into the personal sob story”. Neil, on the other hand, wanted his supervision to assist him in finding a lifestyle balance between his work, home and other roles. In particular he wanted to be able to talk through issues when he thought his balance was “all out of kilter.” Neil also wanted help in his supervision to deal with his managers, to get “them to hear some of the things” that he said to them “rather than just hearing and not listening”.

The other two service managers, Nicholas and Joan, were less specific about their expected supervision content. Nicholas apparently wanted content based upon his managerial role and his work. Joan spoke in general terms of issues and career development when asked about what she wanted the content of her supervision to be.

Commentary

In terms of the content of their professional supervision, thirteen of the fifteen participants indicated they wanted to discuss the people worked with and their work with these people, be they clients or staff. The next most common supervision content area identified by seven participants was themselves in relation to their work and this was followed by matters of training and professional development. These findings, it could be argued, are consistent with the views of Kadushin, (1992a: 142) who describes the content of professional supervision as “people, place, process, personnel and problem”. Kadushin claims that this is derived from the “nuclear situation of all social work” which he asserts is:

That of a client (individual, family, group, or community-*people*) coming or referred to a social agency (*place*) for help (*process*) by a social worker (*personnel*). The client comes with a *problem* in social functioning.

In summary the content areas identified by the participants' corresponded with the main areas from which the content of social work is drawn. These areas being the persons involved and their environments (Turner, 1996; NZASW, 1998d).

Process of Supervision

All fifteen respondents identified the process that they wanted their supervision to use and there was very little difference between the probation officers and service managers. One observation worth raising was that I was asked by nine of the respondents (seven probation officers and two service managers) "What do you mean?" immediately after asking them "what process would you want?" The following extract from Joseph's transcript illustrates this point:

K: In terms of process, what sort of process would you want?

J: What are you talking about?

K: What I'm talking about, is ...when you sit down, the sort of atmosphere and what transpires, the underlying stuff. Content is what you talk about, the process is what goes on.

Arguably, this occurrence supported the early finding in chapter five, which found that the participants tended to construct supervision in terms of its content and functions rather than in terms of its process.

Probation Officers

Two of the ten officers Joseph and Kiri spoke in general terms with Kiri indicating that she wanted a process that would keep her honest and would examine whether she was being difficult or hiding things. Joseph, on the other hand, was more theoretical and spoke of being open to a gestalt process, being familiar with the classic social work models, and wanting a change from supervision that seemed to be "solely hooked into parallel process".

The remaining eight outlined steps or elements of the professional supervision process. Angela and David both spoke of a settling in phase in which there would be a bit of "chit chat". This settling in phase would be followed by an identification phase, which involved setting the agenda or listing the matters for discussion. An identification phase

was mentioned by Angela, David, Ernest, Tania, and Mary-Jane, whilst, Grace wanted a checking out phase in which they would “Check out immediate work crises” and “check out how I am” and proceed from that point. David, Tania and Angela spoke of a phase in which what had been identified would be ordered or prioritised. A working phase where the issues selected would be “worked through to solutions” was wanted by Ernest, Mary-Jane and Grace. Jack indicated that he wanted role-play included as an option in this working stage. Angela and David identified the final phase as an ending phase that involved “feedback from the supervisor” and a review of the content and any outcomes and a brief assessment of “how satisfactory” the supervision was.

Service Managers

The service managers’ responses were similar to the probation officers. Nicholas responded in general terms and indicated that the process aspects of supervision was something he would want to brush up on. He mentioned that whilst he could not name each aspect he would like a methodical process.

The other four service managers identified steps in the process. Sofia wanted a planning phase, which occurred at the end of a previous session for the next session. Susan wanted a process that began with “pleasantries” and “a bit of warming up”, which would then be followed by the setting of the agenda. Joan wanted a structured process which involved housekeeping, a review of last session’s notes, followed by the identification of any issues that needed discussion. The process that Neil wanted was one where he could talk to someone who would listen and reflect what he had said back to him so that he could start organising it. Neil describes the process as follows:

It’s a little bit like...taking the top off a boil. You’ve got to let it go first, then you can start cleaning it out...that’s what I’d want from somebody.

Susan’s phase where issues were explored and worked through to a resolution had some similarities to the approach described above. Both Susan and Joan also spoke of a review phase near the end of the supervision process in which what was covered was monitored and evaluated by the participants. Susan also wanted a closure phase so that she did not leave “with the session still running around your head.”

Commentary

The process outlined by the respondents clearly mirrored the social work interview process. This process also involves preparation, an introductory phase, a phase where the purpose or agenda is clarified and ordered, a working phase and a review or ending phase (NZSWTC, 1985; O'Donoghue, 1998a; Payne, 1997). The respondents' perspectives also support the earlier findings in chapter five related to the parallel process between the process used in direct practice and that used in professional supervision. The findings in regard to process also seem to agree with the supervision literature (NZSWTC, 1985; Kadushin, 1992a; Rich, 1993; Morrison, 1993; O'Donoghue, 1998a) and reflect Kadushin's (1992a: 157) view that the approaches and processes adopted for use in supervision are reflective of the approach the person would use in casework. When Kadushin's view is applied to the participants' preferences the casework process that seems to be being replicated is a problem-solving process that is similar to the task-centred practice (Payne, 1994; 1997; Reid et al., 1978).

Structures

Three main structures emerged from the participants' responses. These were the frequency of supervision sessions, length of sessions and the mode of delivery of the supervision.

Frequency of Sessions

The desired frequency of sessions for the probation officers ranged from regular to six-weekly. Angela and David both wanted their supervision to be regular and easily accessible but did not state what they considered regular was for them. The sense I got from both of them during their interviews was that regular meant a session occurring either fortnightly or monthly. Tania also wanted a regular frequency, however she wanted "someone or more than one person" on call and available for consultation when she needed. She also wanted to move away from "a rigid once a month thing". Her reason for this was because:

It's often not possible to wait, particularly if it's with a client. It may be a crisis and you literally need to talk to somebody then and there.

Tania also wanted “short supervision sessions at regular intervals” to monitor stress. Her supervisor could instigate these short sessions whenever he noticed that she was not “functioning properly”.

Jack and Joseph both wanted supervision on a not less than once a fortnight frequency, which was interesting given that both men had years of experience within the Community Probation Service. Jack’s reason for this frequency was that he wanted it to bring him “up to speed again”. Joseph on the other hand wanted that frequency because of the nature of the work he undertook.

Mary-Jane wanted the frequency of her supervision sessions to start off fortnightly and then to become monthly. She gave no reason for the variation in frequency. I wondered whether the change in frequency was related to cost because, earlier in her interview, she had used a calculator to work out how much external supervision of a similar frequency would cost. Mary-Jane was also one of three probation officers (the other two being Tania and Ernest) that also wanted an arrangement for consultation with the supervisor between sessions on an as required basis.

Ernest, and Ellen indicated that their preferred frequency was monthly, whereas, Grace wanted the frequency to range from monthly to six-weekly. These three probation officers had all “been in the job a while” and appeared to base their choices upon the years of experience.

Amongst the five service managers, only Susan specified her desired frequency for receiving supervision. She wanted a formal session at least once a month and a provision to contact the supervisor as required between sessions.

Length of Sessions

The main theme that emerged concerning the length of supervision sessions was that they were between 1-2 hours in duration. Those who wanted supervision sessions to last an hour seemed to want this on the basis of their past experience. Two respondents (Mary-Jane and Susan) wanted their sessions to be an hour and a half or longer because they felt that it took time “to really get down to it and think” about what they brought to supervision. Susan particularly illustrated this point when she said:

Sometimes I think an hour is not enough...it can sometimes take forty odd minutes before someone starts to really unwind, then you've got to cut it short.

Tania provided the only exception to the 1-2 hour range with her desire for short, brief and frequent consultations for her immediate work problems from a number of different people. According to the literature what Tania wanted appeared more akin to case-consultation rather than supervision (Kadushin, 1977; Shulman, 1995).

Mode of Delivery

All fifteen participants wanted individual supervision with only Joseph wanting his individual supervision complemented by a peer group arrangement. The other significant theme present in the findings was whether an external supervisor or a supervisor from within the Service provided the supervision.

Probation Officers

Amongst the probation officers there was a clear division with five officers who wanted their professional supervision provided by an external supervisor and the other five that wanted it provided internally.

Angela, Joseph, Kiri, Grace, and Mary-Jane wanted their supervision provided by an external supervisor. Angela and Joseph wanted external supervision because of their positive recent experiences and considered external supervision to be both "good and valuable". Kiri, wanted external supervision because she felt that it would be safer for her to discuss her issues, particularly if they included "personal stuff". It appeared that Kiri's personality perspective of supervision, which in some ways tended towards personal counselling, rather than supervision seemed to have influenced her choice to some degree. The following extract from her interview illustrates this point:

[If] I have a problem, I don't know how to deal with it, it's to do with work and in some part some of my personal stuff, there are heaps of transference going on here. I've a real problem. I would like to see my professional supervisor about it.

Grace appeared to want outside supervision because her experiences of internal supervision had not been positive. She believed that her chances of having “good supervision” were greater with an outside supervisor. Grace also felt that the agency, by paying for outside supervision would demonstrate that it valued her work, and ongoing professional development. Mary-Jane wanted someone outside of the organisation because she thought it would be “really hard to trust someone in the organisation”, because “you never know what their agenda might be.” Mary-Jane also appeared to infer that she would be more likely to get someone with “a bit of experience and a wealth of knowledge” outside of the Community Probation Service.

David, Jack, Ellen, Ernest and Tania wanted their supervision provided within the Community Probation Service. David and Jack both stated that their preference would be somebody from within the service, but also stated that they did not want anyone they currently worked with. Jack’s reasons were that he knew “all their weaknesses and foibles” and would feel that it would be “almost hypocrisy” for them to sit down and supervise him. Jack preferred somebody he hadn’t worked with from another area within the Service as his first choice. If such a person were not available he would then want someone outside the service. David felt that there was no one within his office that he was comfortable with, or had the personal development that he considered a professional supervisor should have. He did however, indicate that there were “people in our area office” that he would feel “comfortable with” and that “there are probably people in other area offices” that border on to his, that he also felt comfortable with. In summing up David made the point that he would want outside supervision only “if there was nobody in the Department he could have that relationship with.” Ellen had a similar perspective to David. She also preferred to have someone from within the service, but if a satisfactory person could not be provided she wanted an outside supervisor. Ellen’s choice of supervisor was based on whether she thought the person “had better skills than herself”. Ernest, on the other hand, wanted his supervision provided by his Service Manager. His reasons for this were that he considered that supervision of work and the management of work were inextricably linked and he did not support the idea of separating management from professional supervision. Ernest made

two further points: the first was the need for service managers to make supervision a priority; the second was that the organisation should set up structures within its returns system to monitor, legitimise, prioritise and support supervision. Tania wanted her professional supervision to be provided internally within the Community Probation Service “because of the nature of the work”. Tania indicated no preference about whether her supervisor was a peer or her service manager, and pointed out that her choice would depend on their personality. Tania thought that it was necessary to have external supervision for some issues such as sexism and relationships within the office, particularly when the supervisor or manager was involved. She said that this was because people “need to talk to somebody outside...to try and get an unbiased view.”

Service Managers

Four of the five service managers wanted supervision provided externally. Nicholas was the only one who wanted professional supervision to be provided internally by managers. However, he also indicated that if that was not possible he reluctantly wanted external supervision. Nicholas wanted professional supervision to be provided by managers because he considered the alternatives to be “the thin end of the wedge” which was going to push him “out of this building”. The point he made was that any arrangement, which resulted in the separation of the supervisor’s role, was likely erode the service managers role, with the potential outcome being its disappearance.

The other four service managers wanted professional supervision provided outside of the Service. Joan wanted to continue her external supervision and wanted her team of probation officers also to have external supervision. Her reason for wanting supervision “taken right outside the organisation” was that it would be “provided in a safe, objective, professional environment” and that supervisees had a choice. Sofia wanted external supervision both for herself and her team and she stated that service managers still needed to provide administrative supervision because, “they are there when a crisis arises” and they receive any concerns that professional supervisors have. Susan wanted external supervision for herself, but wanted her team to be able to choose between external supervision and professional supervision with her. Susan indicated that she had conducted a straw poll amongst her staff and found that none of them wanted to be supervised by a

peer. The options they put forward were professional supervision “with their manager or an external provider who has a contract with their manager”. Neil also wanted external supervision for himself and for his team. He clearly believed that professional supervision should be “divorced from the organisation”, and he indicated that his staff wanted an external provider. Neil also envisaged a contracting arrangement between the supervisee, the supervisor and the service manager, based upon “a three way meeting”. Neil said that this contracting arrangement would be “like when we set up a community care programme for the clients”.

Commentary

The structures identified by the respondents as desirable for professional supervision, namely frequency, length of sessions and mode of delivery seem to correspond with those identified in the supervision literature (Kadushin, 1992b; Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996). One structure which was not identified by the probation officers but had risen to prominence in the supervision literature was the supervision contract between the supervisor and the supervisee (Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996). This structure was identified by only two service managers, Neil and Susan, and in each case it was in relation to purchasing and accountability of the parties involved in external supervision.

The specific findings in relation to the structures identified by the respondents present a mixed comparison with the literature. The findings related to desired frequency of sessions, which ranged from short to six-weekly differ from the frequency specified by Kadushin (1992c: 14) who found that fifty percent of supervision sessions were on average held weekly. In regard to the desired length of sessions the findings, which ranged from one hour through to two hours, appeared to equate with the duration reported by Kadushin (1992c: 14).

The mode of delivery findings, when compared with Kadushin (1992c: 14) revealed both similarity and difference. The similarity was in relation to the dominance of individual supervision. The difference on the other hand relates to the strong preference for external supervision expressed by nine of the fifteen respondents, which is not replicated in the supervision literature. This preference, which was strongest amongst the service

managers, appeared to be based on the premises that an external supervisor would provide better and safer supervision and supervisees should be able to choose the supervisor.

Philosophically the expectations espoused by the nine respondents for external supervision appeared to reflect public choice theory and agency theory, both of which are identified by Boston et al., (1996) as part of the theoretical underpinnings of new public management. Arguably it seems that the respondents who want external supervision are wanting to replicate the purchaser-provider split and the individual freedom espoused by the free market through choosing their supervision relationships (Brown et al., 1996). Alternatively, the reason for these expectations may be found in the distrust and lack of support the respondents' perceived was present in the Service.

Performance Management and Competency Programme

The Community Probation Service's performance management system and its competency programme were identified by the Service's management as structures that were complementary to the professional supervision programme (Community Corrections, 1997b). All fifteen respondents were asked what relationship they would want between each of these structures and professional supervision.

The respondents were divided about the performance management and professional supervision's relationship, with eight (six probation officers and two service managers) in favour of the two structures being linked, and the remaining seven (four probation officers and three service managers) wanting them kept separate.

The type of relationship described by the eight respondents who wanted supervision and performance management linked was one where information about performance was shared between the parties, with any performance problems initially addressed through the supportive environment of professional supervision. These respondents also recognised the need of the professional supervisor to "whistle blow" if there were performance deficits reported in supervision that were professionally dangerous.

The other seven respondents (four probation officers and three service managers) wanted performance management and professional supervision kept separate because they felt that the confidentiality and the safety of the professional supervision relationship

would be compromised by any relationship. They also thought that performance management was an administration task that sometimes had “negative connotations”, whereas professional supervision was a positive process.

The findings concerning the relationship the respondents wanted between the competency programme and professional supervision differed somewhat from those of performance management, with a clear majority of the participants wanting a relationship between the competency programme and professional supervision. Ten of 15 respondents (8 probation officers and 2 service managers) wanted a relationship between the competency programme and professional supervision. The sort of relationship envisaged was one where professional supervision supported the competency assessment process. This would be through attestation and advocacy by the supervisor about the probation officer’s competency, providing guidance and personal support throughout the competency process, and helping prepare the probation officer for the assessment through training, coaching and gathering of the supporting evidence.

From the remaining five respondents, one (Neil) did not know what relationship he wanted between competency and professional supervision. The other four (two probation officers and two service managers) did not want any relationship between the competency programme and professional supervision. Their reasons were that the confidentiality of the supervision relationship would be compromised, that supervision and competency were separate entities which “sit nicely by themselves”, and because they were “not sold on the competency programme” in its current form.

Commentary

The findings concerning the relationship that respondents wanted between professional supervision, performance management and the competency programme, show that their opinions were clearly divided about performance management and less divided in regard to the competency programme. It would appear that the competency programme was viewed more favourably because it was thought to have a development function, whereas performance management appeared to be viewed as synonymous with evaluation of job performance. In the supervision literature both performance management and the assessment of a practitioner’s competence are viewed as evaluations of one’s ability to do

the job (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993; Kemshall, 1995). Generally, such evaluations were understood as involving both the administrative, educational and supportive functions of supervision and were conducted by a supervisor who had responsibility for both managerial and professional supervision (Kadushin, 1992a; Kemshall, 1995). Kemshall (1995), writing about the probation service in Great Britain, viewed performance appraisal as clearly related to professional supervision and advocated that both reflect the process of continual quality improvement rather than managerial control. Payne, (1994) on the other hand, asserted that the role of supervision in performance review was ambivalent. He attributed this ambivalence to the conflicts between: the managerial and professional aspects of supervision; the ongoing implicit assessment in supervision sessions with the one off explicit assessment of an appraisal; and agency policies which promote efficiency and effectiveness with best professional practice (Payne, 1994).

It appears from the supervision literature reviewed, that little attention has been paid to the implications of the distinction between the output and task accountability of management supervision and the process accountability of professional supervision. Perhaps, the ambiguity found in the participants' responses is reflective of the lack of thought given to this distinction and the novelty of the Community Probation Service's professional supervision programme.

Ideal Supervisor

Both groups outlined attributes they wanted their ideal supervisor to have. In general the probation officers wanted more attributes than the service managers and there was a clear difference between what each group wanted. However, there appeared to be a clear convergence between what service managers wanted for their probation officers and what the probation officers wanted for themselves.

Probation Officers

The three attributes of qualified, experienced and comfortable to be with, stood out from the probation officers responses. Eight of the ten probation officers expected that their professional supervisor would have either professional or supervision qualifications. Seven

expected the supervisor to have professional practice experience, and five expected that their supervisor would be someone they felt personally comfortable with.

Amongst the eight that wanted their supervisors to have qualifications, differing expectations were expressed in regard to the type of qualifications desired. Three (Kiri, Mary-Jane, and Joseph) wanted them to have a qualification in either social work or psychology. Ernest, on the other hand, wanted his supervisor to have similar qualifications to himself, i.e. social work qualifications. Three other officers (Jack, Grace and Tania) wanted their supervisor to have a qualification in supervision, but did not specify from which professional discipline the qualification came. Angela was also not specific about the type of qualification she wanted her supervisor to have but stated that the level of qualification she wanted was “quite high”.

The seven probation officers that wanted their supervisors to have practice experience wanted someone that had experience with clients and understood what it was like to work with the probation clientele. They also wanted the supervisor to have a depth of front-line practice experience and a familiarity with the probation officers’ role. A particular preference was also expressed by one respondent (Mary-Jane) that the supervisor have experience in related practice fields such as mental health, and child protection.

The five respondents that wanted their supervisor to be someone they were personally comfortable with, emphasised aspects commonly found in positive helping relationships such as empathy, positive regard, faith, trust, genuineness, and the ability to pick up on non-verbal and behavioural cues (Egan, 1990).

Another matter related to personal comfort raised by three officers (David, Mary-Jane and Joseph) was the gender and ethnicity of their supervisor. David, and Mary-Jane indicated that they wanted a female supervisor because they would feel more comfortable with a woman. Joseph on the other hand also included ethnicity and indicated that he could see some real value in having a Maori woman supervisor because she could help him work with Maori clients in a more culturally appropriate and effective way. Joseph also stated that in the past he had found that a woman supervisor “has been valuable in terms of at least testing whether I’m as much of a SNAG [sensitive new age guy] as I think I am.”

Service Managers

The five service managers' expectations in regard to their own ideal supervisor revealed little or limited commonality. Nicholas wanted someone like his current area manager, whom he related well with and who had "wide experience, a good practical base". Sofia wanted a Maori person because the demographics of her area showed a high Maori client base and she believed that such a Maori person would keep her safe. She also wanted her supervisor to be highly qualified with professional supervision qualifications and membership of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. In summing up, Sofia insisted that her ideal supervisor be approachable, technically competent, and have a background in management. Neil wanted someone he could trust who was "non-judgmental", and stated he would not see someone he did not believe he could trust or was judgmental. Joan wanted someone who was of the same gender and culture, of good standing professionally, with good credentials, a managerial background and was compatible with her. Susan also wanted a female supervisor because of the "male dominated culture she worked in". She expected her supervisor to be skilled, with proven supervisory experience, good standing as a supervisor and older than herself. Susan wanted her supervisor to have a good knowledge of the public service, her work context and the work itself.

All of the service managers agreed that they wanted supervisors for their probation officers that were qualified, experienced, and with whom the probation officers were comfortable.

Commentary

The respondents' expectations about their ideal supervisor reflected individual preferences and tended to suggest that the profile of the ideal supervisor was dependent upon the perspective of the person drawing it. The range of views appears to imply that amongst the respondents there are differing individual supervision needs. These differing needs seem to imply that supervisees ought to have a range of supervisory choices.

Despite these individual preferences, the common picture of the probation officers' ideal supervisor emerged as a competent supervisor who was professionally qualified, had

a reasonable amount of practice experience and was able to put supervisees at ease. This picture corresponds with Kadushin's (1992a: 339) who asserted that:

The general picture of the "good" supervisor shows him/her to be a person who is a technically competent professional, with good human relations skills....

The finding that the probation officers were more particular than the service managers seemed to support Munson's (1993: 29) assertion that "social workers tend to look for more specific characteristics in supervisors than workers from other disciplines". The challenge that the respondents pose for the Community Probation Service concerns the provision of supervisors who have professional qualifications, practice experience and well-developed interpersonal skills to supervisees who are very discerning and specific.

Roles and responsibilities

The participants' perspectives on the roles and responsibilities they wanted their supervisors to undertake adds further detail to the outline drawn above and fills in the portrait of the ideal supervisor.

Roles

The respondents expected their supervisors to undertake a range of roles. The roles identified by the probation officers were more varied than those espoused by the service managers. However, despite the difference there was a convergence between both groups in the sense that the roles identified generally fell into two categories, namely, those related to development and those related to support. The roles that related to the development of the supervisee, were:

Facilitator/Problem Solver; Challenger; Trainer; Mentor; Advisor; Role Clarifier.

The roles that appeared to be related to support were:

Sounding Board; Monitor of Well-Being; Motivator; Affirmer; Counsellor; Helper; Leader.

Table 7.1 below lists the roles identified and the number of participants that identified it.

Table 7.1: Roles of Supervisors

Category	Role	Number	Probation Officers	Service Managers
Development	Challenger	7	David, Jack, Grace	Joan, Susan, Sofia, Nicholas
	Facilitator/ Problem Solver	3	David, Jack, Grace	–
	Mentor	2	–	Joan, Susan
	Trainer	1	Angela	–
	Role Clarifier	1	–	Susan
	Advisor	1	Tania	–
Support	Sounding Board	4	Angela, Grace, Ernest Tania	–
	Monitor of Well-being	4	Kiri, Jack, Ernest Tania	–
	Affirmer	3	–	Sofia, Susan, Nicholas
	Leader	2	Mary-Jane, Ellen	–
	Motivator	2	David, Ernest	–
	Counsellor	1	–	Joan
	Helper	1	–	Neil

The most common role identified was challenger, a role that related to supervisee development. This role, identified by seven of the respondents, was best described by Grace who said it was “the ability to get me to think beyond my sphere”. The two next common roles, sounding board and monitor of well-being, both related to supervisee support, with the former involving empathy and reflective listening and the latter checking out that the supervisee was okay. Jack aptly described the application of this monitoring role when he said:

I'd like them to come to me and say 'I notice that you've been snapping at everybody around the office this morning. What's going on? It's interfering with the way you function.'

The two categories of roles identified above seem related to findings concerning professional development and personal support functions identified in Chapter 5. This revealed that professional development and personal support were the most common functions identified by the respondents.

The literature concerning the roles undertaken by supervisors seemed to confine itself to the roles of an enabler or supporter, teacher, administrator, mediator and advocate (Kadushin, 1992a; Morrison, 1993; Shulman, 1993; 1995; Brashears, 1995). Whilst these descriptions seem to encapsulate the roles outlined by the participants they seem to be quite limited in their description of the supervisor's role and less descriptive than those of the participants. The variety of desired roles that the respondents wanted their supervisors to undertake did not appear to be discussed elsewhere in the supervision literature.

Responsibilities

Both groups of respondents expressed similar expectations about the responsibilities that they wanted their supervisors to undertake. The most common expectation identified by eight (five probation officers and three service managers) of the fifteen participants was that the supervisor be committed to the supervision. Commitment was defined by these respondents as including planning sessions, keeping appointments, and being organised and prepared for the supervisee. Grace sums up the sentiments expressed by this group of respondents when she said:

I'd want them to be responsible for having to see me, and being committed to their job as a supervisor to the best of their ability.

Grace's statement seemed to support the assertion made by O'Donoghue (1998a: 18) that supervisors have a responsibility to their supervisees, the profession and themselves to be models of best practice.

Several individual probation officers and service managers spoke of other responsibilities they wanted their supervisor to undertake. These were, to engage and guide the supervisee through the supervision; to keep the supervisee honest; to support the supervisee; watch over the supervisee's well-being; to establish and maintain boundaries; confidentiality; and to walk alongside the supervisee.

The literature concerning the responsibilities of supervisors tends to focus on the supervisor's functional responsibilities, namely administration, education and support, (Kadushin, 1992a) more than the more personal responsibilities expressed by the respondents. The literature, however, does indicate that when supervisors do not undertake the personal responsibilities outlined by the respondents there is dissatisfaction with the supervision provided and the supervisor (Kadushin, 1992a; 1992b; 1992c).

The portrait of the desired supervisor outlined by the respondents when viewed in terms of the background, roles and responsibilities seemed to correspond with the picture presented by Kadushin, (1992a, 1992b) and echoes the maxim: "Good supervisors are available, accessible, affable, and able" (Kadushin, 1992a: 339).

Agency Support

All fifteen respondents wanted the agency to support professional supervision and expressed their expectations about their desired level of agency support. The most common theme identified (by ten of the 15 respondents) was that they expected the agency to adequately resource professional supervision.

Probation Officers

Amongst the probation officers several expectations were expressed. The most common expectation, expressed by five of the 10 probation officers, was for the agency to pay for external supervisors. The view taken by these five appeared to be best captured by Angela and Grace. Angela wanted the agency to pay because supervision has "to do with the clients and it's to do with the job." Angela believed, therefore, that the onus was on the agency to meet her needs. Grace reflected a similar position and emphasised two further points; namely, her occupational health, safety, and feeling valued as an employee. Grace raised what appeared to be expectations about her occupational health and safety when she stated that:

I think what we do is not easy, and the fact that there's the safety issue and a burnout stress issue, that you may not have in other jobs.

Grace asserted that outside supervision would help her reduce the risks related to personal safety, burnout, and stress. In her second point, Grace emphasised that agency support of external supervision would provide recognition that she was valued as an employee.

Two further probation officers (David and Jack) spoke of resourcing professional supervision in more general terms. They expected that the agency would resource the professional supervision project adequately. David wanted "Corrections to resource it adequately" because he thought "the quickest way to kill it would be to under resource it". He believed that the agency should also support supervision through providing a "pool of supervisors" who were knowledgeable and well trained. Finally, David wanted agency "guidelines or protocols" about the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees and a "transparent appointment process". In a similar vein, Jack emphasised that professional supervision "can't be taken out of current resources because we're cut to the bone". He wanted the agency to support it by providing additional money for good quality supervisors and extra staffing so that staff could take the time to attend professional supervision. Jack also wanted suitable equipment provided that would facilitate professional supervision. He had stated earlier in his interview that he wanted his supervisor to observe his practice so it was likely that the equipment he was referring to was audio/visual and may have included special screening rooms. The use of equipment is discussed in the supervision literature, where it is argued that it adds value to traditional approaches (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson; 1993). Kadushin (1992a: 469) further argues that such equipment is a necessary addition to the supervisee's reports of their practice and that "there is little justification for not using the various methods for direct supervisory access" to the worker's practice.

Service Managers

The service managers expressed similar expectations to the probation officers. The major theme present in their responses was that they wanted the agency to support professional supervision through resourcing it at a higher level than it was at the time of their interview. Two service managers had expectations about money to pay for external supervisors. Sofia

wanted enough money for all probation officers to have “a decent amount of professional supervision”. She also wanted the agency to bring in professional supervision for management and to provide service managers with training so that they could understand professional supervision better. Joan wanted the agency to provide support for professional supervision in two ways. Firstly, by providing an extra \$1000 per year in her team’s budget for each team member to have external supervision. The second way was that if the agency was unable to find the extra \$1000 per team member, she wanted the agency to allow her to find the money from within her budget through making savings elsewhere. Essentially, Joan wanted the management to empower her by permitting her more freedom to decide service delivery priorities.

Neil also wanted a budget at service manager level that he could manage with his staff to obtain the best possible supervision available for that money. Neil made the following plea in this regard:

Give us a budget at service manager level...we’re accountable. We have auditors...I can’t take the money and spend it on myself...leave it up to me in conjunction with my staff.

Susan also wanted support for supervision through resourcing. She wanted sufficient resources to enable her staff to benefit from it rather than concern themselves with extra work pressures stemming from attendance at supervision sessions. She wanted extra probation officers so that she could “make a commitment to releasing them for the hour a fortnight, or hour a week”, and not worry about the work that was pressing. Susan also wanted the team to commit to undertaking supervision. The fifth service manager, (Nicholas) wanted the agency to support professional supervision through providing ongoing training, but was vague about the details of this training.

Commentary

The agency support the respondents wanted for professional supervision was primarily that the agency provide money to pay for external supervisors and training, and to reduce work pressure so that staff can make the most of professional supervision. Other points made were that the agency ought to provide professional supervisors of a high calibre, the ability

for staff to choose their supervisor and guidelines for professional supervision including a transparent appointment or accreditation process. In regard to the latter the Community Probation Service professional supervisor competency standard appeared to provide a basis for accreditation as a supervisor, however the findings indicated that this route has not been used as it was intended (Community Probation Service, 1998a). In New Zealand Beddoe (1997a; 1997b) highlights the issue of supervisor accreditation and suggests a portfolio route through the ANZASW board of competency.

The findings also support the assertions made in recent professional supervision literature, namely that agency support in terms of both mandate and resourcing is necessary for professional supervision to meet the expectations of those involved (Morrison, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; Hughes et al., 1997; O'Donoghue, 1998a). Arguably, the findings in relation to the two service managers, who wanted greater managerial freedom to budget for professional supervision, highlights the double-bind new public management creates. On the one hand it gives rise to the expectation of business management principles such as decentralisation, subsidiarity and self-management. At the same time it acts according to the whims of politicians who, whilst espousing business ideology, have a vested interest in ensuring they are not embarrassed by the rogue acts of public servants and therefore support both bureaucratic control and centralism (Peters, 1992; Kelsey, 1993; Creech, 1994; Gregory, 1995; Boston et al., 1996).

Organisational Culture

The findings in relation to the organisational culture desired by the participants revealed a clear similarity between the service managers and probation officers. In short, the findings revealed that the participants wanted an organisation that would be supportive of professional supervision.

Probation Officers

From the eight probation officers that made comments, four key expectations emerged of their desired organisational culture. They were that the culture was one of trust, it was positive, it had a best practice focus and it was stable.

Three probation officers (Angela, Kiri, and Joseph) expressed expectations in relation to greater trust than there was at present. Angela wanted an organisational culture

to develop where staff were able “to work together for the same common good”, with “the same integrity” and a shared understanding of “what’s important to clients”. Kiri wanted a culture “where people trust each other”. Kiri also made the point that because probation officers are “quite opinionated” with a “fairly thick crust or thick skin”, the trust she desired would need to be managed through “good leadership”. She encapsulated the type of organisational culture she wanted when she said, “a good type of organisation where people... are happy to do their jobs, and are satisfied with their lot.” Joseph stated that he thought the culture that was needed was one of “mutual respect for one another as professionals and (where people were)...motivated to get on with the work.” Joseph believed that this could be achieved through good professional supervision and he made the following point:

Within the organisation there will be some people they should worry about, but as a whole, most staff ...are very dedicated to their job, and if they would provide them with good professional supervision they’d drop the anti group.

Joseph’s points seemed paradoxical because he indicated that the way to achieve a culture supportive of professional supervision is through good professional supervision, and that this good supervision would lead the “anti group” to either change or leave the organisation.

Jack and Mary-Jane were two officers who wanted a positive organisational culture. Jack describe a positive culture as:

Where everybody works together, where the job that you’re doing is important. Where the people...come to work with a smile on their face, and don’t drag themselves through the door ten minutes late...where management recognises staff for what they do.

Jack also provided an example of the type of culture he wanted through telling “a war story” about his first manager and the respect this man had from the staff due to his personable nature and human approach. Jack described the essence of this as “being managed right” and stated that:

It's a matter of being recognised, encouraged, all those sorts of things and that raises your morale and motivation. I'm not kidding you, I used to come to work at half past six in the morning, not because I had to but because I felt I wanted to...and I wouldn't leave my office probably till 6, 7 o'clock some nights and I never thought anything about it...the fact is I did it, and I didn't have to do it.

Mary-Jane also wanted a positive organisational culture. For Mary-Jane this culture involved staff being "more friendly", a "lift" in the mood of staff, a décor change, and a weekly blessing and cleansing of the building of the "negative vibes from clients and colleagues". She also wanted creativity, team building and celebrations.

Ellen wanted a best practice culture where professional practice was the focus. This type of culture would "demand good professional supervision" and a well qualified, well skilled work force and therefore involved everyone in continuous learning and up-skilling.

David wanted the organisational culture to be more stable and he stated that it would be difficult to bring professional supervision into an organisational culture of continuous change. He also wanted a culture where the emphasis was shifted from an individual's performance to team performance because for him team membership was important and more likely to motivate him. David also wanted a culture where decisions related to practice were not determined solely upon their fiscal cost. He emphasised that such decisions restrict good professional practice, particularly if the first question asked is "can we afford it?"

Service Managers

Amongst the three service managers that expressed views about the organisational culture, the main attributes that emerged were trust, openness and a culture that invests in its staff.

Neil wanted an organisational culture of trust in which "people look at your actions, and they see that your actions marry up with your words". Allied to this Neil wanted a culture of open communication in which information was transparent. For Neil an open

culture was one where “you have to give people more information than they actually need or want.”

Susan also wanted a more open culture. She stated in her interview that “I think we’re pretty much a fear culture right now” and then made the point that if there was more openness “staff would be happier” and their value would be recognised. She went on to state that a culture that valued its staff would be likely to find that its “outputs would vastly improve” and “sabotage would almost disappear.”

The theme of valuing staff outlined by Susan appeared to be expanded upon by Joan who wanted the organisation to redevelop the business philosophy present in its culture so that it invested “in the people that are doing the business.” Joan asserted that the organisation had invested in managing finance, information technology etc... but, “lost the stuff in the middle” which she argued was investing money in the staff. Joan further stated that she thought, “it’s moving in that way” but it “needs to pick it up” by paying for external supervision.

Commentary

The respondents’ expectations of an ideal, positive organisational culture were that it was characterised by trust, openness, positivism, stability and investment in the staff. These attributes, with the exception of stability appear to correspond with the management literature about successful organisations (Creech, 1994; Peters, 1992; Covey, 1991; Bartol et al., 1991). The expectation of a stable organisational culture was not supported in the management literature. The only reference found in this literature about stability within organisations was that related to values, purpose and principles (Nelson et al., 1996; Covey, 1991).

Organisational culture was not too widely discussed in the professional supervision literature. The only text found that gives it significant consideration was Hawkins et al. (1989) wherein it is argued that a learning/developmental culture enables professional supervision to flourish. This type of culture is described as continuously learning, steeped in reflective practice and adult learning theory, high in trust and transparency, and a high investment in its staff. Locally, Beddoe, (1997a) has argued that only in the conditions of a learning and development culture can supervision and professional development thrive.

Summary and Implications

The objective of this chapter has been to explore the respondents' aspirations and expectations of professional supervision. The presentation of these findings involved discussing: firstly the participants' expected content, processes and structures of professional supervision; secondly the participants' expectations of their ideal supervisor in terms of attributes, roles and responsibilities; and finally their expectations of the agency in terms of support and organisational culture.

The findings in relation to the content, processes, and structures of professional supervision revealed that the respondents wanted the content of their supervision to be focused upon their clients, their work with clients, and themselves in relation to their work. The supervisory processes they expected appeared to clearly parallel the social work interview process which involves preparation, an introductory phase, a phase where the purpose or agenda is clarified and ordered, a working phase and a review or ending phase (NZSWTC, 1985; O'Donoghue, 1998a; Payne, 1997). This finding clearly reinforced the earlier finding in relation to a parallel process identified in Chapter Five.

The structures the respondents wanted were related to frequency, length of sessions and mode of delivery. The frequency wanted ranged from fortnightly to six weekly, whilst the length of sessions ranged from one to two hours. The mode of delivery wanted by the respondents was individual supervision, and there was a strong preference for external supervision, which is not replicated in the supervision literature. This preference, strongest amongst the service managers, appeared to be based on the arguments that an external supervisor will provide better supervision, that trusting internal supervisors was difficult, that having external supervision was safer for the supervisee, and that supervisees should have the supervisor they want. Philosophically, the expectations espoused in favour of external supervision seem to reflect public choice theory and agency theory. These theories are identified by Boston et al. (1996) as underpinning new public management. Arguably, at an ideological level, it would appear that these respondents were mirroring the purchaser-provider split present in public service contract management through this expectation.

The respondents' expectations of the relationship between professional supervision, performance management and competency programmes revealed that the relationship that

respondents wanted was clearly divided in the case of performance management and less divided in regard to the competency programme. It would appear that the competency programme was viewed more favourably because it was seen to have a development function, whereas performance management appears to be viewed as synonymous with evaluation of job performance.

The findings in regard to the respondents' ideal supervisor, and this person's role and responsibilities, revealed that for probation officers, the ideal supervisor was expected to be competent, professionally qualified, with a reasonable level of practice experience and sufficient personal attributes and interpersonal skills to put supervisees at their ease. The service managers' picture of an ideal supervisor was less specific, with the most common findings being someone they could trust who had management experience. In terms of roles expected to be undertaken by the supervisor, the findings identified roles related to professional development and personal support. The most common roles were those of challenger, sounding board, and monitor of the supervisee's well-being. The primary responsibility expected by respondents of their supervisor was that the supervisor be committed to supervision with commitment defined as including planning sessions, keeping appointments, and being organised and prepared for the supervisee. The respondents' findings in regard to supervisors seemed to support Kadushin's maxim that "Good supervisors are available, accessible, affable, and able" (Kadushin, 1992a: 339).

The agency support and organisational culture findings emphasised that the participants wanted the agency to support professional supervision and provide an environment where it can thrive and flourish. In terms of agency support, the respondents wanted the agency to pay for external supervisors, supervision training and to reduce work pressure so that staff can make the most of professional supervision. Other points made were that the agency ought to provide professional supervisors of a high calibre, choices for staff, and guidelines for professional supervision, including a transparent appointment or accreditation process. With regard to organisational culture, the respondents wanted a culture which had a high level of trust, openness, positivism, stability and investment in the staff. This type of culture appears to correlate with the learning/developmental culture outlined by Hawkins et al.(1989).

The implications of the respondents' aspirations and expectations of professional supervision are considerable. The findings are both positive and problem posing for the Community Probation Service. The positive aspect of the findings was that the respondents' presented a positive and clear message that they wanted good professional supervision so that they could do justice to the clients of their service. The respondents wanted supervision that addressed both the persons involved and the supervision environment. They wanted the agency to: sufficiently resource the professional supervision programme; to allow supervisees choice in regard to their supervisor; provide supervisors of high quality; and where necessary, invest in external supervisors. The respondents wanted a clear accreditation process with integrity for supervisors and the agency to provide guidelines for professional supervision. They also wanted an organisational culture that was supportive of professional supervision namely one that promotes learning and best practice.

The problem posing implications of the respondents' findings for the Community Probation Service are that the respondents' expectations are a fair distance from the experiences they outlined of professional supervision and the supervision environment, and where they believed professional supervision was heading. These unmet expectations pose problems for both the respondents and the organisation (Reid et al., 1978). Some of the particularly significant implications for the professional supervision programme are in regard to staff support or buy in, and the programme achieving its purpose and objectives. In terms of the direct implications of these findings, the agency would be well advised to reconsider its supervisor selection or accreditation process, together-with the mode of delivery outlined in its supervision policy. It would also be well advised to consider professional supervision for its service managers.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate professional supervision as practised under new public management in the Community Probation Service. The first three sections of this conclusion review the objectives of the research, the methodology and the key research findings from the three empirical chapters. The final sections discuss the implications of the research findings, and make suggestions concerning the future practice of professional supervision in the Community Probation Service and wider social service environment. Also discussed, are areas for future research that have been identified during the course of this study.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of professional supervision practice in terms of the philosophy, experience, aspirations and expectations of both practitioners and managers, in the environment of new public management in the Community Probation Service. The development of the primary objective was derived from the literature review (Chapter 2), but was also influenced by two factors. The first factor was the author's experience of significant changes in the way public social services were managed and the effect these changes had on both the professional practice and management of statutory social service agencies. In the Community Probation Service the managerial changes resulted in an increase in private sector business management practices which impacted on the practice of professional social service supervision (Garwood, 1994; O'Donoghue, 1995; Dale, 1997). The second factor was an assertion made by Payne (1994), namely that the future of professional social service supervision in this new managerial environment would result in one of three scenarios: (a) that there would be separation of the professional and managerial aspects as part of a professional revival; (b) that there would be a reconciliation between these two aspects through the quality movement; or (c) that there would be a complete rejection of the professional aspects of social service supervision.

The Community Probation Service policy appeared to be taking a path that paralleled the first scenario outlined by Payne (1994). It also appeared that the Community Probation Service was a trailblazer with this development in statutory social work supervision in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The social service supervision literature reviewed indicated that limited attention had been given to the separation of the professional aspects of supervision from the managerial or administrative aspects. It was argued that in the literature there is a dialectical tension between the managerial and professional aspects, with authors tending to emphasise one or the other (Tsui, 1997b; Payne, 1994; Munson, 1993; Kadushin, 1992a).

Underpinning the primary research objective, as specified above, were the three major research questions. These questions were:

- What are the participants' understandings of professional supervision?
- What are the participants' recent experiences of professional supervision?
- What do the participants want from supervision?

These three questions provided the foundation and basic points of reference for Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

Methodology

The research questions were examined using a qualitative research design and approach. In particular, the approach employed focussed on the participants' construction, experience and desires in regard to professional supervision, with each participant encouraged to voice their perspective on the subject. The methodology employed makes no claims to positivist scientific truth, and is interpretivist (Patton, 1990; Babbie, 1995).

The research design involved a sample of ten probation officers and five service managers, who were purposefully selected from staff lists provided by a regional manager of the Community Probation Service. Purposeful selection was chosen to obtain information rich cases as well as a cross-section in terms of experience and professional background. The sample chosen could be said to be biased. It is asserted, however, that the bias that arises from the sample selection makes the findings more, rather than less significant, because all those interviewed had a keen interest in professional supervision.

A semi-structured interview guide, developed by the researcher on the basis of the literature reviewed, was used for the purpose of data collection. This interview guide was pre-tested on a probation officer and a service manager. The interviews explored the participants' background details, philosophy of professional supervision, recent experiences and their professional supervision aspirations and expectations. The interviews were audiotaped, and on average took between an hour and an hour and a half.

Two hundred and seventy-seven pages of single-spaced transcript were produced for analysis. The data was organised for analysis by cutting and pasting the fifteen individual transcripts into files that corresponded to the four sections of the interview guide. Each section was then analysed and the themes present were identified. These themes were further analysed and a structured reporting framework was developed (Patton, 1990).

The limitations of the research methodology were threefold, in relation to: the sample; the research process; and in terms of epistemology. With regard to the sample, the main limitation was that the majority of people interviewed were or were to be *recipients* of professional supervision, with only two service managers claiming to be *providers* of professional supervision. Only one probation officer interviewed stated that he would be undertaking the supervisor role, and advised that he would be trained the week after his interview. This limitation was primarily due to the timing of the research interviews, which corresponded with the supervisors' training, and appears to have been an unavoidable coincidence. Also, when the sample was purposefully selected in April 1998, a regional list of prospective professional supervisors was not available to the researcher. The significance of this limitation was that the perspectives of the new professional supervisors post-training, and as beginning supervisors, were not considered in this research.

In terms of the research process, the main limitation was that the researcher chose the sample, collected the data and conducted the data analysis. The question that arises concerns the extent to which the findings reflect the researcher's perspective and interpretation. The epistemological limitations are threefold: first, the findings cannot be generalised beyond the research participants; second, the findings were reported perspectives; and third, the practice of professional supervision was not directly observed. In essence, the main limitation of the research methodology is that the procedures and

findings presented rely on the integrity of both the researcher and the participants for their credibility.

Key Findings

Philosophy of Professional Supervision

Three key findings emerged with respect to the philosophy of professional supervision amongst the participants. The first finding was that a clear philosophy of professional supervision was lacking amongst the participants. Second, their knowledge and understanding of professional supervision was at an elementary level. Finally, the philosophy of the participants did not align with the philosophy of the organisation.

Lack of Clear Philosophy

This was particularly apparent in the lack of commonality found in the participants' definitions and descriptions of the functions of professional supervision. There was not a shared definition of professional supervision amongst either the probation officers or the service managers. Their definitions varied considerably and tended to reflect three perspectives - the organisational, situational and personality perspectives found in the literature. Professional supervision, when discussed from these perspectives, includes: the roles and goals of the organisation; the discussion of problems and challenging work situations; and the management or resolution of personal material that affects the worker-client relationship (Munson, 1993). Absent also amongst the participants was a shared understanding of the functions of professional supervision. The most commonly identified functions were professional development and personal support.

Elementary Knowledge and Understanding

This finding was signalled by an emphasis on content and functions (rather than process and context), and by the limited knowledge of participants expressed in relation to processes, theory and models, and the skills of professional supervision. The emphasis on content and function was reinforced by the dominance of the organisational, situational and personality perspectives found in their definitions (Munson, 1993). In the literature, an emphasis upon content and function in supervision is viewed as indicative of a beginner's

understanding of professional supervision (Hawkins et al., 1989; Kadushin, 1992a; Brown et al., 1996).

The findings in regard to process, support an elementary knowledge and understanding of professional supervision in two ways. The first is through the processes involved being identified by the participants as similar to those used in direct practice. The aspect of an elementary understanding that this reveals is that of the participants' understanding being based in direct practice approaches rather than supervision approaches. Kadushin (1992: 157) describes this situation well when he asserts that:

Lacking in training in teaching but possessing clinical skills, the temptation for the clinician-turned-supervisor is to utilize her preferred clinical approach in teaching.

The second was the finding in relation to the perceived influence of gender and culture on the processes involved in professional supervision. Little attention was given to the context of supervision and how structures such as gender and culture can influence the processes, and both construct and reconstruct the context. The literature in regard to this finding indicates that a concrete and context-free understanding is also indicative of a beginner's understanding of supervision (Hawkins et al., 1989; Kadushin, 1992a; Brown et al., 1996).

This elementary knowledge and understanding was further exemplified by the findings in regard to knowledge of professional supervision theories and models, which revealed that the participants either had little knowledge, or could not articulate their knowledge. The clear implication of this finding was that the participants' philosophy of professional supervision was uninformed.

Finally, the findings in relation to the skills identified as important in professional supervision, were those generally ascribed to social workers and related to the expressive aspects of the supervisory relationship, particularly empathy and reflective or active listening skills. These findings support an elementary understanding of professional supervision through their predominate focus on the expressive and supportive aspects of supervision. This trait is particularly identified in the literature with beginning practitioners who tend to have higher levels of supervisory anxiety and a need for reassurance (Hawkins et al., 1989; Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993; Brown et al., 1996).

Lack of Alignment

There was a clear lack of alignment between the participants' philosophy and that expressed in the organisation's supervision policy. This lack of alignment was revealed in the participants' definitions and descriptions of the functions of professional supervision. None of the participants' definitions equated with the agency's definition of professional supervision, and only one participant's description of the functions equated with that of the agency. The lack of alignment was further shown in the findings on the role and place of professional supervision, which revealed differing opinions amongst the participants in regard to the specific role and place of professional supervision within the organisation. These differing views tended to reflect thoughts about the culture of continuous change, the separation of managerial from professional supervision, and the organisational culture and environment in which the Community Probation Service now operates.

Experiences of Professional Supervision

The three key findings of this section were: first, that the participants had minimal recent experience of professional supervision; second, that the participants' experience of the agency's professional supervision policy development and implementation raised for them issues related to the credibility of the policy and its effectiveness; and finally, that the participants' experience of the context was paradoxical in that, on the one hand, the context revealed an increased demand for professional supervision, whilst on the other hand, it revealed a reduced ability to supply professional supervision. Each of these three key findings is briefly elaborated upon and discussed below.

Minimal Recent Experience

The participants' minimal recent experience of professional supervision was evident in the finding that there was not a consistent form of delivery of professional supervision, and no standard method of provision. This finding was further supported by the varied reports of the participants who stated that they had had no supervision, had only administrative supervision with their managers, had both administrative and professional supervision with their managers, had experienced participation in only informal peer group arrangements,

and/or had had external professional supervision. Only three out of ten probation officers reported they had recently participated in formal professional supervision, whilst a fourth officer reported he had recently finished external supervision and was participating only in an informal peer group arrangement. Among the five service managers, only one was a recipient of supervision. Two service managers provided professional supervision but did not receive any supervision themselves. The other two managers purchased external supervision for their respective teams. In terms of whether professional supervision was actually provided, the findings indicated that this was dependant upon the commitment of individual managers to purchase or provide it, or the individual respondent's initiative coupled with managerial support. Overall, the respondents' recent experience revealed inadequate professional supervision.

Supervision Policy Development and Implementation

The policy development process was not transparent and reflected the cognitive interests of management, rather than those of clients and field staff of the organisation. In general, it was found that: the reasons or rationale for the recommendations of the professional supervision policy project team and subsequent management decisions in relation to the policy, were not clear to the participants; that the participants were not aware of the terms of reference of the professional supervision project; and finally, that attempts made in the policy development process by participants to gain ownership were unsuccessful. This finding essentially highlights that management's interests more significantly influenced the construction of professional supervision in this organisation, than did those of the professional staff.

The policy implementation process was reported to be unclear and fraught with practical difficulties. The most alarming of these difficulties was the inconsistent selection or volunteering process for professional supervisors, and the limited investment made by the agency in the professional development of its managers, supervisors and supervisees. In particular, the selection or volunteering process for supervisors undermined the credibility of the supervision policy. Very few people reportedly put themselves forward, and some of those that did, were of questionable ability according to colleagues. The essential issue was that there was not a clear process used to designate and accredit

professional supervisors despite the agency's reliance on its supervisors' competency standard. Clearly, these findings raise questions in regard to the criteria and process by which professional supervisors are designated or accredited in social service agencies where new public management dominates.

Supervisor development was found to be limited to a three-day training course followed by a review day a few months later. The view of the majority of the participants was that this amount of training was inadequate. This finding also raises questions in relation to the provision of professional supervision training, particularly in regard to the accreditation of training providers and course standards.

A further finding was that supervisees and managers received only written communications and no training about how to optimise professional supervision. This was particularly significant, given that the participants emphasised that they had not experienced a culture of professional supervision. They clearly indicated that they had been informed of the policy without any formative experiences (Community Corrections Service, 1997b; 1998b). In the social service supervision literature, Proctor et al. (1988) specifically address what skills supervisees require to ensure that they maximise the benefits of professional supervision. In particular, Proctor et al. (1988) identify the supervisee's requirement to have a clear understanding of their needs, and to negotiate with supervisors in regard to both the type and boundaries of supervision. Also identified was the need for supervisees to be responsible for their level of personal disclosure in supervision, and the need to prepare for sessions. Finally, Proctor et al. (1988) explored the area of receiving feedback, and strategies for understanding what is said, and deciding whether it is applicable or not. It appears that none of these requirements were being met among the participants in this study.

Experience and Impact of Context

The participants' experiences revealed that the management practices they experienced reflected "new public management" (Boston et al., 1996). The most significant of these management practices was the separation of professional workers from management.

Another issue raised was the limited ability of senior managers to receive feedback, listen, understand and empathise with their staff. This finding also appeared to relate to the

participants' experiences of the organisational culture, which they outlined as a bureaucratic, crisis culture unsupportive of professional supervision (Hawkins et al., 1989; Beddoe et al., 1994; Beddoe, 1997a;1997b). All fifteen respondents presented an unflattering picture of the organisational culture with some participants referring to a recent climate survey which portrayed the culture as "being quite cold, unsympathetic, unsupportive of staff." The culture described was also one where professional supervision becomes a source of quick fix solutions amidst a host of competing demands (Hawkins et al., 1989; Beddoe et al., 1994; Beddoe, 1997a; 1997b).

In regard to the impact of social policy, the findings identified themes found elsewhere in the social policy literature of Aotearoa/New Zealand - namely, the reduced welfare state; greater accountability; increased individual responsibility; and the impact of de-institutionalisation (Cheyne et al., 1997; Shannon, 1991). In such a "turbulent environment", the need for supervision was intensified. However, this need is met with a paradoxical reduction in the resources available, which in turn has an affect upon supervision practice (Hughes et al., 1997; Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993). The key finding from the participants' experience of the context, was that management practices, organisational culture and social policy, reinforced the need for professional supervision, yet, at the same time, each factor was also a restraining force upon that need.

Aspirations and Expectations of Supervision

There were three key findings in regard to the participants' aspirations and expectations. Firstly, they expected professional supervision to assist them to work more effectively with clients/staff. Secondly, they expected good committed supervisors that would develop and support them. Thirdly, they also expected the agency to support professional supervision through the provision of sufficient resources, guidance and quality assurance in terms of a clear accreditation process for supervisors, and through the establishment of a learning/developmental organisational culture that supported professional supervision.

Professional Supervision Expectations

The major finding in this section was that the participants expected that professional supervision would assist them to work more effectively with clients and, in the case of service managers, with staff. They wanted supervision that met the needs of supervisees, rather than the contract-focussed supervision found in the Community Probation Policy, which arguably meets the needs of management (Community Probation Service, 1998a; 1998b). This desire was most apparent in the findings in relation to expected content, process and structures of professional supervision.

The expected content was one where the participants could discuss: (a) clients and their work with clients; (b) themselves in relation to their work; (c) their training and professional development; and (d) feedback on observed work. The supervision process expected was very similar to the structure of a social work interview, with a preparatory phase, an introductory phase, a phase where the purpose or the agenda is clarified and ordered, a working phase and a review or ending phase.

In terms of structures, the participants named three domains where they wanted supervision structures, namely: frequency; length of supervision sessions; and mode of delivery. The participants expected structures that would be flexible and responsive to their individual personal supervision needs. This flexibility and responsiveness was also apparent in the mode of delivery findings, with individual supervision desired by most participants. However, mixed views were expressed on whether it should be delivered by supervisors (either peers or managers) from within the agency, or by supervisors external to the agency. Nine respondents expected external supervision, with the remaining six opting for internally provided supervision. The main point that was evident was that respondents expected good supervision, which was individually suited to their needs.

Good Committed Supervisors

The participants expected supervisors to have a sound professional background, to undertake a range of roles that would support and develop the supervisee, and to be committed to the supervision. The sound background expected by the participants included suitable qualifications, relevant experience in the field, and highly developed personal attributes and interpersonal skills. The roles the participants expected their supervisors to

perform appeared to be in two categories those that were developmental and those that were supportive of the supervisee. This finding further reinforces that the participants expected that their supervisors would provide support and professional development, and as a natural consequence, assist them to provide better service to clients. Finally, a high level of commitment to professional supervision was expected. This commitment would be manifested in the keeping of appointments and preparation for supervision sessions. Overall, the portrait of the desired supervisor outlined by the participants echoed Kadushin's (1992:339) maxim that, "good supervisors are available, accessible, affable, and able".

Agency Support

The participants' expectations of agency support for professional supervision raised three main areas - resourcing, guidelines and quality assurance processes, and an organisational culture supportive of professional supervision. Expectations in terms of resourcing were that the supervision programme would be adequately resourced through funds being made available to pay for external supervisors, supervision training, and to reduce work pressure so that staff could make the most of the supervision provided. A theme that emerged from these expectations was that there was a clear gap between what the participants wanted and what they perceived the agency was delivering and able to deliver.

The participants' expectations concerning agency guidelines and quality assurance process, focused upon staff having choices in terms of their professional supervisors, guidelines for the practice of supervision, and a transparent appointment or accreditation process. In general, the participants wanted the agency to ensure that their supervisory needs were met in the most effective manner.

The participants' aspirations and expectations of organisational culture were for an environment in which professional supervision would be supported and would thrive. The characteristics of their desired organisational culture were that it had a high degree of trust, was positive, open, best practice focused and promoted investing in staff. The type of organisational culture desired, appeared to be similar to the learning/developmental culture outlined in the literature by Hawkins et al. (1989) and Beddoe (1997a).

Implications of Key Findings

Upon reflection, it appears that the underlying message from all of the findings reported was that good professional supervision was expected and that the participants' wanted the agency to do all that it could to facilitate this, because they believed it would benefit the clients and staff of the Community Probation Service. In these terms the key findings signal significant challenges for the development of professional supervision within the "new public management" of the Community Probation Service.

The implications derived from the key findings are that: field staff and management need to be socialised into professional supervision; the professional supervision programme as currently implemented is unlikely to be successful; and professional supervision needs to be focused upon persons and their environments, rather than agency focused practice.

Socialisation of Staff

The need for socialisation of field staff and management appears to be in two arenas the organisational and professional.

In the organisational arena, the need for socialisation into professional supervision appears present in the lack of alignment of participants' perspectives with that of the agency. This lack of alignment in regard to professional supervision, appeared to be related to the way in which the organisation's professional supervision programme was introduced without any formative experiences of professional supervision to draw upon. In other words, the organisation's past experience was not reframed in the light of a new situation (Rich, 1993). Essentially, it appears that the professional supervision programme was developed and implemented without an adequate assessment of staff's experiences, knowledge, skills and expectations of professional supervision being completed. Furthermore, it seems that the purpose, objectives, and desired outcomes of the supervision programme were not well understood. The most likely result of this situation is that professional supervision practice will lack consistency, and that individuals or groups of individuals are likely to participate in professional supervision in a variety of ways which do not align with the agency's policy or purpose.

The challenge for the Community Probation Service is to develop consistency of purpose across the organisation in regard to its professional supervision (Covey, 1991; Nelson et al., 1996). To achieve this, the organisation needs to review its professional supervision programme and dialogue with the key stakeholders - the probation officers and service managers about their supervision experiences, knowledge, skills and expectations. Based on the responses from the participants in this study, I would suggest that such a review should be conducted by professional social service consultants or academics external from the agency.

In the professional arena, the need for socialisation arises from the low level of professionalisation apparent within the Community Probation Service. Bracey (1981) particularly highlighted this point, and argued that probation officers were not highly professionalised, with only limited commitment to the social work profession through membership or active involvement in the New Zealand Association of Probation Officers (NZAPO), or the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW). Knipe-Ackermann (1997) further reinforced this point by questioning the extent to which probation officers are aligned with the social work profession, and the extent to which the social work profession embraces probation. In the research findings, this low level of professionalisation is most acutely apparent in the findings related to construction of professional supervision within the organisation, which indicated that management's interests were more significant in shaping professional supervision than those of the profession. It is argued that professional supervision, as constructed in the Community Probation Service, is not professional supervision but agency focused practice supervision, because it is constructed upon the basis of the agency's interests rather than those of the profession.

The implications of this low level of professionalisation are that the professional supervision practice is likely to be conducted upon the basis of bureaucratic requirements rather than best-practice, and that it is likely to be reductionist, with a technical rationalist focus, rather than one based in critical reflective practice (Dale, 1997; Ellis, 1998).

The socialisation of staff who are not highly professionalised into "professional supervision" as constructed by the social work profession rather than the agency, presents a considerable challenge which involves a three way commitment involving field staff,

management and the professional bodies. The challenge for probation officers and service managers is to develop their professional identity through membership and active participation in a professional body (either ANZASW or NZAPO). This will require education and training programmes on the theory and practice of supervision, as well as accessing the local and international literature on professional supervision in the social services (O'Donoghue, 1998a).

Management's challenge in regard to the socialisation of staff in the professional arena is twofold. The first challenge is to support the probation officers and service managers' development of their professional identity through its employment policies, and through a monetary contribution towards the staff's professional membership fees. From the author's experience these practices are commonplace in the health and community sector. The second challenge is to develop effective working relationships with the professional bodies, which facilitate the involvement of professional expertise in practice policy and standards development.

For the professional bodies, the challenges are to clarify their relationships, the development of policy statements and standards, and the establishment of a professional credentialling and accreditation process for professional supervisors and supervisor training programmes. ANZASW and NZAPO need to establish a clear supportive relationship. This might be achieved through a formal agreement or through NZAPO being affiliated to ANZASW. The key point in the research was that NZAPO was unable to significantly influence the policy development, whilst ANZASW appears not to have been involved at all, which again reflects the low level of professionalisation in the service. A further factor, which may also be contributing to the situation, is that social work is not a registered profession in Aotearoa/New Zealand, despite the recent efforts of ANZASW towards this. Registration may have an effect on the practice of professional supervision through formal legitimisation of the professional knowledge and skill base, thereby challenging reductionist practice approaches, which have links with the knowledge and skill base of other professions, particularly management and accounting (Randal, 1997). A further implication would be that, in terms of practice matters, the professional bodies are in a stronger position to advocate on behalf of the profession. It may also provide an increased entrée into agency policy-making processes (Randal, 1997). Whether registration

is achieved or not, the challenge remains to both professional bodies to strengthen their positions as guardians of professional supervision practice.

The development and publication of policy and standards is another means by which the professional bodies can socialise the staff of the Community Probation Service to professional supervision as understood by the profession. In this area, the ANZASW published a policy statement on supervision, and has published standards in relation to social work supervision courses (NZASW, 1998b; 1998c). Public promotion of these documents to both members of the profession and the agencies, would aid the socialisation of staff into professional supervision.

A longer-term challenge for the professional groups is to reclaim professional supervision through the development of credentialing of professional supervisors, and the accreditation of training providers. At present in Aotearoa/New Zealand, there are no processes for credentialing supervisors or accrediting training providers. Overseas, particularly in the United States, the professional body provides credentialing for social workers, but it does not specifically provide any credentialing for social work supervisors (Munson, 1993). In terms of accreditation of training providers in the United States, there is a specific body - the Council on Social Education whose role includes the accreditation of Bachelors and Masters of Social Work education programmes (Munson, 1993). In the literature reviewed, there was no mention made of accreditation of supervisor education and training providers, except as part of BSW and MSW programmes. This literature indicates that social work supervision tends to be given only scant attention in such programmes (Kadushin, 1992a; Munson, 1993).

The local situation in regard to the accreditation of training providers is a complex one. The Industry Training Organisation (ITO), Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, for social services, accredits providers of the National Diploma and National Certificate courses according to a mandate given by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (Ellis, 1998). The attention given to provision of social work supervision within this framework is also scant and somewhat limited, with only two unit standards within qualifications set at undergraduate level (Ellis, 1998). According to Ellis (1998), the university based social work programmes remained outside the NZQA framework, and continued to explore alternative accreditation arrangements such as through the professional association or by

the establishment of a model like that of the United States, where there is a specific accrediting body. Currently in Aotearoa/New Zealand, training and education in professional supervision is delivered through a proliferation of short courses provided by independent providers and the Central Institute of Technology. In terms of in-depth formal education and training, the Auckland College of Education and Massey University provide the only substantial programmes aimed at social work graduates (O'Donoghue, 1998a). The heart of the credentialing and accreditation issue, in terms of the practice of professional supervision, is that supervisors and training providers are professionally reputable. The research findings imply that short three or four day courses are not creditable professionally, and in the current managerial environment are likely to represent the interests of the purchaser rather than best professional practice. The research findings emphasise that there is no clear mechanism to ensure that, in the new managerial climate, supervisors and the supervision training providers are reputable. It is argued that, for the profession to maintain the creditability of professional supervision, it needs to establish a process of credentialing supervisors, and an accreditation process for education and training providers. One means of establishing the credentialing of supervisors is through the ANZASW competency programme (Beddoe, 1997a). The matter of accreditation of training providers appears to be an issue that is more complex. My preferred approach would be for the professional body to facilitate the establishment of an independent body to accredit education and training programmes on social work supervision. The professional association has moved slightly towards that path with the production of its suggested standards for supervision training courses (NZASW, 1998c).

Professional Supervision Programme

The implication that professional supervision practice within the Community Probation Service is unlikely to achieve the aspirations of the General Manager, namely that it is "Crucial to effective interaction with offenders to achieve the reduction in reoffending" (Community Corrections, 1997b), is based upon the findings pertaining to the experiences of the probation officers and service managers. It is argued that the supervision practice will be ineffective because of the lack of a best practice culture in the organisation, and that it is not a managerial and/or political priority.

Lack of Best Practice

The research findings indicate that the professional supervision programme appears to be driven on the basis of expediency and efficiency, rather than on best national and international practice. The expediency and efficiency roots of the programme are most evident in the findings related to policy development and implementation. The policy was developed in a tight timeframe, implemented using a volunteering process for supervisors, with limited investment in workforce development. Little attempt was made by the organisation to establish what was best practice in the field of social service supervision (Community Corrections, 1997a). The lack of a best practice supervision culture was also apparent in the research respondents' elementary understanding of professional supervision, and their lack of professional supervision experience.

The likely practice outcomes are that supervision will tend to focus on supporting the worker, rather than facilitating best client practice. It is also likely to be influenced by the parties' personalities and issues, rather than practice content. The role of direct observation of client practice is unlikely to occur, because supervisors will tend to base supervision upon reports of work and review of file notes, particularly as the process of professional supervision was poorly understood. Finally, there will be reliance by supervisors on agency norms, policies and procedures, rather than best professional practice (Kadushin, 1992a; Rich, 1993; Brown et al., 1996; O'Donoghue, 1998a).

The challenge for the agency is to establish a role structure that supports best professional practice, perhaps similar to that present in the Children, Young Persons and their Families Agency, where there is a chief social worker and practice consultants. A best practice culture for professional supervision within the Community Probation Service, would be more likely to develop if practice consultants were established in each of the sixteen areas, with these practice consultants being supported by a Chief Probation Officer whose focus is the professional practice of the Service.

Managerial and Political Priorities

The research findings imply that the professional supervision programme will be unsuccessful because it was not a priority either managerially or politically. Essentially, the

findings imply that new public management and libertarian social policy set both the managerial and political agenda within the Community Probation Service. This agenda is one of fiscal restraint, output accountability and risk management (Kelsey, 1993; Garwood, 1994; Boston et al., 1996). The findings also implied that there was a clear separation between the management and professional lines of the agency, and it was argued that this separation is detrimental to the professional practice of the agency (Gowdy et al., 1993).

The impact of supervision being a low priority, was that the project was under-resourced, and its success was based on quantified outputs. Examples of these outputs were the number of staff receiving professional supervision, and the supervisor competency standard which measured the elements of establishing, implementing and ending a supervision contract (Community Probation Service, 1998a; Community Corrections Service, 1997a).

Another implication is that it is unlikely that the supervision will be of a high quality, because it is not adequately resourced and supported. It is also likely that the reported experiences of the participants of inadequate and infrequent supervision will be repeated.

The challenge for both management and politicians, is to reprioritise services so that they are service-user centred rather than purchaser focused. It is argued that until this type of paradigm shift occurs best professional practice will struggle to develop under the large cloud of managerialism.

Persons in Their Environments Supervision Practice

The key findings in regard to the participants' aspirations and expectations imply a need for professional supervision practice that is focused upon persons in their environments, rather than supervision that is dominated by the organisational context.

This requires that supervision be reconceptualised in terms of professional practice, rather than in organisational or management terms (Brashears, 1995). It also recognises the influence that the various contexts (e.g., personal, practice, team, managerial, organisational, professional and political) have upon the principal actors (clients, supervisee, supervisor, and agency) (Tsui et al., 1997). In other words, persons in their environments supervision practice works in the same manner that social work practice

does; it assesses and intervenes in the intrapersonal, personal, interpersonal, and social systems arenas. In doing so, it also addresses, mediates and reconstructs the effects that the ecological environment has on the person and their situation (Turner, 1996). Professional supervision practice, constructed in this manner, also draws from a wide knowledge base of theoretical concepts and models of practice. In terms of actual supervision practice, the persons in their environments approach stimulates critical reflective supervision because it recognises the impact of the social and political context upon clients, workers and the organisation (Ellis, 1998; Fook, 1996; Drew, 1987; Freire, 1974). This type of critical reflection is more likely to result in intervention that attends to clients', supervisees' and agencies' social realities, and their perception of this reality. It is also likely that the interventions made are more effective because they are constructed on the basis of thorough multi-level assessment (Turner, 1996). The literature emphasises that professional supervision of this kind requires a high degree of integration in terms of practice experience, theoretical knowledge and practice skills (Brown et al., 1996).

The challenges that persons in their environments supervision practice presents to the Community Probation Service and other social service agencies, is that firstly it requires a professionally trained workforce (Munson, 1993). This challenge relates directly to the Community Probation Services recruitment policy, and calls for the reintroduction of social work qualifications as a prerequisite. It also argues for those currently employed without such qualifications to be professionally educated.

Secondly, it requires the development of a best practice supervision culture that is lead by professional supervisors who are experts in professional practice (Munson, 1993). The clear challenge here, is to develop the practice expertise of those who are to become professional supervisors. The most effective way in which this could be easily achieved, is to ensure that the internal supervisors are supervised externally from the organisation by professional supervisors who are recognised for their level of practice expertise.

Thirdly, it challenges social service organisations' construction of professional supervision in terms of contractual arrangements, and as an agency function (Drew, 1987). Arguably, the professional supervision in the Community Probation Service, is not professional supervision. It is agency focused practice supervision. This challenge to resist the reductionism of professional supervision not only relates to social service

organisations, but falls squarely on the shoulders of the profession and its members. The challenge to the Community Probation Service, if it wishes to have professional practice supervision, is to support the professionals and the professional bodies in establishing structures that facilitate professional practice supervision. Again, on a practical level, the agency could support and foster membership of professional organisations such as ANZASW or NZAPO through its employment policies. For the professionals and the professional bodies, the challenge is one of reclaiming professional supervision as their own. One strategy that professionals could use is to put the payment of professional organisation fees and the payment of external professional supervision as claims in employment contract negotiations. For the professional bodies, the challenge as guardians of professional supervision involves raising the consciousness of workers to the difference between professional practice supervision and agency practice supervision (Beddoe et al., 1994; Beddoe, 1997a; 1997b).

Future Research Areas

Five key questions that warrant further research arise from this thesis. Firstly, what occurs in the actual practice of supervision in the Community Probation Service and other agencies? Second, what is the relationship between supervision and client outcomes? Thirdly, what professional supervision frameworks and approaches facilitate best supervision practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand? The fourth question is what makes a creditable supervisor, and what is creditable supervisor training? The final question is what is the impact of new managerialism upon professional social service practice?

The Actual Practice

The findings of this thesis, which are based on reported perspectives, reveal a need for future research into the actual practice of supervision in the Community Probation Service and other social services in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Both nationally and internationally, very little research has been undertaken into what actually transpires in professional supervision. Tsui (1997a) emphasises that the actual practice of supervision has been difficult to obtain empirical data on, because it is embedded in an organisational context that is not conducive to direct participant observation. Future research into the actual

practice of supervision is also necessary in terms of the development of theory and practice models within the various fields of practice within the social services.

The Relationship between Supervision and Client Outcomes

According to the literature reviewed, only one study has been undertaken in relation to supervision and clients' outcomes (Harkness et al., 1991). This dearth of research, together with the findings and implications of this study, which infer that supervision is not a managerial and political priority within the social service environment in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and that agency focused supervision is constructed as professional supervision, reinforces the need for future empirical research on the clients' outcomes in relation to both professional and agency-focused supervision.

Professional Supervision Frameworks

The need for future research into the development of professional frameworks from within our own cultural context, has been highlighted via the findings in relation to the participants' philosophy of professional supervision, that revealed an elementary understanding which focused on content to the detriment of process and context. This need is further exacerbated by the implication that supervision, as constructed by the profession, is being reconstructed by agencies in a reductionist form. Another reason for further research in this area, is that it is dominated by authors from the northern hemisphere. This domination means that their frameworks, which do not take into account the Treaty of Waitangi and the uniqueness of our bicultural setting, have shaped supervision practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Future research into professional supervision frameworks is needed to ensure that professional supervision in our context is relevant towards those it serves, namely clients, staff, agency, profession, and the community.

Creditability of Supervisors and Supervisor Training

The research findings and their implications signal that the creditability of professional supervisors and supervision training is a question of significance in relation to the Community Probation Service professional supervision programme, and for the wider social service environment in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In regard to future research related

to the creditability of supervisors, such a topic could be approached using a qualitative methodology which looked at the perspectives of clients, supervisees, supervisors, agency management and the professional body. Future research in relation to supervisor training needs to be evaluative in approach, and ought to examine how effective the trained supervisors are at assisting supervisees to help clients obtain better outcomes.

New Managerialism's Effect Upon Professional Practice

This thesis has inferred that new managerialism has effected professional supervision practice in the Community Probation Service in a negative way. An inference of this kind demands further research, particularly in the area of the business or generic management and professional practice interface. Key areas that future research ought to be aimed at are the influence of business or generic management in the social services upon client outcome, worker satisfaction and productivity versus the influence that managers who have retained their social service professional identity have on the same variables.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the research objectives, the methodology and the key research findings were reviewed as the entrée to the discussion of the implications of this study and identification of areas where future research is required. The major implications of this study were identified as:

- a need for staff to be socialised both organisationally and professionally into professional supervision;
- that the professional supervision programme within the Community Probation Service, as currently implemented, is unlikely to be successful; and
- that professional supervision needs to be focused upon persons and their environments, rather than agency focused practice.

These implications signal strongly that the road ahead for professional supervision under new public management within the Community Probation Service and the wider social service environment, is one which has significant challenges. The areas for future research

that were identified provide opportunities for future researchers to delve deeper into these challenges.

In concluding this thesis I am reminded of a remark I made in a previous study; namely that “social work supervision in this country is under threat from managerialism” (O’Donoghue, 1998a: 92). The process of completing this study has enabled me to reflect on that remark, and I have revised my opinion. If I was to write that statement today I would say that “managerialism has challenged the social work profession to become the guardian and advocate of professional supervision practice”. What I take with me from this study is an enlightened understanding of a statement made by one of my past professional supervisors (Cockburn, 1994:37):

Professional supervision as it is traditionally defined by the social work profession itself is a necessity and cannot be replaced by managerial-oriented solutions.

APPENDIX A

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

APPLICATION TO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

NAME: Kieran Barry O'Donoghue

STATUS OF APPLICANT: Masterate student

DEPARTMENT: School of Policy Studies and Social Work.

EMPLOYMENT: MidCentral Health Limited.

PROJECT STATUS: Masterate Thesis

FUNDING SOURCE: Kieran Barry O'Donoghue

SUPERVISORS: Associate Professor, Andrew Trlin
Mary Ann Baskerville, Senior Lecturer

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Professional supervision practice under new public management: A study of the perspectives of probation officers and service managers in the Community Probation Service

ATTACHMENTS:

Information Sheet: ()

Consent Form ()

Interview guide ()

SIGNATURES:

RESEARCHER:

SUPERVISORS:

.....

DATE:

1. DESCRIPTION

1.1. Justification:

The State Sector Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989 have facilitated significant changes in the way government departments are managed. These changes have affected both professional practice and management in the Community Probation Service and other statutory social service agencies. These changes have resulted in greater managerial accountability and an emphasis upon quantifiable output measures and performance targets rather than professional process accountability, which had previously occurred through professional practice supervision (O'Donoghue, 1995).

The importance of professional supervision within this context is exemplified by the Community Probation Service's desire for best professional practice, competent professional staff and quality assurance (Community Corrections Service, 1997a).

Within the wider field of professional social work supervision there is both an extensive and established body of literature (Bennie, 1995). This literature is dominated by authors from Great Britain and the United States of America, with the most prominent authors being Kadushin (1976, 1992), Munson (1979, 1993), Middleman and Rhodes (1985), Morrison (1993) and Brown and Bourne (1996). Within Aotearoa /New Zealand there is a growing body of literature which has developed mainly under the auspices of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers and the New Zealand Social Work Training Council (Bennie, 1995). From the New Zealand literature the "*Supervision Resource Package*" (1985) published by the New Zealand Social Work Training Council and Garth Bennie's (1995) "*Social Work Supervision An Annotated Bibliography*" stand out. In general, the published literature (within Aotearoa /New Zealand and internationally) appears to highlight the following areas:

- approaches and models of supervisory practice;
- the tension between the managerial and professional aspects of supervision;
- the link between quality supervision and best practice;
- the importance of supervision as a professional process;
- and the future of supervision in the current changing management environment.

In Aotearoa /New Zealand there appears to have been very little research conducted into professional social work supervision and none in relation to professional practice supervision under the new public management approach.

1.2. Objectives:

The objective of this study is to produce a Masters thesis that identifies and examines the participants' philosophy of professional supervision, their wishes

or expectations with regard to the professional supervision they receive or provide, and their recent experience of professional supervision practice.

1.3. Procedures for recruiting participants and obtaining Informed Consent.

Between five and ten probation officers and five service managers will be purposefully selected from lists of staff provided by the Regional Manager Community Probation, Central region, to attain participants with a broad mix of professional practice and/or supervision experience. Participation in this study is voluntary. Potential participants selected will be provided with an Information Sheet (copy attached) and if they agree to take part their written consent will be obtained prior to the commencement of an interview.

1.4. Procedure in which research participants will be involved

Participants will be asked to participate in an audiotaped in-depth interview lasting between one and two hours. They will be advised that the research is focused on supervision and will be asked questions concerning (see Interview Guide attached):

- their philosophy of professional supervision,
- their wishes or expectations with regard to the professional supervision that they receive or provide, and
- their recent experience of professional supervision.

Participants will be advised that they have the right to ask that the audio-tape be turned off at any time during the interview. They will also be advised that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and that they are entitled to refuse to answer any particular question(s) at any time.

Participants will be asked to review the transcript of their interview, and to correct any errors or alter any comments made prior to returning it to the researcher.

1.5. Procedures for handling information and material produced in the course of the research including raw data and final research report.

The interviews will be recorded on audio-tapes which will be transcribed by a typist who will sign a confidentiality agreement. All interview tapes, floppy disks and written transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet until the study is completed. Once the thesis has been assessed all transcripts stored on floppy disk or the researcher's hard drive will be erased. The audiotape and any printed transcripts will be destroyed unless the participant wishes to retain these for his/her own personal records.

A summary of the research findings (which includes a statement about how the results of this research will be disseminated) will be provided to participants should they request it.

2. ETHICAL CONCERNS

2.1. Access to participants.

The researcher will advise potential participants how selection of participants was made.

Access to participants will be made initially through the Central North Island Regional Manager of the Community Probation Service, who will be asked to provide the researcher with a list of the probation officers and service managers in the Central North Island Region. This list will also provide details of the probation officers and service managers length of service, location, and gender. The list of names provided by the Regional Manager will include a letter confirming that she is able to make the list available.

The researcher will write to potential participants and send them the Information Sheet, Consent Form and the Regional Manager's letter of approval, which will also assure participants that their identity will remain confidential to the researcher. The letter will ask the potential participants to contact the researcher should they wish to participate in the study. The envelope will be marked confidential. If no response is received within two weeks after posting the above letter a follow up letter with the envelope also marked confidential will be send.

2.2. Informed Consent.

All potential participants in this research will be provided with an Information Sheet (copy attached). This sheet explains the nature and purpose of the study and specifies the following rights:

- *to decline to participate.*
- *to ask any questions about the study at any time before it begins and during participation.*
- *to refuse to answer any particular question(s).*
- *to ask to have the audiotape turned off in order to ascertain the meaning and implications of potentially sensitive questions.*
- *to withdraw from the study at any time.*
- *to provide information on the understanding that their name and other identifying features will not be used (unless they give permission to the researcher).*
- *to review and amend the transcript of their interview.*
- *to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.*
- *to determine the final disposal of the interview audiotape and any copy of the interview transcript.*

Each Interview will only be commenced once the participant has completed a Consent Form (copy attached).

2.3. Anonymity and Confidentiality.

The researcher will maintain confidentiality through ensuring that all identifying features such as a participant's name and location remain confidential to the researcher and transcript typist and by writing up the research findings in a manner that ensures that the participants will not be identified. This will be done by either the use of fictitious names or by referring to participants by their role (ie. probation officer or service manager) in the research report and quotations. The researcher will also maintain confidentiality through the secure storage of all research data and through ensuring that the typist who will transcribe the interview tapes signs a deed of confidentiality.

2.4. Potential Harm to Participants.

The researcher aims to minimise potential harm to participants through ensuring confidentiality and through ensuring that the findings cannot be construed so as to harm individuals or groups of individuals. The researcher, when interviewing, will ensure that he is sensitive to the age, gender, etc. of research subjects.

2.5. Potential Harm to Researcher.

Not applicable

2.6. Potential Harm to the University.

Not applicable

2.7. Participant's right to decline.

Participants will be informed of their right to decline upon first contact, and if they so decide they will not be approached again.

2.8. Uses of the information.

The information obtained will only be used for the purpose of thesis research and any academic publications arising from this project.

2.9. Conflict of Interest/ Conflict of Roles

The researcher worked for Community Corrections for almost six years in the roles of probation officer in Taranaki, and Unit Manager/Service Manager in Palmerston North.

He left Community Corrections in March 1997 after obtaining his current position at MidCentral Health. During his period of employment with Community Probation the researcher produced a handbook for supervisors of probation officers (O'Donoghue,1995). The researcher does not believe he has any conflict of interest or conflict of roles in this research because he does not hold a role within the Community Probation Service and he is also not employed by the Community Probation Service.

2.10. Other ethical concerns.

None

3. LEGAL CONCERNS:**3.1 LEGISLATION****3.1.1. Intellectual Property legislation
e.g. Copyright Act 1994.**

Not applicable

3.1.2. Human Rights Act 1993.

Not applicable

3.1.3. Privacy Act 1993.

The Privacy Act is relevant (in terms of the obtaining, storage and use of information private to individuals) and will be observed as appropriate.

3.1.4. Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

Not applicable

3.1.5. Accident Rehabilitation Compensation Insurance Act 1992.

Not applicable

3.1.6. Employment Contracts Act 1991.

Not applicable

3.2 OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

3.2.1. Official Information Act 1982.

This Act is relevant in regard to the obtaining of information from government organisations, particularly section 12. The terms and conditions of the Act will be observed.

4. CULTURAL CONCERNS

Not applicable

5. OTHER ETHICAL BODIES RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH

5.1. ETHICS COMMITTEES

None

5.2. PROFESSIONAL CODES

The researcher is a member of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers and will observe its Code of Ethics as appropriate.

6. OTHER RELEVANT ISSUES

None

Professional supervision practice under new public management: A study of the perspectives of probation officers and service managers in the Community Probation Service

INFORMATION SHEET

1. The researcher and supervisors.

My name is Kieran O'Donoghue and I am enrolled for the degree of Master of Philosophy at Massey University. I am currently employed by MidCentral Health as Senior Social Worker and Project Manager for Mental Health Services.

My chief supervisor is Associate Professor Andrew Trlin, School of Policy Studies and Social Work, Massey University, Palmerston North.

My second supervisor is Mary Ann Baskerville, Senior Lecturer, School of Policy Studies and Social Work, Massey University, Palmerston North.

2. How to contact the researcher and supervisors.

Kieran O'Donoghue may be contacted Monday to Friday 9am-5pm on (06) 350 8034 or 0868 12589. After 5pm and during the weekends Kieran may be contacted on (06) 3574837.

Associate Professor Andrew Trlin may be contacted on (06) 350 4305.

Mary Ann Baskerville may be contacted on (06) 350 5218.

3. The nature and purpose of the study.

The State Sector Act 1988 and the Public Finance Act 1989 have facilitated significant changes in the way government departments are managed. These changes have affected both the professional practice and management of statutory social service agencies. In the Community Probation Service these changes have resulted in greater managerial accountability and an emphasis upon quantifiable output measures and performance targets rather than professional process accountability, which previously had occurred through professional practice supervision. The importance of professional supervision within this context is exemplified by the Community Probation Service's desire for best practice, competent professional staff and quality assurance. The focus of this research is on supervision.

The purpose of the study is to produce a Masters thesis that ascertains the participants' philosophy of professional supervision, their wishes or expectations with regard to the professional supervision they receive or provide, and their recent experience of professional supervision practice. The information collected will be used for the production of the Masters thesis and for any academic publications arising from it.

The study will involve in-depth qualitative interviews with between five and ten probation officers and five service managers. The duration of each interview will be between one and two hours. Participants will be purposefully selected to attain a broad

mix of professional practice and/or supervision experience from probation officers and service managers within the Community Probation Service's Central North Island region, which ranges from Masterton to Huntly. Contact between the researcher and participants will occur away from the participants' workplace. The interviews will be recorded on audiotapes, which will be transcribed by a typist who will sign a confidentiality agreement. The transcripts will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Potential participants are selected from an up to date list of staff provided by the Regional Manager Central Region (see attached letter). Potential participants have the right to decline to take part. If participants agree to take part their written consent will be obtained prior to the commencement of an interview. Participants will be advised that they have the right to ask that the audiotape be turned off at any time during the interview. Participants will also be advised that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and they are entitled to refuse to answer any particular question(s) at any time.

A summary of the research findings (which includes a statement about how the results of this research will be disseminated) will be provided to participants should they request it.

4. What will be asked of the participants, including the time involved.

Participants will be asked to participate in a recorded in-depth interview lasting between one and two hours. They will be asked questions concerning:

- their philosophy of professional supervision,
- their wishes or expectations with regard to the professional supervision that they receive or provide, and
- their recent experience of professional supervision.

Participants will be asked to review the transcript of their interview, and to correct any errors or alter any comments made prior to returning it to the researcher.

5. Confidentiality.

The researcher will maintain confidentiality through ensuring that contact occurs away from the participant's work place. He will also ensure that all identifying features such as a participant's name and location remain confidential to the researcher and transcript typist and by writing up the research findings in a manner that ensures that the participants will not be identified. This will be done by either the use of fictitious names or by referring to participants by their role (i.e. probation officer or service manager) in the research report and quotations. The researcher will also maintain confidentiality through the secure storage of all research data and through ensuring that the typist who will transcribe the interview tapes will sign a deed of confidentiality.

Once the thesis has been assessed all transcripts stored on floppy disk or the researcher's hard drive will be erased. The audiotape and any written transcripts will be destroyed unless the participant wishes to retain these for his/her own personal records.

6. *The rights of the participants*

Participants will have the following rights:

- *to decline to participate.*
- *to ask any questions about the study at any time before it begins and during participation.*
- *to refuse to answer any particular questions.*
- *to ask to have the audiotape turned off in order to ascertain the meaning and implications of potentially sensitive questions.*
- *to withdraw from the study at any time.*
- *to provide information on the understanding that their name and other identifying features will not be used (unless they give permission to the researcher).*
- *to review and amend the transcript of their interview.*
- *to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.*
- *to determine the final disposal of the interview audiotape and any printed copy of the interview transcript.*

**Professional supervision practice
under new public management:
A study of the perspectives of
probation officers and service managers
in the Community Probation Service**

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Professional supervision practice under new public management: A study of the perspectives of probation officers and service managers in the Community Probation Service.

Interview Guide

Background details:

- Gender
- Cultural identity
- Age
- Brief work history
- Professional education and training
- Education and training in supervision

Philosophy of professional supervision:

What is the participant's understanding of professional supervision?

- Definition and purpose of professional supervision.
- Role of professional supervision for you and your organisation
- Main functions within professional supervision
- Processes involved in professional supervision
- Knowledge of theories of professional supervision
- The skills that are important in professional supervision

Recent experience of professional supervision

What is the participant's recent experience of professional supervision as a recipient or provider?

- Current participation in professional supervision (ie, frequency, type, mode, when was last session, when is next session, roles).
- From whom do you obtain advice and support.
- Relationship of your supervision to agency policy/ guidelines (ie, contract, record keeping, frequency, gender and cultural appropriateness, confidentiality and evaluation.)
- Describe the content and process of your supervision.
- Satisfaction and feelings about current supervision.(What's good, what's less than good and why).
- Current supervisor (relationship, gender, culture, experience, training, qualifications, theoretical perspective, model of practice).
- What factors impact on the quality and quantity of your supervision
- The extent to which current supervision improves the quality of the your practice.
- The extent to which current supervision helps manage work related stress.
- The extent to which current social policy impacts on supervision in the organisation.
- The extent to which Managerialism impacts on supervision in the organisation.
- Effect of organisational culture on supervision.

*Aspirations and expectations of professional supervision***What does the participant want from supervision as either recipient or provider?**

- Agency support (eg, policy guidelines for professional supervision).
- Structures,(ie, frequency, agreements, type of supervision, mode of delivery, culture and gender appropriate, recording keeping and access to records, confidentiality and evaluation).
- Supervision provided within the organisation or by external consultants contracted from outside of the organisation.
- Supervisor to be line Manager, peer or other (choice of supervisor).
- Relationship between performance management, competency programme and professional supervision.
- What knowledge, skills, experience, qualifications, gender and culture would be ideal for you in a supervisor/ supervisee.
- What roles and responsibilities would you want your supervisor to take.
- Supervision practice -What would you want the content of supervision to be ? (ie, discussion about case-work, professional development, problem solving, personal counselling, debate, feedback on observed work etc...).
- What process would you want supervision to use? (ie, shared agenda, groundrules, speak for oneself etc...)

Participants general comments about supervision.

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