SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION:
CHALLENGES & ADVANCES
SEMINAR 2015
Social Work Supervision: Challenges and Advances

Organized by the Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB)
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1. Foreword
   Ms Ang Bee Lian

The material in this book was presented at the “Social Work Supervision: Challenges and Advances” Seminar 2015, held on 18 – 19 May 2015. This seminar was organized by the Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB) and supported by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW).

2. Opening Address
   By Mr Chan Heng Kee

3. Day 1 Keynote 1:
   Features, Nature and Culture of Social Work Supervision
   By Professor Tsui Ming-Sum

4. Day 1 Keynote 2:
   Research and Knowledge Building on Social Work Supervision
   By Associate Professor Kieran O’Donoghue

5. Dialogue Session: Dilemmas in Social Work Supervision and the Way Forward
   By Professor Tsui Ming-Sum, Associate Professor Kieran O’Donoghue, Dr Peace Wong
   Facilitated by Ms Lee Yean Wun

6. Day 2 Keynote 1:
   West Meets East: Sharing of Supervisory Strategies and Skills – Dialogue and Demonstration – Part 1
   By Professor Tsui Ming-Sum

7. Day 2 Keynote 2:
   West Meets East: Sharing of Supervisory Strategies and Skills – Dialogue and Demonstration – Part 2
   By Associate Professor Kieran O’Donoghue

8. Closing Address
   By Ms Ang Bee Lian
Workshops

   By Ms Ruth Chua and Ms Rebecca Lo

10. Workshop 2: Challenges and Responses of Social Work Supervisors with Managerial and Clinical Roles
    By Dr Peace Wong

11. Workshop 3: PPIS Coordinated Multi-Pronged Supervision Programme: Towards An Evidence Based Approach’
    By Ms Maimunah Mosli

12. Workshop 4: An Experience of Reflecting on Supervision
    By Mrs Jade Low and Mrs Annie Lim

13. Workshop 5: Harnessing Supervisees’ Feedback to Enhance Supervision Practice: Sharing on AWWA’s FSC’s Supervision Review Journey
    By Ms Charlotte Chen

14. Workshop 6: Teaching, Empowering and Discovering Supervision: Supervision Ideas Worth Sharing
    By Mr Udhia Kumar

15. Workshop 7: Am I a Mindful or Mind-full Supervisor?
    By Ms Yogeswari Munisamy and Ms Patricia Wee

16. Workshop 8: Clinical Supervision and Case Management Supervision: Contention to Marry the Two
    By Mr Elijah Sim

17. Workshop 9: Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS) and its Application in the Supervision of Individual/Family Counseling
    By Ms Chan Lay Lin

18. Workshop 10: Structure, Process and Theories of Clinical Supervision: Fei Yue’s Journey in Clinical Supervision
    Mrs Lilian Seah-Ong
Day 2 Keynote 2: West Meets East: Sharing and Demonstration of Supervisory Strategies and Skills – Part 2

Associate Professor Kieran O’Donoghue
Massey University
Head of School – School of Social Work

Video: The Interactional Process of the Supervision Session: Skills and Strategies
A/P Kieran O’Donoghue, Supervisor (In person)
Dr Polly Yeung and Dr Michael Dale, Supervisees (On video)

Introduction
A/P Kieran used a recording of a supervision session he had with two of his workers to demonstrate the structure and flow of a supervision session. He would pause between video segments for participant discussions. This video aimed to demonstrate the interactional map of the supervision session (O’Donoghue, 2014).

Table 1 below illustrates the stages and phases of this map.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Stages</th>
<th>Supervisee Phases</th>
<th>Supervisor Phases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Continual consider.</td>
<td>Reviewing records.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Session preparation.</td>
<td>Thinking about the forthcoming</td>
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<td>session.</td>
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<td>Attending to the setting.</td>
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<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Social engagement.</td>
<td>Starting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Orientation.</td>
<td>Checking-in.</td>
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<td>Planning</td>
<td>Agenda setting.</td>
<td>Agenda setting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prioritising items.</td>
<td>Prioritising items.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Telling the story</td>
<td>Clarifying and exploring the story</td>
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<td></td>
<td>or presenting an item.</td>
<td>or issue.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interactively processing.</td>
<td>Facilitating decision making and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>task setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending</td>
<td>Summary and review.</td>
<td>Reviewing what was covered.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The practicalities of next</td>
<td>Finishing up the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>session.</td>
<td>Finishing the notes.</td>
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The video was prepared on the assumption that both the supervisor and supervisees had prepared for the session by working out what they were going to discuss and what they wanted from their respective sessions.

Starting the Session – Engagement
The supervisor started the supervision session by asking the supervisee to share how her day was. And then how her work was going. He elicited her sharing by asking her to share
‘what was on top for her’. While she was sharing, he constantly reflected her feelings and probed her about her concerns and fears regarding what she was sharing. He let her share for approximately 3 minutes, without interrupting her with the exception of his use of attending skills and listening responses. After she had finished her sharing, he then moved on to ask her to set the agenda and goals for the day. They would later process the things she had identified for the day.

A/P Kieran then paused the video and posed 4 questions to the participants. He asked:

1. What did you notice about how the session started?
2. How was the supervisee engaged?
3. How were the focus and the agenda clarified?
4. What skills and strategies were used?

The participants expressed that they liked how the supervisor caught up on how the last session had left off at the start of the new supervision session. This helped to allow both supervisor and supervisee to catch up with the agenda. Another participant expressed that he appreciated the supervisor helping the supervisee to scope the session.

**Exploring the Use of Practice Theory and Models: The Supervisee Tells the Story**

In the next part of the session, the supervisor went on to get the supervisee to tell her story and experience. The supervisor then started to summarize her experiences and helped her to reflect and process them. He tried to explore with her the different practice theories and models that she had used in her work. He then continued to probe and explore with her the skill sets that she had used in her work. Once again, reflection and other attending skills were paramount in his interaction with his supervisee.

Again, A/P Kieran paused the video and requested the participants to consider several points.

1. What did you notice about the skills and strategies used in the session to assist the supervisee to reflect?
2. What did you notice happen to the supervisee as she began to process her experience?

The participants expressed that the supervisor had gotten his supervisee to talk about the models and justify and evaluate her usage of them. He then took a step back to look at the processes with the supervisee. The participants also noted that the session was well regulated through the posing of good questions. A/P Kieran responded that it is important to keep in touch with the supervisee and slow her down if she needs it – this is so that they will be able to process the important issues.

**Exploration of an Issue**

A/P Kieran showed a second recording of a supervision session with a different supervisee to illustrate how to explore an issue with a supervisee. He expressed that in exploring an issue, the supervisor should help the supervisee first give an outline of the issue before eliciting the details of the story. In this segment of the recording, the supervisor helped the supervisee to tell his story and to clarify, categorize and highlight the main points he would like to cover for the supervision session. A/P Kieran then paused the video and asked:
1. What skills and strategies did you notice the supervisor use to assist the supervisee to tell his/her story?

The participants expressed that the supervisor first allowed him to tell the story completely before beginning to process it with him. In response, A/P Kieran expressed that the supervisor could ask challenging questions as a means to get the supervisee to think through and process what had happened on his own. This is important as it allows for reflection on the part of the supervisee and it causes the supervisee to do the work instead of the supervisor. A/P Kieran also expressed that in asking such questions, the focus is not on the answer but on the thinking process and the effect of the question on the supervisee.

A/P Kieran also expressed that as he was speaking to his supervisee he had a checklist in mind of the things that he wanted to ascertain or to process with his supervisee. He also mentioned that supervisors ought to give their supervisees the space to share what was going on and the issues to address or process will naturally emerge from there.

**Finishing the Session**
A/P Kieran shared that as the session comes to an end, the supervisor should give feedback to the supervisee and ask for feedback as well. He also added that it is important to question the supervisee what he/she would be doing after the supervision session. The participants also shared that they felt that that would round up the session well.

**Conclusion**
A/P Kieran expressed that supervisors must begin by orientating their supervisees when they come in for supervision, and prepare them to be vulnerable and to share their emotions. Similarly, the supervisor must also orientate the supervisee when the session ends and prepare them to go back out onto the field, especially when they have opened up themselves and been vulnerable during the session. He shared a checklist for supervisors (see Table 2) and also encouraged supervisors and supervisees to review their sessions through exploring the following questions:

- How well have we prepared?
- How well have we engaged with each other?
- How well have we focused upon supervision?
- How well have we managed our agenda and priorities?
- How well have worked through the items?
- How well have we made decisions and identified actions?
- How well have we concluded our sessions?
Day 2 keynote 2: West meets east: Sharing and demonstration of supervisory strategies and skills- part 2

O'Donoghue, KB

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