

**SOCIAL WORK
SUPERVIS^{ON}!**

**CHALLENGES
& ADV^{ANCE}S**

SEMINAR 2015

SOCIAL WORK SUPERVIS[!]ON: CHALLENGES & ADV[▲]ANCES

Proceedings from **"Social Work Supervision: Challenges and Advances" Seminar 2015**
Organized by the Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB)
Supported by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW)

Prepared by:
Office of the Director of Social Welfare
Ministry of Social and Family Development

Printed:
Jan 2016

Material from the proceedings belong to the respective authors. It may not be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without written permission from the authors.

CONTENT PAGE

1. Foreward	4
Ms Ang Bee Lian	
 <i>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).</i>	
2. Opening Address	5
By Mr Chan Heng Kee	
3. Day 1 Keynote 1:	
Features, Nature and Culture of Social Work Supervision	8
By Professor Tsui Ming-Sum	
4. Day 1 Keynote 2:	
Research and Knowledge Building on Social Work Supervision	13
By Associate Professor Kieran O'Donoghue	
5. Dialogue Session: Dilemmas in Social Work Supervision and the Way Forward	22
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	28
By Professor Tsui Ming-Sum	
7. Day 2 Keynote 2:	
West Meets East: Sharing of Supervisory Strategies and Skills – Dialogue and Demonstration – Part 2	31
By Associate Professor Kieran O'Donoghue	
8. Closing Address	35
By Ms Ang Bee Lian	

Workshops

9. **Workshop 1: Group Supervision in Social Work Practice:
A Systemic Approach** 38
By Ms Ruth Chua and Ms Rebecca Lo
10. **Workshop 2: Challenges and Responses of Social Work Supervisors
with Managerial and Clinical Roles** 42
By Dr Peace Wong
11. **Workshop 3: PPIS Coordinated Multi-Pronged Supervision Programme:
Towards An Evidence Based Approach'** 51
By Ms Maimunah Mosli
12. **Workshop 4: An Experience of Reflecting on Supervision** 59
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** 60
By Ms Charlotte Chen
14. **Workshop 6: Teaching, Empowering and Discovering Supervision:
Supervision Ideas Worth Sharing** 65
By Mr Udhia Kumar
15. **Workshop 7: Am I a Mindful or Mind-full Supervisor?** 74
By Ms Yogeswari Munisamy and Ms Patricia Wee
16. **Workshop 8: Clinical Supervision and Case Management Supervision:
Contention to Marry the Two** 83
By Mr Elijah Sim
17. **Workshop 9: Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS)
and its Application in the Supervision of Individual/Family Counseling** 91
By Ms Chan Lay Lin
18. **Workshop 10: Structure, Process and Theories of Clinical Supervision:
Fei Yue's Journey in Clinical Supervision** 103
Mrs Lilian Seah-Ong

Day 1 Keynote 2: Research and Knowledge Building on Social Work Supervision

Associate Professor Kieran O'Donoghue

Massey University

Head of School – School of Social Work

Introduction

A/P Kieran began by stating that the aim of his address was to review the development of social work supervision knowledge, discuss the implications of this knowledge for supervisory practice and the development of supervision nationally and internationally.

Development of Social Work Supervision

Social work supervision knowledge was developed over time through practice wisdom, the application of practice theory and models from casework, empirical research and the development of supervision models and approaches.

Practice Wisdom

Early supervisors developed knowledge about supervision through reflecting on their experiences, and deriving understanding and new practices from it. Accumulated practice wisdom was shared through the early writing and oral transmission at conferences. At the beginning of the 20th Century Brackett (1903, p 4) notes that the individualised form of social casework supervision started to emerge as the result of, "Observation, comparison and study" and the formulation of casework methods. The primary focus of this early supervision practice was to conceptualise the elements within supervision and to understand the developing pattern of supervision (Burns, 1958; Munson, 1979). This in turn contributed to the development of knowledge about the purpose and methods of supervision, which were focused on teaching the social casework method (Burns, 1958).

Practice Theory And Models

The adoption of psychoanalytic theory within casework coupled with the advent of formal social work education set the foundation for practice theory and models to form the base knowledge for supervision (Burns, 1958). The advent of formal social work education, particularly, the supervision of students' field experience provided a means for the transmission of casework practice theory into supervision. The application of psychoanalytic theory to supervision influenced the structure, format and processes of supervision, as well as reinforced the individualised session based approach. The therapeutic emphasis of psychoanalytic theory also resulted in supervision being conceptualised as therapy for the caseworker and the supervision relationship being conceived for a time as a therapeutic one (Rabinowitz, 1987). This therapeutic element did not endure within the social work supervision, and between 1937 and 1950 it disappeared from the social work supervision literature. Burns, (1958) attributes the reasons for its demise and disappearance from the literature to firstly the depression of the 1930s, wherein the focus of practice shifted from clients' psychological needs to their basic welfare, and secondly to an emphasis on the role of supervision in the training and development of social caseworkers within the social work supervision literature.

The role of supervision in the training and development of social caseworkers was the focus of the first book on social work supervision, *Supervision in social casework*, by Virginia Robinson, which was published in 1936. Robinson (1936) defined supervision from

an educational perspective and emphasised the role supervision had in the professional development of practitioners. She also provided the first clear unified conceptualisation of social casework supervision, which consisted of administration, teaching and helping components, together with a theory of learning. The unified conceptualisation of social casework supervision enabled a consolidation to occur across all three components of supervision.

The administrative component was strengthened through improvements in the performance evaluation process, which included innovations such as job descriptions and performance standards (Burns, 1958). The teaching of casework within supervision was furthered by the recognition of the role anxiety played in the supervisee's readiness for learning. This in turn played a part in the helping component through providing a stronger endorsement to the role that supervisors had in helping workers identify and address their resistance and reluctance to learn within supervision (Zetzel, 1953). The developments of this period cemented supervision as a mainstay of casework practice and thereby made it inseparable from the casework method regardless of the theoretical approach taken (Rabinowitz, 1987).

Over time there were changes to social work's connection with psychoanalytic theory (Munson, 2002). These mirrored those occurring in counselling psychology, which were due to the rise of other psychodynamic schools, as well as behaviourist and humanist approaches. Munson (2002) notes that in the 1950s there was a backlash against psychoanalysis within social work, which contributed to social workers turning to a social science theory base to conceptualise their practice rather than a psychological one. During this time, systems theory and social psychological theories (e.g. functional theory, role theory and communication theory) entered social work. The social science theories helped restore a social emphasis within social work in contrast to the psychological emphasis that had been prevalent since the 1920s (Munson, 2002). This in turn contributed towards a more balanced psychosocial approach to social work and supervision. Examples of this were found in models that integrated social science theories such as Perlman's (1957) problem solving approach and Hollis' (1966) psychosocial therapy. Changes in practice theory were also reflected in supervision, which continued to mirror practice theory (Munson, 1979). The resulting theoretical pluralism in practice theory was also reflected in the supervision literature, which incorporated ideas from transactional analysis, task-centred practice and role theory perspectives (Kadushin, 1968, 1976; Munson, 1979; Pettes, 1979). Moving forward to the 21st Century, this situation continues with O'Donoghue (2010) finding that participants in his study reported using ideas drawn from strength-based (Cohen, 1999) and task-centred approaches (Caspi and Reid, 2002) in supervision whilst also appearing to eclectic in their use of a range of ideas from several supervision approaches.

Empirical Research And The Development Of Supervision Specific Models And Approaches

Prior to the 1970s, the social work supervision literature mostly consisted of reflections on practice, literature reviews and theoretical ideas posited by experienced practitioners and social work educators, with the theories and models used being derived from casework and organisational function (Munson, 1979). The turning point was Kadushin's (1974) national survey on social work supervision in the United States of America. This study involved a random sample of 1500 subjects (750 supervisors and 750 supervisees) and provided a description of social work supervision in the United States of America, plus an empirical foundation for defining supervision in terms of administrative, educational, and

support functions, which subsequently developed into Kadushin's functional model of supervision (Kadushin, 1976).

Another influential study was Carlton Munson's (1975) doctoral dissertation on the uses of structural, authority and teaching models in social work supervision. Munson (1975) surveyed 65 workers, by way of individual interview and 60 supervisors by self-administered postal questionnaire. He found that the teaching style and structure of supervision had little effect on workers perceived satisfaction. Authority, however, did to the extent that supervisors who were perceived to operate from a competence model had a greater influence and a more positive affect upon their supervisees, than those who used a sanctioned or role-based model. Munson (1975) also recommended that an analysis of the interactional processes involved in supervision be applied to address issues pertaining to conflict and authority in supervision regardless of the structure used. He also commented that the dual model whereby the two roles of "administrative supervision and clinical consultation" were clearly distinguished deserved further consideration, particularly when these roles were vested in different individuals (Munson, 1975, p.237).

The third influential study was that of Shulman, Robinson and Luckyj (1981). This study involved a sample of 780 respondents (109 supervisors and 671 supervisees) and concerned the content, context and skills of supervision in social work, nursing and residential settings across Canada. From this study, Shulman et al. (1981) developed a scale of supervisory skills, which Shulman (1982, 1993, 2005, 2010) later applied in a further study to test an interactional model of social work supervision and from which he also determined that parallel process was part of social work supervision.

The research of Kadushin, Munson, and Shulman resulted in the development of their supervision specific models and approaches which were published in their respective books (Kadushin, 1976, 1985, 1992a; Kadushin and Harkness, 2002, 2014; Munson, 1983; 1993, 2002; Shulman, 1982, 1993, 2010). These three authors' texts are the most highly cited publications on social work supervision and often referred to by others as the starting point from which they developed their supervision approaches (O'Donoghue, 2010). The further development of supervision specific models was discussed by Bruce and Austin's (2000) in their review of seven major North American social work supervision texts, which were:

- Supervision in social work (Kadushin, 1976, 1992a);
- Supervisory management for the human services (Austin, 1981);
- Competent supervision: Making imaginative judgements (Middleman and Rhodes, 1985);
- Supervision and performance: Managing professional work in human service organizations (Bunker and Wijnberg, 1988);
- Supervising in human services: The politics of practice (Holloway and Brager, 1989);
- Clinical social work supervision (Munson, 1993);
- Interactional supervision (Shulman, 1993).

According to Bruce and Austin (2000, p. 99), these texts provided the basis for "an evolving framework of supervisory practice" across the macro-micro multidimensional nature of social work supervision. The texts, also clearly illustrated that a shift had taken place in social work supervision literature from practice theory based approaches towards supervision specific models.

Empirical research and the development of supervision specific models have continued to be the primary means by which formal supervision knowledge has been produced. O'Donoghue and Tsui (2015) identified that over forty years (1970-2010), supervision research has increased in the number of research articles, and spread across the globe. In addition it has diversified with regard to the research designs (i.e. from cross-sectional surveys, to qualitative and more recently mixed-methods studies) as well as showed an increasing rigour in the analysis with regard to validity, reliability and credibility. The knowledge base this research provides for supervision is that it describes an evolving theory of supervision. It demonstrates the importance of supervision within the child-welfare field and in relation to worker outcomes, as well as, makes the argument that supervision contributes to practice and client outcomes (O'Donoghue and Tsui, 2015). In other words it provides evidence to inform supervisory practice and potentially the basis for an evidence-informed approach.

O'Donoghue and Tsui (2012) explored 18 supervisors' views concerning what, informed their supervisory practice. They found that the supervisors' practice was contextually based, and informed through an integrative reflection upon the person, situation, and the interactional process occurring within both the practice discussed and the supervisory interaction. The supervisors also drew from a set of personal, professional, and technical rules derived from their: (a) experiences within supervision; (b) supervisory practice wisdom and approaches; (c) direct practice approaches, style, and assessment checklists; and (d) emotional intelligence. These rules were applied reflexively in response to the practice setting, content and process of supervision, and the person of the supervisee.

O'Donoghue and Tsui (2012) noted that they were surprised that none of the supervisors in this study specifically referred to being informed by research or evidence-based practice or practice-based evidence. One explanation for this is that up until the last decade that social work supervision research has not been easily accessible and that supervisors in this sample have learned to supervise from their experience and practice backgrounds rather than through any formal education (O'Donoghue, 2010; O'Donoghue and Tsui, 2015).



Figure 1: The Knowledge-base for Social Work Supervision

One of the implications from O'Donoghue and Tsui (2012) is that supervisors use practice wisdom and develop their practice wisdom by ensuring that they draw upon the learning they have had from their previous supervisory experiences in their ongoing supervisory practice. One way supervisors may enhance their practice wisdom is to keep a reflective, journal of their supervision experiences that is focused on their learning and development

in relation to themselves, and their supervision practice skills and knowledge. Two others ways for supervisors to develop their practice wisdom are to seek feedback from supervisees towards the end of each session and to discuss their supervisory practice in their own supervision.

In regard to the use of practice theory and models, supervisors use these to: a) frame their general approach to supervisory practice; b) to make sense of the material presented by the supervisee particularly through using their personalised assessment checklist; and c) to facilitate the interactive problem-solving process that occurs within session (O'Donoghue and Tsui, 2012). This highlights the importance of supervisors being current with the latest practice theory and models, as well as, asking questions concerning how particular theories and models might apply to situations raised by supervisees in supervision. Supervisors can develop their use of practice theory and models in practice through discussing this topic in their own supervision with their own supervisor and by making entries in a reflective journal describing how they used practice theory and models in a particular session and how this might be further developed.

The development of a specific model or approach for supervisory practice is important because it forms the basis of how supervisors work with supervisees and how supervisors explain their approach to their supervisees and supervisors. Reading books which outline supervision models and approaches is one way to aid this development (Davys and Beddoe, 2010; Shulman, 2010; Weld, 2012; Wonnacott, 2012), while other ways involve identifying one's own model through reflection on one's practice over time and discussion with one's supervisor. Another pathway to supervisory model development would be through formal social work supervision education and training.

For supervisors, the use of empirical research in supervisory practice is challenging, because this research is not easily accessible and often its application for supervisory practice is often not clear (O'Donoghue and Tsui, 2005). The development of evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches within the clinical supervision field is still in its infancy. In clinical psychology, Milne (2009) has produced an evidence-based approach for clinical psychology supervision based on a best evidence synthesis. While in social work O'Donoghue (2014b) made the case for an evidence informed approach for clinical social work supervision which was derived from the evidence pertaining to the supervision relationship or alliance, the supervision process, the supervision of practice, and the supervision of the practitioner. In this approach, the supervisor is mindful of ensuring that they are attuned to supervisee's needs and priorities within the supervision relationship and create a safe relationship characterised by trust and support. In terms of the supervision process, this mirrors the social work interview which means that the session is structured in terms of engaging and orientating the supervisee to supervision, establishing the agenda for the meeting, then interactively processing the issues through a reflective dialogue that assists them. The session concludes with a review that identified the actions and learnings and the practicalities of setting another session and finishing the notes. Applying an evidence-informed approach to the supervision of supervisee's practice with the client involves, firstly, keeping the focus on the client, their issues, and outcomes (O'Donoghue and Tsui, 2015). This is followed by an exploration of the supervisee's awareness, understanding, and consideration of evidence-informed interventions and may involve Google Scholar to search for evidence. A discussion could then follow on the selection and how the selected research evidence could inform the supervisee's practice with the presenting situation. The fourth dimension of an evidence-informed approach concerns the supervision of the practitioner and pertains to attending to the supervisee's

well-being and development as a practitioner. This involves the provision of practical help, emotional support, and positive interpersonal interaction by the supervisor (Mor Barak et al., 2009).

National and International Implications

The implications for national social work professional bodies in regard to knowledge building concern the development of a social work supervision literature base, the education and training of supervisors, the setting of standards and policies for supervision within the profession, and furthering the development of research and evaluation within social work supervision. In other words, the role for national social work professional bodies is to advance the development of a professional social work supervision culture. To further the development of social work supervision internationally, there is a need to bring together the international knowledge and to develop international standards. Another development could be an international network of social work supervisors and researchers which shares knowledge across jurisdictions and engages in comparative international research studies. Supervision knowledge could also be advanced by a supervision specific stream in regional and global social work conferences and congresses.

Conclusion

This paper has examined knowledge building within social work supervision through reviewing how knowledge has developed over time by way of practice wisdom, practice theory and models, empirical research and specific supervision models and approaches. The implications of this framework of knowledge building for supervisors have been explored with regard to the ways in which they can develop a more informed approach to supervision. Such an approach would be derived from practice wisdom, practice theory and models, specific supervision models and approaches and the use of supervision research evidence.

The implications for the profession at a national and international level have also been discussed with suggestions made in regard to advancing a professional supervision culture at national level, as well as, how to build an international infrastructure for knowledge for the advancement of social work supervision. In conclusion, the key messages of this paper are: a) for supervisors to develop their knowledge for supervisory practice and be more mindful of how they use knowledge in supervisory practice; b) For the profession at national level to develop and synthesise the supervisory knowledge-base to advance a professional supervision culture; and c) to develop the infrastructure to support the international advancement of social work supervision.

Citations

Austin, M. (1981). *Supervisory management for the human services*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Brackett, J. (1903). *Supervision and education in charity*. New York: MacMillan.

Bruce, E., and Austin, M. (2000). Social work supervision: Assessing the past and mapping the future. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 19(2), 85-108.

Bunker, D. R., and Wijnberg, M. H. (1988). *Supervision and performance: managing professional work in human service organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Burns, M. (1958). The historical development of the process of casework supervision as seen in the professional literature of social work. PhD Dissertation. The University of Chicago, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International.
- Caspi, J. and Reid, W. (2002). Educational supervision in social work: A task-centred model for field instruction and staff development. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cohen, B. (1999). Intervention and supervision in strengths-based social work. *Families in Society*, 80 (5) 460-466.
- Davys, A., and Beddoe, L. (2010). Best practice in professional supervision: A guide for the helping professions. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hollis, F. (1966). Casework: A psychosocial therapy. New York: Random House.
- Holloway, S., and Brager, G. (1989). Supervising in the human services: the politics of practice. New York: Free Press.
- Kadushin, A. (1968). Games people play in supervision. *Social Work*, 13(3), 23-32.
- Kadushin, A. (1974). Supervisor-supervisee: A survey. *Social Work*, 19 (3), 288-298.
- Kadushin, A. (1976). Supervision in social work. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kadushin, A. (1985). Supervision in social work (2nd ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kadushin, A. (1992a). Supervision in social work (3rd ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kadushin, A., and Harkness, D. (2002). Supervision in social work (4th ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kadushin, A., and Harkness, D. (2014). Supervision in social work, (5th ed.) New York: Columbia University Press.
- Middleman, R., and Rhodes, G. (1985). Competent supervision: Making imaginative judgments. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Milne, D. (2009). Evidence-based clinical supervision: Principles and practice. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Mor Barak, M. E., Travis, D. J., Pyun, H., & Xie, B. (2009). The impact of supervision on worker outcomes: A meta-analysis. *The Social Service Review*, 83(1), 3-32.
doi:10.1086/599028
- Munson, C.E (1975). The uses of structural, authority and teaching models in social work supervision. Unpublished DSW Dissertation, University of Maryland, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International.

- Munson, C.E. (1979). *Social work supervision: Classic statements and critical issues*. New York: Free Press.
- Munson, C.E. (1983). *An introduction to clinical social work supervision*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Munson, C.E. (1993). *Clinical social work supervision* (2nd ed.). New York : Haworth Press.
- Munson, C.E. (2002). *Handbook of clinical social work supervision* (3rd ed.). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Social Work Practice.
- O'Donoghue, K. (2010). *Towards the Construction of Social Work Supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand: A Study of the Perspectives of Social Work Practitioners and Supervisors*. PhD thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North. <http://hdl.handle.net/10179/1535> [Accessed 12 January 2015].
- O'Donoghue, K. (2012). Windows on the Supervisee Experience: An Exploration of Supervisees' Supervision Histories. *Australian Social Work*, 65(2), 214-231. doi: 10.1080/0312407x.2012.667816 .
- O'Donoghue, K. B. (2014a). Towards an Interactional Map of the Supervision Session: An Exploration of Supervisees and Supervisors Experiences. *Practice*, 26(1), 53-70. doi: 10.1080/09503153.2013.869581
- O'Donoghue, K. B. (2014b). Towards an Evidence-Informed Approach to Clinical Social Work Supervision. In M. Pack, & J. Cargill (Eds.), *Evidence, Discovery and Assessment in Social Work Practice* (pp. 295-308). Hershey, PA 17033, USA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-14666-6563-7.ch014.
- O'Donoghue, K., Munford, R., and Trlin, A. (2005). Mapping the Territory: Supervision within the Association. *Social Work Review* 17 (4), 46-64.
- O'Donoghue, K., & Tsui, M. -S. (2005). Towards informed supervisory practice: Knowledge, theory, and methods. In L. Beddoe, J. Worrall, & F. Howard (Eds.), *Supervision Conference 2004: "Weaving together the strands of supervision"* (pp.131-137). Auckland, NZ: University of Auckland.
- O'Donoghue, K. B., & Tsui, M.-S. (2012). In Search of an Informed Supervisory Practice: An Exploratory Study. *Practice*, 24(1), 3-20. doi: 10.1080/09503153.2011.632678
- O'Donoghue, K., & Tsui, M.S. (2015). Social Work Supervision Research (1970–2010): The Way We Were and the Way Ahead. *British Journal of Social Work*, 45(2), 616-633. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bct115
- Perlman, H. (1957). *Social casework: A problem-solving process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pettes, D. (1979). *Staff and student supervision- A task-centred approach*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Rabinowitz, J. (1987). Why ongoing supervision in social casework: An historical analysis. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 5 (3), 79-90.

Robinson, V. (1936). *Supervision in social casework*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Shulman, L., Robinson, E., & Luckyj, A. (1981). A study of supervision skill: Context, content and process. Unpublished manuscript, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Shulman, L. (1982). *Skills of Supervision and Staff Management*. Itasca, Ill.: Peacock Publishers.

Shulman, L. (1993). *Interactional supervision*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Shulman, L. (2010). *Interactional supervision* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.