

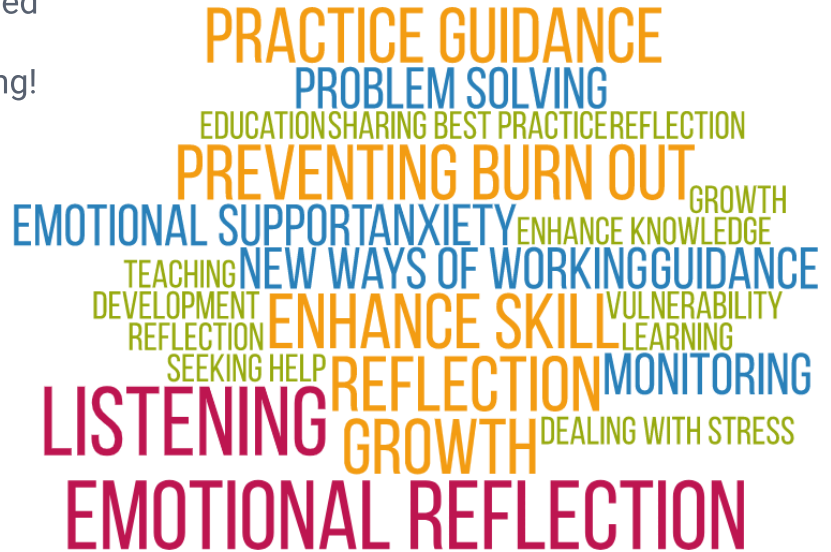
Supervision



Supervision

Supervision has long been recognised as an important part of all roles that make up health and social care. It is all about making sure the worker receives the support they need to effectively deliver their role.

Supervision is a two way process which ensures that you get the support you need AND the organisation is happy that you are doing what you are meant to be doing!



Support for you

Supervision is an important way for you to identify, seek and receive support for your role. This is for many reasons:

Advocacy can be emotionally demanding

Supporting people who are in crisis, have experienced trauma, are at vulnerable moments in their life can have an impact on the advocate. Having to constantly offer compassion and kindness can lead to people finding their energy is depleted. Becoming exhausted as a result of constantly supporting people through trauma or traumatic events can cause 'compassion fatigue' wherein the worker can become traumatised themselves, experience anxiety, mood swings or lack of motivation.

Being able to access effective supervision which enhances self care and takes times out to address and deal with strong emotions or traumatic experiences is essential in ensuring the worker is able to cope effectively with the emotional demands of being an advocate.

Challenging can be challenging

Challenging decisions, people and systems can have an impact - especially when it feels like this is all you doing. Advocates can at times, feel like the whole world is stacked against them (and of course the people they are supporting). Inflexible decision making processes, decisions that put money and resources before the person, working in environments that are not person centred and working with services that have different interests and agendas can mean that you have to spend significant amounts of time challenging things.

Without reflection, clear strategy and support, this can quickly lead to burnout, especially when the advocate becomes overwhelmed and frustrated with the amount of things that 'feel wrong' and have to be challenged

You will want to grow

Most advocates, throughout their work, will want to grow, nurture new skills and develop new knowledge. No-one is expected to know everything! Especially when you are new to the role. Supervision is a great way to identify opportunities to learn new skill sets and plug knowledge gaps. Don't forget that learning and growing are fundamental human needs.

Supervision is a space safe to acknowledge any gaps and make a place to learn new strategies. Nowhere is this more true than when you hit an obstacle or dilemma and are stuck (or are worried) about what to do. By exploring complex issues you can seek out more support and create solid plans to address the issue. You are not expected to do everything alone and most managers feel relieved when advocates raise issues or problem areas early and honestly.

Types of Supervision

There are different types of supervision that an advocate can access

1:1 supervision

This is a formal meeting which takes place between the supervisor and advocate. It should last long enough to allow the advocate explore their work, the emotional impact, logistical issues and workload. The meeting should be held in a private space which affords confidentiality and privacy and be formally recorded.

Group supervision

Group supervision takes place between the manager or supervisor and the wider staff team. Together the group discuss shared issues, themes and work practices. Group supervision is an excellent way of sharing best practice and utilising the knowledge and skills of more experienced or specialist members of staff.

Informal supervision

Informal supervision can take place at any time or place and includes any discussion where the supervisee asks for support or guidance. Managers should ensure they are available outside the formal supervision to provide information, support, guidance and decisions. This is a really important feature as it ensures people can access the support they need when they need it.

Supervision of case notes

A useful way of quality monitoring the service is through the supervision of written records produced by advocates. This can take the place of a planned audit to quality assure case files. Sometimes a random selection can be identified and taken to group supervision for discussion. This is a great way to introduce standardisation across the service.

Preparing for supervision

To make sure that you get the most from your supervision session you can do the following to prepare for your session:

- Take some time to look at your last session to refresh yourself on what was discussed. Think: has anything has changed or have the issues since been resolved? is there anything to bring forward to your forthcoming session
- Identify which areas of your practice you would like to focus on. Are there any blockages or challenges that are causing you or your partner challenges? Are there specific problems that you want guidance on resolving
- Choose at least one things you felt has gone well. It is really important to acknowledge and celebrate your successes: this could be something obvious like a big 'win' - for instance supporting a person to achieve their goal or it could be something much more subtle like a feeling of connection, or going the extra mile, or overcoming a challenge. Celebrate these!

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