

Supervision

Approach and Understandings held by Nigel Pizzini

The intention of this work is to contribute to the provision of purposeful, intentional, ethical and effective services to those who consult you as clients

Clinical Supervision has been a central matter for counsellors for many years, being an ethical and professional requirement for membership of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors. More recently the practice has been taken up by social workers, RTLB's, corporate or agency managers or team leaders. In this context "supervision" is not simply the overseeing of a persons' work (eg. case management) but co-creating a reflective space to explore ones' own clinical practice, professional identity and to move further towards the best practice one can offer those who consult them.

My Approach to Supervision

I hold a post-structuralist stance towards counselling and supervision and a pro-feminist world-view. I am interested in forging a collaborative partnership with practitioners and create a supervision practice that supports on-going reflective counselling practices. I see supervision as a *working alliance* between the supervisor and the practitioner, that supports and maintains the counsellor's authority and cultivates a safe, respectful and reflexive practice. It is also a site where knowledges and practices can be co-produced.

Supervision is where conversations can be held about what is going well, about what theory and practice say about what might be possible, about stuck-ness and ways forward... among many other things. For example we can celebrate highlights in your work, and make visible all that you do in your practice rather than just examine the "stuck" places.

Periodically I may ask to record our sessions for my personal reflection and learning process. You are invited to do the same. If you approve, these may be shared with my supervisor for the purposes of "supervising my supervision" and on-going evolution of my supervision practice. All recordings will be treated with care for your confidences and privacy, and erased after their purpose has been fulfilled.

Group Supervision

Most commonly, supervision is conducted individually. However, it can be a very rich learning experience (and economical) to participate in group supervision.

This may suit counsellors-in-training (although may not meet course requirements), but could also be valuable for professional colleagues with similar client populations, learning interests, or those seeking to further develop their Narrative practice. I am very open to this way of working.

Purpose of Supervision

NZAC states the purpose of supervision is:

- For counsellors to reflect on and develop effective and ethical practice.
- To serve a monitoring purpose with regard to counsellors' work.
- To include personal support, mentoring professional identity development and reflection upon the relationships between persons, theories, work contexts and cultural perspectives.

In addition to these statements I see supervision as a space to think, to reflect on your practice in partnership with another practitioner, and to bring forward an account of this practice that will serve your work with clients.

Supervision is a space to story your professional identity, offering an account of your practice and your location in it. This reflection can contribute to your professional development and the monitoring of your professional work.

My On-Going Commitment to Supervision

I have an on-going commitment to my own professional development to enable me to offer the best supervision I am capable of. To that end I regularly attend professional development forums and training, maintain a personal course of study, participate in a peer supervision group with other senior practitioners, and reflect on my supervision work with my own supervisor.

I rely on feedback from those who consult me to ensure this work is effective. I view supervision as a collaborative relationship we share responsibility for. Please raise any questions, concerns or ideas for what might more usefully meet your needs.

Confidentiality and Ethics

As a member of NZAC I adhere to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Supervision (NZAC Handbook, 2002). This governs the privacy of information discussed in supervision and the professional standards of practice. Any concerns about your counselling practice will be thoroughly discussed in supervision. If any issue needs to be taken further this will be carefully and respectfully detailed first.

Creating our Working Agreement

Meaningful supervision relies on both the supervisor and practitioner playing an active role. Both need to prepare, actively participate in and share responsibility for the content, structure and effectiveness of the supervision.

If we agree to work together in the service of supporting your practice with clients, we will first explore what you seek from supervision and would find most useful. A working agreement will be formed from this exploration to specify our agreements, hopes and expectations. This will be a living/evolving document of our shared understanding that can be regularly reviewed as we go.