**Reflective Supervision**

A primary goal of Reflective Supervision is to help the worker gain increased insight into their belief system.

How they view their clients will influence how they treat them. What are their beliefs about how change happens for people?

As front-line staff learns to start viewing client behavior through a trauma lens, they will need support and guidance related to learning to view behaviors and symptoms as adaptations.

For many survivors of trauma, what looks like acting out to us, looks like surviving to them.

Finding ways to help front-line staff recognize these behaviors as the adaptations that they are can go a long way towards helping them to develop appropriate supportive responses to their clients; responses that have the potential to interrupt the negative trajectory that these clients might otherwise find themselves continuing on.

**Supervisory Functions**

A skillful supervisor needs to take on different roles and draw from a variety of approaches dependent on the circumstances. The most common supervisory functions include being able to:

**Inspire** –create conditions that instill hope and promote adherence to the mission and goals of the organization

**Teach** –impart content knowledge; supervisor should use innovative methods to communicate knowledge in addition to written materials such as modeling, roleplaying, and role reversal

**Support** –provide encouragement, empathic responses, examples from personal experience; build rapport, relieve anxiety, and build supervisee’s self‐awareness and insight; supportive approach especially helpful when individual makes mistakes as it fosters open learning environment and promotes risk‐taking

**Model** –demonstrate how knowledge translates into practice through applying specific techniques; supervisors regularly model behaviors informally through boundary setting, handling conflict, self-care practices

**Challenge** –provide corrective feedback, point out discrepancies between supervisee’s stated goals and one’s actions, interpret, most effective when provided in constructive manner in context of an established positive supervisory relationship

**Evaluate** –review and assess performance; key part of supervision but often problematic for many supervisors due to discomfort with hierarchy, approval, and power; evaluative role often is minimized; best to acknowledge and address evaluative role with supervisee from the very beginning

**Collaborate –**encourage the problem‐solving skills of the supervisee and theirprofessional development; used especially with supervisees who have advanced knowledge and experience; role is more collegial and consultative than evaluative

**Advocate** –“provide a voice” on behalf of supervisees regarding matters of workplace safety, input into organizational decisions, access to needed information, technology, and resources, a “living wage” and adequate benefits, grievances, opportunities for professional growth, and so forth.

* Peterson, 2015

**Best Practices for Reflective Supervision**

\* Hold a regularly scheduled meeting without interruptions or distractions (phone, door, etc.)

\* Follow an agreed upon agenda

\* Be accessible and available in the event of crisis

\* Be emotionally present

\* Observe and listen carefully

\* Avoid judgment

\* Be compassionate and respond with empathy

\* Model open communication

\* Focus on building the relationship and on being genuine

\* Listen for worker emotions and invite the sharing of feelings

\* Provide supportive feedback and build on worker strengths

\* Create an open environment to share challenges and mistakes

\* Help the worker find meaning in their work

\* Inquire about and support self-care

\* Maintain a balance of focus on the worker, and on their cases

\* Use motivational interviewing techniques

\* Ask for feedback

**A Framework for Supervisory Sessions Process**

• Establish a regular schedule of meetings for supervision (e.g. weekly, bi-weekly) at a mutually agreed upon time and place,

• Create meeting agenda together - each responsible to bring relevant information, questions, and topics for discussion,

• Supervisor should document content and key decisions of meeting in a supervisory log -supervisees encouraged to do the same,

Content Topics to be covered routinely in supervisory sessions:

• Check-in regarding general wellbeing of supervisee - take "vital signs"

• Ongoing monitoring of job responsibilities/work plan in relation to agency mission

* + Update on progress of work activities
  + Identification and resolution of concerns/obstacles
  + Prioritization of tasks and activities
* Identification of opportunities to collaborate with other staff or outside resources
* Coordination of logistical issues: work schedule, meetings, time off, etc.

• Follow-up regarding supervisee's professional/job-related education and development activities

• Discussion of self-care issues - e.g. attention to workload, potential for burnout, self-care practices, staff interactions, healthy balance between work and personal life • Feedback about individual performance of supervisee

• Evaluation of how supervisory relationship is working, including feedback from supervisee to supervisor about effectiveness of supervision, additional needs.

**Using Motivational Interviewing Skills in Supervision**

**(adapted from Miller & Rollnick, 2013)**

**OARS: Open Questions** "Tell me more about that?" "What approaches have you tried thus far?" Open questions invite others to talk about what is important to them as well as to elaborate on a topic. They are the opposite of closed questions that typically result in a limited response. Open questions are used in supervision to draw out information, ideas, and feelings to enable supervisees to clarify and develop their practice.

**OARS: Affirmations** "You used your reflective listening skills very effectively in that situation." "That sound like a good idea. Let's try it." Affirmations are statements and gestures that recognize a person's strengths and positive behaviors. Affirmations build confidence in one's abilities. To be effective, affirmations need to be genuine and congruent.

**OARS: Reflective Listening** "This has been quite stressful for you." "You're wondering if you could have prevented him from getting hospitalized." Reflective listening is a primary skill in building and maintaining effective supervisory relationships. It fosters clear communication, builds trust, and helps develop the supervisee's confidence.

Reflective listening appears deceptively easy, but takes hard work and skill to do well. There are three basic levels of reflective listening:

1. Repeating or rephrasing - listener repeats or substitutes synonyms or phrases; stays close to what the speaker has said,

2. Paraphrasing - listener makes a major restatement in which the speaker's meaning is inferred,

3. Reflection of feeling - listener emphasizes emotional aspects of communication through feeling statements - deepest form of listening.

**OARS: Summaries** "Let me see if I understand." "Here is what I think I've heard. Tell me if I've missed anything." Summaries are special applications of reflective listening. They are particularly helpful at transition points, for example, after the person has spoken about a particular topic, has recounted a personal experience, or when the conversation is nearing an end. Summarizing helps to ensure that there is clear communication between the speaker and listener. Also, it can provide a stepping stone towards determining "next steps."

**Questions for Supervisors to Consider During Supervision**

As a supervisor, it is your responsibility to ensure a safe and productive work environment and to lead by example. Supervisors must be proactive, informative,

and able to model how to effectively face this challenge. Formal Supervision is one way to do this.

By creating a safe space where supervisees can share, as well as walk away with effective tools and a sense of validation, we can contribute to a safe and productive work environment.

Below are some statements and questions that may be helpful to incorporation into your supervision practice.

I know that you have been working with a challenging situation/client that has encountered a lot of trauma.

How has this affected you?

How have you been dealing with it?

What can I do to make sure you are getting what you need?

What can I do to support you in taking care of yourself?

I have noticed a change in your behavior/demeanor, and that you appear withdrawn, apathetic, upset, frustrated, etc. since you have been dealing with this particular client /situation etc., and I am concerned for you.

What's going on?

How are you feeling?

How can I help you?

I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication that you are putting into your job.

Are you taking time for yourself to recharge?

What are some things that you have learned about yourself from your work with this situation/client that have positively influenced your perspective, approach, job, etc.? With this new knowledge/awareness, as there anything we can do as an agency to enhance what and/or how we do business?

If at any time you need additional support, please don't hesitate to come and talk to me

**The CLEAR Model for Supervision:**

Useful Questions and Responses for Each Stage

1. **Contracting:** Starting with the end in mind and agreeing how you are going to get there together

* How do you want to use your time?
  + What do you most need to achieve today?
* How could I be most valuable/helpful to you?
* On what in particular do you want to focus?
* What challenges are you facing?

2. **Listening:** Facilitating the supervisee in generating personal insight into the situation

• What more can you say about that?

• Who else is involved whom you have not yet mentioned?

• How do you think other people - your colleagues, your team, your client - see the situation?

• Let’s see if I can summarize the issue.

1. **Exploring:** Helping the supervisee to understand the personal impact of the situation

• How are you feeling right now?

• Are there any feelings that you have not expressed?

• What patterns might be re-occurring in this situation?

4. **Exploring II**: Challenging the supervisee to create new possibilities for future action in resolving the situation

• What outcome do you and others want?

• What behaviors need to be different in you to achieve the outcome?

• Who might be of help to you that you have not yet consulted?

• Can you think of two or more different ways of approaching this situation?

5. **Action:** Supporting the supervisee in committing to a way ahead and creating the next step

• What are the pros and cons of each possible approach/strategy?

• What is the long-term objective/goal?

• What is the first step you need to take?

• When are you going to do that?

* Is the plan realistic? What is the percent chance of succeeding?

• What is the first thing you are going to say or do in your next interaction with the situation/client?

6. **Review:** Taking stock and reinforcing ground covered and commitments made. Reviewing the process and how it could be improved. Planning the future review after the action has been tried.

• What have you decided to do next?

• What have you learned from this session?

• In what ways have you increased your own ability to handle similar situations?

• What did you find helpful about the supervision process?

• What could be better next time in the supervision process?

6b. **Review II:** Debriefing at the next session the actions taken between sessions

• How did what you planned work out?

• How do you think you did?

• What feedback did you receive?

• What did you do well and what could have been even better?

• What can you learn from what happened?

Hawkins& Shohet, 2012

**Mindfulness and Self-care for Supervisors**

When you awaken, express gratitude for the new day... for having a home... for health... for friendships... your work...

Eat nourishing food

Take time to be silent... listen to what's within you

When caught up in a challenging situation ask, "What is the most important thing right now?"

Practice new ways of seeing - "you can look at a scar and see hurt, or you can look at a scar and see healing" - Sheri Reynolds

Offer yourself to others in your vulnerability and your strength

Consider your supervisory function as "the sum total of hundreds of thousands of small words and tiny actions" - Charles S. Lauer

Show appreciation for the work of all the staff in your organization

Create a personal mission statement related to your supervisory work that aligns with your agency mission statement

Identify the ways in which your work both feeds and depletes you personally

Create a rhythm of action and contemplation in your workday

Before dialing or picking up that ringing phone ... take a deep, renewing breath

Display things that inspire you in your workspace - art, flowers, fresh fruit, sayings, photographs

Do one thing at a time

Be forgiving

Remember that it's the little things that count

When you go to bed at night, express gratitude for the day you were given... for having a home... for your health... friendships... for your work ...