

Engaging in the Supervision Cycle

1. Focusing on Experience

The emphasis is on facilitating an accurate and detailed recall of events. A partial description of the situation will undermine the rest of the cycle. Worker can be assisted to recall more than they think they can recall if the right questions are asked. In these lists, the “you” is the supervisee.

- What happened before the interview?
- What was your role?
- What was your aim? What planning did you do?
- What did you expect to happen?
- What happened? Identify perceptions of youth, co-workers, etc.
- What did you say and do? What methods or interventions did you try?
- What did the young person say, do or show?
- What reactions did you notice to what you said/did?
- What surprised or puzzled you?
- What stuck out for you? What were the key moments?
- What did you notice about yourself, the client?
- What observations or concerns do other agencies have?
- What went according to plan? What didn't happen?
- What changes or choice did you make?
- What did you say, notice or do immediately after the meeting?

These questions can be enhanced by using other methods: video or audio recording, detailed observation and process recordings.

2. Focusing on Reflection

Here the emphasis is on eliciting feelings, partly because they may bring out further information, or may reveal the worker's underlying attitudes. They may also give clues to other personal factors complicating the worker's experience. Reflection helps the worker make links between the current situation and his/her prior experiences, skills or knowledge.

- What did you feel at the start of the meeting? What feelings did you bring to the meeting?
- Describe the range of feelings you had during the session.
- What did the meeting/your feelings remind you of?
- What previous work, processes, skills, knowledge are relevant?
- What patterns did you see in the meeting?
- Describe a time when you last experienced that – what happened?
- What did you think the client was feelings – based on what?

- What feelings might you carry on behalf of the client – e.g., what transference of projection might be occurring?
- What other factors might influence how you, the client felt or reacted, e.g., gender, race?
- Where and when did you feel most or least comfortable?
- What thoughts went through your mind during the session?
- What ideas can to you during the session?
- What are the continuities or discontinuities between this meeting and previous work with the case?
- What metaphor or analogy would describe your experience of working with case?
- What was left unfinished?

Other methods to assist reflection: role playing, genograms, eco maps, person centered plans.

3. Focusing on Analysis

Here the emphasis is on analysis, probing the meanings that the supervisee and the client attributes to the situation, consideration of the other explanations, the identification of what is not known or understood, and areas for further assessment.

- List three assumptions you brought with you to the meeting.
- How would you explain or understand what happened in that meeting?
Note: It is important to identify and probe different perceptions.
- How did this meeting fit or not fit into the overall aims of the work?
- What aims/outcomes for the meeting were or were not achieved?
- What went well, or not well, and why?
- What other, possibly unexpected outcomes, did the meeting produce?
- How else could you explain what happened?
- How would the client explain what was happening in the meeting?
- What was the nature of the power relations during the meeting?
- Did power relations shift during the session – if so, why? What might this tell you about assumptions around gender, race, sexuality, etc?
- What new information emerged? What was the critical moment?
- What bits of theory, training, research, policy, values might help you make sense of what was happening in the meeting?
- How else might you have managed the meeting?
- What are the current strengths, needs, risks for the client?
- What is not known?
- What conclusions are you drawing from this work so far?
- How do you define your role in this situation?
- How does the client define your role in this situation?

Other methods to assist analysis: sharing articles, references, case presentations, attending training as a team.

4 . Focusing on Action Plans

The focus here is on translating the analysis into planning, preparation and action. This includes identification of outcomes and success criteria as well as consideration of potential complications and contingency plans.

- In the light of the reflection and analysis we've done, what's your overall summary of where things are at, and what needs to be done next?
- Can you identify what you are and are not responsible for in managing this situation?
- What information still needs to be obtained?
- What are your goals in this next phase of work with this young person?
- What is urgent and essential?
- What would be desirable?
- What is negotiable and what is non-negotiable in this situation?
- What would be a successful outcome at the next meeting from the client's perspective?
- What are the different ways in which you could approach this?
- What might your strategy be for the next meeting?
- What are the possible best or worst responses from the client?
- How can the young person be engaged – what does s/he need from you?
- What contingency plans do you need – what is the bottom line?
- Who else needs to be involved?
- What would you like from them?
- How well equipped do you feel to undertake this? What would you need to support you?
- Where do you feel more or less confident?
- How can prepare for this?
- What can I do as your supervisor that would be helpful at this stage?
- Are there any safety issues for you or others?
- What and when does feedback and debriefing need to take place?

Other methods include: role play, case planning, contacting other professionals involved.