

Utilising Reviews to Monitor and Enhance Supervisory Relationships.

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Why Review?

“Do the work, then step back

The only path to serenity” Tao Te Ching Verse 9 circa (500BC)

“Do the supervision work together, and then make time to step back and discuss it and reflect upon it. A sure way to maintain a healthy and effective supervisory working alliance.”

Holding regular reviews fulfils our ethical duty as practitioners to “..monitor how those they work with experience their work together, and also the effectiveness of this work.” (BACP Ethical Framework).

Relational dialogue within supervision could be seen as providing ongoing regular “micro-reviews” of supervisory interventions, sessions and of the supervisory relationship. However, it would still seem wise for the supervisor and supervisee to step back in a more planned way from time to time to review the experience, effectiveness and practical arrangements of the supervision.

Whilst it is the **responsibility** of the supervisor to initiate reviews, supervisees can request them. As supervisees we can and should influence the way our supervision is practiced.

What to Review?

The **explicit contract** (practical arrangements, confidentiality etc), and the **implicit** (or unspoken) contract – i.e. *how* we work together; the supervisory relationship (Eye 5 of the 7 Eyed Model - Hawkins and Shohet); our **experience** of working together – what we appreciate, and what we may wish to change; the **effectiveness** of our work together in relation to fulfilling the **3 functions of supervision** – Restorative, Formative, Normative; the **balance** between these three functions; does the current supervisory approach and style match the **developmental stage** of the supervisee?; do we **focus** over time on all of the 7 Eyes of the **7 Eyed model** (Hawkins and Shohet) or do we habitually neglect some of the eyes? (for example do we look at **process** as well as **content**?); consider any **small changes** to the way we work that may **enhance** the supervision process over the next 6 months.

How to Review?

Each supervisor needs to find their own way to conduct reviews that fits with their particular style – the important thing is to **make space** for collaborative review discussions at agreed regular intervals and to **be consistent** in this practice.

My own approach is to **build reviews into the written contract** for supervision; review every 6 months; give a month’s notice; provide prompt sheets for supervisee and myself to reflect upon our work over the past 6 months in preparation for the review; spend anything from 20-60 minutes on the review. I take some notes during the review and refer to them from time to time so that I can recall and implement any agreed changes to the supervision work over the following 6 months.