

## Book Review

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### **Practical supervision: How to become a supervisor for the helping professions**

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Foreword by B. Proctor and F. Inskipp, (Jessica Kingsley Publishers London and Philadelphia 2014). ISBN: 9781849054423 and eISBN: 9780857009180.

*Practical supervision: How to become a supervisor for the helping profession* is as it says on the tin. The authors are experienced supervisors and trainers who have set out to provide a compact, comprehensive and resourceful introductory book about many aspects of supervision. The book only stops short of being a manual as it is a somewhat brief and slim volume but this makes for ease of reading and using. Its target audience are those beginning as supervisors in such helping professions as; social and health care, early years' services, psychology, coaching and all types of therapies. The focus of the book is not to compete with other excellent books on supervision that are well-known but instead makes useful reference to them. The style is practical and interactive, introducing short exercises from the authors' training programmes which stresses that supervision should be practiced, provide active learning and develop reflective skills.

Humanistic and Adlerian ideas and values are considered with a 'strengths-based approach' (Edwards 2012) which advocates that the supervisor recognises and appreciates the ability and potential of their supervisees, using the ethical framework within which their supervisees work. Various models are described, such as using the psychological or 'implicit contract' which provides an enabling space for both supervisor and supervisee. Another useful framework is one of paying attention to our human needs. Lew and Bettner's model (1995) of the Crucial Cs highlights that if we do not pay attention to these needs we be influenced by those that are not useful. The Seven Eyed Supervision model (Hawkins, P. and Shohet, R. 2006. Supervision) which aids focusing and reminds us that there will be different perspectives, is also described in detail.

The opening chapter looks at encouraging novice supervisors to start with themselves and explore memories of good and poor supervision so they know what supervision should be about and what it should not. Further chapters examine; definitions of supervision, the effect of transference, what skills are needed, explores attitudes and values, explains some of the difficulties supervising other disciplines in a team, takes us through how to set up and start to practice supervision. One chapter in particular points out that supervisors may be simply doing supervision because it is part of their job description or they have a gate keeping role or maybe because they have trainees. Interestingly it highlights the difficulties for those who may be expected to supervise colleagues from other disciplines in their team, even if younger or less experienced in a

particular field or in some cases offering supervision to others when you have never trained in their field of work.

The strength of the book is that it is pitted with tips and gems regarding the setting up, conducting and reviewing of supervision. Metaphor, analogy, rhyming names and acronyms are used which make this an accessible practical guide. Perhaps the book tries to do too much as it skips over and covers a whole host of topics from setting up supervision, knowing your learning style, developing your relationship style, supporting professional development, giving and receiving feedback, using creative methods, creating cost saving group supervision as well as exploring using technological mediums e.g. using emails and Skype. I enjoyed reading this book, as an experienced supervisor, because it helped me reflect on what has been successful and useful in my own practice and also what to continue to avoid. For me it brought out the enjoyment, encouragement and the power of the developmental and mutual learning that is supervision when it is at its best. I would recommend this book to any new supervisors as well as experienced practitioners who could dip into it or refer to it to help them to develop ethical, reflective, consultative and good clinical practice.

**Sylvia October**

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