



## Supervision

### Flying with the Eagles Eye an Introduction to Supervision

Many years ago, as I sat in a queue on the M62, the highest motorway in the UK I was watching a buzzard circle and imagining its view of the world, in order to hunt it must have super-vision.

I was driving to a supervision group and got to thinking about my role as a supervisor. The need for super-vision and a meta-perspective. I chuckled to myself, and hoped my glasses were clear enough for me to see at least some of the processes in the supervision that was to follow. However, the idea seemed a great metaphor for the role of a supervisor it has remained with me 30+ years later. Although I now have my own photographs of the beautiful eagles.



### WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

Supervision is to provide the supervisee with a safe, protective relationship in which to be creative, developing skills and theoretical understanding.

Providing positive strokes / recognition and stimulation for the supervisee. Promoting ethical, safe, and effective practice. The supervisor's role is to facilitate autonomy, growth and protection for the supervisee and the client. There is also a wider ethical responsibility to the wider community, the profession, and the public.

**Supervision / coaching or consultancy:** See my notes on teaching for a discussion regarding the various terms used to describe supervision – which in various settings is called counselling, coaching, consulting, mentoring, training – the term used is normally recognised within the organisational system and context. In the world of TA supervision is the normal term used for professional development as Transactional Analysts.

**ERSKINE** (Oct. 1992. TAJ Vol. 12 no): supervision aims to develop competent, ethical, psychotherapists who have the capacity for self supervision and a commitment to find the most effective means of promoting the psychological and physical health of their clients. (This can be easily adapted for all the fields and applications of TA).

**HESS** (1990): A quintessential interpersonal interaction with the general goal that one person, the supervisor, meets with another, the supervisee, in order to make the latter more effective in helping people.

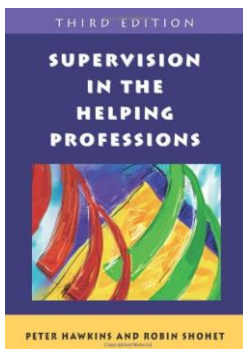
**British Association of Counselling** (1987): The primary purpose of supervision is to protect the best interests of the client. (This is similar in TA to Berne's insistence on the implementation of the ancient first rule of therapy / medicine that no harm should be done).

**Iain Burnside, Nigel Dawson, and Dr Pam Wells:** Reflection on professional practice in a supportive relationship leading to developing techniques, clarifying of psychotherapeutic relationship issues and improved clinical effectiveness.

**Rachel Curtis, Alison Collis;** A professional relationship in which the goal is for the psychotherapist to receive mentoring, modelling, and insight to be effective as a psychotherapist, encouraging self reflection and best practice.

**Philosophy and principles of supervision:** TA's core philosophy provides the foundation for supervision practice:

- I am OK – You are OK – the supervisor seeks to develop an OK – OK relationship which is mutual in which autonomy, spontaneity, creativity, and intimacy are promoted and stroked.
- TA's frame of reference is that everyone, clients, supervisees, and supervisors are responsible for their thinking, feelings, and behaviours and can therefore change, develop and be autonomous.
- Berne's first rule of practice is "do no harm". This is central to the practice of supervision, promoting ethical and safe practices.
- Open Communication is central to TA supervision in which the supervisor and supervisee make a contract for their roles and responsibilities as well as the outcome which is the goal of supervision.



### Supervision in the Helping Professions – 1989

By Hawkins and Shohet.

This is an excellent handbook for supervision, with excellent descriptions of various models of supervision. Most well-known for the process model of supervision. The following concepts are also discussed:

#### The 3 functions of supervision – (Proctor):

- 1) Formative – educational, skills development, understanding and applying theoretical, and ethical professional concepts.
- 2) Normative – monitoring and evaluation of work, normalising best practice.
- 3) Restorative – a safe space and relationship is created in which the supervisee is able to receive support, recognition and stimulation focussed on their professional practice.

#### Types of Supervision:

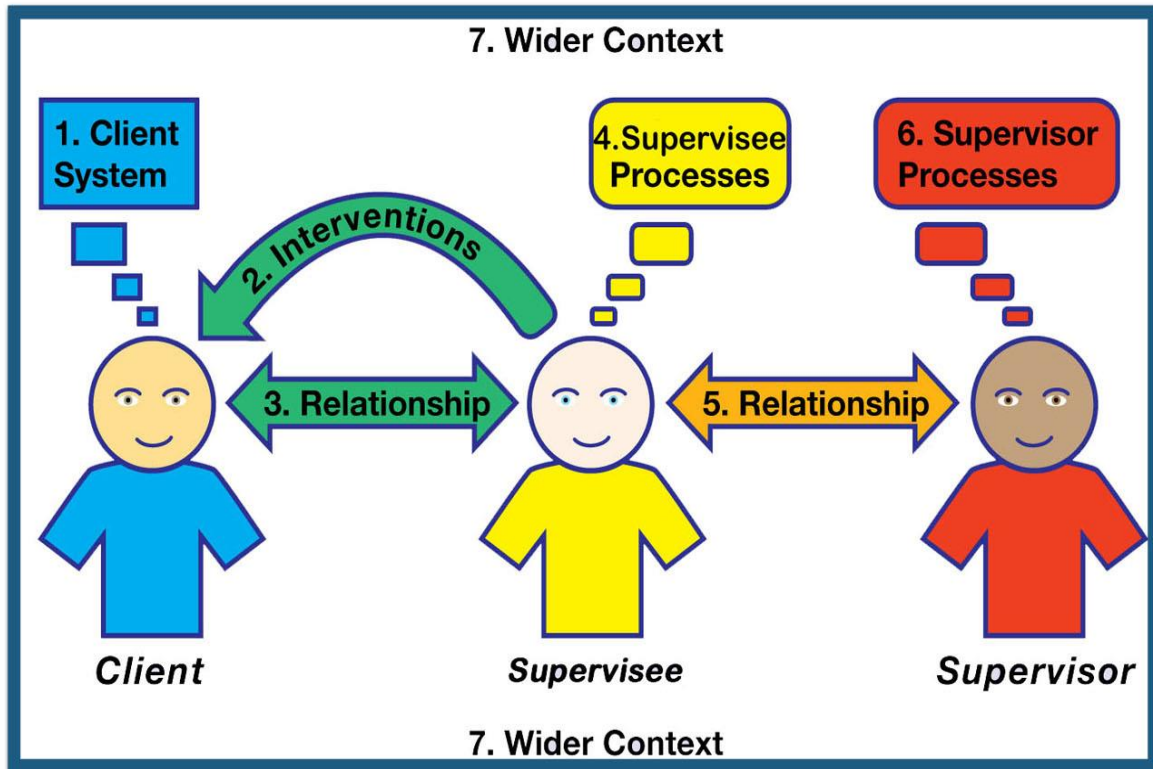
- 1) Training Supervision – The supervisor is responsible for the professional development of the supervisee.
- 2) Managerial supervision: in which the supervisor has a managerial responsibility for the supervisees practice and performance.

- 3) Consultancy supervision: Usually the supervisor is external to the organisation and system in which the supervisor is working.

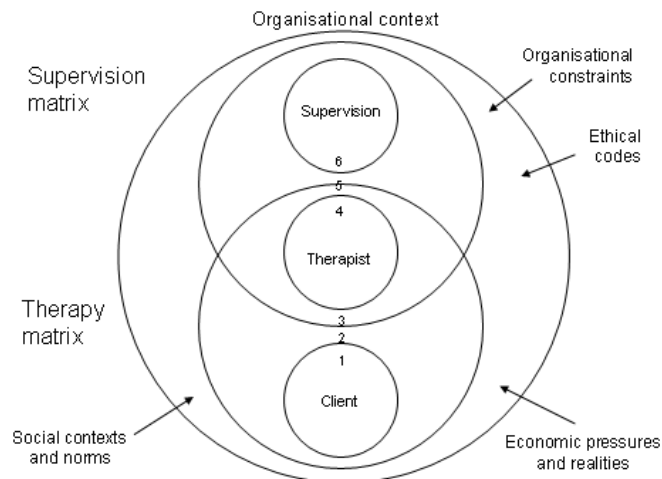
**The process model of supervision-** this has become the most important model of supervision – and it is quoted in all TEW'S and TSTA examinations. The model describes 7 areas of process which need attention in supervision. In the picture below no 7 is described as the wider context – sometimes this is framed as the organisational context. There is then an 8<sup>th</sup> area which is the external social system.

- 1) **The client's system** – this is the client presented in the supervision.
  - a. The supervisor will ask questions regarding the external system in which the client is living, their family, relationships, and work settings. This might include TA models such as game analysis.
  - b. The supervisor will ask about the client's internal system. Including the diagnosis, their script system and narrative, ego state structure.
  - c. The supervisor will ask about the client's desires and reasons for being in therapy / coaching etc.
- 2) **Interventions** – The supervisor will explore the interventions which are used by the supervisee – asking which interventions will be most effective with the client.
- 3) **The relationship between the supervisee and the client.** – This will include reflections on the therapeutic (coaching / counselling) relationship including transference and counter transferential processes.
- 4) **The supervisees own process** – How is the supervisee experiencing the work with their client. Is the work raising personal issues which need to be addressed?
- 5) **The relationship between the supervisee and supervisor** - The supervision contract is addressed. The supervisor pays attention to their relationship with the supervisee asking if there are process issues in their relationship which need attention prior to reflecting on the work the supervisee is presenting.
- 6) **The supervisors process** – The supervisor reflects on their transference and counter-transferences, asking if their experiences are in response to their own issues, their response to the supervisee, or their response to the client (professional issue) the supervisee is presenting.
- 7) **The organisation / wider context** - The supervisor and supervisee reflect on the wider system in which they are working, and in which the supervisor – client work is taking place. The supervisor will be asking if there are systemic issues which need addressing. If there are systemic issues, then the supervisor and supervisee will reflect on how to address, if possible, the issues in the wider context. If there is nothing which can be done to impact upon the system, then how does the supervisee account for this in their work with the client. Examples are situations in which the client is carer, a single parent with a young child, is living in poverty, lives on a state pension and is not fit enough to work.

The process model of supervision (Hawkins and Shohet) – (picture by Dave Spenceley).



The following picture is from the book: You may understand why I created the above picture!

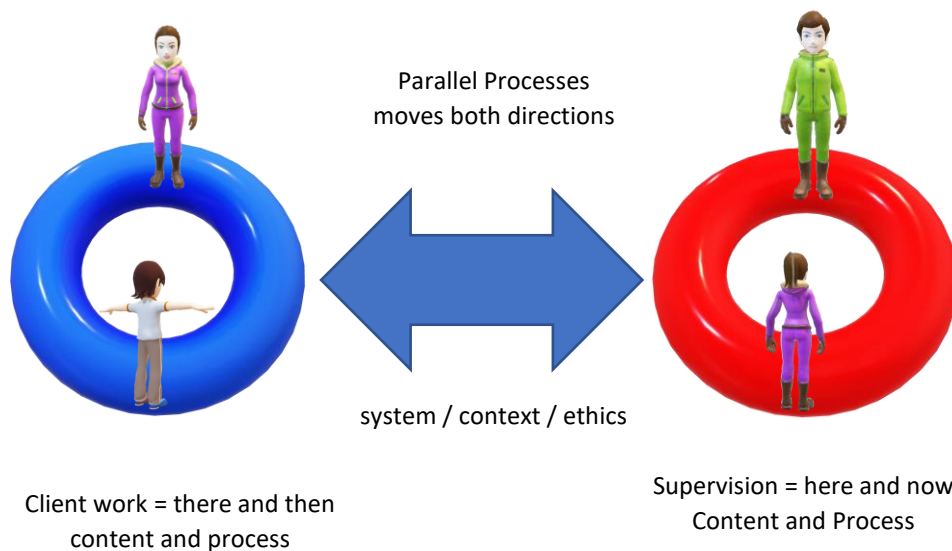


**Parallel Process:** in the book there is a discussion regarding parallel process, describing how Doehermann (1976) researched the phenomena of parallel process. Starting out questioning is there is such a phenomenon and ending up being convinced that in supervision there are always parallel

processes. I put this in the plural deliberately as in my experience there are a number of parallel processes in supervision sessions. My understanding is that this is an example of a transference phenomenon. The unconscious issues which are carried by the client are responded to by the supervisee and brought into the supervision session.

Within the picture below for example, issues which are occurring consciously or unconsciously in the 3<sup>rd</sup> area – the relationship between the client and supervisee will be echoed in the 5<sup>th</sup> area the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to address these issues and as the issue is resolved in supervision the supervisee will be able to take the resolution into their work with the client. It should be remembered that the process may start with any of the participants in the system, however the supervisor is responsible for addressing the issue and facilitating a resolution.

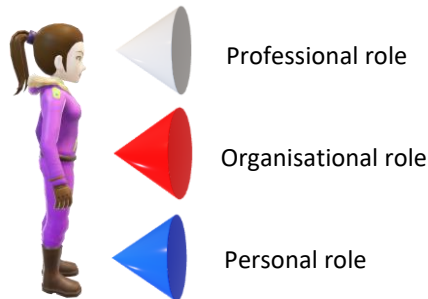


**3 Roles:** Bernd Schmidt was awarded the Eric Berne memorial award in 2007 for his work on “the role concept”. TAJ 2008.

When supervising it is important to identify which role the supervisee is needing to pay attention to. In order to resolve any difficulties then all 3 roles must be satisfied regarding the solution.

- 1) The first is the supervisee’s personal view... How is the supervisee perceiving himself in his life? His frame of references, his desires and goals are all relevant. The supervisee’s responsibility to himself.
- 2) The second is the supervisee’s professional role. What are the professional responsibilities? Professional goals and values, including ethical values.
- 3) The third is the organisational role of the supervisee. I often describe this as the client’s responsibility to themselves as the chief executive of their own business life.  
The role might represent the supervisee’s organisational responsibility to their employers, in which case there may be a conflict between their responsibility to their employer and their responsibility to themselves.

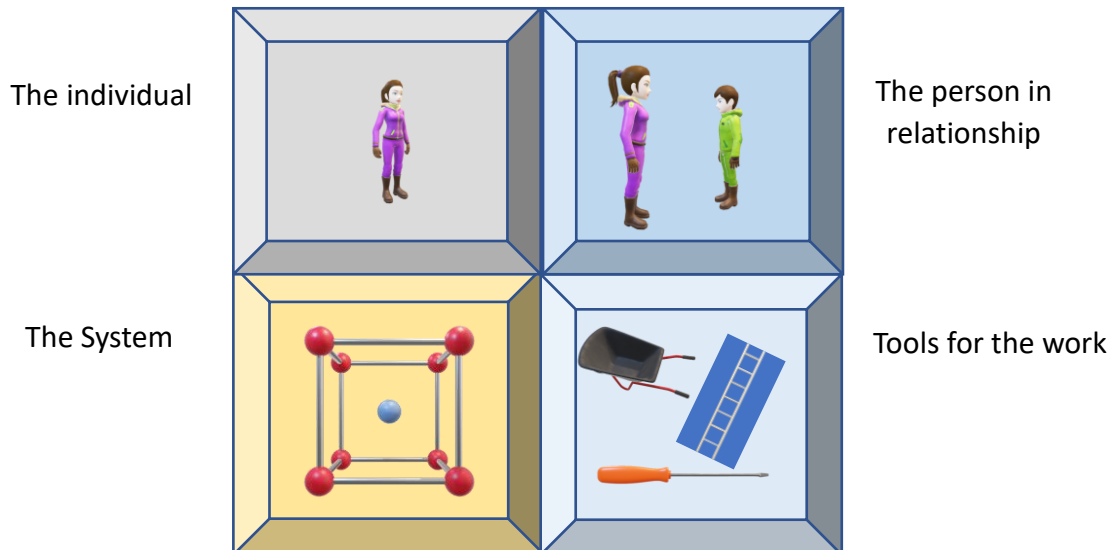
**The 3 roles to be addressed in supervision – Bernd Schmidt.**



**Areas of Supervision / coaching** – Uta Höhl TSTA describes in her model how there are 4 areas of focus in supervision. Each are of focus must be reflected on when contracting for the supervision and identifying what the supervision problem / question is.

- 1) Is the focus of supervision a personal issue?
- 2) Is the focus and issue of the supervisee’s relationships?
- 3) Is the focus an issue of the supervisee needing to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of theory?
- 4) Is the focus related to a systemic issue?

Uta Höhl TSTA: focus of supervision / coaching



**Developmental models of supervision:**

**Supervision of Psychotherapy – Models of professional development** – TAJ - 1982 – Richard Erskine – This is an excellent article describing the supervisory needs of trainees at their different stages of development.

- 1) Beginning stages:
  - a. The trainee needs a clear and effective theoretical framework.
  - b. The trainee needs to develop various intervention techniques.
  - c. Their personal needs must be addressed – the need for feeling comfortable in their new role, to be assured that they belong in their new role.
- 2) Intermediate stage:
  - a. To develop their own identity in their role as a psychotherapist / coach etc.
  - b. To develop effective treatment plans for specific clients.
  - c. To implement their treatment plans effectively.
  - d. Their personal needs, which have arisen as a result of their work must be addressed in personal work.
  - e. Enabling the trainee to begin to deal effectively with transference / counter transference issues.
- 3) Advanced stage:
  - a. To become choiceful and flexible regarding the models they might use with clients, developing a range of approaches that the trainee is comfortable understanding and applying.
  - b. Integrating the theoretical frames and developing their own understanding of theory and application.
  - c. Personally, they continue to deal with issues as they arise in therapy.

**Six stages of development:**

Blooms Taxonomy of Education quoted by Bruce Loria 1983 TAJ = In this model the first three areas are seen as beginning stages, with the second three stages as being advanced. Supervisors adjust their supervision to reflect the developmental stage of the supervisee.

- **Basic:**
  - Knowledge of theory.
  - Understanding of theory.
  - Application of theoretical concepts.
- **Advanced:**
  - Analysis / critique of the component parts of the theory and application relevant for each client.
  - Synthesis: the bringing together in a unique way the therapist's own application and understanding of theoretical concepts.
  - Evaluation, self-evaluation in the wider context.

**Apprenticeship model of development and the supervisory needs:** The medieval developmental model is often referred to:

Stage 1 The Supervisee is an Apprentice

- During this first stage the emphasis is upon skills development and understanding theory and its application.
- The use of TA models, understanding their application to practice.
- Building up the confidence and self-belief of the therapist.

Stage 2 The supervisee is a journeyman craftsman.

- How can I help this particular client?
- The supervisee is starting to make his / her work a reflection of themselves.
- Reflection on transference and counter- transference is often central to supervision in this phase of development.

Stage 3 The supervisee is an independent Craftsman.

- At this stage the trainee is preparing for qualification and needs to prepare for the examinations.
- A qualified practitioner is addressing the complexity of the therapeutic work in it' s wider context.
- The supervisee is developing their own inner observer – evaluating their own process and reviewing and supervising themselves in their work with clients.

Stage 4 The supervisee is a master craftsman.

- The supervisee is an experienced practitioner with the ability to self-evaluate in the wider context.
- Supervisee may train to supervise and become a trainer themselves.

**Bands of Supervision and EATA examinations:** Petruska Clerkson: developed the bands of supervision.

- Assessment and Treatment Planning
- Strategies and interventions
- Theory
- Ethics
- Parallel Process
- Developmental
- Key Issues
- Contracting
- Models of supervision

Marco Mazetti developed these bands of supervision and described them as 7 operational models in his 2007 TAJ article – he provides various examples of the kind of questions and processes addressed with each of the 7 operations.

EATA have developed and expanded these operational models of supervision and created a standard score for the evaluation of supervisors in the STA examination.



**The score sheet for EATA STA examination:**

Following a discussion regarding the candidate's philosophy and approach to supervision the candidate demonstrates their supervision in 2 twenty-minute sessions. After each supervision there is discussion – usually regarding aspects that the examiners will be scoring – using the exam score sheet: scoring 1 – 5 (5 is excellent – 3 a pass – 1 or 2 is a low score.) in the following 7 areas:

- 1) Supervision philosophy and teaching supervision criteria: Is there a clear understanding of the philosophy of supervision and the principles that follow. Are these then reflected in the settings in which the supervisor is working?
- 2) Contract clearly established: Is there a clear bilateral contract formed and completed?
- 3) Key issues identified: What is the key issue in the supervision, this is usually expressed in a simple and quickly understood form. (for example: “who is in charge here”?) The key issue will be present at each level of the work. The client / therapist / supervisor / supervisor process.
- 4) Emotional contact achieved, relational issues addressed, awareness and use of Parallel process: The supervisor and supervisee are in a contact-full relationship in which the supervisee can express their emotions. The supervisor recognises parallel processes and addresses it.
- 5) Protection issues, regarding both the supervisee and their client: The aim is to reduce harm at every level of the process: If anyone is going to be harmed by this process who is it?
- 6) Increasing the developmental direction – The supervisor addresses the developmental needs of the supervisee.
- 7) Equal relationship: A mutual OK-OK relationship is established.
- 8) Understanding of ethical issues: Any ethical issues are addressed in the supervision, usually in reference to the EATA ethics code – the ethics grid is a valuable resource when thinking about ethical issues in this context.

**Methods of supervision –**

A recording of the supervisees work is played followed by exploratory questions and discussions. Inviting the supervisee to reflect on their work, addressing the bands of

supervision, in the quadrant and roles as appropriate. The goal is to complete the supervisory contract for the session while addressing the supervisees developmental process as well as any ethical issues which emerge. The use of audio and video recordings very significantly enhances the value of supervision. This is the most frequently used method of supervision.

**Variations:** There can be various creative and fun alternative methods which can be used to explore the supervision issues.

**Group questions and speculations:**

- 1) Each of the supervision group asks a question which seems important to them – however the supervisee does not answer the question directly.
- 2) After hearing all the questions, the supervisee speculates as to the reason why their colleague asked their question.
- 3) The supervisee then reflects on their learning.

**Two chair work:** I often use projective work in supervision – after each of these techniques the supervisee needs to spend time reflecting and exploring what they have learned and experienced.

- 1) Imagining the client on the empty chair and asking them what they want – the supervisee then role plays the client, and they have a conversation about the therapeutic work and needs of the client.
- 2) Using soft toys / plastic animals / small dolls / models / artwork – all can be used successfully and effectively in supervision – for example choosing an animal to represent the client – and other members of their system including the therapist.
- 3) An alternative – the supervisee, plays the recording and describes the issue / problems they are facing – then one of their colleagues roleplays the client.
- 4) Another alternative is that the supervisee role plays their client and either a colleague or the supervisor acts as therapist.

**Using the white board:** There are two occasions in which I use the white board.

- 1) When the supervisees story is too complex to easily visualise or understand – it is a good idea for the supervisee to draw the system on the board in some way. (This is an alternative to using models to create a sculpture of the system)
- 2) When I want to explain theory concepts in relation to the presented work.

**Additional TAJ articles:**

- 1983 – Zalcman and Cornell: A bilateral model for clinical supervision.
- 2007 – Evita Cassoni: Parallel process in supervision and therapy: An opportunity for reciprocity.
- 2007 – Marco Mazzetti: Supervision in Transactional Analysis. An operational Model. An excellent article with practical examples of what the supervisor can do in each of the operational models – which are an evaluation of the bands of supervision.