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Introduction

This assignment will focus on the importance of supervision and the functions that can be applied during sessions. Practice log 1 analyses the way the supervisory relationship develops, looking at the supervisory contract, the importance of making sure the supervision environment is appropriate for both the supervisor and supervisee, as well as evaluating how the relationship was initially established and then developed as the sessions progressed. Practice log 2 examines the way that the three functions of supervision were included, and how the supervisee's knowledge of the functions was applied during the supervision sessions. The third practice log reflects on the supervisor's whole experience and provides an analysis of their experience of the role of leading and managing the supervisee. Finally, the last section compares and contrasts leadership and management theories and evaluates how they are applied, and how effective they are in terms of youth work practice. It also looks at the financial crisis currently in youth work and the challenges that comes with this.

Part 1: Practice log 1

The supervisory relationship was initially established by the supervisor reaching out to the supervisee to ask if they were available to be supervised. Once this had been agreed, the supervisor arranged to meet with the supervisee once a week, every week. The supervisor and supervisee both felt that the sessions would work better in quiet spaces to avoid distractions and interruptions, which was helpful in accommodating both their learning differences. Arranging sessions in advance, helped with planning and organisational skills, and helped in making both the supervisor and supervisee comfortable with knowing what was arranged for the coming weeks. This is seen as a planned approach and according to Kilminster *et al.* (2007) it is important to establish regular contact so that if something comes up the supervision session can be changed to a different day.

Furthermore, this would also give them both the opportunity to plan the context of what they would be bringing to each session. "According to Sapin (2009, cited in Jenkinson, 2010, p. 161) 'Supervision can be a developmental process for both supervisees and supervisors as they learn from each other's practice and identify ways forward'". Further, by providing the context of what the supervisee may want to talk about in the session, and knowing what is likely to arise in the session, can help with researching beforehand so that the supervisor can recommend training courses that may help develop the supervisee's knowledge and understanding of this topic. Reflection is also important in the moment, and can help the supervisee think about and consider and appropriate future actions. Eraut (1994, p. 148) argues that "...reflection lies at the heart of taking responsibility for our continuing development and ongoing evaluation of practice."

One of the most common challenges linked to supervision, according to Jenkinson (2010, p. 163) is the "...varying levels of understanding and commitment to the process", however, this was not an issue in this case as the supervisor felt that both parties were very committed to making the process work and had a good understanding of what was required. The supervisor felt that the supervision was beneficial for understanding and providing opportunities for both the supervisor and supervisee to learn about and grow their practice (Smith, 2005). Therefore, the supervisor felt that it was important not to bring too much to the supervision sessions, for example, in this case the first session covered eight points, which on reflection was too much for one session. It was decided that future sessions would focus on fewer key points so that there was an opportunity to look at fewer things more in-depth. Smith (2005, p. 150) suggests this would "help maintain good standards of work" as well as correct "application of policies".

All the above was underpinned by the development of a supervisory contract, which was established at the very beginning during the first meeting between the supervisor and supervisee and drawn up jointly by both parties. This links to Corey *et al.* (2021, p. 8), who say that "...the supervisor and supervisee work together to establish a specific plan of action in a collaborative manner". This included discussing the practical arrangements, issues concerning confidentiality and what this means in practical terms, as well as how the supervisor and supervisee would formulate the agenda and keep a record of the sessions. This is supported by Herman (2012, p. 119) in their Youth Policy where they "...define supervision as both a working practice and relationship where advice is not given but the worker is enabled to explore their situation and reach their own decisions." The supervisor felt that this was also important in terms of establishing ground rules and expectations (Corey *et al.*, 2021),

such as no phones during meetings, and contacting each other as early as possible so that both parties were aware of when the meetings were being set up and the times, and what would be discussed at each meeting.

Tash (1967, cited in Herman, 2012, p. 119)...identifies several phases of the supervisory relationship ranging from getting to know each other, to a short phase of dependency, to a time where the worker is able to reflect and problem solve independently without supervision.

(Tash, 1967, cited in Herman, 2012, p. 119)

The supervisor felt that the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee had developed really well across the four sessions, and this included writing up the contract, to bringing what the supervisee wants to talk about in the session, and developing their reflection skills. The supervisor also felt that asking the supervisee questions and recommending training courses helped them to develop their knowledge and understanding of topics which they may not have previously known much about. It was felt that one of the challenges of being a supervisor was that it was harder to supervise someone who is a friend, because the relationship needed to stay professional with boundaries in place. Also, the supervisor felt that it could have been awkward if there was a need to remind the supervisee about boundaries, for instance, not looking at mobile phones during the sessions (although this did not arise in our supervision sessions).

Part 2: Practice log 2

Hess (1980, cited in Jenkinson, 2010, p.158) defines supervision as when “...one person, the supervisor, meets with another, the supervisee, in an effort to make the latter more effective in helping people”. They suggest that this should include things such as establishing a contract, setting clear boundaries, as well as ensuring and respecting confidentiality. The supervisor develops responsibility by making sure that the supervisee understands the importance of “ethical, legal, and organizational requirements” (Jenkinson, 2010, p.160). By forming this relationship between the supervisor and supervisee, they are made aware of what is expected of them within the setting and how to further develop within their role (Jenkinson, 2010, p.160). The supervisor was aware that in supervision there are three different functions that support both the supervisor and the supervisee to achieve appropriate outcomes. These are, educational, administrative, and supportive (Weiss-Dagan, Ben-Porat and Itzhaky, 2018).

Firstly, ‘educational’ is defined by Barker (1995) and Munson (2002) (both cited in Weiss-Dagan, Ben-Porat and Itzhaky, 2018, p. 343) as an opportunity “...to impart clinical knowledge, therapeutic skills, and approaches to implementation of knowledge and skills”. For example, the supervisor felt that when supervising it was important to establish boundaries, such as agreeing not to have phones out, so that both the supervisor and supervisee can get what they need out of the session (Blacker, 2010). The function of ‘knowledge’ may be making sure the supervisee is given appropriate training courses to help develop their knowledge and understanding on how to deal with certain situations that may arise, for example, Cyber Safety, Safeguarding, 1st Aid, and Food Hygiene, something the supervisor felt was important to discuss during the supervision sessions.

Moreover, the supervisor felt that the application of additional skills could encompass things such as listening and communication, body language, practical skills, IT skills, resolving conflict, safeguarding skills, advising young people, and empathy and compassion. Also, the supervisor felt that it was important for the supervisee to acknowledge that young people need to have their voice and be heard, and to have the chance to develop their research skills. The supervisor felt that this could be beneficial in helping them to gain a better understanding of their own individual challenges concerning any physical and/or learning differences (Hill, 1995, cited in Banks and Morgan, 2010; Sapin, 2013).

Secondly, with 'administrative', the supervisor felt that it was their responsibility to check that the supervisee was aware of the policies and procedures in place in the youth work setting so that they understand the boundaries of what is expected of them in the workplace as well as conduct outside the workplace. This includes "evaluation, distribution of tasks, and planning of interventions" (Kadushin and Harkness 2014, cited in Weiss-Dagan, Ben-Porat and Itzhaky, 2018, p. 343). The supervisor felt that it was important to check with the supervisee that they were aware of certain policies and procedures when they led sessions in the workplace, and that the supervisee disclosed how they linked their activities to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC) which is defined as "The convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of the young people's lives and these rights apply to everyone"(Unicef, 2016, p.1). The supervisor felt that this was important for the supervisee, as they needed to make sure that everyone was included and everyone's needs were being met, as well as ensuring the young people's voices were being heard and that they had a safe space to express themselves. The supervisor recommended that the supervisee asked for more information on different policies and procedures, such as Safeguarding.

Thirdly, 'supportive' is about the supervisor checking on the mental health and wellbeing of the supervisee at the beginning of each supervision session, and this is sometimes called the "...restorative' function of supervision" (Tetley, no date, cited in Reid and Westergaard, 2013, p. 8). The supervisor felt they needed to allow the supervisee to meet the challenges that sometimes they are faced with, giving them opportunities for reflection, through using models such as Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984 cited in Ord, 2012, p.56) and Gibbs' Models of Reflection (1988 cited in Foster et al., 2021, p. 106), while ensuring that their mental health and wellbeing is protected (Harrison and Westergaard, no date, cited in Reid and Westergaard, 2013, p. 8).

In practice, the supervisor felt that the supervisee prioritised the wellbeing of the young people by providing opportunities to participate in pamper sessions, listening to their favourite music, as well as drawing and creative activities, all this helped promote and support their mental health and wellbeing. The supervisor felt that it was important to remind the supervisee to not forget to look after their own mental health and wellbeing too, as they appeared to be very focussed on the young people. It was also suggested by the supervisor that if the supervisee's mental health and wellbeing deteriorated at any point, then they could access appropriate support from different organisations, such as Mind, the Samaritans, as well as workplace provision.

Currently, there is more research developing that shows how mental health and wellbeing can deteriorate in the workplace due to many reasons, including a lack of funding, not enough staff, and poor working conditions (Harvey *et al.*, 2017; Joyce *et al.*, 2016; LaMontagne *et al.*, 2010; LaMontagne *et al.*, 2007a; LaMontagne *et al.*, 2014, cited in Memish *et al.*, 2017). Youth workers are responsible for letting management know when they are struggling with stress, illness, and lack of staff (EAP; Page *et al.*, 2013). The supervisor felt that it was important that the supervisee should make her

aware if and when any problems arise so that the supervisor can appropriately advise the supervisee to help make them aware of different support organisations, so this can help them feel less stressed and properly supported (LaMontagne *et al.*, 2007b; LaMontagne *et al.*, 2014). The supervisor felt that by actively listening to the supervisee, this can help them feel correctly supported and helped with any issues arising in the workplace.

Part 3: Practice log 3

Good supervision focusses on the way teams manage tension, worry and strain, as well as disorder and conflict (Sapin, 2013). Knowing this made the supervisor feel nervous about the supervising process as this was something they had not ever done before and they felt the sense of responsibility within the role. However, according to Sapin (2013, p. 223) it is natural to feel this way and they say the best thing to do is consider that:

Preparation for supervision could also include participants taking their time to identify their hopes and fears with regards to supervision, as well as any strengths or limitations that may affect the supervisory relationship or agenda.

(Sapin, 2013, p. 223)

Through the supervisor having more supervision sessions, this made them feel more confident as they progressed. Furthermore, the supervisor felt that when reflecting it was important to focus on self-reassurance and self-belief and this is what really helped to build confidence in personal and professional ability. This is supported by Halpin (2003, cited in Pugh, no date, p. 146) who suggests that...

...to be effective we need to sustain ourselves intellectually, emotionally and physically and maintain our enthusiasm and our hope in spite of many things that combine to make youth work a hard job.

Halpin (2003, cited in Pugh, no date, p. 146)

The importance of reflection became even more evident as the supervision sessions went on, with the supervisor deciding to use Gibbs' Model of Reflection (1988 cited in Foster *et al.*, 2021) to look back on how the sessions went, and how they might do things differently in future sessions to build confidence and improve professional practice.

The supervisor felt that the supervisee was engaging well in the sessions and the whole experience was positive overall. The supervisor always came to the supervision sessions with a positive and empathetic attitude and according to the National Occupational Standards (NOS, 2019), this is important in building rapport and developing a trustworthy relationship with the supervisee. Additionally, the supervisor always ensured that the supervisee felt they were being listened to and heard, and that their opinions were valued. By having their opinions valued in this way supports anti-discrimination policies and practices (Purdy, nd, cited in Jonsdottir, Kristinsson, 2020). Jeffs and Smith state that "Supervision...should address issues of accountability by offering good standards of work and ensure policies are understood" (Jeffs and Smith, 2010, cited in Olsen and Burk, 2017, p. 86).

Furthermore, the supervisor felt that by actively listening to the supervisee it would help the supervisee open up more about the experiences and challenges that they maybe discovering in the workplace. Arman *et al.*, cited in Jonsdottir and Fridriksdottir, 2019, p. 2) states that "At its core, active listening is a higher form of listening to gain a deeper understanding of the message and context". The importance of active listening in supervision helps the supervisee and supervisor to help open up more about the challenges and difficulties in the workplace, and outside of the workplace, and how to overcome this through reflection (Rogers, 1969 and Egan, 1986, cited in Sapin, 2010).

The supervisor felt that it was important to regularly check in with the supervisee to see if they were struggling with mental health challenges, difficulties in the workplace, or outside the workplace (Proctor, nd, cited in Kilminster, Jolly, 2000). By managing and leading the supervision sessions, the supervisor could help the supervisee by making sure that they were receiving the right support, and to make sure the

supervisee's needs were being met (Hargreaves, 2002, Kadushin and Harness, 2002, and Thompson, 2007, all cited in Pugh, nd). This is important in supervision as the supervisor is making sure that they are supporting the supervisee, to make sure that their needs are being met and additionally that they are getting the support they need. Moreover, the supervisor felt that by making sure the supervisee had a safe space and environment, they would be more likely to open up during the sessions about difficult situations they could face in placement, or outside of placement (Sapin, 2013).

Both the supervisor and supervisee felt that if both parties were keeping appropriate records of the supervision they could reflect on and observe problems and monitor if the problems were being solved or continuing. Sapin (2010, p.226) states that:

A record can remind both parties of the issues discussed to provide continuity between sessions, monitor development, identify patterns in issues arising and, in student supervision, assist in the completion of assessment form.

Sapin (2010, p.226)

Part 4: Critical review*Introduction*

Leadership and management in youth work is an important factor. This is because without good leadership and management the young people may not engage with practitioners as they might feel like no one cares enough to provide them with the safe space they need, and where they feel they can trust staff as professionals (Sapin, 2013). According to (Wieland *et al.*, 2017) there are 4 main types of leadership theories, namely, trait, behavioural, contingency, and transformational. Therefore, this final section compares and contrasts leadership theories and evaluates how they are applied in youth work practice. It also explores the current challenging financial climate and how it is affecting the youth work sector.

Critical review of leadership and management

Trait theory is based on individual personality traits and leadership characteristics (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). The key purpose of this theory is that it focuses on leadership and management skills, which is based around management performance and results that demonstrate good leadership (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). In this theory, it is about having the ability to apply personality characteristics to the role to become a strong leader and manager in order to influence positive changes (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). The similarities between this theory and behavioural and contingency theories are that they are all focused on management-centred strong leadership to influence positive changes. The main difference is that this theory is more management focused, concentrating on the performance of the manager rather than being young person-centred.

The basic description for behavioural theory is similar to trait theory in that it focuses on personality traits and leadership characteristics (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the key purpose of behavioural theory is that it is more focused on youth work practice with young people at the centre of decision making, in line with Hart's Participation Ladder (Youth Power, nd). Likewise, this theory highlights how behavioural challenges that young people face, and the ways group dynamics are affected in a positive way through strong leadership, can create an environment where any challenging behaviours are recognised and worked through so that negative situations have positive outcomes. This theory stands out as different from others in that it is young person-centred and young people feel that their voices are heard and listened to.

Contingency theory is a framework for organisational design driven by policies and procedures (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). This theory aims to protect young people by clarifying the boundaries for the organisation, its staff and service users (young people, parents/carers) (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). Ensuring that the correct policies and procedures are applied in certain situations both inside and outside the setting, links to risk management and risk assessment being a priority. The key similarities are that it is young people and management centred, and that there is strong leadership to ensure that policies and procedures are being correctly followed. This theory is driven by policy and procedure to protect young people (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). The key difference with this theory is that it is firmly based around policies and procedures, so as to create a safe space and environment for young people (Sapin, 2013).

Finally, transformation theory is about creating and designing ideas and frameworks tailored to local needs (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). It focuses on changing youth work settings and provision by linking together recent research with local needs by getting ideas from young people in the community listening to what they want and need

(Wieland *et al.*, 2017). This theory aims to provide more opportunities for young people so that they engage better and are prepared for any future work placement or employment opportunities that arise (Wieland *et al.*, 2017). This is done by helping them to write CVs, cover letters, as well as discuss their interests and pursuits and helping them to get help from and link with external agencies. The difference with this theory is that it focuses on creating and designing frameworks tailored to the local needs, which sets it apart from the other theories mentioned.

These theories can be applied in practice to make sure that the needs of the young people are being met through applying the Five Pillars of Youth Work (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2018). These include, 'educative, expressive, participative, inclusive, and empowering' (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2018, p.6). By applying these in settings it is ensuring that young people can have a voice in what they would like to learn and engage with through different activities. For example, during placement, the young people expressed that they would like to create slime and putty. Through listening to what they would like to do, youth workers are ensuring that the young people are going to do activities which meet their needs and interests, resulting in better engagement. According to Youth Work in Wales Review Group (2018), allowing young people to participate in activities that interest them and allows them to feel listened to and heard, helps to keep them engaged.

Part 3: Financial challenges

In recent years youth work organisations have faced financial challenges for many reasons, including lack of funding and resources being allocated to the sector (Siebel, nd). More youth work organisations are now having to rely on donations and grants to be able to keep themselves up and running (Siebel, nd). The lack of financial support

impacts young people by them not getting enough educational trips, or activities and this can have a negative effect in that they are not getting the opportunities for learning and developing personally, socially and educationally (Siebel, nd). There are charities that aim to help young people in different ways, such as the King's Trust (formally known as the Prince's Trust) (2024, np), who provide opportunities for young people to 'gain the confidence and skills to get a job'.

However, there are courses available for youth workers to help better manage the little amount of funding they have, so that they can get the most out of what is available for them. Also, this can help them become more knowledgeable about the different types of funding that is available and teach them how to apply for it successfully (National Youth Agency, no date).

Conclusion

To conclude, in this assignment the focus has been to understand how the supervisory contract in management helps the supervisor and supervisee with planning and organisational skills, researching, recommending training courses, coming up with questions, and just getting both parties to develop their reflective practice. The supervisory logs were important to both the supervisor and supervisee to help them keep appropriate records and to ensure that confidentiality was being applied. Understanding the ways in which everything is underpinned by management and leadership theories was also important in making sure that youth workers meet the needs of every individual young person, although this is always challenging with the current financial situation.

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