REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION

Presented by: Peggy Herrera & Linda McNulty
REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION

- What is supportive or reflective Supervision and why it is so important?
- What to consider when you begin a supervisory relationship with your staff?
- How do I improve my supervisory skills?
“Reflective supervision is a relationship for learning.” (Fenichel 1992; Shahmoon Shanok 2007)

“The process of examining, with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with young children and their families.” (Eggbeer, Mann, and Seibel 2008).
DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF SUPERVISORS

Who me?

Infant

Toddler

↓

Pre-school

School Age

Pre-adolescent

Adolescent

or

Mature Adult

“Wise Old Soul”
Take turns introducing yourselves by:
- Telling what program you are with
- How many people you will or are supervising
- Why you picked this group (years of experience + level of confidence in supervising)
- After everyone has taken a turn return to your seats
3 SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS

1. **Educative:** Developing skills, understanding and abilities of your home visitor through reflection and exploration.

2. **Supportive:** Helping home visitors to develop positive attitudes and coping strategies.

3. **Managerial:** Providing organizational structure and resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Home Visitors</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to help child reach potential</td>
<td>Prepared to help parents help children reach potential</td>
<td>Prepared to help home-visitor help parents help children reach potential</td>
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</tbody>
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Context

Supervisor

Supervisee

Parents

Child(ren)
Reflective supervision is:

a tool for relationship-based services. Supervisors use reflective supervision to help staff think about, understand, and put in perspective the information shared by families, the emotions experienced from that sharing, and the feelings generated from their own life experiences. It is very different from the traditional supervisory relationship.
REFLECTION-BASED SUPERVISION

- Regular
- Collaborative
- Reflective
Model healthy ways to manage conflict. By creating a safe and professional space where staff can talk about conflict, you help each other to understand better the roots of problems and strategize about how to address them.
TIPS ON REFLECTIVE SUPPORT

- GO SLOW TO GO FAST
- RESPECT EACH OTHER
- CONFIDENTIALITY ABOUT CONTENT AND PROCESS
- PEOPLE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TELL OTHERS WHEN THEY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE
- PEOPLE SHOULD ARRIVE AND BE PREPARED FOR GROUP REFLECTIVE SUPPORT
WHEN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO BEGIN SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS—OR RENEWING AN EXISTING ONE—CONSIDER:

- Taking time to identify and understand staff’s personal investment in their work. Ask about the challenges and rewards of the work.
- Observing the staff member in action. This provides first hand information to discuss in a supervisory session.
- Encouraging the sharing of experiences and reactions to the work.
- Celebrating examples of professional development.
TOPICS TO CONSIDER

- What are your strengths as a staff member? What do you see as your weaknesses or areas for growth?
- What are you bringing to your particular role from your training, and from your life experiences? How do these things help you—or hinder you—in your work?
- What does this work mean to you personally? What are the things about it that you connect to meaningfully?
- What are the aspects that challenge you, or even scare or worry you?
TOPICS TO CONSIDER

- How do you deal with stress or challenges, like the ones we just talked about?
- What do you need in your role to do the best work you can do, and to grow in your role? What other resources should we look for?
- Sometimes observing the staff member at work provides additional data for a supervisory dialogue. When a supervisor sees a person role-playing or communicating with a family, then she has material to work with. She can describe what seems to be working or not, and the supervisee can refer to actual events.
Open ended questions might include the following:
- Tell me what happened…
- How did you feel when…
- What did you say? What would you like to say, if he/she were here right now?
- If you could wave a magic wand and change things, what would be different?
- What could you do differently, if anything, to change how this relationship is going?
- It sounds like you were … • I wonder … • What do you think was successful?
Pare & Share: Turn to your neighbor, using the reflective supervision knowledge we have covered so far and the open ended questions we just discussed, take turns role-playing being the “Reflective Supervisor” and the Home Visitor in a 3 minute reflective supervision session.

Scenario #1 Home Visitor’s concern: I’ve been going to visit Mrs. Martinez for 3 weeks now, since her regular home visitor of 2 years quit and she is still acting so un-friendly and distant. I’m getting frustrated I think you should give her to someone else.

Scenario #2 Home Visitor’s concern: I just visited the Jones family and they are getting evicted and I am really sad about the situation. The kids were crying and misbehaving, it is really affecting them.
Three key areas for both parties to explore are:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Meaning
Knowledge means, do I have the information I need to do my job well? Am I comfortable expressing my questions, feelings of uncertainty or confusion to my supervisor? Do my questions get addressed in a way that is useful?
Does knowledge translates into effective skills in my work? When things aren’t working, do I share these struggles with my supervisor so that we can develop alternatives together? When my supervisor is concerned about something I’ve done, is that concern shared in a way that feels nonthreatening?
Does supervision bring meaning to my work by building my competence and confidence? What are the values, beliefs, and assumptions that I bring to my work—and that my supervisor brings?
Supportive supervision should aim to develop staff in all three of these areas by developing new knowledge, turning that knowledge into actual skills and strategies, and building a meaningful professional presence that provides support to children and families. A supervisor should strive to build her own set of tools for fostering professional growth of staff, learn new things in the process of sharing experience, and provide a safe space for reflection.
REMEMBER THAT RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE COMPLEX BUSINESS

- So Many Meanings
- So Many Feelings
- So Many Surprises
Establish healthy boundaries. Know your time and content boundaries. This is emotional work, and self-care is essential for you and your supervisee. When you become available to staff in more emotional ways, you will need to take time for yourself to rejuvenate, reflect, and make time for your own supervision and support.
Call on the resources available to you in your agency, community, extended network or your own supervisors. Staff will work more effectively when they have the support that they need, and so will supervisors.
Books I have found helpful:


- Davidovitz, D. (November 4-5, 2002). Lecture “Understanding and Implementing Reflective Supervision.”

- Parlakian, Rebecca, Zero to Three (2001) *Look Listen and Learn: Reflective Supervision and Relationship-Based Work.*

Parents As Teachers DVD Series “Reflections on Supervision” www.parentsasteachers.org

National Resource for Family Centered Practice Supervision Training Course. www.uiowa.edu

Head Start “Home Based Supervisors Manual” www.ehsncr.org
The Discoveries of an Accidental Tourist
Read about author Robert Weigand's personal and professional journey through reflective supervision he received as a teacher of toddlers in an early childhood center.

Leadership self-assessment tool
Brief series of statements and reflective questions that offer insight into one’s leadership style.

Three building blocks of reflective supervision
Describes the central elements of reflective supervision.

What is reflective leadership?
Describes key characteristics of reflective leaders.

Learning through Supervision and Mentorship to Support the Development of Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families: A Sourcebook By Emily Fenichel (Ed.) (1992)


Reflective supervision: Stories from the Field Rebecca Parlakian (2002)
“Begin with the end in mind.”

Steven Covey