

# What is Professional Supervision?

*“Professional supervision is an opportunity to focus on you and your work, to reflect on what’s good and bad, and how it affects you. Supervision is an opportunity to look at the big picture and manage the effects of work on yourself. You set the agenda. You are the expert about you. The supervisor’s role is to create a safe space and ask the questions that help you to reframe and rethink what’s bothering you, explore ideas that excite you, and find ways to move forward.” (Rohleder, 2018)*

*“It is a compassionate, appreciative inquiry...in supervision we rewrite the stories of our own practice. It wakes us up to what we are doing. When we are alive to what we are doing we wake up to what is, instead of falling asleep in the comfort stories of our coaching routines.” (Ryan, 2004)*

*“Somebody once likened solution-focussed (supervision) to that of a taxi driver. The client or supervisee in the back is the boss, tells the driver where he/she wants to go, has a purpose for the journey, and pays the fare. The driver’s job is to drive safely, keep a well-maintained cab, have the Knowledge, and be available for hire” (Waskett, 2006).*

## Proctor & Inskipp’s Three Functions of Supervision (1993)

### **Formative (learning)**

Concerned with the continued development of the skills, abilities and understandings of the supervisee/practitioner through regular reflection on practice of working in the healthcare environment.

### **Normative (accountability)**

Concerned with maintaining and monitoring the effectiveness of the supervisee/practitioner’s everyday healthcare work.

### **Restorative (support)**

Concerned with how the supervisee/practitioner responds emotionally to the stresses and demands of working in the healthcare environment



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## Supervision is:

- about improving compassion satisfaction i.e. job satisfaction
- an interpersonal, negotiated relationship in which both parties have rights and responsibilities
- accountable – to the organisation, to the profession
- ethical
- confidential
- ongoing and regular (a process rather than an event)
- educative (but not education)
- managerial in that it relates to organisational standards and policies, but it is not management or appraisal
- supportive but it is not counselling
- focussed on the practitioner's agenda
- focussed on the practitioner's learning
- about providing a better service to clients

## Supervision is not:

- surveillance
- a chat session
- gossip
- friendship
- counselling
- management
- for the supervisor to talk about his or her issues
- appraisal
- judgemental

(Davys 2007)

## Supervision Agenda

The supervisee sets the agenda for what is discussed during the session and for how long. This may seem challenging to start with but a good way to prepare is to keep a notebook or journal to jot down issues between sessions. The supervisor is responsible for helping the supervisee to prioritise what is most important and sticking to the time frame decided by them. This can change during a session; it's up to the supervisee.

## Supervision Contract

The supervision contract defines the supervision relationship and establishes how the supervisee and supervisor will work together; the rules, protocol, manners and ethics. It's a living document, so although this is agreed at the outset, it will be referred to throughout the duration of the relationship and personalised to reflect the expectations of both parties. For instance, a karakia or prayer to begin and close the session.



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