

A Framework for Supervision

Beginning phase

The **beginning phase** in a supervision session can focus on the administration preparation for the session such as the agenda and previous agreed actions. However, this can be seen as the 'tuning in' – taking time to reflect more on the process and where the supervisee is current at when present. Empathy can be a critical element in being able to work from where the other person/supervisee is at. This beginning phase can be a time to check in to see if there are any urgent concerns or topics that may need to be discussed.

The contracting for that particular session to allow the conversation to unfold between the supervisor and supervisee – clarifying what it is you are going to do today occur at the beginning phase. Once the clarity has been reached, how you plan to achieve this needs to be agreed by the parties present. Seeking and gaining agreement for the work in the moment or over time can take time but the impact of this 'tune in' can be beneficial for all.

Work phase

The work phase is where you move from the general to the specific. It is by engaging the skill of contracting for each session that both you and the supervisee can ensure that the work phase progresses and does not lose focus.

Supervisors play a key role to ensure the conversation between themselves and the supervisee remains focused on the topics that were agreed in the beginning/contracting phase. However, there is a balancing act to all freedom to bring issues pertinent to them currently.

Some core skills will be looking at shortly will support all these phases such as active listening; empathy, giving and receiving feedback etc. Essential also during the work phase to facilitate the process is agreeing actions as it consolidates the discussion that has taken place.

Endings and transitions

It is important that you plan the session so that enough time is left to allow for endings and transitions.

It provides the final opportunity to make sure that both you and the supervisee share a common understanding of the conversation.

The supervisee is also more likely to remain engaged in the process and return for future sessions. The ending of one session can sometimes be the beginning of the preparation for the next session.

Reviewing – process of summing up what has been discussed and agreed during the conversation.

Agreement – follows the process of reviewing where both supervisor and supervisee explicitly agree on the nature and content of the conversation.

Checking out – refers to the process of constantly checking that one's understanding is in line with what the other is saying. Failure introduces errors in the conversation and quite

possible for two people to proceed in a conversation whilst each head in diverging directions. Therefore, making time for supervision endings and transitions is vital.

All these processes are interwoven – they work synchronously and are interchangeable. It is good to develop awareness of each in its own right.

Lawrence Shulmaan: *The Skills of Helping Individuals, groups families and Communities*, (1991).