
MY APPROACH TO SUPERVISION FOR CLINICIANS AND ALL PEOPLE HELPERS

With passion pray. With passion work.

With passion make love.

With passion eat and drink and dance and play.

Why look like a dead fish in this Ocean of God?

Rumi

With passion do supervision

Diplock

Love one another and you will be happy

It's as simple and difficult as that

There is no other way.

Amen

Michael Luenig

I want Supervision to be a transformative experience. Touching the Soul.

WHAT IS THE SOUL OF SUPERVISION?

I asked some of my supervisee's, *How do I make Supervision work for you?*

This is what they said;

"Your own transparent practice".

"Your Authenticity".

"Your Honesty".

"You Create a Safe Environment".

"The Power is balanced".

"You confront me in very respectful ways".

"On the Ball".

"Very Present".

"Don't let me get away with anything".

"A calming presence that is inviting".

"Respectful".

" You provide good feedback".

"I feel valued in the process".

"I trust you can advocate for me".

"I have a sense you have much experience and knowledge, however you go about this quietly".

"Your tracking is excellent; you will always bring me back to a point I may be avoiding".

"I feel like Aladdin being taken on a magic carpet ride and you're the "Magic Carpet.""

SUPERVISION BUILDS EXCELLENCE, DEVELOPS TALENTS AND MAINTAINS QUALITY WORK.

- Supervision is about a learning relationship.
- Supervision is reflection on action, or indeed, reflection *in* action to result in reflection *for* action.
- Supervisors are primarily facilitators of reflection.
- Practice becomes a '*mind-ful*' involvement.
- Supervision creates mindful supervisees who think deeply and courageously about their work.

SUPERVISION IS ABOUT FACILITATING LEARNING

- I am primarily not a teacher in supervision. I am a ***facilitator of learning***.
- In teaching, I ask the recipient to join *me* in my world.
- ***In learning, I work at joining them in their world.***
- Teaching is not unimportant. It just is not as important as learning.
- A passionate supervisor will really listen to the language and life experience of the person in front of them, and adapt their own style and language accordingly. This is the mark of true humility.

“The soul of supervision is to respect difference and look for shared understanding; to acknowledge weakness and power and not to exploit either; to wish for the very best for the supervisee, their client, the organisation and society at large. Sometimes the only way to do this is to hold all in our hearts and still take a stand. When we supervise from this perspective, we want to learn from those who seek our help as well as share our accumulated wisdom, knowledge and skills. There is a saying in Celtic mythology, the body lives in the soul, and not the soul lives in the body. We meet and touch each other at that level more often than we comprehend.”

From ***Passionate Supervision***. Ed. Robin Shohet. © 1996, 2010 Jessica Kingsley Publishers

I am committed to a **relational** supervisory style. I think the areas and the concepts that most **inform my practice** as a supervisor are:

1. Developing the capacity to be present
2. Feeling and conveying acceptance and compassion
3. Practicing an *Invitational* style of relating
4. Developing Practitioner Self-Awareness
5. Fostering an interest in *empathic attunement* or resonance
6. Flowing with creativity, responding to supervisee needs.

Bert Hellinger observed: “In the seed form, the whole is already at work, yet without being fully present”. (Hellinger, in *Passionate Supervision*. Ed. Robin Shohet. © 1996, 2010 Jessica Kingsley Publishers, p.55).

- **Passionate supervision** puts development, growth and transformation at the heart of the supervisory relationship. It is not a tool for control but a *means of inquiry*.
- **Passionate supervision** reveals the intimate connection between our inner nature and our outer nature.
- Change and challenge are an inevitable part of being in practice.

REFLECTION POINTS

- Think of a major insight or ‘ah-haa’ moment you have had. What made this possible, and how did it transform your practice? How might this relate to your supervision practice?
- If your supervision practice were to be more transformative than it currently is, how would you need to change? How would the view of supervision by supervisees need to change? How would the organisation need to change?
- What aspects of your supervision practice do you find it most difficult to contract around? How do you use professional boundaries to protect yourself from having to explore and possibly change these?

Post Script

Psychologists call "*liminal space*" a place where boundaries dissolve a little, and we stand there, on the threshold, getting ourselves ready to move across the limits of what we were, into *what we are to be*. Building on Mircea Eliade's concept of division of human experience into the *sacred* and the *profane*, Victor Turner introduced the concept of 'liminal space': a space of transformation between phases of separation and reincorporation. (Victor Turner, *Drama, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Societies*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1974). It represents a period of ambiguity, of a marginal and transitional state. Similarly does Arnold van Gennep, while describing rituals of transition. For Gennep, liminal or *threshold world* is a space between the world of status that the person is *leaving*, and the world of status into which the person is *being inducted*.

How does Supervision provide a place of Liminal Space?

[Go back to the Articles page](#)