

# Interprofessional learning for professional/clinical supervision

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## Introduction/background:

The authors have both taught clinical supervision for many years in both workplace training and within formal university programmes for practitioners. They have taught mature and experienced practitioners from diverse professional backgrounds in health, education and social services. Students have shared a common focus on learning to become a professional supervisor, often as part of a professional career path, but previous exposure to supervision varies by discipline. A small qualitative study of participants' views on learning in interprofessional supervision courses supports an interdisciplinary approach.

## Purpose/objectives:

This paper presents some findings of a small qualitative study in order to stimulate discussion about good practice in supervisor education in diverse health contexts.

## Issues for exploration/ideas for discussion:

At the end of the study the presenters had further research questions: should supervision become a generic process? Does this weaken or strengthen supervision practice within professions? Can interprofessional supervision learning and practice strengthen connections between professions in multi-disciplinary teams? How well is supervision supported following interprofessional training opportunities?

## Results:

Several themes emerged:

- Interprofessional learning was seen to increase the appreciation of the possible range and breadth of supervisory practice. It deepened both the learning experience and understanding of the subject material.
- The need to communicate with others from different professions each with different experience of supervision required each participant to be clear and specific about what he or she wanted to say.
- Respondents recognized assumptions commonly made about other professions and between those of the same profession and way in which these assumptions could limit effective, collaborative problem solving.
- Finally respondents spoke of the benefits and challenges of sharing different knowledge and world views and how they understood their professional work.

## Discussion:

The researchers explored how the different professional perspectives of the participants had affected their experience of an interprofessional learning situation, their participation and their actual learning. Overall the study findings supported interprofessional learning.

## Conclusions:

A small study indicates that interprofessional programme professional development in clinical supervision provides rich opportunities for learning. This poses some challenges to ensure that 'mixed' learning groups enhance not impede the educational experience. Effective course design and learning process are important factors.