

Evaluating Professional Supervision in Aotearoa/New Zealand:

A multidisciplinary collaborative study

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Background

- **Came together through a shared interest in professional supervision**
- **Met several times a year over last 6 years**
- **Interested in research**
- **Discovered similarities and differences in our practice of supervision**

Our starting point.....

- **Best practice guidelines recommend that the supervision relationship and process are evaluated regularly**

e.g.: Te Pou (2011) Professional Supervision Guidelines

NZPB Supervision Guidelines

- **Increasing interest in paper and pencil tests which typically measure satisfaction within supervision**

O'Donovan & Kavanagh (2014)

Increasing calls of for accountability

The evaluation of professional supervision has been promoted as best practice yet how this is translated into practice remains unclear and there have been repeated calls for further research into the place, role and process of evaluation in supervision (O'Donoghue, 2006; Beddoe, 2010).

Within the international supervision literature there is some confusion

“Evaluation (of supervision) has advanced from nuisance to necessity and is being implemented within supervision, across individuals and within systems”

Watkins & Milne (2014 p.661)

Whilst others

note that to date few measures have been developed to evaluate either the effect of supervision on the supervisees or on their work with clients

(Falender & Shafranske, 2014; Tsong & Goodyear, 2014).

However ...evaluating supervision is not as simple as it sounds

- confusion about what evaluation of supervision involves
- broader professional, ethical and organisational considerations (e.g.: what needs evaluating?)
- “and many more questions than answers”

Watkins & Milne (2014)

Evaluation versus review

Evaluation is essentially about judging the value or worth of something

“Outcome evaluation is concerned with understanding the overall effectiveness or impact of a programme or service.

Process evaluation is concerned with understanding the means or process, by which the programme is being implemented.”

(Fox, Martin & Green 2007, p. 67)

The research purpose:

To explore and document the current status of supervision evaluation in the Aotearoa/New Zealand, to identify issues, concerns and possible gaps and to make appropriate recommendations.

Four aims:

1. To map and document the current practice
2. To ascertain interest in evaluating supervision.
3. To explore the need for a formal supervision evaluation tool/process
4. To explore a theoretical framework for constructing such a tool/process

Design of Study:

This study has a sequential design and employs a range of methods within a qualitative research methodology.

Stage One:

Semi- structured interviews

The findings of these interviews forms the basis of this presentation.

Stage Two:

On line survey

Stage Three:

Subject to the results of stage two, to make recommendation regarding the development of an evaluation process.

Stage One: What we did?

Aims

- To explore - map and document the current practice in terms of how supervision is valued and evaluated.
- To ascertain what the parties to supervision (supervisor, supervisee and manager) consider of interest to evaluate.

24 semi- structured interviews were conducted across mental health nursing, social work, psychology and counselling:

2 supervisors,

2 supervisees and

2 managers

from each of the four professions.

Findings from this stage are reported here

Participants (supervisors supervisees and managers)

Demographics and Characteristics

- Age range: 30 – 70
- Gender: 4 males 20 females
- Ethnicity Identified:
8 Maori & 16 Tauwiwi
- All had a tertiary qualification
- All had been receiving supervision for a number of years and had experience of at least two supervision relationships
- Experience as a supervisor ranged from 5 to over 30 years
- Training in supervision: ranged from none - non assessed short courses - postgraduate qualifications

Interview questions:

What is their current practice of evaluation in supervision?

(role of evaluation; policies and/or rationale for evaluating; information gathered; analysis and distribution of the information)

What would they consider to be an ideal for future evaluation of supervision?

(what would they do differently, consider as ideal practice in evaluation and whether a recognised evaluation process/tool would be of value)

Research Findings

Current Practice of Evaluation of Supervision

- A. Most of those interviewed did evaluate supervision in some way.
 - The reported frequency of evaluation ranged from every supervision session to 3 monthly to annually.
 - Subjective measures, surveys and verbal report.
 - Two respondents used a recognized supervision evaluation measure.

- B. No overarching culture of evaluating supervision was identified.
 - All those in organisations were aware of relevant supervision policy documents but many did not know whether these covered evaluation.

Research Findings

Ideal Process in the Evaluation of Professional Supervision

Overall interest in a process for evaluation

- Evaluation should attend to process as much as it attends to content
- Evaluation needs to be purposeful
- For some there was an interest in evaluation but there was uncertainty as to how this would be achieved
- Degree of suspicion regarding the way the information may be used

Our preliminary reflections on findings....

- 1. There were similarities between the four disciplines with regards professional supervision and evaluation**
- 2. There was no universal understanding or practice of evaluation**

Additional Themes:

The different needs (and hence evaluation criteria) for students, new and experienced practitioners

There are power differentials within supervision which may have an effect on evaluation

The risk that evaluation becomes a management tool

Additional Themes Continued:

Evaluation could enable supervisees to have a voice

The question was raised about the place of culture in evaluating supervision i.e. evaluating supervision from Te Ao Maori perspective

Evaluation would add to the credibility of the practice of supervision

Final thoughts

Supervision complexity

**Any evaluation will need to be
multifaceted**

Falendar & Shafranske (2014)

**Watch out for our on-line survey in
Connections**

**We would appreciate your comments
about evaluating supervision**

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