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Evaluation of Supervision of Supervisors

The supervision of the supervisors of psychologists was carried out in six groups. Each group consisted of three to six psychologists – supervisors-in-training (here-after called supervisors). Six supervisors of supervisors actively participated in the process of training the supervisors, and collaborated in implementing the supervi-sion. Supervision sessions took place from May 2015 to March 2016, and there were a total of 38 sessions).

Monitoring and evaluation of the supervision of supervision were carried out from the beginning of the work in supervisory groups until the conclusion of the super-vision process. The course of supervision was monitored and evaluated in all six groups. Two questionnaires were constructed for monitoring and evaluating the su-pervision of supervision: *A brief regular evaluation for supervisors* and *A brief regu-lar evaluation for supervisors of supervisors*. The questionnaires were completed by the supervisors and supervisors of supervisors upon the conclusion of each group supervisory session.

Upon the conclusion of the supervision a final reflection on the entire process was performed in all groups. Two specific questionnaires were constructed for this: *Final evaluation of the supervision process for supervisors* and *Final evaluation of the su-pervision process for supervisors of supervisors.* The two questionnaires were com-pleted by supervisors and supervisors of supervisors before the final supervisory session. Their reflections served as the foundation for the mutual reflection per-formed in the final supervisory session.

The rest of this chapter presents summaries of reflections by the supervisors and those by the supervisors of supervisors who implemented the supervision.

Summary of Reflections by Supervisors

In general, the supervisors were very satisfied with various aspects of the supervisory sessions. Using a 10-point satisfaction assessment scale (1 – very unsatisfied, 10 – very satisfied) they assessed their satisfaction with the **content/topic** of the supervisory sessions with the average value of 9.35. Total average value of their satisfaction with **approach/method** of sessions was 9.46, while their satisfaction with **own activities/contributions on sessions** was estimated with the average value of 8.51.

In most cases, the supervisors **felt safe for active participation** in the supervisory groups. The total average value of their assessment rates was 9.38 (on a 10-point scale; 1 – not safe at all, 10 – absolutely safe).

In the supervision process the supervisors stated that they had **obtained what they expected**. The total average value for this was 9.20 (on a 10-point scale; 1 – not at all, 10 – absolutely).

The supervisors emphasized the possibility and readiness for active participation in a supervisory group **as positive in the supervision process**. They praised the exchange of opinions, experiences, and ideas between supervisors and supervisors of supervisors. By working with personal devotion, genuine participation, and reflection, the participants contributed to a higher level of engagement and interpersonal trust in the group. They reported on their positive relationships with the supervisors of supervisors, and these supportive relationships enhanced reflection, so overall they were motivated to engage in more active collaboration.

As for **weaknesses or things that bothered them**, some of the participants mentioned the late arrival of certain members to some sessions, which influenced the dynamics and work in the supervisory groups. Others noted the unclearly structured process of supervision, occasional difficulties in focusing on group work caused by tiredness or concerns in relation to events happening outside of supervision. Several supervisors expressed a need for better preparation for the supervision sessions. They stated that they wished they had had more time for material preparation in order to provide concrete and elaborated dilemmas and audio and video recordings. The factors mentioned as challenges in the supervision process included those related to self-disclosure, self-exposing, logistics of supervision sessions, and disharmony in the process creating supervisory dyads (a few supervisors did not have supervisees at the beginning of their group supervision). Several supervisors emphasized the low payment for their work. For some supervisors, it was challenging to find a topic for a supervisory session (at the beginning of the process there were few cases and contents, whereas towards the end there was an overabundance of these). Further, they mentioned a

lack of time for the supervision-of-supervision process as another challenge, as well as the dual roles they needed to play in the supervisory groups (some of them were co-workers in the work organization, and members of the same supervisory group). Moreover, they wondered how to develop a healthy critical attitude towards their work and that of their colleagues, while stating that they were aware that any gains in the process depended on their own contributions to it.

With the help of supervision of supervision they acquired more insight into the structure of the supervision process and the dynamics of the supervisory relationship. The supervision process enabled opportunities for reflection and self-reflection. The respondents thus obtained new ideas and experiences for even more effective supervision. Working in groups, they developed interpersonal trust, connectedness, and a feeling of safety, and supervision provided a space for relief of their anxieties, although several supervisors recognized the need for better self-care. Additionally, by collaborating in the supervision-of-supervision process, the respondents stated that they gained the following:
- Knowledge and experiences of new methods of work.
- Case-based learning.
- Collaboration in case treatments.
- Expanding social network and connectivity with colleagues.
- Emotional support.
- Awareness, experience of the importance of a well-structured group work (agreement, introducing one's expectations at the beginning).
- Experience of trustful, quality relationships.
- Structured time and safety for working on cases.
- Strengthening of self-confidence.
- Opportunity for affirmation and strengthening of one's professional identity.
- Experience of how important well-moderated communication is in case treatment.
- Experience of taking a different perspective on cases.
- Experience of how important the role of humour is in the group process.
- Opportunity for self-growth.
- Opportunity to lead the group process.
- New methods and techniques of work.
- Communication skills.
- Opportunity for further professional development.
- Experience and understanding of how dual roles can influence the relationship and process of supervision.
- Awareness and strategies of self-care (care for one's own mental health).

Supervision and collaborating in the supervision-of-supervision process enhanced supervisors' acquisition and further development of competences. Among the primary competences, they in particular noted goal specification (needs analysis,

planning), application of interventions (better knowledge of the role of supervisor and supervision process, establishment of safety and trust in the supervisory relationship, etc.), evaluation (monitoring and evaluation) and communication (giving clear and structured feedback, report writing). Among the enabling competences, they listed professional strategy (making decisions on ethical dilemmas), continuing professional development (care for mental health, knowledge of legislation and different legal procedures, effective time management), development of professional relations, independent implementation of psychological services, quality assurance, and self-reflection.

Summary of the Reflections by Supervisors of Supervisors

Supervisors of supervisors assessed **general climate/mood in a group** by means of a 10-point scale (1 – very bad, 10 – excellent) as very good. Total average value was 9.0. They were very satisfied with their **role of leading a supervisory group** and expressed this satisfaction with the average value of 8.4 on a 10-level scale (1 – not satisfied at all, 10 – absolutely satisfied).

The development of the supervision-of-supervision process: At the beginning of this process the focus was on structuring, defining the frame of collaboration, forming of groups and building rapport, setting a safe framework for work, and establishing trust. In all groups, the process was carried out more on a cognitive level at the beginning, supervisors were somewhat reticent. In the continuation the process became more spontaneous and genuine. It was not before the final sessions when the clear focus was on the contents relating to the supervision process. At the beginning of the supervision-of-supervision process the supervisors exposed several technical dilemmas; towards the end the dilemmas were more procedural, relational, ethical. In some groups at the beginning of the process they experienced the supervisors' delivery of materials as "being forced upon them"; later it was a consequence of their own needs. There were several contents for work/learning in supervisory groups. Through the larger part of the process, some groups experienced difficulties in "what to deal with; how to find material to work on". During the supervision-of-supervision process trust and connectedness developed in the groups. Upon the conclusion of the process several supervisors expressed their gratitude for having been able to participate in the group and the exchange. A lot of them expressed the necessity for the learning process to continue.

Challenges in the supervision-of-supervision process exposed by supervisors: Some of the supervisors of supervisors expressed doubt in own competency, feeling of insecurity. They discussed dilemmas regarding dual roles. For most of them recording of supervision of supervision sessions was a challenge. They had to cope with logistics of sessions' coordination (time, location, cancelations by supervisors etc.). It was challenging for some of them how to follow and implement the introductory

agreement, and adapt it if needed. Another challenge for some of them was the fact that supervisors in their group needed more motivation for active preparation and participation in the supervision-of-supervision process.

As **good in their work** the supervisors of supervisors praised their engagement, spontaneity, and adaptability. Regularly, they monitored development and the course of the supervision process. They appraised an open, relaxed relationship in their groups. They strived to assure a feeling of safety for all the group members. They motivated and encouraged the supervisors to actively collaborate in the supervision-of-supervision process. The relationship established in the groups was founded on a high level of interpersonal trust. Communication within groups was open, stimulating and empathetic. The supervisors of supervisors showed compassion for actual distress and offered support in dealing with dilemmas and challenges of implementing the supervision process.

Acting the role of leader of a supervisory group supervisors of supervisors gained the skills of better self-care, strengthened their self-esteem, self-confidence, devotion to the profession, feeling of shared responsibility in shaping of psychologist identity, and new knowledge and skills.

The supervisors of supervisors strengthened and developed different competences. Among the primary competences they listed goal specification (needs analysis, goal setting, structure at work), application of interventions (support assurance), evaluation (monitoring and assessment), and communication (giving clear and structured feedback). Among the enabling competences they emphasized the development of professional strategy, continuing professional development, quality assurance, professional relations, and self-reflection.

When assessing the supervisors' competences and their development, they provided similar evaluations as supervisors did. Among the primary competences they confirmed goal specification (analysis of needs, planning), application of interventions, evaluation (monitoring and assessment) and communication (giving feedback, report writing). Among the enabling competences, they listed development in the area of professional strategy (perception of and coping with ethical questions, dilemmas), continuing professional development (openness for and exploring novelties), quality assurance, and self-reflection.

Conclusion

The supervisors participating in the training of supervisors and in the supervision of supervision became better informed on the application of the competence model. They thus developed a comprehensive perception of the supervision process, and now approach it systematically and procedurally, taking into consideration the factors in the competence model, while previously they approached supervision

"by feeling and intuition." They have strengthened their focus on sources of power, gained skills of supervision, motivating the supervisees to learn and prepare the materials, and the skills needed to successfully conclude the supervision process.

With regard to feedback by supervisors and supervisors of supervisors relating to the development of competences, it can be observed that they followed common goals in the supervision-of-supervision process, and that the work in supervisory groups contributed to the development and strengthening of the supervisors' competences.

For most of the supervisors and supervisors of supervisors, the experience of the supervision-of-supervision process was very positive and beneficial. In general, they valued the positive climate in the supervisory groups, sense of safety and trust, and motivation for collaboration. Despite limitations due to the project requirements (the short timeframe of the project, planned quantitative outcomes), the psychologists who participated in the supervisory groups did gain new knowledge and experiences, and developed and strengthened different competences. They built on their professional identities and made connections with a network of colleagues. Most expressed a desire for the work implemented in the project to continue, because they saw progress in their professional development and work. Systematic regulation of supervision and supervision-of-supervision implementation thus seems to be needed to make the best use of this approach.

While in this evaluation of supervision of supervision we were critically reflective and did not overlook the weaknesses that were brought to our attention, there may still be some weaknesses we were not made aware of, and these may thus represent the basis for further improvements.