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## **IMPORTANCE OF THE TRAINING OF SUPERVISORS AND THE OUTLINE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME IN SUPER PSIHOLOG<sup>6</sup>**

### **Why do Supervisors Need to Be Properly Qualified?**

It is essential that the supervisor has very good knowledge of the field which he/she is supervising, in order to be able to participate in the reflective activity of his/her supervisee and in the resolution of professional issues, and to ensure the professional development of his/her supervisee will enable him/her to offer psychological services of high quality and supported by evidence-based scientific findings. However, the good professional qualifications of supervisors are not enough. The supervisor has to be able to transfer his/her knowledge, skills, and attitude towards the profession onto his/her supervisee. For this reason, the supervisor has to be familiar with different supervision methods and teaching skills, and has to be able to recognize the level of supervisory relationship development and adapt his/her approach accordingly. Further, the supervisor has to be able to resolve possible conflicts with the supervisee, recognize the factors which influence the quality of supervision, and deal with any dilemmas which may occur due to two roles being played – that of a supervisor who encourages and cares for the development of supervisee competences, and that of a supervisor who evaluates whether or not the competences meet the desired level of development. To this end, the *EuroPsy* Regulations (EFPA,

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6 Some of the contents of this chapter were presented at the second Academic Economic Congress (Podlesek, 2015).

2015, pp. 61–62) state that the supervisor has to have well-developed supervisory skills, which include active listening, reflective practice, giving feedback, and dealing appropriately with boundary issues and those of power relations.

Falender and Shafranske (2004) state that supervisors who gradually gain experience through the implementation of supervised practice progress from the point when they are insecure of their role – too focused on difficulties and the supervisee’s success, take mistakes personally, are too excited or too controlling – to a point when they are firm in their role of supervisor and become more appreciative of the supervisee’s contribution to the supervisory relationship. However, the implementation of supervision and thus accrual of related experiences do not necessarily improve the supervisee’s competences. However, such progress can be acquired with specific training which equips the supervisor with proper knowledge of supervision, enabling him/her to develop the skills of implementing supervision and have a proper attitude towards this practice (e.g., having an awareness that supervision is a lifelong activity, feeling motivated for the transfer of knowledge to younger generations and to regularly participate in supervision, being willing to have a reciprocal relationship with the supervisee, and so on). In short, the supervisor has to be properly trained in order to be able to guide the supervised practice and evaluate the supervisee’s competences, and it is estimated that formal training of supervisors should last at least two years (EFPA, 2015, pp. 59–60).

The knowledge, skills, and positive attitude towards supervision which are developed by the supervisors can lead to the optimum professional development of a young psychologist. A qualified supervisor understands which supervisee competences should be developed and how. The supervisor knows how to establish a respectful and reciprocal relationship in which a beginner feels safe enough to share his/her dilemmas and problems, come to realizations about his/her weaknesses and feelings of powerlessness when dealing with professional challenges, anger because of failures, and work towards better relations with clients, colleagues and the supervisor. A qualified supervisor can enhance reflection by the supervisee and give him/her specific feedback which leads to valid self-evaluations and further development of his/her competences. The supervisor recognizes the different phases of the relationship and knows how to strengthen and develop it. The supervisor should also recognize obstacles in the relationship, know how to adapt, and utilize strategies for managing difficult situations in supervision. During the training the supervisor should also attend a supervisory group where, for instance, once a month he/she presents the cases of supervision to other supervisors and reflects on them, thus coming to greater awareness of all the aspects of supervision, which would otherwise remain less noticed.

The aim of the SUPER PSIHOLOG project was to increase the self-confidence of supervisors and their satisfaction with supervision by training them so that they gained more knowledge of the characteristics of the supervisory relationship, key

influential factors, different methods of mentoring and supervision, understanding of dual roles of a supervisor, and so on. In this way a supervisor can establish better supervisory relationships and become more effective in transferring knowledge and skills to supervisees, help new psychologists to have a more positive attitude towards the profession, thus contributing to their professional self-esteem, professional identity and better self-care. The key aim, however, is to ensure high quality psychological services and, in compliance with this, to train supervisors to recognize and evaluate the development of novice psychologists' competences and thus serve as gatekeepers to the profession.

## The Contents of the Training Programme for Supervisors/Mentors of the Supervised Practice of Psychologists

The training programme for supervisors which was developed in the SUPER PSYHOLOG project consists of three modules, and each is oriented towards a particular aspect of mentoring and supervision.

Module 1, which had previously been implemented (Podlesek & Zabukovec, 2012), trained supervisors to apply the competence-based approach in the supervised practice, and emphasized the outcome of the supervised practice. Supervisors became qualified to recognize and develop specific professional competences in novice psychologists, and to evaluate whether or not the supervisee is prepared to start practicing independently. During this part of the training, which lasted 40 hours, supervisors became familiar with different competence models for professional psychologists, e.g. the Cube model (Fouad et al., 2009) and the competence model developed within *EuroPsy* (Bartram and Roe, 2005; EFPA, 2015), and elaborated on which competences have to be developed in order for a psychologist to carry out the psychological services in a specific field, and which competences are expressed in performing a particular work task. They were informed about current study programmes in psychology and the competences they develop and to what extent. They learned about modern paradigms of mentoring and the development of mentoring relationships from preparation to conclusion. They considered ethical dilemmas which can occur in the mentoring relationship, planned the supervised practice, and engaged in reflective practice. They became familiar with the related documentation and evaluation methods. They supervised a one-month internship and evaluated it in the final part of Module 1. They produced documentation about the internship, and assisted the supervisee in preparation of his/her own documentation. They learned how to assess the supervisee's competences and their level of development, and became more critical towards competence evaluation and the methods of evaluation and self-evaluation. They also thought about further development of their mentoring competences.

Module 2 upgraded Module 1. It focused on the soft skills of supervision, the process of supervision and the development of the supervisory relationship. With Module 2

the Norwegian Psychological Association transferred to Slovenia their long-term experiences in the training and supervision of supervisors. Supervisors learned about the importance of the supervisory relationship and its compulsory content from the Norwegian experts. They became acquainted with the methods and skills of supervision, learned about the establishment of proper supervisory relationships and support for the professional development of supervisees. They were introduced to the analyses of audio and video recordings of the supervisee's work, role playing, the reflecting team method, and learned how to give evaluative feedback. They were taught about the process of supervision and ways of resolving the conflicts which can occur during supervision. Module 2 included a total of 40 hours' work.

Module 3, with a duration of 80 hours, introduced supervisors to various topics in the field of mental health (e.g., the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health problems, mental health of professionals, supervision of professionals who have problems in this area). Supervisors were taught how to support personal growth, mental health care, and the ethical professional conduct of supervisees. They worked on the skills needed to recognize difficulties in mental health, how to prevent these, and apply the appropriate conduct when problems arise as well as various different methods for strengthening mental health. The focus was thus on maintaining mental health in both supervisors and their supervisees. Not only is such care for professionals important for their mental health, but it also influences the quality of the professional services they can provide. Regular monitoring of and care for one's own physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being is a key element in quality work with clients. A professional who works with people has to be able to recognize the factors which cause stress, and should be able to de-stress and recover a sense of perspective and purpose. As such, he/she has to be able to recognize the symptoms of secondary trauma and fatigue that can occur due to emotional involvement in case treatment, and so maintain a balance between professional and private life. The training of supervisors for faster recognition and prevention of difficulties in the mental health of supervisees can help reduce such negative phenomena among novice psychologists. The supervisees should thus be able to, under the guidance of their supervisors, better manage stress, recognize the signs of burnout at an early enough stage to deal with them effectively, resolve conflicts in the workplace, better organize their work, and so on. Module 3 was thus based on the link that some studies find between effective supervision in the workplace and psychological qualities such as the positive self-esteem, emotional adjustment, and psychological well-being of the supervisee (Eby et al., 2008).

An important part of the training of supervisors is the guidance of the psychology student's one-month internship in the supervisor's workplace, and implementation of the one-year supervised practice of the novice psychologist. Supervisors develop the supervisee's competences, monitor the traineeship process, and work with the supervisee to reflect upon this. It is recommended that they gain experience in both

the supervision of student internships and that of practitioners-in-training during supervised practice.

The student performs his/her internship in his/her supervisor's work organization. In this way the supervisory dyad is in constant contact, regularly reflects on and evaluates the process, learning is intense, the planning of internship can be adjusted to the actual circumstances, and the development of competences is very effective. However, the internship usually lasts for a short period of time, and the student can thus develop his/her competences only to a certain level. The internship presents the initial contact of the student with psychological practice, so supervision is more directive and the supervisor often plays the role of teacher, educating the student about specific practical approaches which are new to him/her, giving instructions and advice, and suggesting solutions to problems. The supervisor assigns work tasks to the student, and is to a large extent accountable for the student and his/her achievements. By supervising the internship, supervisors gain the experience of a typical mentor who cares for the mentee in a protective manner. The implementation of the supervised practice, where the supervisee is employed in another work organization, provides the supervisor with insights into supervised practice where sessions between the supervisee and supervisor are regular but not that frequent. The relationship which is developed in the supervised practice exhibits different qualities to those seen in a typical mentoring relationship. The structure of meetings has to be clearer and planned in advance. The supervisor cannot assign many work tasks to the supervisee, cannot directly monitor the supervisee's performance at any time, and the content of the supervision sessions depends on what material has been prepared by the supervisee. The supervisee is thus more active in self-regulation of his/her learning and developmental process, taking responsibility for himself/herself as the supervision is less directive and educational, and so there is more reflection and encouragement of reflective practice. These differences between the two supervisory relationships have, of course, been emphasized, but there are many aspects that are shared by both internship and the supervised practice.

The experiences which are gained by the supervisor through guiding the internship and supervised practice are processed in a supervisory group. Such a group consists of supervisors working in a particular field of psychology, and their supervisor (i.e., the supervisor of supervisors) provides support and expands their learning. In the group, supervisors discuss the process of the internship and supervised practice, reflect upon the supervisory relationship, help each other in resolving dilemmas and conflicts, support each other, and learn from one another.

The following chapters present the curricula of Modules 1, 2 and 3 of the training of supervisors developed in this project, along with their key contents: a competence-based approach to supervision, the supervisory relationship and its development, the acquisition of supervision skills, and supervision as self-care and care for one's own mental health.

## **Module 1 of the Training of Supervisors: Basics of Mentoring and a Competence-Based Approach to Supervised Practice<sup>7</sup>**

### The goals of the training:

- To introduce the participants to the theoretical background of mentoring in the process of internship and the supervised practice of psychologists, and to train them to lead the internship and the supervised practice.
- Application of the theoretical findings with regard to mentoring of the internship and supervised practice in the workplace of a psychologist, and successful guidance of the internship or the supervised practice of psychologists.
- Reflection and evaluation of the internship and the supervised practice, as well as strengthening the ability to keep detailed documentation about the practice, and providing assistance to the psychologist-in-training in his/her preparation of documentation.

### Competences developed by the programme:

- The participants train to develop the primary and enabling competencies of psychologists-in-training (primary competences: goal specification, assessment, development, intervention, evaluation, and communication; enabling competences: professional strategy, continuing professional development, professional relations, research and development, marketing and sales, account management, practice management, quality assurance, and self-reflection).
- The participants develop their mentoring competences, and thus acquire knowledge and skills related to the development and maintenance of the collaborative mentoring relationship.
- The participants develop the skills of reflective practice (openness to feedback and consulting with colleagues or supervision). They know how to reflect upon and evaluate the supervised practice. They know how to assess the psychologist-in-training's competences and prepare the documentation regarding the supervised practice;
- They recognize and strengthen their own professional competences, and develop those for planning and implementing the supervised practice.

### Duration of training

The duration of training is 40 hours.

### Training contents

#### 1. The first scope (5 + 10 hours):

*EuroPsy* Certificate: uniform education requirements for psychologists, implementation in Europe and Slovenia (lecture). The supervised practice in

<sup>7</sup> The program was prepared by Anja Podlesek and Vlasta Zabukovec. The training leaders within the SUPER PSIHOLOG project were: Anja Podlesek, Vlasta Zabukovec and the supervisory groups' leaders: Anita Kovačič, Jožica Možina, Julija Pelc, Vita Poštuvan, Andreja Rihter and Blanka Tacer, under the leadership of Mateja Štirn.

compliance with *EuroPsy* (lecture). Competences: the competence models (*EuroPsy* model, the Cube model), competences developed by the psychology studies (lecture). Explanation of competences (lecture and practicum).

2. The second scope (5 + 10 hours):

Mentoring: importance, forms and functions of mentoring, importance, roles, tasks, and competences of the mentor, mentoring process and the development of the mentoring relationship, ethics of mentoring relationship, multicultural diversity in mentoring relationships, distance mentoring (lecture, practicum, discussion in groups). Planning, implementation and evaluation of the internship and the supervised practice: formal background of the practical training, steps of practical training, relationship and communication between the supervisor and the psychologist-in-training, methods of enhancing reflection, monitoring and regular evaluation of the psychologist-in-training and the supervisor, ethical aspects of psychological services and the supervised practice (lecture and practicum, which if possible take place in a dyad with the supervisee-to-be). Keeping records of the supervised practice (lecture and practicum). Reflection on and evaluation of the supervised practice: methods of evaluation and self-evaluation, assessment of competences of the supervisee and the supervisor, reflection on the supervised practice, self-evaluation, evaluation of the internship and the supervised practice, supervision of supervision (lecture and practicum).

3. The implementation of the internship (160 hours):

Between the second and third scope there is the implementation of the internship, with a minimum duration of one month. The participants supervise the internship in their workplace for a minimum of 160 hours. After the initial assessment of the supervisee competences, they adjust the internship plan in agreement with the supervisee. In their workplace, they guide the internship (develop and monitor the development of the supervisee competences), working with the supervisee regularly to reflect upon the process of internship and evaluate it.

4. Inclusion into the supervisory group (10 hours):

The participants join the supervisory group (i.e., they receive supervision of their supervising). In such groups they discuss the process of the supervised practice, and during training this should last for a minimum of 10 hours (the greater part of this is implemented within practicum at the location where training takes place).

5. The third scope (10 hours):

The participants prepare the documentation about the process of the internship and discuss it in their supervisory groups: they prepare the outline of the supervisee's documentation of the internship, assess the development of the supervisee's competences, and prepare the outline of the development of the



supervisee competences, structure and analyse the notes on regular reflection, and prepare the final reflection on supervision and the process of internship, structure and analyse the summaries of supervision-of-supervision, analyse the ethical dilemmas which occurred during the course of internship and methods of their resolution, prepare the final evaluation of the internship and their role, as well as that of the supervisee(s). They upgrade their knowledge of the competence model. They suggest changes with regard to implementing internships, the development of new monitoring methods, and plan their own development to raise the quality of the supervision they provide. Work in this scope is performed individually and in supervisory groups.

### Study requirements

The participants have to collaborate in all courses and meetings, take part in the internship for a total of 160 hours, and participate in a supervisory group. They have to prepare two products:

1. Prior to the start of the implementation of the internship, they prepare a portfolio with details of the related literature, definitions of competences, and planning of the internship.
2. After the conclusion of the internship they create a report which contains an overview of the supervisee's documentation about the internship, an overview of the development of the supervisee's competences, an analysis of the notes related to their regular reflections and a final reflection on the internship, an analysis of the summaries produced with regard to the supervision of supervision, an analysis of the ethical aspects of internship, final evaluation of the internship, an analysis of the evolving understanding of the competence model, suggestions with regard to changing the internship, development of new monitoring methods, plans of their own professional development to enhance the quality of supervision, and so on.

The products are assessed using two basic standards: competent / not yet competent.

### Modalities of training implementation

The training is provided via lectures, discussions, practicum, various forms of observation, examining the results of field work, working in mixed groups, evaluating outcomes, and carrying out work assessments and case studies. The training programme encompasses individual work, performance in dyads (with the supervisee), work in supervisory groups, and work in *ad hoc* formulated groups of psychologists from the same or related field of practice.

### What are the benefits for the participants of the training?

The participants who have received positive assessments of their products obtain a certificate confirming their participation, and this can lead to a formal certificate



indicating that they are qualified to serve as a supervisor/mentor for the internship and supervised practice of psychologists. The training thus serves as a demonstration of their continuing professional development within the framework of gaining and revalidating the *EuroPsy* Certificate.

#### Training programme enrolment requirements

The participants have to meet the following requirements:

- They have to be university degree psychologists.
- They have to have a minimum of three years of independent practice in a particular field of psychology.
- Their work organization has to make it possible for them to accept a student for a one-month internship. At the beginning of the training programme, the participants will obtain forms indicating agreement on the implementation of the internship between the programme holder and work organization where the student will be based.

#### Recommended literature for participants:

Zabukovec, V., & Podlesek, A. (2010). *A model of the supervised practice of psychologists*. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete.