

## Foreword

My own background includes a life-long interest in and practice of the supervision of Norwegian psychology students and candidates for a specialty in clinical psychology. I was one of the founders of the program for supervisors of supervisors developed by the Norwegian Psychological Association, and have taught and trained supervisors of supervisors since its beginning in 1996. Supervision has also been one of my main research areas. In this foreword, I want to point out some of the issues that I found most striking in this comprehensive and impressive piece of work.

One main issue is the cooperation of two European countries in developing a supervision model and a model for supervision of supervisors, although their points of departure were rather different. In Slovenia, interest was focused on beginners in their professional fields (clinical psychology, education, social welfare, etc.), and the use of a mentor model and competency model (developed in accordance with the EuroPsy standards). In Norway, much more attention has been given to the development of individual therapists on their way to acquiring mastery of a specialty, and to methods suited to the furthering of their methodical, conceptual and personal development. Slovenia wanted input from Norway in developing a model for the supervision of supervisors, and this was implemented through working together in the practice of supervising supervisors, as well as talking about how it should be done. These differences in thinking naturally emerged during this work, and appeared to influence both parties in a constructive way.

This book is almost exclusively written by Slovenian psychologists, and gives a rich picture of how they progressed in their work with the establishment of supervision, in spite of limited resources. They have mostly drawn on supervision research in other countries, and it is interesting to note how they have used European literature to a higher degree than Norway has. Ethical, cultural and contextual variables are also given much attention, and this is an important contribution of the Slovenian side of this project.

In the last part of the book (parts three and four) the Slovenia-Norway project is evaluated, and this evaluation contributes considerably to the value of the publication as a whole. This evaluation is carried out using a great variety of exploration methods, and the results clearly indicate that the project was a very satisfactory experience for the participants. An important part of the evaluation was to explore possibilities for the further improvement of the program, as a basis for planning new programs after the project was completed. Another significant aspect of the evaluation is that the text gives concrete details of how the program was developed, specifies the instruments that were used (and thus the content of the significant competencies that were a focus of the program), and how the self-reports from different parties were organised. I found it particularly interesting to read the personal stories about the teaching process from a supervisee, a group of

supervisors, and a supervisor of supervisors, which gave a “flavour” of the project, as well as a qualitative assessment.

In addition to the evaluation of the project, the whole program was assessed in various different ways, considering its impact on both students in internships and novice therapists. This is pioneering research, and one that has been prioritised by several European universities. Moreover, in the integrationist spirit that currently prevails at many such institutions, we must rethink (and research) how we help students to become therapists, thus benefiting these new professionals as well as their clients.

As its title indicates, the last chapter presents a set of *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Supervised Practice of Psychologists*, as developed by the project team. These guidelines are clear recommendations for the implementation of supervised practice, providing details of the key organizational, financial and professional aspects of such projects. It was a pleasure to read this conclusion, and this section in particular means that the current book will be of great value to professionals, universities, and psychological associations dedicated to improving the psychological services that are provided to clients.

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This book is a wonderful compendium regarding the highly innovative training program for supervision in Slovenia. It is very professional, integrated and both compelling and persuasive regarding implementation of the competence model. It is comprehensive, thorough and thoughtful, providing a prototype for future implementations of similar projects.

There are a number of features that make this volume unique. It is impressionistic—powerful impressions are conveyed by individual supervisors and supervisees, providing depth and breadth to our understanding of the supervision process. The format of an edited collection also lends itself to the elucidation of multiple viewpoints and perspectives.

Through a clear articulation of real-world dilemmas, the various authors provide details of different situations and how to deal with them. One highlight is the interesting discussion on the complexity of boundaries, relationships in supervision, and what happens after the supervisory relationship has ended. The discussion of reflection in particular is exemplary, indicative of its critical nature in supervision (as well as the rarity of its use).

That supervisees would like to be trained in supervision also supports the international data which shows that more supervision training is essential to creating a spirit of life-long learning. Further evidence of the need for supervision training is that the supervisees themselves desire to have longer training periods! This is most likely a testament to the quality, focus, and complexity of the project as a whole, and thus it should be taken as a model for similar efforts.

Absent a control group I would urge a degree of tentativeness about the conclusions, but it should also be noted that the findings are extremely interesting in their support for training in the competence model. Moreover, going beyond what could be done in this formal training project, I remind readers that transforming supervision into an ongoing process, continued post-licensure, already occurs in several countries, including New Zealand and Australia.

This study presents a set of data affirming the efficacy of using a competence model for training. The self-assessment data, gathered at the completion of the project, is an important and innovative aspect of this work—although it is noted, and of concern, that the participants did not necessarily grasp all the aspects of the model, as evidenced by their self-assessments on reflection and the enabling competencies. Despite this, the supervision agreement was clearly important, the training received was strong, and the supervisors appreciated it.

My only concern is about the seeming blending of mentoring and supervision. It is very important to distinguish the two: supervision has a power differential and evaluative component, whereas mentoring does not. Would it be so important to differentiate this model from others if there were not a gatekeeping component? Johnson and colleagues have one approach, but they may minimize the power differential (and gatekeeping role) which is so critical for informed consent. Without clarity and definition, the relationship can become strained or ruptured—especially if the supervisee does NOT meet the related competence requirements. Moreover, it would have been interesting to ask the supervisees about whether they perceived the relationship to be mentoring or supervision, and how they felt about each.

Finally, it was highly gratifying to read of the wonderful, unexpected benefits of the program, which are spelled out so carefully in this book. Congratulations to all involved on the development and implementation of this project, and the excellent manuscript that emerged from it.

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