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SUPERVISION: DEFINITION AND FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION, MODELS OF SUPERVISION, AND SUPERVISORY ALLIANCES¹

What is Supervision?

The field of supervision is rather complex, and this is reflected by the diversity of definitions that appear in the literature. A frequent definition used in textbooks is that of clinical supervision, as summarised by Bernard and Goodyear (2013):

Supervision is an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior colleague or colleagues who typically (but not always) are members of that same profession. This relationship:

- is evaluative and hierarchical,
- extends over time, and
- has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s); monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients that she, he, or they see; and serving as a gatekeeper for the particular profession the supervisee seeks to enter. (p. 9)

This definition points to the fact that supervision is unique and differs from other related interventions, such as teaching, counselling, psychotherapy, and consulting (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). While these interventions can be included in supervision,

¹ In this chapter the author summarizes the parts of her doctoral dissertation titled “Development of a Model of Facilitating and Hindering Factors in Psychotherapy Supervision” (in preparation).

the latter still has certain distinctions. For example, supervision is an educational process and teaching is a central intervention. The supervisor, similar to a school teacher, evaluates his/her 'students'. However, a distinction between supervision and classic education is that the latter is usually based on a clearly defined curriculum, while the former adapts each session to the needs of a supervisee, and at the same time respects the general specifications of the goals that have been set. Moreover, supervision includes elements of consulting and psychotherapy, although the distinction between them has to be clear (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). Sometimes the supervisor applies therapeutic interventions to help the supervisee explore his/her behaviour, thoughts and emotions, in relation to his/her performance. However, this only happens when, according to the supervisor's opinion, such interventions can help increase the effectiveness of the supervisee's work with the client. Finally, a difference between supervision and consulting is that the latter is primarily a one-meeting event that is voluntarily sought, and the relationship is not hierarchical.

Supervision is performed by a more experienced professional working with a less experienced person in the profession, and its main purpose is to elicit the supervisee's professional growth and protect the client. The supervisor's task and responsibility is to monitor and evaluate the supervisee's performance and progress. His/her evaluative function arms the supervisor with power and a higher hierarchical position. In their definition, Bernard and Goodyear (2013) emphasize that an important element of supervision is that it continues over time, and this distinguishes the practice from educational workshops and consulting events, which can be attended once. This also enables the supervisory relationships to grow and develop.

The supervisory relationship is an important component of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Watkins, 1997; Wheeler & Cushway, 2004), as it is carried out in relational context involving at least two people: the supervisor and the supervisee. The nature and quality of the supervisory relationship is linked to the quality and effectiveness of the supervision that occurs (Carter et al., 2009; Henderson, Cawyer, & Watkins, 1999; Jacobsen & Taggaard, 2009; Martin, Goodyear, & Newton, 1987; Rabinowitz, Heppner, & Roehlke, 1986; Worthen & McNeill, 1996; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979). In this context, Hawkins and Shohet (2012) transfer the 'good-enough-mother' concept, as developed by the paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1986/1960), into the field of supervision. For instance, when the child of a 'good-enough-mother' spits out food, she does not take it personally, does not give in to feelings of guilt and inadequacy, but instead tries to understand the child's inner experience and the reason for such behaviour. She is able to do this provided she has the support of her partner or another supporting adult. Such a 'nourishing/caring triad' makes the child feel accepted even when he/she expresses hatred and rage. By analogy, the 'good-enough-psychologist' can withstand and survive attacks from clients if he/she is 'held' and supported by the supervisory relationship.

Purposes and Tasks of Supervision

The main purposes of supervision are as follows (Aasheim, 2012; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012): (i) professional development of the supervisee, and (ii) the assurance of quality and ethical services, and protection of the client's well-being. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) outline three main functions of supervision, which are interlinked: developmental, supportive, and qualitative.

The **developmental-educational process** that exists during the ongoing reciprocal supervisory relationship enables clients to reflect on the content and process of their performance (Gilbert & Evans, 2000). They can thus better understand their clients, become more aware of their reactions, and improve comprehension of their relationship with the client. They can reflect on their interventions and the consequences of these, and explore additional methods of working with their clients (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). In this way they learn how to transfer theory into practice, conceptualize cases and recognize different processes of supervision, e.g. the parallel process (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013).

Within the **supportive function** of supervision supervisees receive both personal and professional support. Supervision is a 'safe base' for the supervisee and ensures that he/she will not experience his/her development and performance alone (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Supervision helps supervisees face and reduce self-doubt, fear and anxiety (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 1997, 2010), and share and let go of unpleasant experiences relating to their performance. This function of supervision is essential for beginners, while effective supporting is important for maintaining the supervisee's equilibrium and preventing burnout (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

An important function of psychotherapy supervision, which is related to resourcing, while still significantly different, is the function of **affect regulation** (Rožič, 2012; Žvelc, 2015), which is the process of managing and modulating affect intensity and duration (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2004; Schore, 2003). Research on psychotherapy supervision (Žvelc, 2015) shows that supervisees often experience difficult emotions about themselves (e.g. self-doubt, doubt in their performance) or in relation to their clients and interactions with them (anxiety, anger, apathy etc.). However, an empathetic and well-adjusted supervisor can make the supervisee feel safe enough to disclose and explore his/her emotional experience and reactions. During the process of supervision, the supervisee's intense performance-related emotional states are processed and regulated with the help of the supervisor's interventions. The intensity of the emotional states that are felt is thus reduced. Supervisees calm down, their subjective feeling is that a burden has been lifted off their shoulders, and they become more aware of the background of their emotional experience. Strong and intense emotions, mostly anger and hopelessness, are replaced by feelings such as compassion, affection and hope. In cases when the supervisee is apathetic and does not feel anything despite the emotionally charged contexts, affect regulation

enables him/her to get in touch with what he/she is experiencing and to start feeling contextually appropriate emotions. The affective states which occur due to hypo- or hyper-arousal of the autonomic nervous system are regulated during an effective supervision session, so that supervisees can re-establish the so-called window of tolerance, a state of equilibrium, in which they are able to process information and engage in socially appropriate communication (Ogden, Minton, & Pain, 2006). Affect regulation elicits, among other changes, an alteration on the supervisee's physiological-emotional level, which is why the supervisee returns changed to the following psychotherapy session with his/her client.

Supervision has another function which is essential for evaluating the quality of supervisee-client performance, i.e. a **qualitative** function (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Watkins, 1997). The supervisor is accountable for monitoring the quality of the supervisee's performance and directing the supervisee to achieve the following aims (Watkins, 1997): (i) adequate care for the client; (ii) prevention of causing harm; (iii) adequately developed skills so that the therapist can perform therapy; and (iv) ensuring that those individuals who do not meet the related standards cannot proceed with their studies or work without undertaking adequate measures to change their performance. One of the supervisor's most important and yet most difficult tasks is to evaluate the supervisee's development and performance and to decide whether or not the candidate is ready for professional practice. The supervisor thus plays the role of gatekeeper (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013) at the entrance into the supervisee's desired profession, and cannot open the door to those who, according to his/her evaluation, are not suitable for practice.

Another important aim of supervision, towards which its various components lead, is the **capacity for reflection** (Aasheim, 2012; Allstetter Neufeldt, Karno, & Nelson, 1996; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Reflection is a fundamental tool in the development of critical thinking, self-evaluation, insight and autonomy at work (Aasheim, 2012). The supervisee has to become a 'reflective professional' (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012), not only in supervision but also in his/her own performance. This means that the supervisee reflects on what takes place prior to and after, as well as during, the sessions. Gradually he/she progresses towards a greater capacity to participate in a 'live' relationship and at the same time step back to reflect on events related to the client, himself/herself and their relationship. Safran and Muran (2000) refer to this capacity as mindfulness in action, and emphasize that it is one of the most important capacities of a psychotherapist. Along with the ability to reflect, the supervisee develops so-called **internal supervision** (Casement, 1985, 1990, 2002). This refers to the internal dialogue through which the psychologist observes what is going on during a session, in the client and in himself/herself. He/she observes and evaluates different emerging options of response and their possible consequences.

A further important function of supervision is the development of the supervisee's **professional identity**, his/her professional values and beliefs (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Lerner, 2008). Professional identity is expressed through the supervisee's attitude

towards his/her clients and performance. Supervision helps the supervisee find his/her own therapeutic style and voice (Lerner, 2008). Another important function of supervision is that the supervisee adequately evaluates his/her own effectiveness and competence in counselling (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Steward, Breland, & Neil, 2001). Hawkins and Shohet (2012) add that supervision produces benefits not only for the supervisee and the client, but also for the organization where the supervisee works, and for the entire profession, its development and maintenance of reputation.

Supervision Models

Supervision models offer a conceptual frame for supervisors. As expressed in the well-known Indian fable in which six blind men 'are examining' and describing an elephant, with each focusing on only one of the animal's body parts, each model that aims to understand supervision only does so by examining certain aspects of it. There are thus many models of supervision and different overviews of them (e.g., Beinart, 2012; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Hess, 2008; Watkins, 1997), although in general we can divide the models in four major categories: (i) psychotherapeutic theory-based models, (ii) developmental models, (iii) process models, and (iv) the second generation models (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013).

The models founded on a certain psychotherapeutic theory base their views and choice of modality on the same theory. For instance, psychoanalytic supervision will emphasize unconscious processes, Gestalt supervision will focus on events that happen 'here and now', and integrative supervision will focus on relationships. Developmental models assume that supervision is constantly changing, that supervisees go through different stages of professional development and so have different needs and reactions. Developmental models emphasize that supervisees need different teaching approaches to be used by their supervisors, based on their characteristics of their development. Some of the best-known and most-cited developmental models of supervision are the Integrated Developmental Model (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010) and Life-span Supervision Model (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 1993). Process models focus on the supervision process, i.e. on what is done during supervision. They are interested in what kind of interventions the supervisor applies, his/her orientation, critical events in supervision, factors affecting the quality of the supervisory relationship, how this relationship is developing, and so on. Process models of supervision include the Discrimination Model (Bernard, 1997), the Seven Eyed Model of Supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012), the Events Based Model of Supervision (Ladany, Friedlander & Nelson, 2005) and the Systems Approach to Supervision (SAS) (Holloway, 1995).

Seven-eyed Model

A very useful process model is the seven-eyed model, developed by Hawkins and Shohet (2012), which helps us systematically direct supervision interventions. The

model assumes that the supervisor can be oriented towards two supervision systems, namely: client–supervisee or supervisee–supervisor. The authors distinguish between two main categories of *supervision styles*:

- Supervision which is directly directed towards the client–supervisee matrix (e.g. through reports on the client, note taking, recordings).
- Supervision which is directed towards the client–supervisee system in a manner that includes reflection on the events happening in the supervisee–supervisor system. This type of supervision is interested in how the client–supervisee matrix is expressed in the ‘here and now’ experience of the supervision process.

Figure 3 shows seven ‘eyes’ or windows for the supervisor to direct his/her focus to; three eyes/windows relate to the client–supervisee system, three eyes/windows relate to the supervisee–supervisor system, and the seventh eye/window presents a broader organizational and socio-cultural context.

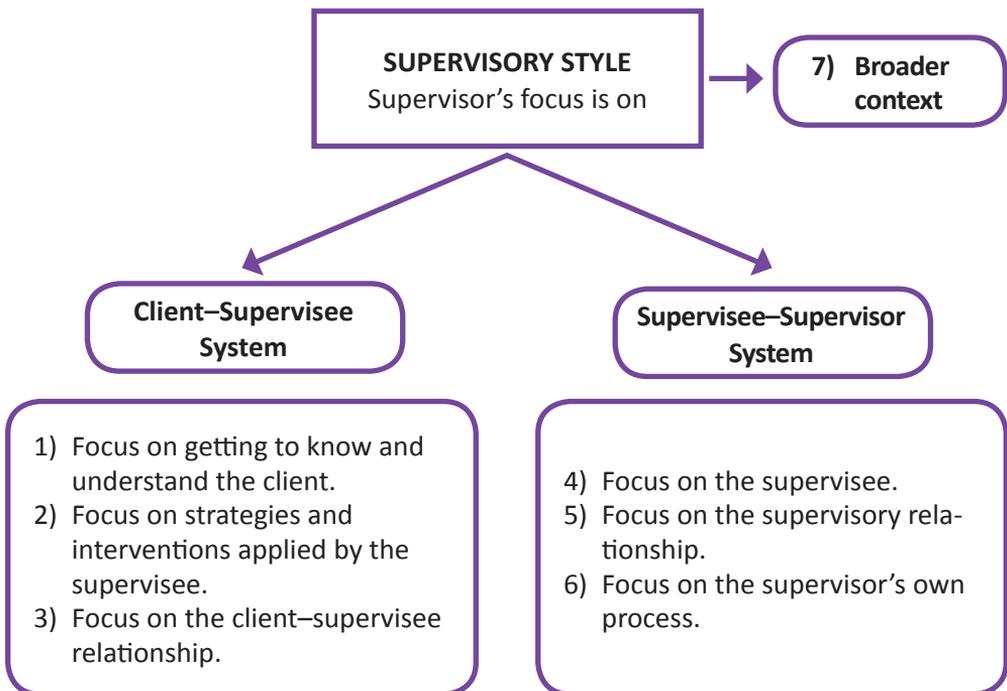


Figure 3. Outline of the Seven-eyed Model.

Events-based model

Ladany, Friedlander and Nelson (2005) explain critical events in supervision using the events-based model. These are events which encompass the most frequent

dilemmas in supervision, and which most often challenge the supervisor regardless of his/her theoretical background and field of practice. Such events include: (i) negotiating role conflicts and role ambiguity; (ii) culture and gender related misunderstandings; (iii) sexual attraction to clients; (iv) counter-transference and projective identification; (v) supervisees' inadequate skills; and (vi) problematic emotions, attitudes and behaviours.

The model is transtheoretical, and its descriptions of relationships and processes express an interpersonal or relational approach to supervision (Frawley-O'Dea & Sarnat, 2001; Herron, 2001; Kron, 2000). This is based on current analytical and humanistic works, and considers the supervisory relationship to be a fundamental driver of professional growth and development. The quality of this relationship is a reflection of and interaction between the work interpersonal models of the client, supervisee and supervisor. In supervision as well as in therapy, the cognition, emotions and behaviours of one partner affect those of the other. According to the authors (Ladany et al., 2005), the supervisory relationship is vital processing conflicts when they arise.

This model was created as a critical response to others which define the goals of supervision, but do not provide any answers for how to accomplish them. The model is based on the paradigm of events and the model of task analysis (Greenberg, 1986). Not only does it address the various discussions that can occur in supervision, but it is also interested in the types of sequential interpersonal behaviours which initiate change.

Second-generation Models

Parallel to the development of psychotherapy, which has had impact on the development of supervision, more recent models of supervision are becoming more integrative and evidence-based. Bernard and Goodyear (2013) refer to the following three second-generation models: (i) combined models, (ii) target issue models, and (iii) common-factors models.

Combined models integrate aspects of existing first generation models. Target issue models illuminate specific concepts of supervision, e.g. the competence of supervisors with regard to cultural diversity, or their attachment styles. Common-factors models search for and describe common aspects of various therapy/supervision models with the purpose of developing an integrative theory of change. Lampropoulos (2002) proposes the following **common factors of supervision**:

- Supervisory relationship (divided into the real relationship, supervisory alliance, and transference and counter-transference processes).
- Providing support and relief from tension, anxiety, and distress.
- Instillation of hope and raising of expectations.
- Self-exploration, awareness, and insight.
- Theoretical framework (philosophy, theory and methodology of the model origin).

- Exposure and confrontation of problems.
- Acquisition and testing of new learning.
- Mastery of the new knowledge.

A fundamental component of supervision, the supervisory relationship, is discussed in more detail below.

Supervisory Relationship

The supervisory relationship can be viewed as a two- or three-person system (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). The models which consider the supervisory relationship as a two-person system study and explain the relation between the two participants in supervision, the supervisor and supervisee. In contrast models which examine a three-person system emphasize that there are three parties involved, the supervisor, the supervisee and the client.

Supervisory Alliance

Within the supervisory relationship as a two-person system, one of the most important notions is that of the supervisory alliance. The concept of a supervisory alliance (Bordin, 1983) emerged from that of a therapeutic working alliance (Bordin, 1979), and it refers to the quality of mutual collaboration needed in order to elicit change. In supervision, the supervisor and supervisee must collaborate with the purpose of elaborating on the latter's professional development and so ensuring high quality and ethical psychotherapeutic or clinical services are provided, and thus protecting the client's well-being (Aasheim, 2012; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

A supervisory alliance relies on the following three aspects (Bordin, 1983):

1. Mutual agreement on supervision goals.
2. Mutual agreement on supervision tasks.
3. An effective bond between the supervisor and the supervisee(s).

The supervisory alliance depends on an agreement between the supervisor and supervisee with regard to the goals of the supervision. Supervisors with different theoretical backgrounds will give preferences to different goals. Similarly, supervisees will differ in their expectations in relation to supervision, and the specification of goals will be influenced by their level of professional development (Rabinowitz et al., 1986; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 1997, 2010; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979). It is important for the supervisor and supervisee to agree on the supervision goals so that conflicts and breaks in the working alliance can be avoided.

Another important element of a supervisory alliance is the agreement between the supervisor and supervisee on the supervision tasks. The core tasks assigned to the supervisee are the preparation of written or oral reports about his/her performance,

or submission of audio or video recordings of his/her performance, and the formulation of supervisory questions. The supervisor's tasks are linked to these supervisory questions and the goals they are related to. For instance, if a goal is the development of specific skills, the supervisor will give feedback to the supervisee stating what the supervisee did well, and what could be added and/or improved, or he/she will recommend other possibilities with the purpose of expanding the supervisee's repertoire of interventions. If the supervisee has never recorded a session or brought a recording to the supervisor, then the supervisor has to discuss the need to do so with the supervisee.

The bond refers to the quality of the relationship between the supervisee and supervisor, and includes experiences of care, support, trust, and affection. The issue of bonding occurs due to the key task of evaluation in supervision (either written or oral), as this can lead to unavoidable tension due to status distinctions between the supervisor and supervisee (Bordin, 1983), which relate also to the processes of power. Bordin emphasizes that supervisees need to be acknowledged as good practitioners, and for this reason always explicitly confirms what the supervisee has mastered before informing him/her about problematic parts of their work.

All three aspects of supervisory alliance are interconnected and influence one another (Bordin, 1983). If there is no high quality bonding between the supervisor and supervisee (e.g., the relationship is marked by distrust and anxiety), then the supervisor's various activities, such as an exploration of the supervisee's perception of the client, or a suggestion as to which technique the supervisee should apply, will be met with resistance and distrust, and so will be less effective. The power of alliance also depends on the supervisee's understanding of the connection between supervision tasks and supervision goals, and thus whether the supervision performance corresponds to the desired outcome of the supervision. Additionally, the power of alliance is dependent on the supervisee's evaluation of his/her ability to carry out a task. It can thus be concluded that the model of working alliance encompasses both personal and technical factors, and their interconnectedness.

Bordin's model offers a valuable and important conceptualization of the supervisory relationship (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Ladany, Walker, & Melincoff, 2001). The working alliance is a core concept here, and one that relates to many other supervision concepts. It has been empirically shown that a high quality working alliance, and in particular its component of bonding (relation), corresponds to the experience of good or effective supervision (Carter et al., 2009; Henderson et al., 1999; Jacobsen & Taggaard, 2009; Martin et al., 1987; Rabinowitz et al., 1986; Worthen & McNeill, 1996; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979) and supervisee satisfaction (Ladany, Ellis, & Friedlander, 1999), while a low quality working alliance correlates to more conflicts occurring during the supervision (Gray, Ladany, Walker, & Ancis, 2001; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001; Quarto, 2002; Shao-Ling & Shiou-Ling, 2006). Additionally, the supervisory alliance depends on the supervisee's

self-disclosure (Gunn & Pistole, 2012), and on the supervisor's self-exploration and his/her supervisory style (Ladany et al., 2001).

Working Alliance, Supervisory Relationship and Attachment System

The theory of attachment (Bowlby, 1969) can help us better understand the supervision process and the supervisory working alliance. Watkins' (1995) experiences reveal that most supervisees, regardless of their attachment style, are mature and 'safe' enough to, at least to some extent, constructively collaborate in supervision. However, he maintains that there are supervisees with pathological attachment styles which are disturbing for the supervision process and may even cause harm to clients. These are divided into the following groups: (i) supervisees who suffer from compulsive self-reliance; (ii) supervisees with anxious attachment; and (iii) supervisees who suffer from compulsive care giving.

Gunn and Pistole (2012) establish, based on a sample of 480 doctoral students of clinical psychology and counselling, that a secure attachment between the supervisor and supervisee has positive and significant impacts on the working alliance, with regard to all three components (agreement on goals, assignments, and bonding). They emphasize a positive link between a secure attachment and the supervisee's self-disclosure, mediated by the working alliance. Other research also reveals a positive relation between the supervisor's self-disclosure and the quality of the working alliance (Davidson, 2011; Knox, Edwards, Hess, & Hill, 2011; Ladany & Lehrman-Watterman, 1999). The more frequent the supervisor's disclosure (according to the supervisees' opinions), the better the working alliance, with stronger agreement on supervision goals and assignments, and a stronger emotional bond.

White and Queener (2003) present the results of a study that included 67 supervisors and 67 supervisees, and show that the quality of the working alliance depends on the extent of the supervisor's ability to establish healthy interpersonal relationships. They report that a supervisor's secure attachment style, as is reflected in his/her ability to trust and rely on others and feel comfortable in intimacy, can predict the quality of the supervisory working alliance. The supervisors who were weak in establishing close relations reported having weaker working alliances with their supervisees. The same held true for the supervisees, as they evaluated the alliances with such supervisors to be weaker than those with the supervisors who exhibited a secure attachment style. Later research confirms the importance of the supervisor's attachment style for the working alliance, regardless of the supervisee's attachment style (Dickson, Moberly, Marshall, & Reilly, 2011; Riggs & Bretz, 2006).

Kim and Birk (1998) find that more securely attached supervisees were more satisfied with supervision, while those with an insecure hyper-regulating attachment style showed less satisfaction with supervision.

Ruptures in the Alliance and Conflicts in the Supervisory Relationship

Both the supervisee and supervisor occupy different roles in supervision. The supervisee operates towards the clients from a position of authority, while as a student-in-training, he/she is in a more subordinate position towards the supervisor (Nelson & Friedlander, 2001). The supervisor acts as teacher, consultant, therapist, and colleague (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). Due to these inequalities of power, incongruent situations, unclear roles, and other factors, conflicting situations can occur in the supervision process (Gray et al., 2001; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001; Quarto, 2002).

As reported by Quarto (2002), the participants in supervision may perceive a conflict in the supervisory relationship when one of them does not behave according to the other's expectations. For instance, the supervisor recognizes a conflict if the supervisee does not discuss the topics suggested by the supervisor. While both supervisees and supervisors admit (Quarto, 2002) that conflicts in supervision arise from time to time, they are not typical features of supervisory relationships. Moreover, differences in the perception of conflicts exist among supervisors who hold different levels of experience, with less experienced supervisors noticing more conflicts, while both supervisees and supervisors agree that conflicts weaken a working alliance.

Research and clinical findings affirm that not only is it important for the working alliance to be built, but it also needs to be constantly renewed and negotiated (Safran, 2003; Safran & Muran, 2000; Žvelc, 2008). Ruptures in a working alliance cannot always be avoided (Guistolise, 1996; Safran & Muran, 2000), and therefore it is important to notice them and act in the direction of correcting them, or in that of conflict resolution (Quarto, 2002). Frustrating situations in supervision and ruptures in a working alliance can turn into helpful factors when properly approached and dealt with (Jacobsen & Taggaard, 2009). On the other hand, unnoticed and uncorrected ruptures in a working alliance can have various negative consequences (Gray et al., 2001; Nelson & Friedlander, 2001; Quarto, 2002; Shao-Ling & Shiou-Ling, 2006).

On the basis of their research, clinical experience, and findings by earlier academics, Safran and Muran (2000) present a model of the different types of ruptures that can occur in a therapeutic working alliance, and a model to resolve these. They distinguished between two main types of rupture: (i) **withdrawal** (the client withdraws from the relationship, emotions or therapeutic process), and (ii) **confrontation** (the client directly expresses anger or dissatisfaction with the therapist or therapy). The indicators of withdrawal are denial, minimum response, change of topic, intellectualization, story-telling, discussing other people, being late or cancelling a session, and the client's wish to terminate or conclude the therapy. The indicators of confrontation are complaints, attack on or confrontation with the therapist as a person, the therapist's competence, therapy activity, time of therapy, continuation of therapy or complaints regarding the progress in therapy. My argument in this chapter is that the same types can be found in the supervisory alliance, although the transfer

of types and indicators between the alliances (from therapeutic to supervisory) would need to be scientifically confirmed.

Parallel Process

Supervision is a process in which the supervisor meets the supervisee to discuss the supervisee's performance with one or more clients, with the purpose of helping the client and improving the skills of the supervisee. Supervision can be seen as a three-person process or system, which includes the supervisor, supervisee, and client. Constructs which arise from the notion of supervision as a three-person system are a parallel process, isomorphism, and interpersonal triangle (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013). The idea of a parallel process originates from the psychoanalytic concept of transference. Researchers have observed that the therapist's transference and the supervisor's counter-transference within the supervisory session occur in parallel to what happens in the session between the client and therapist (McNeill & Worthen, 1989). This parallel process is an unconscious repetition of the therapeutic relationship in supervision.

Despite the fact that the parallel process is mentioned in the literature on supervision, in particular in the psychoanalytic literature, it still needs more empirically study. As reported by Watkins (2012), the research conducted by Tracey, Bludworth and Glidden-Tracey (2012) was the first to show that the parallel relationship can be studied in a rigorous and sensible manner, and thus he recommends it as a prototype for further research. Tracey et al. (2012) show that the parallel process in supervision proceeds in two directions:

1. When the therapist transfers the therapist–client interaction pattern into the supervision session. The therapist acts out the same pattern which happened in therapy between the therapist and client, only now the therapist acts out the client's behaviour.
2. When the supervisee transfers the interaction pattern from supervision back to the therapeutic session as a therapist, and acts out the role of supervisor.

The concept of a parallel process, without the inclusion of unconscious components, is included in the developmental models of supervision (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). The authors of these models state that students with more advanced levels of training/education are more likely to work on the personal questions which often show up as the parallel process (Rabinowitz et al., 1986; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 1997, 2010).

In conclusion, it has to be emphasized that supervision helps develop and maintain professional competences with the purpose of offering the best services to clients. This is why supervision is essential for psychology as a profession and other helping fields of practice, both early in practitioners' careers, and throughout their working lives (Aasheim, 2012; Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Hess, 2008; Watkins, 1997).