



Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SUPERVISION

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT USE IS IT?

HOW DO YOU GET THE BEST OUT OF IT?

PERSONNEL WORKGROUP

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HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF SUPERVISION

BE CLEAR

What is it?

Whose is it?

What is it for?

What to expect from it

TAKE THE INITIATIVE

Choose a good supervisor

Make a contract

COMMIT YOURSELF

To prepare

To work

To evaluate

WHAT SUPERVISION IS

The word **SUPERVISION** may be used of three different working relationships.

1. **FORMATIVE SUPERVISION** is a teaching relationship. A senior person supervises a junior and may be responsible for assessing their competence.
2. **MANAGERIAL SUPERVISION** is supervision in which the supervisor is responsible for the supervisee's work, and may decide pay and promotion.
3. **CONSULTATIVE SUPERVISION** is a supportive and collegial relationship. The supervisor has no evaluative or managerial role and is neither teacher nor boss.

We are talking about the third kind, **CONSULTATIVE SUPERVISION**.

Supervision is a safe, confidential relationship, which provides a regular opportunity to reflect on our work and professional relationships. It only works where an atmosphere of trust is built up. Supervisee and supervisor are each responsible for building that trust by approaching the other with openness.

The desired outcome of supervision is a continuing improvement of quality in the service we offer. Along with this can go increased self respect, released potential, the capacity to see, feel and hear what we have tended not to see feel and hear, and the bonus of increased health and well-being. Research shows a high correlation between good supervision and job satisfaction.

Good supervision supports; challenges; encourages learning, self-knowledge, professional development, good use of resources and time, and respect for boundaries.

Every supervision relationship is unique and needs its own contract.

The focus of supervision is on actual events; real, living, work situations.

THE FOCUS OF SUPERVISION

The **GOAL** is continuing improvement in the **QUALITY** of ministry

The **CONTEXT** is an atmosphere of **TRUST** and **OPENNESS**

The **VEHICLE** is a **RELATIONSHIP**

The **FOCUS** is actual **EVENTS**

PREPARING FOR SUPERVISION

As supervisees we are responsible for what we present in supervision and for identifying what makes it important enough to spend time on.

Anything is appropriate that arises from actual events and can affect, or is affecting, the quality of our work, for instance our role in a particular situation, priorities, time management, insights, people, committees or institutions, changes, pressures, needs....

Any one of the following may be useful in deciding what to choose

- The most significant event in my work since my last supervision is...
- This incident/concern keeps pushing itself back into my mind...
- I am aware of very strong feelings about something that has happened...
- When [this] happened it seemed to be a pattern repeating itself...
- I am so [tired, miserable, elated, worried]...
- I want to clarify where I stand on a particular issue...
- I want to stop something like [this] happening again...
- I want to get something like [this] to happen more often...
- I seem to keep avoiding/putting off...

When we arrive for supervision we need to be able to say

- This happened
- This is my question
- This is what I want

Supervision works best if:

- We are open, honest
- We report our behaviour, observations, reactions and feelings accurately
- We accept feedback
- We monitor our feelings and responses (including our need to justify, explain)
- We remember that what happens in supervision is our responsibility
- We remember that the purpose of the whole undertaking is to keep improving the quality of the service we give

A TYPICAL SUPERVISION PATTERN

Supervision is an opportunity for learning. Learning is a form of change and can cause anxiety because we want to cling to familiar patterns. At first in a supervision relationship, we may be uneasy, anxious and have an initial struggle because we resist altering our ideas and behaviour. This stage is often followed by a tendency to create or perceive likeness. We try to break down the distance between the supervisor and ourselves. It is the supervisor's task to keep the distance there, because in the space there is room for us to learn, and accept responsibility for our own learning.

A GOOD SUPERVISOR

A good supervisor provides:

- a supportive, safe environment
- full attention
- space for me to reflect on what I do and how I do it
- feedback to me
- space for feedback from me
- relevant information

A good supervisor encourages me to:

- be active in supervision
- accept responsibility for my thoughts, feelings, attitudes, actions
- observe and clarify my thoughts, feelings, reactions
- become aware of the effects of my words and actions
- find other ways of looking at things
- discover and explore my options
- come to my own conclusions, choices and decisions
- acknowledge my strengths and successes
- keep the focus on the event material I present
- keep in mind the fundamental goal of improved quality of service

A good supervisor has knowledge, experience, integrity and skill to:

- maintain 'professional distance' [see note in the box on page 3]
- help me deal with transference and counter transference in my work and the supervision process. [*Transference: the active past. Although we are in the present, our past is always with us, and dynamic in every relationship. Because it arises in the past, it fails to fit the present. Inappropriateness is an important signal of transference.*]
- recognise parallel process. [*What I present from my work is mirrored in the relationship with my supervisor.*]
- recognise the limits of their own skill and offer me appropriate referral.

A supervisor is responsible for seeing that supervision

- stays within the ethical boundaries agreed in the contract
- does not become counselling or therapy
- is not used for any purpose but supervision

A good supervisor doesn't:

- talk a lot or give lots of advice
- do all the work in the session
- take responsibility for my work
- respond to my words but miss my feelings

SUPERVISION CONTRACTS – WHY HAVE THEM?

A contract describes a unique relationship. Each supervision relationship is unique; it is the only supervision in which these particular people work together. Their experience and understanding of supervision may differ, so they need to clarify what they are doing. If they don't there can be confusion and disappointment. A contract is the best safeguard.

A contract helps establish the relationship. Negotiating a written contract can be an important step in the setting up supervision. It can be a learning experience and a model. It emphasises each person's commitment. It requires the effective use of time.

A contract provides a framework. Some people find making a detailed, specific contract a good base for on-going work. A contract sets ground rules for the shared task. It provides a framework for evaluation (are we doing what we agreed to do?). It can be re-negotiated and adapted to meet needs.

Significant things to consider in negotiating a contract:

1. The purpose of the supervision.
2. What each person expects the process of supervision to be like
3. What each person expects a supervision session to be like.
4. What the roles and tasks of the supervisee will be in this relationship.
5. What the roles and tasks of the supervisor will be in this relationship.
6. How and when the supervision will be evaluated.
7. What ethical code or covenant will be adhered to.
8. The working details:
 - (a) What preparation will be done.
 - (b) The working format of the session – e.g. how it will begin and end.
 - (c) How material will be presented [e.g. *orally, written, verbatim, tape*]
 - (d) What records will be kept and how material will be disposed of.
 - (e) The frequency, day, time and length of sessions.
 - (f) Starting and review dates and the proposed duration of the contract.
 - (g) Agreement about cancellations, regularity, punctuality, interruptions.
 - (h) Evaluation.
 - (i) Confidentiality [*what might lead the supervisor to wish to break confidentiality? What would he or she do? See also (d) above.*]
 - (j) What to do if there is conflict, or if one participant has a complaint.
9. Payment or non payment. Whether or not the supervision is paid for, the current market rate for skilled supervision is at least \$50 an hour.

Not everything suggested here will be written into the contract but discussing it helps to clarify both parties' expectations. Sometimes it may clarify for one or other person that the relationship is not likely to work.

POSSIBLE SHAPE OF A SUPERVISION CONTRACT

The contract is between

SUPERVISEE
ADDRESS

Tel: Home/Work

SUPERVISOR
ADDRESS

Tel: Home/Work

We have agreed [*detail the specific items of the contract*]

We have contracted to meet at [*three*] weekly intervals on [*Tuesdays*] for [*1 year*] at [*2-3 p.m.*] at [*place*] at a fee of [*amount*] starting on [*date*].
Date of first review [*date*].

SIGNED:

..... (Supervisee)
.....

Date:

..... (Supervisor)
.....

Date:

ETHICAL BASIS

Ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand work within the ethical framework of the Code of Ethics in Pastoral Care set out in the Book of Order (1996 edition), Appendix E-10.

Supervisors belonging to other professions operate within the ethical requirements of that profession but accept that a supervisee is governed by the code of ethics of the supervisee's profession. If the codes are incompatible, the supervision cannot work.

OBSTACLES TO SUPERVISION

- The work
- Previous unsatisfactory experience
- Fears about confidentiality
- Practical difficulties – distance, cost, lack of suitable people
- Assumptions (maybe unrecognised, maybe unchallenged)
 - I don't need supervision
 - My needs don't matter
 - God will supply all my needs (in the way I say)
 - I shouldn't have any needs
 - There's no time
 - It's too expensive
 - There's no one suitable
- Defences
 - No one's going to judge me
 - No one's going to tell me what to do
 - No one's going to be allowed to see that I'm vulnerable

SUPERVISION ISN'T...

Supervision isn't friendship, giving advice, spiritual direction, therapy, counselling, prayer, telling your story, joint sermon preparation, discussion of common problems or concerns. All these may be good things in themselves; if supervision time is used for them, it isn't supervision.

Supervision is never gossip, **never** an erotic or sexual relationship.

SIGNALS THAT NEED ATTENTION

Either person tends to forget the time or day of the appointment, to be late, to want to finish early; feels it's just a friendly chat, can't point to anything achieved in the session, feels a strong attraction to the other, feels a strong dislike of the other, sits too close, makes physical contact.

The supervisor is drowsy, falls asleep, doesn't attend, gives lots of advice, takes responsibility for the supervisee's work, does all the work in the session, responds to words and misses feelings, takes the 'expert' role, talks a lot about his/her own experience.

The supervisee arrives unprepared, doesn't focus on actual events, doesn't mention things s/he feels uncomfortable with, avoids some aspects of her/his work altogether, ignores her/his true feelings, asks for lots of information or advice, expects the supervisor to tell him/her what to do.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. In what ways are you clearer about what supervision is and what it is for?
2. In what ways are you clearer about what to expect from supervision?
3. Are there any questions you want to raise about what has been said?
4. Are there any things you want to add to what has been said?
5. (a) **ELDERS:** The Code of Ethics of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand requires ministers to use 'regular approved supervision'. What does your parish do to support them in this?

(b) Do you think ministers would benefit from the kind of supervision described in these guidelines?
6. (a) **MINISTERS:** Is there anything in these guidelines which is inconsistent with your view of ministry?

(b) Is there anything in these guidelines which encourages you to rethink what you are doing about supervision at present?
7. What suggestions do you have for ways in which presbytery/UDC could make it easier for ministers to obtain good supervision?

EXCERPT FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006

The following excerpt from General Assembly 2006 comes from notice of motion [06.047] as presented by the Book of Order and Judicial Reference Group. To read the General Assembly minutes in full, please refer to www.presbyterian.org.nz

Book of Order and Judicial Reference Group

Convener Mr John Marshall presented the report of the reference group.

Mr Marshall moved and it was seconded:

- [06.047] That the amendments to the Book of Order contained in the report of the Book of Order and Judicial Reference Group be approved:
- “88A
- In order to ensure that children and young persons in the Congregation are kept safe, Sessions or Parish Councils shall develop and implement a Safety and Protection policy in respect of children and young persons who are under their care. This policy may include checks, including police vetting checks, as appropriate, on all persons who are involved in the care or supervision or religious education of children and young persons to ensure that they are responsible and of good character, and suitable to be involved in positions of responsibility with children and young persons.
- a) new regulation 88B:
- “88B
- (i) All persons, who are engaged, in a paid capacity, by Sessions or Parish Councils, in positions involving ministry with children and young persons, and families, shall, as a minimum requirement:
- a. Participate in a course of training relating to safety and protection issues which is approved by the Sessions or Parish Councils concerned;
 - b. Accept, and have professional supervision of their work from a suitably qualified person who is not a member of the parish concerned.**
 - c. Be subject to a police vetting check.
- (ii) Where the appointee for a position involving ministry with children and young persons, and families, does not in the opinion of the Session or Parish Council have a relevant qualification, or previous experience working with children, young persons and families, such persons shall be encouraged to undertake a suitable course involving the following areas:
- a. Vision and goals for ministry with children;
 - b. Biblical foundations;
 - c. Understanding children;
 - d. Models and strategies for ministry with children;
 - e. Safety and protection issues;
 - f. Developing skills for ministry with children;
 - g. Resources and guidelines.

b) new regulation 172:

“172

(s) When employing any person, in a paid capacity, in a position involving ministry with children and young persons, and families, Presbyteries shall follow the requirements of Regulations 88A and 88B, as if, in place of the words “*Sessions and Parish Councils*”, the word “*Presbyteries*”, was inserted”

c) amend appendix E-17:

Delete 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 of Appendix E-17 and replace them with the following:

2.6.2 In respect of all ministry appointments made after 25 September 2004 ministers are required to be supervised on an ongoing basis. Subject to Presbytery’s approval of the supervisor, ministers are responsible for arranging their own supervision.

2.6.3 Presbyteries shall maintain lists of suitable supervisors and shall arrange training courses for supervisors.

2.6.4 Boards of Nomination are to include in their discussion the importance of supervision for the minister they may nominate.

d) amend appendix E-20:

Add to Appendix E-20 on page 239 of the Book of Order under the heading

Assembly Employees and the subheading Appointments as a new list item (11) as follows :

(11) When employing any person in a paid capacity in a position involving ministry with children and young persons, and families, the Council, the Assembly Executive Secretary, or the Service Team Leader shall follow the requirements of Regulations 88A and 88B, as if, in place of the words Session and Parish Councils, the words ‘the Council, the Assembly Executive Secretary, or Service Team Leader’ were inserted.