

# 1 The role of supervision in contemporary psychological practice: an introduction and orientation

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this book is to enable you to develop a personalized approach to supervision, one that is grounded in the available literature and fit for purpose for your particular setting and style of practice. This, we believe, is an ambitious aim. Although as psychologists much of our learning, growing and decision-making will be supported by and scrutinized within supervision, supervision itself is a complex activity. Its influence on practice is also still, arguably, relatively poorly understood.

Typically held in high regard but underpinned by a limited evidence base, there are currently few substantive guidelines on how to develop a robust, context-sensitive approach that takes account of the learning needs of those being supervised, facilitates optimum practice for the benefit of clients and meets the needs of a variety of additional stakeholders who may remain 'silent partners' throughout the process. As Lesser astutely observed, 'It is important to be aware that the supervisory room is crowded with all sorts of "persons" who create anxieties for both the supervisor and the supervisee' (1983: 126). In this book, we aim to help you become more aware of those 'persons' who 'crowd' the supervisory room for you personally, become clearer about how their influence enables or constrains the work that you do, and ultimately refine your contribution to professional psychology – whatever form this may take.

## **Psychology and supervision**

As professional psychology has expanded and diversified, formats, styles and processes of supervision have evolved to match. There are now myriad ways in which

supervision can be delivered and received. For many branches of professional psychology and for the bodies which accredit them, supervision is deemed central to professional development, competence and quality assurance. Indeed, the British Psychological Society (BPS) now has a 'Register of Applied Psychology Practice Supervisors'. Open to all psychologists who hold chartered status, the Register is designed to recognize those with specialist skills in supervision, heralding the beginnings within psychology of a formal recognition of supervision as a distinct domain of professional expertise.

However, within the sub-disciplines of psychology there have been marked differences in philosophy and practice. For example, until recently within the BPS the discipline of clinical psychology viewed the ability to practise without supervision as the hallmark of a qualified psychologist. Only in 2013 did this position change such that clinical psychologists identified supervision as a requirement for all psychologists rather than an activity provided for trainees. In contrast, a defining feature of counselling psychology has been its historic commitment to supervision as a 'whole career' activity. This reflects a difference in values as well as practice. For counselling psychologists (as for counsellors and psychotherapists) the 'person' of the psychologist is deemed to be a critical part of the engagement with clients. For practitioners working from this value-base, interventions are not organized first and foremost around 'evidence-based practice' (however carefully this might be applied to the needs of the individual client). Rather, practitioners and clients are engaged in a joint endeavour in which growth emerges through the interaction between them. This perspective has significant implications for the aims, structure and focus of supervision.

In some of the newer fields of applied psychology, such as coaching psychology, the conflict between supervision as a process for trainees and as a career-long process has been evident. Coaching psychology has shared the broader debate in the coaching arena with a gradual move towards the idea of supervision for all. Yet the issues faced by psychologists vary greatly as a function of the context in which they work and the type of psychology they practice. These contextual differences generate different purposes for supervision, draw upon diverse perspectives to inform the way supervision is understood and lead to a wide variety of supervision processes and procedures.

The ways in which the different psychological disciplines currently understand and apply supervision are described in detail in the subsequent chapters of this book. For now, it is sufficient to note that supervision is an emerging specialism within psychology. The fact that it is emerging now (as opposed to, say, 30 years ago) is a function of the ways in which psychological practice is evolving, the changing expectations of an increasingly diverse range of stakeholders and the myriad competencies that psychologists need to provide an effective service to their clients. These factors have significant implications for how supervision is defined, and its functions understood.

## Questions of definition and function

The supervision literature is extensive, although the scientific status and rigour of much of the research in this area has been questioned (e.g. Ellis et al., 1996), and Milne and Reiser (2016) comment on the fact that, ‘. . .we await a scientifically-informed consensus on many of the core aspects of best practice’. Nevertheless, the literature presents the reader with a confection of interesting and potentially highly relevant themes, perspectives, findings and dilemmas from which to consider supervisory practice. Some of the more obvious of these (which also find their way into the chapters of this book) include:

- supervision as a function of theoretical or therapeutic orientation;
- process models;
- stage-based approaches (e.g. as a function of career stage);
- formats of delivery (e.g. individual, group, live supervision);
- the impact of the supervisory relationship;
- the management of process issues in supervision (e.g. the notion of ‘parallel process’);
- the impact of the wider context(s) in which supervision is delivered and received;
- ethical and legal issues;
- how to organize and manage the impact of evaluation of competence;
- assessment tools for establishing the impact of supervision and of supervisor expertise;
- teaching and researching supervision.

The range of themes explored in conjunction with the relative lack of empirically-substantiated findings means that navigating this literature for the purposes of enhancing supervision can be a challenge. Perhaps, therefore, a useful starting point is to attempt to arrive at an understanding of its primary functions through sampling some of the more commonly held definitions.

The issue of how supervision is understood and defined relates closely to the purpose which it is designed to serve (a point that we discuss in detail in Chapter 2). Unsurprisingly, therefore, a number of definitions exist, each emphasizing certain aspects of the task over others. Writing from the perspective of clinical practice, for example, Bernard and Goodyear (2014: 9) propose that,

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.

Along similar lines, the Department of Health defines supervision as ‘. . . a formal process of professional support and learning which enables individual practitioners to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for their own practice and enhance consumer protection and safety of care in complex clinical situations’ (2003: 3). Working across professional contexts, Hawkins and Shohet (2012: 60) refer to supervision as

...a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client/practitioner relationship and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession.

Lane and Corrie, concerned with the multiple formats in which supervision can be provided as a function of work context and career stage (they emphasize that as a ‘whole career’ activity, the form adopted is likely to vary at different developmental stages), adopt a more fluid and flexible definition in which supervision is understood as ‘. . . a formal, independent process of reflection and review which enables practitioners to increase individual self-awareness, develop their competence and critique their work’ (2006: 192).

Taking just these four definitions as examples, what emerges is that, despite privileging diverse areas of focus, there is a shared view of supervision as serving potentially multiple functions which coalesce around fostering competence for the benefit of clients and other stakeholders, developing, supporting and nurturing the professional and evaluating performance (however formally or informally this might occur) for the purposes of quality assurance.

In her helpful and oft-cited framework, Proctor (1987) has differentiated the roles of evaluator, educator and mentor (the so-called ‘normative, formative and restorative’ functions). Milne (2009) highlights how supervision overlaps with other interventions such as therapy, coaching and mentoring, while Schofield and Grant (2013) emphasize the role of supervision as providing protection against the risk of burnout and distress. These different functions draw attention to the multiple – and at times potentially conflicting – responsibilities that the supervisor holds and which will shape the nature and development of the working relationship in critical ways. Each of these roles has different implications for contracting, for the aims and objectives of the work that follows and for how a supervisee’s progress is monitored and evaluated (and by whom). Herein lies one of the central challenges of delivering effective supervision: namely, that what is required of

supervisors is the capacity to synthesize the different roles of mentor, educator/trainer and ‘examiner’ and to move seamlessly between them in order to ensure that supervisees experience the supervisor as a consistent, facilitative presence.

### **Faith and fact: the hiatus between belief in supervision and the evidence base**

Although the supervision literature is extensive and supervision is held in high esteem by the psychological professions (Watkins and Milne, 2014) and policy-makers (Department of Health, 2004) alike, we noted at the start of this chapter that enthusiasm for supervision currently outstrips the evidence base, including the evidence that attests to its impact on practice. Moreover, while the literature provides a broad range of methods and theories that relate to the development of *supervisees*, historically relatively little attention has been paid to the development of *supervisors* (Bernard and Goodyear, 2014). This is not, of course, to suggest that our collective faith in supervision is necessarily misplaced, but rather that the conscientious practitioner cannot rely on the extant literature to provide clear, systematic guidance underpinned by quality research.

The hiatus between research and practice is perhaps not entirely surprising when we consider the speed at which professional psychology has evolved. As Lunt (2006) observed, over the last half century, the contexts in which psychologists work have changed beyond recognition. She specifically cites employment and working contexts, the rise of evidence-based practice and the structural and organizational links between science and practice at an international level as key changes which have impacted how psychologists understand and approach their work. Nonetheless, we cannot easily sidestep Watkins’ (1997) earlier challenge that if supervision is so critical to practitioner performance, there can ultimately be no justification for the fact that training to become a supervisor, and opportunities for relevant continuing professional development, remain limited. The state of affairs is particularly problematic given psychology’s professed allegiance to the scientist-practitioner model (see Lane and Corrie, 2006) and the belief that practice should, wherever possible, be evidence based.

Of course Watkins’ comment was made some years ago. The evidence base for supervision, its impact on practice and how best to develop an optimally effective supervisory workforce remains limited (Barker and Hunsley, 2013) and Milne (2009) calls for greater precision (differentiating one activity from another) and specification (identifying the operationalizing elements which supervision entails). Nonetheless, more recently there has been some significant scholarly activity (see e.g. Milne and Dunkerley, 2010; Watkins, 2012a, 2012b; Barker and Hunsley, 2013; Goodyear et al., 2014; Watkins and Wang, 2014). It would seem that the academic and practitioner ‘spotlight’ is turning increasingly towards supervision as both a legitimate and critical domain of investigation. This book takes

its place alongside the contributions of other scholars who are committed to furthering the knowledge base of psychological supervision, in the hope of better supporting those who seek to develop their supervisory practice in thoughtful, creative and contextually responsive ways.

### **Introducing the purpose, perspective, process model**

In order to navigate a proliferating literature and the rapidly expanding discipline that is supervision it can be useful to have an organizing framework to support individual planning. We offer one such framework here: the purpose, perspective, process (PPP) model.

The PPP model (Lane, 2002) was originally developed for the purposes of guiding practitioners in co-constructing formulations with their clients (based on original work by Lane, 1974, 1978, 1990a, 1998). Its application to formulation in applied psychology has since been developed (see Corrie and Lane, 2010 for a detailed review), offered as a framework for guiding professional enquiry more generally (Lane and Corrie, 2006), adapted for the purposes of coaching (Corrie, 2009; Lane and Corrie, 2009), research (Blumberg and Lane, 2011) and in management and broader areas such as practitioner development in veterinary primary care (it provided a framework for the development of education for such care, see Fillery-Travis et al., 2007).

The PPP model is underpinned by a belief that psychological practice needs to be informed by a shared framework of enquiry. This framework enables practitioner and client to co-construct a narrative that assists the planning and delivery of an intervention (however loosely or tightly this is defined) in the pursuit of the agreed goals. Purpose, perspective and process represent the three core themes that underpin and guide how the work unfolds.

Succinctly (for a more detailed description see Chapter 2 of this book), purpose is concerned with the fundamental nature of the enquiry and the primary reason for embarking upon a psychological approach. According to the PPP model, neither an intervention nor indeed a psychological assessment can be undertaken with any confidence until the purpose of the enquiry has been clarified and agreed by all parties. Essentially concerned with establishing, 'Where are we going and why?', attending to Purpose entails engagement with the following kinds of question:

- What is the question we wish to explore?
- What are our expectations and those of other stakeholders?
- What role do we each wish to play?
- What do we need to appreciate in our context that gives meaning to this activity?
- What boundaries does this imply?

**Pause for reflection**

You may find it useful to consider your own response to these questions, taking one or two recent examples from your own sphere of professional practice to guide you. On reflection, how clearly formulated is the Purpose that guides your professional practice and approach to supervision?

The perspective theme of the PPP model (see Chapter 3) is concerned with the attitudes, assumptions and beliefs brought to the work and which shape the choices made. These include the ‘foundational assumptions’ (Mahrer, 2000) of our professions and regulatory bodies as well as those we have inherited from living and working in a particular culture at a particular point in our history. These foundational assumptions inform judgements about what constitutes appropriate knowledge and methods of intervention and what does not. As such, some perspectives will be easier to excavate and evaluate than others. Essentially concerned with establishing, ‘What will inform our journey?’ clarification of Perspective entails engagement with the following kinds of question:

- What perspectives (attitudes, assumptions, beliefs) are informing your approach?
- What perspectives are informing your supervisor’s/supervisee’s approach?
- What are the beliefs (helpful and unhelpful) you each bring to the encounter?
- How do you ensure coherence between your outlook and that of your supervisor/supervisee?

**Pause for reflection**

You may find it useful to consider your own response to these questions, taking one or two recent examples from your own sphere of professional practice to guide you. On reflection, what are some of the chief Perspectives that have been informing your professional practice and approach to supervision?

In light of the purpose and perspective taken, process (Chapter 4) is concerned with determining the methods, tools, procedures or processes that will be optimum for achieving desired outcomes and which might be prohibited. Essentially concerned with establishing, ‘What happens when you work together?’, clarification of process entails engagement with the following kinds of question:

- What process do you use to ensure that the purpose agreed was met?
- What constraints arise from the perspectives you (as supervisor or supervisee) bring to the encounter?
- What constraints arise from the perspectives that the other person (as supervisor or supervisee) brings to the encounter?
- How do you choose to structure the process for the work?
- Do you have a generic process for the work or is it particular to the supervisee and the needs of their clients, or one that emerges in the moment?

### Pause for reflection

You may find it helpful to consider your own response to these questions, taking one or two recent examples from your own sphere of professional practice to guide you. On reflection, what are some of the chief processes that have been dominant in your work? Can you trace these back to the Purpose and Perspectives that underpin them?

We believe that the PPP model offers a useful way of exploring, critiquing and developing supervisory practice for several reasons. First, because the PPP model is an atheoretical framework, it can accommodate a variety of theoretical positions, constructs, models and approaches to intervention. As such it provides a helpful structure that also affords the practitioner considerable flexibility in adapting specific content to their preferred approach. Second, anecdotally, the PPP has a high degree of face validity among practitioners who have applied it. Third, it is tried and tested across a range of contexts (see Gray et al., 2016).

Finally, in terms of bringing a rigour and discipline to our decision-making, the PPP model reminds us to excavate, reflect upon, critique and anchor our interventions within the broader frameworks of meaning from which they originate. Writing from the perspective of coaching, Drake (2008) highlights how professionals today are immersed in what he terms, 'a culture of pragmatism'. One potential consequence of this is a climate in which psychologists' thinking can tend to divorce content (such as deciding which intervention to use) from context (that is, systems of meaning from which the selected intervention originated). (Wheelahan, 2007, has made a similar point in her critique of competence models.)

For example, psychologists may find themselves working in services that receive 'payment by results', may be expected to deliver outcomes in highly prescribed and short-term time frames and have their own performance scrutinized and judged according to the outcomes they obtain. Corrie et al. (2016) comment on how this organizing culture can exert a tacit influence of 'cutting to the chase', creating a tendency to seek prescriptive solutions in ways that may prevent a



sufficiently thorough exploration of clients' needs and result in premature (and potentially misguided) intervention. Although certain disciplines within applied psychology may be more impacted than others, it is important to appreciate how cultural trends shape our practice not just explicitly but also implicitly. By requiring us to understand the purpose of any psychological enquiry, along with the perspectives brought to it, the PPP model can help redress the balance, ensuring that we are aware of the range of influences that sit behind our choice of process.

## **An introduction to the book**

The PPP is the principle framework that we use to achieve the aims of this book. Our primary objective is to enhance your knowledge about psychological supervision and to provide a framework that can facilitate the development of a personalized model of practice. More specifically, we hope to:

- engage you in a process of 'growing' your own framework for supervision;
- consider different foundations for practice including research, theory and reflection on experience;
- orient you to key debates within the literature and help you decide how these debates relate to your own practice;
- explore different formats of supervision as a function of career stage and context;
- provide through case examples and practical exercises a means for you to critique your practice;
- explore ways of delivering, using and evaluating supervision;
- clarify some of the contextual issues which enable and disable effective practice;
- address a number of complex issues such as the role of mirrored trauma between client, practitioner and supervisor.

The book is presented in three parts. Part 1 comprises three opening chapters in addition to this one, which explore issues relating to the purpose, perspectives and processes of psychological supervision. This section provides an approach to reflecting on some of the key issues outlined earlier in this chapter and offers a building block for subsequent chapters including the case studies of Part 2. In Part 3 we synthesize some of the main themes presented in the earlier chapters to consider implications for future practice and taking forward your own learning and development.

More specifically, Chapter 2 attends to the issue of how to define the purpose of the supervision you provide. It introduces the idea that to be optimally effective, supervision cannot be understood merely as the application of a specific

process (however clearly defined and evidence based that process might be) but is rather an endeavour that is meaningful in the context in which the relationship is manifest. This entails defining a purpose that makes sense for the parties who have come together for the purposes of exploring, critiquing and refining practice, as well as encompassing the expectations of other stakeholders who may include clients, team members, employers, government departments, and professional and licensing authorities. Through working with the material in this chapter, you will be able to consider how to define your own purpose in supervision.

Chapter 3 explores how different perspectives inform the supervision provided. In many texts, these perspectives are considered from the point of view of varying theoretical positions (e.g. humanistic, systemic, psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioural, etc.). The chapter takes a different view, embedding the notion of perspective in a broad range of influences that inform the journey taken. Inviting readers to focus a lens on the assumptions that underpin their understanding of, and approach to, supervision, this chapter examines perspective-taking itself, introduces a personal learning cycle to elaborate the reader's self-guided understanding of how new learning can be assimilated into practice and uses three case vignettes to illustrate some of the many forms of learning to which supervision can give rise. Through working with the material in this chapter, you will be able to identify and consider the impact of the perspectives that inform your supervisory approach, as well as any perspectives that you may wish to draw upon to guide the development of your future practice.

Drawing on the defining aspects of purpose and the perspectives which are brought to supervision, Chapter 4 considers the critical issue of what actually happens when you work together: that is, the process that emerges. Regardless of the amount of preparation undertaken and the supervisor's level of skill, what unfolds during supervision is always to some extent uncertain. This chapter helps you consider how to build a process for practice to manage what is known or can be established in advance (e.g. a supervisee's baseline level of competence, or their stage of career development) and what is perhaps unknown (e.g. how a supervisee seeks out and responds to corrective feedback). Through working with the material in Chapter 4 and exploring relevant factors, you will be able to identify and consider the processes that you typically use, reflect on their impact and identify ways of working with process that can enable you to refine your approach.

Part 2 of the book, comprising chapters from our contributors, explores how the PPP model can be applied to specific contexts in which psychological supervision is delivered. Thus we have contributions from clinical psychology, health psychology, forensic psychology, educational psychology, sports psychology, counselling psychology, coaching psychology and occupational psychology.

An important caveat is that in inviting these contributions, we have not aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of supervision across all areas of applied

psychology. The breadth of application is too broad for a single text to represent adequately the diverse and innovative ways in which psychological practice is delivered and supervised. Instead, we have focused on what might be considered some of the core areas of psychological practice and on using the PPP framework to identify some of the myriad ways in which psychologists from different disciplines might approach supervision. Each chapter is different in outlook, approach and focus and while some consider psychological supervision primarily through the lens of being a supervisor, others organize their accounts predominantly through focusing on the position of the supervisee. Through this diversity of emphasis we hope that you will have maximum opportunity to garner a rich range of ideas and approaches that can inform the development of a more personalized approach.

In Part 3 of the book, and drawing upon the material and themes of the previous chapters, we identify shared issues that all involved in psychological supervision need to consider. These include areas such as lifelong learning and the need to embed self-care in any professional development planning. By synthesizing learning from the chapters that precede it, this final chapter should leave you equipped to take forward your own learning and development (including identifying any support mechanisms that need to be in place to achieve this).

### **Who is the book for and how to use it?**

This book seeks to meet the needs of all of those who deliver and receive psychological supervision as part of their professional practice. It is also intended for those who draw upon psychological perspectives to inform their supervision in other fields. For those who are reading from the perspective of being a supervisee, the book can offer the basis for a negotiated approach with intended supervisors. For supervisors, it offers a means of better understanding the value they add and how best to negotiate with supervisees a framework for specific contracted relationships. The book will also address the issue of the organizational culture for supervision and the regulatory frameworks that are emerging at local, national and international levels.

Primarily, we seek to meet the needs of supervisors and supervisees operating in 'real world' contexts where learning, development and the evaluation of competence may serve multiple and potentially conflicting agendas. We hope, therefore, that the book will be useful for a wide range of professionals including:

- those starting out in their supervisory careers and who are seeking a broad framework that can represent a 'scaffolding' on which to build knowledge, competence and skills in defined areas;
- experienced practitioners seeking to 'deconstruct' their approach in order to reflect upon, critique and refine their practice;

- those who sense that, for whatever reason, their delivery or use of supervision has become stale and habitual and are seeking fresh perspectives that can reinvigorate their practice;
- those who sense that their approach to supervision has become uncritically dominated by one approach or model, or has become overly constrained by stakeholder expectations (e.g. case management pressures specific to a particular service or commissioning agreement) and who wish to stand back and reflect upon the impact of these influences;
- those tasked with the responsibility for training supervisors to deliver supervision in a particular context;
- those who are seeking to gain the most out of the supervision provided to them – whether individually ‘commissioned’ or delivered within the context of an employing service.

In order to gain the most from this book we would encourage you to personalize your reading and the questions and exercises to your individual learning and development needs. This task will be made easier if, before getting underway, you first give some thought to what you most need at this point in your career.

You will also find it helpful to give some thought to how best to facilitate your learning. Having a system of recording to document insights, reflections or questions is very helpful. If you are undertaking formal supervision training, receive ‘supervision of your supervision’ or participate in peer group supervision, you may wish to share your reading and observations in these settings. We also encourage you to interact with the material, reflect upon its implications for the supervision you deliver and receive, and conduct some ‘safe to fail’ experiments with the ideas and methods that intrigue you. By doing so, we hope that you are challenged to think about your practice in new ways and that the ideas, methods and models explored provide some fruitful food for thought as well as opportunities for discussion and debate.

We have sought to draw widely from the literature, looking beyond models derived by psychologists to disciplines that include adult education, coaching, leadership, organizational theory and psychotherapy (among others). However, consistent with the aims of this book, we do not attempt to provide an exhaustive review of the supervision literature. Rather, the aim has been to draw selectively on ideas to illustrate key points that have substantive implications for practice. Although it is important to be aware that this book is not intended to be a substitute for supervision or indeed supervisor training, we hope that by engaging with the topics discussed and the reflective exercises provided you might have greater confidence in creating your own approach – one that is sensitive to your stakeholders and which enables others to benefit optimally from what you have to offer.

## Conclusion

As authors and editors of this volume, we bring considerable experience of both providing and receiving supervision of many different kinds. We are also subjected to the influences described in the previous sections of this chapter. Our understanding of, approaches to and uses of supervision are all inevitably shaped by living and working in a culture that can at times seem overly preoccupied with targets and outcomes at the expense of reflective practice and journeys of discovery. Like you, our reader, we are immersed in a professional world that privileges evidence-based practice and empirically supported interventions at the same time as requiring us to operate effectively in emerging areas of practice where no adequate knowledge base exists, or is of minimal assistance to the dilemmas we encounter in the 'real world'.

We share a belief in the unique and remarkable opportunities for learning and development that supervision can offer. We also share a long-standing commitment to supporting and nurturing the professional development of others. It will come as no surprise, then, to learn that in coming together as a team of editors, we sought an approach to working that reflected and honoured the supervisory process itself. In short, we chose to create this book through working together as peer supervisors who, throughout, remained committed not just to the project but also to one another's learning and development as practitioners, as scholars and as writers.

This intention extended to the collaborative way in which we have worked with our guest contributors and is reflected in the way in which we have chosen to 'voice' the book. Specifically, we have sought to give expression to some of the many ways in which supervision can be experienced rather than trying to condense the book into a single style that might ultimately obscure more than it illuminates. Therefore, and perhaps unusually for an academic book, you will find that some authors have chosen to use personal pronouns in preference to the more typical and 'distant' passive voice. The authors of these chapters have chosen to do so in response to fundamental beliefs about the nature of the supervisory journey itself, reflecting a desire to remain true to the personal engagement with learning and development or to highlight how emerging understandings of self and other are embedded in relationship. In other chapters, you will find the authors adopt a more 'aerial' perspective, intentionally stepping outside of their individual learning journeys to consider some of the broader issues that confront their specific fields of practice. Again, where this occurs, it reflects a choice to adopt a particular perspective on supervision and the myriad functions it can serve. We encourage you, as you read the different narratives and narrative styles, to embrace these different styles, to consider the extent to which each might apply to your own journey and in what ways.

Ultimately, and regardless of the settings in which you are delivering and receiving supervision and the professional path that is your own career, we hope that you will find this book to be a useful, informative and enjoyable companion on your road to becoming a more effective supervisor.

**Exercise 1.1 Reflecting on your experiences of supervision to date**

Before you read any further, we invite you to begin by reflecting on your own experiences of supervision so far in your career.

Starting with your own experiences of the supervision that you have *received*, give some thought to which experiences were the most and least helpful. Can you identify the elements, qualities of engagement or characteristics of the learning environment that influenced the quality of that experience?

Then, if you have or are currently *providing* supervision consider which, in your opinion, have been the most and least effective of the experiences you have offered. What were the elements, qualities of engagement or characteristics of the learning environment that influenced the quality of that experience?

Finally, if you were in a position to ask yourself the second question, are the elements of influence the same or different when you were receiving and delivering supervision? If they are different, why do you think this is the case?

Return to your responses periodically as you read through the different chapters of this book to see if any new ideas or insights emerge.

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