

PETRA VIDEMŠEK

# SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK

Learning from Success



PETRA VIDEMŠEK

# SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK

Learning from Success

**Petra Videmšek**

**SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK: Learning from Success**

This book is translation of the work by Petra Videmšek titled *Supervizija v socialnem delu: Učenje na podlagi dobrih izkušenj*, published in 2023 by University of Ljubljana Press (Založba Univerze v Ljubljani)

**Translator:** Arven Šakti Kraj

**Reviewers:** Alenka Kobolt, Kristina Urbanc

**Cover design:** Branka Smodiš

**Layout design:** Branka Smodiš, Andrej Juvan (Camera d.o.o.)

**Published by:** University of Ljubljana Press

**For the publisher:** Gregor Majdič, Rector of the University of Ljubljana

**Issued by:** Faculty of social work, University of Ljubljana

**For the issuer:** Mojca Urek, Dean of the Faculty of social work, University of Ljubljana Ljubljana, 2024

First edition

**Printed by:** Camera, d. o. o., Ljubljana

**Numbers of copies:** 100

**Price:** 0 EUR

The book was published with the support of the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (except photographs).

First e-edition.

Publication is available in open access at: <https://ebooks.uni-lj.si/>

DOI: 10.51741/9789616569828

---

Katalogna zapisa o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v  
Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

**Tiskana knjiga**

COBISS.SI-ID=190155779

ISBN 978-961-297-296-7

**E-knjiga**

COBISS.SI-ID=190160899

ISBN 978-961-6569-82-8 (PDF)

# CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>7</b>
CHAPTER ONE	
<b>DEVELOPING SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK: FROM MENTORING TO SUPPORTING</b>	<b>17</b>
WHAT IS SUPERVISION?	17
Has supervision stimulated the development of the social work profession?	22
THE FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION	26
Administrative function	28
Educational function	32
Supportive function	35
Mediation function	38
APPROACHES TO SUPERVISION	42
Development of supervision in Slovenia	58
Summary	69
CHAPTER TWO	
<b>FROM TRADITIONAL TO POSITIVE SUPERVISION</b>	<b>71</b>
Theoretical foundations for the development of traditional supervision	72
The impact of social movements on changes in supervision	97
The impact of the concept of the strengths perspective on changes in supervision	101
The impact of therapeutic approaches on changes in supervision	110
SOLUTION-FOCUSED SUPERVISION	113
POSITIVE SUPERVISION	121
Forms and ways of giving feedback	130
Differences between traditional and positive supervision	136
Summary	139
CHAPTER THREE	
<b>SPECIFIC FEATURES IN IMPLEMENTING SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK</b>	<b>141</b>
Co-creation in supervision	141
Working relationships of co-creation in supervision	144
Summary	159

CHAPTER FOUR	
<b>REFLECTION AS A LEARNING PROCESS IN SUPERVISION</b>	<b>161</b>
The importance of reflection in supervision	162
Summary	200
CHAPTER FIVE	
<b>THE FRAMEWORK OF WORK IN SUPERVISION</b>	<b>203</b>
Conditions for the supervision process	205
The stages of the supervision cycle	210
The structure of the supervision meeting	228
Ethics in supervision	238
CHAPTER SIX	
<b>THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE AS PROTECTION AGAINST COMPASSION FATIGUE</b>	<b>251</b>
The development of a self-care culture	257
Understanding the need for self-care – why the cobbler's children go barefoot	261
Daily self-care in practice	266
How we can practise self-care as supervisors	282
BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION:	
<b>WHY WE NEED SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>REVIEWS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THE BOOK</b>	<b>325</b>
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	327

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A book is never written in isolation. Although only my name appears on the cover as the author of the book, many people have contributed to its content in significant ways.

At this point, I would like to express my special thanks to the ANSE intervision group. Olga Pashko (Ukraine), Siri Meyer (Norway), Lina Danusevičienė and Ligita Jakučionytė (Lithuania), Adrienne van Doorn (Netherlands) Jeanne-Elvire Adotevi (France), Johanna Wahlbeck (Finland) and Piret Bristol (Estonia) have been a real source of inspiration and stimulus for new steps. Without your valuable encouragement and feedback at the book launch, I would certainly not have considered having the book translated.

Special thanks go to Prof. Shulamit Ramon from the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield, who has guided and supported me for many years and enabled me to grow both professionally and personally through supervision. Thank you for discussing the book's contents with me from the onset and especially for providing helpful suggestions in addressing the subject matter. Your organisational help during my time in Cambridge was simply invaluable and enabled me to conduct a series of interviews with experts in the field of supervision and also gain insight into supervision practices in England. Thank you, Shula, for the many years of mentorship that goes beyond simple mentoring support. Thank you for the confidence and courage you instil in me in every supervision session.

I would also like to thank the Chair of the Department of Methods and Theories of Help at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, Asst. Prof. Lea Šugman Bohinc, who selflessly shared her knowledge about supervision with me, supported me in the process of taking up the subject and encouraged me on the path of creating new content.

I would like to express my greatest appreciation to my supervision teacher, mentor and supervisor Vida Milošević Arnold, who initiated supervision in the field of social work in Slovenia. Thank you, Vida, for introducing me to the world of supervision, supporting my curiosity and entrusting me with this field of work.

My special thanks go to the reviewers, Assoc. Prof. Alenka Kobolt from the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, and Prof. Kristina Urbanc from the Social Work Study Centre at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb.

I greatly appreciate them both, as they are experts in the field of supervision, and I am glad that they took over the reading of the manuscript when it was still in its roughest form. I am grateful for your support, your comments and your trust. Without you, the text would not be what it is today.

Finally, I would like to thank the translator Arven Šakti Kralj, who withstood all my pressures and the demands of time and did an excellent job, as well as the publisher Borut Petrović Jesenovec, who burnt the midnight oil to ensure the publication of the book and a stress-free process with the book's release.

The translation of the book was supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency. The results were obtained as part of the research programme P5-0058: Social Work as the Bearer of the Processes of Social Justice and Inclusion in Slovenia – Theoretical, Methodological and Methodical Perspectives and Historical Development. The activities were (co)funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency

## FOREWORD

There is more than one motivation for publishing a translation of this book. The main reason is certainly the international intervision meetings, which have shown the diverse ways of conducting supervision sessions and the specifics of their implementation as practised in Slovenia. The supervisors from the intervision group encouraged me to have the book translated and thus also provide others with the opportunity to learn from the Slovenian experience of conducting the supervision process.

The second reason is certainly that, as a supervisor myself, I have learned how to conduct supervision in different contexts. I have had the opportunity to learn and be supported by supervisors from both England and Slovenia, so with this book, I want to show how I have put what I have learned into practice.

The third reason is the overwhelming response to the Slovenian edition of the book. The first edition of the Slovenian version of the book sold out immediately. I have received many compliments on the work, both from colleagues in the academic field and from supervisors and practitioners.

What motivated me most in my writing was the realisation that most things are learned not from mistakes but from good experiences. And this is the main reason why I decided to write a book that shows the value of these experiences that were shared with me during supervision sessions. In this book, I will demonstrate the importance of supervision, which is in social work linked to the profession in a specific way. The first aim of the book is therefore to demonstrate the need to provide practitioners with supervision as a fundamental tool for good, competent social work.

Supervision was, and still is, recognised as a necessary part of practice, although a review of the literature shows that there is little

evidence of what this service actually means in practice (Ming-sum, 2005; Wonnacott, 2014). All this, of course, shows that supervision is a very complex process that needs to be flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of the group. It is a lifelong learning process for the practitioner.

It is certainly a process that focuses on relationships, both at the level of the practitioner and at the level of the organisation, the wider social and societal environment. This was another reason for me to explore the dimensions of supervision and the supervision processes. I am aware that supervision is a complex process, so in this book, I focus mainly on the most widespread practices in Slovenia. In contrast to the Anglo-Saxon world (Brown and Bourne, 1996; Wonnacott, 2014; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Knott and Scragg, 2016; Bruce, 2013), group supervision is the most widespread in Slovenia. Therefore, I have analysed and written mostly about group supervision as the most widely used approach to supervision practice in Slovenia.

The research material presented in this book was obtained through a combination of research methods. Firstly, I undertook a very systematic review of the literature on supervision. In reviewing the literature, I found that we have gone through several stages in the supervision process, which I defined as the transition from traditional supervision to positive supervision. I then began qualitative research, starting with focus groups and in-depth interviews with supervisors (2017), and continuing with in-depth interviews with supervisors (2018). In addition, in the book I used documentation on the supervision processes (agreements, reports, evaluations) that I received from supervisors in the field of social care (2018–2020). For the research, I also used secondary material on the development of supervision in Slovenia, which is kept at the Faculty of Social Work and also at the Social Chamber of Slovenia. In order to compare supervision processes, I conducted several in-depth interviews with supervisors in the field of social care in England (specifically in Cambridge and Hatfield) from April to July 2019 and gained insight into their implementation of supervision processes. I chose England primarily because I was there as part of a three-month study exchange. Through a combination of methods and a longitu-

dinal study, I was able to incorporate different aspects of the study of supervision processes and multiple perspectives.

I have divided the chapters of the book into seven main themes. In *Chapter One* I focus on the definition of supervision and the key issues that are essential to the supervision process: relationships, support, strengths and the importance of process in learning. I show that supervision is an art of interacting with people that requires a high degree of flexibility to find different ways of working, new, aesthetic forms of cooperation that deliver desired outcomes.

Since definitions of supervision depend to a large extent on the time in which they emerged, in this chapter I present a more detailed history of the development of supervision and show the fundamental paradigmatic changes that have taken place not only in the social work profession but also in supervision. I begin my historical overview with the onset of the development of supervision, in the United States, from where the first forms of supervision learning and awareness of its importance originate. I go on to outline the various functions that supervision has had throughout history and show how these functions have evolved over time from traditional (educational, supportive and managerial) to meditative functions. I also present the role of the supervisor through the various tasks of supervision (Kadushin, 1976, 1985; Milošević Arnold, 1997, 2004; Kobolt, 2002, 2004; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000; Bruce, 2013; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012, Wonnacott, 2014).

Although in this book I focus mainly on group supervision as an approach that is not only more cost-effective but also has many other positive effects on the practitioner's development, I also present other possible supervision approaches (individual, team, peer, personal supervision) and the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the development of supervision in Slovenia. I write about supervision in and for social work. I had the opportunity to learn more about supervision in England and I can safely say that in social work we have started to develop our own way of conducting supervision in Slovenia that is in line with the fundamental concepts of social work.

Based on a systematic literature review, I show in *Chapter Two*

that supervision processes have moved away from so-called traditional supervision (Smolić Krković, 1977; Kadushin, 1985; Milošević Arnold, 1994; Morrison, 1993; Žorga, 2002; Kobolt, 2002; Noble and Irwin, 2009), which is problem-oriented – with the intention of first analysing the problem and then solving it (the central question is what is wrong and needs to be fixed) – to a solution-finding paradigm – with the intention of finding something new, creating and co-creating new possibilities (the central question is what works so that the supervisee can develop it further) (Wei-su, 2009; Bannink and Jackson, 2011; Bannink, 2015).

In this chapter, I outline the characteristics of the supervision processes in each period and show which theories and events most shaped this transition. In particular, I focus on the influence of social movements, therapeutic approaches and concepts developed in the social work profession. In social work supervision, perhaps the most important paradigm shift has thus taken place: rather than learning from mistakes, we learn better from good experiences. Namely, a review of the literature (Milošević Arnold 1997, 2004; Kobolt 2002, 2004; Kobolt and Žorga 2000; Golja 2004) shows that supervision enables learning from mistakes. This is of course true. But today's social work paradigm suggests that in supervision, too, we need to move from what we do not know to what we do know. The underlying concept of this kind of learning is based on a strengths perspective (Saleebey 1997; Rapp 1998; Bruce 2013) as the starting point of the working relationship in supervision. We learn from good experiences. This encourages us to think further, even critically, about what we will try next and allows us to explore new things. It is our resource to keep going and a signpost to good experiences. Many practitioners know many such stories but keep quiet about them. Supervision therefore enables the voice of professional work to be amplified or, as Michel Polanyi (1967) put it, the silent knowledge of the professional to be heard.

I continue the chapter with the impact of the solution-focused approach on supervision work and conclude with the positive supervision that has developed from the concepts and approaches mentioned.

*Chapter Three* deals with the particularities of the development

of supervision in social work. The foundations of the supervision process in social work are the working relationship developed in social work (Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Kopal, Mešl and Možina, 2005; Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2010; Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Mešl, 2019), co-creation and the exploration of new possible paths. Attitudes and roles in supervision have also changed. The supervisor is no longer an authority figure who tells you how to act, but an expert who encourages co-creation. Today we know that the most important dimension of the encounter is dialogue as an “original conversation” (Martin Buber, 1970) and as a central means of changing the individual’s worldview and their actions against the inequality of power (Paolo Freire, 1985). Thanks to dialogue, we no longer experience the supervisor as someone who knows more and who tells us how we should act, but as an equal partner in this process. Equal partners in a dialogue in which the participants think together about possible outcomes for the situation in which the supervisee finds themselves. In the contemporary paradigm of supervision for social work, we speak of it as a partnership, a dialogue in which reflection plays the most important and central role.

In *Chapter Four*, I present reflection as a fundamental element of social work that facilitates experiential learning in supervision. Since the profession of social work has existed, reflection has been described as the basis for the development of the individual as a professional, which is why reflection is also an essential part of teaching and training at the Faculty of Social Work (Mešl, 2008; Kodele and Mešl, 2015; Šugman Bohinc, 2020; Videmšek and Kodele, 2019). Even though it is initially only reluctantly carried out by students, it enables us to consider what we do and how we do it. Reflection allows us to consider the complexity of social work values, emotions and principles. Despite the lack of research evidence on the effectiveness of using supervision in practice, the book shows that we need supervision if we are to persevere in the situations we encounter. Moreover, supervision is increasingly recognised as a necessary professional activity that enables and supports professionals to reflect on their work, while at the same time influencing the development of the profession as a science, precisely because of this reflection on practice. It is therefore no coincidence that the social work profes-

sion is an active science that is intensely interwoven with theory and practice. Indeed, social work is based on theories that have emerged in practice and on theories that move from learning from mistakes to learning from experiences.

Since its beginnings, reflection has played an important role in the development of the practitioner. For this reason, the work of Donald A. Schön has become a model, so to speak, for identifying the knowledge of the practitioner through *knowing in action linked to theories of action*. The knowledge of the practitioner is therefore shown in what I do. Schön (1991) emphasised two things:

- If we want to improve our practice, we need to reflect on it (articulate what we actually do). And this reflection involves a rich and detailed knowledge base.
- The knowledge that we have developed through our work thus becomes *knowing in action*. Much of this knowledge, as Donald A. Schön (1991) notes, is difficult to define or articulate and is often referred to as intuition and instinct. This means that each individual develops their own theories to guide them and help explain their actions. There are theories about how to manage a case, how to build a working relationship, how to communicate, etc.

But to call it a theory, we need reflection that enables discussion about it all. And this brings us to the theory of practice developed by Argyris and Schön (1974). The theory of practice also consists of two parts, namely the *espoused theories* (what we say, do or think we do) and the *theories-in-use* (what happens in practice). We recognise which theories are in use when we listen to our colleagues explain their work. Reflection provides a basis for improving the theories we use. Argyris and Schön (1974, p. 10) therefore wondered how we can change the existing theory we use or how we can learn a new theory if we do not articulate what we need to change or do not say how we do it. Supervision is a support for the practitioner in their professional development, a guide to professional accountability and a means of facilitating professional learning and a process of continuous reflection.

In this chapter, I review the development of reflection and also the changes that have taken place in the field of reflection. Firstly,

I introduce the leading theorists who developed reflection based on experiential learning. John Dewey (1933) believed that everyone can see that people do not learn from mistakes, but from reflection after they have made a mistake.

I continue my description of the development of reflection by drawing on contemporary theorists (Thompson and Thompsom 2008; Noble, Gray and Johnston 2016; Bruce 2013) who point out that reflection has also undergone changes as a result of the changing conditions in the work itself. For example, great emphasis is now placed on the reflection of emotions and feelings and on what is termed critical reflection, which includes a new dimension, namely a sociological one that encompasses the broader context of social, political and cultural function that perpetuates inequality and disadvantage for vulnerable groups (Thompson and Thompson, 2008; Fook, 2012).

The language of social work focuses on change and the search for the possibility of the new. It creates what does not yet exist. Reflection encourages thinking about change. It is a context for learning. It brings in perspectives and different points of view. Reflection is therefore a core competence and a central process in supervision. It means recognising what is happening, it allows us to realise where we are now, and it means both looking at our own past experiences and looking ahead to our desired outcomes in the future. And that is what makes supervision in social work so special. In supervision for and in social work, we do not focus so much on the past. It helps us to think about what could have been different. The key is what our next steps will be, what we want to achieve and what we need to bring about those changes, as well as how we will know that we are bringing them about, what needs to happen. This is what supervision in social work is about and it can be done in a variety of ways.

Since the whole book is centred on the search for something new, I present a specific model of reflection as a process of learning from so-called professional experiences with positive outcomes in social work. I developed the model based on my ten years of experience in conducting supervision processes. I started from the premise: If I want to know what good social work practice is, I need to study the good rather than the bad practice. I undertook a sys-

tematic review of the literature to theoretically underpin my premise and to formulate a model for managing the supervision process that reflects the specificity of the social work profession. I believe that in the social work profession, we have taken an important step towards change and understanding what the best foundations for learning are and who is the best expert to recognise the situation. The entire book is based on the theoretical understanding of each topic that underpins my premise and my experience of leading supervision processes in social welfare. I have developed a model that integrates social work concepts and effectively supports supervisees. It has shown what the best foundations for learning are. Supervision meetings no longer focus on what the problem is, but on what the supervisees are good at.

We have moved from learning from mistakes to finding out what works.

In *Chapter Five* I deal with the organisation of the supervision process and the management of supervision. I explain the matter of process because supervision is not just a one-off encounter, but an ongoing process. Only through the process can experiential learning take place, and only the process enables the group to achieve the desired goals. I present the process of supervision, focusing on the different stages that take place in this process and the elements that can be observed in each supervision session.

In this section, I present a possible progression for conducting supervision and the skills the supervisor needs to lead this process. The main part of the chapter deals with the content of the individual sessions. I outline what the working material can be and what the choice of content for each session depends on. In particular, I show that we need to consider ethical principles in everything we do in supervision, and I conclude the chapter by explaining why ethics is a central theme in supervision meetings. Ethics is everything that supervision encompasses, it is the “moral landscape”, as Penny Henderson, Jim Holloway and Anthea Millar (2014) call it, in which we do our professional work. If supervision is a reflection on learning and ethics is a reflection on what we do, then it is easy to see the interconnectedness and conclude that supervision and ethics are inextricably linked. In supervision, learning takes place through

concrete examples of ethical dilemmas that social workers face in practice. The discussions in supervision help to reflect on the ethical dimensions of situations and to focus on the principles and processes of ethical decision-making. In-depth reflection and discussion in supervision groups support professional ethics.

*Chapter Six* focuses on the concept of self-care. Self-care is not a new idea, but it is a challenge. The recognised effects of stress experienced by social workers in the workplace, secondary stress disorder and risk prevention have led to an increasing focus on self-care, where self-care is always a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment in which they work. Professionals need to practise self-care because they are confronted on a daily basis with various traumatic stories of people who find themselves in hopeless situations. The high level of vulnerability stems from the stories of people facing multiple challenges on the one hand, and the helplessness that social workers experience in dealing with these situations, on the other. All too often, good and desirable outcomes do not depend on their professional work and the relationship they build with their dialogue partner but are the result of social inequalities and injustices and an inadequate distribution of the services people need.

Since social work is a specialised profession for supporting people, which is stressful due to the nature of the work – because of the daily and direct personal interaction with people who need help and support to cope with many challenges – in this chapter I specifically address the concept of *compassion fatigue*, which is not to be confused with burnout. Compassion fatigue is a result of secondary exposure to traumatic experiences, often defined as “vicarious trauma”. It occurs when a trauma that is told and experienced by others is experienced over an extended period of time (Cox and Stainer, 2013).

Social work is certainly specific by the fact that social workers identify with the stories of their dialogue partners more often than in other forms of assistance. Communication therefore often involves a direct relationship with and empathy for the emotional states of the people they work with. And it is this empathic understanding of narratives that can lead to compassion fatigue (Bride and Figley, 2007; Rourke, 2007; Figley, 2007). Compassion fatigue is a direct response to a particular experience in the performance of

work. Kathleen Cox and Sue (2013) argue that compassion fatigue is an emotional and physiological response of the professional to stress that results from prolonged empathic and compassionate interaction with people with lived experiences (who have experienced various traumas) and is not solely the result of empathic experience.

Based on a literature review (Foucault, 1984, 2007; Jordan, 2010; Patrick, 1987; Stebnicki, 2007; Cox and , 2013; El-Osta et al. 2019) and experience from supervision sessions, I have developed a self-care matrix that is divided into three levels, namely the personal (micro), group (mezzo) and organisational (macro) levels.

I conclude this chapter with what helps me in performing supervision. I believe that supervision is an opportunity for experiential learning, where we learn from our own experiences and from each other, and where we see what we do and how we do it. It is an opportunity to celebrate results. In this book, I have summarised some ways in which the invisible practice can become visible. Let the book be an incentive to express what we do and how we do it because this enables the transition from tacit knowledge to knowledge-in-practice. It is certainly a specificity of the social work profession that we do not have ready-made solutions, but only co-create, seek and adapt them. Each for themselves and together.

## CHAPTER ONE

# DEVELOPING SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK: FROM MENTORING TO SUPPORTING

### WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

In Chapter One, I will present the definition of supervision as I define and understand it. It is clear that I cannot start writing a book on supervision without explaining to the reader what supervision is for me because it is a word with several meanings. The definition is a succinct summary of my understanding of the meaning of supervision in social work and is the main thread of the whole book.

Defining the term in a concise and clear way is certainly not easy, both because of the history of the development of the process and because of the all-encompassing role and the variety of ways in which supervision can be carried out. But if I wanted to explain in simple terms what supervision in social work is, I would describe it as follows:

Supervision is a space for constructive discussion about what and how we do social work practice. It is the main source of support in dealing with the challenges that practice brings and it is a guide to possible solutions in situations that arise. It is a method of learning new experience and new competences, and it means increasing the strength of the individual practitioner. This competence is acquired through their own experience, which helps them to learn new things both professionally and personally. Supervision enables practitioners to reflect on their work, develop new solutions together and broaden the scope of their professional activity. They are supported in this process by their supervisor, who must be sensitive enough to recognise possible changes and be a mindful and respectful ally.

As I will show later in the book, supervision is of course much more and needs further explanation. It is a complex process and not just a one-off encounter, a one-off event. It is a sequence of meetings in which the group draws on all the experience and skills of its individual members to help each other. Processing allows us to learn from our own and others' actions, exchange ideas, learn together, imagine solutions, and plan and resolve situations. It is the process by which a group systematically progresses towards a defined goal. And it is a form of encounter led by a supervisor. Supervision is life-long learning, it supports practitioners in learning to work with the complex situations they face and celebrates the achievements and successes along the way.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 3), supervision is a method that is intended to help the professional directly, but also indirectly helps the users by providing them with quality professional services. Supervision is at the same time a stimulus for the professional to learn, a source of support and guidance for professional development (op. cit., 3–4).

Supervision always involves a relationship, which is its key component (Bernard and Goodyear, 2013; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Kobolt, 2004; Čačinović Vogrinčić, 2009). The relationship is the foundation of the supervision activity. This is because supervision always takes place in a relational context with at least two participants, the supervisor and the supervisee, but it can also be more than one person, depending on which approaches are used (individual, group, team supervision, etc.). A good relationship is crucial for success in supervision. Supervision is more than just a relationship between supervisor and supervisee and involves a complexity of relationships between all those involved in the process. As Vida Milošević Arnold (1999) argues, supervision is therefore also a relationship between the supervisee and the expert by experience, and Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012) argue that it is also a relationship between the supervisee and the wider system. Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 13) suggests that it is a relationship that promises acceptance, seeing, hearing, understanding, exchange, complementarity, symmetry and constancy.

In supervision, we work with each individual to develop a relationship, desired outcomes and original individual work. The foundation of this relationship and its central dimension is dialogue (Freire, 1985). Cooperation between individuals in social work supervision is based on a dialogic practice in which participants pursue different personal and professional goals, all of them as equal partners. And this relationship also takes place in supervision as a working relationship (Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Kobal, Mešl and Možina, 2005). Lea Šugman Bohinc (Šugman Bohinc, Rapoša Tanjšek and Škerjanc, 2007, p. 31) argues that a successful dialogic practice is based on a conversation with a characteristic hermeneutic method of communication, in which the speaking partners learn to understand the other's understanding without losing their own interpretation in the process.

In the supervision relationship, the relationship between the participants changed. At the beginning of the development of supervision, the roles were hierarchically arranged. The supervisor was assigned the role of the person who knew more and could therefore correct people. The paradigm of supervision today, however, could be described as dialogue, partnership and respect for all those involved in the process. With the development of the power paradigm (empowerment, power perspective), this has also happened in supervision. We have moved from a medical paradigm (what is wrong with the individual) to a paradigm according to which people also have sources of power, even when faced with complex professional challenges.

Supervision supports the practitioner to explore their ways of working, to present challenges, good experiences or dilemmas they face in their daily practice. Based on my supervision practice, I can write that social workers often need support and help to persevere in their work and to see the results of this work. Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 4) argues that supervision is a support for the professional to cope with the stresses of responsible professional work, to participate in the user's decision-making, to set boundaries, to keep professional distance, to prevent numbness and burnout. In practice, social workers face many challenges and improve the difficult life circumstances of their speaking partners, creating the foundations

for change. To persevere, they often need the support of a supervisor and a team to recognise the small steps they are taking to achieve big changes. They create new, unforeseen and unwritten solutions. They need support to see progress in these complex situations and to do their part to bring about the desired change.

Supervision enables lifelong learning for the practitioner through reflection on their work. Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 4) considers supervision as a stimulus for learning how to act in a professional relationship and self-knowledge, as this is a necessary component of quality professional work. Through reflection, the practitioner increases their effectiveness and expertise. Reflection helps them to acquire new knowledge and broaden their understanding of existing knowledge with the help of others involved in the supervision. It is not only about acquiring new skills and knowledge but also support (including emotional support) to deal with everyday situations and the skills to cope with everyday organisational demands (Ferguson, 2005).

When I claim that supervision enables or ensures that the professional can present their situation, I mean two things. Firstly, the organisation where the social work practitioner is practising must ensure that supervision can take place and must ensure that the practitioner attends the meetings. This is also stated in the Rules on Standards and Norms for Social Welfare (2010), where supervision is defined as an integral part of the service (Articles 3, 4, 5 and 6). Second, the supervisor must facilitate the conditions in which the working relationship in the meetings can take place. (More on supervision in Chapter 5.)

In the introduction, I have deliberately presented my understanding of supervision, but I have not shown how supervision is understood and defined by other authors. I will use different authors' definitions in different parts of the text and place them in the broader context of understanding the content. Definitions depend on when they were created, who introduced them, what the author wanted to emphasise and, last but not least, the field of work in which supervision was developed.

I chose my own definition for another, perhaps crucial reason. It defines supervision in social work, developed in the Slovenian envi-

ronment. Based on many years of leading and researching supervision processes in Slovenia and the UK, I can say that supervision as we do it in Slovenia is a place where supporting the practitioner in their search for something new, for more strength and courage to take new action, really happens. Let us look at all the factors that have influenced the fact that today supervision is co-created in a working relationship and is understood in social work as it has been defined.

Supervision has changed over the years. And it has changed a lot. At the beginning of the development of supervision, it was said that in supervision we learn from mistakes, but today I can say with certainty that in supervision we learn from good experiences. This does not mean, of course, that there are no mistakes. What is more. We are aware that mistakes are part and parcel of the social work profession or, as Vito Flaker (2003) states, social work does not know *a priori* what is right and what is wrong. Dialogue is needed about this, reflection is needed for this to happen, and this happens in supervision. Errors in social work, as Vito Flaker (2003) states, are therefore an integral part and a necessary consequence of the working method. The social work method recognises and treats mistakes not only as a necessity but also as a way of acting creatively. We learn from them. We use not only a system of trial and error but also systematic reflection and dialogue (Flaker, 2003, p. 34).

The changes in supervision are a reflection of the many theories we have brought to the social work profession and to supervision. While the historical development clearly shows that changes in the practice of supervision were initially strongly influenced by other disciplines and their theories, it is the profession itself that has contributed most to these changes, developing the theories and approaches that have made these changes possible. They have been reflected in changed concepts (power perspective, empowerment, ethics of participation), changes in structures (deinstitutionalisation) and changes in power relations. All of this was based on the realisation that change is possible and that each individual also has sources of power and knowledge. Let us see how these changes have been reflected in supervision in social work.

## Has supervision stimulated the development of the social work profession?

Supervision has a rich history and is at the heart of the development of social work as a professional practice. Although some argue that it first developed in medicine (Kadushin, 1976; Milošević Arnold, 1999; Ming-sum, 2005), a review of the literature (Brackett, 1904; Siegel, 1956; Ming-sum, 2005) shows that the method of supervision has been present since the establishment of the social work profession, from a time when charity work was still at the forefront (Kadushin, 1976; Ming-sum, 2005).

Supervision first began to develop in the United States, from where it was brought to Slovenia. Supervision was first implemented by charitable organisations in Buffalo, New York, in 1878 (Siegel, 1956; Munson, 2002; Ming-sum, 2005; Ladany and Bradley, 2010). Charitable organisations provided financial assistance to people – based on a rigorous examination of their needs (and fear of the consequences of indiscriminate charity giving) – but this was only one aspect of their services. The most important role in supporting people was played by the so-called “friendly visitors,” volunteers who worked for charities in the 1880s–1900s. The friendly visitors cared for families by supporting them personally and influencing their behaviour in socially desirable directions. According to Sheldon Siegel (1956, p. 20), the main motto of the friendly visitors was: “Not alms, but a friend.” The friendly carers were responsible for a social group that was labelled as poor. They believed that poverty was the result of their bad behaviour and that friendly carers could slowly, on a case-by-case basis, help to eliminate these deficits. When working with the families, the friendly carers were supported by mentors who acted as supervisors to the volunteers.

It became clear in the mentoring processes that people’s problems are caused by external economic and social circumstances, not by behaviour. Jane Addams (1899) pointed this out in her works of reconciliation. Her observations were taken up by Mary Richmond, one of the friendly visitors, at the end of the 19th century and at the turn of the 20th century. She summarised her experience in 1899 in her handbook for the friendly carers, *Friendly Visiting among the*

*Poor*, which stated that the most important thing about the work of the friendly carers was their attitude, which required more than specific activities such as providing support, helping people to find work, helping the sick, etc. She also wrote that the work of the friendly carers required more than just specific activities, such as providing support, helping people to find work, helping people to find work, etc. She said that a visit from a friendly carer is a personal approach based on compassion for poor families. For this approach, the friendly carers need support in the form of mentoring. Fields (1885) said that “the agent become the connecting link for volunteer visitors who come daily for the advice and assistance.” Fields (1885, p.18).

This mentoring later developed into formal supervision. At the beginning of its development, supervision had a strong mentoring role, as the volunteers were mainly helped through mentoring. This mentoring was carried out in different ways. In the early days, the charities organised reading evenings to discuss the literature they had read and the personal experiences of working with families. The reading evenings were devised to connect, discuss and relieve pressure (Kadushin, 1976; Milošević Arnold, 1999; Kobolt 2006). Their role was not simply to monitor and supervise the work, but above all to support the volunteers in coping with the challenges in practice.

In response to the needs of a growing number of charitable organisations,<sup>1</sup> in 1898 the New York Charity Organisation Society (Kadushin, 1976, p. 7) organised the first six-week summer training course for 27 students. This was, according to Ming-sum (2005), the first formal social work training course. After several iterations of the summer training course, the New York School of Philanthropy was founded in 1904 and transformed into the first school of social work: the Columbian University School of Social Work (Ming-sum, 2005, p. 3). In the same year, the first book on supervision was published. The American author Jeffrey Richardson Brackett (1904), a pioneer in the field of social work education (at that time mainly a pioneer in the field of charity), wrote in his book that knowledge,

---

<sup>1</sup> Burns (1958, p.16) wrote that "by 1890 there were 78 charitable societies with 174 paid workers and 2017 voluntary friendly visitors."

awareness and changing behaviour are not the product of common sense, but of study, observation, comparison and, above all, of reporting on the work that individuals have done. According to him, those who have contributed to a better understanding of how people work and are treated are the professionals who have studied cases using different methods of working and have reported to others how they have worked. This provided them with lessons learned on the job and enabled them to transfer what is known as experiential knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Kadushin (1976, p. 7) wrote that by 1910 there were already five schools of social work in the USA.

In 1911, the first training in supervision in fieldwork was organised, led by Mary Richmond under the auspices of the Russell Sage Foundation (Kadushin, 1976, p. 7). Six years later (1917), Richmond published a new book, *Social Diagnosis*, detailing a new method of social work, working with the individual. Her writings show her concern that fieldworkers, and therefore families, should receive adequate support. She started from the premise that people have six sources of power that can be used: household resources; personal resources; neighbourhood and wider social network; social representation; private associations; and public associations. In this period, supervision in social work reflected the values of society and indicated strategies for professional practice. Conferences became the most important form of reflection on practice.

In the 1920s, supervision training moved from charities to universities and supervision of fieldworkers was recognised as part of the educational process. Social work students were taught in individually facilitated supervision sessions in practice settings (Munson, 2002). This was a format that was adopted from British universities

---

<sup>2</sup> It introduces us to important authors who have written about experiential learning, in-depth analyses carried out by different people in different fields. For example, Edward Livingston (1803) presented work with prisoners who had been released. Dorothea Lynde Dix (1984), who spent two years in charitable institutions, mainly for the poor (*almshouses*, also known as *poorhouses*), and in Massachusetts prisons, showed that people began to adopt her language and speech because she spent a lot of time talking to them. Samuel Gridley Howe (1832) taught the blind and visually impaired and worked to ensure that they too could be educated.

such as Cambridge and Oxford.<sup>3</sup> Practice placements thus became a core part of social work education programmes, and students were supported in their practice work by a supervisor. When fieldwork supervision became an integral part of social work education, it was no longer enough for students to learn how to be a social worker, but rather why certain social work strategies are effective.

Supervision was an integral part of the curriculum and for the students, it meant *learning by doing*. Recognising that practice also needed a theoretical basis, Virginia Robinson published a book in 1936 entitled *Supervision in Social Case Work*. Between 1920 and 1945, 35 other articles on supervision can be found in the first journal of social work and research, *The Family* (later renamed *Social Casework*, today's *Families and Society*).

The first professional materials on supervision in relation to social work show that social work was an active profession, with an early focus on development from practice experience, and supervision undoubtedly played an important role in this. Historical development shows that supervision in the early period relied heavily on psychoanalytic theories (Howe, 2009, p. 29), which include knowledge about individual development, mental processes and healing, and deviance from the mean. Despite the initial introduction of elements of psychoanalysis into the supervision process, a review of the literature shows that the structure of supervision itself was very much influenced by the case study developed by Mary Richmond (the dyadic relationship between supervisor and supervisee and confidentiality in the supervision meeting were particularly important); it was intertwined with the study of parallel processes occurring in supervision. The parallel processes were called *isomorphism*, i.e. the supervisor using the same skills to help their clients as the supervisee used in the supervision session. Alenka Kobolt (2006, p. 25) argues that psychoanalytic personality theory has enriched the original understanding and theoretical conceptualisation of the case study. It has contributed to the understanding of processes such as psycho-

---

<sup>3</sup> Individual supervision is still the most common approach in England. However, many authors point to the need for group supervision and, in particular, supervision that moves away from a supervisory role towards a more supportive and developmental one.

analytic personality theory, the processes of transfer and counter-transference and defences, and the explanation of these mechanisms. However, it should not be wrongly assumed that it has developed out of psychoanalysis, but that psychoanalysis has only helped to shape supervision as a method of professional reflection.

With the founding of the *National Association of Social Workers in the United States* in 1956, social work was given a prominent position in the deliberate professionalisation and autonomy of both professional activity and supervision. Two years later, in 1958, the National Association conducted the first national survey on the importance of supervision in social work.<sup>4</sup> The survey was the basis for changing the task of supervision.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

Blaž Mesec (2004) argues that we need a clear definition of the function of supervision in order to be able to use it in practice. The profession is defined not only by a common scientific basis and shared values and skills but above all by its function. It is also not enough to define the task as promoting social functioning or facilitating the growth and development of the individual, but we need to give a general but unique functional definition that will provide guidance for all social workers, whatever their field of work.

A review of the literature on supervision (Kadushin, 1976, 1992; Shulman, 1995; Inskipp and Proctor, 1995; Kobolt, 2002, 2004; Žorga, 2002; Milošević Arnold, Vodeb-Bonač, Erzar and Možina, 1999; Richards, Payne and Sheppard, 1990; Brown and Bourne, 1996; Wonnacott, 2014; Field and Brown, 2010; Hawkins and Shoheit, 2006; Fook and Gardner, 2007; Gardner, 2014; Bannink, 2015; Rožič, 2015) show that the tasks of supervision depend on two factors, namely when the definitions of these tasks emerged and the field from which the author defining them comes. The above-

---

<sup>4</sup> In 1958, the Association, which had 229 members, carried out a survey on the need for supervision. On the basis of one hundred fully completed questionnaires, the Association presented the main findings of the survey, which showed the need for supervision.

-mentioned authors use the term functions of supervision, while I have chosen to use the term tasks of supervision.

In traditional supervision, there are three tasks of supervision. They are most often referred to the pioneer, the American supervision classic Alfred Kadushin, who listed the main functions of supervision as administrative, supportive and educational (Kadushin, 1976; Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). On postmodern supervision, Francesca Inskipp and Brigid Proctor (1995) suggest that the supervisor has three roles in the supervision process, related to the effects that supervision has had on supervisees. They thus renamed and defined the functions of supervision as normative, formative, restorative. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 62–63) similarly named the functions of supervision. According to them, supervision in social work has three functions, namely quality care (qualitative), developmental and focus on the resources of the supervisee (resourcing).

In the 1990s, a new function of supervision began to emerge, which I believe is a particular feature of the UK, as it is not widespread in supervision processes in Slovenia (and elsewhere in Europe). This is the mediation function (Richards, Payne and Sheppard, 1990; Brown and Bourne, 1996), which involves communication between the supervisee and the managers. It also involves informing supervisees about changes taking place in the organisation, the financial situation and other aspects of the operation that may affect the work of the practitioners.

The definition of the functions allows us to identify the role of the supervisor in the supervision process, the expectations of the supervisor, but at the same time, it is important to know the responsibilities of each participant in the process. Whatever the function, supervision is a learning process that does not happen automatically. It takes effort and hard work, and every task contributes its share to co-creating good results. Let us look at the main tasks that have most characterised traditional supervision.

## Administrative function

The administrative function of supervision could also be translated as executive, since it was primarily focused on the function of the institution itself, on managing, organising and directing it, so it is not surprising that different authors have called this function different things. Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 6) defines it as a supervisory-administrative function, while Kobolt (1999, p. 18–38) defines it as a mentoring-managerial support function, which also includes a controlling task. Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014) show that the term supervision initially emerged in the sense of inspection and evaluation of programmes and institutions, not so much as support for individual workers within these programmes. Therefore, in the early development of supervision, during the time of supervision within charities in the USA, the supervisor's approach was focused primarily on the needs of the organisation and not so much on the supervisee. This means that supervision was not organised to support the supervisee, but primarily to support the needs of the organisation. The supervision was focused on administrative tasks in order to keep the administrative functioning of the organisation well-coordinated. I might even add that the role of the supervisor was twofold. On the one hand, they studied the situation in the field and got to know the family that would need the support of the friendly visitors, and on the other hand, they supervised the work of the friendly visitors and made sure that it was done well. It is therefore not surprising that the role of the supervisor in this function is to supervise, guide and evaluate the work (Kadushin, 1992; Kadushin and Harkness, 2014).

It quickly became clear that administrative function alone are not enough, as friendly visitors need above all the knowledge to act in practice. Tenny (1895, p. 202) even wrote that:

In the important work starting new friendly visitors the supervisors try to show one or more things which may be done by a friendly visitor at the first visit; to show how to gain access to a family without seeming to have come to visit;

The supervisor's task was therefore to teach the friendly visitors how to behave and approach the family and how to establish contact

with them. Early records show that the friendly visitors were given suggestions on what to say when they visited the family, e.g. “I heard you were in trouble, what I can do for you” In order to make the contact as genuine and personal as possible and to give the friendly visitors the knowledge to act, they were provided with training material with recommendations, which they received before starting the work. Attendance at a weekly conference and regular meetings with the supervisor, who provided them with basic guidance on the nature of the work, were also mandatory (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014, p. 3).

For this reason, supervision has been identified and defined as an educational process. Virginia Robinson (1949, p. 53) defined supervision as “*an educational process in which a person with a certain equipment of knowledge and skill takes responsibility for training a person with less equipment.*”

Similarly, supervision was defined in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, which stated that supervision is a traditional method for transferring social work knowledge and skills into practice. This transfer, in turn, takes place through the transfer of knowledge from the trained to the untrained worker, from the experienced to the inexperienced student (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014, p. 8).

All the definitions of supervision show that a clear hierarchy of action was established at the beginning of the supervision process. The supervisor (in the beginning, this role was mainly played by paid workers or mentors) told the supervisee how to act. Despite the hierarchical role, it should be understood that supervisors were not completely autonomous in their work. They were torn between two sets of rules (sandwich position). Supervisors were supervisors to the direct fieldworkers, but at the same time, they were themselves under the control of the organisation, which decided everything. Supervisors had to do as they were told. Decisions, in turn, were made at higher levels. They had to follow instructions from boards and other authorities (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014, p. 4). It is not surprising, therefore, that the work was rather directive and focused on what the friendly visitors were supposed to do, and less on how they felt about it and how they experienced the work. Being told what to

do did not allow the supervisors to develop their own management styles and did not allow them to work out (or formulate) the basic methodological knowledge of each supervision process.

During administrative supervision, the authority of the supervisor is expressed in relation to their position. The supervisor is responsible for relating effective workers to effective organizations increasing the effectiveness of the organizational structure and the resources available to the workers. Kadushin and Harkness (2014, p. 160).<sup>5</sup> According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014), one of the most important roles of supervisors was the recruitment of new workers. This was because supervisors were in close contact with the friendly visitors and were familiar with the support needs of the families. During the meetings, the supervisors recognised the need for new staff, as the friendly visitors were exhausted (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014, p. 29). This illustrates very clearly the role of the supervisor: they were supposed to keep the organisation running and provide the staff to carry out the tasks. This was their primary responsibility.

As it was difficult to recruit friendly visitors and to retain those who did come, both because of the amount of work<sup>6</sup> and because of the frustration they experienced when visiting families, it quickly became clear that supervision needed to be reformed. Thus, the administrative role of supervision was extended to a supportive one. The supervisors recognised the need for the friendly visitors to learn how to deal with the emotions they were experiencing at work. Smith (1884, p. 69) wrote that supervisors needed to be able to manage the process, be willing to help the friendly visitors when

---

<sup>5</sup> In the earliest stages of its development, supervision was based on an authoritarian, hierarchical model of management. Rožič (2015, p. 27) states that supervision began in 1902 with a few young doctors gathered around Freud who expressed a desire to learn, practice and disseminate psychoanalytic knowledge. The meetings always followed a well-defined sequence: first one of the participants would present a case, then coffee and pastries would be served, and there was a lot of smoking – there were always cigars and cigarettes on the table. After an hour of chatting, the discussion began. Freud always had the last and decisive word. His way of supervising his colleagues was in line with the practice of psychoanalysis at the time.

<sup>6</sup> As I outlined in the development history, in 1980 there were 78 charities with 174 members of staff and 2017 friendly visitors (Burns, 1958, p. 16).

needed, be able to inspire the friendly visitors to work, and, when the friendly visitors were inconsistent, remain patient and not take over the work for them.

In the initial phase of development, the role of the supervisor was thus multifaceted: to recruit supervisees, to teach them, to point out mistakes, to supervise the work and to call for changes in behaviour if necessary. Notwithstanding this supervisory task, we can discern from early accounts of supervision a tendency for the supervisor not to do the work for someone else, but to impart behavioural knowledge to the supervisees. In doing so, they had to be patient and encouraging. Early writings on supervision thus emphasise many principles of working in supervision that are still highly relevant and desirable today. In fact, postmodern trends in positive supervision can already be seen in reports of work with the friendly visitors. The administrative, support and educational role of supervisors is successful when it is based on a positive relationship. Smith (1901, p. 159–160) wrote:

In order to make friendly visiting succeed... the agent (supervisors) must care to really help the visitor- not merely to give what the visitor asks, but with tact and patience what he needs and to go as it simply and informally. The agent...must learn patiently to know and understand the new visitor.

In the administrative function of supervision, the supervisor in the organisation took part of the responsibility for how the supervisor worked with clients, whether they worked according to ethical standards and whether the tasks were carried out. Administrative function was replaced by supportive and educational functions in the 1920s, but from what I have read, the administrative function was reintroduced in the 1980s, with the emergence of managerialism, when efficiency became the priority of social work. Although many supervisors challenged this thesis and sought to maintain critical reflection, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, supervisors were given a clear message that their most important role was to check that tasks were being completed (Wonnacott, 2012, p. This moved supervision away from the emotional involvement and relationship dynamics between practitioners and experts by experience, to the

practical issue of how to conduct a user assessment (Hughes and Pengelly, 1997; Morrison, 1993).

This purpose of supervision was evident until the 1990s, when the need for supervision to move forward, or at least away from reviewing task performance, in the direction of helping practitioners to think about, explain and understand what they do and how they do it, became apparent (Brandon et al. 2008, p. 106).

Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012) have called this function a quality task, as it relates to quality control of work with people. The supervisor can ensure that all things are done according to standards and that all work is completed. They are responsible for ensuring that the supervisees' work is well done and in accordance with the code of ethics and professional standards (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012, p. 63). This function ensures quality control of the work with people and identifies blind spots, vulnerabilities, feelings and prejudices.

Francesca Inskipp and Brigid Proctor (1993, 1995) have called this the *normative function* of supervision. It refers to a clearly formulated contract of participation and a clear agreement on what kind of support supervisees expect, what kind of feedback is expected (debriefing on the process), whether the supervisor has to write reports, what standard is expected, who will have access to supervisees' reflections, etc. (Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014, p. 44).

## Educational function

At the end of the 19th century, industrialisation and urbanisation led to a growing need for paid workers. A review of the literature (Howe and Gray, 2013; Wonnacott, 2012; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012) shows that administrative function quickly began to be complemented by educational function of "advising and assisting." The supervisors taught the friendly caregivers (volunteers) how to approach the family so as not to make them feel uncomfortable when they visited. They taught them what questions to ask the family, but above all, they warned them what not to do and what was inappropriate. (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014). Instead, they helped them

to establish a relationship, which Mary Richmond in particular pointed out. David Howe (2009) suggests that from taking on her role as head of the charity, Mary Richmond sought to understand the relationships between people so that people could improve their character and grow personally through working together. She constantly strived to understand the relationship between the individual and his environment so that the two could be helped to adjust, one to the other in harmony and mutual benefit. Her aim was to help her clients improve in character and to “grow in personality”. Under her direction, we see social work beginning to define itself as a profession whose focus of interest is the “person in relationship to his or her environment”(Howe, 2009, p. 27).

The growing need to support families in the field has led to the first training programmes for supervisors. As the training programmes developed, the role of the supervisor became more and more defined and clear. Supervision processes began to develop different methods of work used by supervisors, all with the aim of learning as many skills as possible for their work.

The educational function naturally centre on education. The main objective is to promote the personal and professional development of the supervisor by reflecting on work with an expert from experience. Educational supervision focused on increasing the impact of the work by developing the supervisee’s knowledge and learning and acquiring new skills for their work. Lawrence Shulman (1982, p. 22–23) showed through research that the most time in supervision sessions was devoted specifically to learning practical supervisory skills and to consultation. This makes supervision an opportunity to learn new skills, and supervisors take on the role of teacher. This gives the supervisor the power of an expert because they know how to act. Different approaches that supervisors use to guide supervision processes have started to evolve. The educational function thus relates to the development of supervisees’ professional skills and knowledge, including understanding experts by experiences and their environment (Howe and Gray, 2013, p. 5).

With the development of the case study, developed by Mary Richmond, a new way of working in supervision emerged. In supervision meetings, a concrete case from practice is discussed. Research

by Reginal O. York and Thomas Hasting (1985, p. 86) showed that for many supervisors, problem-solving was the most important content of the work. Supervisors from different professions were found to act as facilitators (e.g. they showed how the supervisee could improve the effectiveness of their work and proposed ideas for solving problems). Much attention was paid in supervision to the supervisee's satisfaction with the supervision.

The supervisor therefore identified where they saw the problem, analysed and assessed it, and made suggestions based on the case presented by the supervisee. During this period, the supervisor's role was to suggest how to act. They were an authority who knew and knew how.

The supervisor is expected to act as a teacher in the context of educational tasks. The basic task therefore consists of teaching the supervisor how to do the job.

Sonja Žorga (1997, p. 14) argues:

Appropriate supervision enables the practitioners to integrate what they do, feel and think, to integrate practical experience with theoretical knowledge, to put theory into practice and to learn to carry out the work independently. In this way, the practitioner not only grows professionally but also develops as a whole person.

This transfer of practical experience to theory in supervision processes has often been done through a variety of circular models of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984a, Gibbs, 1988, Atkins and Murphy's circular model, 1994). Regardless of the model used, it is now important that the individual finds their own solutions and that the supervisor is only in the role of asking questions and guiding the supervisee to new insights, but not in any way in the role of an adviser.

Francesca Inskip and Brigid Proctor (1995) called the educational function *formative*. This means that the supervisor invites the supervisee to report on what works well, to report on their successes and failures by reflecting on them. The supervisor encourages the supervisee to discover their tacit knowledge and find their own way of acting in practice. This means learning through practical experimentation and linking experience to theory. Penny Henderson, Jim

Holloway and Anthea Millar (2014, p. 43) suggest that the supervisor can offer support to the supervisee in expanding their knowledge (either through their own experience or by referring them to further reading).

Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 62–63) have called this a *developmental function*, as it involves attending to the development of the supervisor's skills, understanding and abilities. This is possible thanks to the reflective and exploratory work that the supervisor does with people who are experts by experience. Supervision helps the supervisee to better understand their own reactions when working with experts by experience, to understand the dynamics of the interactions between themselves and the expert by experience, and to recognise how they act in a particular situation and the consequences of this action on the expert.

## Supportive function

Supportive function cannot be completely separated from other functions, as they also appear alongside administrative and educational functions. Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014, p. 160) even suggest that administrative, supportive and educational functions are intertwined rather than isolated. For example, when a supervisor uses an educational function to help a worker acquire new skills, the consequences are both an increase in competence in working with people and greater job satisfaction.

Regarding administrative function, I have written that the supervisor's main task is to take care of the staffing and efficiency of the organisation and to increase the efficiency of the organisational structures and the resources made available for the work. The primary tasks of the supervisor in educational functions are: training, ensuring an increase in job performance, expanding the supervisor's knowledge and acquiring new skills. The primary task of the supervisor in a supportive function is to improve performance, especially by reducing stress. The supportive role is therefore primarily aimed at supporting supervisees to overcome a range of challenges and to relieve them in their work.

According to Alfred Kadushin and David Harkness (2014, p. 162), the supportive role of the supervisor is to alleviate anxiety, reduce feelings of guilt, eliminate frustration, increase job security, enhance confidence, encourage and support supervisees in their work to rebuild self-confidence, nurture and increase personal capacity to cope with pain, restore emotional balance, and provide comfort. The authors argue that social workers need to feel good about both the work they do and themselves if they are to do their work effectively. The reality of social work is that social workers often feel ineffective, powerless, frustrated, devalued and unimportant because of the situations they encounter in their daily practice with people and lack the necessary courage to change.

Clarence A. Pretzer (1929, p. 168) was one of the first to investigate the distress faced by practitioners on a daily basis. He presented a study he carried out in 1927/28, which showed that the severe situations that social workers encountered every day – “dissatisfaction with social work,” “depressing work,” “clients hopeless,” “caseload too heavy” – were the key reasons for leaving their jobs. Concern for the well-being of friendly visitors also emerged as an important element in the administrative task. Supervisors were quick to recognise the need to support friendly visitors in their work and that the supervisor needs to be able to deal with the emotion of disappointment.

With supportive function, supervisees receive both personal and professional support. Above all, the focus is on emotional support at work. The main purposes of the task are, as the term suggests, to support, identify and raise awareness of the emotions that arise in the supervisee when working with people. The supportive function is important in maintaining the supervisee’s equilibrium and preventing burnout (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012). Supportive supervision helps supervisees reduce self-doubt, express fears and confide unpleasant experiences related to their work. This function is often particularly helpful at the beginning of supervisees’ professional careers.

Focusing on the good points is also an important role of the supervisor in the supportive function of supervision. Behaviours that lead to burnout reduce the chances of achieving success and

satisfactory results at work. The role of the supervisor is therefore not only to reduce insecurity, restore confidence and ensure that the practitioner regains self-confidence but also to encourage and enthuse practitioners to look for something new and thus increase their job satisfaction.

The role of the supervisor in providing support is changing. The greatest value of supervision is that the supervisee is given the freedom to find their own solutions, their own paths and themselves (Žorga, 2000, p. 222). The supervisor accompanies the individual in learning and finding their own solutions and allows them to reflect on new possibilities in a safe environment. The supervisor therefore ensures that the supervisee does not embark on any new adventures that would put them at serious risk. It is therefore important to talk to them about what the possible solutions are, but also about what the consequences are. Only in this way can the supervisor choose the solution that suits them best. Of course, it is the supervisor's responsibility to choose the solution.

Accordingly, Christian Chandu and Kitto Jane (1987, p. 3) define supervision as something that is not counselling or teaching but enables professionals to think better about their work and therefore do it better. It is not surprising, therefore, that in this period (around 1987) clear dividing lines emerged between supervision and therapy. Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014) rank among the biggest differences between therapy and supervision that the supervisor is aware of the limitations of the effects of the work. The supervisor's responsibility is to help the supervisee become a better practitioner and not necessarily a better person. Most of the focus is on changing their professional identity, not on changing their personal identity. To this end, the supervisor asks: how can I help you in your work? They ask: how can I help you (personally)? The supervisor is not concerned with the pathology of the individual, but with the consequences this has on the work. Supervision should in no way become a psychotherapeutic process (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014, p. 147).

Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 62–63) have referred to this function as a *resourcing* function. A supportive function provides the supervisee with a safe environment and ensures that

they are not alone in their development and work. The supervisor's task is to explore with the supervisee their sources of strength and skills.

Francesca Inskipp and Brigid Proctor (1995) called the supportive function *restorative*. It is devised to support the supervisee in achieving greater self-awareness and professional *resilience*. Resilience can be an initial theme of supervision when supervisees are asked how they are and what is going on in their lives that might affect practice.

## Mediation function

Mediation is the fourth newly added task of supervision. It emerged in the 1990s but is still relatively unknown in supervision in Slovenia. In this role, the supervisor is the link between the supervisee's report (their practice) and the organisation where that practice takes place (Richards, Payne and Sheppard, 1990). Tony Morrison (2005) states that the supervisor is a mediator between the members of the supervision team and other staff in the organisation. In this often referred to liaison role, the supervisor can be an advocate for the supervisee both inside and outside the organisation, can promote the organisation's policies and can influence its development. Authors (Richards, Payne and Sheppard, 1990; Morrison, 2005) have defined this role as describing the needs of the workers and presenting these needs to the organisation's management. This function enables better communication between supervisors and managers and better communication with others in the organisation. It also involves informing supervisees about changes taking place in the organisation, the financial situation and other aspects of the operation that may affect the work of practitioners.

In addition to information and mediation between different agents, this function also involves advocacy on behalf of supervisees, especially in promoting and achieving their ideas for improving programmes within the organisation itself.

Neil Thompson and Peter Gilbert (2011) argue that such a function can be extremely thankless, as it requires defending the inte-

rests of supervisees on the one hand and protecting the interests of the organisation on the other.

Let us look at a table for an overview of supervision functions that I have adapted from literature (Kadushin, 1976; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; Beddoe, 2010; Wonnacott, 2014; Richards, Payne & Sheppard, 1990; Morrison, 2005; Noble, Gray & Johnston, 2016).

Table 1: Supervision functions

Administrative and managerial	Supportive	Educational	Mediation
Ensure that user interests are promoted	Encourage self-directed learning Supervisor gives positive feedback on the steps supervisees have taken to improve learning	Identify skills, knowledge and approaches needed to achieve professional values, community expectations	Ensure mediation between employees and management
Ensure impartiality of organisation and achievement of standards	Supervisor ensures well-being and professionalism	Develop professional competences	Raise awareness of changes and organisation policies, in particular among workers
Ensure sufficient resources to carry out the work effectively	Supervisor provides and facilitates brief reporting	Identify learning styles of expert	Support workers to understand how they fit into the organisation
Role of workers and expectations of them must be very clearly defined	Supervisor accompanies and supports supervisee in creating and applying self-care strategies	Support for learning based on practical experience	Support in aligning organisation objectives and challenges of supervisor in practice
Critical view of the effectiveness of planned work must be provided	Provide constructive feedback to achieve professional development and professional growth	Ensure that supervisees acquire new skills and knowledge that they can put into practice	Provide information on where workers can find further information and support
Responsibilities and obligations of those involved must be clearly defined	Recognise need for an external supervisor (not management)	Reflect on ways to improve practice Promote development of new knowledge based on practice	Brief message to supervisor about underlying weaknesses and harm caused by them
Possibility of systemic changes must be considered		Ensure constructive learning to eliminate bad practices	Defending interests of workers and the organisation

The function of supervision refers to the basic notions of what supervision is and what is expected of the supervisor in this process. The function of supervision also refers to the purposes for which supervision has been established. Regardless of the choice of function, they all have in common that they are focused on the work of the practitioner. An overview of the functions shows the development of supervision. The functions could simply be divided into those that focus primarily on the direct provision of quality services by the practitioner, those that focus on the care of the supervisee, and those that focus primarily on the supervisee's professional learning. The function of supervision thus differs according to the effects, the tasks and the relationship it establishes in the group. The function of supervision enable the supervisee to improve their view of their work and of the experts by experience. This enables the supervisee to cope with the daily routine and at the same time provides them with the skills for reflective practice.

But whatever the differences, all functions have in common the support of supervisees and the concern for good and effective practice. Lynette Hughes and Paul Pengelly (1997) have shown that supervision becomes almost impossible unless at least three functions (supportive, administrative and educational) are included, if not all of them.

Based on my experience in supervision and on the results of my research (Videmšek, 2019), in which I looked at the goals that supervisees set for themselves at the beginning of the supervision process, I believe that the most significant developmental and educational function for the Slovenian environment is one that is based on the resources of the supervisee and is established with the aim of the supervisee's personal and professional growth. This function is about the supervisor helping the supervisee to develop the skills, understanding and capacities that they have, all based on the awareness that the supervisee has their own sources of strength that they can draw on to help them in the face of uncertainty. This recognition and the development of resilience are essential in social welfare. Especially where practitioners are burdened with people's difficult life circumstances. These situations are not few in the field of social work, and it is therefore essential that practitioners are able to par-

ticipate in supervision. On the one hand, supervision enables them to reflect on their work, and on the other hand, it helps them to manage their emotions when dealing with situations. Without this, as professionals, they may identify completely with others, become empathetic and feel powerless, or simply become overly defensive and protective, and in the worst cases, no longer want to work with people in the field of social welfare. Sonja Žorga (2000) suggests that the basic purposes of supervision are: to integrate practical experience with theoretical knowledge, to support the supervisee in finding their own solutions to problems, to support the supervisee to cope more effectively with stress, and to support the development of the supervisee's professional identity. She believes that supervision supports the professional and personal learning and development of the practitioner.

It is important to realise that the function of supervision is a matter of agreement and expectations about what the supervisee or the organisation needs and for what purpose the collaboration with the supervisor is established. The function of supervision therefore depend on the purpose for which supervision is established and what supervisees can expect from this cooperation.

In addition to the function, the approach to supervision is also important.

## APPROACHES TO SUPERVISION

There are many different ways of conducting supervision. How they are used depends on who the supervision is aimed at, how the meeting will be organised, how many members will be involved and who the facilitator will be. A review of the literature (Proctor, 1995; Brown and Bourne, 1996; Milošević Arnold, 1997, 2004; Hughes and Pengelly, 1998; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000; Hawkins and Shohet, 2006, 2012; Morrison, 2005; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016) shows that we are aware of at least six different approaches to supervision. Milošević Arnold, Vodeb-Bonač, Erzar and Možina (1999) use the term supervision type, while Sonja Žorga and Alenka Kobolt (2000) use the term work form. I will use the word approach. In

continuation, I present the most important approaches that supervisors can use to conduct supervision. The approach is, of course, very dependent on the setting in which the supervision takes place. In the Anglo-Saxon setting, individual supervision is the most typical approach, while in Slovenia group supervision is the most common approach. Let us look at the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches.

### *Group supervision*

Research (Videmšek, 2019) has shown that group supervision is the most common in Slovenia and that a very small proportion, only one per cent, is conducted as individual supervision (coaching supervision) or as an addition to group supervision. To this end, I will elaborate on the advantages of group supervision and highlight what the supervisor needs to be aware of when conducting group supervision.

If it is a group, it is important to define the size of the group. What is a group? Does the group consist of three or more members? From personal experience, I can say that an ideal group consists of six to a maximum of eight members. The number of members is determined based on the development of the group and the different phases through which the group goes through in the supervision process. If we agree to work together for a year (10 meetings), this means that all six members can be in the role of supervisor and present the material at each meeting and that we as supervisors have the opportunity for additional learning according to the goals set and enough time for evaluation and celebration of what has been achieved. Brigid Proctor (2008, p. 20) is somewhat more flexible on the number of members and considers a group of four to six members to be appropriate. This number ensures diversity and confidentiality. In any case, the group should not be larger than ten members, as Vida Milošević Arnold (1997) has already stated.

Much of the Anglo-Saxon literature (Proctor, 1995; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012) recognises the importance and benefits of group supervision. Lynette Hughes and Paul

Pengelly (1998) suggest that another advantage of group supervision is that it allows for many other perspectives on the situation presented. Group supervision has a number of advantages because, unlike individual supervision, it creates an atmosphere in which practitioners can confide their concerns and at the same time receive support and realise that others are experiencing similar problems. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 178) list seven benefits of group supervision:

1. time and financial advantage,
2. group potential,
3. feedback is also given by group members and not only the supervisor;
4. in group supervision, there is an opportunity to examine emotions in depth,
5. the diversity of experience and age in the group, and the strong possibility that at least one member feels, sees and understands similarly to the supervisee,
6. using a variety of effective techniques and methods in supervision,
7. group supervision enables the development of the group as well as the individual within the group.

Richard Ingram (2015, p. 101) additionally lists the following benefits of group supervision:

1. entrusting experiences between peers (learning from each other, “all in the same boat”),
2. exploring the complexity of social work practice through the power of the collective voice,
3. ensuring mutual support,
4. confidence in own knowledge as practitioners,
5. ability to see things from multiple perspectives.

Other authors (Proctor, 2008; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014) have added to these benefits: creativity, inspiration for change, recognition that others have similar situations and sharing responsibility.

The group thus ensures diversity in terms of gender, age, work experience and ethnicity.

Similar to Hawkins and Shohet (2012), Brigid Proctor (2008) also notes the advantages of group supervision. She also cites time and money savings as an advantage. Considering the fact that practitioners have less and less time and the need for supervision is increasing, the authors (Milošević Arnold, 2004; Proctor, 2008, Hawkins and Shohet, 2012) believe that group supervision can be very time and cost-efficient. The supervisor can meet with several supervisees in a group at the same time. This reason is not so relevant in the Slovenian context. However, this could be the reason why we started with group supervision. Brigid Proctor (2008) from England, who is one of the thousands of people in favour of group supervision, is of the opinion that group supervision is not least economically more efficient. Managers can hire one supervisor for 4–5 employees instead of the usual one employee. Group supervision is also “time efficient.” Individual supervision lasts 45 minutes and 4–5 supervisees can be supported for an hour and a half (Proctor, 2008, p. 19).

Many authors (Milošević Arnold, 2004; Proctor, 2008; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014) highlight the potential of the group as a key advantage of group supervision, as the group allows for multiple perspectives on the situation, and the group also acts as a support network for the supervisee. This creates an atmosphere in the group in which the members share similar experiences and fears that they experience at work and recognise that others are facing similar dilemmas.

A third reason is that reflection allows supervisees to hear feedback not only from the supervisor but also from other colleagues (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Proctor, 2008; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Kadushin and Harkness, 2014; Ingram, 2015; Bannink, 2015). The group is also the best format for receiving and giving feedback on skills and communication.

Brigid Proctor (2008) asked supervisors who had conducted both individual and group supervision to list the strengths and weaknesses of both. The research showed that individual supervision allows the supervisee to have “special time,” an hour (or however long the supervision lasts), dedicated to them alone, whereas in gro-

up supervision most of the time is dedicated to others rather than just one member. In individual supervision, a special relationship is established between the supervisor and the supervisee, which can progress from a mentoring to a collegial relationship.

The advantage of group supervision is that the supervisor is not the sole authority, but the group is encouraged to co-create (Proctor, 2008; Ingram, 2015). Group members may even find it easier to hear other group members than the supervisor in the role of authority. Group members can support each other and also start to behave like other group members, which cannot happen in individual supervision (Proctor, 2008, p. 20).

Groups are an opportunity for additional learning and are not inferior to supervision. Birgid Proctor (2008) wrote that a group is more than the sum of its parts. In fact, a group is already made up when there are two members and a supervisor. The group is a source of support and allows for a broadening of perspectives on the work and the situations that arise, as the group provides the diverse professional experience of the group members (Proctor, 2008, p. 12). In social welfare, there are often practitioners from other profiles in addition to social workers. In everyday practice, social workers are also associated with a wide variety of profiles, so it is not surprising that professionals from other profiles are also involved in supervision processes alongside social workers. Group supervision allows supervisees from different professional backgrounds to hear each other's voices, share their experiences and present their work to each other. Supervision involving members with different theoretical assumptions (because they have received different training) thus makes an important contribution to understanding other areas of work. The heterogeneity of the group provides new learning opportunities. In addition to knowledge of the ethics and values of social work and basic helping processes, theoretical knowledge of other disciplines is necessary for good social work practice.

Vito Flaker (2003) argues that a social worker should have knowledge of the functioning of society (basic theoretical knowledge, social dynamics, processes of marginalisation and discrimination, everyday life, social conflicts), of the dynamics of interpersonal processes and experiences (social psychology, symbolic interactio-

nism, socialisation, learning, personal conflicts, family psychology, stress), legal and administrative knowledge, knowledge of the organisation of the state (knowledge of family, labour, criminal, social security and procedural law) and of the functioning of the legal system (procedures, mechanisms, information on rights, regulations and obligations) as well as the basic concepts, approaches and language of related, complementary and borderline disciplines (pedagogy, medicine, law, sociology, etc.). This experience can also be gained in supervision groups involving different profiles from the field of social welfare.

The diversity of the group gives us an insight into different practices. Group supervision thus has access to the different styles and skills of each individual in the group. Learning from each other (*shared learning*) (Ingram, 2015) can be extremely stimulating – practitioners can become more adventurous, they can set themselves bigger challenges both in the supervision itself and in the practical work. The group thus provides learning opportunities. Brigid Proctor (2008, p. 17) suggests that group supervision encourages supervisees to learn to trust themselves and their perceptions, and at the same time be open to and accepting of different perspectives.

Marianne S. Corey and Gerald Corey (2006, p. 5), a married couple who are both family therapists and supervisors and who started running various therapeutic groups in the mental health field in the 1970s, wrote that the group is a natural laboratory for showing people that they are not alone and that there is a possibility for a different life.

Reflections on supervision sessions (Videmšek, 2019) show that supervisees often report that the group gave them the insight that others are confronted with similar situations and that they need not be ashamed of failure.

I went into the supervision with great uncertainty. I was afraid of having to present my work to others, afraid of being judged, or maybe even afraid that what I was doing was not good. I was ashamed to report what I was thinking or had thought... But over time I realised that there was a very good atmosphere in the group, that I was not the only one who was worried because others were expressing this, I got more compliments on my

work and I lost the feeling of shame. I saw that I was not alone in this situation.

(Personal record, 2019)

This creates an atmosphere in the group where members share similar experiences and fears they face in their work, and realise that others face similar dilemmas. The group allows for several different perspectives on the situation and acts as a support network for the supervisees.

Group supervision also has the advantage of realising that “more people know more.” More participants means more opportunities for good practice. Group supervision brings out the different behaviours, strengths and experiences of the supervisees.

Because group supervision involves more emotions, the group is also an inspiration for change. Dealing with the group’s emotions is a very important part of group supervision, so it is important to check how safe the group members feel before setting up the group. Many practitioners find it easier to share their experiences face-to-face than in a group.

The advantage of group supervision is that they can experience first-hand what group dynamics mean: group development, group processes, group development, etc. They can integrate their experience of working with how they as a group co-create the map of how the group works (by setting rules, agreeing on cooperation, setting responsibilities for communication, etc.).

As we have seen, the group has great potential, but it is up to the supervisor to make the most of it. An important skill that can help them do this is their knowledge of group management. The basic theories of group dynamics can be the basis for the implementation of the group process and help us to intervene creatively and effectively when necessary. This is the basis for evaluation. Alenka Kobolt (1994, p. 490) argues that the advantages of group supervision are that the characteristics of group dynamics are intertwined with the learning process and allow for learning from each other, richer communication, more alternatives and more perspectives on the same thing.

My research (Videmšek, 2019) has shown that the most commonly used approach in the field of social welfare in Slovenia is group supervision. This approach has become established when working with a group of professionals from the same discipline or simply from the same work environment. According to Alenka Kobolt (1994, p. 490), group supervision is a process of professional reflection in which, in addition to the supervisor, several people participate who take turns assuming the role of the supervisee, i.e. the one who embarks on a journey of learning about how and why they do their professional work in the way they do it. Such supervision is effective when all participants are willing to share their knowledge and experience and when the supervisor is willing to take responsibility for this learning. Working in group supervision undoubtedly helps to broaden the knowledge of those involved in the group process, creates an excellent basis for a variety of work experiences and allows for different perspectives and reactions to the situation presented.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold (2009), this approach of supervision is the most widespread in Slovenia because it is economical and enables active learning and exchange of experience between several experts (who may come from different fields and disciplines). As we have seen, and as Allan Brown and Iain Bourne (1996) also write, there are more than just economic reasons, because group supervision has a number of other advantages (its multilayered nature and the realisation that the group has considerable power in transforming and changing our patterns of action). Tony Morrison (2005, p. 200) has described group supervision as a process in which a group of practitioners come together in a pre-agreed format to reflect on their work and so share their experiences with others. The supervisor cannot focus solely on the supervisee but must pay attention to the group as a whole. In addition, the time available to the supervisor is the disadvantage of group supervision. On the one hand, they must ensure that the voice of all participants is heard and, on the other, that the material the supervisor brings to the session is discussed in sufficient depth.

### *Individual supervision*

Individual supervision is characterised by regular one-to-one meetings between the supervisor and supervisee (Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016, p. 20). Many authors consider this type of supervision to be the cornerstone of professional development (Wonnacott, 2014; Rožič, 2015; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016), although there is no research evidence to support this and show that individual supervision works better than group supervision. Certainly, individual supervision has some advantages as it is individualised and it is supervision with a single person, i.e. the supervisor works systematically with a single supervisee. This means that only two people are involved in the process: the supervisor and the supervisee. As a result, there is certainly more time available and all the attention is focused on the supervisee, their situation and the search for solutions for them. The individual approach is widely used in the UK, where most supervision takes place at an individual level (Brown and Bourne, 1996; Morrison, 2005; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016).

My research (Videmšek, 2019) has shown that individual supervision in the field of social care is very rarely practised in Slovenia. When it does take place, it is usually due to emergencies (especially in specific areas of work, e.g. violence) or as a follow-up to group supervision. However, one of the reasons for its use is that it is prescribed as a measure to improve work. Unlike in England, many of the same principles apply to individual supervision in Slovenia as to group supervision; the supervisor is independent and comes from outside. Individual supervision also emphasises the interpersonal relationship, so the initial meetings are simply about establishing a respectful and confidential working relationship. In individual supervision, it is very important to create a situation in which the supervisee feels comfortable and can talk freely about their work and also about the situations that stress them the most and reveal their vulnerability. The aim of the meetings is to find and plan new steps that the supervisor chooses for the situation in question.

Various authors (Brown and Bourne, 1996; Morrison, 2005; Milošević Arnold, 2004) count the time that the supervisor can de-

vote to the supervisee among the advantages of individual supervision. This relationship is seen as more in-depth since the supervisor spends all the time allocated to one supervisee so that the supervisee's supervision problem can be dealt with in depth from several perspectives. In one-to-one supervision, supervisors often use the Seven Eyed Model<sup>7</sup> (Hawkins and Shohet, 2013). The disadvantage of this format is that it is often not accessible to everyone. In addition, the supervisor is not able to learn from other colleagues and does not have the opportunity to hear and act on so-called tacit knowledge.

As the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is very intensive in individual supervision, it is particularly important in this supervision approach that the relationship and roles are very clearly defined. It is important that the supervisor is neither a consultant nor an advisor in this relationship, but enters into a dialogue with the supervisee. Unless they have previously agreed otherwise. The supervisor must pay particular attention to boundaries and ensure that individual supervision does not turn into therapy and does not drift into personal areas.

### *Team supervision*

One of the most popular approaches in supervision is the so-called team supervision (*staff and organisational supervision*). Alenka Kobolt and Sonja Žorga (1999, p. 171) consider that a characteristic feature of team supervision is its composition. A team is a group of co-workers who are dependent on each other for their work. Team supervision is characteristic of environments where an individual is dealt with by a team of professionals and several people are responsi-

---

<sup>7</sup> The model was developed by Peter Hawkins during his research into the crucial difference in leading a group when supervisors with different styles conducted the supervision. He realised that the crucial difference depended on the decisions that the supervisors made. These depended on what the supervisor focused on. He recognised that several levels were active at the same time. Based on his findings, Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet introduced the Seven Perspectives Model in 1985, which later became the "Seven Eyed Model," which identifies different areas that in turn define what to focus on in supervision. The authors write that they have modified the model slightly since it was first used, particularly in light of what supervisors who have used the model in practice have reported about its use (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012, p. 85).

ble for them. In team supervision, everyone deals with one case but looks at it from different perspectives. The focus in this approach is on the supervisee's effective service delivery on the one hand, and on building effective and good relationships within the organisation on the other. The same principles apply to team supervision as to group and individual supervision, except that in team supervision the members of the team are closely linked and know each other.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold (2009), supervision is about the supervisor working with the members of a work group who regularly work together to solve various problems. The role of the supervisor is to ensure good communication within the team and to help remove distractions that hinder their constructive cooperation. As Alenka Kobolt (1994, p. 490) argues, the members of the supervision group clarify issues related to their functioning in the group work in sessions. They seek answers to questions about the structure of their relationships with each other and about possible obstacles and hindrances they experience in the fulfilment of their tasks. Within the group, each individual contributes to improving the quality of work with users.

According to Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2006, p. 162), team supervision, in contrast to group, individual or peer supervision, focuses on a group of people who have come together in supervision because they have a working relationship with each other. The goals of team supervision are standardised, coordinated work processes. They have a common concern and the team members are dependent on the other members. The team members may be different professionals, but they must at least maintain a minimum level of common agreement. They must find a consensus that enables them to work in the same direction. This means that team members must be able to compromise, listen to and understand each other and communicate effectively and openly.

Chris Payne and Tony Scott (1982) have pointed out that the supervisor must be an external member who is independent of the team. However, supervision within the team is possible if the team has already been formed and the members have sufficient experience on which they are prepared to reflect.

The task of the supervisor in the context of team supervision is

to pay attention to at least three levels: the level of the individual in the team (the need for everyone in the team to be heard, the need to reflect on how they see the functioning of the team, how they evaluate their place in the team, how they describe their role, how they see it, how they see the relationships in the team, etc.), the level of the team (the need for everyone in the team to be heard, the need to reflect on how they see the functioning of the team, how they evaluate their place in the team, how they describe their role, how they see it, how they see the relationships in the team, etc.).the team needs to reflect on the team processes (how does the team work as a whole, where are the supports for the individual carers in the process, what group processes are going on in the team, how do the members feel, what needs to be fixed or what should be done more often) and on the level of team tasks (are the tasks clearly defined, is it known who does what, are the tasks useful, should something be added or changed, etc.).

In order to work correctly in team supervision, it is essential that the supervisor has a basic theoretical knowledge of group dynamics. Alenka Kobol (1994, p. 490) believes that an important theoretical starting point is also the topic-centred interaction, which emphasises the importance of the balance between the three sides of the equilateral triangle: (1) the needs of the individual, (2) the group as a whole and the new entity in group supervision, and (3) the topics addressed – the supervision issues.

### *Peer supervision – intervision*

*Peer supervision* is an approach that is independent of financial resources. It is usually set up to bring together a small group of professionals working in the same organisation or in a similar field of practice to meet without a formal supervisor and to share experiences and concerns from practice. In peer supervision, they take responsibility for their own learning, for their own professional development in achieving professional standards of practice. Such supervision is an upgrade of group supervision, with greater autonomy and independence for group members, providing an already more collegial and friendly relationship. Peer supervision thus refers to a process

in which one practitioner is supervised by another (they are equal members). Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2006, p. 164) suggest that peer supervision is appropriate when practitioners have not been able to join a supervision group or get a supervisor because the supervisor either does not have the time or the group is already full.

Peer supervision in Slovenia is called *intervision* (Žorga, 1995; Milošević Arnold, 1997). A characteristic feature of this approach is that none of the individuals involved takes on the role of permanent supervisor. Henk Hanekamp (1994, p. 503) argues that *intervision* is a method of learning in which a small group of colleagues with similar levels of professional competence and work experience supervise each other on the basis of issues that arise in their work environment. He defines *intervision* as a type of supervision in which none of the participants takes on the permanent role of supervisor.

*Intervision* is a great opportunity for colleagues to support each other while they wait for the next supervision meeting. At the meeting itself, it is agreed who will take the lead in the *intervision* meeting and the one who leads is given the role of *intervisor*. The next time, the roles are reversed and someone else takes over the process. This ensures that the roles are balanced and that the experience is reported.

Despite the role reversal, it is important that the principles applied in the *intervision* are similar to those applied in supervision processes, that the participants agree on a cooperation agreement, develop rules and follow ethical principles. In this way, they can develop their professionalism, support each other and learn from the situations presented. The best preparation for working in an *intervision* group is certainly to have participated in the supervision process beforehand, as the experience of the supervision process can be transferred to *intervision*. Henk Hanekamp (1994) lists five basic conditions that should be observed as ground rules for participation. The most important is that the person participating in *intervision* supervision actually works in practice. This is because *intervision* focuses on the personal way in which the work is done. It is very difficult to carry out an *intervision* if someone is unemployed, ill for a long time or on leave. Such a member would have nothing to talk about and this quickly proves useless. Such a group would soon

become a chat room where work experiences are no longer discussed. This may be pleasant, but it has none of the characteristics of intervision.

In addition to practical work, it is important for good results in intervision processes that meetings are regular and arranged in advance. According to Hank Hanekamp (1994, p. 503), intervision is concerned with the process of learning. This means that meetings should be regular and have a predetermined date, attendance, duration, roles of individuals, content and didactic methods. The frequency of the meeting depends on the arrangements made, as does the attendance. Attendance should be compulsory. Mere occasional attendance when someone has a problem, for example, does not make sense.

Intervision may bring together experts from different institutions, with different lengths of experience, but working in the same field of expertise. Diversity usually enriches and enriches the group. It is important, however, that there is no hierarchy among the experts. Hierarchical superiority of members hinders the work of the intervision team. Intervision is actually about the question of one's own responsibility in the performance of professional roles. Each member is responsible for their own work. However, it is difficult to trust if one is in a subordinate relationship with another member of the group, which is why Hank Hanekamp (1994, p. 503) clearly writes that the leader and the subordinate do not belong to the same intervision group.

Intervision is a relationship that cannot be associated with friendship, partnership, kinship, counselling, etc. If we want to talk openly about our experiences and listen to our colleagues without prejudice in order to learn together about the profession and the work, it is really very important that the purpose of the meeting is first and foremost intervision. Sometimes the nature of the work makes this difficult and dual roles are unavoidable, but in this case, it is important to discuss and agree in advance on confidentiality, responsibility and consequences, and the benefits of meeting members outside the intervision team.

The subject of intervision is personal learning. It is about supporting each other in learning how to do the job. In intervision,

interviewees often learn important things about their own organisation and the profession.

Despite its many advantages, this approach also has drawbacks. According to Vida Milošević Arnold (1997), the biggest pitfall of intervision is that it can make learning too ineffective because it is precisely the pleasant and supportive atmosphere and the mutual trust of the members of the intervision group that enable them to give each other a lot of support and comfort in difficult work situations. As a result, there is a lack of perseverance in the search for constructive solutions to problems. Another disadvantage is that the members of the intervision group, due to their homogeneity, tend to spin in a vicious circle when presenting problems and only see solutions that make no significant difference to the situation. In addition, members of the group can get carried away and bring up current organisational, technical, legal and other work-related problems. They may also start to criticise colleagues and superiors unconstructively, but this is not the purpose of intervision.

### *Self-supervision*

The purpose of being involved in supervision meetings is also to train the supervisee in reflection, to recognise its importance and to be able to carry out *self-supervision*, which is increasingly recognised but still underused. Self-supervision means that each practitioner reflects for themselves on events at work when another supervisor is not available. In this approach, each practitioner is their own supervisor (Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016, p. 20). Self-supervision should be the ultimate goal of supervision. In the supervision processes, the practitioner should acquire the competences to be able to help themselves when they encounter an obstacle. Self-supervision enables the supervisee to identify their own supervision needs and take responsibility for their own development. Noble, Gray and Johnston (2016, p. 20) suggest that such an approach complements supervisory communication with others, and thus the individual can gradually become more self-sufficient and transfer the communication from supervision to their everyday practice.

## *Meta-supervision*

Notwithstanding the above approaches, a meta-supervision approach is important and necessary for the proper implementation of supervision. I could simply say that meta-supervision is supervision for supervisors because supervisors also need support in their work and in leading groups. Supervision is a learning process for everyone involved in the process, including the supervisors. Meta-supervision is therefore the supervision of supervisors. It contains all the elements of a meeting as we know them from the management of supervision processes and is also considered to be based on a cooperative agreement and with all the characteristics of a working relationship. Meta-supervision, like supervision, takes place at pre-agreed times, but usually bi-monthly rather than once a month as is the case with supervision sessions. They are intended to support the process of the supervision meetings. Meta-supervision enables more effective and efficient work in supervision processes and creates new possibilities for conducting a particular session. What is special about meta-supervision is that the subject of the discussion is not the work with a particular person in practice, but that the meta-supervision sessions provide an opportunity to discuss how we as supervisors manage the process, what challenges we face and how we as supervisors could do things differently in our management. Tanja Rožič (2015, p. 241) argues that meta-supervision is a space in which unresolved issues from supervision processes are revisited, this time on a third level.

Some meta-supervisors choose to work on the basis of intervision, with one supervisor taking the lead at a time, and there are also meta-supervision groups led by a meta-supervisor. The Social Chamber of Slovenia has also created a list of meta-supervisors who are available to supervisors in solving dilemmas in the implementation of supervision processes. Regardless of the choice, it is important that supervisors also reflect and learn about their own supervision processes.

## Development of supervision in Slovenia

The School for Social Workers was founded in Slovenia in 1955. Its main purpose was to provide professional training to those already working in the field of social work practice. The opening ceremony of the school took place on 7 November 1955 in Ljubljana. On this day, formal training in social work began (Zaviršek, 2005, p. 31). In the first courses, supervision was not yet part of the curriculum. It was introduced as a subject relatively late, as it was not included in the four-year study programme until the 1994/5 academic year and the course was taught by Vida Milošević Arnold (University of Ljubljana, 1994). The course was taught in the 4th year, both in the first and second semesters and consisted of 60 hours of lectures, surprisingly without tutorials.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold, a long-time lecturer and head of the subject Supervision in Social Work at the School of Social Work, which later became the Faculty of Social Work, the need for supervision had arisen much earlier. Vida Milošević Arnold (2017) recalls:

The need for the course was recognised as early as the end of the 1960s by the then Director of the School for Social Workers,<sup>8</sup> Marija Jančar. In 1969, when we went to America for the first time, she called me and asked me if I would make any enquiries about supervision, which we were not yet familiar with.<sup>9</sup> And that was just the beginning.

The first Slovenian practitioners learnt about supervision and what it is for, why it is needed and how it can be implemented, initially in the USA in Minnesota and then in Zagreb during an inter-faculty study. There we had a supervision course, taught by Nada Smolić Krković (Group interview, 6 November 2017).

Nada Smolić Krković (1977) was the author of the first book on interviewing in Yugoslavia, entitled *Dinamika intervjuja u socialnoj anamnezi: supervizija u socijalnom radu* [The Dynamics of the Interview in Social History: Supervision in Social Work]. The author

---

<sup>8</sup> The first official title was School for Social Workers.

<sup>9</sup> Vida Milošević Arnold was working at a Social Work Centre at the time.

understands supervision as a process and a creative communication between equal professionals in social work, in which the personal responsibility and autonomy of the professionals is preserved. (Pantić, 2004, p. 55) The process of intensive reflection on the need to establish a supervision programme thus began precisely on the basis of the experience of studying supervision in a different environment, first in the USA and later in Zagreb, where a supervision programme was established. Marina Ajduković (2009, p. 54) has written that for a long time, there was no supervision programme in the regular training of social workers in Zagreb either because at that time it was believed that the state would solve all problems and that social problems were something that would no longer exist in a socialist society.

Experience from abroad provided the impetus for the introduction of supervision in the field of social welfare. Although the topic of supervision had not yet appeared in the curricula for the training of social workers, it was introduced in practice, especially in specific areas of social work. According to Vida Milošević Arnold (2009), from the second half of the 1960s, practitioners who encountered more serious problems and needed professional help and support organised themselves and received individual supervision from Metka Kramar, a clinical psychologist working at the Ljubljana Polje Psychiatric Hospital.<sup>10</sup> She was one of the first supervisors and also a lecturer at the School of Social Work. It is therefore not surprising that psychotherapeutic approaches had a major influence on social work itself at this time, and supervision was also in line with these approaches. In the context of supervision processes, the main goal of supervision was the personal growth of the supervisee. The focus was on the supervisee, on their personal growth, on how they worked and what they could do differently, and not on the wider circumstances that contributed to their behaviour.

In the 1960s, supervision was therefore developed most intensively in the field of clinical-psychological and psychotherapeutic work. Milošević Arnold (1999) writes that the incorporation of

---

<sup>10</sup> Metka Kramar worked as a supervisor and consultant for a number of social workers, mainly in the field of foster care and adoption.

psychoanalytic theory into social work was a major change in the development and use of supervision, as it was the beginning of a therapeutic approach in social work that required in-depth individual or group treatment of experts by experience (loss, divorce, mental health problems, etc.). Since supervision was part of the training in the psychotherapeutic process, it is not surprising that most of the first supervisors were psychotherapists. According to Alenka Kobolt (2006, p. 45), those wishing to become psychotherapists must complete 180 hours of supervision with a supervisor of recognised status. After completing training as a psychotherapist, it was also possible to obtain the title of supervisor. This is an honour awarded by the Psychotherapy Section of the Slovenian Medical Association.

A review of the literature (Milošević Arnold, 1999; Milošević Arnold, Vodeb Bonač, Erzar and Možina, 1999; Arnšek, 1999; Žoržga, 1999) shows that group supervision started to be developed and introduced in the context of institutional care, in the field of family and institutional education. Social workers who worked in educational institutions were able to engage in supervision together with teachers. Tatjana Arnšek (1999) adds that in the second half of the 1970s, supervision was carried out in the field of health care, especially in the psychiatry and psychotherapy field (Leopold Bregant), and in the field of social welfare, in educational and correctional institutions (Janez Bečaj and Miloš Kobal in Radeče, who were supervisors in youth reformatory facilities), and in social work centres (Azra Kristančič and later Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Bernard Stritih). In the social work profession, supervision is also associated with the high-profile action research project “The Logatec Experiment” (Flaker, 1991), which included elements of supervision.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 8), the main reason why supervision was not introduced in other areas of social work was that social welfare was not established until the change in the family law in 1976, and the expertise supported mainly the administrative-legal way of solving social problems. (A similar observation was made for Zagreb by Marina Ajduković, 2009.) The need for supervision was therefore virtually non-existent.

The analysis of the interviews I conducted with supervisors in the social welfare field in November 2017 explored three research

questions: how the introduction of supervision in social welfare developed; how supervisors were trained, and their vision for the development of the field of supervision, showed that supervisors believe that the real trigger for change in the field of supervision was certainly the change in family legislation in the mid-1970s.

The legal basis for supervision was the Marriage and Family Relations Act,<sup>11</sup> which introduced marriage and premarital counselling. Those who carried out counselling had to attend supervision. We were all trained. This was part of the medical faculty. Gynaecologists were also present, and they oversaw family planning. It was very good training. (SID,<sup>12</sup> 6 November 2017)

When the legislation changed, we were obliged to take part in training sessions, which today could be described as supervision meetings. We were given the knowledge, the support for our work, and we worked on cases. It was on the basis of these training courses that I later obtained my supervision licence. (SII, 6 November 2017)

Azra Kristančič, a clinical psychologist and founder of family counselling, played a central role in the field of social welfare during this period, according to many supervisors, by supporting direct counselling for family relationships with supervision for social workers. Her contribution to the field of family work certainly had a major impact on the development and progression of supervision in social welfare. Many professionals had the opportunity to learn and gain experience during the time she worked.

Azra Kristančič led the didactic groups. We learned to work on a case study. We prepared a case. Azra trained us according to Rogers, the humanistic model, non-directive counselling and client-centred counselling (SID, 6 November 2017).

This was an area of work that was still developing at the time. Azra Kristančič developed humanistic, didactic and development-orient-

---

<sup>11</sup> The Marriage and Family Relations Act was adopted on 4 June 1976 (*Official Gazette of the SRS*, No 15/76).

<sup>12</sup> To ensure anonymity, the names of the supervisors are encrypted.

ed supervision based on the Dutch model. According to Vida Milošević Arnold (2017), Azra's model of supervision was adopted by Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Bernard Stritih at the then School of Social Work. Azra Kristančič's role was very important for social welfare practitioners in this period, mainly because she supported the practitioners in conducting interviews with the family.

She taught us how to build relationships, how to take the position for social work and how to establish a working relationship (SID, 6 November 2017). The supervision model was thus based on the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers (1942, 1951), which in supervision meant learning through direct experience and a compassionate and supportive relationship between the supervisor to the supervisees (Milošević Arnold, 1999). Alenka Kobolt (2006, p. 47) believes that the "Rogerian approach" as a humanistically oriented counselling communication allows the individual to be an active member of the supervision group, to feel safe and to talk about their professional dilemmas.

According to Azra Kristančič (1999), this approach and the development of supervision arose from the need of all those professionals who had completed the first semester of the postgraduate course in Premarital, Marriage and Family Counselling and who wanted to deepen and broaden their knowledge of the skills needed to work with individuals, partners and families. The author writes that didactic supervision enables professionals to learn about, accept, recognise and respect the limits of their professional power when working with clients (Kristančič 1999, p. 38). It is therefore not surprising that supervision at this time relied heavily on the knowledge and training of professionals from various therapeutic schools and disciplines (e.g. Gestalt Therapy, Transaction Analysis, Reality Therapy, Family Gestalt Experiential Therapy, Systemic Family Therapy, Mediation). Supervision focuses on the professional growth of the professional, the study of social roles, group interaction and group dynamics.

According to Metka Kramar (1998), the need for supervision in psychotherapeutic work led to the founding of the Supervisors' Club within the Section for Psychotherapy in 1991, which was open to all, both those who had already acquired the title of supervisor and

those who had not yet done so. The club was intended for lectures, the exchange of opinions and experiences and international professional networking in the field of supervision (see also Kobolt, 2006).

Good practical experience, Tempus training, group work and the positive attitude of the supervised practitioners encouraged the establishment of the study programme at the then School of Social Work. The Supervision in Social Work course was introduced in the 1994/95 academic year. It was the starting point for the creation of complementary training for supervisors, which arose mainly from the realisation that the study programme itself did not provide qualified supervisors at undergraduate level, as students only had lectures without exercises, but at the same time, it was shown that practice was necessary to carry out supervision processes. It was clear that the supervisor should be an expert in supervision who, in addition to this expertise, also has many years of experience in social welfare.

The first training course on supervision in Slovenia was provided by the Dutch Jetske van der Zijpp and Fons Wierinkom from the Hogeschool van Arnhem in Nijmegen as part of the European Tempus project, starting in January 1992. The training took place both in Nijmegen and in Slovenia. In Nijmegen, 12 Slovenian participants came together. In October 1994, ten of them received their diplomas (van der Zijpp, 1999, p. 9).

Vida Milošević Arnold (2017) described her experience of participating in the programme as follows:

The programme in Nijmegen in the Netherlands was originally intended to be a one-year programme, then we agreed to extend it and turn it into a specialisation programme, and that is what we did. This diploma was nostrified here. There were three of us from the social field (Marta Vodeb Bonač, Doris Erzar and myself, Vida Milošević Arnold), three from the Faculty of Education and three from the Faculty of Health. It was interdisciplinary. There were also three from the former East Germany. We wanted to deepen our knowledge, acquire skills and work under the mentorship of those who knew the ropes, as well as sharpen ourselves and have the opportunity to continue learning. The following year, we had a 14-day training course in Nijmegen and then travelled to Slovenia, where we

formed intervision groups, also interdisciplinary, and in each group, there was someone from the healthcare sector, from education and from us. We trained and sent materials to the Netherlands. Two people acted as facilitators, Jetske van der Zijpp and Henk Hanekamp (psychotherapist and supervisor). They were our mentors.

The most important turning point for the development and introduction of supervision in social welfare in Slovenia was certainly the 1992 *Social Assistance Act*. Article 77 of the Act stipulates that the Social Chamber of Slovenia “shall plan and organise supervision of the professional work of social workers and co-workers.” Supervision thus became a legitimate right of professionals and the authority to carry out supervision was transferred to the Social Chamber of Slovenia.

Zmaga Prošt (1999) wrote that it is the duty of the Social Chamber of Slovenia to establish a suitable model and organisational conditions for supervision. In order to ensure the right to supervision, a wide variety of supervision groups began to be formed. Miran Možina and Bernard Stritih (1999, p. 44) reported that regular meetings of the so-called Balint Groups started at the School of Social Work in April 1994. This is a form of supervision with a special emphasis on the quality of the relationship between the professional and the client and between the members of the group. The groups were led by the supervisor Bernard Stritih.

In order to provide quality supervision to practitioners, it was necessary to provide training for practitioners with many years of experience in the social welfare field to take on the role of supervisors. The legal basis therefore encouraged the development of planned training programmes for supervisors. Žarka Brišar Slana (1997) wrote that in 1995 the Social Chamber of Slovenia was pleased to accept the initiative of Vida Milošević Arnold, Doris Erzar Metelko and Marta Vodeb Bonač (members of the Social Chamber of Slovenia) to carry out the research project “Introducing Supervision in the Field of Social Welfare” and at the same time also the project

“Training Supervisors in the Field of Social Welfare I”.<sup>13</sup> The aim of the project “Introducing Supervision in the Field of Social Welfare” was to obtain answers to the questions of which supervision model best suited the Slovenian situation and how to create a supervision network (Prošt, 1999, p. 5). This was the first pilot project to identify the need for supervision in the field of social welfare and the first study on the need for supervision in the field of social welfare (Milošević Arnold, Erzar Metelko and Vodeb Bonač, 1995). The research showed that until 1995 there were different models of supervision for different professional fields (with different concepts and schools) based on the need for professional guidance and the management of development and innovation projects.

The first training, which ran concurrently with the survey, took place from 25 May 1995 to 22 April 1997 at various locations and was delivered by Vida Milošević Arnold, Doris Erzar Metelko and Marta Vodeb Bonač. 18 supervisors were involved. After numerous consultations, the participants of the first training met with the supervisors at four workshops in Jezersko, at supervision meetings at the School of Social Work and at the Tončka Hočevar Protection Work Centre (Brišar Slana, 1997, p. 5). The training was based on the developmental and educational model of supervision.

At the end of the training, in 1997, a special issue of the magazine *Socialni izziv* [Social Challenge] (published by the Social Chamber of Slovenia) was published, in which the entire training programme was published. The programme included four seminars and the practical part included 16 supervision sessions of four full hours each. The work was carried out in two groups, led by two trainers. Each participant had to complete a minimum of 40 hours of practical work with their supervision group. This was a first, one-off training project. Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Bernard Stritih were the supervisors for the entire training course (Milošević Arnold, 1997, p. 13 and 30).

Due to the excellent experience and the increasing demand for supervision, and the desire to provide support to supervisors as well,

---

<sup>13</sup> The research project was funded by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the training project by the Social Chamber of Slovenia.

the training was continued in 1997 at the School of Social Work as part of "Training Supervisors II." The participants worked with their supervision teams and continued to meet once a month for a year in intervision groups. Every other month they met with the project leaders in supervision groups. Today we would call this supervision of supervisors meta-supervision.

Žarka Brišar Slana (1997, p. 5) believes that the training and supervision led by Jože Ramovš in other areas of social welfare, such as social gerontology and gerontogogy, were also valuable in this period. Supervision training for mentors and managers of voluntary social work programmes was also numerous and very valuable. Supervision meetings were organised for social workers in companies by Pavla Rapoša Tajnšek (Brišar Slana, 1997, p. 5).

The Association for Supervision (now the Association for Supervision, Coaching and Organisational Counselling) was founded in 1997. It brings together supervisors working in the educational, social, health and corporate sectors. The association is based at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana. The first supervisors of the development and education model came from there and developed the first postgraduate programme.

In February 1998, the first verified postgraduate programme in Supervision was established at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana. The programme provides formal postgraduate training for supervisors (Žorga 1999, p. 18). However, at the School of Social Work, supervisor training continued. According to Vida Milošević Arnold (1999), after the programme "Training for Supervision in Social Welfare" in 1997, the school continued the programme, but with the difference that the second one emphasised prevention programmes in social welfare. In 1997, 8 new social work practitioners were trained. They completed the programme in February 1999, so that in 1999 there were 25 supervisors, the backbone for future supervision networks (Milošević Arnold, 1999, p. 24).

An important step in the development of supervision was, in addition to training, the development of the *Rules on Planning, Monitoring and Conducting Supervision of Professional Work in the Field of Social Welfare* (2003), which was prepared by the Social Chamber. Under the auspices of Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič, an expert group

was formed, which gradually defined the criteria for obtaining a licence as a supervisor in social welfare. The Rules were adopted and approved in 2003. The current form of the Rules is still valid today, despite some attempts to amend them.

After defining the criteria and adopting the Rules, the Social Chamber of Slovenia launched its first call for applications to award licences for the provision of supervision in the field of social welfare in 2004. The Videmšek survey (2017–2019) showed that the first presentation of licences was published in the *Official Gazette* on 9 July 2004 (*Official Gazette of the RS*, No 74/04). 43 applications were received, five of which were incomplete. The first 35 supervisors were thus licensed. The survey showed that training for the licence varied: from training conducted by the School for Social Workers (later the Faculty of Social Work) in cooperation with the Social Chamber, to training in supervision according to the relational model, training in supervision in Balint groups, training in supervision in education, therapeutic schools, training in supervision in the field of family work and training in classical psychodrama. Many supervisors obtained licences through additional training (in Reality Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, Kempler Family Therapy), as well as through specialisations in supervision and participation in the Tempus programme (this information was acquired from the archives of the Social Chamber of Slovenia).

On the basis of the licences, the Social Chamber of Slovenia published the first list of supervisors in the field of social welfare in 2005 with the areas in which the supervisors provide supervision. 35 supervisors were included in the list. This list enables practitioners (especially managers) to choose the right supervisor. Since that year, the Social Chamber of Slovenia has published an annual call for licensing, and the list of supervisors is published and updated on its website. In 2019, there were 96 supervisors on the list. There are several reasons why only 95 supervisors have been listed since the first training in 1994. One of them is that the list can be removed (Article 13). The Rules stipulate that supervisors who have not supervised for two consecutive years are to be removed from the list.

Another important reason is that the training of supervisors in social welfare has stalled since 2013. Vida Milošević Arnold com-

pleted her last training programme at the Faculty of Social Work in 2013. The development of supervision has been halted to a certain extent. The Faculty of Social Work did not organise any new training between 2013 and 2017, so more and more supervisors obtained licences and were trained in other programmes and in other fields (e.g. psychotherapy, family therapy).

Between 2009 and 2014, the Supervision module was offered as part of the postgraduate programme, but due to lack of interest, it was not offered again after 2015. The programme also did not ensure that students would be licensed upon completion. They obtained an academic title but not a licence.

The third reason is that not all supervisors who successfully complete the programme apply for a licence.

Due to the interest of practitioners in training to become supervisors and the fact that there is a greater need for supervisors than there are supervisors in practice, a training programme for supervision in social work was relaunched: in 2017, the Faculty of Social Work received accreditation for the supplementary course “Training for Supervisors in Social Welfare,” of which I, Petra Videmšek, am the programme leader and lecturer. In 2018, the first accredited training programme was launched and in 2019, 10 of the 11 candidates successfully completed it (Videmšek, 2020b). In 2021, 8 more supervisors were trained, 6 of whom also applied for and received their licences in 2021 (author’s personal archive).

This programme represents continuity in terms of ensuring adequate staffing and maintaining the language of social work in the supervision process. In reviewing the data I obtained in my research, I find that there remains no simple explanation for how supervisors obtained their licence, but all programmes have a common entry requirement for enrolment. For example, candidates must have practical experience (at least four years of professional experience) and have worked specifically in the relevant field (social care, teaching, therapy) for the duration of the programme. The training programmes also set minimum standards required for graduation. The Faculty of Social Work and the Social Chamber of Slovenia have set a minimum standard of 270 hours – 190 hours of practical work and 80 hours of lectures (Videmšek, 2017).

Although supervision training has been going on since 1994, I cannot say that the network of supervisors is already full. The opposite is the case. In view of the growing need for support for practitioners who are confronted with many challenges and rising expectations in practice (both from professionals in the field as well as from the general public), the existing network should be further supplemented.

Research conducted in England by Lesley Curtis, Jo Moriarty and Ann Netton (2010) found that social work is one of the professions with the highest burnout rates. One of the reasons for the high burnout rate is that social workers work with people with whom they often feel a sense of hopelessness, identify with their experiences and often feel powerless themselves. So a large part of social work is dealing with the misfortune of others, and this is also a source of great stress for social workers, although they often only become aware of this when they realise that they can no longer do their job effectively. Social work is a highly stressful occupation, so it is not surprising that it has been clear since the inception of the profession that social workers need supervision to reflect on their experiences. In fact, the development of supervision began before the social work profession was established.

## Summary

Today it is clear that we cannot rely solely on the skills we have acquired during our training for our profession. The needs of people, communities and families are constantly changing and so are the expectations of good social work practice. We are forced to learn continuously if we want to be aware of the trends and developments around us. It is not only important to learn new social work techniques and skills but also to develop our personal skills. According to Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 3), this is the most important resource we all use in our work.

To sustain their work and do it well, social workers need support both in doing their work and in overcoming the many challenges of practice. And that support needs to be multifaceted and encourage

change, both in terms of how we think and how we experience and feel about our work. And for effective support, we need trained supervisors.

Supervision is not only important for the practitioner but also for the development and consolidation of the social work profession. Carlton E. Munson (2002) argues that there are at least four reasons why social work is extremely important in society: because of social reforms, because of the development of advocacy for users, because of the development of working methods (brief and effective treatment models) and because of the development of an effective supervision model. As supervisors, we must pass on our knowledge and behaviour to the next generation, because social work practice is a constant endeavour to enhance the well-being of the individual. Supervision can therefore be seen as continuous learning, with the desire for both supervisors and social workers to work together to achieve the best possible work outcomes, with agreed desired goals, to learn from practical experience where things have not gone as they should have, to find ways in which we could have done things differently.

## CHAPTER TWO

# FROM TRADITIONAL TO POSITIVE SUPERVISION

The development of social work education has led to the systematic development of new theories that practitioners apply in their work. Supervision has played an important role in the development of theories, as its primary purpose has been to improve practice and support the development of professional practice. This task consisted of transferring experience from practice to theory on the basis of reflection on the practitioner's work. The role of supervisors was crucial in this respect, as they took responsibility for transferring these experiences and shaping professional standards to guide practice, whereas supervisees were responsible for testing out new working methods in practice.

A systematic review of the literature shows that supervision processes have shifted from so-called traditional supervision (Kadushin, 1976; Smolić Krković, 1977; Milošević Arnold 1994; Žorga, 2002; Kobolt, 2002; Noble and Irwin, 2009; Bannink 2015), which is based on a problem-focused paradigm – with the intention of first analysing the problem and then solving it (the central question is what is wrong and what needs to be fixed) – to a solution-focused paradigm. We then moved from solution-focused supervision – finding something new, creating and co-creating new possibilities (Wei-su, 2009; Thompson, 2013) – to positive supervision (Bannink and Jackson, 2011; Bannink, 2015), where the central question is what works so that this can be further developed by the supervisee (Videmšek, 2020a).

Recent research (Seligman 1998, Lopez et al., 2015; Ghraye, 2012; Ghraye and Lillyman, 2010) has shown that we learn better

from good experiences than from mistakes. And this is what social workers need most in today's times to withstand the constant expectations and pressures from others. They need to be seen, encouraged and praised for making a difference and for making such a difference in the lives of people facing numerous challenges.

## **Theoretical foundations for the development of traditional supervision**

In its beginnings, supervision in social work was primarily influenced by learning theories. There are several, but the theories developed by John Dewey (1933), David Kolb (1984) and David Boud (1985) were particularly important for supervision. They enabled learning from experience through reflection on that experience, something that is still central to the development of the social work profession today. These theories are said to be based on the assumption of lifelong learning, that the focus on experience and the desire to learn from experience are central. The learning theories were quickly adopted in social work, mainly because this learning corresponded to the nature of the profession, which is primarily a practical activity. The nature of the profession is that practitioners not only apply certain theoretical insights but also develop them further. Thus, supervision in social work became a method of joint work between supervisors and supervisees with the help of learning theories.

In social work, it has long been believed that the longer a practitioner works, the better they become. This may still be true, but only if they are constantly improving and upgrading their skills. In fact, the understanding of learning has changed radically over the last 50 years. Today, learning is no longer reserved for pupils and students. Today, we talk about learning here and now, and about so-called lifelong learning (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010, p. 5). This is why the conviction "learning first, practice later" no longer applies. Especially not for social work. According to Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 13), the first person to change the way we think about learning and practice was academician and manager Reginald "Reg"

Revans (1907–2003),<sup>14</sup> the founder of *action learning*. He argued that there can be no learning without practice and no action without learning (Revans, 1982). The author worked first in mining and then in health care. He was most disturbed by the gap between what managers learn in theory and how they then apply this knowledge in practice. He felt that the accelerated pace of development and the many changes were making the knowledge they had acquired during their training obsolete and no longer relevant in a world in which they were working only a few years after they had trained. He wrote the formula:  $L \geq E.C.$  This means that learning ( $L = \textit{learning}$ ) must be equal to or even greater than environmental changes ( $E.C. = \textit{environmental changes}$ ). If organisations do not learn faster than the world is changing, the organisation will have to stop working. The same is true for Darwin's evolutionary development. And the same is true for individuals today, according to Robin Hawkins and Peter Shohet (2012, p. 13).

Learning theories emphasise that learning is a dialectical process that combines experiences and concepts. We learn by trying things out. We try things out to see if what we are doing is good or bad. We learn what works and what could be changed. For many years, it was believed that we learn from mistakes and correct mistakes that we could not foresee or recognise. Sonja Žorga (2000) believes that a mistake is something you make in good faith that you are doing the right thing and then realise otherwise. The realisation of a mistake, the new insight that something is not good, is therefore the basis for new, alternative action. Supervision is, as Sonja Žorga (2002, p. 5–8) states, “a process of specific learning and development as well as a method of supporting professional reflection that enables practitioners to gain new professional and personal insights through their own experiences.”

Harlene Anderson (2000) defines the supervision process as a collaborative learning process in which participants discover existing knowledge and develop new knowledge through dialogue. If supervision is understood in this way, the theoretical basis of this process

---

<sup>14</sup> Rey Revans represented Great Britain in the long jump at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. His sporting involvement certainly influenced the way he thought and learned.

can be anything that describes and explains participation, interaction, communication, connection, relationships, learning, creation in these processes.

Experiential learning, as a complementary form to traditional education, developed more intensively in the 1950s and 1960s in the USA. The foundations were laid by John Dewey (1938), Kurt Lewin (1947)<sup>15</sup> Jean Piaget (1961) and David A. Kolb (1984). This form of education soon spread around the world. The profession recognised that experiential learning helps to develop a sense of self and others, the ability to act with integrity, to adapt to new circumstances, to develop personal autonomy, the ability to cooperate and communicate, to function in unpredictable and complex social situations, and it is not surprising that supervision has become a space for this kind of learning.

David Kolb (1984) argued that we cannot learn by observation alone. Learning is a continuous process based on experience and reinforced by reflection on that experience. If we want to learn, we must first reflect on our past experiences and then learn from them. It is also true for social work that social work practice is usually not learned from books alone, but by testing theory in a practical context, with concrete people and concrete challenges that social workers are confronted with on a daily basis. Supervision is therefore a space for processing and learning from professional experience. One of the most frequently used models of reflection is certainly Kolb's experiential learning model.

The most important characteristics of experiential learning are therefore in line with the basic principles: that learning is a process and not a product, that it is a process of knowledge-creation and that learning is a holistic process that encompasses perception, emotion, action and reflection.

Kolb's model of experiential learning comprises four dimensions: concrete work experience, reflection on the experience, making sense of the experience and actively experimenting and thinking about new possibilities.

---

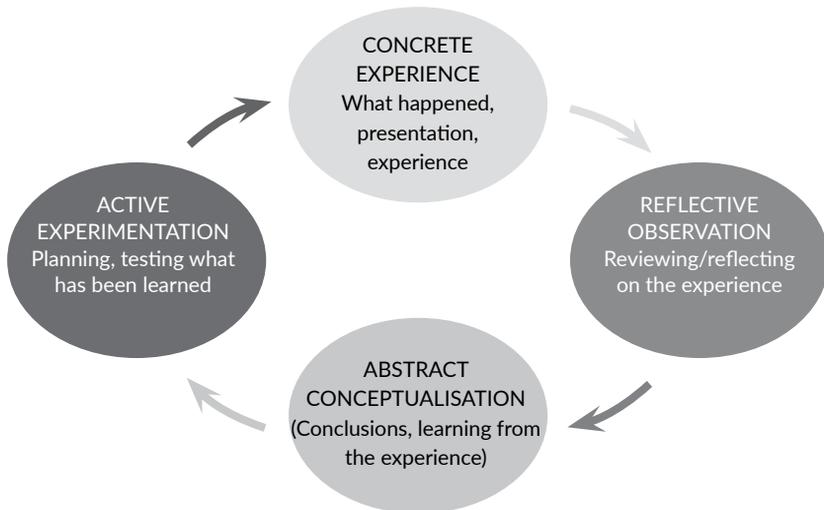
<sup>15</sup> Kurt Lewin (1947) developed a model of change. His model was known mainly in the psychology of change and consists of three steps: unfreezing, changing and refreezing.

### *Kolb's experiential learning model*

David Kolb (1981) sees learning as a cyclical process, a “concrete activity” that can begin at any stage of the cycle, but it is important to have concrete work experience and to consider this experience in all the cycles of the process. The stages are defined in order to solve a problem in an intuitive way through trial and error. However, it is true that in the supervision processes, precisely because the supervision process is systematic and leads to the desired change, the cycle begins with practical experience.

David Kolb (1981, p. 244) argues that the dominant philosophy in the application of this model is pragmatism or reliance on action and that the concrete work is based on case studies and involves asking how the action has affected the case.

Figure 1: Kolb's experiential learning model (1984).



### *Concrete experience*

Experiential learning is always based on a concrete experience, on a story that the supervisor entrusts to supervision. The process of reflection therefore begins with the supervisee reviewing the event, the experience they wish to change. It is important that the experience is as fresh as possible and that changes can still be made. It is

also important that it is the supervisee's own experience and not that of another person. The supervisee needs to describe what happened as concretely as possible. The purpose of the Kolbl model is to recognise our blind spots since in modern supervision we no longer look for blind spots, but for what we shine in. At this point, the supervisor's job is to find out as much background knowledge as possible about the experience by working closely with the supervisee and also asking them about the context, how they felt about it, what contributed to their decisions, all this to understand the experience as well as possible. The supervisor should use the supervisee's and other members' questions to find out for themselves what the problem is.

The role of the supervisor is to guide the supervisee through the experience, through the experiencing of it. It is important how the supervisee experiences the event. Based on what is said, the supervisor formulates the supervision question.

#### Reflecting observation

The second step in Kolb's model is to reflect on the experience. To reflect means to look at the experience again. Reflection enables the supervisee to articulate and re-experience the situation, and at the same time, through this re-examination, they can gain new insights into the situation and their emotional reactions. Supervision is often referred to as a helicopter view of an experience because the supervisee already has a certain distance to it and can reflect on it when they are able to process what has happened. The supervisee reflects on their assumptions and beliefs in interaction with the other members of the supervision group and with the help of the supervisor.

Reflecting on the experience enables the supervisee to gain new insights into the situation, to learn something about the background to the situations that have arisen and to gain insight into which situations repeatedly draw them into patterns of behaviour that are not effective. Through reflection, they discover why they act the way they do, what consequences this behaviour has for them, for the experts by experience of distress and for the other people involved, and uncover the feelings they experience in the process.

### Abstract conceptualisation

It is not enough to report an experience in order to learn. To achieve the desired change, we need to make sense of the experience. This is a very important stage in the learning process because it is the so-called integration of practical and theoretical knowledge. At this stage of the supervision process, the experience is interpreted, analysed and compared with our own experiences and those of the other group members. It is often the reflection on the experience that makes us realise that it is in fact the experience of many, that it is not just happening to us and that change is possible. Experience and reflection are the basis for analysing the case and linking it to relevant theory, research, policy frameworks, formal knowledge, previous experience and wisdom.

To analyse an experience means to connect the experience with a theory. In this part, the supervisee tries to understand the experience and check how the theory fits their action. The connections serve to find out how they can apply the theoretical knowledge to practice and what further knowledge they can use. But it is important that the supervisee does this on their own, that they learn about it themselves and think about how they can apply these new insights in the future. The theoretical insights therefore enable them to connect their experience to the new insights and thus actually transform their mental structure into something new. Sonja Žorža (2002, p. 27) calls this process equilibration or balancing. It is a process in which existing attitudes, knowledge and behavioural patterns are reconciled with new experiences and newly acquired knowledge. This realisation is important because it is only when the supervisee integrates the experience and its meaning that it becomes their wisdom. This wisdom, however, is not static, as it requires the supervisee to constantly reflect on their knowledge and experience, which need to be expressed through words.

### Active experimentation

Without the last step, the supervision meeting would only be a conversation about what has happened. The supervision meeting is primarily about finding out what could have been done differently.

Based on the analysis of the various options presented in the supervision meeting, the supervisor identifies possible solutions, analyses different approaches and perspectives on the situation and then decides what should be put into practice. They use the experiences of the members of the supervision group to gain further perspectives and insights and use only what can be a source of support and a possible tool in their work. Based on new insights and observations about how they could have done things differently, the supervisor plans other ways of responding and anticipates new possible courses of action. The supervisor's task in this part is to encourage the supervisee to think about which of these insights they could use in practice and how they will deal with them.

The focus on what will happen in the future must be seen from a somewhat broader perspective, as new answers always involve at least three main agents: people who are experts by experience, employees and the organisation. In these processes, it is necessary to look at what the changes will mean for them too and how this will affect their relationship with each other.

Kolb's circular model is simple to use, it is a description of how we can learn from experience. When applying this model, the supervisor should make sure that the situation the supervisee is describing is as concrete as possible, that it is their own situation and not someone else's, that the issue of supervision they want to address is clearly formulated. At the same time, they should make sure to involve the other members of the group in the discussion and leave the choice of action to the supervisee.

The pitfalls of the model can be that the focus is on analysing the problem and, more importantly, exploring and dissecting the causes of the problem. However, detailed analysis and dissection tend to focus too much on the past. The supervisor really needs to be careful not to fall into the trap of dissecting the event and looking for causes and consequences.

Another disadvantage of the model is the expectation that the supervisee has of the supervisor in dealing with the situation. Research by Scott (1969, p. 94–95) shows that in the educational model, supervisees expect the supervisor to give them solutions and advice for the situation, precisely because they assume that they have more

skills and theoretical knowledge for working with cases. The supervisor's knowledge and experience are such that they are expected to provide competent professional support. Supervisees see the supervisor as someone who has the answers to a problematic situation based on their many years of experience with similar cases.

Supervisors often fall into this trap themselves when they expect their supervisees to tell them how to act. Alfred Kadushin (1992) has even shown that supervisors often exploit this position and use the model as an opportunity to "narcissistically display their knowledge and skills". He based this assertion on the answers he received from questions about the resources and abilities of supervisors. He asked both supervisors and supervisees questions about this. In the survey, he first encouraged the supervisors to name their most important resources in supervision. The most common responses included: "I have a wealth of knowledge and skills and am able to use these to develop the skills of my supervisees," "I have knowledge of the types of skills supervisees need to do their work effectively and I have the ability to share this knowledge." He then asked the supervisees the same question. He asked them to assess, from their own perspective, what their supervisor's greatest resources were. The supervisees answered, for example: "One of their most important resources is certainly that they have a broad theoretical knowledge of the subject and the ability to pass on this knowledge," "A lot of knowledge that enables them to make suggestions on how we should act," "A broad knowledge of theory and the application of theory in practice, knowledge of the dynamics of the organisation and case studies."

It is not the task of the supervisor to give advice and tell the supervisee what is best for them, but to guide the supervisee to new insights so that they can find out for themselves what works for them and what they can put into practice. Sonja Žorga (2002) believes that the task of the supervisor is to help the supervisee to combine practical experience with theoretical knowledge, to find their own solutions to the problems they encounter at work, to cope more effectively with stress and to develop their own professional identity. Supervision thus supports the professional and personal learning and development of the professional (Žorga, 2002).

In the context of learning theories for supervision processes, it is also crucial to know how supervisees learn. According to Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014, p. 127), it is important to identify which learning styles contribute to effective learning and teaching. The supervisor can organise the structure, provide a good atmosphere and facilitate learning, but can in no way guarantee that the supervisee will absorb this knowledge. Only the supervisee can do that. It is desirable that the supervisor knows how supervisees learn best but also knows the techniques that can effectively contribute to this learning. Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014) have listed six principles for successful learning. They argue that people learn best when:

1. when they are highly motivated to learn (p. 127);
2. when they can focus the majority of their time and energy on learning (p. 130);
3. when learning is successful and useful (p. 133);
4. when they are actively involved in the learning process (p. 134);
5. when the learning content is presented in a meaningful way (p. 135);
6. when the supervisor sees the supervisee as a unique learner (p. 137).

Gordon A. Walter and Stephen E. Marks (1981) added to the list that

1. learning depends on whether we want to learn;
2. we learn when we are interested in learning;
3. learning depends on not knowing the answers in advance;
4. learning is very much an emotional experience;
5. everyone learns in their own way;
6. learning is not about adding to experience, but about re-framing it.

In supervision processes, knowledge of the learning styles<sup>16</sup> of supervisees is thus important, especially in order to be aware that different individuals have different learning styles and that they learn in their own way. Since supervision in social work is centred on the strengths perspective, it is clear that we always focus first on the supervisee's strengths, on the areas in which they feel most comfortable and confident, and then move on to the areas that are more difficult for them and they avoid. Barbara Gogala Švarc (2002) argues that in supervision processes, the supervisor pays attention to how the supervisee learns from the experience. Knowledge of the supervisee's learning style helps to choose the working method and set the learning objectives – what the supervisee needs to develop in order to function as a professional. Identifying the supervisee's learning style enables the supervisor to help the supervisee overcome possible blocks and obstacles in the learning process. The supervisor should therefore be aware of the supervisee's learning styles, but at the same time, the supervision process should enable the supervisees to become aware of their own learning styles. They should encourage them to reflect and plan new strategies of action. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 24) even argue that supervisees need to be very clear about their learning style in order to develop it, adding that it is essential to know one's own learning style, otherwise we will be disappointed to find that others learn faster than we do in certain learning situations. As human beings, we tend to assume that others learn in the same way as we do.

Today, of course, we know that learning depends very much on each individual, and this also applies to supervision. Some people prefer to start with practical examples to get a better picture and then look at what works and what does not through reflection. Others prefer theories and detailed explanations of the situation before trying something out in practice. Therefore, a discussion about learning styles within the supervision process is highly desirable. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 14) suggest that our learning style depends on how we approach learning. Some people

---

<sup>16</sup> In the narrow sense, learning style is the combination of learning strategies that an individual uses in a learning situation, while in the broader sense it includes not only a combination of strategies but also an emotional-motivational component (Štebe, 2002, p. 132).

are more visual types and learn by reading and seeing the whole text, others are auditory types and learn by listening to the text, others are kinesthetic types and learn by associating words with particular moments or sensations.

The model of learning styles developed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (1986; 1992; 2006) is frequently used in supervision and is related to the learning circle developed by David Kolb. Kolb (1984) developed the Action Learning Circle, which is based on the idea that learning is richer when it is linked to action and therefore comprises the stages: thinking – planning – doing – reviewing, checking – thinking.

Based on research, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (1982) developed a useful way of thinking about what helps us learn best. They formulated and defined four types of learning styles:

*Activists:* learn by doing. They are willing and enthusiastic to engage in new experiences and are open to change. They tend to do first and think later. Activists incorporate brainstorming, group discussions, problem-solving, role-playing and puzzles into their learning style.

*Theorists:* want to understand the theoretical basis of the action and want all the information to be relevant. They need models, concepts and facts to understand learning processes. They dislike uncertainty and subjective explanations. Theorists incorporate models, statistics, author summaries, stories, background information and applied theories into their learning method.

*Pragmatists:* want to see how learning processes can be transferred to the everyday world. For them, abstract concepts and games are only useful if they can see how these ideas can be implemented in everyday life situations. They test whether theories work in practice. They can be impatient when they talk and want to make practical decisions. Activities in the learning process of pragmatists include: time to think about how to transfer what they have learned into everyday practice, case studies, problem-solving, discussion.

*Reflectors:* learn by observing and reflecting on what has happened. They will postpone change until they have explored all possible perspectives and will be very cautious. They prefer to observe from the sidelines how an exercise is going rather than participating

themselves. Based on observation, they gather data, observe different perspectives and take time to draw appropriate conclusions. Thinkers' activities include pair discussion, self-analysis, feedback from others, observation of activities, interviews, coaching.

Various authors (Gogala Štebe, 2004; Švarc, 2002; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Morrison, 2007) have pointed out that knowledge of the learning style in supervision processes helps to understand why the supervisee stops or gets stuck in a part of the learning cycle. This can be a challenge to analyse and question why the person is not learning. Knowledge of learning styles can be used by the supervisor to support what the supervisee may need to move forward.

One of the techniques we can use in the supervision process is to create a map of our learning style. This is usually a very fun exercise to remind us of how we learn and helps to ensure that no one in the group feels bad as they are aware that people have different learning styles.

As part of the supervision process, I may dedicate a meeting to the question of how we learn. I usually ask supervisees to reflect on: How do I learn? What have been my best learning experiences? Mostly so that we can bridge the gap between where we are and where we want to be. So that we do not always remain in the same pattern of learned helplessness, as Martin Seligman (1972) would call it.

Of course, it is also necessary to look at learning styles from a distance and say that we cannot group people (supervisees). The criticism of learning styles is that it is impossible to put such complex individuals and all their circumstances into similar groups. This can only be one of the techniques we use to enrich the supervision process and also to establish a relaxed, respectful and trusting working relationship for the next meetings. When looking for new possibilities, learning styles also need to be seen in the light of what can best support the supervisee in their learning, something that is their own way, rather than pigeonholing them into a particular category. Knowing about a particular learning style only helps us to facilitate learning for both supervisors and supervisees.

Due to its emphasis on experiential professional learning processes, supervision is characterised by the developmental pedagogical

cal model of supervision (Žorga 2004, p. 15). This model was developed in Slovenia in the field of pedagogical and social activities. In this model of supervision, the predominant method is dialogue with all the characteristics of good communication. This model focuses on the development of professional skills and understanding, the supervisee's abilities, the development of understanding of professional processes, the acquisition of new skills, the provision of information, it helps in becoming acquainted with personal characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, and match them with work requirements.

Vida Milošević Arnold (2009) adds that this model is characterised by the intertwining of the roles of teacher and supervisor, which is why the author refers to it as an educational-consultative model. The supervisor teaches and checks the competence of the supervisees to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills in practice. This also includes monitoring the level of acquired knowledge acquired and the skills attained for practical work and the gradual improvement of these skills.

In addition to learning theories, traditional supervision has been strongly influenced by psychoanalytical theories of social work. In the context of supervision, we speak of a psychosocial model in which the supervisory process loses its controlling role. As Vida Milošević Arnold (1994, p. 477) writes, this was the beginning of the introduction of a clinical or therapeutic approach in social work, which required in-depth individual and group treatment of people. With the application of psychoanalytic theory, professionalisation increases and psychoanalysis and psychological theories become the most important paradigm of the helping professions. Social workers and supervisors alike have selectively borrowed the theories of psychoanalysis (e.g. the theory of the unconscious) in order to better understand the motives, feelings and behaviours of people who are experts by experience. It is therefore not surprising that supervision was also understood as a therapeutic process during this period.

The legacy of Sigmund Freud and the entry of psychoanalysis into the field of social work, particularly in the area of child development, have played a significant role in social work and supervision. Freud's work drew attention to the development of personality. He argued that early childhood experiences, especially with parents,

have a major influence on personality formation and that unresolved relationship problems in the past can lead to problems in the present. Freud's psychoanalysis approach to understanding individual behaviour was based on the assumption that the cause of all behaviour can be found in the mind. Freud's theories were also extremely important for the development of supervision in social work, particularly in the period 1940–1960 (Howe, 2009, p. 40). During this time, new terminology emerged in social work and students needed to know and understand the components of personality: id (instincts), ego (reality), superego (morality), the three parts of the individual mind as defined by Freud.

Vida Milošević Arnold (1994) argues that the integration of psychoanalytic theory into social work represented a significant shift in the development and application of supervision, as it began the development of a psychosocial model of supervision based on psychosocial theories that encompass three approaches:

- **Experiential-existential approach:** Aims to develop self-awareness, self-understanding and emotions through reflection, while learning from mistakes, and means lowering our expectations in order to create space for new insights (Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016, p. 34).
- **Phenomenological-experiential approach:** Focuses on meanings and how our own beliefs shape our thinking, new experiences and shape the way we think (Noble, Gray and Johnston 2016, p. 34). The idea is based on social constructivism, which is based on the belief that each individual constructs individual meanings according to their own position and benefits, e.g. position in society, gender, class, race and shapes their understanding on the basis of this.
- For the social work profession, perhaps the most well-known approach is the *strength-based approach*. This is solution-focused.

Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) argues that the strengths perspective is the most useful of all the models for social work, as it includes those elements that are specific to social work. The key features of this model are:

- it focuses on the needs and possibilities of the supervisee

- and on empowering them;
- the focus of supervision is on the professional growth and development of the supervisee and on promoting their professional competence;
  - the focus of the model is on learning for the professional role of a social worker through reflection on the concrete practical experience of the supervisee;
  - this supervision model does not have a supervisory-administrative role;
  - the supervisor is not directly responsible for the quality of the supervisee's professional work;
  - the supervisor also has no direct responsibility for the benefits of the people who are experts by experience of distress, but through their guidance, the supervisor ensures that they do not harm these people through their work;
  - supervision takes place on a voluntary basis.

It is important to point out that in this model the supervisor works with the supervisee and not for them, just as a social worker works with a person who is an expert by experience, or with a family facing many challenges and not for them or even in their place. It helps them to understand the nature of their professional role and the nature of the relationship with a particular person who is an expert by experience. They help the supervisee to deal with the situation not only with their knowledge but also with their personal qualities. In this way, the supervisor is better able to help the person who is an expert by experience to solve their concrete life problems in their complex problem situation.

The supervisor is neither a counsellor nor an inspector who takes responsibility for the supervisee and their work. Just as the aim of a professional working with an expert by experience is to enhance their strength and competence to solve life's problems, the aims of supervision are to enhance the strength of the supervisee and to improve their professional competence in working with people and in providing other services.

In the 1960s, social work, and by extension supervision, drew on behavioural theory (Pavlov, 1902; Watson, 1913; Skinner, 1938;

Greene, 2009, Howe, 2009), which gave rise to the developmental-integrative model of supervision (Milošević Arnold, 2004). David Howe (2009, p. 49) wrote:

If social work is about helping people to cope better and change their behaviour, it seemed logical to suggest that social workers should have a good look at behaviour modification and its techniques for inspiration. And this is what happened. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, books and papers began to appear on behaviour modification for social workers.

Within the framework of supervision processes, this meant that the supervisors entrusted examples and concrete situations from practice. They dealt with the questions of what triggers certain behaviours in the individual, dialogue partner, expert by experience, why they react the way they do, and what triggers these reactions. Within the framework of supervision, the behavioural theories meant that the supervisor learned a new way of dealing with people who had personal experiences of distress, based on concrete examples. The prevailing view was that behaviour is influenced by the environment, especially the environment closest to people – their family. This influence happens unconsciously. Learning can happen unconsciously and without anyone wanting it, such as children observing their parents and their relationship; some children learn that they can attract their parents' attention by behaving badly.

The specificity of the developmental integrative model of supervision (Milošević Arnold, 2004) lies not only in the knowledge of the various responses and behaviours. In this model of supervision, the main focus is on the professional and personal growth and development of the professional and on endeavouring to increase their competence. In supervision, the supervisee primarily learns from their experiences and analyses them with the support of the supervisor. This enables the supervisee to gain new professional and personal insights from their own experience. Such a process promotes the personal growth and development of the professional and thus increases their competence. It also helps them to combine their practical experience with theoretical knowledge and thus find their own solutions to practical problems. In this way, the supervisor develops their own way of acting professionally. The supervisor does not eval-

uate the knowledge, skills, professionalism, professional competence or personal suitability of the supervisees, but is a role model for the behaviour of professionals in practice through their behaviour in the supervision group.

The crucial difference between this and the psychosocial model of supervision is that the supervisor in the developmental integrative model is a supervision expert. It is not so important what their profession is and which field of expertise they come from (this is of course not negligible and usually supervisors choose to take on supervision from another field of work). What is important is that they are familiar with the methods and techniques of supervision work and know how to manage the supervision process.

Both social work and supervision were strongly influenced by constructivist theories in the late 1980s (Berger and Luckman, 1967; De Jong and Berg, 2002; Milošević Arnold and Postrak, 2003), with the theme of relationship taking centre stage. Social work has (since Mary Richmond wrote about the importance of attitudes) refreshed its classic, somewhat forgotten and never fully considered basic principles of respect for human personality, with respect for diversity, belief in human sources of strength and the possibility of resolving the situation, competence to resolve the situation, the capacity for learning and personal growth, the right to participate, the right to make mistakes and errors, and so on.

Professional roles started to change and this was also reflected in supervision processes. During this period, the power relationship between the social worker and the person in need of support changed and a new paradigm of supporting people developed. For example, people with lived experience of poverty, mental health problems, homelessness, became experts by experience. A partnership formed in the relationship between them, and the social worker is aware that the dialogue partners know their situation best, so a new term arose during this period: expert by experience. This person is thus, by virtue of experience, an expert on their situation, and the social worker is an expert who knows the process (Videmšek, 2008). This constructs a new kind of knowledge, knowledge by experience, and recognises that knowledge that is considered “valid” is a product of social construction.

Constructivist theories gave rise to the idea of multiple truths. Blaž Mesec (2004) defined this as a process that occurs in interaction and can be explained by interaction theories:

Knowledge and social action go together. Through our interactions with others, we all contribute to understanding the world, generating knowledge and shaping our actions, which is why we also speak of interaction theories.

We must realise that there are multiple truths and that it is the task of the social worker to examine what social meaning a particular truth has for the individual (Myers, 2008, p. 12). For supervision, constructivist theory is important because it assumes that the supervisor is a supporter who helps the supervisee gain new insights and that communication takes place between them in the form of a dialogue, which is still a central element of supervision today. The supervisor makes a conscious effort to understand the supervisee's actions in the light of their past experiences and their current situation, but also to see them in a broader context and to relate the situation to environmental influences.

Humanistic theories (Maslow, 1954, 1962; Rogers, 1980; Glasser, 1998) and the humanistic approach have also contributed to the development of supervision. Humanistic theories recognise that human beings have a will. Nurture, environment and heredity have an influence, but will (as a personality trait) is the key. A characteristic of the humanistic approach is that the individual should not be seen only as an external observer, but that one should focus on their experiences. In Slovenia, we have introduced the Dutch model of supervision based on humanistic psychology,<sup>17</sup> especially by Carl Rogers (1980), which means learning through experience and the supervisor's compassion and support in relation to the supervisee (Milošević Arnold, 1999, Kobolt and Žorga 2000, Kobolt 2004). It is important to remember that the supervisee is recognised as competent to solve problems, learn and grow as a person. Carl

---

<sup>17</sup> Humanistic psychology advocates respect for the individual. The main ideas of humanistic views are based on the fact that human beings were initially biologically and emotionally dependent on others, but then strove for autonomy, self-realisation and integrity and wanted the subjective experience of the situation to be taken into account. Humanistic psychology emphasises the uniqueness of the individual (Varga, 2003).

Rogers (1980, p. 65) argued that if I do not interfere, they will take care of themselves – if we do not control them, they will behave responsibly – if we do not teach them, they will be able to develop and change – if we do not force them to do anything, they will become independent and their own person. Various psychotherapeutic approaches were therefore used in supervision (Glasser's reality therapy based on choice theory, transactional analysis, Gestalt therapy), which emphasise humanistic values and the importance of a relationship with people who are recognised as experts by experience. Another important shift in working with people is that the focus of the work is on the "here and now."

Within the framework of supervision processes, the influence of systems theory should not be overlooked, as it has contributed an important starting point for the search for possible solutions, even if at the beginning of its application the expert still offers solutions ("I know what is best for you"). As Srečo Dragoš (1994) states, in systems theories the social worker no longer questions only the relationship between the individual and the social worker, but refers to and relates to external systems. Systems theory in social work was summarised by Virginia Satir (1978, 1976) and in particular by Peter Lüssi (1990). In his understanding of social work, the use and development of the language of social work is crucial. Since human beings are primarily social beings and belong to many systems (family, school, interest groups, etc.) that influence us, it is important that we as social workers are aware of these relationships and follow them closely. According to Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2010, p. 239), it is crucial that Lüssi places the individual within the system and asks who the other agents are, and that he develops a theoretical language about or for social work practice that is also relevant for supervision. Systems theory states that the structure and culture of society and interactions with others are manifested in the individual and that the way everyone lives affects us all – it is a holistic understanding, a view of the person in their life situation (Milošević Arnold and Postrak, 2003). Systems theory describes systems as abstract organisations that are independent of matter, time and space. The concept of a system is usually defined as a whole consisting of parts, or as a whole that is distinct from its environment. General systems theory

attempts to classify systems according to the way they are organised and the interdependence of the parts. It is assumed that the whole is more than the sum of the parts of a system (Možina and Rus Makovec, 2010).

Systemic concepts are important for supervision in social work, mainly because of the awareness that each person is part of interactions, that the system is made up of individuals and the relationships between them, that it is important to recognise the connections between these relationships (each member of the system influences and is influenced by others, and similarly with the interactions that take place in social work). Systems theories bring a new perspective on the individual (the supervisee) to supervision practice, as the supervisor needs to make connections between behaviours, relationships and events. It focuses on the boundaries that arise in these relationships and influences behaviour and action, as well as the roles that the individual takes on.

Supervision in social work is not only based on systems theories. Theories explaining power relations have also become important. Feminist theories have had a significant influence on social work and therefore also on supervision (Zaviršek, 1994; Urek, 1997; Leskošek, 1995; Dominelli, 2002; Orme, 2009). They are particularly responsible for the development of attitudes towards various forms of abuse of power and social inequalities. Feminist theories have not only pointed out that the majority of service users are women but also that the majority of social workers are also women. There was a need to develop a theory that focused on gender differences. Women need to understand that the way we experience ourselves is actually defined by men who give women a second-class status (Orme, 2009).<sup>18</sup> Feminist theories have attempted to explain women's experiences, including their position as oppressed in society. The major task of feminist theories has been to understand how social structures influence social relationships and how both influence the way we think about and experience something.

Feminist theories in social work have raised important questions about the redefinition of social problems and have helped to move

---

<sup>18</sup> Simone de Beauvoir wrote about this in 1949 in her book *The Second Sex*.

away from the pathologisation of individual women. Lena Dominelli (2002) has written that feminist practice has contributed to greater equality. She cited the key principles of feminist theories as: valuing women's knowledge and recognising diversity, supporting all women in their efforts to take control of their own lives, understanding that social structures determine personal experiences, finding common solutions to personal problems and a willingness to work with men. Supervision that takes feminist theories into account thus initiates the search for different answers to the most taboo problems (homosexuality, violence, abuse) and a new way of looking at the relationships between people with lived experiences of violence, mental distress and disability with social workers.

The changes within supervision processes are also influenced by the critical theories in social work, which point to the inadequacy of psychotherapeutic theories, behavioural theories and cognitive theories because they all focus on problems (Howe, 2009). The knowledge provided by psychologists focused on pathologising people through personal experience. This means that social work adopted their way of looking at people rather than finding out the background to the problem, what causes these situations, for example, unjust social structures and unequal distribution of power and resources. Critical theories identify the organisation of society as the biggest problem (Oliver, 1995; Morrison, 1993) because it exposes the interests of those who have power, including control of the media, politics, technology, education. The control of those who hold power even interferes with the everyday life and relationships of the individual. The work of Michel Foucault (1967) is of great importance for the development of critical theory in social work because it examines the question of power and the production of knowledge. Foucault was interested in how power relations manifest themselves in everyday life, between women and men, between disabled and non-disabled people, between white and black people. He wanted to show how the dominant social group and its discourses define social relations (who is crazy and who is not, who is good and who is not, who is sexually deviant, etc.). He warned of the dominant discourse that sees people as old, crazy, deviant or different.

David Howe (2009, p. 131) suggests that the people who found

themselves in these categories also used the language of the dominant group of people (in this case psychiatrists or medical profession). He argues that critical theory is important primarily because it encourages a critical view of things. We easily take everyday situations for granted and rarely ask ourselves how things are organised in society. As social workers, we need to go beyond taking things for granted. If we start to question the social structures and politics of everyday life, we as social workers have a much better chance of understanding how we interact with each other. We can look at an issue like violence from the perspective of power and discrimination and also from the perspective of gender. This opens up new possibilities for our actions and also for understanding people's lives. In supervision, a whole new kind of reflection becomes possible: critical reflection (Thompson and Thompson, 2008; Bolton, 2010; Bruce, 2013; Graham, 2017).

Sue Thompson and Niel Thompson (2008) argue that critical reflection enables the social worker to question power relations and to recognise the role that power relations play in lived experience, both for people with lived experience and for social workers. A social worker who remains ignorant and insensitive to power relations contributes to a practice that is insensitive to social inequalities. This was supposed to be the core task of the supervisor, which was put on hold for a while with the introduction of *care management*. Jane Wonnacott (2012, p. 16) wrote:

... although they wished to use supervision to promote critical reflection and explore the emotional impact of the work, they were not encouraged in doing so. Messages from senior managers / ... / were often that the first priority of supervisors was task completion.

With the introduction of care management in social work, the role of the social worker was redirected to an organisational role, providing a package of services according to the needs of the individual, alongside which the role of supervision also changed. The emphasis was more on service delivery and answering the question of how to deliver a particular service rather than on the relationship, emotions and dynamics between the social worker and experts by experience.

The model of supervision, which is based on a managerial, managerialist task, has brought the development of supervision to a standstill. At least until the 1990s, when the need for a reflective practice became more and more common. This shifted the focus from what to do to what practitioners do and how they do it. The emphasis is on the need for supervision to move away from what needs to be done, towards monitoring and accountability, towards a process that helps social workers reflect on, explain and understand their actions.

*Anti-oppressive theories* developed from critical theory (Thompson, 1995; Dominelli, 2002), which are based on anti-discriminatory practices (Thompson, 1995; Urh Humljan, 2013). Niel Thompson (1995, p. 273) argues that anti-discriminatory social work emerged from a growing awareness of the increasingly underhand oppression based on gender, race, class, age, physical ability and sexual orientation. The emphasis is on the diversity of experience and the validity of each individual's experience. Understanding both the general scope of oppression and its specific manifestations is a crucial prerequisite for the development of anti-discrimination practice relevant to all areas of social work. Supervision takes into account the significance of discrimination and oppression in the lives of marginalised social groups from which the majority of social work users come. An anti-discriminatory approach encourages supervisees to advocate for change and to confront and mitigate the effects of discrimination.

As we have seen, supervision relies on a variety of theories. You are probably wondering now how it is possible that a scientific discipline has developed so many different theories (in a relatively short time) and how we know how to apply them. Since in social work, we deal with people and respond to their needs, feelings, expectations and abilities, we try to understand what they think, what they feel, what they believe and where they come from. Therefore, all these theories are a logical consequence of the need to understand the individual's situation. Good intentions alone are not enough. Even in a situation as simple as the one in which an individual finds themselves in their relationship with a social worker, there are many things to consider.

Each of these theories has its own significance and sheds new light on the level of the individual and their social environment. Thus, some theories help us to understand the relationships in society, the power relations that are institutionalised in society, others help us to understand the individual and still others help us to understand our role in all of this. People change and so do their needs, and as society evolves, so do the methods we use to work with people. Technological developments also allow us to change the way we work and adapt to the new challenges they bring (e.g. when theories of addiction were developed, no one thought that people might also be addicted to online gaming).<sup>19</sup>

Each of these theories in its own way contributed to changes in supervision and changes in attitudes in the light of the establishment of the principle of respect for human personality with elements of respect and appreciation of diversity. Vida Milošević Arnold (1994) argues that the professional roles of social workers are expanding and changing due to new knowledge about human beings and society in all disciplines and also due to the changing relationship between the state and the citizen, leading to a demand for flexibility and creativity on the part of social workers. Supervision provides support for practitioners who are under daily pressure to comply with regulations and help people (Milošević Arnold, 1994).

All these particularities of supervision in the field of social work are the reason why we speak of the social model of supervision. Vida Milošević Arnold (1999) argues that it is an eclectic model, based mainly on the psychosocial model of supervision, with certain features derived from other models of supervision. The name chosen comes from the social work profession because supervision is an integral part of the social work profession. The social model is in fact a synthesis of some of the models developed and known in the world and in this country, from which we take the individual elements for the development of this specific social model of supervision. The social model integrates all the features of other models that are close to the social work profession. Therefore, the social model could also

---

<sup>19</sup> The World Health Organisation listed video game addiction as one of the addictions causing mental illness (Sky News, 26 May 2019).

be described as a holistic model. It must be flexible and adaptable to the needs of each supervisee, depending on their work environment and the problems they face. The central features of the social model are the social work relationship and the co-creation of solutions, and it adopts from other models the features that are most useful in a particular situation.

Supervision in social work is characterised by a relationship-based model of supervision. The relationship we establish with all those involved in the process is important. A good working relationship established between the supervisor and the supervisee and other members of the team can be a model of the relationship between the supervisee and the expert by experience in social work practice. Above all, the supervisee needs support, understanding, a safe and comfortable atmosphere and courage, as they need to develop their professional and personal self-confidence. Gabi Gačinovič Vogrinčič (2004) believes that it is important that this relationship is respectful and always personal, otherwise we would not be able to explore the preciousness that each supervisee brings to the meeting. From a positive and respectful relationship grows the trust that supervisees need to perform their work competently. The work in each meeting is most often based on allowing the supervisee to present a work or personal situation in which they want to bring about change. The supervisee, in cooperation with the supervisor and other members of the group (if it is a group approach), is empowered to better sustain their work. Reflection is most often used by supervisors as a basic learning method: it is possible to change existing practices on the basis of one's own actions and experiences. It is therefore not surprising that reflection is a process that facilitates experiential learning.

A review of theories shows that the role of supervision has changed. Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 15) distinguishes five stages in the development of supervision: beginning (1870–1900, especially in the USA), psychologisation (1900–1960), sociologisation (1960–1970), differentiation (1970 to the present) and the focus on learning organisations. All these stages are also characteristic of the development of supervision in social work, but during the period of differentiation, supervision in social work developed in its own way. This development was certainly influenced by the theories mentio-

ned earlier, which crystallised in social movements, the development of therapeutic approaches and the evolution of social work concepts, especially the perspective of power.

## The impact of social movements on changes in supervision

Social movements have certainly played an important role in supervision. The social movements that emerged and were active in the transition period from the 1970s to the 1980s were not only an important factor in putting pressure on civil society and a generator of political modernisation, but also a catalyst for direct change in social work and therefore also in supervision. The specificity of the social work profession lies in its commitment to social change and to people on the margins of society, as well as in its endeavour to draw attention to the inadequacies of social systems. This is also reflected in the international definition of social work, which was adopted by the International Federation of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers in 2001 and updated in 2014:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. (IFSW and IASSW, 2014).

It is therefore not surprising that social movements have been the most influential and challenging in social work and have brought many innovations to the field. They have drawn attention to social inequalities and aimed at social change, particularly evident in the development of community services. They manifest themselves in the principles of deinstitutionalisation, in the move away from pathologisation towards social responsibility in the elimination of inequalities, in the user perspective, etc. The movements had an impact on the consolidation of social work as a scientific discipline, which began to develop its own theories and concepts of work. From the beginning, the weakness of the discipline was revealed in its dichotomy – on the one hand, in the reduction and resolution

of people's problems (the desire to make the voice of the individual heard) and, on the other, in the application of working methods that were typical of other disciplines. Social movements are therefore credited with influencing the development of the theory and practice of social work through their activism (Videmšek, 2012).

Together with social workers, the movements problematised social inequality and sought new social measures. One of these actions was led by the anti-psychiatry movement in Slovenia. The anti-psychiatry movement is a milestone not only in the reintegration of people into the community but also in understanding the needs of women and men. Darja Zaviršek (1994, p. 233) argues that feminist social action, together with changes in social work theory and practice, changed the micro-politics of power and local structures of help for different groups of people. Feminist social work, adopting the slogan "the personal is political" from feminist action in the 1970s, began to emphasise the importance of the perspective of social context, which is today one of the most important orientations in working with people.

Mojca Urek (1997) notes that one of the basic motivations for the establishment of autonomous psychosocial projects for women was the dissatisfaction experienced by women as social workers and users of public, private and non-governmental social services. They observed that social services in the field of mental health available to women mostly reproduce patterns of inequality against women. At the same time, they found that there are no mechanisms in these services that would enable staff to reflect on their actions and to uncover and eliminate discrimination (Urek, 1997, p. 383).

Social movements have emerged as a link between processes of social change at the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, they have a significant impact on changing issues (violence against women, oppression), supporting changes in social consciousness and political culture of individuals and groups in the public sphere (liberalisation of homosexuality) and encouraging the participation of people with lived experience to speak on the subject. At the macro level, they have promoted structural innovations. Although the movements operated in areas of social life that were less or not at all politically visible, they nevertheless influenced the spread of new

social values and broke the social silence, therefore they were political in nature. Through their activism, media coverage and influence on legislative change, they undoubtedly had an impact on the social change that began with various social actions and campaigns.

The movements have influenced the development of new forms of support and helped to shape new concepts and methods of work. The basic conceptual starting points of the social movements were based on the concept of social inclusion (Trbanc 1996; Leskošek, 2010, 2011), the concept of power (Zaviršek, Zorn and Videmšek, 2002; Dragoš, 2008; Mesec, 2006; Videmšek, 2008) and the concept of independence (Brisenden, 1989; Ratzka, 2005; Pečarič, 2005). Social inclusion at the micro level means that individuals have the opportunity to participate in the processes that target their life situation. This became particularly clear in the context of the anti-psychiatry movement when people with lived experience of mental distress were given the opportunity to tell their stories and experiences of institutionalisation and make their voices heard. The anti-psychiatry movement encouraged many people with lived experience of mental distress to write down their stories. It was during this period that Tanja Lamovec's invaluable and extremely important works for the social work profession and for supervision were written. In the early 1990s, the author's knowledge and expertise shaped the processes of working with people with lived experience of mental distress and contributed to the creation of community services that ensure impact on users. Her work is particularly relevant to supervision and the supervision process because of the phenomenology of behaviour: who is the one who reports and who is the greatest expert. Lamovec found that the language we use in our work is very important and that we need to keep it simple.<sup>20</sup>

Social movements have become specific above all because of their particular characteristics and values (orientation towards personhood, freedom and a postmodern definition of the relationship

---

<sup>20</sup> As you will see in continuation, the simplicity of language use has also been discussed by solution-focused authors (De Shazer, 1985; Berg and Miller, 1992; Walter and Peller, 1992). Peter Lüssi also warned about the use of language in his work, and Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (1993) reminded us of this in the social work profession.

between the individual and the institutions of state coercion). Because of their orientation, they succeeded in carrying out a series of actions and thus changing the existing practice of social work. All this stimulates the development of the social work profession because it is the social work profession that has moved to the centre of community action and has drawn attention to the importance of recognising the social context of the individual, the lifeworld of the user (Urek, 2005; Šugman Bohinc, Rapoša Tajnšek and Škerjanc, 2007; Grebenc, 2014). In all these newly established services, practitioners were supported by supervisors (both local and foreign). For example, when setting up desensitisation projects, practitioners were initially supported and supervised by David and Althea Brandon and Ann Davis, all from the UK. During this time (mainly 1993–1995) a number of local supervisors were trained as supervisors as part of the Tempus project.<sup>21</sup> Many of them, notably Jelka Škerjanc, Vesna Leskošek, Darja Zaviršek, Vito Flaker and Vesna Švab, took the lead in supervising the field of mental health and developing innovative projects.

Social movements have shown that there are different strategies for solving social problems, that they develop new approaches, methods and forms of organisation and that they go beyond the idea of universalism. I believe that social movements have been instrumental in changing social work and supervision practices. They have expanded the boundaries of social work (from institution to community), promoted the pluralisation of practitioners (increase in the number of non-governmental organisations offering new programmes), challenged power relations and promoted the participation of those affected in the process of support. Social movements and people with lived experience have pointed out what solution-focused therapists have already noted (De Shazer, 1985, 1988; De Shazer, Dolan, Korman, Trepper, McCollum, and Berg, 2007; Nelson and Thomas, 2007; Myers, 2008), namely that professionals have a unique perspective on their personal experience of

---

<sup>21</sup> Tempus project: "Študij duševnega zdravja v skupnosti – usposabljanje za psihosocialne službe" [Study of Mental Health in the Community – Training for Psychosocial Services] (1991 –1996). More in Flaker and Leskošek (1995) and Flaker (1995).

distress, that they have the most knowledge and understanding of the situation, and that they need to be heard. This was also a fundamental and decisive change in supervision. The knowledge that supervisees have, the participation in the search for possible solutions, the changed role of the supervisor – all this is what we call supervision in social work today. This is based on a dialogue-based practice, as Paulo Freire (1985) emphasised, and was developed in Slovenia primarily by Vito Flaker (2003) and Lea Šugman Bohinc (2018), and is created in the working relationship (Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2002; Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Kobal, Možina, Mešl and Šugman Bohinc, 2005).

New paradigms in social work are thus also being applied to the supervision process. As a result of social movements and radical social workers recognising the need for change, more and more supervision groups are being set up to respond to the needs of social workers and bring new themes, innovations and issues related to structural change into the groups. The change is an expression of social constructivism, which emphasises that the assumptions we each make about reality are rooted in communication and therefore all our knowledge is developed in a social context.

The need to move away from traditional supervision has also been strongly influenced by the concepts we have developed in the social work profession. One of the fundamental concepts that has influenced the paradigm shift in supervision is undoubtedly the concept of the strengths perspective.

### **The impact of the concept of the strengths perspective on changes in supervision**

The concept that has enabled the paradigm shift from learning from mistakes to learning from good experience, and which is certainly best known in the social work profession, is the strengths perspective. This concept is a paradigm in social work today. The concept of the *strengths perspective*, introduced to social work by Dennis Saleebey (1997) in *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice*, has fundamentally changed the relationships between those involved.

He recognised that the medical model of social work had predominated for too long and that practitioners had focused too much on people's problems and pathologies. David Howe (2009, p. 13) also believes that for too long social workers have focused on mistakes, on correcting those mistakes, on finding inadequacies and on correcting inappropriate behaviour. Too often social workers saw people with lived experience as victims, either of their own past or of the structures in which they found themselves. Social work initially focused on the shortcomings of the individual, as Watkins (1997) puts it.

It is thanks to Dennis Saleebey that social work today is focusing on the sources of strength of the individual.<sup>22</sup> Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Nina Mešl (2019, p. 116) argue that the science and profession of social work is based on a shift in focus from deficits, limitations and pathologies to a strengths perspective, a competence-based, health-oriented paradigm that recognises and emphasises human strengths.

So in conversation, social workers look for virtues, personal resources, strengths, not weaknesses or faults. I do not wish to summarise here the definitions of the concept as given by authors (Saleebey, 1997; Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2003, 2008; Šugman Bohinc, 2000; Mešl, 2007; Rapoša Tajnšek, 2007; Videmšek, 2013), but I would like to show how the concept is implemented within the supervision process in social work.

A closer look at the development of social work shows that the impetus for developing the strengths perspective concept was already given by Peter Lüssi (1990), who emphasised the importance of language. From a strengths perspective, it is extremely important what language is used and who defines the situation and sets the goals. Lea Šugman Bohinc (2003, p. 380) argues that decisive changes have taken place in social work because instead of a vocabulary of various analytical and systemic metaphors, we have a vocabulary of newly

---

<sup>22</sup> David Howe (2009, p. 105) wrote that the development of the strengths perspective can already be recognised in the approaches implemented by Octavia Hill and Charles Loch. The authors encouraged users to work hard for their independence because they believed that they had the necessary resilience to achieve their goal.

and more satisfactorily written shared stories of the expert by experience and the social worker, stories that evolve towards a desired problem solution. Social work (and therefore supervision) based on the strengths perspective is founded on the belief that the people who need from professionals support are much more than the labels they are given (e.g. mentally ill, bullies, alcoholics, homeless people, illegal drug users, prisoners).

It is about a changed view of the individual and their situation. A changed perspective means looking for the good, not the wrong. We can always find faults in people if we want to. In every single one of us. But that is not our job. A strengths perspective requires not only that we look at the individual without labels, but also that we recognise their potential. And that needs to be seen and told. The greatest skill and virtue of social work is to recognise what people are good at, what they can do well. That is the starting point for our work. That is how we build a working relationship from a completely different perspective. And that is why we say today that, even in supervision, social workers learn more from good experiences than from mistakes.

Dennis Saleebey (1997), in developing the concept of the strengths perspective, identified the values of *resilience* and *resourcefulness* in many people living in distress. David Howe (2009) suggests that resilience is a concept that describes a person's ability to cope with risk, overcome obstacles and continue to function well regardless of the pressures of a difficult situation. There are a number of qualities that contribute to the development of resilience, for example, humour, optimism, temperament, a good self-image and emotional intelligence. But the greatest asset of resilience is the ability to build and develop good relationships. The social support people receive and the relationships they develop are important for developing resilience (Howe, 2009, p. 100). These relationships are crucial for social work, as relationships with others can be a source of strength.

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Nina Mešl (2019, p. 118) introduce the concept of resilience in their work with families and summarise various authors who have researched the concept of family resilience, such as Walsh (2011), Ferrell, Bowel and Goodrish

(2015) and Moore (2014). They show that resilience is both a person's ability to withstand and recover from adverse life circumstances and a concept that can be developed when working with people who need support.

Dennis Saleebey (2002) has argued that practice centred on the strengths perspective best reflects the values of social work. People facing multiple challenges need to know that they can still make it. The social worker needs to see that people can, that life is full of possibilities and opportunities. A woman who was beaten and left alone by her husband is still able to pay the rent and feed her children, even though she is depressed and can not find a job. These are sources of strength that need to be reinforced. Talents and skills need to be further nurtured. Dennis Saleebey (2002) wrote that we are building on clients strengths. Practicing from a strengths perspective require that we shift the way that we think about, approach, and relate to our client. Rather than focusing exclusively or dominantly on problem, your eye turns towards possibility. In the ticket of trauma, pain and trouble you see blooms of hope and transformation (2002, p.1). The most important thing is to recognise and respect these sources of strength. As social workers, we must be interested in the stories, the recounts of the experts by experience and respect these recounts and also the tendencies of the interpretation of their experience. We believe in change, that they can deal with problems and take the path to change, to their growth. So it is not new that the strengths perspective and the thesis developed by Saleebey (1996) have shaken up the existing way of working and have been applied to supervision practice because listening and taking an interest in people's stories and narratives are very effective ways of instigating change.

Supervision processes also work on the basis of Dennis Saleebey's (1996) thesis that the strengths perspective is founded on the need to see the dialogue partners in a different way, as well as their environment and their current situation. It is about changing the way we look at the situation and the social worker. Charles A. Rapp (1998) adds that the strengths perspective model directs our gaze to the new. It allows us to see opportunities instead of problems, to see the right to choose instead of limitations, to see health instead

of illness (1998, p. 24). We see the person as someone who can and knows something, and not as someone who has failed.

The role of the supervisor is to help the supervisee find a solution to the situation, not to focus on the problem, on what went wrong, but on the solutions and possibilities in the situation. The focus of supervision thus shifts from problems to new possibilities in life (Evans and Fisher 1999; Mešl, 2007). Vito Flaker (2003) has written that problematisation is not problem-oriented. In particular, it is not about problematising people, their characteristics and actions. Such problematisation can be counterproductive. Social work is also not about solving rebus, crossword, maths or chess problems. It is about living with others. Problematisation in social work is the transformation of what is taken for granted in concrete life into the subject of our conversation, dialogue; it is the creation of a critical awareness and a willingness to act. The object of problematisation is usually the obvious we do not notice, and less often the problems that catch our eye (Flaker, 2003, p. 25).

Charles A. Rapp (1998, p. 31–38) described some of the basic assumptions of acting from a strengths perspective:

1. people who are successful in life use their resources to achieve their aspirations,
2. have the self-confidence to take the next step to achieve their goal,
3. have at least one goal and the necessary talent at all times and are confident about the next step,
4. have access to the resources they need to achieve their goal,
5. have a good relationship with at least one person,
6. have access to opportunities that are relevant to their goals,
7. have access to and opportunities to build meaningful relationships.

The paradigmatic shift of supervision from a strengths perspective means that we as supervisors focus on finding new ways of leading, that we encourage supervisees to look for something new and untried. In addition, we encourage and reinforce what works. The situation presented by the supervisor is the basis for exploring pos-

sibilities, not for looking for reasons why something happened. We focus on the things that worked. These help us to follow up. We explore the resilience that the person has developed to cope with the situation. And that is the foundation on which we build.

Traditional supervision (Kadushin, 1985; Milošević Arnold, 1994, 1999; Kobolt, 2002; Žorga, 2002) was based on the principle that we learn best from mistakes. The belief is that if we get rid of our weakness and eliminate the mistake, we become better and thus avoid doing what we no longer want to do. But is it true that we learn better from mistakes? Is recognising and finding the mistake really the best way to work towards change? The modern paradigm of supervision in social work claims the opposite. We learn most and better from good experiences. This has been demonstrated in the supervision processes I have conducted in the field of social care. It is true that learning is a unique process, that everyone learns in their own way. It is therefore not unimportant to answer the questions for yourself: What would help me be more successful in my work and feel satisfaction in doing so? To develop my own sources of strength/resilience or to correct my mistakes?

Probably a bit of both. Of course, this does not mean that we ignore mistakes and weaknesses. Change in supervision means that we are able to look at mistakes from a different perspective and approach them creatively, positively and from a position of resilience. A sense of empowerment allows us to reframe the problem and challenge it. Martin Seligman (2011) has formulated three steps to achieve these changes, which can be implemented in everyday communication and also in supervision processes. It is about reformulating the initial questions and finding out what we are good at.

The first step is to answer the question: What went well today?

The second step is to answer the question: Why did this happen?

The third step consists of describing the situation to the group, sharing the events and their interpretations and then reflecting on what the most important event was.

Answering the questions changes the perspective because we are talking about what is good, not what is bad.

Tony Ghaye (2012, p. 137) reminds us that the best definition of weakness is one that defines weakness as an activity that makes

us feel bad and helpless. It is an activity that evokes negative feelings in us regardless of our efforts. The author therefore wonders how we can learn and develop personal growth in this way. If we want to learn about resilience, the first prerequisite is that we study and identify this resilience. If we want to learn from successes, we need to recognise and articulate these successes (Buckingham, 2007; Buckingham and Coffman, 2005; Seligman, 2011). If we want to know what good social work practice is, we need to study this and not study bad practice.

We need a change in the way we think and understand our work. If we want to change, it is of course difficult. Let us start with the source of *strengths*. Many of us do not know our sources of strength and can not simply list them. We do not know how many resources we have. We often do not even want to answer this question because we feel uncomfortable and even embarrassed when people ask us about our strengths, our qualities. In contrast, we are very aware of our weaknesses and can easily list them.

Dennis Saleebey (2002, p. 89) offers several questions that can help us explore the sources of strength of the social worker:

1. Questions about survival: Who helped them in the past? Who offered them support? Who helped them find solutions? How did they come into contact with these people and why do they think they helped them?
2. Questions about exceptions: What happened when things were good and worked well? What did they do then? How did they feel then?
3. Questions about possibilities: What people and what qualities help give them hope?
4. Questions about respect: What do people say most often when they speak well of them? What are they particularly proud of in their life?
5. What makes them happiest and proudest?

As the questions show, work that focuses on the strengths perspective is always aimed at identifying the good, the successful. These can be small things, changes that may not happen often but are there, and that is what strengthens resilience or, according to Dennis

Saleebey (2002, p. 90), recognising one's own competences, one's own reserves and sources of strength that have been hidden for many years due to self-doubt, blame from others and, in some cases, the influence of the labels one has received.

Therefore, the main task of the social worker is to believe that experts by experience have their own inner strength to make changes in their lives, based on their personal experiences. To mobilise the sources of strength (gifts, knowledge and skills) of people with lived experience so they achieve their goals and vision for a better life (Saleebey, 1997, p. 4).

Supervision in social work, based on a strengths perspective, enables the supervisee to see what they have already achieved in a particular case and to explore further possibilities. Through reflection, the supervisor is asked: What was the part that they would consider good? What was different than usual so that they were successful? What else did the supervisee think about, what would they do differently if the situation were to happen again? We do not focus on problems, but on new opportunities and possibilities. Social work is a reflective profession and reflection is part of supervision, where we always come back to the original hypotheses and review them in order to either reformulate them or find new answers to them.

The basic focus of behaviour is on the search for new possibilities, or as Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2006a, p. 20) states:

The shift to a strengths perspective leads us to explore the sources of the strengths in the contribution of the supervisee; we ask about desirable outcomes, good results, dreams and hopes, support in the community, good experiences from the past.

In supervision, this means looking for something new that we have not yet tried or done. The strengths perspective in supervision means a basis for cooperation and support for the supervisee in the unfavourable situation in which she finds herself. The strengths perspective helps the supervisee to achieve the goals they have set themselves.

The main task of the social worker is to recognise the good in the person, and the task of the supervisor is to identify the skills

and good practice of the supervisee. Supervision is therefore only useful if it is based on a strengths perspective (Saleebey, 1997; Rapp, 1998) and focuses on the social worker's resources, skills and gifts. Of course, it is about exploring something new and consolidating knowledge in order to act (De Shaz, 1985; Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2003; Myers, 2008).

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2018) believes that supervision offers a valuable experience of "being with a person in the present". Supervision based on a strengths perspective re-frames the present by articulating new sources of strength and adding meaning while helping to renew old sources of strength that have been relied upon in the past. It is a delicate process of co-creation of power and meaning. Nina Mešl (2007) points out that while the strengths perspective is a recurring theme in contemporary social work, it is important to revisit it, deepen our knowledge of it and reflect on our practice because although we start from a strengths perspective, we can sometimes remain entangled in a long tradition of problem-orientation (Mešl, 2007, p. 133).

The key issues related to the strengths perspective are thus focused on the opportunities that the supervisee has, on the concrete work that focuses on the issue of influence, on the issue of making decisions about lifestyle, the nature of support and on the issues of finding sources of strength and removing social barriers that hinder the process of empowering the expert by experience. Supervision from a strengths perspective discovers the potential of the practitioner and is based on the belief that each supervisee as a practitioner has skills and talents that they can develop and use to enhance their strengths and at the same time their professionalism, which aims to empower the individual. According to Dennis Saleebey (1997), good supervision offers the supervisee the opportunity to work from a strengths perspective: Exploration of resources, support in engaging with the supervisory community, time to develop skills and competences and time to reduce stress and failure. The intensive action in the supervision process gives the supervisee the opportunity to talk about their immediate experiences and also helps to manage the stress they are constantly exposed to when working with people.

The concept of the strengths perspective was thus the foundation for the changes that have taken place in supervision in social work, but it is not the only reason why supervision in social work today is conducted in a co-creative way and from the perspective of the supervisor's strengths. An important role in the changes is played by the solution-focused approach, which has been developed abroad (USA, Scandinavia, England) since the 1980s (Myers, 2008, p. 4) and was gradually transferred to Slovenian social work after 2005 (Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2006; Nina Mešl, 2007, 2018; Mojca Šeme, 2012; Nina Mešl, 2018). Let us take a look at how the solution-focused approach is used in supervision.

## The impact of therapeutic approaches on changes in supervision

A significant paradigm shift in supervision in social work was certainly achieved with elements of *solution-focused therapy* (De Shazer, 1982; Berg and Miller, 1992), which, although therapeutically oriented, was quickly translated into the language of social work as a *solution-focused approach*<sup>23</sup> (Myers, 2008). Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2010) argues that it is no coincidence that the contemporary language of social work in helping processes uses elements of brief solution-focused family therapy, as its conceptual leader was a social worker. I will use the term solution-focused approach because it is most in line with what we use in supervision today, so do not be confused by the difference in terminology. What is more, the solution-focused approach has evolved from solution-focused brief therapy.

David Howe (2009, p. 75) argues that John Dewey (1933) himself conceived of the solution-focused approach as a pragmatic, solution-oriented approach. He started from the conviction that If we want to solve a problem, we must first identify, define and specify it in order to then think about possible solutions. Alongside John

---

<sup>23</sup> The originators also insisted that this was an approach, not a model or a theory, which they wanted to explain theoretically to experts and the general public.

Dewey, Helen Harris Perlman (1957) also developed the idea of the solution-focused approach when she wanted to combine learning theory with Freud's theory. She believed that a problem can be solved by the person who has the problem and that it is the person who has experienced and felt the problem who must also find solutions to the problem. In Perlman's view, no one else can solve the problem and the expert should not use their power to offer solutions (Perlman, 1970, p. 131).

The solution-focused approach, as further developed by Steve de Shazer (1982), Insoo Kim Berg and Scott D. Miller (1992) and others, is a step in the direction of not needing to know what the problem is in order to find a solution. Nina Mešl (2018, p. 93) argues that in the dialogue process, we do not focus on solving problems, but neither do we focus on searching for solutions. The essence of the approach is to work with the person to create a context in which solutions can emerge.

The extension of the idea of the solution-focused approach, which is certainly best known today, has its origins in the psychotherapy and family therapy of the 1980s, where such an approach was first developed in the context of solution-focused brief therapy (de Shazer, 1985). Psychotherapists working at the US Brief Family Therapy Centre in Milwaukee, which was founded in 1978 by the psychotherapist and social worker Steve de Shazer together with his wife Insoo Kim Berg, also a social worker, played an important role in the development of the therapy approach. Steve de Shazer (1982, 1985, 1988, 1994) and his colleagues investigated what works, for whom it works, when it works and why it works. They were interested in what helps people with lived experience change and achieve their goals. The methods they used were not developed on the basis of previous theoretical foundations, but by practitioners who thought about what works. From the outset, the complexity of the various therapeutic practices and interventions was minimised in order to develop principles and strategies for practice with a minimum of interventions and a maximum of change effect for people with lived experience. They focused on finding anything that would support people with lived experience to achieve their goals. So the solution-oriented ways of working were a collection of methods that were

used in practice. What they all had in common, however, was that they looked for themes focused on the question of the future.

The solution-oriented approach, as developed by Steve de Shazer and colleagues, had three important starting points. The first is that “therapy” is brief. The second is that people with lived experience have the capacity to resolve the situation, to solve the situation themselves. The third is to focus on the future.

According to Thorona Nelson and Frank Thomas (2007), solution-focused therapy emerged in response to the needs of therapists who realised that they had much more to offer professionals for their personal experiences if they listened to them. More. They wanted to learn from them. From their stories and practices. As we have seen, it was people with lived experience who, through social movements, brought us to the same realisation in the social work profession. Social movements have pointed out and shown that people with lived experience are the greatest experts by experience and that social workers need this knowledge if we want to co-create solutions. Co-creation is therefore a fundamental shift in the way we work with dialogue partners in the fields of social work (Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Kobal, Mešl and Možina, 2005) and also in supervision. In supervision processes, the supervisor cannot avoid the fact that the practitioner is the ultimate expert in their work, that they have relevant and diverse experience, and that they can draw on it.

A third insight that Steve de Shazer (1985) explicitly mentioned in his work was that a future-oriented, solution-focused conversation is very effective in constructing solutions to a situation, as opposed to the emphasis on understanding the past that is so characteristic of many traditional theories and practices, particularly in the field of counselling. This focuses the conversation on what we want and what we can still create, rather than what cannot be changed. He added that this insight does not, of course, mean that this work is easy. Rather, you have to be determined to use your skills and be disciplined in looking for solutions and giving up the search for the causes of the situation.

Social workers bring to their work the knowledge they have acquired through training and practice, and this knowledge is also based on the social environment as knowledge production. Today

we know that people with lived experience of distress also bring it to bear on the basis of personal experience. As Bill O'Hanlon (1993, p. 3) suggests, this has been made possible by the fact that we have been able to make the transition from a pathology-focused approach to a solution-focused approach, and therefore to solution-focused supervision.

## SOLUTION-FOCUSED SUPERVISION

Solution-focused supervision (Wetchler, 1990; Trenhaile, 2005; Myers, 2008; Wei-su, 2009; Thomas, 2013) evolved from the solution-focused approach. This type of supervision has been developing since the 1990s. Undoubtedly, solution-focused supervision is a postmodern approach and is based on the assumption that the model can play an important role in the context of supervision, as it does in therapy, especially for the co-creation of more collaborative, resource-based relationships within this process. Solution-focused supervision seeks the expert's opinion on personal experience in order to work with them to find individual solutions to the situation. Solution-focused supervision is about a paradigmatic shift from problems to solutions. Solution-focused supervision is based on the assumption that the supervisee already has all the answers and that the role of the supervisor is only to help them formulate these solutions, which they conceive in their own way, and is therefore their respectful ally.

In supervision processes, these experts are the supervisors. The role of the supervisor is not to explain how they see the situation, because that can influence the person's thinking and take away important solutions. The role of the supervisor is to articulate the experience together with the supervisee and the other members, to look for sources of strength together with the supervisee, to give feedback and compliments on their performance and to work out solutions together with them (Myers, 2008, p. 8). It is about working with the supervisee based on the conviction that they have the knowledge, skills and competences to resolve the situation. The task of the supervisor is to facilitate the circumstances in which the supervisee is

encouraged to explore these solutions. Another distinctive feature is that supervision is based on the exploration of the here and now, on the exploration of resources for change in the future. The aim of solution-focused supervision is to empower the supervisee to recognise that they too have sources of strength, to acknowledge the valuable contribution of support from people who are experts by experience in their daily practice and to co-create and explore additional possibilities, solutions, in their own way during supervision.

Frank N. Thomas (2013) argues that solution-focused supervision differs from traditional supervision in that it is a very clear practice and its unique approach allows for a flexible response to the needs of the supervisee. It focuses on what works, on supporting the supervisee both in defining the situation and in completing the process. In his view, Insoo Kim Berg is the greatest proponent of solution-focused supervision, who is credited with bringing it to the forefront.

Over the last 30 years of development, it has become very clear what solution-focused supervision is (Thomas, 2013, p. 3):

- it is clear that labelling and pathologising contradict the understanding of solution-focused supervision;
- the priority is to be concerned with the success of the supervisee, not the supervisor;
- based on what works (description), not on what the situation means (interpretation);
- the protocol is very clearly focused on the goals of the supervisor, the question of the miracle, the discussion of exceptions.

Solution - focused supervision aims to understand the wider context that can influence how people interact with the environment, how people are encouraged to see themselves, how we talk about ourselves. The wider social context helps to understand how we see ourselves and how we relate to others. The development of solution-focused supervision has been particularly influenced by the development of systems theories. Steve de Shazer (1994) draws our attention to two important aspects of systems theory that we use in supervision, namely the way we conduct the conversation and the

importance of language use. Steve de Shazer (1994) emphasised that the most important tool in the conversation is the language we use. A solution-focused approach relies on us using understandable language, not only in our interactions with people but also in the words we use when we explain things. The way we report or speak about something leads to an individual, particularised understanding. This is also what Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2010) wrote about when she summarised the work of Peter Lüssi (1990). Using the language of social work is therefore a basic requirement of the profession and how we speak when explaining what we do and how we do it is not insignificant. Finally, the importance of language use, particularly naming itself, has also been emphasised by people with lived experience of distress (Oliver, 1992; Morris, 1993; Haaster and Koster, 2005) and by academics (Brandon, 1994; Ramon, 1999; Šugman Bohinc, 2003; McLaughlin, 2009; Videmšek, 2009, 2017). This, of course, suggests that language has a power of its own and that it must be used to empower people with lived experience of distress rather than the other way round.

Nigel Parton and Patrick O’Byrne (2000, p. 97) even suggest that the basic principle of conversation and language use is to shape change for the future. Language plays a decisive role in shaping and constructing our reality. Bill O’Hanlon (1993) wrote that we should use language as an “iatrogenic injury,” i.e. to reduce the harm caused by talking. To achieve this, the conversation should be conducted as “iatrogenic healing”, a healing in which we are respectful allies and willing to change.

Postmodern and post-structuralist thinkers in social work have recognised that the way we conduct a conversation is very important for understanding reality (Myers, 2008, p. 17). Language is therefore not just an expression of inner thoughts and feelings, but is shaped by interpersonal relationships. This gives us new ways of thinking about processes and interactions between people. Conversation is a dynamic activity that enables or prevents change. This is why postmodern approaches are so concerned with the use of language: where it is spoken, when it is spoken and how it is spoken. These are also the key perspectives when applying a solution-focused approach. A solution-oriented approach recognises that what we say

(words, phrases, concepts we use) and how we say it (tone of voice, pitch, body language) can affect the experience of a conversation. David Brandon (1994) also drew our attention to this in his work.

Based on the concept of the solution-oriented approach, we have introduced a number of elements into the supervision process, namely:

1. Supervisors are the greatest experts and connoisseurs of the situation. It is about respecting the supervisor's ability to resolve the situation in their own way. Helen Harris Perlman (1957, 1970) drew our attention to this. She wrote that "it is the person with the problem who can solve it most easily" (Perlman, 1970, p. 131). Often, of course, supervisees would like us to offer them solutions (because that is of course easier than thinking about what I have already investigated and what else I can do).
2. A solution-oriented conversation allows us to focus on finding something new, rather than dwelling on the past that we can not change. Thomas (2013, p. 49) argues that solution-focused supervision encompasses three temporal dimensions. Past, present and future, but the focus is on the future. Solution-focused supervision concentrates on the supervisee's recent successes and the activities they will attempt in the future, based on their current successes.
3. We focus on what is possible, not what is not possible. Solution-focused supervision, as Frank N. Thomas (2014, p. 23) argues, concentrates on creating what is possible, not on the problem. Of course, it all depends on perspective and what we are calibrated to, or, as Heinz von Foester (1967, p. 2–3) argues, "You get what you look for."
4. The assumption that the supervisee has undiscovered sources of strength and that they are capable and able. Supervisees are experts by experience, actions and knowledge.
5. We look for exceptions that enable progress. Exploring the exceptions brings out good solutions from the past. Awareness and recognition of exceptions is the hallmark of solution-focused supervision, and it is difficult to imagine such supervision without the question of exceptions.

In supervision, we have introduced another important element to solution-focused therapy, namely that the supervisor always acts out of pure curiosity and the position of “not-knowing,” as Harlene Anderson and Harold Goolishian (1992) called it. Curiosity implies a genuine interest in the other, and the position of not-knowing enables the supervisor to do this. The position of not-knowing, according to Anderson and Goolishian (1992, p. 29), thus requires an approach in which we seek more information from the other and are always striving for more information and trying to “be informed.” From the dialogue partner. The supervisor shows an interest and a need to find out even more about the situation itself.

The supervisor is not an authority who will tell the supervisee how to act, but we reflect together with the supervisee on the basis of all the information we receive and encourage them to find solutions.<sup>24</sup> In social work supervision, the supervisor relinquishes this position of power and assumes the awareness that what they know and can do as a supervisor is only part of what can contribute to solving the situation. The main source of knowledge comes from the supervisee, their experience and their expertise in their work.

The position of not-knowing in the supervision process encourages an open dialogue, a conversation that allows for alternatives and the discovery of something new. All this in the knowledge that the supervisees are competent to do their job. The talk of supervisor competence re-emphasises the postmodern role in supervision, which assumes that supervisees are competent.

Supervision is therefore based on respectful relationships (de Shazer 1985; Nelson and Thomas 2007; Thomas 2014). We respect social workers as experts and supervisors as respectful allies on the journey, as Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2004, 2019) argues. In supervision, we can apply two further assumptions of Steve de Shazer

---

<sup>24</sup> This suggests one of the methods for working in supervision, the “how to” method (Milošević Arnold, 2007), which is why it was slightly modified and reformulated by Lea Šugman Bohinc and Miran Možina. The method is designed in the spirit of postmodern, solution-focused, dialogue-based approaches to support and help. The process of dialogue with the user/supervisee is organised so that the focus of the conversation is on the user/supervisee and their understanding of the problematic circumstances in which they find themselves and the possibilities for the desired outcome (as defined by the user/supervisee).

(1985), namely the guiding principle that the supervisee's independence should be achieved (by encouraging them to think effectively about their own work processes), and the second feature of this approach is simplicity (Myers, 2008, p. 5). Saying and explaining things in a way that everyone can understand (Lamovec, 1995).

In short, solution-focused supervision differs from traditional supervision in that:

1. it recognises the importance of exceptions (there are always exceptions);
2. is focused on the future;
3. is based on the realisation that solutions are not necessarily directly linked to the problem;
4. is based on the belief that the supervisees have the answers to the situations themselves, they just need to articulate them;
5. the process uses language that is easy to understand and simple;
6. the work is pragmatic (focused on what is possible and what can be changed and what works) (Thomas, 2013, p. 5);
7. is focused on the goals of the supervisee (Thomas, 2013, p. 275).

The basic rules of operation of solution-focused supervision, as listed by de Shazer, Dolan, Kormar, Trepper, McCollum and Berg (2007, p. 1–3), are based on assumptions such as:

1. "If it isn't broken, don't fix it."
2. "If it works, do more of it."
3. "If it doesn't work, do something different."
4. "Small steps can lead to big changes."
5. "The language for solution development is different from that needed to describe the problem."
6. "No problems happen all the time; there are always exceptions that can be utilized."
7. "When you find what works, do it more often, use it more."
8. "The future is both created and negotiable."

The above rules for solution-focused therapy certainly provide a good introduction to what solution-focused supervision is all about.

Frank N. Thomas (2013, p. 9) grouped the above principles into five categories of action, namely pragmatism, testing, non-pathologising, curiosity and respect. The pragmatic approach requires time and experimentation. If we want to know whether something works, we need to test it. We know from supervision processes that they require time and communication with each other in order to build trust in the group. In addition to time, it is important to cultivate warm, nurturing relationships with each other, as this helps people to learn more effectively and work more effectively in practice. At the same time, to build a trusting relationship, it is important that we as supervisors keep the processes simple, straightforward, clear and open and, where appropriate, disclose personal ideas and ways of working and talk about personal and professional limitations.

Identifying the exceptions is, in a sense, the basis of solution-focused supervision. Nothing ever happens, so there are always exceptions and it is worth utilising them. However, it is important to realise that not every exception is equal, as Frank N. Thomas (2013) emphasises. He argues that it can have a negative impact if we as supervisors focus too much on an exception of the supervisee. Thomas (2013, p. 13) gives an example of this trap that we as supervisors can fall into if we do not examine the circumstances and simply suggest that they do more of what helps them.

For example, I once had a client who told me that exercise reduced her anxiety, so I encouraged her to do more of it. The following week, she said, “I can’t *do* more exercise! I tried, but I *can’t*.” Further conversation revealed that her *normal* exercise regimen included 250 push-ups, 1,000 sit-ups, running seven miles on a treadmill, and cycling an hour per day on a stationary bicycle; she said she simply did not have time in her day to exercise more. Clearly, I had not investigated the nature or extent of her normal routine or I would not have recommended increasing her exercise time, nor would I have endorsed the *current* amount of exercise without further questioning. (It turned out she was training for a triathlon, and this amount of exercise was typical in her training over the past several years and carefully monitored by her spouse/trainer).

A further challenge for solution-focused supervisors is to act in a non-labelling (non-pathologising) way. Social workers are often confronted with pathologising people in their daily practice, so the most important principle of action is to get away from it. It is a paradigmatic shift from problems to solutions. Solution-focused supervision is based on the assumption that the supervisee already has all the answers and that we as supervisors must help them to formulate these solutions, which they find themselves, in their own way. As supervisors, we therefore help to bring about change. In a qualitative study, Wei- Su Hsu and Ben Kuo (2014, p. 197) show the benefits of solution-focused supervision. The study found that:

- a.) participants reported that this model helped to improve their skills in their work, particularly with involuntary users, through the application of a solution-oriented approach,
- b.) that the model enabled the identification of performance and
- c.) that the model enabled them to increase their personal positive development and growth, including greater recognition and awareness of their own feelings and self-care, and a more positive attitude towards life in general and interpersonal relationships.

Frank N. Thomas (2013, p. 5) listed methods and techniques that can help us to practise solution-focused supervision.

- Questions are asked in a way that invites the supervisee to reflect on success and positive orientation.
- We focus on the goals set by the supervisor, not on the problem.
- The supervisor must constantly look to the future. Something is certainly clear today. Solution-focused supervision must of course be practised; it cannot be learned by reading books. While a basic framework is provided that can guide supervisors through the different stages of solution-focused supervision, it is necessary to put the idea into practice and ensure that such processes take place and are tested in supervision processes. From my experience of leading supervision groups, I can say that solution-focused supervision is very

close to the supervisees. They often say that it gives them the support and encouragement they need to learn something new, and at the same time, it confirms that what they do and how they do it brings about the necessary changes. To cite just a few findings (Videmšek, 2019):

- This allows me to move forward with pride and courage, knowing that I am on the right path.
- This is exactly what I needed to see that all the effort is worth it.
- I have realised how important it is to take small steps and not get lost in wanting too much to make a big change and then being disappointed when this does not happen.

The theoretical foundations of solution-focused supervision have led to a revaluation of the management of supervision processes, so-called positive supervision (Bannink and Jackson, 2011; Bannink, 2015).

## POSITIVE SUPERVISION

Until the 1960s, social work practice was orientated towards the past. Postmodern conceptualisations of social work focus on the future. Today, I can safely say that social work practice and supervision processes are based on the question of the future. The emphasis is on learning from good experiences, from the resources the supervisee has and from the supervisee's own view of how to resolve the situation. This is what makes the social work profession special and sets it apart from all other helping professions.

We have moved from traditional problem-orientated supervision to positive supervision through solution-focused supervision. The basic starting point of positive supervision, similar to solution-focused supervision, is not focused on the analysis of the problem, but on the analysis of the goals that the supervisee sets themselves. The supervisor's behaviour is geared towards the supervisee's strengths perspective and the supervisee's competence. Fredrike Bannink (2015, p. 15) defines positive supervision as building solutions among peers for greater personal and methodological com-

petences, with support and encouragement to and from each other discussing and implementing these skills.

The basis for the development of positive supervision (Bannink and Jackson, 2011; Bannink, 2015) is based on positive psychology and solution-focused therapy (de Shazer, 1985; Čačinović Vogrinčić, 2006, 2010; Nelson and Thomas, 2007; Myers, 2008; Mešl, 2018), which we have adopted in supervision as solution-focused supervision, as I have already introduced in the previous subsection.

Positive psychology has gained momentum since 1990 (Seligman, 1998, 2002; Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010; Hefferon and Boniwell, 2011; Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti and Snyder, 2015). All of these authors agree that positive psychology did not just emerge today but has been around for many years. One of the authors who drew attention to positive psychology in the 1950s is certainly Abraham Maslow (1954). Although he is better known for his formulation of the hierarchy of needs, it was Maslow who first pointed out that it is necessary to look at the potentials that an individual possesses and not just the deficits (1954, p. 201). In fact, the importance of positive attitudes was already written about in the early days of the development of supervision. According to Gardiner (1895, p. 4), supervisors were advised that the most effective supervision is that which is carried out in the context of a positive attitude.

Shane J. Lopez, Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti and C. R. Snyder (2015, p. 3) argue that positive psychology in the 21st century focuses on what is right in people and builds on people's resilience. Positive psychology thus draws on the concept of promoting resilience, which aligns with the concept of a strengths perspective. According to Kate Hefferon and Ilona Boniwell (2011, p. 2), positive psychology focuses on an individual's well-being, happiness, strengths, wisdom and creativity. The focus is not only on how an individual can be happy but also on how their well-being can affect the group. Positive psychology also focuses not only on positive thinking and positive emotions. It focuses on creating opportunities for the supervisor and other group members to experience success. And this can contribute to a positive orientation. It also focuses on what enables the individual and the group to maintain a positive attitude.

The best-known and most cited author of positive psychology today is certainly the psychologist Martin Seligman (2015, p. 10), who works at the University of Pennsylvania and has developed this field of work in detail since the 1990s. Martin Seligman (1998) has written that a certain number of human resources such as courage, optimism, interpersonal skills, work ethic, hope, honesty and perseverance are present, and he argues that it is our task to develop a science that helps people to access these sources of strength. Professionals working with people who are vulnerable and struggling with multiple challenges need to recognise that they work best when they focus on people's sources of strength rather than their weaknesses. The author writes that we have learned throughout history that pathologising attitudes have not brought us closer to the long-term consequences of a person's disabilities. Therefore, he argues that today we need a psychology that helps families, individuals, students and communities to build resilience.

Lyn, L. Abramson, Martin Seligman and John D. Teasdale (1978) transformed the model of learned helplessness into the theory of learned optimism, which was further refined and developed by Martin Seligman. Martin Seligman (2011) wrote that optimists use customised pattern traits to explain negative events. They use external factors that influenced the event to answer the question "Why did this bad thing happen to me?" rather than internal labels that lead to pessimism. Optimists tell themselves that something bad will not happen to them again, or that something bad only happened in one area and not in several areas.

#### Example

When students take a test, they react very differently to a bad grade. Optimistic students who receive a poor grade respond by attributing it to "the test was bad and hairsplitting" (external label); they tell themselves "I did better on previous tests" (attribution of an acceptable trait) or "I am much better in other areas, such as relationships and sporting activities" (specific trait). In contrast to optimists, pessimists will say, "I messed up" (an intrinsic trait), "I did even worse than on previous tests" (a fixed attribution), "I am not doing well in any area" (a global attribution) (Lopez,

Teramoto Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2015, p. 192). (Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2015, p. 192)

Martin Seligman (2011) therefore argues that it is important to establish a strong and solid connection to the future and to let go of the negative things of the past and look at them from a distance. Positive supervision refocuses us on learning from good experiences, i.e. overcoming the mindset that nothing can be changed. Often, of course, we attach too much importance to experience and we often become prisoners of negative thoughts and lose hope of change. Positive supervision, which focuses on learning from good experiences, shows that simply changing the language brings about changes and reactions to the situation and enables us to move from the “can not frame” to the “can frame.” Here again, we can draw on the work of Dennis Saleebey (1997), who has been mentioned several times, and also Karen Healy (2000, p. 158–164), who describes five basic principles that enable this transition:

1. take an optimistic view,
2. focus on the value of the statement,
3. co-create with an expert by experience,
4. work towards long-term empowerment,
5. build a community – connect one expert with another to promote a self-help community.

Such a starting point is, of course, based on the assumption that all people have abilities and sources of strength, as Dennis Saleebey explains (Saleebey 1997, p. 12). This includes awareness of what we have learned about ourselves, our virtues and the world we live in, as well as knowledge of previous strategies for dealing with situations and previous experiences of success, talents.

With positive monitoring, it is of course important that every small success is recognised and praised. Praise can help to change perspective and is not difficult to give.

I know you are very busy at the moment, but I am fascinated that you have managed to get there on time. It looks like you really want to change something about this situation.

I believe that it is extremely difficult to look after a father with dementia, but I must admit that I am impressed with how you manage to juggle work, family and caring for him.

What skills and sources of strength help you to do this?

What helps you to reduce your anxiety?

The supervisees are thus encouraged to see not only the difficult situation but also what they are good at. Positive supervision differs from the aforementioned solution-focused supervision and also from traditional supervision in the feedback it provides.

An important turning point, then, is to start from the sources of individual strength on which new possibilities are consolidated and built. David Howe (2009, p. 105) uses the metaphor that “Talk of about weaknesses is to build the house on sand. The case will collapse. Despair will increase. It is the solid bits of the users’s life to which we must attend. What skills do they have? What knowledge? What successes? What insights? What do they think is going on and why? What do they think might move matters on and make a difference? These are the strengths of the situation. This is where future success lies. That’s where we must build.

Adam Kepecs (2014) shows that emotional responses have a profound impact on how we learn. When we remember positive (winning) strategies, positive attitudes and behaviours are the result of this thinking. The hormone dopamine, which is crucial to our well-being, builds ‘walls of confidence’ and increases the likelihood that a person will be able to make quick and clear decisions in a similar situation. In other words, people learn much better and more effectively from successes than from failures. It has been proven that when our brain is freed from negative comments and supported by positive messages, we are more likely to learn and not remain at the same behavioural level. The more often we succeed (win), the more confident we are and the more willing we are to take risks.

This was also shown in a study (Histed, Miller and Pasupathy, 2009) on monkeys. The authors showed that the neurons in the brain can process information more easily and efficiently after a success than after a failure, which naturally leads to better behaviour. In the study, they observed the neuronal channels in the monkeys' brains while they were learning a specific task. The monkeys were shown a picture every few seconds and had to look to the left or right depending on what they saw in the picture. They learned by trial and error in which direction they had to look depending on the picture. If they got it right, they were rewarded. It turned out that the monkeys that were successful learned faster than those that failed. If a monkey failed, there was no change in its brain, its brain did not change. In practice, this meant that the monkey that succeeded once was more likely to succeed again on the next attempt. This is where the link between neuronal activity and animal behaviour was detected.

The brain needs both the visibility of success and the support to continue its ongoing efforts. In fact, the brain protects us from too much pain, including shame. If people only hear negative criticism or feedback, they will be very reluctant to act in the future. They might even give up and give up.

Nina Mešl (2013, p. 357) points out that the use of positivity and optimism in social work needs to be reconsidered because, as she argues, optimism is not a panacea. It cannot, for example, replace human rights, social values, the right to a decent life, good parenting, it cannot solve poverty, social inequalities. Optimism is only a tool.

Positive supervision, defined as guiding the supervisee to articulate their competence and increase their problem-solving skills (Bannink, 2015, p. 17), is based on a number of working principles. The first principle is open-ended questions. By asking open-ended questions, we encourage the supervisee to explore hope, think about resources, explore what is working, what the next step will be, etc. And not just from their own perspective, but also from the perspective of the other members involved in the supervision. So open questions lead to the exploration of other possibilities. As I mentioned earlier, it is important that the questions are asked in a positive way, so they act as encouragement.

The principle of positive supervision is based on six pillars: a positive start to the meeting, positive formulation of goals, looking for competencies and exceptions, dealing with progress, feedback and a follow up sessions.

*A positive start to the meeting.* Every start to a meeting is always positive. We talk about what the supervisee is good at, what they have done well, what they like, what they love, what makes them happy, etc. In positive supervision, every start is made in a positive direction. Every supervisee reports on their current state in a positive way.

*Positive formulation of goals.* Positive supervision is based on the theory of hope, which focuses on clearly defined goals. Hope can be understood as a journey that requires three basic things: a destination we want to get to, a map to reach that destination and a path (means of transport) to reach that destination (Bannink 2015, p. 40–41).

Formulating goals is important throughout the process, both when setting up the group and at each individual meeting. In supervision, we often ask the supervisor: How will you recognise whether this supervision has been successful? What would you like to have achieved at the end of this meeting? How will you recognise that you are on the right path, how will I as the supervisor recognise that the supervision is useful for you? What can I help you with, what would be most useful for you? How will you let me know that I need to do things differently? How will you recognise that you are making progress? The supervisees and all group members define what their goals are, what they want for their future.

*Finding competences and exceptions.* Positive supervision focuses on the visibility and identification of the competences that the supervisees possess. In supervision processes, we often use the question of what works and how it has been done. These are the two questions that ask the supervisee to present and talk about what they have already done, what skills have helped them. By engaging with the competences, supervisees articulate and identify their competences (both personal and professional competences, such as the ability to show empathy, build a working relationship, listen in a sexually and ethically sensitive way, ask questions, deal with conflict, manage

challenges, hold a conversation). Often supervisees do not recognise their own competences, or they see them as commonplace. For this reason, positive supervision deals specifically with the topic of competences, because it assumes that recognising competences can help supervisees to feel proud and satisfied with their work. Fredrike Bannink (2015, p. 60) suggests asking direct questions about competence: How did you do it? How did you decide about it? How did you manage to do it?

A frequent question in positive supervision is: “How did you manage that?” and “How did you do that?”. In this work, we as supervisors can of course use compliments as part of this process to recognise the importance of the work done.

One of the ways in which the supervisor can articulate competences is to look for exceptions: “In which part was the problem more manageable? When were you able to handle the situation better?” In every job, no matter how problematic, there is something that is different. In positive supervision, the focus is precisely on these moments and how the supervisee was able to achieve them. This is because they are often only small changes, and when the supervisee is encouraged to make small changes (exceptions in action) and when they evaluate these changes, they can recognise competence. Fredrike Bannink (2015, p. 66) suggests that small changes trigger a snowball effect. John L. Walter and Jane E. Peller (1992) formulated a plan to find exceptions by moving from wishes and complaints to goals: What would you like to see changed about this problem? Do exceptions already exist for this problem? If so, can they be repeated (this is based on the solution-focused therapy assumption “if it works, do it more often”). Are there spontaneous exceptions (explore these exceptions); if there are no exceptions, is it possible to reformulate the goal? Take several small steps. An important step in this work is to celebrate successes.<sup>25</sup>

*Working on progress.* In this section, we focus on progress based on the supervisor’s previous successes. “What will be your next small step?”. When dealing with progress, we can help ourselves as

---

<sup>25</sup> We have already read about the importance of success in the story *Winnie-the-Pooh on Success* (Allen and Allen 1997, p. 17), where a clever stranger tells the animals how they can become successful.

supervisees with different scales that quickly show progress towards the desired future (goals), on self-confidence: “On a scale from 0 to 10, how confident are you that you will achieve your goal?”. Positive supervision is not just about successes and what works. Many supervisees want to talk about problems or feelings of stagnation or hopelessness.

John L. Walter and Jane E. Peller (1992) offered some possible solutions when a supervisor has a sense of hopelessness. These questions are: Who wants change? What is the supervisee’s goal? Do you have a goal rather than a desire? Are you and the supervisor rushing too much and looking too broadly at the situation? Is the supervisor perhaps not doing the job you expect of them? If you have considered all the questions and still feel like you are at an impasse, it is important to answer the question “Is there anything I could have done differently?”. Fredrike Bannink (2015, p. 86) adds that sometimes we are too close to the tree to see the forest and that we are not able to recognise unproductive patterns between supervisor and supervisee.

*Reflection and Feedback.* One of the cornerstones of positive supervision is certainly feedback.

Effective feedback gives meaning to supervision meetings. It enables the supervisee’s personal and professional growth and improves their practice. For the supervisor, feedback provides insight into their work and leadership. Feedback is an opportunity to express feelings about the meeting. Fredrike Bannink (2015, p. 18) suggests that feedback must not only be given at the end of the meeting but also during the meeting itself, when it is needed. This means that each participant tells what they have learned in the meeting about the profession, their work, themselves and not least about the experts by experience that they encounter on a daily basis.

In supervision, giving feedback is very important for supervisees, as effective feedback allows for personal and professional growth, learning and practice improvement. Given the importance of giving feedback, let us take a closer look at the characteristics of good feedback.

## Forms and ways of giving feedback

Penny Henderson, Jim Holloway and Anthea Milar (2014) refer to feedback as a *meeting point*. They argue that feedback is an interaction between the supervisor, group members and the supervisee and could also be defined as a meeting of multiple perspectives (2014, p. 59–60). Feedback is also a time for each participant to share their feelings about what happened in the meeting. It is important that each member of the supervision group is able to express their individual observations and feelings that arose from what happened. The rule when giving feedback is that all participants should give feedback, otherwise there is an imbalance of power. Sometimes the observations of observers who were only indirectly involved but were able to observe more are very valuable (e.g. students on placement who are not part of the supervision group but are allowed to observe the learning process). Feedback should therefore become the rule in every supervision meeting, as it is valuable and invaluable. It increases the visibility of group developments because, as Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 32) argues, it acts on “blind spots” (content that is not made conscious). Giving and receiving the right feedback is therefore an opportunity to reflect on and change the forms of interaction in the group, so it is not unimportant how the feedback is given.

Feedback is only effective when it is delivered in an assertive way. Otherwise, of course, the feedback becomes a part that the supervisees want to avoid because it makes them feel uncomfortable.

### *Giving feedback assertively*

The feedback we give others is not necessarily good. The feedback we receive from others is not necessarily nice either. Sometimes we simply do not want to hear it because it tells us things about ourselves that we would rather avoid or ignore. Supervision is a place where we can hear what we do not want to hear but in a respectful and assertive way. Assertive feedback means that we learn to give not only positive but also negative feedback in a way that is helpful to others. When giving feedback in supervision, it is important to follow the rule that negative feedback, according to Simona Žnidarec Demšar and Polona Erlah (1998), is only useful if it is not given in a meek

and passive or aggressive way.

We can help ourselves when giving feedback by following some basic principles:

1. always speak in the first person and do not guess how someone else might be feeling,
2. assess the right time to give feedback or criticism,
3. check what the person receiving the feedback or criticism really heard and how they took it.

Assertive feedback is never given in a way that punishes, hurts, humiliates, asserts or plays the role of a “psychologist” who knows what is good for people.

Supervision meetings are centred around conversation, communication that is respectful and supportive to the supervisee. Respectful conversation is conducted in an assertive manner. Assertive communication allows us to express what we feel, need and want in a way that expresses our self-confidence and does at the same time not humiliate others (Žnidarec Demšar and Erlah, 1998).

Assertive communication is direct and explains the needs of one person to another in an open and honest way. Darja Zaviršek, Jelka Zorn and Petra Videmšek (2002, p. 38) state that the most important forms of assertive communication include:

1. Speaking for oneself: “I think” instead of “I have heard people say ... “
2. Saying what we feel: “This really upsets me!”
3. Saying straight out what we want: “I want to be alone now.”
4. Distinguishing between facts and opinions: “My opinion is that ... “ instead of “The simple fact is that this is the best solution.”
5. Recognising that different people see things differently: “This system works very well for me”, as opposed to “This system is good.”
6. Being as direct as possible: “I disagree with you.”
7. Being willing to negotiate.
8. Encouraging others to be as assertive as possible.
9. Making sure that our body language matches what we say.

From the perspective of power regulation, assertiveness is the answer to the question of how to empower supervisees through thoughtful,

systematic and simple skills and how to transform this power into influence, which they then use themselves in a respectful way in their relationships with others. Assertiveness as a way of communicating is based on self-esteem, on creating equal relationships, on taking personal responsibility, on being aware of one's own rights and the rights of others.

Various authors (Kobolt, 2006; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Heen and Stone, 2014) have developed different methods of providing feedback for supervision purposes. Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone (2014), for example, describe seven pillars that can help when giving feedback.

*Ongoing review.* Where possible, ongoing communication gives us many opportunities to recognise the successes and the work done to achieve them.

Create a safe space. Before you enter the room, remind yourself of your wishes and aspirations for the future. If you are anxious, try to refocus on curiosity and optimism. Keep reminding yourself that they are doing the best they can with what they know. They need to feel seen, heard and respected so they can think out loud with you about the risks.

*Start with questions.* Start by asking about their perspective, what are the challenges they face. Listen and summarise their assessment. Share with them what you have experienced as their attitude and how this has impacted their success in achieving their goals. Ask them how you can support them in their learning and development. Ask them for suggestions for improvement before making any suggestions.

*Do not focus on what went wrong.* Explore their desired outcomes and focus on what will help them achieve them. Pay attention, you are not the person telling them what to do differently, they are capable of this themselves.

*Give clear instructions on the results.* Given that you are working towards them, be clear about what you and others expect to happen. Create normal communication and make yourself available to them because they are dealing with change. Remember to praise their efforts and the results achieved.

*Even a negative reaction must be accepted with equanimity.* If we stay with them, caring, where they are, they will be able to process their feelings. Give them a chance to grow up before we stop them or try to save them.

*Be patient.* Self-reflection and the desire for a new way of thinking take time.

Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 160) have created rules for giving feedback, which they summarise with the acronym CORBS. The acronym provides a clear message about what the main principles of giving feedback are. In their view, feedback should be:

*Clear:* be clear about what feedback you want to give.

*Owned:* be aware that this is your feedback, that this is your perspective and not the ultimate truth.

*Regular:* feedback should be regular and should be given as soon as possible.

*Balanced:* ensure a balance between positive feedback and any potential challenges.

*Specific:* feedback should be as detailed and precise as possible. We need to give very specific feedback that describes what the supervisee has done without evaluating and judging their work, e.g. “I noticed that you stayed with the user for an hour instead of the scheduled half hour and that you made an extra home visit outside of working hours because it was his birthday.” You can then ask the supervisee to explain their point of view and check if the concerns are appropriate.

Alenka Kobolt (2004) believes that feedback is an important principle of the dynamic group process in supervision as feedback is a phenomenon of interaction that is only possible in a dyadic or group interaction. A feedback message is an opinion, statement or thought of one of the members in a communication intended for one or more members. It enables a situational interaction process and provides the opportunity to “objectify” messages that are important to the subject or group, thus discovering new perspectives and expanding the optics of experience and evaluation for both the giver and the receiver of the feedback message.

Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 32) has formulated general rules for delivering feedback in supervision:

- provide when the dialogue partner is able to hear it,
- keep the message concise, clear, concrete,
- report perceptions as perceptions,
- communicate emotions as emotions,
- do not analyse the supervisee,
- keep the focus on positive aspects,
- encourage the search for solutions,
- consider how much information they can take on board,
- can only be accepted at their own will,
- if they are ready to share with us and others,
- if they trust us,
- if they feel respected,
- if assured that their answer will be accepted,
- and if we respond to it.

The basis of any feedback in supervision is that it encourages the supervisee. Supervisees should develop a sense of inner satisfaction and motivation. Encouragement means recognising strengths and at the same time offering support for challenges when the supervisee needs it. To achieve this, the supervisor must build a very good relationship with the supervisee, as this enables the supervisee to face their fears.

As supervisors, we need to realise that encouragement is much more than positivity. An incentive is different from a reward. Encouragement means focusing on what the person likes to do best and not on how they compare to others.

Supervision also serves to encourage supervisees to take new steps. Verbal encouragement can be achieved by avoiding adjectives such as: good, clever, unempathic, unethical, focusing instead on the supervisee's intention.

The final pillar of positive supervision is the follow-up session.

## 6. Follow-up session

This part usually takes place in the follow-up supervision session and is meant as reflection on the previous meeting. The meeting often begins with questions about what changed since last time, what worked, what improved. The main purpose is to articulate progress and determine if anything from the last meeting was meaningful and useful.

Steve de Shazer (1994) points out that the main purpose is to provide support in recognising what was helpful and support changes so progress can be seen and experienced. At the same time, the review should also serve to avoid things that are not working and, in this sense, look for alternatives.

Fredrike Bannink (2015) points out that it is important to pay attention to how we start when we meet again. The first question at a reunion should focus on the process, with particular attention to what went better. This puts the supervisee in a position to articulate progress. The question “What is different/better?” is therefore different from the question “Is anything different/better?” The supervisor does not provide an answer with this question but encourages and explores the process.

Of course, it may be that the supervisee tells us that it is no better or no different. There are several reasons for this response, ranging from the fact that they are not used to this type of reporting or that they simply need an extra push to make these changes visible. The supervisor therefore asks more specific and precise questions and must be careful how they ask these questions.

Peter De Jong and Insoo Kim Berg (2002) created the acronym EARS, which can be used by supervisors to explore the insights of the supervisee. E stands for *Eliciting*, which is based on a story in which progress and exceptions are sought. A stands for *Amplifying*. The supervisor invites the supervisee to elaborate on the difference between the times when things went well and when things did not go so well, and what the supervisee’s role was in this.

Next is R for *Reinforcing* successes. The supervisor reinforces the successes and the path that has led to these successes and exceptions by also exploring the exceptions in more detail.

## Differences between traditional and positive supervision

Traditional supervision assumed that the focus was on problem-solving and pathology (what is wrong and the diagnosis of the problem) and the search for solutions in response, where the focus was on analysing what went wrong and how the problem can be solved. Solution-focused supervision is characterised by the supervisee finding solutions to the situation in their own way. In positive supervision, the attention is mainly on what works, what we are good at and what brings success.

TRADITIONAL SUPERVISION	SOLUTION-FOCUSED SUPERVISION	POSITIVE SUPERVISION
What went wrong? What is the problem?	What do you want to do? What are your desired outcomes? How will you know that the supervision was successful?	What have you been successful at? What went right?
Can you tell me more about the problem?	What would you like to change? You say you don't want that, can you tell me what you would like instead.	What would you rather see instead of what is happening? (goal analysis) How is this a problem for you?
Is the problem caused by something deeper?	How would you explain the main theme you want to focus on?	How did you react? I'm sure you have a good reason for your reaction, can you tell me more? How did you know what you had to do?
Can you tell me more about the problem?	Can we explore the exceptions? How did you manage that? How did it make you feel? What did you rely on to make it happen? Could this happen again in the near future?	What can you do differently next time? What will you use next time? Where would you like to go? How can you get out of this situation? What did you do that was useful?
	What would the future look like without you? How did you celebrate these successes? What steps do you plan to take to implement the change? What are the small steps to make a big difference?	
Was this meeting useful for you?	What is different now? How was this meeting useful for you? What new things are you leaving with? Anything useful?	

The difference between traditional and positive supervision can easily be measured by the time spent on each topic in a meeting. In traditional supervision, less time is spent on emotions, resilience, successes, sources of strength and what works. There is a shift in the way we work together, with traditional supervision focusing on the problems and positive supervision focusing on the opportunities. Peter De Jong and Insoo Kim Berg (2002, p. 268) argue that with the new paradigm, the role of the supervisor is also changing. They are no longer the authority that has all the answers and offers all the solutions, but their role is to co-create solutions rather than solve problems. The new paradigm is characterised by the fact that it is based on affirmative questions that stem from the supervisee's sources of strength.

Positive supervision makes supervisees feel that their work is valued, encourages them to find solutions and helps them to achieve the changes they want to see in their work. This is what social workers need most in today's world. They need to be seen, encouraged and praised for the meaningfulness of their work and for making such important small changes in the lives of people facing so many challenges. I have heard many success stories in conducting supervision about how many important small steps for big changes have been taken and shaped by social workers together with people. Experiencing positive outcomes always encourages us and others involved in the supervision process to think, even critically, about what we will try next and allows us to explore new things. It is a source of courage to try something new and at the same time a confirmation that good experiences happen. It simply means working from a strengths perspective and bringing social work concepts into the supervision process.

The idea of learning from experience thus goes back to the *problem-solving approach* developed by Helen Harris Perlman (1957), which was transferred to social work. The author wanted to combine education theory (Dewey) with therapy (Freud) and recognised that only those who have a problem can solve it. She saw life as problem solving process.

The person she says with his subjective reading of and reaction to his problem(s) must also be his own problem-solver. The

problem cannot be dealt with expert through him, with him, and by involvement of his powers' (Perlman, 1970, p. 131)

It may seem strange to the reader that I put this author in this context, but she argued that we can also learn about success because of a problem. The author said that the problem is always big at first and seems unsolvable. This is when we tend to collapse into a state of hopelessness, surrounded by sadness and perhaps panic. Helen Harris Perlman (1970) was very clear that we can handle problems by first breaking them down into several smaller problems, into smaller, more manageable parts. Even though we must always have the big problem in the background, we experience success when we are able to solve the small problems. This sense of achievement encourages people to look for new solutions and to continue working. Her work is therefore a prelude to learning from good experience, even if it is the experience of a problem that the individual has.

Learning from experience shows why we may make and repeat the same mistakes. It is therefore not irrelevant to ask what is the nature of this mistake.

The role of the supervisor in acting on good experiences is, of course, only to work on the goals that the individual supervisor has set for themselves. Every person has certain goals. If these are not being achieved or are not going in the right direction, it is important to talk to supervisees about the impact of their decisions. The focus should remain on the goals, but it is important that the focus is on what they are doing well. We must not let the words "your failures" get in the way of the conversation because the brain processes mistakes much more easily than failures. Therefore, the way we as supervisors give feedback is extremely important to the supervision process. It should always be based on assertive communication.

As supervisors, we must do our best to maintain a positive attitude. Many of the qualities and resilience skills we develop will be visible in our supervision meetings.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the development of supervision, highlighting which theories have had the greatest influence on the development of supervision in social work as we know it today, and relating them to the different models of supervision depending on when the model was developed and who developed it. A review of the literature shows that there are a number of models depending on theoretical starting points (psychoanalytically orientated, models derived from therapeutic approaches, user-centred models, etc.). The model also depends on the objectives (professional identity development, experiential learning, learning from others). Some models have been developed by academics, others by supervisors through their supervision practice. Tanja Rožič (2015, p. 33) views supervision models as a structure from which to understand roles, relationships, responsibilities and processes in supervision (Wheeler and Richards, 2007, p. 10).

The period of traditional supervision could therefore be described as focusing on the past. In the supervision processes, however, we look at real-life cases that come from a problem-orientated paradigm based on the medical model and psychotherapy. It is about identifying the problem (what is wrong), the pathology. So identifying the problem is the first step. Then we look for the causes, what is causing the problem (again according to the medical model – cause and effect). This is followed by the correction of the problem. The traditional model of supervision is far too simple: identify the problem and fix it, and of course, analyse the problem and fix it. This sounds logical and unproblematic if it were not inappropriate due to a number of assumptions. The first of these is certainly that the supervisor takes on the role of the person who analyses the problem and also offers solutions to it. The relationship is highly hierarchical, the supervisor is given the power (in administrative supervision by the position itself, in the educational role by the power of the expert who knows and can, and in the supportive role by the power to give guidance on how to act). Sometimes we are too quick to find a final solution to a problem, just as we see that there should be a solution before we really think about the whole situation. As soon as we say:

“This is the problem,” we are already contributing to the search for solutions.

In supervision, we have gone from learning from mistakes to learning better from good experiences, because good experiences inspire us to reflect further, give us confirmation and show us that everything we do makes sense. We have learned this thanks to the theoretical foundations of other helping professions, particularly therapeutic work in the 1980s, especially theories centred around *problem-solving theory* and *solution-focused approaches*. These theories and approaches placed the individual and their knowledge in the foreground and the supervisor in the position of the not-knowing and respectful advocate (Nelson and Thomas, 2008; Myers, 2008; Thomas, 2013). Although the theories were therapeutic in orientation, they were very quickly translated into the language of social work and took their place in social work as a *solution-focused approach* (Mayer 2008).

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2006, 2010), Nina Mešl (2007, 2018), Mojca Šeme (2012), Lea Šugman Bohinc (2019) and Petra Videmšek (2020) brought the concept to the Slovenian context. Their consistent application of the concept in practice has contributed to changes in supervision in social work. As in the professional field of social work, social movements have had a major impact on change in supervision, pointing to the need to change forms, methods and ways of working. And all these changes have had an impact on supervision, which has become a space to discuss the rejection of the unacceptable and the promotion of change. In addition, the strengths perspective, which underpins the paradigmatic shift from learning from failure to learning from good outcomes, has also contributed to change.

All these theories and concepts formed the basis for a paradigmatic shift from learning from mistakes to *learning from success*. The new paradigms in supervision go beyond reducing and eliminating the problem. They focus on co-creating and shaping positive solutions that we do not yet know.

## CHAPTER THREE

# SPECIFIC FEATURES IN IMPLEMENTING SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK

Since social work is a profession that deals with extremely complex human situations, social workers have the task of dealing with these complex processes on several levels (micro, mezzo, macro). Due to the nature of the work (creating new possibilities in the processes of help and support), it is logical that supervision also needs specific ways of supporting practitioners in their work. The most distinctive feature of supervision in social work is certainly that the content of the session is always co-created and that supervision takes place in a working relationship. This specificity of the social work profession has been recognised by other disciplines (pedagogical, theological) and is included in the supervision process (Ristič, 2017; Rožič, 2017). These concepts are typical of social work practice in Slovenia and are increasingly used in the practice of social work, but also more recently in school support processes, as Gabi Čačinovič Vogrič and Nina Mešl argue (2019, p. 29).

### Co-creation in supervision

A good relationship between supervisor and supervisee is based on co-creation and openness, allowing each participant to be honest and direct in the relationship. This means: mutual respect, as participants value each other; awareness of interdependence; allowing individuality and creativity to develop so that each can grow in the

relationship; and meeting needs together, but only when this is acceptable to the other (Gordon and Schutz, 1977, p. 19–20).

As in the social work profession, there was an important shift in supervision in the late 1990s towards the concept of co-creation, which was in Slovenia developed by Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2006, 2008, 2010; Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Mešl, 2019). As we have seen from the example of solution-focused supervision, co-creation does not happen by itself. It is not a predetermined framework and it is not something we do, but something we co-create in interaction with others. The concept itself is not a guarantee that something will work. It depends on how we implement it and what we do to make it work. Co-creation is a concept that must first be recognised and then put into practice. Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2010, p. 241) argues that the concept of co-creation defines both the attitude and the process of helping. Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Mešl (2019) define co-creation as a relationship between a user and a social work practitioner who is also a researcher. It is a relationship between the experts by experience and respectful and responsible allies who establish and secure processes of research and participation in desired outcomes. The focus is on the process, on the contribution of each participant, who provides an instrumental definition of the problem and their share. The prefix “co-” is justified because it refers to the co-creation, co-participation, co-operation carried out by the speaking partners, co-participants, co-workers in the processes of providing support (Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Mešl, 2019, p. 24).

The relationship of co-creation also takes place in supervision processes. Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2015, p. 1) suggests that supervision is best defined as a unique learning process aimed at the professional growth of the practitioner. Supervision provides a safe space for a very personal exploration of one’s work, obstacles, setbacks, successes and dilemmas. A good outcome is to empower the practitioner in their professional work so that they can discover their competence in very concrete work situations and develop new skills in their own way. Professionals need a very skilful but personal style to manage their work. It is not only about consolidating professional competences but also about developing a professional and personal identity.

The definition, written in the language of social work, suggests that supervision is an opportunity to create something new. It is not a place of control. It is a space where we protect the individual's knowledge, seek new, yet undiscovered ways of working and seek the impossible in a safe environment. This is the characteristic and special feature of supervision in social work in Slovenia.

A supervisor from England working in social care, when introducing the concept of co-creation into the supervision process, asked me how I, as a supervisor, know that the care worker has completed all the required tasks and that all the work is done, or in other words, who is the person overseeing the process of the work (Gwenyth, personal interview, 20 May 2019). Her question only emphasises the supervisory and administrative function of supervision in the English system.

It is therefore not surprising that Penny Henderson, Jim Holloway and Anthea Millar (2014, p. 25) write that co-creation may not be something you are used to, but it is the most effective way of working together where no one person plays a superior or subordinate role. A relationship based on equality ensures that reflection can take place. Only collaborative and co-produced supervision is effective.

Divya Jindal-Snape and Richard Ingram (2014, p. 136–137) have also written about the need for co-creation-based supervision in the English context. To this end, the authors have developed the Supervision Remit Compatibility (SuReCom) model, which promotes and ensures partnership in supervision and enables all participants to co-create the content and context of the work. The model ensures that the supervisor and supervisee jointly agree and co-create the content. They offered a four-stage framework for the content to be discussed:

*Expectations and aspirations:* Both parties can say what they expect and what balanced supervision should look like.

*Negotiation:* This is the roadmap for collaboration, a time to talk about all views and differences. Any difference of opinion is a point for discussion and can be explored further.

*Agreement:* This is negotiated and is used to achieve a wide range of goals. The model is used to reach agreement on the wishes of both the individual and the organisation.

*Reviewing the agreement:* The model allows us to review the agreement at any time: Are we still adhering to the agreement or does it need to be changed and adapted?

The authors have shown that it is very important to co-create an agreement and to clearly define the expectations of all those involved in the process. In their view, the model is based on a vision of co-creation. The model ensures adaptability to the needs of the supervisee, as the agreement can be changed at any time. Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape (2014, p. 140) argue that such a supervision model requires an external supervisor who is unburdened and free from managerial responsibilities and can support supervisees in exploring new possibilities.

Thanks to Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2009, 2011, 2018), the concept of co-creation is well known in Slovenia. Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2009) emphasises that supervision in social work is co-created in the working relationship. There is no other effective way. The supervisor, who establishes and maintains a working relationship in order to provide an open space for conversation that enables change, at the same time establishes a framework for the experience of co-creation between the user as an expert by experience (in this role they are now the supervisor) and the supervisor, who cannot be other than a respectful and responsible ally of the professional who has initiated the learning process. Let us see how the working relationship unfolds in supervision.

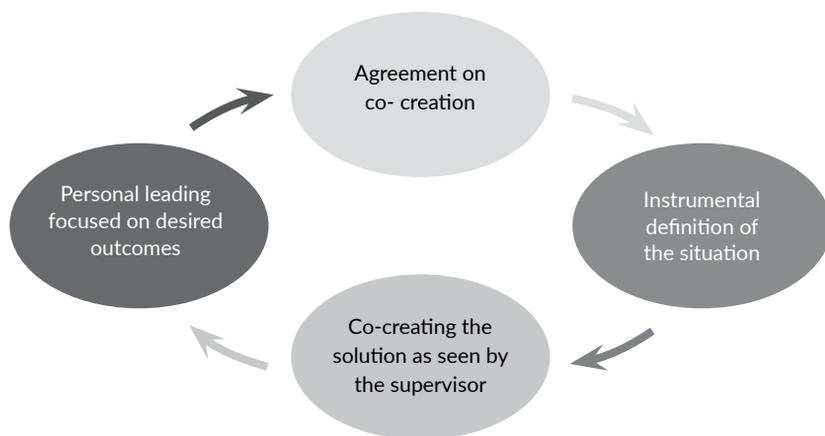
## **Working relationships of co-creation in supervision**

The concept of the working relationship of co-creation in social work (Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Kobal, Mešl and Možina, 2005; Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2008, 2019; Čačinovič Vogrinčič and Mešl, 2019) is well known and need not be presented in detail, but I would like to illustrate how these basic theses of the working relationship manifest and materialise in the supervision process. Supervision is a relationship that is limited in time, and within this time limit, we have agreed on goals that we want to achieve in this process. It is about supporting the supervisee to grow as a person, celebrate successes

and help the supervisee to practice more effectively, find alternative solutions to the situation and feel empowered after the meeting. This means that during supervision we look at why the group was formed and why it was set up (Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014). Supervision is therefore not a friendship or a chat over coffee, as Sonja Žorga (1996) has described, even if friendly bonds can be forged between members. It is a relationship founded on ethical considerations and a working relationship.

Eileen Munro (2011a) has written as a recommendation for change in child protection work that an established working relationship provides a basis for collaboration and includes the ability to ask challenging questions, reduces prescription-based practice and allows practitioners more autonomy and a sense of preventative work. Munro (2011a, p. 6) argues that it is only through the working relationship that we can move away from bureaucratic practice towards a practice that is values-responsive, expertise-led and focused on children's safety and wellbeing: "When social work practice becomes too bureaucratic, the central space, the 'heart' of social work, is lost." Only when a working relationship is established does the work become person-centred. The working relationship in supervision is useful above all because it provides a safe space for dialogue (with an agreement to work together) and offers the supervisee support that is in line with contemporary social work paradigms, based on the presentation of the situation. The working relationship enables and facilitates the process of support for the supervisee because it protects the conversation so that the support can be explored and co-created.

Chart 2: The supervision process in the working relationship.



Source: Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2009.

Let us take a closer look at what the different elements of the working relationship mean in the supervision process.

### *Supervision agreement*

The basis for working in the supervision process is the supervision agreement, as an etiquette for cooperation. We cannot begin supervision without a clear agreement about how we want to work together, what we expect of ourselves and others, how our meetings will be conducted, what we want to happen, how we will let others know that we are not doing well, and what we want to achieve in the meetings. The first meeting of the group therefore always serves as an introduction to get to know each other and to agree on how we will work together. It allows the group to get to know each other, set out their expectations and define personal and group goals (these should be recorded in the agreement). The agreement of co-creation is, last but not least, the supervisor's work obligation, which is defined in the *Rules on Planning, Monitoring and Conducting Supervision of Professional Work in the Field of Social Welfare* (2003). Article 14 of the Rules states that supervision starts with the signing of a tripartite agreement (between the employer, the supervisor and the members of the supervision team). The draft agreement was drawn up by the Social Chamber of Slovenia.

The agreement thus means that both parties, the supervisor and the supervisee, have rights and also obligations – the supervisor in relation to the client and the group members. The agreement obliges the signatories to observe the ethical principles of the profession for the duration of the agreement. This is the only way to ensure a safe environment for each individual group member (Milošević Arnold, 2004; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Thomson, 2013; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014). The agreement can be made at the first meeting and is valid until the last meeting. However, it is recommended that the agreement should not be fixed, so that it can be amended if the group recognises that additions to the agreement are needed.

The agreement in the initial meeting includes two important aspects, namely the unambiguous, written agreement (which is usually very familiar to all social work supervisors, as it was presented in the book *Znanje za ravnanje [Know-How]* by Milošević Arnold, Vodeb-Bonač, Erzar and Možina, 1999) and the unconditional, unsigned agreement (Schaife, 2009), which is non-binding but very important for establishing a working relationship as it allows for the concept of co-creation.

A formal agreement is thus necessary (Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014, p. 26):

- write down basic practical aspects (where and when meetings will take place, who will send meeting reminders, what the cancellation procedure is, when the summer holidays will be, plans for the end of the agreement, etc.)
- explain the structure of the supervision process (how many people will be present, what will happen with new members, what work people are doing, what we as supervisors expect supervisees to do, how they should present cases, how they should write down reflections, when they should send reflections, whether we will record the meetings, etc.),
- discuss ethics in supervision (presentation of codes of ethics, how to use names in reflections, the issue of dual roles, etc.),
- set goals at both personal and group levels.

In general, I can write that the agreement includes two aspects: organisational (where and when the meetings will take place, the

duration of the meeting, what the content of the meetings, will we record the meetings and who is the signatory of this agreement) and professional (the purpose of the supervision and the goals that the supervisees want to achieve both on a personal and group level, with a clear message that it will take effort to achieve this) (Field and Brown, 2010, p. 69).

The so-called implicit agreement (Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014, p. 28) plays an important role in establishing a collaborative agreement. It involves talking about expectations so that they do not remain “unspoken”. I myself always start agreements with expectations so that I know what expectations the supervisees have going into the supervision process. I ask all group members to say something about their expectations. The expectations are very different because the groups are also different. So, some people come to supervision with no expectations or even with the conviction that they have nothing more to learn. I can not offer them much; I can only evaluate their work and learn from them. Others come more cautiously and do not know exactly what to expect. Still others, come full of expectations, with good experiences from previous supervision processes, and they know what they want. It is therefore important to talk about what the supervisees expect in the meetings. I use this as a basis for co-creating content: how can I support them and what can they expect from me as their supervisor.

Supervision is always collaborative. It allows the supervisor to contribute their own competences and, through reflection, to explore what is still untapped knowledge. Together, in dialogue with the supervisee, we co-create the content. Research on supervision processes has shown that this part is even more important than the formal agreement, as it is the beginning of joint work and co-creation. This part is where we include a discussion about these elements:

- Expectations: as supervisors, we need to be very clear about what we expect from our supervisees and at the same time be prepared for them to tell us how they see our role. Is it the role of teacher, expert, dictator, parent or confessor (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012)? What are their expectations and perceptions of what successful supervision is? Here it is also appropriate to ask about what has helped them in the past.

- The work methods we use as supervisors. In this section, we explain where we were trained as supervisors, where we were supervised, which supervision model we use and how the supervision process works.
- Experience from previous supervisions: invite supervisees to share their experiences from previous supervisions, what they liked, what they would like to do again and what they would rather not do in a supervision session.
- Differences: discuss gender, age, professional, social and cultural differences.
- Learning styles: ask supervisees how they learn best and present your preferred learning style (Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014, p. 26–29).

Agreement is always an integral part of all meetings. However, agreements, both formal and informal, can change if we want to respond flexibly to supervision situations, which is why Brigid Proctor (2008, p. 55) suggests that supervision is a space where we respond to actual situations that are happening here and now. The author illustrates a possible way of agreement by using five Russian babushkas, which she calls *Russian Frogs*, to illustrate the essence of agreement. She believes that an encounter is made up of several agreements. The first is the *umbrella agreement* (the largest, outer babushka), which defines and sets the basis for all the other agreements. The umbrella agreement includes the responsibilities of the supervisor, the supervisee and the organisation. This is followed by a slightly smaller babushka, which represents the *group agreement* that defines the rules of the group, the responsibilities of both the supervisor and the group members. An even smaller babushka represents the *meeting agreement*, which is based on the group's agreement and is a plan of the meeting, how the meeting will proceed both in terms of content and timing. The author believes that what has already been agreed does not need to be agreed every time. However, it is important to agree on the priorities for the meeting and what will be discussed. The smallest babushka represents the heart of supervision, a space for reflection and engagement with the concrete case.

The author calls the last babushka the “shadow babushka”. She believes that it illustrates the ongoing decision-making about changes to the content of the meeting, as in supervision meetings it is sometimes necessary to make quick decisions that affect the course of the meeting. The author refers to these decisions as “minute-to-minute” decisions. The essence of these decisions is that each member has the opportunity for reflection, which is the most important part of supervision (Proctor, 2008, p. 55).

So there are several possible forms of agreement. Both formal and informal, and also those that arise in the process itself. The structure of the agreement is of course a matter for the supervisor, but it is important that the agreement exists as a formal form of cooperation and is signed by all participants involved. It is important that there is an agreement because it is also a formal commitment to cooperation. According to Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012), every agreement should include a statement of the supervision approach used and the underlying objectives of the supervision.

Regardless of the form or final shape of the agreement, I would like to point out that the content of the agreement is more important than the form itself. Of course, I agree with the authors (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012) that the agreement also describes the purpose of the supervision, but even more important than the purpose are the personal goals that the supervisees set for themselves in the process of working together. The main purpose of the agreement is to articulate the goals that the supervisee wants to achieve in the supervision process, both on a personal level and on a group level. The supervisor should ensure that the supervisees set clear, measurable and achievable goals when making the agreement.

### *Goal setting as a necessary part of the supervision agreement*

To assess whether the supervision process has been successful and whether it has brought about any changes, we can do this by reviewing the goals that the supervisees have set themselves. The research by Petra Videmšek (2019), who reviewed the agreements, shows that the majority of supervisees accept the agreement (89%) in the form prepared by the Social Chamber or as presented by Vida Mi-

lošević Arnold, Marta Vodeb Bonač, Doris Erzar and Miran Možina (1999), while eleven per cent of supervisees are willing to accept the supervisor's personal leadership style.

A review of the agreements that included goals (not all did) showed that many of the goals were too vague and intangible. Supervisees very often set very general goals, e.g. *"I would like to be a better practitioner"*, *"I would like to be as flexible as possible in my work"*, *"I would like to get along better with my colleagues"*, *"I would like to be more assertive"*, *"I would like to be able to set boundaries"*, *"I would like to be a good team worker"*. Or they may have very lofty goals, e.g. *"I want to create a service that responds to people's needs"*, *"I want to speed up the processing of cases"*, *"I want to achieve clarity in conversations to reduce stress"*. Of course, there is nothing wrong with having general or lofty goals. However, it is important to specify and discuss these general goals. Talking about goals is no different than asking questions as a manager: *"What do you want to add?"*, *"What do you want to do first?"*, *"How will this help achieve the goal?"*, *"What will be different for you then?"*, *"How will you feel the difference, will it make a difference in the organisation?"*.

In the supervision process, there are two types of goals for the desired cooperation, namely long-term (the ultimate goal, e.g. getting a new job) and short-term (e.g. learning to set a boundary). With long-term goals, it is important to break them down into several smaller, short-term goals so that we can follow the path to achieving the goal and not get lost in the feeling that we are not achieving anything. When developing goals, the line manager often asks questions such as: How will you know if you are succeeding? What needs to happen for us to know that you are on the right track to achieve your goals? How will I as the supervisor, and the other group members recognise that this is the case?

Regardless of whether the goals are long-term or short-term, it is important that they are as precise, concrete and achievable as possible. We need steps in planning the path to the goal: how will I reach the end goal, what do I have to do to make it happen?

The practice of supervision has shown that well-formulated goals help supervisees recognise the importance of supervision and the impact of supervision on their work. Research on the impact

of good supervision (Hughes, 2010) and my own experiences with supervision processes (Videmšek, 2019) show that well-formulated goals have many positive effects.

### *What are well-defined goals in supervision?*

Supervision is a process in which each individual enters with goals, so it is not unimportant how they are written down and set. Various authors (Berg and Miller, 1992; Nelson and Thomas, 2007; Mantell and Scragg, 2019) have defined what well-defined goals are, which can support us in making agreements. According to Thorona Nelson and Frank Thomas (2007, p. 17–18), well-formulated goals are those that are personally meaningful to the supervisee, set in context, positively oriented, focused on first steps rather than the end goal, and are measurable, achievable, and realistic.

When formulating supervision goals, it is therefore important to be as specific as possible. Specific goals are more effective than general ones such as “I will do my best” or not setting any goals at all. An effective goal clearly indicates what is needed to achieve it. This means that the goal must also be measurable.

Goals should be progressive. Progression (the ladder to achieving goals) is motivating because we see the results of our efforts, it gives us hope that we are making progress. This keeps our commitment and willingness for the work strong. Progression is also an effective safeguard against burnout. It makes us feel competent. Progression allows us to see progress and at the same time gives us an instrument to monitor the achievement of goals. Questions such as “*Where are you on this journey?*”, “*Where are you in the process?*”, “*What if I asked my expert by experience, what would they say?*” are useful here. The supervisor thus guides the supervisee towards the first steps and helps them to see where they are, what still needs to be done, what they are still thinking about, what would be the first, small steps, etc.

We need to be clear about our goals and in particular how to achieve them. One of the main reasons why a supervisee may not achieve a goal is that they do not have clear strategies to achieve the goal and may also have unclear expectations of the supervisor and

other members on where they can be supported in achieving the goal.

Goals should be modest and manageable. The supervisor must define the amount of time needed to achieve the goal, e.g. improving their relationship with colleagues. They can help themselves by asking questions: how will you know that things are now different (focus on behaviour), or what would you like to be different, what would you like to change in the behaviour of others or within the system. This does not mean, of course, that the goals should not be challenging. But they should still be realistic. According to Thorona Nelson and Frank Thomas (2007), challenging goals inspire individuals to make a real effort. The same cannot be said of goals that do not challenge the individual. The higher the goal, the harder the individual will work to achieve it. However, it is important to emphasise that goals should not be set too high, as this could discourage the individual from achieving them in the first place. It is therefore important that the goals are high, yet realistic.

Well-formulated goals are those that contain a self-belief in the need to work hard. This communicates that a goal is a complex thing, that it requires time, space and support, and that it also requires the support of the context to make it happen. Well-formulated goals are those that are positive, as Thorona Nelson and Frank Thomas (2007) have stated. The best goals are those that focus on what we are good at and what we can be supportive of. A positive orientation allows the individual to focus on success rather than failure.

Insoo Kim Berg and Scott D. Miller (1992, p. 32–44) list seven characteristics of well-formulated goals:

- they are important to the individual and will benefit them personally, they are modest enough to be achieved,
- they are concrete, specific and describe behaviour, as this is the only way to evaluate progress,
- we talk about what is, rather than what is not,
- focus on the beginning, not the end (focus on how we will begin to reach the goal, not on how everything will end),
- are achievable and attainable for the individual,
- they are based on the knowledge that hard work will be required.

Andy Mantell and Terry Scragg (2019, p. 9) introduce the acronym SMART, which can be used to create clear goals. Goals should therefore be as *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic* and *Timely* as possible.

As I have shown, goals are an important part of the agreement and a prelude to the collaborative supervision process. Often the goal-setting stage takes two meetings. There is nothing wrong with that. It is better to take the time to have clear discussions and well-defined goals than to rush into the second stage. Research (Videmšek, 2019) has shown that some supervisors suggest that supervisees write down the goals at home and then attach them to the agreement. It is important to note that if these goals are written down at home, it is a good idea to present them to the group so that both the supervisor and the other members of the group can hear and know the goals that the supervisee has set for themselves.

Once we have a cooperation agreement, we move on to the second element of the working relationship. This is the instrumental definition of the situation with a clear supervision question. The whole process is based on a personal relationship and commitment, and is clearly oriented towards the desired outcome: an increase in the competence of the supervisee.

*The supervision question as an instrumental definition:  
defining the situation*

The basic working content of supervision is the case (supervision material) that the supervisor prepares for the session. According to Sonja Žorga (2002, p. 31), the material for group work should be as accurate a description as possible of the supervisee's concrete practical experience. It does not have to be a problem, it can just be an event that we are not sure how we handled, or an event where we did very well contrary to our expectations and we do not know exactly why. A record of the dialogue that took place is also desirable. This can be a recording or a transcript of the recording of the event, it can also be a video recording. The more detailed the description, the easier it is for the supervisor and the members of the supervision team to orientate themselves. The supervision case must be topical.

In supervision, we work in the present and do not stop and get stuck in the past. The past is a trap that is safe because you are exploring in retrospect, but you cannot change. The key to supervision work in social work is the opposite. We are with the individual here and now, in the present. The past is merely a resource to help the supervisor find the desired outcomes and to see what we have done that has worked or not worked.

The supervisor comes to the meeting with their own presentation of the work situation, which Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2005) refers to as the instrumental definition of the problem. The instrumental definition, as presented by the supervisor, provides the framework for cooperation in the supervision. In the instrumental definition of the problem, the supervisor invites the other members of the supervision group to contribute to the process with their own view of the case presented. The most important thing in the instrumental definition is a clear formulation of the supervision question, the dilemma that the supervisor wishes to address. The individual often has many questions. It is the supervisor's task to ask the supervisee to first formulate a clear question, possibly also on the basis of additional dialogue. Otherwise, it will be difficult for both the supervisor and the other group members to contribute solutions in solving the situation.

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2018) believes that supervision is delicate work that requires time, perseverance and patience. In a supervision meeting, both the supervisor and the members of the supervision group help the supervisee to put together a new jigsaw puzzle of the event, to look at it from a new perspective and to say what the event means to them, where they need support for the next steps. What they have presented, what they have told the group, what they need to work on in the future, what they no longer need and what they can leave in the past. In this way, the supervisor only takes what helps them, what makes sense for them, what supports them, and not what cannot be changed. This part is often rewritten at the end, during the evaluation of the meeting, and written down in the reflection after the meeting.

Well-prepared material and a clear supervision question allow the supervisor and the group to better express their opinions, pre-

sent their viewpoint and guide the supervisor in the choice of working method.

### *Supervision analysis: how to make sense of the experience*

Supervision analysis in social work always starts with what the supervisee has already done to resolve the situation (rather than what they have not done). The basic guideline is to work from a strengths perspective, as we want the supervisee to come out of the supervision process with more strength, not less, and to use the questions as a source of support for what they have already tried, but it has not worked. Supervision analysis in social work supervision focuses on what works (description) rather than what it means (explanation).

Supervision analysis allows the supervisor to reflect on their work. It is not based on the most concrete experience of the situation presented. It is useful to ask questions such as: what are you relying on, what ideas did you have when you acted as you did, did what you expected materialise, if you think about it now, what more could you have done, how would you have acted? At the same time, the analysis is an opportunity for the supervisor to hear from the other members of the group how they see the situation, how they would act or have acted if they had been in a similar situation, etc. The situation presented is always analysed through reflection, which is a process. The basis for reflection is the concrete context or the understanding of this context, the work experience. Alenka Kobolt and Antonija Žižak (2010, p. 170) argue that reflection in supervision is not accidental, but that it is stimulated and encouraged because it serves to recognise what was previously hidden or hastily overlooked. In this way, we recognise that it would have been or is possible to act differently. When analysing changes, sophisticated methods are used by the supervisor to trigger a change or the learning process.

### *Encouragement to take new steps: courage to find new paths*

Supervision is about discovering something new, something we didn't know before the meeting. This discovery is made possible by the reflection that the supervisor conducts in dialogue with the supervisee and through which the supervisee comes to new insights.

Lilja Cajvert (2001) argues that this is a creative process in which the supervisee is given the opportunity to reflect on themselves and their part in the processes of interaction with an expert by experience. The aim of supervision is for the supervisee to recognise, uniquely, their own style, and to be able to choose the way they act in the encounter with the user. Supervision is therefore a process that promotes reflection and the development of competence (Cajvert, 2001).

Participation in the supervision conversation is based on the strengths perspective of the supervisee. In all models of supervision, we have to believe in the strength and competence of the professional (Nilson and Thomas, 2007), we are the companions in their learning process and we believe in their personal growth and professional development. A very simple encouragement, just a “well done”, can go a long way in making the supervisee more enthusiastic and more confident in taking their first steps.

The working relationship in supervision is a particular feature of supervision in social work. Within supervision processes, we also take into account the fundamental concepts of the social work profession, especially the working relationship (Čačinovič Vogrničič, 2009) and the strengths perspective, which underpins the paradigmatic shift from failure to learning from positive outcomes.

The way supervision works in social work is unique. It is certainly the work of Vida Milošević Arnold and other pioneers of supervision in social work, Doris Erzar, Marta Vodeb Bonač and Majda Golja (Milošević Arnold, 2017), who are most responsible for its development. They brought the Dutch model of supervision to Slovenia, which is based on experiential professional learning (Kolb, 1984a) and the concept of non-directive (Rogers, 1969, 1980), supervisee-centred work. The above-mentioned authors laid the foundation for supervision in social work in Slovenia.

The changes were certainly influenced by Sonja Bouwkamp's lecture in 1995 as part of training and supervision in experiential family therapy (Čačinovič Vogrničič and Mešl, 2019, p. 69). As a supervisor, Gabi Čačinovič Vogrničič insisted on the language of social work and introduced therapeutic working methods into social work, adapting them to the behaviour and work of social workers. Also in supervision.

In England, where supervision is regularly practised and statutory, the concept is virtually unknown and the group supervision approach is rarely used. In England, where an individual approach (often including *ad hoc* supervision) is mostly practised, some work settings even have two supervision sessions (Munro, 2011; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014; Hunt, 2019). Interviews with supervisors revealed that one supervision focuses on process management and leadership. They focus on whether practitioners have completed the tasks, where they stopped on a particular task and what their next task is. They are not at all focused on what else the supervisor has thought about, where they see a solution, what they would like to do differently, nor on the emotions, how the person felt, what else they are thinking about, what else they could do. Although their basic supervision material is casework, as in Slovenia, then the process is a bit different. The supervisor asks questions and focuses on the completion of the task, so they ask and check whether the supervisee has done anything, whether they have anticipated a certain situation, etc. There is no co-creation in this relationship and, as it is individual supervision, there are no other perspectives (personal interview, Cambridge, 24 April 2019). Researchers (Munro, 2011; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014) add that there is a growing recognition of the need for additional, second supervision that focuses on the content as well as on what others think about the case presented.

Based on observations and interviews with a number of supervisors in England conducted between April and July 2019, I can better understand the claims of various authors (Munro, 2011; Wonnacott, 2012; Howe and Gray, 2013, Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014) who argue that social workers need two supervisions. One focuses on management (the supervisor is the supervisee) and the other on developing the supervisee, their thinking (encouraging them to think critically about their work) and supporting the supervisee's new ways of working. The advantage of individual, managerial supervision, as defined by law and implemented in practice, is that the supervisor is available to the practitioner (at least once a month), and practitioners who are just starting their careers even receive supervision once a week. Practitioners receive supervision, but

the question arises as to whether this is supervision at all or rather a review of how tasks are carried out.

As a result of all the above, there are also increasing initiatives in England to introduce group supervision and a new way of working that encourages critical reflection on practice (Munro, 2011; Howe and Gray, 2013; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014).

## Summary

In this chapter, I wanted to show how in social work we have developed our own supervision, which has been informed by other professions but has nevertheless taken its own path of co-creation, as is typical of the social work profession.

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2008) points out that supervision in social work is co-created in the working relationship. There is no other effective way: a supervisor who builds and nurtures a working relationship to create opportunities for dialogue that leads to change to improve the supervisee's work and professional growth simultaneously creates a framework for an experience of co-creation between all participants. And it is co-creation that also represents a departure from traditional working methods in supervision processes and brings about a change in the relationship between all those involved in the process. The supervisor is no longer in the role of the one who has all the answers and is expected to find solutions to the situations presented by the supervisee, but their central role is to guide the conversation and create a space of exploration for what is not yet known, accepted or articulated. The working relationship in supervision ensures that supervisees always leave supervision sessions feeling more rather than less empowered, with new insights that they can try out in practice, or with the realisation that what they are doing is meaningful and worth continuing. This is the fundamental task of supervision.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# REFLECTION AS A LEARNING PROCESS IN SUPERVISION

As an active science that is constantly changing and responding to people's changing needs, social work requires social workers to continuously learn and strive for personal and professional development. Harry Ferguson (2005, p. 781) argues that effective social work practice requires social workers to know more than just the basic methods of practice. They need an approach to work that will enable them to reflect on the work they have done for their professional development, to build good relationships with people with personal experiences of distress who use social care services and, not least, to be able to cope with the most challenging situations they encounter in working with people.

The ability to reflect is a key competence that a practitioner needs in order to know what they are doing and how they are doing it. Reflection is thinking about a particular event or experience that has happened and gives rise to new knowledge, a new perspective that is gained as a result of this process (Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014). Reflection also makes sense of our relationship to the profession and the service where we work. But this does not in itself mean a change in our professional behaviour. Reflection alone does not guarantee change and that we will be good practitioners. For that, we need reflective practice (Bolton, 2010).

Melanie Jasper (2003, p. 3) considers reflective practice as a concept for learning. Linda Bruce (2013, p. 32) adds that it is only when reflection (thinking, awareness, new insights) is transferred into practice that it becomes reflective. Reflective practice expresses our relationship to reflection and the experiences we have gained in order to put them into practice.

It is a circular process, turning theory into practice and practice into theory. The basic position of reflective practice is that, in addition to putting theories into practice, we also contribute to the creation of new theories and other forms of knowledge. Supervision is therefore a practice where the transition from reflection to reflective practice is facilitated. Sue Thompson and Niel Thompson (2008) summarise that the essence of practice is a process in which the supervisee consciously uses knowledge to guide their work and make their work even more transparent (Thompson and Thompson, 2008, p. 12). The idea is very simple: we learn by reflecting on things that happen to us, and through reflection we can see these in a different way and test these new insights in practice. This allows the supervisees to take new steps and actions. The main purpose of reflection is for the supervisee to gain a new understanding, a new insight and knowledge about their own experience. Only these new insights enable them to find new possible solutions to the situation (Bruce, 2013, p. 33; also Knott and Scragg, 2007).

A key element in supervision is reflection: practitioners reflect on their experiences and learn from them in order to understand and build on them. A review of the literature on reflection reveals the theoretical framework that has facilitated this learning process. However, with the regular use of reflection, the competences of the supervisees also change and the reflection on the experience becomes more complex and in-depth. I could write that through reflection, practitioners move from exploring what they do, through what they feel about the work, to how they contribute to change. The emotional process is enhanced by critical reflection, which focuses on rejecting what is unacceptable.

## The importance of reflection in supervision

Reflection enables the transfer of what Michael Polanyi has called “tacit expert knowledge”. He wrote that we know much more than we say (Polanyi, 1967, p. 4). This fact seems very obvious, but it is difficult to say what exactly it means. Polanyi coined the term “tacit knowledge” and described it using the example of face recognition:

if we know the face of an individual, we can recognise it in a crowd of thousands, even millions of people, but we still cannot say exactly how we recognise the face we know. So this knowledge cannot be articulated.

Since this cannot be put into words, the author makes a link between so-called *tacit* and *objective* knowledge, tacit knowledge being a distinctly personal form, referring to personal judgements, ideas and values, whereas objective knowledge is that which can be expressed in words and numbers, data, manuals, and thus becomes transferable (Polanyi, 1967, p. 20).

Donald A. Schön (1991) considers reflection to be a higher level of *learning*. Through reflection, we can learn to understand (even criticise) our tacit knowledge, which we have acquired through repetition and as a specific practice, and we can make new sense of a situation of uncertainty or uniqueness that we have experienced.

Reflection, as used in supervision, is a retrospective activity (Mantell and Scragg, 2019, p. 8) that allows us to benefit from what we have overlooked in the past. It is, of course, a privilege of sorts, allowing us to be aware of what is happening while we are here, it means looking back at where we have been and what has been, and it is an invitation and reflection on what we would like to have been different, and it means planning the steps we will take to achieve this. It is a reflection on what is not yet there, what the desired outcomes are, and an invitation to try out new insights in practice. And that is what makes supervision in social work so special.

Reflection is, therefore, the basic way of working in supervision processes, through which the supervisor recognises the important steps people with personal experiences of distress take in their daily practice and gains insight into what more they could do, so it is not surprising that many definitions of supervision include the term reflection, regardless of when this definition emerged (Kadushin, 1985; Milošević Arnold, 1999; Kobolt and Žorga 2000; Kobolt 2002, 2004; Ajduković and Cajvert, 2004; Kobolt and Žižak, 2010; Wonnacott, 2014).

Hank Hanekamp (1993) wrote:

Supervision is a directed, circular learning process in which the supervisee develops their professional identity by using and re-

flecting on their experiences in order to develop their personal relationship to the profession.

Alenka Kobolt (1995, p. 16) presents supervision as an open reflection on one's own professional action, based on communication that is symmetrical and non-evaluative and non-judgmental. Through supervision, the individual becomes aware of their thoughts and feelings in the profession, recognises their behavioural strategies and thus opens up ways to make conscious choices to change their work.

Marina Ajduković and Liljana Cajvert (2004) argue:

Supervision is a process and a creative space that enables the development of the practitioner, who reflects on their work and learns from their experiences, seeking their own solutions to the situations they encounter at work.

Vida Milošević Arnold (2009) adds:

Supervision is a process in which learning takes place as a specific process. This specificity means that through supervision we do not learn in the traditional way, but by reflecting on our own experiences at work and comparing them with those of others. This is also the most effective way of learning.

Jane Wonnacott (2012, p. 13) defines supervision as a challenge for practitioners to reflect on their work in order to expand the boundaries of their professional practice.

Alenka Kobolt and Antonija Žižak (2010, p. 170) argue that reflection in supervision is not accidental, it is encouraged and nurtured, as it is used to identify what was previously hidden under a veil or hastily overlooked. In doing so, we realise that it would be possible or is possible to act differently.

Gillie Bolton (2010, p. 3) argues that reflection is the basis for responsible ethical practice, as it encourages us to reflect on our assumptions, dangerous biases, inequalities and our responses that may unconsciously lead us to marginalise those with less power (also Thompson and Thompson, 2008; Ruch, 2009; Taylor, 2010).

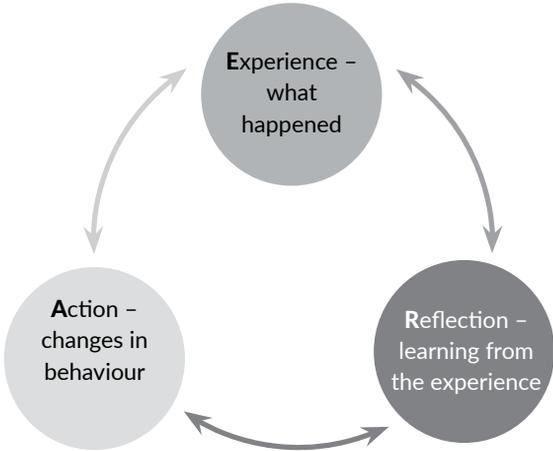
These few selected quotes explain the dimension of reflection in supervision. From the definitions, we can see that supervision is

a process, a learning process. This takes place while analysing the experience. The process also involves a relationship that can take place between the supervisor, the supervisee and the other members of the group. What is special about this relationship is that it is based on a dialogue in which this learning takes place. The learning is established with a view to the personal and professional growth of the supervisor, but it is mainly focused on empowering the expert by experience.

Niel Thompson (1995, p. 276) has written that the first task of reflection is for the practitioner to “unlearn” what has been learned. He explained the need for “unlearning” by the fact that discriminatory and oppressive attitudes become internalised in the process of socialisation, and in order to deal with them, it is necessary to “unlearn” a good deal of the ideas, beliefs and assumptions that have so far influenced our work and our interactions. This requires a certain degree of self-reflection and can put us under a lot of pressure.

A review of the literature (Hanekamp, 1994; Ajdukovič and Cajver, 2004; Wonnacott, 2014; Kobolt and Žižak, 2010; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000; Milošević Arnold, 1999) shows that the theoretical explanations and understanding of reflection have been influenced by different scientific disciplines (philosophy, sociology, pedagogy, psychology), which have shown that people can learn from experience through the circular model of ERA. The ERA model is an acronym for *Experience – Reflection – Action*. Here, experience means a situation and a view of what happened, reflection allows supervisees to learn from that experience, and action means a change of behaviour, a response to the newly acquired knowledge.

Chart 3: The ERA learning cycle.



Source: Sicora (2017, p. 8).

The search for the origins of reflection in supervision processes, therefore, leads to theories of learning,<sup>26</sup> initially developed by the educator and philosopher John Dewey (1933), known as the master of reflection and theories of experiential learning. He believed that the basis for learning is experience, and that reflection on this experience makes learning possible. Experience alone is not enough to bring about change. He also stressed that we can only learn when we are personally involved in the learning process, and not just by observing someone else in the process. John Dewey explored the use of everyday experiences as potential resources for learning. He was particularly interested in the link between what we do and what happens, what consequences these actions have for the individual and others as a result of these actions. As early as 1933, he wrote that people only begin to learn and reflect when a particular thing needs to be corrected. He even pointed out that reflection is useful when something goes wrong and we need to solve a problem or situation. He also stressed that we learn most from experiences that challenge us. In his view, doubt and uncertainty are the basic elements for

---

<sup>26</sup> More has been written about learning theories in Chapter 1.

effective reflection. John Dewey (1933) defined reflection as an ongoing process rather than a single event, a single challenge that an individual faces. To this end, he formulated a spiral of the learning process that involved having an experience, reflecting on that experience, conceptualising that experience (thinking about possible solutions) and how we can use this new information in the future (our reflection and summaries of what we will do differently next time), and trying out that experience (trying something new).

John Dewey (1938a, b) believed that learning is the result of reflection on our experience, which contributes to professional development. The learning spiral (which is continuously rotating) ensures that a practitioner who takes time to reflect can build on existing knowledge, values and skills in the light of learning from their experience. His work is also important because he argued that without reflection, our practice becomes “habitual and mechanical”. And it is this process of learning through experience that has most characterised the processes of supervision. If we want to learn, we first need to reflect on our previous experiences and then learn from them. It is also true of social work that social work practice is not mostly learned from a book, but by trying it out in a practical context, with concrete people and with concrete challenges that people face.

Reflection in supervision has certainly been most influenced by the work of the philosopher and educator Donald A. Schön (1983).<sup>27</sup> He too was interested in how individuals learn from experience, but he was particularly interested in the knowledge that we practitioners have to make the “right decisions” in such diverse situations (ibid., p. 54). The author drew attention to the difference between what knowledge is developed by academics and how this knowledge is then used in practice by practitioners. He argued, as Michael Polanyi (1967) had done before him, that “practitioners know much more than they can articulate” (Schön, 1991, p. 51). Our knowledge is everyday, tacit knowledge, embedded in our patterns of practice and in our sense of the work we do on a daily basis. Therefore, he says that our knowledge is in our actions (1991, p. 49). He wrote that

---

<sup>27</sup> The author's work *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* from 1983 is arguably still the most cited text on reflection in the social work profession and remains an important legacy today, 41 years later.

people and professionals alike think a lot every day. Our reflection on this is often the result of a moment of surprise. Through reflection, we return to the experience and the knowledge we have used in doing so. In doing so, we can ask ourselves, for example: what was the gesture I noticed when I perceived this thing? What were the criteria I used to make my decision? What procedures do I follow when I perform these skills? How do I visualise the problem I want to solve?

Donald A. Schön (1983, p. 49) used reflection to encourage practitioners to reflect on what they do (even while they are doing it). To this end, he developed and promoted two types of reflection, namely “*reflection on action*” and “*reflection in action*”. He argues that reflection is the art of dealing with situations of uncertainty, instability, particularities and conflicts of values that practitioners sometimes encounter (Schön, 1991, p. 50). He stressed the need to develop a close relationship between so-called “idealised” theory and real practice in order to see what practitioners actually do. He thus began to develop reflection to make the tacit knowledge of practitioners heard. He wanted the knowledge that practitioners use in their work to be seen and heard by others. Everything, so that the effective ways of doing things do not just remain with the practitioner.<sup>28</sup>

Supervision is a working method that facilitates the learning process in and for the profession of social work. Reflection is an essential element in this learning process, as it encourages reflection on change. It is a context for learning from personal experience. Vida Milošević Arnold (2009) argues that supervision is always a mapping of practice, as it addresses concrete experiences from the supervisee’s working environment. However, the treatment of practical experience takes place at a new, higher level and, of course, in a different context. This means that in the supervision process, we reflect on something that has already been seen and done, but we want to change. The purpose of such reflection is to translate experience into knowledge, which is more than just reflecting on practice. The advantage, of course, is that we can look at the experience from a distance. According to Nina Mešl (2008), reflection

---

<sup>28</sup> See also Kodele and Mešl (2015).

is the ability to look back on a process, to see it in a new light, to articulate one's own behaviour and attitudes in it, to remember key events and interactions, to retain the encounter in memory, and to arrive at a wholeness for oneself and for others. Through reflection, the supervisor learns what a particular experience means to them, what they were able to learn from it, and they can compare it with the experiences of other participants.

The special feature of reflection in social work supervision is that we do not focus on the past. It helps us to think about what could have been different. The key question is what our next steps will be, what we would like to achieve and what we need to make these changes happen. All this in the light of social work, which is based on the search for the possibility of something new and is oriented towards the future. Supervision is a space where the supervisee says, understands, reflects and creates what is not yet there. Through reflection, they gain a different perspective on the situation, as the rest of the group tells how they themselves act in similar situations, what else is possible, and the supervisor then chooses whether they can apply any of what they have been told to their own practice.

Reflection in supervision is therefore not just about looking at what was, but about trying something new, and it is not surprising that Sue Thompson and Niel Thompson (2008) have built on Donald A. Schön's (1983) model of reflection by adding a new, additional step to his model of understanding reflection as a continuous process during or after the act itself. They suggest (Thompson and Thompson, 2008, p. 140) that as practitioners we need to reflect on reflection after action. This means that the practitioner reflects not only during the action itself, and not only after they have done something, but also after they have introduced new steps into their work. This is a crucial step for social work as it makes reflection a reflective practice. Given that the authors are social workers, it is not surprising that they have developed and promoted this practice in social work.

The verification of these changes and the usefulness of reflection happens again and again in supervision meetings, as the supervisor checks with the supervisee how they have incorporated the new knowledge they have gained in the last supervision meeting into

their practice. This gives the supervisee the opportunity to reflect on the change they have made in their practice, while at the same time seeing the sense of reflection and the imparting of the so-called tacit knowledge of all those involved in the supervision process. In this way, as Vida Milošević Arnold (2009, p. 3) writes, “supervision becomes a meeting point of theoretical knowledge and practical experience”, and reflection becomes a reflective practice (Thompson and Thompson, 2008).

Reflection *on action* (to use Schön’s literal translation) allows us to learn from actions that have already been done (these can be either mistakes or successes), while the second type of reflection, which Schön promoted as reflection *in action*, is based on the fact that the mistake does not happen at all. That is, reflection while doing and analysing our work while doing itself. This mode of reflection is very demanding and challenging, especially when strong emotions are involved and when interactions take place in intimate relationships. Donald A. Schön (1983, p. 31) argues that it is a dialogue between thinking and doing at the same time, to be more visible about the practitioner’s work. According to him, the knowledge held by practitioners can be understood in two ways: as a separate activity, as *knowing in action*, or as *reflection in action*.

The elaboration of experiential knowledge is based on the supervisee’s prior understanding of how they as individuals shape and perceive the situation and implies a willingness to face multiple possibilities and different perspectives on the situation. Donald A. Schön (1983) presented the reflective practitioner as an artist who is able to capture the world from different sides, and at the same time to draw a suitable solution that will suit only them.

By putting knowledge, experience and knowledge into practice, reflection can give us new opportunities to build on our personal and professional knowledge. Schön, like John Dewey before him, argued that we learn most from the so-called “elements of surprise” (1987, p. 26; 1991, p. 56), which lead the individual to reflect on experience. We reflect on those experiences where things did not go as planned or where we did not achieve the desired expectations. It is only when we realise that our action has surprised us, when something we did not want to happen has happened, that we can

respond by reflecting on that action. Such a process of reflection thus focuses on the effects of our actions, on the action itself and on the intuitive knowledge that characterised the event. Schön pointed out that we always have two options: either we ignore the experience and do not reflect on it, trying to avoid it, or we reflect and learn (either during the action itself or afterwards). He also added that reflection is based on personal theories and the supervisor's wisdom. A review of recent literature on reflection (Moon, 2004; Thompson and Thompson 2008; Bolton, 2010; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016) adds another perspective to understanding reflection, namely the importance of emotions in the experience. Emotions are an integral part of social work practice, and it is important to talk about them specifically.

### *Reflection on emotions*

Matthew Gibson (2019) has written that there is a long history of researching and theorising about emotions in social work, as they are an integral part of practice (Miller, 1969; Fraser et al, 1999; Ferguson, 2005; Morrison, 2007; Ingram, 2013). What has not received enough attention in the past is the exploration of what the role of emotions is and how they impact practice (Gibson, 2019, p. 9). Clarke and colleagues (2015) show that despite the awareness of the importance of emotions in social work practice, this is the most overlooked topic. The reason for this is seen in the fact that emotions conflict with the function of social workers (Clarke et al., 2015). Furthermore, social workers are expected to be able to deal with their emotions on different levels, both in relation to their colleagues because of the personal experiences they are confronted with on a daily basis, as well as in relation to their superiors, in relation to others and, last but not least, in relation to themselves. This is because it is assumed that this is part of a professional image and competence.

Social work is a relational profession, so emotions play an important role in practice interactions. Social workers experience a wide range of emotions in their working relationships. David Howe (2008,) wrote that social workers most often experience high levels

of stress, especially when they have to suppress their emotions and act contrary to what they are feeling. Everyday social work is so fraught with emotional content, and it is important that practitioners have the opportunity to reflect and look critically at emotional responses in practice, as this is the only way to help people with multiple challenges to move forward.

The work of David Boud and David Walker (1998) has played an important role in the development of reflection in supervision. The authors have built on the understanding of reflection in supervision by emphasising the importance of emotions in the experience. They argue that reflection that does not include the emotions that the practitioners are experiencing at the time of the event is the biggest obstacle to learning because emotions are always involved in professional work. Emotions are a means of translating external events into personal expressions. And wrongly, our emotions often guide our reactions to an event.

David Boud and David Walker (1998, p. 194) argue that reflection is not only a cognitive process but that emotions are also part of learning. Social work requires both cognitive and emotional commitment from practitioners, and professional responsibilities are both rational and emotional. Intellectually, social workers are expected to be able to use different working methods (support planning, risk analysis, crisis intervention, etc.) and to manage different tasks in a complex, ever-changing environment. At the same time, social workers' work is highly emotional, so it is important that they are able to deal with emotions as professionals. Both their own emotions and the emotions experienced by the experts by experience of distress. People who use social care services face many personal challenges, often associated with a wide range of emotional responses: for example, poverty can provoke anger and despair; moving house contributes to feelings of loss and fear, etc. (Howe, 2008), and social workers' responses to these emotions point to effective professional work if these feelings are recognised, acknowledged and managed.

The work of social workers in practice therefore always involves reason, reflection and emotion. Keith Oatley (2004) has defined emotions as the response to a wide range of events that stimulate

emotional and cognitive reactions. Richard Ingram (2015) adds that emotion is a mental process by which we subjectively express our value attitude towards a person. They are always manifested at a personal level and have a very significant impact on our behaviours, actions and decisions in our daily practice Richard S. Lazarus (1991) wrote that our whole life is very much intertwined with emotions, for example, we experience the emotion of pride when we are promoted, we experience joy when a child is born, we are angry when our house is broken into, we are proud when our children are born. Emotions need an object, a thing to which we then respond. This can be an event, a physical object or a simple thought. The author believes that emotions are rooted in the psychological reactions that an event causes in an individual (e.g. the emotion of fear can cause breath-holding), and therefore argues that emotions as such are an experience, an experiencing. Emotions arise when our goals are either hindered or achieved (Lazarus, 1991).

Gillie Bolton (2010, p. 29) adds that emotions are often the first response to a situation and are often linked to our memory. This can also be a so-called “forgotten memory”, which was created a long time ago but is personally relevant to the practitioner. Supervision and reflection on practice in it is thus an excellent opportunity to reflect on and discuss these emotions, the so-called “ghosts from the past”,<sup>29</sup> as Thorona Nelson and Frank Thomas (2007) put it, and to give them meaning. Talking about emotional experiences requires stability. Only when we are emotionally stable, aware of our feelings and sensitive to what is happening to us, are we able to deal respectfully and responsibly with others in a helping relationship. This means that when we are in touch with our feelings, we can think about them.

Today, a growing number of authors (Lopez et al., 2015; Hefferson and Boniwell, 2011; Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010; Fredrickson, 2004) link emotions to the development of the modern concept of emotional intelligence, which could be defined simply as the ability

---

<sup>29</sup> The term ghosts from the past is used as a metaphor and can be a person from our past who has caused us discomfort and is causing us problems again. It can be about events that have happened and are recurring, causing us anxiety and worry.

to identify, understand and control our emotional states and to use them meaningfully in communication with others in expressing our thoughts and carrying out our actions.

Richard Ingram (2013) argues that it is important to recognise the complexity of our feelings (both conscious and unconscious) and to have the opportunity to reflect on the feelings that arise in our everyday practice. Both those that are pleasant and those that are slightly less pleasant, which is why Herrie Ferguson (2005) argues that for social workers to practice effectively, they need much more than just knowledge of procedures and methods of working. They need an approach that will enable them to approach each case individually and thus to respond to each case individually, with all the emotions involved. We must never deny or ignore our feelings. What is more, we must be aware of the psychological impact that emotions have on work and of the anxiety we feel about them. This is more than just following the rules (Ferguson, 2005, p. 783). It is also defining what we can and cannot do. Matthew Gibson (2019, p. 9) has researched the emotions of social workers, focusing in particular on exploring two emotions that social workers encounter when working with families and children. These are the emotions of pride and shame. He showed that the emotion of shame is related to the subject of discussion in social work, such as poverty (Sen, 1984), class (Sennet and Cobb, 1973; Sayer 2005), mental health (Breuer and Freud, 1895; Lewis, 1971), and with other stigmatising labels (Goffman, 1961; Elias, 1978), with everything that characterises and is identified with the experience of power in social groups as a central element of that experience (Foucault, 1977; Scheff, 2000).

Rarer than shame, however, is pride. In fact, it is experienced only rarely. Eileen Munro (2011a, p. 6) wrote in her report on child protection: practitioners need to move away from the currently overly bureaucratic work that focuses on consent (compliance) to do whatever is asked of them, towards work that respects values, expertise and focuses on the safety and well-being of children. This is the only way to ensure that social workers also feel a sense of satisfaction with the work they do.

Gilli Bolton (2010) argues that we need to look at emotions in a slightly broader context. From the perspective of how our thoughts,

feelings and actions affect others with whom we work, we can also learn something about ourselves and our relationship with others, because only this way of looking at an event allows us to make the connection between our personal beliefs, our behaviour and what we feel as individuals. All of this shows what is important to us. Bolton (2010, p. 37) suggests that emotions are an indicator of our ethical values. Values, in turn, are at the centre of action in social work. The steps we take in all aspects of social work practice are primarily an expression of our own personal values, which influence our responses and our work. Personal values are in most cases acquired through socialisation and growing up and are influenced by our own experiences as well as the accepted norms of the society in which we live. Values are what people in a particular culture consider to be “good”, “right”, “normal” and depend on gender, age, ethnicity and social status. These beliefs and values shape us as individuals and influence how we react to the people around us. These values shape the way we think, the decisions we make and the way we value others (Beckett, Maynard and Jordan, 2017). Reflecting on personal values therefore helps us to understand what is happening to us, to better understand how we think and feel, and to support us in developing new possibilities (perspectives) and actions in practice.<sup>30</sup> Only our own reflection allows us to articulate our values and put them into practice. Personal values may have led us to decide to become social workers (Beckett, Maynard and Jordan, 2017).

Social work is a profession based on values, on standards of how social workers should act when working with people. Core values include respect for fundamental human rights, the right to dignity, the individual’s right to define for themselves what the problem is, confidentiality, a non-judgemental approach, and trust in the possibility for change (Graham, 2017, p. 37). The values starting points mentioned above can be found in a number of definitions adopted by different social work associations, e.g. *National Association of Social Workers NASW* (1996); *British Association of Social Workers BASW*, *International Federation of Social Worker (IFSW)s*, as well as

---

<sup>30</sup> Reflection on personal values can be done simply by identifying three personal values that are important to us. Who or what has had the greatest influence on shaping these values?

codes of ethics. All of these documents set out professional values that social workers are supposed to follow.

In their 2014 definition, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) emphasised two core values in particular:

- human rights and dignity (including the right to self-determination, participation and focus on the sources of individual power),
- social justice, including the principle of recognising diversity and combating discrimination.

Christopher Walmsley and Jane Birbeck (2006, p. 113) argue:

Values are manifested in life experiences – in interactions in the wider social and societal environment, in the family, community, culture and society.

Citing authors points to a clear link between our own narratives (stories), i.e. that reflection on practice is always also a reflection of this social context and the way we experience the world. In other words, each individual enters into practice with their own values, constructions of reality, including power relations determined by social structures.

Just as personal values show the way we think and reason, professional values provide the framework within which we make decisions. These values are very complex, but we take them into account. Vito Flaker (2003) argues that the values that are essential to consider in social work are: respect and value differences and diversity, self-determination, free choice, influence over one's own life, being (actively) against discrimination, not stigmatising, the right to (social security). The core values of social work can be grouped into two basic sets. One is about the uniqueness of the individual, their freedom, self-determination, rights and freedoms. It is based on Kantian moral philosophy and a modern conception of the individual. The second is about social justice, overcoming the injustices that happen to people, the duty to help in times of need, solidarity. It is based on 19th-century social philosophies and different conceptions of society and justice (Flaker, 2003, p. 16).

I could also say that reflection in supervision always involves

certain principles of action and values. Gillie Bolton (2010, p. 24) includes among these values:

- *Confidentiality within the group*, allowing us to be who we are, to explore and try new things, to ask questions and be critical. Trust is really about giving ourselves permission to think in ways that will help us find the right path.
- *Confidence in yourself*, in your beliefs, actions, feelings, values, identity. This is a vital skill that helps us to express and trust these feelings in ourselves and others. It is why we communicate respectfully with others and with ourselves and become aware of the inevitable fears, hesitations and inner voice of the pernicious critic. With the certainty and self-respect that comes from learning, we can be creatively uncertain when we don't know where we are going.
- *Responsibility* for all your actions.
- *Positive orientation and empathy*.

Reflection often means reporting negative events in our work with people, but it is important to remain respectful. Any disclosure of events must ensure anonymity and privacy. Negative feelings allow us to learn from it, and celebrating positive feelings allows us to continue the work we have started.

Understanding and reflecting on emotions is so important because it influences our actions. Lena Dominelli (2009) believes that it is essential for social workers to understand and value their own emotions and values if they are not to act in a discriminatory manner. As she states, non-discriminatory practice is extremely complex and involves issues of social justice, human rights and an overarching social and political ideology. In order to be non-discriminatory, social workers need to understand their own values and emotions and consider how these values and emotions influence their practice.

Understanding the emotions that social workers face on a daily basis can have an impact on increasing non-discriminatory practice. It is not unusual for social workers to be confronted with unpleasant information (e.g. disclosing that a child has been sexually abused, working with verbally aggressive people). All of this provokes emotional reactions and can also influence the way in which these

people are treated. This makes reflection, which also focuses on the emotions of social workers, all the more important. Several authors (Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985; Ingram, 2012) argue that the support of supervision is invaluable in helping social workers to manage and recognise emotional responses in their work. It is believed that reflection occurs as a result of situations that have triggered discomfort in the individual. The key is to recognise how the emotions experienced by the social worker in that situation have influenced their responses and actions. Support in social work is more than a good intervention. Supporting professionals through the experience of distress is very different and complex and is an emotional experience that receives too little moral and ethical attention.

In order to help the supervisee become aware of emotions, David Boud, Rosemary Keogh and David Walker (1985) developed a three-stage reflection framework to help supervisees become aware of and understand emotions.

1. Revisiting an experience in order to shed new light on our thoughts, feelings and actions.
2. Attention to feelings, analysing both the positive and negative emotions that were presented and reflecting on how they influenced our interpretations and our reactions to the event.
3. Re-evaluation of the experience (revisiting the experience) based on previous analysis.

Supervision allows practitioners to articulate what actually guides their practice, what influences their decisions and how they experience their actions. Supervision is therefore an opportunity to answer the question of how our feelings and beliefs influence us, our decisions, in a safe environment and allows us to become aware of these feelings. Supervision thus allows supervisees to explore the complexities of social work practice, and this includes feelings that influence actions and the relationship itself with the experts by experience (Ingram et al., 2014, p. 5).

But it is not irrelevant what attitude we have towards these feelings. Barbara Featherston (2010) points out that supervision should be an opportunity for reflection, in which supervisees should feel as

much pride and positive feelings about their work as possible. Therefore, it is important to see, also in the area of emotional experience, what was good even in a bad situation and what the supervisees were successful in.

### *From negative to positive emotions*

If we want to make the step from learning from our mistakes to learning from our successes, it is important to focus on positive emotions. According to Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2012), positive psychology, which describes positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, interest, hope, pride, inspiration and love, contribute to positive outcomes. Barbara Fredrickson (2004, p. 1367) adds that people should take care of their positive emotions, but not only their own, also the positive emotions of others who surround us and make up our community because positive emotions contribute to the best cooperation. The author argues that positive emotions not only make for a pleasant moment and good performance in the short term but also have long-term effects on work. Her claims are supported by research by Lopez et al. (2015, p. 138), which shows that positive emotions (e.g. pleasant excitement and joy) lead to cognitive flexibility and creativity in people, while in contrast, negative emotions (e.g. fear and negative arousal) are associated with poor responses, disinterest and lack of completion of activities.

Joy and positive attitudes make us open to many new ways of thinking and acting, while negative emotions block our ideas and actions. Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2012, p. 135) argue that a dimension of positive emotions is that when they are discussed, they expand the repertoire of action, encourage the exploration of unusual and creative ways of acting, ideas and social connections, and thus contribute to personal growth, increase personal resources and develop resilience. This includes physical and intellectual resources as well as social and psychological ones. These are the resources that act as our reserves, which we can draw on when we want to explore further the dimensions of dealing with success, a job well done and striving for a good outcome. This is the so-called “knock out” effect. With positive thoughts, we develop the capacity to be open and

thus gain considerable capacity to try things out, experiment and improve what we do. This means that when we think positively, we are more receptive to new ideas, more flexible and more adaptable. We feel stronger and more confident in our parts. Pleasure is an impulse that stimulates the desire to play, interest stimulates the desire to explore, pride stimulates the desire to do things over and over again. In contrast, when we experience negative emotions, we are less willing and able to consider alternatives. We feel powerless. We may even feel devalued.

Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2012) point out that positive psychology, which describes positive emotions, does not mean that we deny negative emotions. These feelings are also part of who we are and what we practice, and they remind us of what we do not want and what we want to change. When dealing with emotions in supervision, this does not mean that we avoid negative emotions. On the contrary, these also need to be articulated. It is about realising that evaluating only the positive or only the negative view is not productive. It is very tempting to look only at the good or only at the bad, but it is not scientific and it is not an approach that guarantees us the creation of cooperation and co-creation. Nor does it mean that we were misled at a time when we were learning from our mistakes, or that the authors who made us think so were bad scientists. Far from it. At the time when they created this knowledge, it coincided with theories and was an expression of a way of working. Although today we are interested in the positive, in what works, we are still not denying this other side of the story, the negative side. In supervision, then, we must find a way to include both parts of the story in the process itself. It is the function of the supervisor (and the other members in the group supervision) to listen carefully and recognise that this situation is causing the supervisee to suffer. In such situations, the supervisor can say to the supervisee, for example: "I understand that this must have been difficult for you. How are you coping?" But if possible, the supervisor can redirect the conversation as quickly as possible to the question: "What would you have wished for instead of the problem you described?"

I want to stress that it is not about denying negative feelings, but it is important not to go into too much detail and not to let supervi-

sion become therapy. That is why we do not ask about the details of the problem but focus on the vision of where the supervisee would like to go. I have already stressed several times the importance of the future in social work. That is what we are striving for. Unlike the past and the present, the future offers possibilities for change – it means doing things differently, better, and it means trying to move away from what has happened. As humans, we like to feel that things will happen the way we imagine. And we want to bring that feeling to supervision sessions. The supervisor thus focuses on the competences, skills, creative ideas and resources of the supervisee and not so much on the details of the story. Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2012) point out: if we want to evoke positive emotions, it is important to use positive questions. But this happens too rarely.

Emotional processes are therefore an integral part of supervision. It is in the supervisor's function to create the conditions in which these processes can also take place, and it is above all essential that we as supervisors ensure that there is confidentiality in supervision, in which supervisees can talk about their vulnerabilities. Richard Ingram (2013) has explored what the fundamental elements of reflection are and has emphasised that it is the trusting relationship, particularly in group supervision (Bruce, 2013; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014; Ingram, 2013; Mantell and Scragg, 2019), and safety that ensure practitioners reflect on what is really happening to them. It is very important that each participant in supervision feels safe throughout the process and can speak openly about any doubts and difficulties in their work without fear of unpleasant consequences. Supervision practice has shown that supervisees need a certain amount of time, at least four to five group sessions before they really dare to expose themselves and show their vulnerability and emotional experiences in the group.

Reflective practice for the social worker, as David Schön (1983) argues, involves the creation of maps that the social worker needs in order to learn about ambiguities, uncertainties, mistakes, delusions, fears, etc. Maps allow the social worker to deal with these situations, but at the same time, they allow them to face their own hidden fears and prejudices that would otherwise cause more and more problems. Reflection enables us to know which path to take in order to

avoid getting into even bigger predicaments.

A review of the literature on reflection (Moon, 2004; Thompson and Thompson 2008; Bolton, 2010; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016) points to another aspect of understanding reflection. All of these authors agree that it is not only the relationship between the participants in the group that progresses, but also the supervisee, thanks to ongoing reflection. And as they progress, their demands for reflection become different. According to the authors, supervisees move from what is called technical reflection (characteristic of novice supervisees who test theories in their practice, testing their skills and reflecting on them), through practical reflection (they already have more knowledge and experience, and reflection already involves dialogue between them and others, and points to changes in practice in the future), to critical reflection (this stage of reflection requires supervisees to point to the need for change in the structures of practice of a particular service, based on what they have learned in practice) (Bruce, 2013, p. 1). 46; also Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Bolton, 2010). As supervisees develop, reflection also becomes increasingly critical and, as Sue Thompson and Niel Thomson (2009, p. 27) argue, any reflection should include a critical perspective. A critical perspective implies a new dimension of reflection, one that brings a social perspective to the process of reflection, a reflection on the wider social, political and cultural factors that perpetuate inequality and disadvantage. As supervisees progress, the content becomes more complex and in-depth, and supervisees become more independent and assertive. On the group facilitation side, I can argue that they move from reflection, where they explore how they work, through what they feel about that work, to how they can contribute to change in the field of social care.

### *Critical reflection - an opportunity to reject the unacceptable*

Today, a growing body of literature on reflection is devoted to the study of so-called critical reflection (Moon, 2004; Thompson and Thompson, 2008; Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016; Ferguson, 2017) as an inevitable

element of reflection on contemporary practice. I argue that this is a reclamation of this element of reflection, as we have been reminded of the importance of critical reflection by John Dewey (1933, p. 195), who wrote that: “Without critical reflection, there is no progress and no possibility of applying new practices.”

Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 7) argue that supervision is needed now more than ever. Its content has changed since its early days. Supporting supervisees and ensuring that they do a good job is still the focus but support alone is not enough. It is important to recognise that the world has changed radically.

In recent years, I have increasingly encountered situations in supervision meetings that were completely unacceptable to the social work profession. Professionals reported more and more complex situations and demands, an increase in the number of people with personal experience of distress who need support, demands for quality service delivery in the face of insufficient time to work and the fact that there are fewer, not more, social workers. As a supervisor, I have often been faced with the dilemma of how to support social workers in such situations to respond to situations and to persevere in their efforts for change. How can supervision be used to resist what cannot be accepted? How the supervisory process can also be used to reject what is unacceptable, as Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2019) calls it. Much of this kind of thinking has already been promoted and presented in feminist theories, theories of social constructivism, postmodernism, etc. (Howe, 2009). My own focus will be on the role of the supervisor in addressing such current ethical dilemmas and issues that we would like to see social workers identify and address in order to change them. This is not least enshrined in the *Global Definition of Social Work* (IFSW, IASSW, 2014), which charges social workers to be “agents of change”:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people.

Sue Thompson and Niel Thompson (2008, p. 72) have written that critical reflection is the foundation for non-discriminatory and ethical practice, as it gives us as practitioners the opportunity to

question whether our values are aligned with practice and gives us the opportunity to advocate for those values. All of this, of course, assumes that the practitioner reflects on their professional values and illuminates the assumptions and rationale to which those values relate. Jan Fook (2007) even adds that critical reflection enables the practitioner to address what is important in practice and thus develop possible ways of dealing with complex situations.

Critical reflection means using critical theories – to see the broader context of the work and make the changes we want to achieve greater clarity and the outcomes we want. I see critical reflection as the opportunity to look for something different. It is used as a platform to create the conditions for change where we are not judging what is good and what is not, who has done something right and who has not, we are not looking for who is to blame, we are looking for a solution to the situation. Critical reflection in supervision is a space in which we create the conditions for supervisees to express and explore what is going on and what they need so that something to change. Fiona Gardner (2014) points out that critical reflection is the highest level of awareness of the work and is the level that practitioners develop over a period of practice, it is a condensed view of the values of holistic professional practice. Critical reflection is a theory and a process that involves an in-depth look at the assumptions that underpin our actions, thinking and feelings. Fiona Gardner (2014, p. 24) wrote that critical reflection thus involves the interaction between

- the experience that the individual has and is having,
- the emotions, thoughts, reactions and actions associated with the experience,
- understanding the meaning of this experience: what meaning it has, including assumptions, values at a basic level,
- the impact of the broader social and historical context at both individual and collective levels, with expectations and questions about whether this critical process is creating change.

Critical reflection, despite the word critical, is certainly a way of supporting the supervisor in their efforts to change because, as Andy

Mantell and Terry Scragg (2019, p. 12) argue, critical practitioners are capable to:

- ask life-changing questions and identify problems with great precision and clarity,
- effectively gather and identify important, relevant information, using theory to explain these important issues,
- reach conclusions and look for solutions that go beyond existing, proven criteria,
- be open and willing to accept the consequences,
- communicate very effectively.

Critical reflection thus necessarily involves asking what is happening in wider society (not just within the organisation), because all of this has an impact on our practice.

It is impossible to endure a situation where you know that you do not have even a little bit of time to deal with an individual, even though you know that this is the only way you can achieve something with an individual who is facing many challenges. There are more and more people waiting for us, and we are failing to keep up to date, with fewer and fewer of us. This is no longer a situation in which it is possible to do social work. It takes time to do the work, and we do not have that time. It would be necessary to work with others, not in the sense of passing the buck, but real teamwork, but that time is simply not there. (Personal document, 2019)

The supervisor's quote is very much in line with what Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 7–8) have also written about. They have given a number of reasons why we need to critically reflect on our system of work. They wrote:

- more and more people need support (the world is becoming more populated, migration is a daily occurrence and will continue to increase (despite political rhetoric), poverty is on the rise and the gap between rich and poor is wider than ever),
- expectations from social services are very high (not only are more and more people in need of help, their expectations of the services are higher and they require more explanation

- about what we do and why),
- resources are becoming scarce (many people still believe that the current economic crisis is only temporary and that economic growth is on the way; scientific research shows that denial is a major danger on a collective level,
  - high levels of fragmentation (climate change is not just a threat, but a reality, which is why social work also needs ecological social work.

Even if the outlook is not optimistic, we can resist and contribute to change. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shoet (2012, p. 9) use an example from a conference for teachers to show how we can resist. They presented a congressional event and pointed out that everyone, no matter where they were from, was talking about the same situation:

we have bigger and bigger classes, we have to amend pupils' annual tests every year, parents and children demand more and more and we are no longer taken into account, we are respected less and less and of course we are no longer paid for doing extra work. Everything stays the same.

The authors responded to these complaints by saying that the more they complain, the more powerless they become. So their question was: can we do something together to get out of this and take it as a challenge?

The message of this paper is that we need to work together more than ever. Supervision, team meetings, staff support – all this is more crucial than ever. Today, we need a transformation in human understanding, ways of thinking, ways of behaving, both in relation to each other and in relation to the human world (Hawkins and Shoet, 2012, p. 10).

The process of critical reflection thus requires reorganisation, the courage of the practitioner to resist what is unacceptable, to point out what is unsustainable, and at the same time, it means examining our own values and the values of the profession that guide our practice and influence our decisions.

### *Reflection as a learning process in social work practice*

The supervision session is a reflection session to identify the social work methods, themes, methods and theories that the supervisee uses in practice. In supervision we deal with the inner professional reality, as Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 33) would call it, we ask ourselves new questions, we are not satisfied with apparent answers, we seek and try to understand the contradictions and limits of our professional capacities. In supervision sessions, the supervisor builds on existing knowledge with new insights and theories that may have been tested in practice. Neil Thompson and Sue Thompspon (2008) have pointed out that practice without any reference to theory or research is a lack of knowledge about social work theories. All social work practice is therefore grounded in theory, within which each social worker constructs their own understanding to guide their work and practice as well as decisions about what and who will be the focus of treatment and how this will be approached.

Another special feature of supervision in social work is that it takes place in dialogue. The importance of dialogic practice was already taught by Paulo Freire (1973), who said that the role of the teacher is not just to teach but to engage in dialogue with the students. Reflection enables the supervisees to empower themselves, to strengthen themselves. Not by the supervisor giving them this power, because they simply cannot, but by the way they work and the way they approach it. Paulo Freire (1973, p. 81) wrote that “empowerment is not something that the teacher gives to pupils but is the product of a dialogue between them which takes place as a collaborative process.” The need for dialogue was also pointed out by Jürgen Habermas (1989) as a tendency of modern society, in which it should be possible to discuss politics and thus replace the one-way method of communication. In other words, debate and dialogue became the main source of media coverage and were positioned from the “top down”. The basic condition for dialogue is respect for and valuing of the individual. Reflective practice in dialogue respects and values the knowledge of each practitioner and facilitates changes in power relations – in working with practitioners for their personal experiences of distress and not least between the profession as a scientific

discipline and its practice. Tony Ghraie and Sue Lillyman (2010, p. 7) argue that knowledge is therefore not the product of something external, something produced in the laboratory, but the product of reflection. To academic knowledge can be added personal, practice-based knowledge that is acquired through reflection.

Many models of reflection and theoretical foundations (Shön, 1983; Boud and Walker, 1998) of reflective practice focus on helping supervisees to learn from their own experience and shape a practice that takes into account the values and principles of social work. Despite the plethora of theories and the adaptation of individuals to learn their own ways of reflection, David Boud and David Walker (1998, p. 193) point out that “no reflection is guaranteed to lead to learning and new insights, and no learning activity is guaranteed to lead to reflection.” This is a process that has to be learned.

As we have seen, reflection allows the practitioner to go deeper and get a better understanding of the reactions to everyday challenges in practice. David Boud and Susan Knights (1996, p. 27) have written that reflective practice requires much more than an effective brief account of practice. They showed that there are many ways that contribute to reflective practice, such as journaling, concept mapping, short debriefing activities, critical incident analysis, autobiographies, etc. All of these forms help the supervisee to achieve a turning point from experience to learning.

At least two forms of reflection are used in supervision, namely debriefing and note-taking. This ensures that the learning process actually happens and is a journey from so-called tacit knowledge to the construction of new knowledge. For the practitioner to be able to transfer tacit knowledge and build explicit knowledge, the supervisor has various models at their disposal that enable the supervisee to learn through reflection and gain new insights and knowledge about how to deal with situations.

Over the last fifty years, several different models of reflection have been offered, from the simpler ones (in the 1970s) to today's increasingly sophisticated and in-depth models. From so-called single loops to double loops, as Argyris and Schön (1974) put it, Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schön wrote that a model of reflection can be implemented as either a *single loop* or a *double loop* of learning.

A single loop is just reflection on an event, while a double loop is reflection and reflexivity. With a single loop, only one side can be examined (when something goes wrong in daily practice, the social worker reflects on their work by asking themselves what happened and is satisfied that they have done everything required by law or procedure). The single loop of reflection is the basic model, but in the double loop, supervisees are asked not only about how they work but also about the values, norms and theories they apply, as well as the values and norms of the organisation. These things are critically scrutinised by the supervisee (Ingram, Fenton, Hodson and Jindal-Snape, 2014, p. 18).

Reflection is a dynamic process that changes with each re-entry, with each new person who enters the process and with each new case. It is a unique and unrepeatable learning process.

A review of the literature shows that there has been a move from circular models (Kolb, 1984; Gibbs, 1988; Atkins and Murphy, 1994), models in the form of predefined questions (Borton, 1970), to highly complex models that cover a broader field of action (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012).

Not only models of reflection have changed, but also perceptions of what is the best basis for learning. Many authors have written that reflection begins when something goes wrong (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983). However, more recent research (Ghraye and Lillyman, 2010; Bannink, 2015; Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti and Snyder, 2015) shows that we learn better from good experiences than from mistakes.

### *A model for reflection on professional experience with positive outcomes*

I would like to introduce a new paradigm in supervision, namely reflection as a process of learning from so-called professional experiences with positive outcomes. In my ten years of experience of leading supervision processes in the field of social care, I have realised that as a supervisor I am changing the developmental-educational model of leading the supervision process, according to which I was trained as a supervisor, mainly because I wanted to find a model that takes into account the postmodern concepts of social work as much

as possible. I started from the thesis: if we want to know what good social work practice is, we need to study it, not bad practice. I have conducted a systematic literature review to theoretically support my thesis and design a model for managing the supervision process that reflects the specificities of the social work profession. I believe that it is in the social work profession that we have taken an important step towards change and understanding what the best foundations for learning are, and who is the best expert to identify the situation. So, the model is based on a theoretical understanding of the specific issues that underpin my thesis, and experience of delivering supervision processes in social work.

In leading supervision processes, I have heard many success stories about how many important small steps for big changes have been taken and co-created by social workers together with people. Experiencing positive outcomes encourages us and others involved in the supervision process to keep thinking, even critically, about what we are going to try next and allows us to explore something new. It is a source for further work and also a confirmation that good experiences happen. It simply means working from a power perspective and bringing social work concepts into the supervision process.

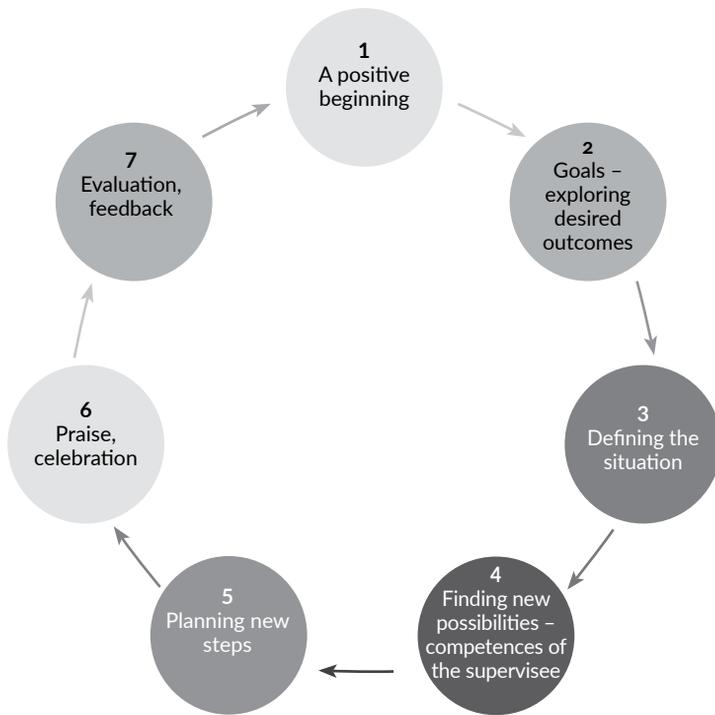
In the following, I present a new paradigm in supervision, reflection as a process of learning from so-called professional experiences with positive outcomes. This should be a framework for conducting solution-oriented supervision. I would add that supervision is not and should not be a template-driven process, but should respond flexibly to situations. It is important that as supervisors we are change-oriented, that we encourage change and that we ask questions that lead to change. Steve de Shazer (1985) wrote that solution orientation is simple, but it is not easy! That is why we need the discipline to keep at it.

#### Elements during the supervision meeting

The model is designed as a circular process and contains seven governance elements. The language in the process is respectful, supportive and focused on the supervisor's sources of strength. Respectful

questioning is based on the belief that the supervisee is competent in their perception and can justify it in a meaningful way. The elements of the encounter in the model presented are: a positive start, defining goals and exploring desired outcomes, presenting the situation, exploring new possibilities with a focus on the supervisor's competences, planning new steps, praise and celebration, and reflection and feedback.

Chart 4: Model of reflection on professional experiences with positive outcomes.



In the second meeting, the supervisor uses all the elements presented but adds a new one between the first and second element: reflection on the previous meeting.

The first element in the process of each meeting is the start of the meeting. It can also be called the internal weather, breaking the ice or, in sports parlance, the warm-up. What makes it special is that it always starts positively. We invite the supervisees to briefly report on recent small successes of which they are proud. This helps

to change the focus and direct the conversation towards what the supervisees are good at, what they have been successful at, what their skills are rather than their weaknesses.

The supervision process continues with the exploration of the goals of the supervisees, who will present the situation in the meeting, with what they want to achieve by exploring the desired outcomes. In this way, the work is future-oriented rather than past-oriented. Possible questions to use as supervisors are: *what do you hope will happen? What is the best possible outcome for you from today's meeting? What would you like to happen? What difference will it make? How will you know that coming to the supervision was not a waste of time?*

The third element is the presentation of the situation<sup>31</sup> with the supervision question, which consists of three parts: presentation (what the supervisee wants to change), checking understanding and handling emotions. The supervisor's function is to listen attentively. They are not interrupted during the presentation of the situation. We wait for them to finish.

Only then should we ask questions to get more clarity about the details. Different questioning techniques can be used. It is important to ask open questions, as closed questions limit the supervisor and do not encourage dialogue, e.g. *"Please tell me more about the relationship between you and the expert by experience."*, *"I wonder what you were thinking about when you ...?"*, *"I can understand that this situation is difficult for you. How can you cope and deal with it?"*. If we want to move to positive supervision, we also ask: *"What would you like to have instead of this problem?"*, *"What would you do differently today?"*. We do not analyse the details of the situation but explore what worked in the situation. The attention is on the competences of the supervisor, their skills and creative ideas about what else they could try in the relationship when working with the individual.

---

<sup>31</sup> We deliberately do not use the term problem because we consistently use language that has the power to effect change (De Shazer, 1985; Čačinovič Vogričnič, 2003, 2010). Not focusing on the problem does not mean avoiding or ignoring it. It is simply not helpful in finding solutions. The past helps us to recognise how we no longer want to work, or when something works, we reinforce it, as De Shazer (1985) wrote. We assume that the supervisor recognised this themselves when they described the situation. The function of the supervisor is to support the transition from the past to achieving the desired change.

The next step is to check whether the presentation has been well understood, what has been said and what the superior wants to do. It is about respecting uncertainty. As supervisors, we must avoid making assumptions. Instead, we check with the supervisee whether we have understood them well. Furthermore, the position of not knowing encourages the supervisee to explore and utilise their skills and abilities.

Focusing on emotions is also an important part of presenting a situation, as they have a significant impact on our actions and decisions. Often we ask the supervisee: “*How did that make you feel?*”, maybe even: “*In which part of your body did you feel that?*”. We focus on pleasant feelings to encourage exploration of unusual and creative ways of acting, ideas and social connections, thereby contributing to personal growth, increasing personal resources and expanding the repertoire of action, as Tony Ghaye (2012, p. 135) would define it.

If we want to move from learning from failure to learning from success, it is important to focus on positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001; Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010). Tony Ghaye (2012, p. 135) suggests that the dimension of positive emotions is that when they are discussed, they expand the repertoire of action, encourage the exploration of unusual and creative ways of acting, ideas and social connections, and thus contribute to personal growth, increase personal resources and develop resilience.

The fourth element of the meeting is the search for new opportunities. In the first part, we understood the situation, which allows us to move forward and not dwell on the past, and the supervisor gave us a clear supervision question as a basis for the work. In this part, the supervisor is working on finding solutions. The supervisee poses a clear question and the group focuses on collaboratively finding a solution. Possible questions: “*What would be the desired outcome for you?*” or “*How would you like the matter to be resolved?*” We are not interested in causality or the nature of the situation, but rather we are focused on finding solutions to the situation identified by the supervisor. A possible question is: “*Where do you see solutions?*” or “*What else have you thought about but not done?*” In this part, it is important that we, as supervisors, give the supervisee enough time to explore on their own where they see the solutions. We can also

use the miracle question developed by Insoo Kim Berg.<sup>32</sup> The other members of the supervision group answer these same questions. *What would they do if they were in a similar situation or if something similar happened to them?* How would they handle the situation? *What would be of support to them?* The supervisor first asks the supervisee to discuss possible solutions, then invites the other members of the supervision group to discuss their ideas.

We also focus on the competences of the supervisees when looking for possible solutions. This is the bridge between the past and the future: what the supervisee is good at (what they are already good at), what their sources of strength are (what they have already used), the competences they have (here and now) and how they will use them next time.

The fifth element is action-oriented, planning the next steps. The supervisor is asked, *“What will be your next step?”* Positive supervision focuses on the future. In this part, the supervisor invites the supervisee to think (within the framework of the solutions they or other members have provided) about what their next step might be. Two useful questions to ask are: *“What steps do you plan to take to make a change?”* and *“What are the small steps to make a big difference?”* The supervisor can think with the supervisee about how they want to achieve these steps, what needs to happen and who can help them achieve the goal (if the solution is also linked to other systems). We may use the scale developed by Insoo Kim Berg. Using a scale focuses the conversation on exploring the smallest possible step towards successful solutions. (Myers, 2008; Shennan, 2014).

In this part, the supervisee is invited to reflect on how they will put this insight into practice. It is a reflection on a situation that is yet to happen and where we cannot fully predict what will happen,

---

<sup>32</sup> The question of the miraculous was discovered by Insoo Kim Berg by chance, while working with an expert by experience. She asked him what should happen. He hesitated, then replied, "A miracle would have to happen". Insoo Kim continued, "Well, suppose a miracle happened," and the man was stumped, but answered anyway (Shennan, 2014, p. 51). Since then, the miracle question has been a frequently used technique (for more see De Shazer, 1985; also Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Kopal, Mešl and Možina, 2005). The miracle question helps the supervisor to form an idea of new situations, to formulate a new story and the beginning of something new.

but we would like to prepare ourselves so that the risk is not too great. Social work differs from other disciplines that deal with the same situations in that it is prepared to deal with unpredictability (Flaker, 2003, p. 3).

The sixth element is called praise and celebration. This part is mainly aimed at making the supervisees to make sense of their work and efforts. Supervisees often do not feel that they have taken very important and valuable steps to improve the situation of people with personal experiences of distress, which is why this part is so important. Positive supervision focuses on the good qualities and actions of the supervisee, knowing that we learn better and faster when we have good feelings and realise that work is always a process, not done in isolation, and that the results are not always up to us. In this part, we ask the supervisee where their sources of strength are. *What gives them the strength to develop their resilience?*

The seventh and final element of the meeting is devoted to evaluation and feedback. The supervisor asks: “*What is different now?*”, “*What was good?*” or “*What new things are you leaving with?*”. The evaluation allows the supervisee to evaluate the progress, to draw on their personal sources of strength and skills, to achieve change in the time and in the way they have set for themselves. Then the other members of the group also give their opinion and praise what they have heard. This work could also be called positive feedback.

The evaluation is aimed at assessing what the supervisee has gained for themselves, what their learning process has been. Now the other members of the group report on what they have learned and how they feel, as does the supervisor, who can use the feedback to tell where they have seen progress in the supervisor and in the group.

We always evaluate the process, but there is also an opportunity to ask about the well-being of the supervisor and the other members. The purpose of evaluation is also to learn as supervisors and to know what helps the group to achieve its goals.

The meeting is now closed. The next time the group meets, add a reflection element on the previous meeting between the first and second elements. The supervisor asks the supervisee what is better, what changes have been made in the work, followed by exploring

the details of success.

This chapter shows how the model of reflection on professional experience can be used in a supervision meeting with positive outcomes. It can be used for both group and individual supervision. Each supervisor can, of course, find their own style that suits both their theoretical assumptions and their style of supervision. My experience of leading supervision confirms that this kind of reflection is close to their hearts, that they get the right support and encouragement to learn something new, and at the same time the reassurance that what they are doing and how they are doing it is bringing about the necessary change.

### *A model of respectful reflection*

In reflection, too, we can see a paradigmatic shift towards the resources and resilience of the practitioner, and towards a reflection on what such reflection can bring us. Today, what is increasingly called “respectful/appreciative reflection” (Marchi and Ghaye, 2010; Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010) is being used. Respectful reflection is based on valuing the best in the supervisor. Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2010, p. 7) argue that in such supervision we do not look for what is not there or what should be there. The most significant shift, including in the area of reflection, has of course been that we have moved away from assuming that we are “dealing with problems” to recognising the very important role that reflection plays in focusing on the resilience and strength that practitioners have (Ghaye and Lillyman 2010, p. 1).

Respectful reflection is very much in line with social work concepts and confirms that we learn better from good experiences. Respectful reflection is actually based on positive questions. This paradigm shift has not happened in isolation and is based on theoretical assumptions that underpin the understanding of resilience and are rooted in the concept of the strengths perspective, from the group being an important element in the development of the practitioner to starting to ask positive questions to promote change.

Learning often does not happen in isolation and is based on the realisation that we can learn better in a group, where we have the

opportunity to hear other perspectives. The group provides support for our work and care for how we work. Reflection in a group can be experienced as emotional support. But it is also the group that provides the wider context and insight that this is not just a product of our reflection, but that this learning is occurring in a wider social and organisational context and is a strength of reflection (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010, p. 2). Notwithstanding Jenny Moon (2004) argues that reflection is always personal (speaking in the first person) and involves who we are and how we work. We ask: “*What did I do? What did I do to succeed? How successful was I?*”. We always speak in the first person singular. We do not ask: “*What would others have done?*” (because this is advice), but we report on how we did something ourselves.

If we, as supervisors, want to use respectful reflection in our work, it is crucial how we start the supervision and what we focus on. Will we first address the “problem” or will we try to understand the resilience, resources and successes of the supervisee? In respectful reflection, it is important to start with the successes and resources first, rather than looking at the problems. The reason I emphasise resilience and success is that these are the very themes on which we want to build our work. We want to emphasise what we have succeeded in, not our failures and our slip-ups. This is a strategic decision about what we are going to focus on. Language that is respectful and positive plays a key role in this. Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2010, p. 137) write:

We need a language that regenerates us, that warms us, that gives us a new impetus, that allows us to move forward and not run away.

We have seen in other disciplines (especially in psychology) how well people are influenced by positive attitudes and how much progress can be achieved through positive statements. We know how positive situations (e.g. optimism, self-confidence) influence our mental, emotional and physical well-being. In my supervision processes, I have seen that co-creation, contact with other group members and a positive focus have helped to bring about change and have had a motivating effect on all participants in the process, so it is import-

ant to put this into practice as often as possible. In social work, we have long since moved away from “social histories”, diagnoses and problem analyses and it is right that we also make this transition in supervision processes. In this way, we can also show the specifics of the profession, what we do and how we do it.

I often talk about how the use of language that is stimulating and respectful is a very important element. This is also the essence of respectful reflection, which starts with positive questions about what is currently working, what is good, what I see as the best in the people I work with.

Tony Graham and Sue Lillymna (2010, p. 12–13) have developed a model of respectful reflection based on four fundamental questions of reflection:

- What needs to change?
- What works?
- What are we learning?
- Where do we go from here?

The framework for respectful reflection is to ask positive questions that allow us to start the supervision in a positive way. The focus is on positivity. Reflection on this means that we start to actively think in the direction of what supports us in our work and what is good about it. It means valuing our skills and talents as well as those of others. Asking questions already reflects a change in attitude towards the situation at hand. David Cooperrider (2001, p. 31) suggests that positive questions:

- Create a new way of communicating, as the focus is not on problems but on new possibilities. This also encourages all employees to start thinking this way and to use words that are stimulating, phrases, sentences and ideas that they would not have used otherwise.
- Affirm multiple choices and ensure that everyone’s voice is heard – here we can refer to the use of language and how language brings about positive change.
- Help us to value others – positive questions allow us to see and value the work of others.
- Encourage personal relationships. Positive questions encour-

rage social workers to reflect on practice and articulate what is important to them.

- Enable community building by inviting people to participate with their best and most valued contributions. We immediately create a context for work based on empiricism, support and mutual cooperation.
- Can generate social innovation, as positive questions can stimulate the creation of new forms of support and promote organisational development.

The second question, “what needs to change”, is a respectful reflection aimed at raising awareness of our work in order to improve it and create even better ways of working. For some, this may mean looking at a “problem” or challenge in a creative way and in a critical spirit to find alternative ways of working for future practice. It means being open to unexpected connections and ready for new possibilities.

The third question, “what are we learning”, focuses on creative thinking. It focuses on improving working practice through a concrete example. It simply means looking again at what we already know to gain a new perspective on how to improve our actions.

The fourth question, “where do we go from here?”, involves both our clarity and orientation and simply means putting into practice what we believe to be good practice and will help to improve some parts of our practice and policy of action. We can help ourselves to do this by asking questions (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010, p. 13):

- What gives you the most satisfaction and joy in your work right now?
- What was the last thing you did to get things done and use your resilience?
- What happened when you realised you did a really good job?
- Did anyone do or say anything to you to make you feel that your work is appreciated and positively valued?
- What resilience do you have when you feel that you are swimming against the tide at work?
- What did you do to hear a colleague say, “Thanks, it’s nice

to be respected?”

- What did you do to hear a colleague say, “It’s great to work here, it’s nice to be appreciated?”
- What did you do to hear a colleague say, “Thank you for understanding my situation”?

In supervision, supervisees should be able to express their views and values. They need to be supported in speaking up and saying something different from what others are saying (so of course they need courage, they should not be afraid). It is important that supervisees ask for more visibility rather than accepting the reality as described by others (Newman, 1999, p. 158).

Of course, no amount of reflection can guarantee that we will be good social workers. Supervision helps social workers to become even more competent in their work through reflective practice. It enables them to embrace uncertainty, which is the pathway to effective learning (Bolton, 2010, p. 4). It enables them to be able to say, “I don’t know what is going on here and I want to explore it.” All this does not happen by itself, of course. David Boud and David Walker (1998) argue that nothing is a given and that nothing can be achieved unless we know what we want. Not even with modern technology. The authors give an example of the use of the Garmin navigation system, which we are all familiar with. They point out that navigation can only help us if we, as travellers, know exactly where our destination is. And so it is with the solution to the situation. No one can find a solution unless they define exactly what the problem is. This is the most difficult question in reflection. We all want to become better practitioners, but to do that we first need to define where we want to become better practitioners, where exactly do we want to be better, what do we want to change?

## Summary

By reviewing reflection, I wanted to show the potential that reflection has. I wanted to emphasise that reflection is much more than just a description of an event; reflection reflects all that social work is. Tony Ghaye and Sue Lillyman (2010, p. 139) list 12 main characteristics of reflective practice:

1. is about you and your work,
2. is about learning from experience,
3. is about valuing what we do and why we do it,
4. is about learning how to account positively for ourselves and our work,
5. does not separate theory from practice,
6. can help us make sense of our thoughts and actions,
7. generates locally owned knowledge ,
8. conversation is at the heart of the process of reflectingon-  
-practice,
9. emphasises the links between values and actions,
10. can improve our practice,
11. reflective practitioners develop themselves and their work systematically and rigorously,
12. involves respecting and working with evidence.

Given that the social work profession is an active science, reflection and reflective thinking are key to the development of a social worker's identity. Reflection is, therefore, an integral part of social work practice, but only when new action is the result of reflection and reflective practice emerges (Mantell and Scragg, 2019, p. 4). Reflection is more than simply reporting on work, it is the search for connectedness and interdependence in action between social, community and individual factors, that is, between the whole and its parts. It is embedded in the method of induction, as the practitioner looks for patterns through observation and action and relates them to theories. In this way, each practitioner develops their own strategies of reflection and reflexivity (Bolton, 2010, p. 44).

Reflective supervision allows the supervisee to talk about the work, to look for new frames of possibility, to think about things they have not thought about before and to ask questions they have not asked themselves before. Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 33) argues that reflection reveals what was previously obscured, hidden, perhaps not accepted in haste. We reflect on how the individual's problem has affected us, what fears have been aroused in us about it. Supervision thus allows us to explore safely and comfortably and to find possibilities that are otherwise difficult to articulate. It can

problematize our assumptions, our ideologies, our inequalities, our reactions to a situation. Kate Howe and Ivan Gray (2013, p. 3) wrote that reflection allows the supervisor to question:

What do I know and want to explore further?

What do I know that I don't even know that I know?

What don't I know and wish I knew?

What do I think about, what do I feel, believe, value, how do I understand my role and my limits?

How do my actions fit with what I believe?

How do I evaluate my feelings and take them into account?

All this questioning helps them to recognise the complexity of social work practice, to receive support in this work and to prevent social work from becoming a cookie-cutter response to people's needs. In contrast, the social worker explores new ways of working in order to be able to support people with personal experiences of distress as effectively as possible.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE FRAMEWORK OF WORK IN SUPERVISION

Since supervision is a process that ensures that supervisees learn from their experiences and integrate the insights into their own practice in an appropriate way, the right conditions must be in place to support this process. Only appropriate conditions ensure greater professional and personal competence and learning from the particular situations at hand. For supervision to be successful, the right conditions must be in place before and throughout the process so that all participants are involved, relaxed and active, no matter what stage the group is at. These circumstances are simply referred to as the conditions necessary for supervision and I summarise them following various authors (Proctor, 2018; Ingram, 2015; Milošević Arnold, 2004; Wonnacott, 2012; Howe and Gray, 2013). However, before the conditions are presented, the basic prerequisites that are necessary for supervision must also be clarified, namely: the supervisor and the supervisee. Without them, the supervision process would not exist. These are the two basic elements that ensure that supervision works and that it gets off the ground in the first place.

The first requirement is a supervisor who is qualified to lead the supervision process. As we have read, in Slovenia there are different pathways for an individual to become a licensed supervisor (Videmšek, 2020), but regardless of the pathway chosen, the supervisor needs a number of skills that they use in their supervision. Tatjana Rožič (2015) suggests that we become supervisors and uses Bion's (1975) notion of *becoming* as a process that begins, continues and is never finished. There are as many reasons for becoming supervisors as there are supervisors. Research (Videmšek, 2019) has shown that some became supervisors because they were inspired by their first supervisor, others because they were interested in wor-

king with younger colleagues, and others still because they wanted to build on their experience, out of curiosity, to pass on what they had learned or because they saw it as a learning opportunity, etc. For whatever reasons supervisors decide to become supervisors, Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 173) argues that supervisors must be well trained, have relevant professional experience and be flexible and able to use an eclectic approach. It is the supervisor's responsibility to facilitate optimal conditions for learning and to monitor the professional development of supervisees.

The supervisee is also a basic prerequisite for supervision. The supervisee is the expert who presents the material in the supervision sessions, so it is essential that they have work experience. Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) refers to this as the first prerequisite. The length of service is not important, although we know that the supervisee's development also depends on the length of service, it is more important that the supervisee is in a working relationship so that they can play their part in participating in the process. Supervision is designed to help the supervisee find solutions to the dilemmas they face on a daily basis, to present their work, to receive validation for their way of working and to help others to learn from their experiences. In this way, the supervisee directly shapes the content of the supervision by providing concrete material for discussion. This possibility of transferring practical experience into supervision and new insights from supervision back into practice must be a continuous process. According to Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 174), the supervisee must recognise the connection between work and learning, they must perform practical work and discuss concrete experiences from their practice in the supervision sessions, they must have good basic knowledge and must participate in the process voluntarily and with motivation.

Once we have a supervisor and supervisees, we have created the conditions under which we can also begin to discuss the prerequisites necessary for the supervisee, as well as the rest of the group, if it is group supervision, to emerge from the supervision with more and not fewer strengths and new insights. It is the supervisor's responsibility to facilitate optimal conditions for learning and to monitor the supervisee's professional development.

## Conditions for the supervision process

A basic prerequisite for successful supervision is a safe space, which is the most important of all prerequisites for supervision to take place and be successful, especially in group supervision (Proctor, 2008; Ingram, 2004; Milošević Arnold, 2004; Wonnacott, 2012; Howe and Gray, 2013; Morrison, 2005). Richard Ingram (2013), based on his research on the basic elements for conducting critical reflection, has shown that it is very important for each participant in supervision to feel safe throughout the process and to be able to speak openly about any doubts and distresses in their work without fear of unpleasant consequences. Tony Morrison (2005) adds that supervision is only successful and meaningful if we as supervisors can provide a safe space in which supervisees can disclose and explore their dilemmas and fears. This certainly strengthens confidence in the practitioner's behaviour and helps to foster a better relationship when working with experts by experience of distress.

Brigit Proctor (1995) wrote that the role of the supervisor is to help the supervisee gain a sense of acceptance and safety, because only when the supervisee feels safe will they be able to look at their experiences and question themselves as to what could have been different, and only then will they be able to evaluate themselves and their own skills. Without an appropriate and safe space, it will be difficult for them to accept critical feedback, for example, or to hear what we have to say. If reflection is to be successful, we need a safe atmosphere in which people can look for new alternatives to the situation.

A safe climate is not something that simply exists, but something that must be co-created by all those involved in the process. This co-creation begins with the establishment of rules and the drafting of a supervision agreement that supports our work throughout the process. In the supervision agreement, the group sets out the rules that each member must strictly follow throughout the process. An important provision of this agreement is the maintenance of confidentiality and respect for the individual's experience.

Another prerequisite for successful supervision is a motivated supervisor (Milošević Arnold, 2004). It is desirable that supervisi-

on is voluntary and that only those members who are motivated to work and learn in supervision participate. In addition to voluntariness, it is important that the supervisee believes that they will increase their professionalism and derive personal benefits from it. Participation “under duress”, when the employer decides to do so, when the practitioner is “on the line” or even when the Social Affairs Inspection Service suggests it, usually has no real effect. The supervisor also plays an important role in decision-making and motivation, as they must make it clear what the supervisees can expect from the supervision process and what the supervisor expects from them. Supervisees must have the choice of whether or not to participate in supervision. This decision is made on the basis of the preliminary stage of the supervision process.

Milošević Arnold (2004), Wonnacott (2014), Henderson, Holloway and Millar (2014) argue that space is a very important prerequisite, as space largely determines the way we will work. Ideally, group members should be able to sit in comfortable chairs that are arranged in a circle. This has proved to be the most effective way of doing things, as it allows all the participants to see each other, to have enough distance and at the same time to have the possibility to either lean forward to clarify something and thus get closer to the speaking partner, or to lean back, to release tension, to reflect. The circle also allows for a more equal position between all involved, as everyone is included in the circle, both the supervisor and the supervisee, as well as the other members. Ideally, the group should have a permanent, preferably neutral, space in which each member can develop a sense of safety, just by knowing the spatial context. It goes without saying that the space should be such that it ensures that the work is uninterrupted, i.e. no ringing of the telephone, no knocking on the door by users or colleagues and, of course, that the meeting is not overheard in other offices.

In addition to the space, the well-being of the group members in the space is also important. Many groups write down in their rules that e.g. the rooms will be lit (because it gives them more positivity), and that coffee and tea, even biscuits, will be allowed in the group. All with the intention of making the space feel homely. Again, there needs to be a clear agreement on how this will be done.

Eating during the process itself can seriously disrupt group dynamics and distract attention.

Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) includes a supportive working environment among the conditions. The author believes that the attitude of the work organisation in which the supervisee is employed is important for supervision. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012) argue that supervision is by far the most accepted in organisations characterised by a learning and development culture. Similarly, Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) writes that the results of supervision are visible where management encourages and supports the involvement of social workers in the supervision process and sees this as a meaningful “investment” in practitioners and the quality of their work (Milošević Arnold 2004). Supervision is now increasingly recognised as a method that focuses primarily on professional development and support, and practitioners are increasingly aware that through regular supervision they can help others more by continuously learning and reflecting on their own work. Supervision should therefore be an integral part of practice, as also stated in the Standards and Norms Code (2017). To refer again to the English experience, the standards state much more clearly that it is essential for the employer to provide supervision. There is a shift from recommended hours of supervision to responsibility. It is written that it is the responsibility of each employer to ensure that working conditions are appropriate and that the right amount of work is done (i.e. that practitioners do not have more cases than they could have) and that practitioners receive excellent supervision (Munro, 2011).

The organisation must be a learning organisation and must encourage the learning and progress of its workers. It must have a positive social and working climate, open communication and supportive leadership.

Given that supervision is not yet a professional standard in our environment (although it is enshrined in the regulations, and is currently only mandatory for NGOs<sup>33</sup>), financial resources are also

---

<sup>33</sup> NGOs funded by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities are required to have a licensed supervisor to supervise the programme in order to receive funding. Without this condition, the programme is not funded.

a necessary condition (Milošević Arnold, 1999; Kobolt and Žor-ga, 2000). Supervision is a demanding professional activity, which is only carried out by the most competent professionals who have received special training and licensing. Supervisors carry out their work outside working hours. However, such work must also be adequately rewarded, so clients must have sufficient resources to pay supervisors for their work.

For me, creativity is one of the prerequisites for successful supervision. I believe that the supervisor's creativity is also necessary for successful supervision. By using creative techniques, the supervisor ensures that the meetings are always a little different and stimulate new learning opportunities for the supervisee. As the supervisor is not supervising in their own room most of the time, but in a room where others are also working, it is important that the supervisor is prepared for the meeting and has a variety of items to use as a working method and to help them present the case: they have many tools at their disposal, such as toys that can be used for metaphors, paper for writing and drawing diagrams, pictures that evoke associations, diagrams that can be used both to establish the working relationship and to develop the material discussed, and that allow the supervisor to articulate the feeling and experience.

Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) considers that the available time is also a prerequisite, as supervision requires a lot of systematic work and time, which includes not only the time needed to participate in the meetings themselves but also much more (preparation, reflection, documentation, etc.). The author stresses that this time should be counted as working time, as it is intensive work aimed at developing greater competence of the professional. In England, this is always part of the working process. In the 2009 Social Work Reform (*Social Work Reform Board, 2010, p.23*) it says: Supervision is an integral element of social work and should provide practitioners with a renewed insight into their daily practice, the decisions they make and enable them to learn and develop professionally and to process both the emotional and work demands expected of them. Evidence highlighted the need for a set of standards and supervision framework for all employers of social workers. These proposals set out the shared core expectations of employers which will enable

social workers in all employment settings to work effectively. Good supervision has been shown to provide more consistent outcomes for children, adults and families.

In the Slovenian environment, this is often part of the work process. Most often, supervision takes place at the end of the working day (after 2 pm) and during working hours. There are exceptions. Especially in places where the workers themselves pay for the supervision. Kristina Urbanc (2019) reports that in Croatia they have managed to provide a whole day for supervision. Once a month, supervisees have a day set aside for supervision only. On that day, they work on several cases and the supervision lasts at least five hours.

For learning in supervision to be effective and efficient, it is important that the process is over a long period of time and is a continuous, intensive, systematic process, directed towards a clear goal. Lea Šugman Bohinc (2020) argues that supervision, despite its systematic nature, is a “systematically non-systematic process”, because we explore with each individual how to establish a working relationship because we are so different. With each one of us, in our own way, we develop relationships, desired outcomes, authentic individual work, so it is non-systematic. It is authentic. And yet, behind all of this, there is a concern to develop this systematically. So it is also a systematic process.

The systematic nature of the process is also ensured by the supervision cycle, which lasts for a certain period of time, hence the term “process”. The length of the supervision cycle depends on the agreement made by the group. Although in our setting we have adopted the Dutch model of supervision, which consists of 20 meetings (Milošević Arnold, 1999),<sup>34</sup> research by Videmšek (2019) has shown that the process can last up to one year (10 meetings), with the possibility of extending it to two years (20 meetings), with meetings held once a month, with breaks in the summer terms. Supervisors have at least one and a half hours for each meeting, depending on the size of the group and the agreement. The minimum requirement is one and a half hours if one supervision issue is discussed. Of cou-

---

<sup>34</sup> Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 286) states that the cycle of the supervision process is between 15 and 20 meetings.

rse, more time is needed for larger groups.

The cycle depends on the agreement and also on the size of the group. If the group has more than eight members and the length of each meeting is 1.5 hours, a cycle of ten meetings is not useful as not all supervisees will have the opportunity to present cases. It is important that the supervision process provides equal opportunities for all participants and that the voice of all those involved in the supervision process is heard.

The systematic nature of the supervision process is ensured by the pre-defined stage of the supervision cycle.

## The stages of the supervision cycle

I have said many times that supervision is a process. It is a process in which the group systematically progresses towards certain goals. It is a series of events, meetings, in which the group makes use of all the experience and skills of the individual members. It is a form of meeting, led by the supervisor. The process is one of the key features that distinguishes supervision from consultation<sup>35</sup> and which gives supervision added value. The process enables supervisors to connect, to establish a working relationship and to develop new ways of working, on the one hand, and to progress and develop profession-

---

<sup>35</sup> Unlike supervision, consultation is a one-way event involving a consultant (who gives advice) and a consultee (the person seeking help, advice). Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 9) argues that consultation in social work is a problem-solving process in which an individual, group, organisation or community facing difficulties at work receives advice. Consultation is topic-oriented, sought when the professional encounters a problem that they are not able to deal with alone, and is usually discontinuous, with the exception of an agreed consultation, which may last several months, with a mentor or tutor during the traineeship. The consultation is not pre-arranged but happens as and when it is needed. It is always voluntary, based on the need to solve a specific professional problem. Consultation also differs from supervision in terms of responsibility. The consultant is only responsible for their own work, the person seeking professional advice is responsible for solving the problem; the supervisor is responsible for the supervision process, and in this context, it is important to have knowledge of group work, group processes, establishing a working relationship, establishing dialogue and communication in general. The consultation focuses on solving a specific problem within a specific case, while supervision allows reflection on the whole working context of the supervisee.

ally, on the other.

Every supervision process takes place in interaction with others. The supervision process involves the direct participation of the supervisor and the supervisee as well as the group members in the case of group supervision. Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) adds that experts by experience and the work environment of the supervisee are also indirectly involved in the process. The interactions between the participants change over the course of the stages so that each stage has its own characteristics. What they all have in common, however, is that the supervision process, regardless of the stage, takes place in a supervisory relationship, which is crucial for successful supervision.

The foundation of an effective supervision relationship is mutual trust and respect for the supervisee's knowledge and experience. Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 181) argues that the supervisor works through the relationship and the supervisee learns through the relationship. The quality of the relationship largely determines how much and what the supervisee will learn. It is of course important that the supervisor is aware of the supervisee's learning styles and at the same time allows the supervisee to find their own paths. Given that supervision is a learning process involving the integrated functioning of the whole organism (thinking, feeling, perception and behaviour), it is important that this relationship is personal and respectful.

Every process is considered to follow certain predefined working stages, and supervision is no different. Different authors define different numbers of working stages. Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 193) mentions four stages: preparatory, initial, working and final. Vida Milošević Arnold (2009) mentions seven stages: preliminary or introductory (preparation), introductory or initial (2 or 3 meetings), working (middle), mid-term evaluation, final stage, final evaluation, goodbye. Both authors follow a cycle of 20 meetings.

The working stages thus depend on the length of the cycle and how detailed each stage is defined. Regardless of the number of stages and the detail of the division, what is common to all of them is the systematic nature of the supervision process, which ensures that the process is carried out from cognition to completion, and the recognition that each stage has its own purpose and is set up to dee-

pen the working relationship between the participants and to enable the participants to gain new insights in the process.

Based on more than 10 years of managing supervision processes, I would divide the stages into two parts, namely the information stages and the group formation stages. The information stage starts before the work begins. During this stage, supervisees have the opportunity to decide whether or not to join the group. The group formation stage is then divided into three parts. The first part is the establishment of the working relationship, where the foundations for the work are laid, the second part is the working stage, where the working material from the practice is discussed, and the third part is the final stage with the evaluation.

I would like to stress that the structure of the working stages allows the supervision relationship to develop gradually in the supervision process, that we cannot skip any of the stages in the cooperation cycle, but that the stages support us in structuring and understanding the process and in recognising the dynamics of working in a group.

The working stages involve a varying number of meetings. Most often, one meeting is devoted to the setting up of the group, eight meetings to the working stage and one meeting to the final stage. I would certainly not want us to see the stages in a rigid and inflexible way, as it may happen that, for example, the introductory stage is longer (and not just one meeting) due to different experiences. This has proved to be an extremely important element in the course of

distance supervision.<sup>36</sup> As the supervision process has moved to a digital environment, it has become clear time and time again that the structure that we have in person cannot simply be transferred to the online version. The analysis of the implementations has shown both the advantages and disadvantages of such an implementation. I would just like to point out that it is necessary to have more time than otherwise, both to set up the group and to carry out each stage.

The individual stages are designed to deepen the relationship, and in each stage, it is possible to see the development of the group, so it is not surprising that Alenka Kobolt (2004, p. 30) defines the working stages on the basis of the formation of the group, namely: 1. forming, 2. conflict stage, 3. normalising and establishing rules, 4. acting, ending.

The stages can be seen from different perspectives. I will present below the working stages that have proven to be the most effective in group facilitation, which also include elements of group formation. The preliminary or information stage, the cooperation stage, the working stage and the goodbye stage with evaluation.

### *The preliminary stage - the information stage*

The preliminary stage is what happens before supervision begins, it is the preparation for supervision. I personally think that the preliminary stage is the most important element in connection with the decision in favour of the supervision process. Supervision is a process

---

<sup>36</sup> At the time of writing, we have witnessed new situations that have influenced our whistleblowing. In December 2019, cases of unusual pneumonia occurred in Wuhan, China. The infections were confirmed to be caused by a new coronavirus called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Virus 2, or SARS-CoV-2. The disease caused by this virus is called Coronavirus Disease 2019, or Covid-19. As the new virus spread worldwide in a relatively short time, the World Health Organisation declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020 (Tomašič, 2020, p. 107). The first case of infection was officially documented in Slovenia on 4 March 2020, followed by the first major epidemic in the history of an independent country (Hacin Beyazoglu, Babnik and Lep, 2020, p. 12). Due to the regulations on working from home and recommended teleworking, many services have come to a standstill, including supervision. Although supervisors have endeavoured to continue working with the groups, most supervision processes have stalled. Only a few have reported that they are doing remote supervision. Even those of us who have provided remote supervision have found, based on feedback from supervisees, that remote supervision cannot be replaced by face-to-face work (Videmšek, 2021).

that takes place over a long period of time, so it is not unimportant who is involved in the process and how. The preliminary stage is a time for getting to know each other and aligning expectations, during which all those involved in the process gather all the information they need to decide whether to enter into a supervisory relationship. In this stage, the supervisor introduces themselves. They present their experience as a supervisor and introduce the supervision model they use. They also provide basic information about the purpose of supervision, the goals of the supervision process, and expectations, and give basic information about how the supervision will proceed, how long the cooperation will last, how often meetings will take place, what is expected from the supervisee, etc.

The preliminary stage is not only a time for supervisees to get to know the purpose of supervision and the future supervisor but also a time for the supervisor to get to know who the potential supervisees are, what kind of work they do, what their work experience is, what their experience of supervision is. Most of the time, the supervisor asks them what they already know about supervision, whether they have decided to do it themselves and, above all, what their expectations of supervision are. The supervisor asks about the institution or field where the future supervisees work.

The preliminary stage is thus designed to tune in, to see if we could enter this process based on all the information we have heard. It is a comparison of expectations between the supervisor and the supervisee. This is the time when the supervisees and the supervisor can still decide whether cooperation would be possible according to what has been presented. If something has come up in the initial discussions that the supervisor cannot tolerate at all (for example, the discriminatory orientation of one of the supervisees), this should be brought up, as it can be a significant barrier to cooperation, even if it is not directly related to the work the supervisor is doing. It makes sense for the supervisor not to ignore such reactions or views, but to speak up about concerns and dilemmas. Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) warns us that it is important to bear in mind that practitioners cannot choose the experts by experience of distress using social care services, and that in practice they often encounter mindsets, values, prejudices and orientations with which they may personally

disagree, but that this should not, as a rule, deter them from working with such a person. Therefore, in similar cases, the supervisor can also take up the challenge to establish a professional relationship with the supervisee.

If the group finds that they can work together, the supervisor tries to coordinate with the future supervisees the time for supervision meetings, the start and the conditions of the supervision. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that all the necessary conditions are in place for the supervision to run smoothly.

Jane Wonnacott (2004) argues that before beginning to conduct a supervision process, it is important to:

- in dialogue with the organisation, find out how the organisation works and what would be the most effective learning for the supervisees, what kind of support they would need;
- take responsibility and talk to everyone involved in the process about their expectations, the goals they want to achieve;
- clearly state and explain how the meetings will be conducted, what participants can expect, how the supervision process can support supervisors and group members to achieve both individual and group goals.

Only on the basis of the preliminary stage does the cycle then continue and cooperation is established, which moves on to the team-building stage.

### *The stage of establishing cooperation*

After the decision to enter the supervision process, the first stage of the supervision process begins. In this stage, the supervisor co-creates the rules of the group with the participants and formulates and clarifies the goals that the supervisees have set for themselves (both individually and at group level).

The stage starts with the establishment of the group's rules, which must be defined and accepted. According to Vida Milošević Arnold (2004), acceptance of the rules in supervision means that all participants not only formally accept them, but also internalise them. They must become part of their behaviour and attitudes throughout the duration of the supervision, i.e. for a certain period of time.

The most important part of setting up a group is the creation of a co-operation agreement (you can read more about the agreement in Chapter 3). This stage lays the foundations for further work, of which the key element is, above all, the establishment of a working relationship, good communication and a good atmosphere. Of course, this does not happen on its own, the supervisor has to be able to create it. It is their job to provide the right conditions for learning from the outset, including safety, honesty, reality and a suitable space. The atmosphere of the group setting indicates the way to proceed, and confidentiality and safety are crucial because this is the stage of getting to know each other, tuning towards each other, establishing a trusting relationship and a safe atmosphere. Creating a climate and building a relationship are of course not one-off actions, but an ongoing process, and yet it is the initial stage that will determine the foundations we will lay for future cooperation. Although the main purpose is to establish rules and agreement, this is a stage that goes beyond the mere formalisation of the structure and content of meetings.

This is the group-building stage, and for the supervisor, the techniques for setting expectations and creating clear agreements are crucial. In this stage, each supervisor discovers their own uncertainties, searches for their place in the group and determines what contribution they will make to the development of the group. This is the stage in which relationships are formed at different levels, both at the level of the supervisor and the members of the group, as well as among the members themselves. Even though the group members may have known each other well, this is an opportunity to get to know each other in a different, new way. It is a formative stage, as the supervisor and the supervisee are shaping the way they work together, getting to know each other and all the circumstances in which the work of the supervisees takes place, the way they learn through supervision, its objectives, its possibilities and its limitations.

This is the goal-setting stage, whereby it should be noted that the supervisor's goals are not identical to those of the supervisee. The supervisor's primary goal is to bring about changes in the supervisees that will allow them to function better in their professional role, to support them on this path and to give them the opportunity to

develop professionally so that each of them can think for themselves about the goals they want to achieve.

Getting to know each other is important, as the supervision starts an intensive process of cooperation (for at least a year). During this time, a personal relationship will be established between the participants, which will be the basis for learning for everyone involved in the process. This will be learning about the work and about themselves. Only when the participants have got to know each other a little better can they determine whether they will be able to participate successfully in the supervision process.

This stage thus includes three fundamental elements:

1. drawing up the agreement and the rules of engagement,
2. defining the objectives,
3. establishing a supervisory relationship.

The tasks of the supervisor are to establish a relationship, agree on the rules of engagement and encourage supervisees to reflect on themselves, their work, others' attitudes towards them and their attitudes towards the people they work with (experts in their own personal experience and colleagues) and their expectations of supervision.

The supervisor's task is to reflect on what motivates them to learn, what conditions they need to learn. At this stage it is important that each individual tries to find out what they want to do, what work situations are stressful for them, what often causes them discomfort and dissatisfaction and what situations give them a sense of satisfaction. All of this is important in order to formulate the goals of the supervision and to ask specific supervision questions, which they will analyse together with the supervisor and with the support of the other supervisees in the meetings. Of course, the supervisor is also involved in setting the supervision goals and ensuring that they are as realistic as possible (more on this in Chapter 3).

The establishment of an agreement allows the working stage to begin.

### *The working stage*

When we talk about supervision, we are most often referring to the working stage. The working stage is the longest and most creative event in the supervision process. It starts as soon as we have established an agreement and lasts until the evaluation. This part is the heart of supervision, as the supervisees present dilemmas and situations from practice for which they are looking for new ways of acting.

The working stage is characterised by working with the supervision material that the supervisor prepares for the meeting. According to Vida Miloševč Arnold (2004), this is work that is done through stories, detailed descriptions of concrete situations from the supervisee's work environment and work or supervision questions that the supervisee asks in order to learn something through the supervision analysis.

Based on an analysis of supervision materials (Videmšek, 2019), I can write that the content of supervision depends on several factors. The content of supervision depends on:

1. *The accepted agreement* (e.g. working on concrete work cases, solving situations that arise in practice, learning new approaches, etc. or dealing with oneself, personal growth). The basis for dealing with the material is the agreement as the basic etiquette for the meetings. We need to co-create this agreement together and define at the outset what the content of our meetings will be, what goals we set ourselves as individuals and as a group, and how we imagine we will achieve this.
2. *The specific context, the supervision material* (who we are working with, what the institution is like, the specific case).

3. *The supervisor's previous education, skills and experience.*<sup>37</sup> Regardless of the supervisor's previous training or the programme they have completed, the responsibility for resolving the situation always lies with the supervisor. They must accept the solution in their own way. The supervisor helps them to find solutions that they formulate themselves. The supervisor and the other members only help them (with support, ideas, expanding their view of the situation). The solution and the decision are always left to the supervisor. We can only help them and look for new possibilities together with them and support them in their search for a solution.
4. *The supervisor's level of professional development.* Supervisors also expand their skills and go through various stages of development when they carry out supervision. According to a review of the literature (Kadushin, 1985; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000), the development of a supervisor can be divided into at least three stages, namely: training, integration of leadership with understanding of processes, and mastery. The first stage is characteristic of inexperienced supervisors and is therefore referred to as the training period by the previously mentioned authors (Kadushin, 1985; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000). This stage is characterised by uncertainty. It is the first time that the supervisor learns to manage the supervision process independently and without the presence of their mentor. Despite having experienced an intensive stage of experiential learning for licensure, it is a stage that leaves the supervisor with feelings of confusion, helplessness and lack

---

<sup>37</sup> Videmšek (2020) shows that in Slovenia, out of 96 supervisors registered in the directory of supervisors at the Social Chamber, 31 are not social workers (12 psychologists, 6 pedagogues, 4 theologians, 3 sociologists, 3 professors of defectology, and one organiser, one occupational therapist, and one doctor of medicine). The number of supervisors in the directory of supervisors at the Social Chamber is estimated at 31 (psychologists 12, pedagogues 6, theologians 4, sociologists 3, professors of defectology 3, and one organiser, one occupational therapist, and one doctor of medicine). There is also a varied range of programmes completed by supervisors to obtain the supervisors' licence (Tempus, family therapy training, training for supervisors at the Faculty of Social Work, specialisations) (Social Chamber archives; Videmšek, 2020).

of competence. They are less sovereign in their leadership. In their reflections on the meetings, they question themselves whether they are successful in leading, whether the supervisees are receiving adequate support. The supervisor in this stage is thus focused on themselves and their own concerns in leading, and pays less attention to other factors in the process that influence their structuring and delivery of supervision. In fact, it is very typical for supervisors in this stage to hold on to methods and techniques, and learned structures for managing the process. They usually use two or three methods that they have already tried and that they know they can implement in the time available. The role of supervisor is new to them and they have yet to learn it. At this stage of their development, supervisors are looking for their own way of carrying out and implementing supervision. The second stage of the supervisor's development is about expanding the knowledge they have acquired and gaining a deeper understanding of supervision and their own role in it. The second stage is about integrating leadership with understanding of processes. Alenka Kobolt and Sonja Žorga (2000, p. 188) call this stage recognition. It is characterised by the fact that the supervisor creates the anchorage of the work in their own way. They become more and more confident in their role, try out new working methods and are prepared to take risks. They use a variety of reflective methods in their supervision, responding to the supervisee, their situation, their skills and needs and adapting the way in which they carry out their supervision. They are able to balance the supervisee's needs with their own and with the demands of the work and show more coherence in the way they think and act during supervision. Kobolt and Žorga (2000) suggest that supervisors at this stage make a realistic assessment of their own strengths and weaknesses, are aware of their preferences for the type of supervisee and recognise the influence they have on them. Their knowledge of supervision is becoming broader and deeper, and their confidence and trust in their own supervisory skills increa-

ses. The final stage of development is mastery. A supervisor at this stage has very clearly formulated attitudes and requirements for successful supervision. Based on (experiential) knowledge and literature, they have developed their own supervision style that enables supervisees to be autonomous, safe and supportive in their learning (Kobolt and Žorga, 2000, p. 187–189). In this stage, supervisors usually take on the role of metasupervisors. Practising supervision is a paradigm based on learning from daily professional experience and means learning from practice in order to change theory.

5. *The style of leading the process and how the supervisor views learning.* In the preliminary stage, the supervisor describes in detail the process of learning through supervision and their personal style of doing so. Although the supervisor's work is guided by theoretical knowledge of methods, models, techniques, etc., the supervisor's personality also has an important impact on the supervision process. Personality determines the basic orientation and style that the supervisor applies in their supervision work.

Regardless of the above-mentioned content, based on the analysis of the collected supervision material (Videmšek, 2019), I would divide the dimensions of treatment in supervision into four categories, namely:

1. *analysis of interpersonal relationships:* questions relating to relationships (both within the organisation and with the professionals and their relatives),
2. *analysis of behaviours and procedures:* the issue of behaviour – setting limits (desire to learn and acquire skills in assertive behaviour and setting limits, dealing with conflict),
3. *awareness-raising:* issues in dealing with insecurity (dealing with vulnerability, issues on acquiring skills to become more competent in dealing with emotions and issues related to personal development),
4. *analysis of the procedures and application of working concepts:* issues related to the verification of concepts, beliefs (ideology area), how to take into account the power perspective

in practice, recovery, what is meant by learning from failures and what is meant by learning from successes.

Kate Howe and Ivan Gray (2013, p. 6) argue that although content can be very diverse and cover a wide range of topics, it can be summarised into four basic categories:

- Discussion of a specific work topic, which is most often the main content of the supervision meeting, with the aim of checking that the work is being done and that professional standards are being met.
- The leadership and management aspect: recently, social services have been facing stress, worrying about the future and being concerned about others.
- Quality of relationships with other team members: social work is not a practice that works in isolation and supervisors have many people with whom they need to work professionally, regardless of their different expertise, possible conflicts of interest, etc.
- Discussion on the evolution of the profession, often linked to case management, as a source for continuous change in services.

All of these topics are interrelated and all need to be examined in the concrete context of working with the material the supervisor comes to the meeting with. The key to considering the material is that it is up-to-date, that changes are still possible and that the supervisor is aware of the risks of neglecting a particular topic (Field and Brown, 2010, p. 66). The aim of supervision is to identify the supervisor's topic, as the topic is a response to the situation, to the patterns that the supervisor uses in their work.

However, due to the complexity of the unforeseen situations that practitioners encounter in their work, the material brought to the meeting by the supervisor must be considered on three levels. Each supervision question is therefore analysed on three levels: cognitive (insight into my way of working – knowing how I work), behavioural (insight into my behaviour in a situation – the ability to analyse old patterns and try out new ones) and emotional (insight into my emotional experience and actions in a situation). At the co-

gnitive level, the personal values of the professional are at work, often strongly influencing the judgement of the situation by personal experience and guiding professional actions, but not always in line with professional values. At an emotional level, dilemmas of accountability can arise – to what extent is the professional accountable for the decisions made by the expert by experience? Is this a case of taking too much responsibility for oneself and thus not recognising the competence of the expert by experience? These levels allow the supervisee to experience changes in their own behaviour and view the situation from multiple perspectives, but it is important to keep the ethical principles of supervision in mind.

The three-level treatment always gives the supervisee the opportunity to check and analyse their understanding of the concrete problem, their emotional involvement in relation to the experts by experience and their problem, and at the same time their behaviour within their professional role. This is at the same time an integration of professional and personal development skills.

As this working stage is the longest stage of the supervision cycle, it is characterised by the supervisees getting to know each other and bonding with each other. The characteristics of group development<sup>38</sup> and group dynamics (Stritih, 1999; Proctor, 1999; Vec, 2004; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000) are clearly visible in this part. The group becomes very enthusiastic about the work, as progress is visible, and achievements become noticeable. In this stage, the group becomes more cohesive and therefore more relaxed, and discussions

---

<sup>38</sup> Alenka Kobolt and Sonja Žorga (2006) have summarised the stages of group development based on Lewin. The first stage includes joining the group and orientation, which is characterised by uncertainty, the search for security and the evaluation of expectations. The second stage involves interactions between the group members, the search for the positions of the group members and the initial formation of status and roles among the members. In the third stage, known as trust and intimacy, competitive impulses are overcome and members have reached a minimum consensus on tasks. In this stage, co-operation and mutual help increase. The fourth stage is characterised by an intensification of the initial processes, with simultaneous differentiation, insistence on roles and positions and the development of a "group identity", a sense of "us" that strengthens group cohesion and facilitates group performance. The fifth stage is the separation or termination of the group with the accompanying emotions (which are not always positive) and the preparation of the members to say goodbye (Kobolt and Žorga, 2000, p. 73).

become more in-depth and frank. Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 200) argues that this is the time when supervisors mutually discover patterns of behaviour, strengths and weaknesses of all group members. Their uncovering of themes and recognition takes place as they work through specific supervision issues and becomes more and more in-depth. Ongoing evaluations of individual sessions help them to learn more about supervision and its outcomes. They gradually learn to use supervision as a tool for change in practice and start to integrate the experience of the meetings into their professional life.

The working stage is characterised by parallel processes, called parallelism (Vodeb Bonač, 1996, p. 55; Milošević Arnold, 1999, p. 20; Žorga, 2006, p. 201), in which certain aspects of professional life also occur in the supervision group and the supervisory relationship. Through the way in which they present a particular case, the supervisee unconsciously takes up the problem and presents it in the supervision in the same way as they have encountered it in their professional relationship. What happens to them in their relationship with the expert by experience is replicated by the social worker in their relationship with the supervisor or with the supervision team. The parallel is therefore between the situation that the supervisor specifically mentions in the supervision session and the way they present this situation. This leads to the situation being repeated to all members of the group, who suddenly find themselves in an opaque situation of helplessness. Only when they recognise the parallelism can they analyse the process and look for connections between what they have discovered in the supervision and what is happening in the work situation. Analysing the parallel process enables them to better understand the dynamics of what is happening in their work situation (Žorga, 2006, p. 201–202).

### *The concluding stage with evaluation*

Given that the cooperation between the supervisor and the supervisee has been relatively long and intense, a personal relationship has developed between them, which needs to end in an appropriate way. The final stage is thus intended to bring the process to an end. According to many authors (Milošević Arnold, 2004; Žorga 2006;

Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014), it is not during this period that we take up new topics and cases, but rather conclude our cooperation and look back on the whole process. Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 202) considers this to be a time of putting on the brakes. The final stage is a time to analyse the process through evaluation, which allows both the supervisor and the supervisees to look back, to evaluate the specific goals that the supervisees have set for themselves when they entered the supervision process, to look at where they are in this journey of achieving their goals and what is it that they will be able to use in their future career.

Alfred Kadushin (1985) argues that evaluation is a continuous process, not a one-off event, because it is ongoing, and therefore the final evaluation is part of the overall process. He points out that the evaluation at the end is an evaluation of the whole process, an evaluation of the course of the game and not the outcome of the game, as the author puts it.

Let us now turn our attention to the supervision process itself and look at the flow of the individual meetings. Usually, a written form of evaluation is carried out so that we can share our experiences and our view of the process in the final session. The written record allows us to reflect in a structured way on where we are in our learning journey and the written record helps us to express ourselves more clearly in the final session. The questions for the final evaluation are usually prepared by the supervisor, who tailors the evaluation to the way they are leading the group and to the supervision model they are using. If they follow a developmental-educational model in leading the process, the questions will naturally focus on the evaluation of the learning process.

Sonja Žorga (1996) lists some possible evaluation questions. The questions typically cover the following areas: what new things did I learn for my profession; what new things did I learn about myself; what did I learn from the other participants – from the supervisor and other supervisees; what did I learn about the role of the supervisor; what did others learn from me; what was the working process in supervision like. Supervisees look at where they are on this learning

journey and what they still need to achieve their goals.<sup>39</sup>

As the evaluation is a two-way process involving all participants, the final meeting is an opportunity for all participants to share their experiences and hear how others have experienced the process. A supervisor is also involved in this process. The supervisor evaluates their success of the supervision on the basis of clear criteria and objectives that the supervisor has defined in advance.

Alfred Kadushin (1985) points out that evaluation is not only a view of what has been but also of what will be. Evaluation can be an opportunity for the supervisor to show each supervisee ways and possibilities for further learning without supervision, with the aim that the supervisee builds on what they have learned in the collaborative process and do not fall into the routine of everyday working life. The supervisor can encourage the supervisee to regularly and systematically analyse their own work, write a reflective diary, join a discussion group and practise self-care.

Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) believes that the evaluation is an opportunity for each participant to express everything they think and feel, as there will be no opportunity to do so later. Only in this way will all those who have been together in this process have the feeling that the cooperation is really over and that they will probably not meet again with the same people and in the same way as during supervision.

Evaluation is also a great opportunity for the supervisor's development as it gives them insight into their own leadership and what they could do differently next time. Evaluation provides the supervisor insight into what they already know and what they still need to learn. What could they do differently? How will they recognise that things have improved?

Many authors (Kadushin, 1985; Milošević Arnold, 2004; Proctor, 1999; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000; Žorga, 2006; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014) argue that parting is an important part of the final stage. Sonja Žorga (2006, p. 204) argues that the goodbye is the last step in the supervision cycle, so it does not matter how it

---

<sup>39</sup> For more detailed methods of evaluation, see also Kobolt and Žorga (2006, p. 210) and Milošević Arnold (2004).

is carried out. Care must be taken to ensure that it is not abrupt and without closure, that we do not part with conflict and unfinished processes, and that the supervisee does not become attached to the supervisor. The goodbye ritual means making all participants aware that the period of participation in a specific group of people has really come to an end. All participants have to accept this, but of course, they can expect to enter into new relationships with each other.

The supervisor should be aware of the various potential reactions of the supervisee when saying goodbye. They must be prepared to help if they detect dependency in the supervisee and treat these feelings with appropriate seriousness, care and respect. Cal D. Stoltenberg and Ursula Delworth (1987) found that there are some gender differences in relation to goodbyes in supervision. Female supervisors and supervisees are often unable to say goodbye with sufficient clarity and firmness at the end of supervision. Male supervisees, on the other hand, tend to experience goodbyes rather superficially and almost too easily, which can also mean an inappropriate end to the relationship. As a result, supervisees tend to repress these feelings rather than talk about them and give them the attention they need. It is important that the supervisor is aware of the processes and feelings of the supervisees that come with saying goodbye in order to help them process these feelings. Of course, the end is also an opportunity for a new beginning.

The final stage thus consists of two elements, namely the evaluation of the supervision process (which can be written or verbal) and goodbye, which can include a variety of rituals. As Vida Milošević Arnold (2004) argues, rituals and small symbolic gifts upon saying goodbye on the one hand make it easier to part ways, but on the other hand, they can also say a lot about how the members have experienced each other during the supervision process (symbolic messages).

The supervision process is complete when all stages have been completed and the appropriate goodbyes have been said. The supervisor can re-establish a new working relationship with the same group but must go back to the initial stage with the group. This systematic approach ensures safety, transparency of roles and preservation of the core tasks for which the group met.

The systematic nature of supervision is not only visible in the stages of the supervision cycle. It is also seen in the individual supervision sessions. Supervision is therefore not something that just happens, but a planned, deliberate and structured way of guiding the group towards the desired goals. No matter what stage the group is in, all meetings have a structure. And the structure of the meetings ensures that supervision is not a chat over coffee, but a structured way of working for change.

## The structure of the supervision meeting

Supervision meetings usually have a structure. The structure depends on the supervisor's style and what the supervisor's personal leadership model means to them, how they have been trained as a supervisor and what has been useful to them in the supervision sessions they have participated in as a supervisor. Since supervision is also an art, a creative space, as Lilja Cajvert (2001) called it, each supervisor has the freedom to choose how to organise and lead a particular session. It is by no means necessary to follow what I will outline below. However we as supervisors structure the session, it is important that there is enough space in the session to reflect and work on a concrete example, to decompress, to celebrate our successes and to look at what we have learnt and what we can put into practice. Penny Henderson, Jim Holloway and Anthea Millar (2014, p. 49) write that any supervisor who wants to conduct a supervision session well and be effective in doing so will develop their own habits for conducting this process. The minimum is that it is a format that has a beginning, a working stage and an end, with the initial stage consisting of two parts: establishing the supervisee's well-being and agreeing to a working meeting, followed by the working stage and the handling of the specific case. The meeting is always concluded with an evaluation of the meeting.

Vida Milošević Arnold (1997) has designed a structure for a supervision meeting based on six elements of a meeting, namely: internal illumination of the situation, reflection on the previous meeting, agreement for the meeting, analysis of the material, evaluation,

agreements for the future. This is a framework that allows the voice of all those involved to be heard, including the one who is not in the forefront as the supervisor. This structure of the meeting ensures that the learning process can actually happen. The individual elements of the meeting enable the development of a good working relationship within the group and at the same time contribute to the fact that the meeting is not only about working on and discussing a specific supervision topic but also about reporting on one's own feelings and experiences in the here and now. The structure described above suggests that supervision is a formal relationship in which the supervisor's task is to maintain professionalism, not only curiosity but also commitment to the work and professional development of the supervisor and the members of the group.

Let us look at the possible structure of a supervision meeting and the role of the supervisor. The structure should only be a possible framework. The choice of the structure is certainly a matter for the supervisor. I myself divide the conduct of each meeting into three parts: entering the meeting (1), the working stage (2–5) and saying goodbye (6), using six elements:

1. making contact for a working meeting – describing how you feel and disclosing the desired outcomes,
2. reflection on the previous meeting,
3. agreement on the content of the meeting,
4. presentation of the material – asking the supervision question,
5. evaluation,
6. arrangement for a succession meet and greet.

*Contacting for a working meeting – describing how you feel and revealing the desired outcomes*

It is important to start the session in a relaxed atmosphere in order to enter into the working process and relax. For this reason, some authors (Flaker, 2003; Howe and Gray, 2009; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014) also refer to this stage as “breaking the ice”. Contact should be established in a respectful and friendly manner. It

is appropriate to chat, make a humour remark and jovial talk. Vida Milošević Arnold (1999) refers to this stage as the illumination of the “inner weather”, because it is really about the speaking partners telling how they feel, what they came to the meeting with.

The supervisor asks the interviewee to say something about how they are feeling at the moment in order to find out how the supervisee is feeling (Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014). The supervisor is always involved in this stage but has the floor at the end when everyone has said how they feel. This helps the group to bond better and prepare for the working stage.

The role of the supervisor in this element is to pay attention to what the participants are saying, but at the same time to make sure that the internal climate does not turn to chatter. This part of the meeting should last 5–7 minutes. Experience from leading groups shows that this part is completed very quickly at the very beginning, when the group is still forming and establishing itself (the first three or four meetings), as the participants are still very reserved. In this stage, the supervisors are still checking their own position and that of the other participants. Even if they know each other, it is a new experience of working together and they do not yet know how much they should say about themselves. At the first meetings, the supervisors’ answers are therefore very brief, especially when the first member starts like this. The others often simply follow suit: “I’m alright”, “I’m ok”, “I am fine”, “I’m tired”. The better the group gets to know each other, the more established and self-confident it becomes, the more comfortable the group feels with each other, the more varied the illumination of well-being becomes and the more talkative the supervisees become. Short sentences turn into stories and events become more and more personal.

We had a wonderful weekend with the family. We cycled around Primorska and tried great food. I was quite sad that the weekend was over and I wish the weekend had been as long as the working week.

I am doing very well. I have managed to join the Pilates classes that I now attend regularly and I am very happy that I decided to take this step. I like going to these classes because I can relax and the group is also very nice.

We spent the weekend at the competition because my son had a tournament. I was a real fan. Together with the mums, we encouraged our boys to do their best. It's really nice to watch them fight and they are already real basketball players. I have the impression that it's slowly becoming real and it's no longer just kids playing and passing the ball around.

At the beginning of the group, because of our experience as supervisors, we can use a variety of creative methods to help supervisees overcome their initial embarrassment about how much to say about themselves. I myself like to use a variety of ways to check my inner mood at the beginning of the group (I have a set of postcards ready, for example, so that each person can find the postcard that best describes how they are feeling at that moment).

It has been shown that, at least at the beginning, the supervisor prefers to describe how they feel in a picture, as this helps overcome an initial sense of uncertainty.

The supervisor can also use an introductory game: choosing objects, which the supervisees then use to highlight their “inner weather” and tell why they chose a particular object or what it reminds them of. Playing cards or name cards are also very useful. There are many possibilities and here the supervisor's personal style of leadership also comes to the fore.

Regardless of the choice of the beginning, describing how you feel and revealing the desired outcomes is an invitation to work and co-create something new. It is an invitation for supervisors to make that transition to group work. The unburdening is followed by a reflection on the previous meeting. The supervisor starts this invitation with an affirmative question about “what was good”, “what has changed”.

### *Reflection on the previous meeting: working stage*

Various authors (Milošević Arnold, 1999; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014) have written that before starting to discuss the material, it is important to check whether there is anything left unanswered from the previous meeting.

The supervisor first invites the supervisee to report on how they

have been able to put the knowledge acquired during the last supervision into practice and whether they would like further support today. In this way, the supervisor checks whether there is still work to be done. The aim is not to recount the facts about what happened at the last meeting, but to identify the benefits of the meeting, the messages that the supervisee received. This part also gives meaning to the supervision meetings, because we can see their usefulness. Neil Thompson and Sue Thompson (2008) call this “reflection on action”.

The supervisor then invites the other participants to report on their reflections, what they thought about, what appealed to them, what they were able to transfer from the example presented to their practice, what they learnt. And also what perhaps confused them, disturbed them or left them in doubt.

The supervisor makes sure that each supervisee is able to relate the new insights to previous ones and to recognise similar patterns of behaviour from previous situations. The supervisor gets to know the supervisee’s learning style and pays attention to the results achieved. A good discussion about what happened in the previous meeting gives meaning to the sessions and shows that supervision is a learning process and not just a chat over coffee.

In practice, it has been shown time and again that it is essential for supervisees to write reflections on the meeting, as these help them to articulate their new insights. There are at least three weeks between one meeting and the next, and the memory of the last supervision meeting is lost among the multitude of other daily events.

Supervisees are initially reluctant to write reflections, but after a few repetitions, they realise the importance of it. This is particularly evident in their reports:

Only now do I understand the importance of taking notes. I have learnt by reflection and I have seen what we have already tried.

I find reflection necessary because I have been able to identify my blind spots while thinking and writing.

Through reflection, I have come to understand how I experience an encounter “during the encounter” and how I experience it afterwards when I reflect on it again.

The reflections are thus a support for discussion and reflection on how we have put our new insights into practice. If the supervisor has no more topics on which they would like further support, the supervisor presents the agenda and the content of the meeting.

### *Agreeing on the content of the meeting*

The supervisor leads the process and prepares the agenda for each meeting, which is agreed upon by the members in advance. In most cases, this is primarily an agreement on who will present the material and ask the supervision question. At this point, the agreement can also be changed. The supervisor therefore reviews the agreement, formulates who will play which role and then asks the supervisees whether there is another, more topical subject than the material. In agreement with the group, a new work plan can be adopted that responds to the current events that each supervisee is experiencing in practice. If there is a change, everyone must agree, especially the supervisor who was assigned to work on the material. If they allow their material to be postponed to the next meeting, the intended content of the meeting will be changed. Supervisees also have the opportunity to suggest other topics or questions that they would like to think about in more detail.

This shows the flexibility of the supervisor, who co-creates the content and is able to react to and resolve current situations through their way of working. Once the content of the meeting has been agreed, the focus shifts to addressing the situation at hand.

### *Presentation and discussion of the material - asking the supervision question*

This is the central, working stage of the meeting. In this part, the supervisor invites the supervisee to present their material. Most of the time the supervisor asks the supervisee to verbally present the content (rather than read it). Experience shows that this is then the third reflection on the situation. The first time is when the supervisor is thinking about it in preparation for the meeting, the second time is when they write it down and send it to the supervisor, and the third time is when they present it to the group at the meeting. This allows the supervisor to think more deeply about what they

want to discuss, and the telling of the story can open up new topics that are even more relevant to them. The supervisor has 5–10 minutes to describe the situation. The situation should be as specific as possible. It should preferably be topical, and it should be the supervisee's situation (and not someone else's situation). The presentation of the situation should always end with a supervision question, with what the supervisee wants to deal with. If the question is not clear, or if there are several questions within one question, the supervisor helps the supervisee formulate their supervision question as clearly as possible. It is so important that the supervision question is clearly stated when discussing the material, as this will be the basis for the work. If there is a need for more clarification, the supervisor asks the supervisee additional questions aimed at clarifying the situation, e.g. what specifically happened, can you be more specific about how it seemed? Can you be more specific and give an example? Or perhaps a personal explanation: "What is your problem with this?", "I wonder how is this significant to you?"

The supervisor asks questions according to the agreed objectives of the supervision. The supervisor must first ask themselves: "Why am I asking this?", "How is my question related to the goal?", "How will my question help the supervisee to relate their answer to their supervision goal?"

Now the supervisor (depending on the method they choose) may invite other members of the group to ask any additional questions they are interested in. It is important, however, that they keep to the questions (no clarification or discussion) and that these questions are asked in an affirmative way.

In practice, it has been shown that a good supervision question is difficult to ask and that the level of development of the supervisee is clearly visible in this part. Alfred Kadushin (1985) suggests that in the initial work, the supervisee is much more dependent on the supervisor and the group and therefore expects guidance and structure from them. An example of a common supervision question in beginners is: "How should I handle this situation?" This question clearly suggests that the supervisee wants to get advice and is choosing an easier way to learn: "You tell me how." However, as the supervisee develops, the conflict between the supervisee's dependence and au-

tonomy becomes increasingly apparent. The supervisee no longer expects clear instructions and recommendations but becomes increasingly autonomous in their search for desired outcomes. They still expect a personal opinion and feedback from the supervisor and the team, but this is focused on the search for professional competences.

Well-prepared material and a clear question allow the supervisor and the group to express their opinion and points of view and guide the supervisor in the choice of the working method. It also allows the supervisor to set a working goal.

In this part, the supervisor chooses a method to help the supervisee to gain new insights. Methods are a form of deliberate and intentional action towards desired goals. In social work and supervision, methods can be defined as tools for action. They are the signposts that guide us in the process and help us to discover the unknown and the new.

When we start to run supervision processes, structure is very important. Supervisors need knowledge, techniques and methods that give us the tools to work with. But supervision is not just a selection of methods or techniques from a manual, it is an art that each supervisor develops themselves and therefore, as Alenka Kobolt (2006) states, supervision is more than just the application of a technique and the use of a method of work.

Based on a review of the literature (Milošević Arnold, 1999; Kobolt and Žorga, 2000; Kobolt, 2004; Milošević Arnold, 2007; Cajvert, 2001; Ajdukovič, 2009; Henderson, Holloway and Millar, 2014; Ingram, 2015; Howe and Gray, 2014), I was able to show what has an influence on the choice of methods in supervision.

The choice of the method depends on at least five factors: 1) the theoretical framework of supervision, 2) the previous training of the supervisor, 3) the model of supervision, 4) the material presented, and 5) the goals of supervision.

1. Theoretical sources of supervision include psychoanalytically oriented supervision (analytic, Balint groups), supervision of thematically focused groups, group dynamic supervision (group dynamics, analysis of structures, groups, team supervision), supervision focused on the experts by experience based on humanistic psychology, mainly on a non-directive

counselling approach, and aimed primarily at supporting the professional and personal development of the practitioner or supervisee, as well as therapeutically oriented supervision (Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Reality Therapy, etc.). They are used to monitor, reflect on and evaluate practice in the process of educating therapists. These theories give supervision a slightly different theoretical starting point. The emphasis or orientation in the analysis of the supervisees' practical experience also differs slightly. However, the objectives of supervision do not differ significantly from one another given the different theoretical foundations.

2. Where the supervisor trained for a licence.
3. From the supervision model. In the educational model of supervision, the predominant method is conversation, with all the characteristics of good communication. In the educational model, the emphasis is on experiential learning of professional experiences (Žorga, 2004, p. 15; Proctor, 2008), the humanistic model is a supervisee-centred approach (Milošević Arnold, 2007), and the social model integrates all those features of each model that are close to the social work profession. It should adapt flexibly to the needs of individual supervisees, depending on their working environment and the problems they face. The social model has as its central feature the social work relationship and the co-creation of solutions and adopts from other models those features that are most useful in a given situation.
4. From the material presented – what is the supervision question about?
5. From the goals of the supervisor – what is their desired goal?

In supervision, there are a variety of methods developed by many authors and already presented in our environment in Kobolt (2002), Kobolt and Žorga (2000), Vida Milošević Arnold (2004), Šugman Bohinc and Možina (2009) and Videmšek (2018), so I will not repeat them here, but I am sure that every supervisor has their own set of methods that they use in their work. The supervisor is also constantly learning and through the practice of supervision builds

on existing methods and eventually forms their own methods that they use in their work.

After the discussion of the material, an evaluation of the discussed material and the session as a whole takes place.

### *Evaluation of the meeting*

Evaluation is also an important part of the meeting and consists of two parts. First, the supervisor evaluates the objectives they set at the beginning of the meeting and then the course of the meeting itself is evaluated. The evaluation should be a learning process for everyone involved. For the supervisor, the evaluation provides an insight into what they have achieved and what the other members have learnt from them. It is important to follow the rules for giving feedback during the evaluation. The feedback that the supervisor receives from the other group members is very valuable and enables the supervisor to gradually build up a picture of how the group functions and how it is experienced by the other group members.

Evaluation helps the supervisor to recognise their own management style and change it if necessary. This is followed by a transition to the last part, which is about agreeing on the next meeting.

### *Arrangements for the next meeting with distribution of roles*

The agreement to meet again is an integral part of the meeting. Although the dates of the meetings are agreed in advance, it is important to check that the date and time of the next meeting is still valid. As we have set the dates for the whole year in advance, members of the group may have to attend other service activities on the agreed date. It is also necessary to agree on who will present the material and the supervision question for the next meeting. This avoids going to the meeting unprepared and having to wait until the meeting itself to find out who will present the material. At the same time, the preliminary arrangements are an opportunity for the supervisor to reflect on the situation and prepare for the meeting.

This is also the part where we say goodbye. You can ask them what they are leaving the meeting with. We can also repeat the introductory exercise by showing pictures and having them describe how

they feel now. The supervisor should be careful not to bring up new topics in this part. A goodbye ritual should be made with a conclusion that is positive and oriented towards new steps, towards what makes the supervisee happy and what they are looking forward to. The elements presented help us to make supervision guided and structured.

The group members are expected to attend the meetings regularly, be actively involved in the process, bring working materials to the meetings, ask supervision questions, write down reflections on the meetings and give feedback on the work of the group.

The supervisor's task is to lead the process, establish a working relationship, be attentive to the time and make sure that each participant's voice is heard in the process, ensure dialogue between participants, be attentive to the language used, point out when communication between participants is disrespectful and, above all, be attentive to both verbal and non-verbal communication within the group.

The supervisor's primary task is to guide the process in accordance with ethical principles and values.

## **Ethics in supervision**

Ethics is everything, whatever supervision encompasses, it is the "moral landscape", as Penny Henderson, Jim Holloway and Anthea Millar (2014) call it, in which professional work is carried out. If supervision is a reflection on learning, and ethics is a reflection on what we do, then it is easy to see the interconnectedness and conclude that supervision and ethics are inextricably linked. In supervision, learning is based on concrete examples, presenting ethical dilemmas that social workers face in practice. According to Sara Banks (2006, p. 158), such learning takes place on the basis of the abstraction of a particular problem or situation, and these situations are examined at three levels, namely by dividing them into personal, professional, social, religious, by dividing them into ethical, practical, technical, political and by dividing them into emotional and rational. These divisions within supervision processes help to reflect

on the ethical dimensions of situations and to focus on the principles and processes of ethical decision-making. Professional ethics are supported through in-depth reflection and discussion within supervision groups.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 44), supervision has an important influence on the socialisation process for the profession and thus also on the internalisation of ethical norms, which is an essential part of this process. Ethical norms are the guideline for the behaviour of the professional and this, along with emotions and understanding of the professional situation, is what is discussed in supervision. The role of the supervisor is to support this process. Of course, this process cannot take place during training, as this is not the time when prospective professionals have sufficient opportunity to gain direct experience in working with people. This process only takes place later on the job. It is therefore important that supervision gives young professionals the opportunity to learn continuously through their own experiences and those of the members of the supervision team so that they receive the necessary support and have the opportunity to review their work and behaviour in a professional relationship.

Looking at the codes of ethics, we can summarise that the principle of confidentiality has a special place, and it is one of the ethical principles that we pay a lot of attention to in supervision. In addition to the ethical dilemmas that practitioners face in practice, in supervision sessions they reveal the most vulnerable parts of themselves, the distress, doubt, pain and events that have caused them discomfort. In the meetings, they often specifically mention situations that they may not have disclosed to anyone before, so the ethical principle of confidentiality is the basis for the work in supervision.

For the supervisor, therefore, the entire content of the work is ethical. Both what happens in supervision and the way in which the entire process is carried out. Carlton E. Munson (1995, p. 82) argues that ethics in supervision encompasses the way we act as supervisors, how we apply ethical values to our work and how we as supervisors manage the supervision process. In the supervision process, the supervisor takes into account the values of the supervisee, the values of the organisation in which they are supervising and the

ethical principles of the field in which they are supervising. All this enables the supervisor to orient themselves and to know what they have to do. The supervisor must ensure ethical behaviour above all because it is the right thing to do and because they are a role model.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to know the ethical rules of the profession in detail. They must also ensure that all members of the team are aware of the code of ethics of their profession and adhere strictly to it. This should be discussed at the beginning of the supervision process, but also afterwards and whenever dilemmas arise in relation to values, principles and ethics.

It is also the supervisor's duty to point out any irregularities that they may detect in the practitioner's work. It is unethical for a supervisor not to point out irregularities or even to overlook them. Tanja Rožič (2015, p. 219) adds that in addition to warning, the *duty to warn* is also important if we discover a threat to a particular person during supervision, who must therefore be warned and protected. This is particularly relevant in supervision for areas of work with victims of violence or mental health. It is therefore mandatory for the supervisor to alert the supervisee to situations where it would be appropriate to apply the duty to warn in order to protect the potential victim. Carlton E. Munson (1995, p. 92) argues that the supervisor should do this sensitively and constructively, and not overlook the possible reluctance of social workers to engage in such dialogue.

Supervision practice shows that many problems can be solved with the help of a code of ethics, if its provisions are continuously linked to concrete situations in practice. In Slovenia, supervisors are obliged to follow the *Code of Ethical Principles in Social Care* (2014), which was adopted by the Social Chamber of Slovenia in 1995. Thus, professionals entering into supervision processes are primarily guided by the principles of ethics and the common good in order to protect themselves and others from inappropriate use of professional work and social power. They must delineate their work from ideological, personal and institutional influences and interests that might interfere with their professional judgement as to whether their work is genuinely helping the individual or merely representing interests that are inconsistent with the principles of professional assistance (Article 2, *Code of Ethical Principles in Social Care*, 2014).

The Code also directly mentions supervision and obliges practitioners to build on the knowledge they have acquired, or, as stated in Article 20:

Social care workers improve their professional skills and develop their personality and sense of compassion for their fellow human beings in need. In doing so, they engage in supervision and other forms of professional support that help them to strengthen their professional and human approach to users.

In addition to *the Code of Ethical Principles in Social Care*, supervision is also mentioned in the *Code of Ethics for Social Workers* (1997), which mentions supervision in two places. Article 21 states that the social worker shall engage in forms of supervision and otherwise cooperate with colleagues as well as with other professionals as appropriate. However, it is obligatory to consult with them,

if, in the course of their work, they are faced with any professional dilemma, or

if there is a likelihood that not consulting others would be harmful to the user.

Article 25 states:

the social worker continuously verifies and improves their professional knowledge and skills through self-education, cooperation with colleagues, supervision and other formal and informal forms of education. Formal education is a prerequisite for professional work, and continuing education is a prerequisite for professional performance.

We can conclude that the *Code of Ethics for Social Workers of Slovenia* provides a normative basis for the development of supervision. On the one hand, the codes can be understood as an ethical obligation of social workers, whereby the codes are aimed at the direct benefit of the experts by experience of distress (also by the professional's continuous education), and on the other hand, as a moral obligation of the organisation to ensure that supervision is carried out in the work environment. Supervision is seen as one of the specific forms of continuous learning, which ensures that the practitioner, in cooperation with others, including the supervisor, seeks alternative

solutions to the situation at hand.

The codes also indicate the right of social workers to seek and receive help. Supervision practice has shown that it is often only through supervision that members really understand the meaning of the codes of ethics and the difficulty of ethical dilemmas, which they resolve on the fly with the help of the group and the supervisor, and that professional ethics are sharpened and made more concrete through supervision discussions. Supervision is thus a space that allows for discussions about the norms and values that guide our practice and the choices that social workers make in their daily work. Ana Marija Sobočan (2011, p. 208) argues that the discussion of ethical decision-making and behaviour in social work is crucial as it is linked to social work's commitment to values such as equality, justice, etc. However, social work as a profession can only strengthen its identity, role and meaning if it persistently pursues the goals that constitute its value base.

There is no doubt that social workers face many ethical dilemmas in practice, as they are constantly at the intersection between their responsibility to experts by experience on the one hand, and the needs of the community on the other, and between the demands and expectations of the state. Vida Milošević Arnold (1999, p. 42) therefore asks whether supervision is about applying and respecting all the professional ethics of the professionals involved in the supervision process at a new, higher qualitative level, or whether there is a specific ethics of supervision.

Ana Marija Sobočan (2011) shows that the issue of ethics and social work is becoming more and more interesting and scientifically resonant, as evidenced by the numerous revisions of codes of ethics, the flux of articles, monographs and handbooks, and the fact that ethics is becoming a central theme of world congresses (including the 7th Congress of Social Work in Slovenia, for example). We are also witnessing more and more specialisations of fields and the creation of specific codes of ethics for individual fields - this can be considered as specificity. The ethical norms that apply in supervision are thus specifically mentioned in the codes of the individual professional groups.

The first code of ethics in the field of supervision was adopted

in 1993 in the USA, by the *Supervision Interest Network*, as a result of the awareness of the supervisor's responsibilities and expectations of their role, which is different from other professional roles. The development of this code has contributed to individual professional groups or associations developing their own codes of ethics for supervisors, e.g. *Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy*; *Association of Cooperative and Counselling Therapists in Canada Code of Ethics for Supervisors*; *Professional Organizations' Codes of Ethics On Supervision and Psychotherapy and Counseling ZUR Institute*; *American Counseling Association – Professional Organizations' Codes of Ethics On Supervision in Psychotherapy and Counseling* (2014).

The development of codes of ethics has also contributed to the development of ethical standards for supervision. The *National Association of Social Workers* (NASW) has developed *Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision*, and in Slovenia, the *Ethical Guidelines for Supervisors* have been formulated by the Association for Supervision, Coaching and Organisational Consulting.

A key common feature of codes of ethics could be that most codes of ethics express the importance of respecting the individual (their uniqueness, dignity, autonomy) and of promoting the self-determination of experts by experience (the right to choose). Thus, with regard to ethical conduct in supervision, it can be argued on the one hand that essentially the same is true for supervision as is true for the professional relationship in the profession. It is the social worker's duty to look after the well-being of the expert by experience. In supervision processes, the supervisor ensures that the professional receives the appropriate support to work well for the benefit of the expert by experience. Within this, of course, there is the question of the ethics of confidentiality and the right to privacy. Confidentiality is thus one of the ethical principles that receives the most attention in supervision, and it can be argued that ethics in supervision also has its own specificities that are typical for the supervision relationship. Ajda Eiselt (2011, p. 5) argues that what ethical reflection and supervision have in common is that they need a space, an atmosphere of trust, in which one dares to let go and talk about experiences and reflections about anything while talking about fears, shame and satisfaction. Both give meaning to something deeper and lead to the main human values.

The specificity lies in the specific attitudes and practices in supervision. In the supervision sessions, the supervisee presents situations that happen to them in practice in the relationship between them and the expert by experience. The supervisor has to be careful about several things in this relationship. Firstly, to make sure that the supervisor in their recounting does not reveal the privacy of the experts by experience they are working with. Secondly, it is important to make sure that the supervisor is adequately supported and that the level of the supervisor-supervisee relationship is maintained. They must ensure that supervision does not become therapy. They must also make sure that whatever is revealed in the supervision meeting stays there.

Supervision is therefore not subject to specific ethical principles, but to those that guide the relationship between the expert by experience and the practitioner. Sometimes these principles are renamed as rules in supervision and written as such in the supervision agreement. Vida Milošević Arnold (1999) argues that the social work profession has a number of core principles that should guide practitioners in their work and in their relationships with experts by experience. All of these principles are equally valid in the supervisory relationship. These principles are: self-determination, self-help, acceptance, confidentiality and individualisation. All of these principles can be said to have an ethical dimension since they are in fact about respect for the personality of the supervisee (acceptance, confidentiality, individualisation) and trust in their professional and personal competence (self-determination, self-help).

Ethics in supervision also has some specificities due to the supervision session, where the supervisor presents situations from practice, which are always dealt with on three levels in supervision. At the cognitive level, the personal values of the professional are at work, often strongly influencing the judgement of the expert by experience and guiding professional actions, but not always in line with professional values. At the emotional level, dilemmas of accountability can arise – to what extent is the practitioner accountable for the decisions made by the expert by experience? Is it a case of taking too much responsibility for oneself and thus not recognising the competence of the expert by experience? This includes addressing

boundary issues and over- or under-identification with the expert by experience, as well as issues of empathy towards them. All of the above also has its ethical dimensions, as it reflects respect for human dignity and respect for human autonomy.

Another specificity is that the supervisor is obliged to deal in an appropriate way with the unethical behaviour of those involved in the supervision process. When the supervisor finds that the supervisee's behaviour towards the experts by experience is inappropriate, they first make an enquiry about the supervisee's performance. They ask further questions. On the one hand, it is a question of protecting the reputation of the profession, which is a moral duty of all its members. On the other hand, it is also the responsibility of the supervisor, who is often the first to know about such actions and must react accordingly. The debate on this must be open, objective, serious and appropriately sensitive. More importantly, the supervisor must be able to respond appropriately when the supervisee's behaviour is ethically problematic. Supervision helps the supervisee to recognise and understand differences and to maintain distance so that their own values and prejudices do not compromise professional objectivity.

Carlton E. Munson (1995, p. 90) argues that it is the social worker's duty to critically analyse and regularly review new findings relevant to social work. The supervisor has a duty to encourage and endeavour to contribute to such critical appraisal and ongoing monitoring of developments in the profession (Munson, 1995, p. 90).

Hank Hanekamp (1993) argues that supervision is a game of learning by linking two realities: the reality of external perception and the reality of internal experience. It is the reality of our desires, dreams and awareness. Tanja Rožič (2015, p. 217) wrote:

The supervisor helps their supervisee to understand and feel how their newfound inner world can strengthen their stance towards experts by experience in a way that is both personal and professional. In doing so, the supervisor is essentially concerned with boundaries; as the supervisee comes to know themselves and their inner self, the supervisor provides a framework within which their inner worlds with the experts by experience "intertwine" but do not "entangle".

The supervisor has to pay attention to everything, including the details that spontaneously arise and influence the work of the group, in order to recognise how everything is intertwined. This helps them to maintain good, trusting relationships, to be alert to small events that can shake trust in the group and upset the balance of the group. Rarely, everything is immediately clear and obvious. There can be a lot of uncertainty, confusion and strong conflicting feelings, which is why much of the literature on supervision is associated with the word ethics (e.g. dilemmas, injustice, breach of confidentiality, poor leadership, issues of concern, complaints, abuse).

Supervision is thus a space for the supervisee to reflect on themselves and an opportunity to articulate their feelings and voice their dilemmas.

The specificity of supervision also lies in the number of members who are confronted with a variety of ethical dilemmas. Codes of ethics for supervisors often address the issue of dual roles and boundaries in the relationship between supervisor and supervisee as well as between the group members themselves. It is unethical for the supervisor and the supervisee to be in a relationship with each other. The supervisor must ensure that they maintain ethical, professional, personal and social relationships with the members of the supervision team. The supervisor must avoid unprofessional relationships with the members of their group. In the Slovenian context, this provision seems almost impossible, but that is precisely why it is important to discuss it in the group. In the group supervision, it should be discussed whether we can have private meetings outside the supervision – for whatever purpose, how to talk about the group then, it should be agreed how it is possible to have dual roles (is someone a leader and a member, or maybe two in the group are a couple, etc.). When setting up the group it is necessary to disclose any reservations, fears, dilemmas or concerns about the dual role. Expectations and reservations need to be shared and the supervisor needs to be very clear, ethical and respectful of the principle of confidentiality in the group in the relationship between themselves and the supervisor and the group members, despite any familiarity with them. Any kind of conversation outside the group is not permitted. The supervisor must bear in mind that the purpose of supervision is

to improve the quality of the social worker's work and not to socialise with each other.

We know that everyone has good intentions, that we can very well establish rules of engagement, but we also know from practice that these rules are often broken, so it is the supervisor's job not to overlook, not to overhear and not to deny them. It is the supervisor's responsibility to have a clear ethical attitude. It happens, for example:

#### Example 1

"At one meeting or another, I was approached by a supervisor who said that what we talk about in the group is also known to other employees because one of the members reports on our work."

#### Example 2

"At one meeting or another, I received news that two members of the group got closer and became a couple. The member is concerned that this will affect the group dynamic, but they are concerned that once they are together, they will continue to discuss our cases and perhaps make comments about the group members."

The supervisor is of course obliged to point this out. Discuss it and rewrite the agreement. If the matter is too personal and upsetting for the other members, they are also obliged to say that one of the members of the couple must leave the group.

### Example 3

In a group session with seven members, one of them, I will call her Mary, took every opportunity to talk about herself. She took too much time to describe her problems and quickly shifted the focus from the supervisor to herself. In one of the meetings, when it was time to say how she saw the situation, she took on the role of the victim again and started talking about herself and her experiences. Another member then became angry and said that she needed to work through these things with her therapist and not always burden the group with her personal problems.

When it is recognised that the group is not functioning well, for example, because of too much emotional involvement or too much alienation, it is the role of the supervisor to take on the role of “fixer” and revisit the agreements and goals they have set for themselves (Proctor, 2008, p. 124). They remind the group of the agreement, facilitate a discussion about the situation (they must not allow it to go undiscussed) and, if necessary, add new general rules for the way the group functions (including those not previously agreed) and the group must agree on different levels of responsibility. Once the group has renegotiated, members have the option to leave the group (in the case of a superior/subordinate relationship, the supervisor usually suggests that the superior leaves the group).

While we must always treat all members of the group equally, we recognise that not all members are the same. They are different in many dimensions, and this allows group members to learn from diversity. If there is a member of the group who is particularly vulnerable, the supervisor needs to recognise this.

If the supervisor realises that supervision is ineffective or even harmful, they must articulate this and address the problem. Of course, to achieve this, care must always be taken in the group to systematically allocate time and space for the members of the supervision group (so that everyone has roughly the same amount of time to speak so that they all come forward with their case so that everyone is heard).

The complexity and demanding nature of the helping professions, which are based on a personal relationship with people, require constant examination of the social worker's own professional views and the implications of their actions for experts by experience and themselves.

Hank Hanekamp (1994) wrote that supervision and ethics are not a science. They are an art. They are creative because they teach and "let teach", they live and let live. Everything that happens in supervision is so closely linked to ethics. Everything that happens in the meeting is the reality of the concrete situation with which the supervisor is confronted in their work. We can therefore say with certainty that supervision embodies ethics because it gives it substance and also form. It shows that ethics is not technical but practical and that ethics is everything that happens in practice. Supervision is proof that ethical behaviour is not learned from books and reading literature, but from practice. Ethical behaviour is learned by example and by behaviour so the supervisor is often a role model for ethical attitudes and behaviour.



## CHAPTER SIX

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE AS PROTECTION AGAINST COMPASSION FATIGUE

*“All men should desire to live most happily, and should know that they cannot so live in any other way than by cultivating the soul, and yet leave the soul uncultivated.”* (Foucault, 1986, p. 45).

The main purpose of supervision is to support social workers in coping with the many challenges that practice brings, to acquire the competences to cope effectively with the challenges. As supervision is usually carried out in monthly meetings, supervision alone cannot be sufficient for social workers to work effectively. Even during this time, social workers need support and self-care, as social work involves daily occupational risks. In this chapter I will answer how the idea of self-care developed, why self-care is important in social work and what are the practices that can be used in social work practice. Self-care is essential for the ethical execution of social work.

On a daily basis, social workers are confronted with various traumatic stories of people who find themselves at an impasse. On the one hand, the narratives of situations of people facing multiple challenges and, on the other hand, the helplessness of social workers in dealing with these situations, represent a high level of exposure to risk. Too often, good and desirable outcomes do not depend on their professional work and the relationship they establish with the people they are working with, but are the result of social inequality and injustice as well as inappropriate distribution of the services that people need.

These are extremely stressful situations for social workers, who have very limited resources and opportunities to help people with personal experiences of distress. Social workers are thus exposed to stressful events on a daily basis and rarely see change. This results in high levels of work stress that can lead to burnout (Payne, 2001; Alkema, Linton and Davies, 2008). Burnout is not a contemporary

phenomenon. Signs of burnout have been recognised in the “friendly visitors”- volunteers who were assigned to care to families to offer personal support. Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014) showed that burnout manifested itself in their cases mainly at a relational level, in a reluctance to go and visit their families again – in avoiding contact, in superficial relationships.

In the 1970s, the burnout syndrome began to be studied in more detail, among the first by Herbert J. Freudenberger (1974), Ayala Pines and Christina Maslach (1978). Burnout was defined as a transnational phenomenon, as a syndrome of physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from workplace stress and involving the development of a negative self-image, a negative approach to work and a loss of interest in work. Ayala Pines and Christina Maslach (1978, p. 233) define burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal fulfilment that is present among social workers. Alfred Kadushin and Daniel Harkness (2014) add that the symptoms of burnout can be expressed at three levels, namely at the physical level (social workers are more susceptible to feeling cold, have recurrent headaches and sleep disturbances), the emotional level (social workers experience frustration at work and alienation from work) and the attitudinal level (reluctance to go to work, increased fatigue, absenteeism from work). According to the authors (2014, p. 195), the attitudinal level manifests itself mainly in the interaction with people at work. For example, social workers avoid eye contact, increase physical distance when working with a person who is an expert by experience, subtly try to prevent these people from expressing their feelings and try to finish their work as quickly as possible. Physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion make them increasingly impatient when working with people.

From the first mention of burnout to the present day, burnout and the study of workplace stress have become a hot topic, so it is not surprising to find numerous book chapters, articles and testimonies dealing with this very topic. Kathleen Cox and Sue (2013) suggest that burnout is rooted in social work management, which is characterised by high work demands, low personal rewards and minimal support. Research (Maslach and Michael, 2005; Jenaro, Flores and

Arias, 2007; Alkema, Linton and Davies, 2008) shows that burnout is the result of a lack of congruence between expectations of the profession and the actual work. The mismatch could be divided into three categories, namely personal (motivation for change that rarely happens, invisible work, community that gives poor recognition to the work), organisational – overload, excessive and extensive work, too many cases for one social worker, poor organisation of support, valuation of work, low pay for the work done, and structural (social workers have a high level of accountability with limited power/influence, lack of financial support for programmes, lack of influence over the work done). Burnout is a feeling of lack of support, too much work and a feeling that nothing changes despite efforts and is the result of being involved in such a situation for a long time.

As social work is a specialised profession that is very demanding due to the nature of the work – daily and direct contact with experts by experience, who need help and support to cope with the many challenges – supervision and self-care are essential tools to avoid what is called *compassion fatigue*. Compassion fatigue is not to be confused with burnout. Compassion fatigue is the result of secondary exposure to traumatic experiences, often defined as “*vicarious trauma*”. It occurs when social workers are exposed to the trauma of the people they work with over an extended period of time. It is certainly a specific feature of social work that, more often than in other helping professions, social workers identify with the stories of their interlocutors, and that communication often involves a direct relationship with and empathy for the emotional states of the people with whom they work (empathy). This empathic understanding of narratives, however, can lead to compassion fatigue, which has become an increasingly relevant topic in relation to social work over the last decade (Bride and Figley, 2007; Rourke, 2007; Radey and Figley, 2007). Compassion fatigue is a direct reaction to a specific experience in performing the work. Melissa Radley and Charles R. Figley (2007) define compassion as a deep knowledge and awareness of the suffering of others in order to find ways to improve the life situation of their interlocutor. Compassion fatigue, they argue, is the result of prolonged engagement with people who find themselves at an impasse and are facing multiple challenges.

Compassion fatigue could be defined as the emotional and physiological reaction of a professional to stress, resulting from a prolonged empathic and compassionate involvement with an individual with a trauma experience, and not only as a result of empathic experience. Charles R. Figley (1995) argues that compassion fatigue refers to a range of psychological and physical symptoms as a response by social workers to the narratives of people experiencing a variety of traumatic events, such as psychological and physical violence, sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide, unexpected death of loved ones, etc. According to Kathleen Cox and Sue (2018), psychological symptoms of secondary traumatic stress include depression, anxiety, fear, shame, emotional numbing, doubt, poor self-image, and an intrusive or overlooked memory of the trauma expert's personal experience. Physical symptoms are manifested as increased heart rate, sleep disturbances, impaired immune system, and research has shown high mortality rates in the helping professions (Beaton and Murphy, 1995).

It is precisely because of the dispersed and complex nature of the work, because social work always requires a high level of commitment to change people's lives, but because of the limited chances of success this rarely happens, that regular supervision and self-care is invaluable. Social workers are more likely to experience a range of symptoms that may be similar to those of burnout (with feelings of hopelessness and difficulty doing the job), secondary stress disorders (with sleep disturbances, traumatic memories, nightmares, mental fatigue, chronic irritability, anger outbursts, attention problems), or compassion fatigue.

In view of all the recognised effects of stress experienced by social workers during their work, and in particular secondary stress disorder, and in order to prevent risk, more and more attention is being paid not only to supervision but also to self-care, where self-care is always a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment in which they work. The individual as a conscious subject – the self – is always part of the system. It starts with personal motives (including why we have chosen this profession),<sup>40</sup> but

---

<sup>40</sup> Ana Freud remarked that choosing to become a psychotherapist was one of the most sophisticated defence mechanisms that allowed her to evaluate herself.

personal motives and self-care are always interdependent with the environment in which we work.

I would like to emphasise that caring for oneself is not only the responsibility of the individual, but above all that of the working environment in which the social worker is employed. In the helping professions, caring for others often means giving up one's own needs in order to care for oneself. On a daily basis, social workers empower their clients, but not themselves. There are several reasons for this. From not recognising what is happening to them because they are too concerned about others, to believing that they can cope, perhaps thinking that everything is happening to them and attributing it to their own hypersensitivity, etc. To do a good job professionally, it is definitely necessary to take care of oneself first and foremost. I start from the premise that only good self-care, which of course includes a broader context – a suitable environment that allows for self-care – leads to quality work and helps prevent burnout in the workplace. And I see burnout as an interaction between the environment in which the individual works and the individual.

Self-care is a multi-level process. At the micro-level, it means personal commitment and awareness of the importance of self-care (how the social worker can take care of themselves and recognise what is happening to them); at the mezzo-level, self-care is intertwined with relationships with others and means the organisation of the conditions for self-care (how the organisation of work can contribute to self-care: e.g. by relieving the pressure on the social worker, by facilitating supervision meetings, by spreading the workload evenly etc., thus the institution contributes to a culture of valuing self-care) and, at the macro-level, structural awareness (the need to establish standards and norms that allow sufficient time for social work to be carried out). The philosophy of the whole work environment should be based on positive psychology, which Majda Rijavec and Dubrovka Miljković (2006, p. 621) note explores the conditions and processes that contribute to the optimal functioning of individuals, groups and institutions.

A large part of social work consists of dealing with the misfortune of other people. We often only realise this when we are not very effective in our work, when we start to burn out. This chapter is a

contribution to overcoming the paradox that in the helping professions, the people who help others usually do not have the time to take care of themselves.

Supervision helps supervisees to become more aware of their skills and helps to give meaning to what they do. It is designed to help supervisees develop a sense of their own competence. This protects the care of their work and self, even when they are overwhelmed by feelings of incompetence, professional lack of self-awareness or a sense of hopelessness. Supervision is designed to valuation the work that social workers do.

Conducting supervision processes shows time and again that social workers have a wealth of skills and competences in dealing with the most complex situations, so it is important that social workers in particular see themselves as a source of strength (something they often pay attention to in people with personal experiences) and begin to apply to themselves the concepts that are a fundamental guide for working with people with personal experiences. To see themselves as someone with a source of strength (survival strategies), a style of care that enables them to cope in precarious situations, and to realise that they are not alone in this situation, that they can seek help when the going gets tough.

I would like social workers to recognise the need for self-care, especially so that they can continue to make a difference in changing the lives of people facing many challenges. To recognise the value of their commitment to change, how diverse their knowledge is and how many skills they have. In this way, compassion fatigue could be replaced by compassion satisfaction. Hudnall B. Stamm (2005) defines compassion satisfaction as the pleasure of doing a job. A particular feature of the social work profession is that there are no pre-given answers. We explore these again and again with each individual, each individual facing their challenges, and co-create a work plan of support that the professional needs in their personal experience of adversity for the fruition of possibilities. In fact, compassion satisfaction is linked to seeing progress in our work with people, paying attention to small changes and recognising the positive effects of co-creating solutions with each individual we work with. Charles

Radley Figley (2007)<sup>41</sup> argues that achieving compassion satisfaction requires an approach and activities that encourage and support the positive effects of the work. This is not just a matter for the social worker but for the whole team. The promotion of self-care and the organisation of supervision meetings can be possible activities to achieve this.

## The development of a self-care culture

Self-care is not a new idea. Michel Foucault (1984) shows in his works<sup>42</sup> that self-care is actually an old theme that was widespread in Greek culture (p. 471). Foucault (2007, p. 267) notes that for the Greeks, the instruction of “self-care” was one of the most important principles of the city-states, one of the most important rules of behaviour in social and private life, and one of the cornerstones of the way of life. The moral principle of “know thyself” was thus prevalent throughout ancient Greece. In the author’s view, the principle of “know thyself” was not an abstract maxim as far as life was concerned; it was a kind of technical advice, a rule to be followed when consulting the oracle.

The basic idea was that each individual should pay attention to themselves and deal with themselves. It is about developing what Michel Foucault (1984, p. 471) calls a “self-care culture”, in which the relationship with the self is strengthened and better valued. To take care of oneself is to know oneself. Self-knowledge becomes the object for which self-care is pursued.

Michel Foucault (1984, p. 471) characterised self-care culture by the fact that the art of living – *techne tou biou* in its various forms – is subordinated to the principle of “taking care of the self”; it is this principle of self-care that justifies its necessity, prescribes its

---

<sup>41</sup> While the author studied compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction among psychotherapists, his findings can also be applied to the field of social work.

<sup>42</sup> Michel Foucault wrote about the importance of self-care in his trilogy *Zgodovina seksualnosti* [The History of Sexuality] (1984) and in *Življenje in prakse svobode, Izbrani spisi* [The Life and Practices of Freedom, Selected Writings] (2007). In both works, Foucault outlines the origins of the principle of self-care.

development and the organisation of its execution.

The culture of self-care was consolidated by Socrates' philosophy of the art of living, based on dialogism. Socrates shows the young man of honour that he is very presumptuous when he wants to take responsibility for the state, when he wants to give it advice and compete with the Spartan kings or the Persian rulers, if he has not first learnt what he needs to know in order to rule: he must first deal with himself – and do it while he is still young, because “it will be too late at fifty”. He showed that people must care not for their wealth, not for their honour, but for their selves, for their souls (Foucault 1984, p. 472). Taking care of yourself means knowing yourself and not assuming that you have all the answers.

The principle of the care of the self means not only getting to know oneself, but also dealing with oneself. Self-care is about change, about finding the right path, which requires a whole range of tasks that allow new insights to be gained. It means transformation, a constant search and transformation in the sense of never abandoning oneself. To care for oneself means to watch over oneself, not because of any shortcomings, but above all because one is free to decide and free to dispose of oneself and one's actions. Foucault (1984, p. 476) wrote:

Reason is the faculty that enables one to use, at the right time and in the right way, the other faculties. In fact, it is this absolutely singular faculty that is capable of making use of itself, for it is capable of “contemplating both itself and everything else.”

A culture of self-care includes fundamental principles. Michel Foucault (1984, p. Foucault (1984, p. 473) argues that the rule of taking care of oneself is certainly an imperative that appears in many different teachings; it has also taken over the way we behave, it has permeated our ways of life, it has evolved into procedures, skills and guidelines that have been studied, developed, refined and taught; it has thus shaped social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, exchanges and communication between them, and sometimes even institutions; and finally, this rule has given rise to a certain way of knowing and developing knowledge.

An important observation of the author is that taking care of

oneself is a so-called dispensary for the soul. “The philosopher’s school is a doctor’s surgery; when we leave it, we must not feel that we have enjoyed it, but that we have suffered” (Foucault, 1984, p. 485). Taking care of oneself means changing, it means dealing with what could have been otherwise, and it means facing one’s pain. All with the aim of bringing the individual to the sovereignty and independence of care. It is therefore about always being in harmony with oneself. The author stressed that taking care of the self can be achieved through a wide variety of exercises and practices. According to him, the philosophy of care should be taken as a constant exercise in self-care. Foucault (1984, p. 474) argues that we should never spare our strength to “make ourselves”, “transform ourselves”, “return to ourselves”. Man must take care of himself: but not because of any deficiency that would put him in a state of want, but in order to take himself as an object of study. Self-care is a principle that applies to everyone, throughout life, and means purifying oneself through practices that lead to improvement. Self-care requires a certain amount of effort and also time. One of the main problems with self-care is precisely the latter, namely how to determine the portion of the day or life that should be devoted to it.

This principle of self-care requires not only a certain general attitude on the part of the individual, but a whole series of tasks that would be empowering in terms of self-care. When I wrote that self-care takes time, the first thing to consider is when in the context of organised work such activities could be undertaken. It could be before or after a work activity, it could be during a break. But it is important to have this time available, to set aside a few moments for reflection, to take stock of what needs to be done (or what has been done), to turn inwards.

John Norcross and James Guy (2007) add that in the field of working with people, taking care of oneself should be an ethical imperative. The *Code of Ethics* (2008) of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) provide guidance to social workers that it is the responsibility of social workers to meet the need to care for themselves as well as for their colleagues. This transfers the care of the self to the environment and not only to the shoulders of the individual. When a social worker recognises in themselves or in a

colleague an impairment, a reduced effectiveness in dealing with complex situations, or a chronic distress related to work, the social worker is advised to consult with their colleagues, and is supported to use “remedial action” (NASW, 2008).

Michel Foucault’s (1984, p. 481) important insight is that self-care was not an individual practice, but a communal practice connected to other people and the environment. It is a principle that applies to everyone, throughout life. Self-care is not an exercise in solitude, but a social practice that has been shaped by institutional structures. A universally recognised hierarchy imposed on those who were most advanced the duty to lead others (either individually or collectively). There were group exercises that allowed the individual to get help from others in dealing with themselves. This exercise was called rescuing with the help of others.

Self-care allows us to reflect on events, to take stock of our past, to look at our past actions, to familiarise ourselves with the case, to look at how we want to act, what our good practise has been in the past and what we want to be guided by (what has worked well), and to find the key principles for rational behaviour based on existing experience and knowledge.

A review of the literature (Foucault, 1984, 2007; Cox and Stainer, 2013; El-Osta et al., 2019) shows that today we are witnessing an increasing number of handbooks and advice, but more and more often self-care is becoming an ideology that, in a neoliberal world, places the responsibility on the individual to take care of the self, rather than organising an environment where such care is facilitated. This is evident from the many definitions of self-care. To follow, I would like to present, on the basis of a literature review, how social workers can bring self-care into their everyday activities. Indeed, recent research (Frigley, 2007; Alkema, Linton and Davis, 2008; Cox and Stainer, 2013) shows alarming data on how quickly and frequently compassion fatigue occurs in workplaces related to supporting and helping people in need, making the introduction of the principle of self-care almost a necessity. And learning to care for oneself must start while studying.

## Understanding the need for self-care – why the cobbler’s children go barefoot

Many social workers choose the profession out of a desire to care for others and improve the social situation of disadvantaged groups<sup>43</sup>. Karen Alkema, Jeremy M. Linton and Randall Davis (2008) show in a study conducted in the field of palliative care, in which both health care workers and social workers participated, that social workers are good at caring for others but have no time for themselves.

The priorities are other than themselves. Charles R. Frigley (2007) came to a similar conclusion, arguing that psychiatrists take poor care of themselves. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2018) show that social work students are well equipped throughout their studies with the knowledge to act, they learn methods for working with the individual, the group, the family, the community, they know how to use the skills they have been taught, but what they are not so well prepared for and what they lack is the knowledge of how to take care of themselves. Recognising this fact, a growing body of research (Moore, Bledsoe, Perry and Robinson, 2011; Newell and Nelson-Gardell, 2014) has focused on examining curricula and reviewing how social work students are already supported and taught about self-care during their studies, highlighting changes and what needs to change. The research is based on the assumption that there is no effective social work without social work students in particular, and the social workers of the future, taking care of themselves.

Learning about the importance of taking care of oneself should therefore start during studies, as during this period students take on a wide range of tasks, both in practical training and in the study process, which can cause them high levels of stress. For this reason, it is important to provide support and opportunities for students to reflect on daily events and practice at the educational level. Accor-

---

<sup>43</sup> I deliberately use the term disadvantaged groups rather than vulnerable groups or individuals. Research clearly shows that, for example, people with disabilities are not inherently vulnerable, but suffer from an imposed disadvantage and from the organisation of society that does not allow for equal inclusion of all members of society, hence they are disadvantaged. Disadvantaged groups experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population (Videmšek, 2020).

ding to Moore, Bledsoe, Perry and Robinson (2013) and Newell and Nelson-Gardell (2014), reflection has been shown to underpin the competence acquisition and professional development of social work students. This is because social work students are additionally exposed to stressful situations during their practical training and therefore need mentoring where they have the opportunity to process these situations and present their own participation in the process of working with people with personal experiences. In the spirit of Foucault's care of the self,<sup>44</sup> the more experienced social worker thus takes on a guiding and learning role.

Petra Videmšek and Tadeja Kodele (2019, p. 260) argue that students learn from own experience how to act as social workers and what people who are experts by experience expect from them. Similarly, Tadeja Kodele and Nina Mešl (2015, p. 170) argue that during practical training, students create opportunities for themselves to form their own professional identity and are able to critically self-reflect when reviewing their experience in practical training. At the Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, we have a good support system for students during their internship. This support is reflected in mentoring, both at the Faculty of Social Work and in the social work placement (at the learning base where the student is doing their placement). In the mentoring groups, which take place regularly and are led by a mentor from the Faculty of Social Work, students have the opportunity to reflect on current events, talk about dilemmas they face when carrying out tasks, and share their experiences of working with people with personal experiences. The mentor is available to support the students in dealing with different situations, to encourage them to take new steps and, above all, to guard them against possible mistakes and other consequences of inexperience.

Mentoring groups, both at the Faculty of Social Work and at the learning bases, have proved to be excellent support in learning self-care. However, what could deserve more attention is the organisational aspect of the mentoring groups. The existing groups of 15

---

<sup>44</sup> The generally recognised hierarchy places the duty of leading others (either individually or collectively) on those who have been promoted to the highest positions.

or even 20 students do not allow for in-depth reflection. It would be desirable to have smaller groups that could function as mentoring groups. The mentors could guide the supervision process in a year-long collaboration with the students through the individual phases of the supervision process and apply elements of a supervision session in concrete meetings. In this way, the students would gain experience in guiding supervision processes and in the actual sessions they would acquire skills for reflection and recognise the importance of supervision for self-care. In this way, they could consolidate the skills they have already acquired, gain new skills and at the same time gain an insight into where they are on the path to achieving their goals and experience much-needed emotional relief.

Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2018) show that social workers are most surprised by the challenging emotional work with disadvantaged groups. Emotional labour can affect social workers' mental health, physical well-being and, not least, interpersonal relationships. Research (Figley, 1995; Bride and Figley, 2007; Rourke, 2007; Radley and Figley, 2007; Alkema, Linton and Davies, 2008; Cox and Stainer, 2018) shows the serious consequences of the prolonged stress that social workers experience when working with people.

The term stress is normally used to describe physical symptoms caused by increased tension. A certain amount of stress is normal, as it helps us to cope with the challenges of everyday life. However, too much stress causes unpleasant reactions in the body (Battison, 1999). I could simply write that stress is a normal reaction of a professional to an event. Stress is a physiological, psychological and behavioural response of an individual trying to adapt and adjust to internal and external stimuli – stressors. This stressor can be an event, a person or an object that the individual experiences as a stressor (Dernovšek, Gorenc and Jeriček, 2006).

Every social worker reacts to stress in different ways. One and the same event can be a stressor for one person and an incentive for another. The reaction depends on the individual's personality, experience, social network and other circumstances (Cox and Stainer, 2013). If the individual feels they can cope with the situation, the stress encourages them to continue the activity and the stress is stimulating and experienced positively. If, on the other hand, the

individual feels that the situation is beyond their ability to cope with the challenges, they experience this as negative and it discourages them from endeavouring to change. Stress is therefore not always negative and bad. It can also be positive. But regardless, stressed professionals are put to the test and it is important that they have the opportunity to reflect on these events. Indeed, research (Treven, 2005; Radley and Figley 2007; Alkema, Linton and Davies, 2008; Cox and Stainer, 2018) clearly shows that the inability to reflect on events, and especially when stressful events are prolonged and psychological stressors are more frequent, has a detrimental effect on the body. The consequences that a professional may experience are therefore manifold. They can be physiological (headaches, high blood pressure, heart disease, back problems, etc.), psychological (insomnia, phobias, depression, burnout syndrome, etc.) or behavioural (excessive smoking, craving for alcohol, consumption of illegal substances, eating disorders, etc.). According to Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013), chronic stress can also lead to suppression of emotions, muscle weakness and “diseases of civilisation”, including diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, heart attacks and dermatological problems.

In addition to the psychological effects mentioned above, a common response to stress is behavioural. High levels of workplace stress result in impulsivity, lower levels of tolerance towards others and aggression, both verbal and physical (Vigoda, 2002). Workplace stress can also lead to so-called counterproductive behavioural responses, such as lack of desire to cooperate, stopping efforts, lying, threatening, sabotage (Panny and Spector, 2003, p. 777).

Stress is not just a medical condition, but a web of physical, mental and emotional feelings resulting from pressure, worry and fear. Stress among social workers is linked to the many risks to which social workers are exposed daily, even several times a day. It is any change that professionals must adapt to by activating their strengths. It can be a challenge, a burden or a task that needs to be solved or reconciled. Stress is also any unexpected event that alters normal activities and requires corresponding changes in the individual’s behaviour.

According to Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984), stress is a process that occurs when an individual perceives that events in their environment have exceeded their capabilities and have disrupted their health (1984, p. 21), and it is important to consider both personal and organisational factors that influence the social worker's responses and contribute to high levels of stress experienced in the workplace. At least three factors contribute to stress: the personal characteristics of the social workers (they want to help, they are committed and want to see change in the people they work with, they want confirmation that they are doing a good job, etc.), the characteristics of the people with personal experiences (people are often at an impasse, experiencing violence, poverty, homeless, suicidal, aggressive, conflictive, etc.), and the working environment (working conditions) and work commitments (number of cases, lack of time to work with people, increased bureaucracy and inconsistency).

In addition to the above, the content of the work – dealing with traumatic stories, observing the suffering of their interlocutors, strong emotional states such as despair, anger, depression and often psychological and physical violence, etc. – also contributes greatly to the stress of social workers. Every day, social workers are confronted with people who have had traumatic experiences and often suffer from compassion fatigue, sometimes referred to as secondary traumatic stress. Both terms describe a specific set of behaviours and emotions that naturally occur in social workers who are trying to help people who have had a traumatic experience or who are in pain on a daily basis. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 11) group symptoms of compassion fatigue in social workers into three categories of experience as follows:

- *intrusion*: the symptom of intrusion includes unexpected thoughts about people with personal experiences, disturbing dreams about them, and a sense of reliving their traumatic experiences;
- *avoidance*: involves efforts to keep clear of clients or client reminders. It may also result in an inability to recall client, diminished activity level, detachment from others, and emotional numbing;

- *arousal*: include sleep disturbances, irritability, difficulty concentrating, hyperventilation, and an exaggerated startle reactionse.

Brian E. Bride (2007) conducted a study on secondary stress disorder among social workers. The study shows that during the week of the study, 70% of the study participants had at least one of the symptoms mentioned above. The most common individual symptoms reported by social workers were intrusive thoughts, avoidance of people with personal experiences and apathy.

All of this is exhausting for social workers, draining them of important and precious energy, so it is not insignificant how we deal with these situations. Stress cannot always be avoided. Stress is an integral part of the helping professions. What we can do is explore strategies for taking care of ourselves and finding ways of acting to minimise risks.

## Daily self-care in practice

Although self-care is not a new topic, it is a major challenge these days. Miran Možina (2020) argues that self-care is a challenge because there are no universal recipes that are suitable for everyone. Each person must create their own programme and their own way of caring for themselves from day to day, and adapt it to the different circumstances and periods of their life.

As we have read, in the helping professions, every professional is confronted with stress caused by the content of their work on a daily basis and must apply these stressful events to their personality. No two social workers experience the situation in the same way. The response depends on the personal characteristics of the social worker, the characteristics of people with personal experiences and the working environment. Certainly, this interplay tells us a lot about our personality and predispositions to deal with situations. However, the different behaviours and responses also suggest that the concept of self-care is a personal process that needs to be adapted and tailored to each individual, and that we cannot set up rules for self-care that would suit everyone. It is about individualised self-care that suits all

our predispositions and is specific to the environment in which we work and the people we encounter on a daily basis.

In supervision sessions, supervisors often encounter social workers who show signs of peak stress: they are tired, unmotivated to perform their duties, avoid contact with certain people (experts from their own personal experience) and colleagues, feel useless, etc. It is the job of every supervisor not to overlook such feelings and to help the individual to take care of themselves, understanding self-care on both a personal and organisational level (a way of adapting the work).

A review of the literature shows that self-care is understood as a set of behaviours that enable outcomes such as well-being, healthy lifestyle, stress relief and resilience to compassion burnout (Figley, 1995; Bride and Figley, 2007; Rourke, 2007).

Based on a review of the literature (Foucault, 1984, 2007; Greaves and Campbell (2007), Wilkinson and Whitehead (2008), Lee and Miller (2013), Cox and , 2013; El-Osta et al., 2019) and my experience from supervision sessions, I have developed a self-care matrix, which is divided into three levels, namely the personal (micro-level), the group (mezzo-level) and the organisational level (macro-level).

All these levels spiral into each other. The social worker as an individual is at the forefront, but they never work in isolation and are involved in relationships with others, so relationships with others are particularly important at the mezzo-level, helping the individual professional to put the principle of self-care into practice. The organisation in which the social worker is employed is the foundation for the implementation of the principle of self-care. The organisation thus has the omnidirectional influence that enables the principle of self-care to be realised.

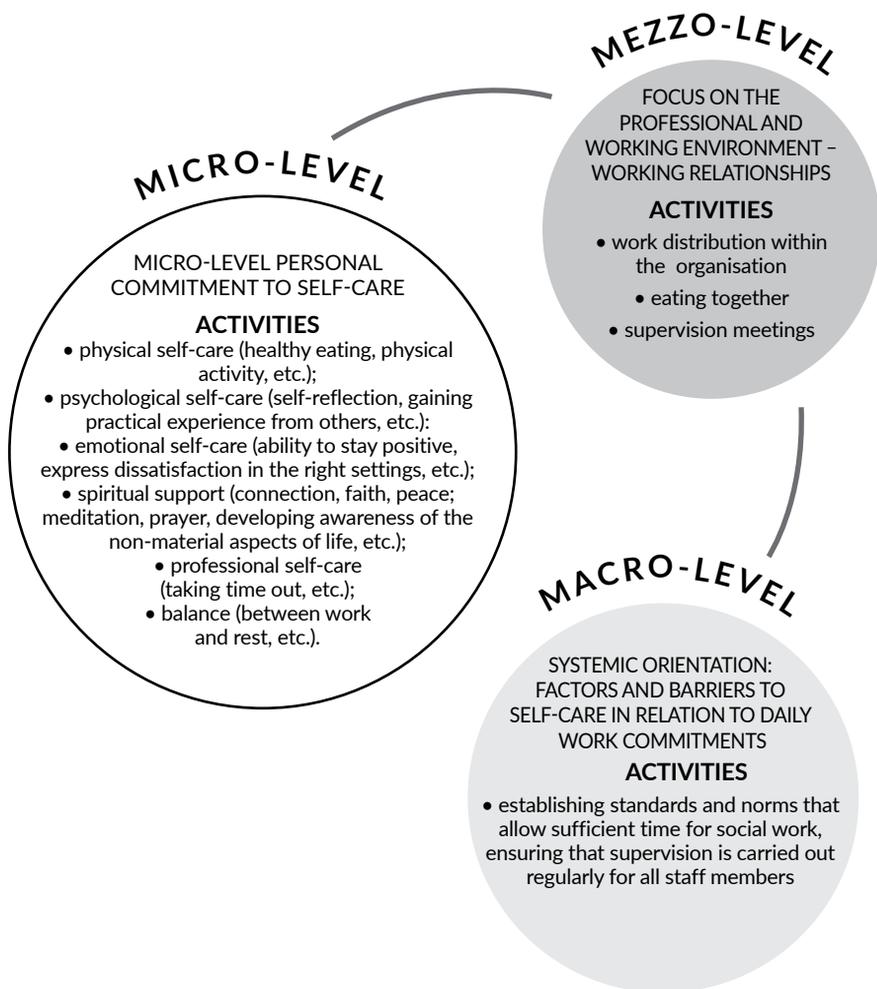
The basic starting point for self-care, regardless of the different levels, is the work situation the professional is facing. The work situation is the starting point for exploring activities that can contribute to self-care.

The entire philosophy of the self-care matrix presented is based on positive psychology and the theory of well-being (Seligman, 2010). Positive psychology has three aims, namely to take an interest

in both human strengths and human weaknesses. It should also be concerned with building strength and repairing harm (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010; Hefferon and Boniwell, 2011; Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti and Snyder, 2015). It is interested in what is best in life and how to make people's lives more satisfying. As Martin Seligman (2010) argues, positive psychology is the science of why life is worth living. The theory of well-being is based on the need to make a turn from what does not work to what does. If we want to be successful, we need to reduce our unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Martin Seligman (2010) has shown that exercises that promote well-being are much better and more effective than those that build on unhappiness. The paradigm shift from what does not work to what does work, in the context of self-care, centres on replacing everything that exhausts the professional with what makes them happy. Martin Seligman (2010) adds that it is not enough to remove what burdens us. It is not enough, for example, to simply reduce the volume of work. It is more important to replace it with something that makes us happy. So the basic principle of self-care is based on adding and increasing activities that we enjoy. Melissa Radey and Charles R. Figley (2007) suggest that the focus should be on promoting success.

Simona Šarotar Žižek, Sonja Treven and Matjaž Mulej (2016, p. 117) show that a professional who develops their potential and improves their own personality is more complete, as they develop all essential aspects of their being (physical, mental, social, spiritual and economic). However, if they do not do this, they remain incomplete in their personality, which then leads to low psychological well-being, which in turn has a negative impact on people's business lives and thus reduces the performance of organisations.

Chart 5: The self-care matrix



The matrix shows that not all care is delegated onto the shoulders of the social worker, although self-care starts with the social worker themselves – by recognising the need for self-care and finding ways to relieve them. I will explain each of these levels in more detail below. Each social worker assesses for themselves what could help and relieve them and how the organisation is working to put the principle of self-care into practice and move beyond the saying “why the cobbler’s children go barefoot”.

### *The personal aspect of self-care: micro-level*

In the social work profession, caring for oneself means learning to care for, accept and nurture oneself as a prerequisite to caring for others. Jacquelyn J. Lee and Shari E. Miller (2013) argue that self-care is not only a key process to prevent compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and frequent staff turnover, but it can also empower social workers to proactively and intentionally negotiate their own overall health, well-being and resilience. Self-care is seen as a behaviour that promotes health and well-being by preventing work-related stress.

The micro-level means a personal commitment to self-care. The basic principle is that the social worker themselves recognises when they need additional support and help in their work. This level mainly refers to activities that help and support the social worker in their daily work. At the day-to-day level, the social worker focuses on specific work-related activities.

According to Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013), a number of approaches to self-care have been proposed by different authors in the field of social work. These approaches coincide with broader categories of self-care – which include, in particular, adjustment practices, lifestyle choices and workplace adaptations (Cox and Steiner, 2013, p. 24 and 33). Adjustment practices refer to the ways in which an individual can adapt to their circumstances. Adjustments are an expression of how we align expectations with what and how we do something. Lifestyle choices include diet, habits and also physical activity. Kate F. Hays (1999), in a study among psychotherapists, attaches great importance to a well-ordered diet, as it can prevent exhaustion. A well-regulated diet also includes the way we eat. Among the suggestions for stress reduction, a wide variety of diets are often recommended as an important self-care strategy in the context of a healthy lifestyle. There is ample evidence that eating well has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels as well as blood pressure. When taking care of oneself, it is important to establish a routine of regular eating and, if possible, to have meals with colleagues. This is because eating together is a relief, a break and a bond between colleagues. Robert Walsh (2011) adds that, in addition to diet, physical activity

is important and shows that physical activity during work has a positive impact on work continuity. This can be short, varied aerobic and anaerobic exercise done to take the pressure off during work.<sup>45</sup> Exercise breaks the routine of work and has many psychological benefits. And more intensive exercise in the afternoon reduces the chances of a wide range of illnesses.

Colin J. Greaves and John L. Campbell (2007, p. 814–815) write that self-care in terms of a person's daily lifestyle (e.g. diet, physical activity, smoking, drug use) is often an important foundation for health as it influences a person's health status. The authors argue that how individuals take care of themselves, their own mental health and how they deal with emotions and stress depends on how successfully they can cope with life's various challenges. Success in overcoming many challenges depends on the individual's attitude towards themselves.

It would probably be impossible to find a work environment that does not cause at least a little stress and put a social worker in a somewhat uncomfortable and unusual situation at least once. As I said before, the response depends mainly on whether we recognise the factors that cause our discomfort and stress and how we deal with them. Will we ignore them or will we deal with the discomfort?

By identifying them, we are well on the way to reducing and eliminating these risk factors. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 45) list three personal strategies for self-care. These are self-awareness, self-regulation and self-efficacy.

The first prerequisite for self-care is self-awareness. Self-awareness begins with exploring and developing empathy for one's own vulnerability, which should inevitably lead to a desire to help others. Self-awareness also involves recognising what is going on during the work process. Social workers should be encouraged to reflect on their own professionalism, their internal expectations, their emo-

---

<sup>45</sup> The University of Ljubljana has introduced an active break for employees during remote working. The active break, run by the Faculty of Sport, lasted 15 minutes via Zoom and included a series of stretching exercises. The active break was not only for stretching, but was primarily a break in the work routine and a change between work and relief. The short relief phase led to better performance, better concentration and an easier return to work.

tional reactions, etc. It is important for each social worker to note for themselves any changes they experience at work, to recognise stressful events that cause them discomfort, to ask themselves what has happened, how the discomfort came about, what is going on, and to examine their own emotional reactions. However, it is important that the social worker recognises the impact that working with professionals has on them and their health. So the social worker explores their own emotional experience when working with professionals, both for their personal experience and for the work within the organisation. What events make them uncomfortable and what makes them happy?

When exploring emotional responses, it is important to realise that emotions are neither bad nor good. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 49) even argue that the fact that all emotions, even unpleasant ones, are clues to the truth about where we are vulnerable and what we value. For example, anxiety can be seen as a signal that we are moving into unknown territory. It can stimulate us to draw on our strengths so that we are able to preserve a sense of competence in the face challenges.

Daniel Goleman (1998) argues that when we are honest with ourselves and aware of our emotions, we are on the path to emotional intelligence. According to the author, emotionally intelligent individuals have a deeper understanding of their own emotions and the effects they have on their behaviour towards themselves, others and work commitments. Self-awareness is the foundation for taking care of oneself.

In supervision processes, supervisors use *mindfulness* techniques to develop self-awareness, which can also be practised by the social workers themselves. Mindfulness is the direct intention to explore the present moment, to be aware of it, to accept it, to explore it and to be curious, rather than to explore what has happened. Robyn Lynn (2010) argues that mindfulness is a way of being aware of one's current experience, paying attention to a particular event. The attitude towards the moment of experiencing that is mindful includes accepting that feeling, accepting the sensations that occur around it, accepting the thoughts that arise around the event, accepting the bodily sensations of the events. When we are sentient, we perceive

these events, we accept them and we do not want to escape them. We are aware of our experience, we accept it and we explore it. In recent times, mindfulness has been recognised as one of the possible ways to reduce stress, so it is not surprising that there are many manuals on mindfulness and short exercises that can be practised on a daily basis. Jan Kabat Zinn (1994) reminds us that mindfulness is not new, it is at least 2500 years old and has its origins in Buddhist teachings.

Mindfulness in supervision is closely linked to reflection and self-reflection (Schön, 1984). Through self-reflection (e.g. writing down specific events – also using metaphors, ideas derived from experience) the social worker spends time exploring current experiences and gaining insights into why they acted as they did. Through self-reflection they develop questions and ideas about their activities and practices. In this way, the social worker can expand their repertoire of ways to respond, become aware of their actions and build on events that they can draw on to help and encourage them. This can enable them to formulate strategies in future situations.

Both mindfulness and Schön's reflective practice are based on examining experience, connecting with feelings and relating to the theories that guide our actions. Both focus on what we can use in future actions to make a difference.

In addition to self-awareness, *self-regulation* plays an important role in self-care (Cox and Stainer, 2013). If, above all, it is important to recognise the need for self-care, self-regulation allows us to achieve recovery and avoid problematic work experiences. It is easy for social workers to find themselves in a situation that is negative, pessimistic and directed at others rather than ourselves. Such situations are a trigger for the doubts that social workers face in their work, about the skills they have and about their inability to bring about change in individuals using social care services. Often this can trigger a variety of negative reactions, to see people with personal experiences as helpless, insecure.

In all these cases, self-regulation is very important. But it is also important how we achieve it. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 62) present the findings of Folkman (1997). Susan Folkman (2001), in her research on supporting people with AIDS, uses the term po-

sitive reappraisal to describe the process of adding positive meaning to troubling circumstances. In her research, the author found that this coping method was associated with positive psychological states in the care partners of people with AIDS. The author showed that it is the people caring for the sufferer who need to change the way they work. They need to move from what can be done to what is possible. This change of perspective moves away from the problem and helps the individual to do what they need. The author presents a concrete example of caring for her husband with AIDS. The lady talks about how she coped with her suffering husband's night sweats until she changed her perspective on this suffering and turned it into an opportunity to show love by giving him the care he needed. A positive interpretation of stress can help to reduce anxiety and improve our self-esteem and resilience.

Martin Seligman's learned optimism (2006, p. 81) is recommended in order to achieve a better quality of life. It involves adopting an optimistic explanatory style through which adversity is interpreted as a temporary setback or challenge that can be overcome, as opposed to a permanent setback or personal failure that is ongoing and may be permanent. To overcome pessimism and learned helplessness, the social worker is encouraged to let go of negative thoughts and adopt a more reflective and constructive perspective. For example, a professional working with a person who hears voices might say that they do not understand them, that they cannot represent their interests and that they would like another professional to work with them. Instead of accepting that they are a bad worker, that they do not know how to deal with people who hear voices, the professional might think about working together once they have succeeded. What was different then? They can also ask themselves what is causing the person to hear voices, what helps them when this happens, they can also simply accept that the person wants to change. Of course, Martin Seligman (2006) warns that we should not take learned optimism lightly and that we must nevertheless remain realistic about our actions and that social workers must also take personal responsibility for mistakes or missteps.

How social workers assess self-efficacy is very important in self-care. Self-efficacy refers to the decisions we make at work and

the personal skills we use in emergencies that have positive results. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 77) argue that self-efficacy is not just about the skills we have, but more about what we believe we can do with those skills and how we can use them to achieve desired outcomes.

It is important to realise that self-efficacy is not something we have forever but means constantly reflecting on our competences and building on the competences we have already acquired. It is important that self-efficacy is nurtured and that social workers are supported in acquiring new competences.

Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 32) mention six basic activities that social workers should use when implementing self-care. These are:

- *physical self-care* (eating well, exercising sleeping adequately, getting massages, accessing medical care, etc.),
- *psychological self-care* (self-reflection, engaging in leisure activities, journaling, practicing receiving from others, etc.),
- *emotional self-care* (praising oneself, engaging in laughter/play, expressing outrage through appropriate channels, etc.),
- *spiritual support* (praying, meditating, developing awareness of the non-material aspects of life, etc.),
- *professional self-care* (taking a break, making quiet time, balancing caseload, arranging work space, etc.),
- *balance* (among work, family, relationships, play and rest, etc.)

Social workers who used any of these activities showed fewer signs of burnout and compassion fatigue. The main activity that a social worker can use in this way is not only self-reflection or supervision on themselves, whereby the social worker can take care of themselves without censorship and recognise what is happening to them, but also professional and emotional care, as well as a balance between work and rest.

Supervisees (Videmšek, 2019) reported that they most often take care of themselves through physical activity (running, walking, cycling) after work. Reflection, however, only happens in supervision meetings. Other activities (psychological self-care, spiritual

support and balance) are used occasionally or very rarely.

In caring for oneself, the social worker can apply the Delphic principle of “know thyself” at the micro-level through reflection. The Delphic principle of “know thyself” is a moral principle that prevails throughout ancient Greece. It was not an abstract maxim as it concerned life, it was technical advice, a rule to be followed. Michael Foucault (1984, p. 491) introduces one of these principles, namely the questioning of conscience. This habit was part of the Pythagorean doctrine, but it has spread widely. The morning questioning was mainly aimed at reviewing the tasks and obligations of the day in order to be sufficiently well prepared for them. The evening examination, however, was a much more monotonous way of memorising the previous day ... The description of this exercise refers to Sextus, a Roman Stoic. He presents Sextus’s practice as one that focused primarily on an evening review of progress; when Sextus gathered before his night’s rest, he would ask his soul: what fault have you cured yourself of; what vice have you overcome; in what have you become better ... What is more beautiful than this habit of looking back over one’s entire day ... when the soul has had its ration of praise and rebuke.

In the everyday practice of social work, these forms of questioning can of course take place through self-supervision, through reflection on events, where the social worker can look at what their sources of strength were each day and what they would like to change in the future. Asking questions, as Michel Foucault (1984, p. 492) suggests, is not about discovering one’s own guilt, even in its smallest forms and thinnest roots. It is true that “we conceal nothing”, “we omit nothing”, but questioning is meant to get stuck in our heads so that we later have legitimate goals in mind and rules of behaviour that enable us to achieve these goals by choosing the appropriate means. The purpose of questioning is not to relive a failure in order to apportion blame or promote a reproachful conscience, but rather, after remembering and reflecting on the failure, to strengthen the rational equipment that ensures wise behaviour.

*The importance of relationships with others in self-care:  
mezzo-level*

Social work never takes place in isolation, so the second level of self-care focuses on the professional and their working environment – the working relationships with others in the organisation. This level is calibrated to what others, not just the individual, can do for self-care, as it is based on the assumption that self-care does not take place in isolation. It is based on the principle that self-care is not just a matter for the individual. Michael Foucault (1984, p. 481) wrote:

This activity is not an exercise in solitude, but a real social practice, and in many ways. It often took shape in more or less institutional structures ... and those who were most advanced were given the duty of leading others (either collectively or individually); there were also group exercises which allowed the individual to get help from others in dealing with himself – rescue with the help of others.

The focus is therefore not only on the individual social worker, but also extends to the social networks, the social capital, as Srečo Dragoš and Vesna Leskošek (2003) would call it, that the rest of the employees in the organisation represent. The professional interacts with others on a daily basis. This refers to the activities that can be carried out within the organisation and encourage the professional to behave in a caring way.

For example, the mezzo-level activity is a team approach (Cox and Steiner, 2013; Rape Žiberna, 2019). The work we do in social care requires teamwork and the collaboration of several professions, not only social work (e.g. working with victims of violence, suicide, borderline personalities). It is completely illogical that one person could do everything. The team can then more easily share the work, the stresses involved, the pain they experience, the countertransference effect and the support they give each other. It is important for the professional to entrust their care to others. However, the organisational aspect of self-care is also important for trusting these concerns.

One of the important activities that can be ensured at the inter-organisational level is the redistribution of work, e.g. that the most

complex work challenges are not taken up by a single social worker. In this way, the organisation contributes to a culture of valuing self-care.

Activities can also include very practical activities such as lunches together, organising supervision meetings.

This level takes into account that the individual is in relationships with others and works in a work environment that is central to the principle of self-care. This means that the work environment and the way work is organised must be such as to provide relief, support in coping with work challenges and recognition of employees' needs. Simona Šarotar Žižek, Sonja Treven and Matjaž Mulej (2016, p. 117) show that when people strengthen their personal integrity and self-awareness as employees, their psychological well-being increases. This translates into greater productivity, efficiency and creativity at work and, therefore, into greater organisational performance. It also follows that organisations need to create the conditions for implementing techniques to enhance ZIPOC (sufficient and necessary personal integrity) with the aim of increasing the psychological well-being of their employees. For they will get what they enable and value.<sup>46</sup>

### *The organisational aspects that promote self-care: macro-level*

Social workers carry out their professional work in an organisation, which is usually a complex system, with different structures and management styles, and not least with different people. The principle of self-care depends to a large extent on the organisation in which the professional is employed. The organisation, whether governmental or non-governmental, private or public, small, with only a few members, or large, with several units, makes a decisive contribution to this development of a culture of self-care. Does the organisation promote self-care, does it care how the individual feels within the organisation, is it supportive or not? Indeed, organisational culture

---

<sup>46</sup> Following Maslach and Leiter (2002), the authors point out that no one will care about human beings until they have economic consequences. This means that, for example, workplace conflicts, work overload or other mismatches between work and staff, their well-being and welfare, will not be addressed until a link between this and a change in costs or revenues, and hence in profits, is indicated.

can be a source of stress and burnout, or it can be a source of support and foster creativity and innovation among employees.

The organisational aspect of taking care of ourselves practically starts when we enter the organisation, with the interview itself, where we as social worker can check whether the mission and vision of the organisation are aligned with our values and principles. Understanding the mission will help us to understand ourselves and our work experience within the organisation, because our values reflect the way we act.

Chapple and Rogers (1999), Redman (2007), Cox and Steiner (2013) argue that the concept of empowerment is behind the concept of self-care, which implies a new understanding of self-care. The emphasis is that services should be organised in a way that builds on the power of social worker, while giving them choice, decision-making and access to services. Self-care is defined as medicine. So what can an organisation do to support the concept of self-care?

Self-care in organisational terms means work reorganisation and organisational changes introduced to reduce the level of workplace stress among employees and therefore also among people with personal experiences. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013) even show that it is the environment in which the professional is employed that contributes to a large extent to the experience of stress in the workplace and to the poor climate and dis/connectedness among employees. In environments where employees are not supported in their work, where they go unnoticed, experience stress and feel insecure, social workers are less likely to take risks, to be innovative and to represent people with personal experiences.

Simona Šarotar Žižek, Sonja Treven and Matjaž Mulej (2016, p. 117) show that people's mental well-being improves when they achieve satisfaction and the necessary personal integrity as employees. This leads to higher productivity, efficiency and creativity at work and thus to higher organisational performance. It also follows that organisations must create the conditions for implementing techniques to promote sufficient and necessary personal wholeness in order to increase the psychological well-being of their employees. Because they will get what they make possible and value.

Good, positive relationships, which are directly linked to job

satisfaction and health, can undoubtedly help prevent compassion burnout. Time is also an important dimension. Michel Foucault (1984) argues that it takes time to take care of the self. This time is not empty: it is filled with exercises, practical tasks, a variety of activities. Taking care of oneself is no small thing (p. 480). Social workers, who often experience secondary trauma and are exposed to high levels of stress in the workplace, are encouraged to plan their work so that not all emotionally taxing tasks are completed in one day, but that they are spread out over several days and see what can be accomplished in one day. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013) believe that it is advisable for workers to plan their breaks carefully, set up a comfortable working environment and perhaps have equipment that allows them to perform a range of exercises that also relieve pain and tension in the neck and back. It is important that they also have projects that are fun and rewarding. Each of them can do this themselves.

An organisation can also take care of its employees by ensuring that not just one person does all the heavy lifting, but that people can rotate and take turns. Cristine Maslach and Michael Leiter (2005) argue that we need to learn to delegate work and train others to do so. The organisation needs to encourage colleagues to share responsibility.

A key part of understanding the macro-level of self-care is the culture of the organisation, which is often very closely linked to the way it is managed and how social workers are seen, supported at work and whether diversity is respected at work. According to Jan Bečaj (1996, p. 72), the culture of an organisation is the sum of generally accepted values, norms, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and expectations, which are usually not written down anywhere, but which nevertheless significantly determine the behaviour of people in the institution.

The culture of an organisation also depends on its orientation: whether it is a learning organisation that promotes change or not. Edgar Schein (2004, p. 365–366) mentions the assumptions of a culture that has embedded continuous learning and change. A learning culture must assume that the world can be managed, that people are active problem solvers, that truth must be scientifically

investigated, that human nature, which is inherently good, can be changed, that both individualism and the principle of community are appropriate, as also authoritarian and collaborative systems of management when based on trust, that a just-right distant view of the future is appropriate, and so on. Sharan B. Merriam (1997, p. 152) argues that learning organisations are places where people continuously develop their capacities to achieve desired outcomes, where new and flexible ways of thinking are nurtured, where new and group aspirations are unleashed, and where people continuously learn how to learn together.

Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner (2013, p. 101) argue that it is important to compare our expectations with those of the organisation and that there are five key determinants that can be used to understand our fit with the organisation's culture. These include: degree of hierarchy, individuality, importance of relationships, immediacy of communication and time perspective.

The cultural aspect of an organisation concerns the significance of the hierarchical structure. Status in the organisation conveys the difference between senior managers and those who have just joined, the power in the organisation, the importance of formal status and the strength of the chain between all those involved in the organisation. Individuality is about what the organisation places more value on, the individual or the community and the group; how the individual identifies themselves within the organisation, whether as an individual or as part of a group, whether they are rewarded as an individual or for their collective efforts. This can of course have a major impact on how social workers interact with each other and how effectively they share information etc.

The question also arises as to what the organisation attaches more importance to, tasks or relationships. Organisations differ in what they value more, relationships within the organisation or successfully performed and completed tasks. In task-oriented organisations, colleagues are less socialised and connected than in relationship-oriented organisations. Relationship-oriented organisations try to organise lunches together so that workers have time to socialise and chat informally. The free time gives them the motivation to continue working.

Directness and clarity in communication is one of the key factors that influence the culture of an organisation, especially in conflict situations.

Last but not least, the time perspective is also important – whether the organisation is focused on deadlines, on getting the job done well or on building supportive and collegial relationships with colleagues in the team.

This level goes beyond the attitude towards ourselves and the attitude of other employees towards us. This level deals with the system orientation of the field and refers to the existing factors and barriers to self-care in the context of daily work obligations within a normative orientation. At the macro-level, the barriers to self-care operate at the level of the policy framework and normative structures of the organisation. Activities at the macro-level focus on creating working conditions that support the principle of self-care. Activities at this level are concerned with setting standards and norms that allow sufficient time for social work to be carried out.

In the social work profession, self-care is practically a prerequisite for coping with the many stressful situations to which social workers are exposed on a daily basis. However, it is true that self-care alone is not enough if the employee works in an organisation characterised by bureaucratic pressures, little or no supervision, time and “more and more” pressures, toxic relationships between co-workers, bullying and intimidation by superiors, and so on.

## **How we can practise self-care as supervisors**

Supervisors in social care are certainly not immune to a high level of work stress, because they too hear all the stories that the supervisees are confronted with. Supervisors, like social workers, are susceptible to the pain of the supervisees and the experts by experience that is discussed during the supervision processes. In fact, supervisors often describe in meetings the emotions they experience when working with disadvantaged groups. They may even describe details of trauma that people experience personally and the supervisor wonders how to proceed. The feelings of discomfort are thus carried over into

the supervision session and the supervisor may also relive the trauma, violence, loss or abuse. Although supervisors focus on finding solutions and showing what they are good at and successful at, it can happen that they themselves as supervisors are caught in a labyrinth of helplessness. It is therefore important that the supervisor also has the support they need to deal with all these situations.

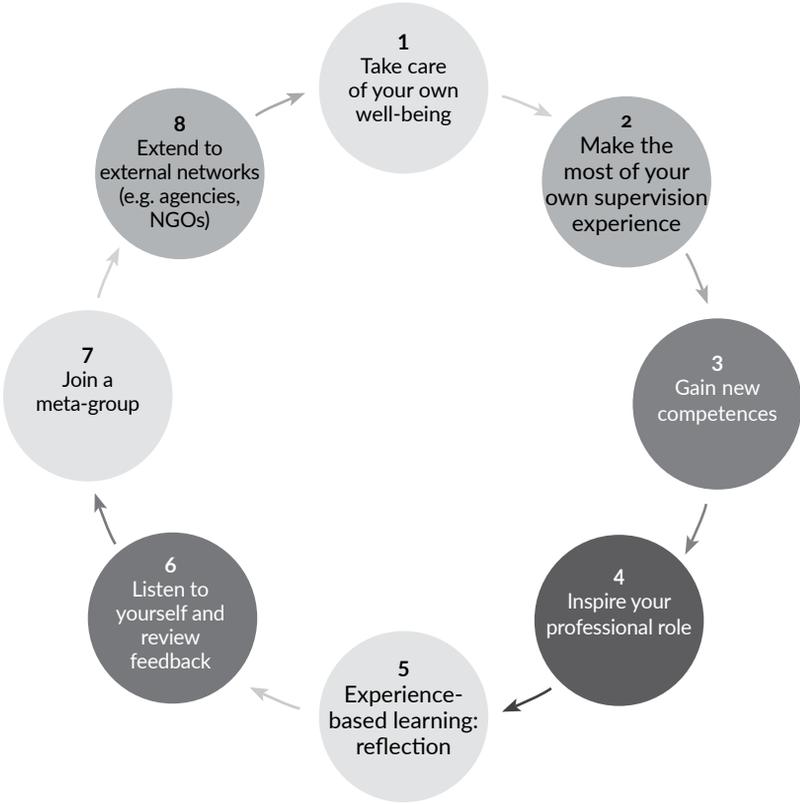
According to Alan W. Korinek and Thomas Kimbal (2003), supervisors often find themselves at the intersection of conflict situations, even among members of the supervision group. The authors suggest taking a co-creation approach to conflict resolution, in which we do not look for losers and winners, but for a win-win outcome. Six steps to achieve this can be helpful:

1. deal with unspoken expectations;
2. set a date to discuss them;
3. describe the situation and the unspoken needs of all involved;
4. consider how to see situations from a different perspective;
5. negotiate a solution;
6. follow up on the implementation of the solution.

Misunderstandings and differences of opinion are integral parts of social work. If the steps are taken in a sensible sequence, the desired outcome is more likely. This helps to regulate emotions and contain stressful situations.

Supervision is a key place to prevent compassion fatigue, but to be successful, the supervisor needs self-care activities. Supervisors also need support to move forward. Jane Wonnacott (2012, p. 183) has emphasised the importance of nurturing our development as supervisors while maintaining our self-care as supervisees. In addition to participating in meta-supervision groups, a supervisee self-care circle can be helpful between meetings.

Chart 6: What enables us to conduct effective supervision (Wonnacott, 2012, p. 183).



*What supports me in carrying out supervision collaboratively*

In this section, I focus on how and what we can do as supervisors to help each other in our supervision practice and what studies on supervision have shown so far. When I started researching supervision processes, I looked for what had already been said and researched about supervision. To my surprise, there was very little empirical evidence to show the effectiveness of supervision processes and to support the need to introduce this form of supervision into practice. This, of course, speaks volumes about the dimensionality of the process itself, because it is difficult to fully represent the complexity of supervision practices and processes when we know that supervision has multiple purposes, multiple approaches, is based on multiple

theories from which multiple models emerge.

A review of the literature shows that until 1995 there were few studies on supervision itself. Ming-sum Tsui (1997) conducted an in-depth analysis of books and articles on supervision that would indicate the effectiveness of the use of supervision on the social worker's work, between 1970 and 1995. The author found 30 chapters in books on supervision and only 13 of these were on supervision and supervisors and even these were very limited to discussion of interaction, dynamics in supervision and supervisory relationships. Only two authors focused on relationships in supervision processes, namely Harkness (1995) and Harkness and Hensley (1991).

Research by Lynette Hughes and Paul Pengelly (1997, p. 359) found that very little was said about the effects supervision had on the participants in supervision sessions. Even less research has been done on the extent, content and quality of supervision. And none of the research presented examined the methods and styles of supervisors that influenced the reduction of risk-taking behaviour by social workers.

Until 1995, there was little research exploring what good supervision is, what it depends on, what needs to happen for supervision to be effective, and so on. It is only since 1995 that research has emerged that presents concrete examples and implications for practice (Wonnacott, 2004; Hughes, 2010). In 2009, the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect conducted a study on the functions of supervision. Participants at their congress (supervisors) were asked about their views on supervision, which task they pay most attention to as supervisors and also whether supervision is successful or not. The study followed Kandushi's model of the tasks of supervision (i.e. administrative and educational tasks). The study showed that supervision is not necessarily a place to support social workers. Moreover, it has been shown that what supervision is for is extremely important. If it is only for management (arranging, reviewing and carrying out activities), it is not challenging for the social workers and does not provide them with support on a personal and professional level.

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič (2009) mentions a study that looked at what supervisees learned from supervision sessions led by the re-

nowned George Pullian, a family therapist who is considered to be an outstanding supervisor among American family therapists. The supervisees said that they learned to respect each client; they learned not to limit themselves in their work and not to stay within a pre-determined diagnosis; they learned to try to enter the helping process with empathy; they learned not to blame the clients; and they admired Pullian's talent for finding elements of humour in every situation.

An in-depth study on the effectiveness of supervision is also presented by Jane Wonnacott (2014), who studied supervision in a work setting. She examined the effects of supervision on social work practice in child protection work. The author shows that the effectiveness of supervision depends on the styles of conducting supervision and the type of supervisor. In her research, she shows that supervision is effective when it takes place in a supportive environment, when the supervisor is aware of their own leadership style and influence on the process itself, while trying to achieve a collaborative approach and taking an active role in case management. Furthermore, she argues that supervision is successful when it involves challenge, reflection and stress management and when it also focuses on the feelings of individuals and attention is paid to communication within the system (Wonnacott, 2004; 2012, p. 21).

There are as many possibilities for successful supervision as there are supervisors. The supervisor plays a key role in how they establish and maintain relationships, how they manage the process. Is it a process of co-creation, a process that leads to desired change and empowerment of the supervisee? It is up to the supervisor to motivate the supervisees to join, participate and co-create in the process. It is the supervisor who ensures that a good atmosphere is created in the group (also by example) and protects the space for discussion of dilemmas, concerns and conundrums aimed at achieving change. Each supervisor has their own style and way of leading. This offers a diversity of choice for supervisors, and enables new learning for other supervisors.

I have developed some rules in my own practice that are useful and encouraging for me when organising and conducting a supervision meeting, and I present them below. Some of the suggestions are

quite general in nature, others are process-related, others are content-related. But all of them are prepared and done with the aim that the learning process in supervision can happen and, above all, that the supervisees leave the supervision process unburdened, with new reflections and visions for change that they will try out in practice.

Three things are important for successful supervision:

- preparation (to prepare for the supervision meeting),
- sensitivity to what is happening in the meeting (being attentive to the process and to all the participants in the process),
- giving feedback (at the end of the meeting, I give feedback to strengthen the supervisees and encourage them to change).

Based on the implementation of supervision processes in different formats (in a meta-group, in a supervision group and in a group for the preparation of learning for future supervisors), I have developed guidelines that can contribute to the successful implementation of the supervision process and thus of the individual meeting. I argue that the successful delivery of a session begins before the meetings themselves and that good preparation for the meeting is both evidence that the supervision is change-orientated and a guide and response to what happens in the meetings themselves.

#### 1. Preparing for supervision

- Take a detailed look at your last notes and reflection on the last meeting (if you don't write a reflection, look at the notes you took at the meeting. You must have written down at least some of what you did. Refresh your memory of the meeting.
- Read the reflections of the group members and prepare feedback on their notes. If no feedback is given, the supervisors do not see the point of the notes.
- Link your reflection with those of the other members and prepare a report on what you have learned from this experience, and in particular what you will tell the group about where you have seen them progress since the last meeting. This way the group connects, sees the sense of co-creation and progress.
- Read carefully the supervision material and the supervisi-

on question. Think about how you will approach this case? What did you feel about it? What else would you like to know? What did the case remind you of? What particularly surprised you? And where do you see a possible solution – hypothetically.

- Consider which questions will encourage the supervisee to co-create, which questions will achieve critical thinking and which questions will prompt them to take the next steps.
- Remind yourself what the main objectives of the group are, of the supervisor who has prepared the material, and of the supervision model you are using. What is the basis of your work, what values guide you?
- Think about what you will do to achieve a safe environment, a pleasant climate and a relaxed meeting atmosphere.

## 2. Starting supervision

- Be in front of the participants at the meeting if possible. Observe the arrival of the supervisees and assess their mood. Based on this, choose the introductory exercise (indoor weather) that is most appropriate (be flexible).
- Make sure the room is properly organised (in a circle).
- If you are in the habit of feasting, thank yourself for this part.
- Make sure you have a good introduction to the meeting, perhaps with an introductory exercise.
- Have several options ready.
- If necessary, remind supervisees of the agreement (if they are late, chatting, using phones, etc.).

## 3. Conducting supervision

- Observe how both the supervisor and the rest of the group react as the supervisor presents the work material.
- Ask the supervisor to tell the story, not read it.
- Listen carefully to the story.
- Pay attention to the words they use and any new information they have not previously presented (written down).
- Pay attention to a well-designed supervision question.

- If other members have the opportunity to ask questions for more clarification, please make sure that there is no debate and that the questions are not accusatory.
- Check that the method you have envisaged is still suitable.
- Observe how others react and pay attention to what they report.

#### 4. Concluding

- Each meeting should be concluded with a review of what worked well, what proved to be supportive and what attendees would like to see more of.

The main focus of supervision should be on ensuring the learning process.

Effective supervision allows us to push the boundaries of what is possible and to discover the unknown in several areas (self, in relationship with others and in relationship with clients), and the supervisor is able to use a variety of methods and techniques in a single supervision session. Jane Wonnacott (2012) argues that a good supervisor is one who has had their own experience of supervision, who learns as they are guided, and who combines elements of both in the best possible way in performing supervision.

Good supervision starts by looking at what has been learned and what the learning process entailed for each individual (Field and Brown, 2010, p. 74–75).

We know that not all supervision is good, but every supervisor tries to be good. From the research data, I could give a definition of good supervision (Videmšek, 2019). Supervisees wrote that good supervision is:

*“where you do not have to censor yourself, where you can say what you think and feel at that moment; which respects diversity and encourages learning and encourages new steps; which is for thinking deeply about work; which is a time where we feel good about what we do; which provides respectful attitudes, respect for diversity, a space to discover those differences and to think critically about what we do; a space where we have the opportunity to confide our insecurities, to check how we are doing and to receive support for*

*what we are doing; a space to learn new things, including relaxation, and above all a time to discuss what we are doing; a space to learn from others and to strengthen our awareness of social work; stimulating and uplifting. I need courage and encouragement and praise to know that I am doing good work; where group members and the supervisor show me new ways of working and help me to formulate solutions, show me the mirror and support me in situations I raise and about which I want to hear their opinion”.*

From the answers, we can see that it is very important for supervisees in supervision to deal with concrete cases and to get competencies for the job, but they also stressed that good supervision is where the supervisor brings new and innovative ways of leading the group into the supervision and provides answers on how to work in practice. From what has been said, I could write that good supervision is one in which the supervisee feels valued and accepted above all, in which the supervisor reflects with the supervisee on their progress, in which the supervisee is enabled to acquire competencies for the work, and in which the supervisee is encouraged to develop their potential while understanding and wanting to understand what they are working on and how they can help themselves with the theory.

Even though their work is situated within psychotherapeutic counselling, Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 130) consider that “good” supervision is defined as that which ensures the development of a competent, responsible, ethically sensitive and effective practitioner who can provide services and support to their clients as effectively as possible.

In order to conduct good supervision, the supervisor needs certain skills that help them to carry out the process. Skills are the technical basis of social work. It is the skills that qualify a person for social work. Vito Flaker (2003, p. 24–32) argues that some of the skills necessary for social work are: interviewing skills, negotiation skills, access to resources, note-taking and reporting skills, organisational skills, professional discipline skills, avoiding the pitfalls of professionalism and a sense of humour.

The supervisor also utilises all these skills when carrying out supervision. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 52) add to these skills some basic skills that a supervisor should have. These in-

clude: flexibility (to be able to apply different concepts and a variety of interventions and methods), the ability to look at a situation from a broader perspective (to be able to look at a situation from multiple perspectives), knowledge of the field of work in which they are providing supervision, the ability to work transculturally, the ability to withstand pressures and fears (both their own and that of the supervisee), a willingness to learn both from the supervisee and from new situations that arise, sensitivity to the broader mental contexts of the subject matter that affect both the work with social workers for their personal experience and the supervision process, the ability to deal appropriately with power in a non-intimidating way and to have a sense of humour, modesty and patience.

The authors believe that most supervisors have already acquired these skills during their training, but it is important to remember them again and again and to pay attention to them when conducting supervision.

According to Vida Milošević Arnold (2004), a supervisor needs skills to perform their role successfully: reading (the supervisor has to systematically follow the current professional literature and direct the supervisees to do the same, who often have to be further motivated to do so), writing (the supervisor prepares various written products, from reports to evaluations of the supervision process, articles, various recommendations for their supervisees, etc. – it is useful if the supervisor can also be a role model for the supervisees in this respect, thus guiding them by example to write good quality professional papers themselves), observation (the supervisor needs to be a good observer, using the same observational skills that are needed in direct professional work), talking (most of the supervision work takes place in the form of a discussion). The supervisor must be skilled in talking about concrete material. This skill is also similar to that used in professional work, but the supervisor must be careful not to treat supervisees as people who are experts for their personal experience. They should encourage them to participate as actively as possible in the supervision process. Listening is also a key skill for the supervisor. In supervision, we are always talking about active listening, which must be even more intense than in professional work, because the supervisor intervenes more often than not. Supervisors

who “just listen” do not help supervisees enough to learn (Milošević Arnold, 1999, p. 30–31).

In addition to the skills mentioned above, the supervisor needs group management skills (knowledge of group dynamics, group processes, what is needed to work well in a group, etc.) and organisational skills to lead supervision groups. Supervisors work in organisations and teams, organising services and also giving support to people facing many challenges, so one of the skills that supervisors need today is group management. Another essential organisational skill is planning the work (to arrive on time for meetings, to manage the process as agreed, to plan the next steps, etc.). According to Vito Flaker (2003, p. 28), planning is an essential organisational skill, it is the dialectic between creating a vision, a practical utopia, and the concrete first steps to get there, it allows us to know where we are going, but it is also a practical operability – to know how to get there.

One of the specific organisational skills is that the supervisor acts as a facilitator – both inside and outside the group.

Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 53–54) write that the supervisor needs to have the ability to “helicopter-view” different landscapes (as the authors call it), where these landscapes are the different perspectives and contexts that the supervisor encounters in their work.

Based on a review of the research, I would say that in addition to skills, a supervisor needs certain personal qualities that supervisees expect from them. The supervisor should be supportive, understanding, willing to help, and in addition to personality traits, they should be knowledgeable about their field of work (Bogo and McKnight, 2006; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016). Michael S. Carifio and Allen K. Hess (1987, p. 244) add that they should be empathetic, understanding, unconditionally positive, consistent, kind (Rogers, 1969), warm and willing to self-disclose, flexible, considerate, attentive, hard-working, curious and open (Hess, 1980, p. 244), and have good communication skills.

The supervisor is therefore expected to have at least some of these skills and qualities. This was also confirmed by supervisees when I asked them about what makes a good supervisor (Videmšek, 2019):

A good superior is someone who is respectful, flexible, punctual and considers time constraints.

A good supervisor lets every participant have their say, respects diversity, but is also a role model, shows knowledge of the field of work and opens up and supports multiple possible perspectives.

A good supervisor is someone who has formulated criteria for their actions, who has a variety of coping strategies, who is able to integrate different skills, who has individual approaches *even* when working in a group and experiences each supervisee as a unique story and who can count on unrepeatability.

Another important skill of a supervisor is to have a sense of time. Time is one of the systemic things we need to develop as supervisors.

For me, a good supervisor is someone who knows what they are doing, guides us through the process and, above all, listens to what we tell them.

A good supervisor is a role model. I like a supervisor who is positive and solution-orientated and who knows how to get the best out of each individual.

From all of the above, I could conclude that the supervisor needs a wide variety of skills to enable them to co-create in supervision. According to the above, the supervisor's skills could be divided into general and specific skills, the general ones being those that are also used in social work: punctuality, respectfulness, approachability, reliability, respecting agreements, protecting the information of the experts by experience, taking responsibility, while the specific skills include: knowledge of group dynamics, of the process of conducting supervision, of different learning styles, of the field, etc.

However, in order to master all the skills and to be successful in supervision, it is crucial that the supervisor is involved in meta-supervision, which allows them to reflect on their work and at the same time provides support in facing new possibilities in their work, as meta-supervision is a form of supervision for supervisors, in which an experienced supervisor (master supervisor) guides other

experienced supervisors and helps them to reflect on how to manage the supervision processes. It is also desirable for the supervisor to receive ongoing training and to upgrade their existing knowledge. If they have the opportunity, it is desirable to join international interview groups, which add an extra dimension to the supervision process.

BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION:

## WHY WE NEED SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK

Research findings (Curtis, Moriarty and Netton, 2010; Lizano, 2015; Lloyd, King and Chenoweth, 2002; Lloyd and King, 2004) conducted among those who help others professionally are alarming. They show that social work is one of the professions with the highest rates of burnout, particularly compassion burnout.

One of the reasons for the rapid onset of compassion fatigue is surely that social workers work with people who are often overwhelmed by their plight, empathise with them and often feel helpless themselves. A large part of social work involves dealing with the misfortune of others and this causes social workers a great deal of stress, even though we often do not realise this until we realise we can no longer do our job effectively. So social work is a very stressful activity.

In social work, it was apparent from the very beginning of its development that, in order to be a quality professional, the individual needed support to build on and develop their competences. Thus, the development of supervision started even before the social work profession was established. However, as social work as a scientific discipline has developed, supervision has been increasingly developed and regulated.

It has been obvious from the onset of the profession that social workers need to be supported in their work and in dealing with the many challenges in practice, both in thinking and understanding. This support needs to be provided on many levels, including the emotional sphere, as they are dealing with a very diverse range of people. Supervision for people who work with people is essential. Without reflection on practice, there is no learning and no change.

I deliberately began this book on supervision for social work with my own definition and understanding of supervision, not with how others define it. And this is how I will end it since I believe I have shown that supervision in social work is much more than simply defining the goals, tasks or role that the supervisor plays in the process.

Today it is clear that good supervision is supervision that co-creates a working relationship in which all participants are on an equal footing, even if one is in the role of supervisor and the others either in the role of supervisee or as members of the supervision team, in which a working relationship is built on the basis of a strengths perspective of the supervisees that supports mutual learning and strives for solutions.

We must be aware that supervision is a process. A process of professional, personal and also group learning through which supervisees gain new knowledge and insights about their work and behaviour as well as that of others. In the supervision process, the supervisee acquires new skills for work, new insights. Something they did not know or try out before. But participation alone is not enough. The supervisee must be willing to learn. Nothing happens on its own. Simply attending a meeting is not enough to bring about change. John Dewey (1933) would say that we do not know if something works just by observing it. We have to try it out for ourselves.

In addition to trying out something new, a large part of supervision is dedicated to supporting the supervisee emotionally so that they can recognise how their emotions influence their decisions in difficult situations. Because the demands of social work practice are changing so much, preventing compassion burnout and strengthening resilience have recently become important topics in supervision.

On the one hand, supervision is an opportunity to support supervisees in coping with increasing and changing demands, responsibilities in managing new roles and the expectations of others in their daily activities (Beddoe, Karvinen-Niinikoski, Ruch, Tsui and Ming-sum, 2016; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016, p. 20), and on the other hand, we encourage them to resist what is unacceptable. Practitioners often point out that they need time to carry out their work professionally. In addition to professionalism, time is a necessi-

ty in social work. If we do not have enough time to build a relationship, make contact and find solutions, social work is pointless.

Research (Bogo and McKnight, 2006; Kadushin and Harkness, 2014; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016; Videmšek, 2019) shows that for many practitioners, supervision is a very important part of their professional and personal development. Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet (2012, p. 13) even emphasise that managers should be aware of the importance of supervision and support it as a core element of organisational functioning. They argue that organisations should adopt a 70 : 20 : 10 model, where 70 per cent is learned from practice, 10 per cent from seminars and various training courses, and 20 per cent from supervision based on learning from experience in the field.

Supervision has a positive impact both on the actual work with people with personal experience of distress and on the organisation in which the practitioner is employed. Given that supervision is such a basic activity in social work, it is surprising that it is not offered to everyone and that employers do not make an effort to offer it. I do not wish to idealise supervision in any way. Not all supervision is good. Many supervisors have reported that they have had bad experiences with supervision. But even poor supervision must be better than no supervision at all. We can also learn from this supervision, and since supervision is a process and agreements are made for the coming year, the following year may well turn out differently. But we must realise that supervisors also have the responsibility to speak up about any unfavourable factors that have come to light as this also impacts changes for the supervisees.

In this book, I have presented the importance of relationships that take place on many different levels. Drawing on literature (Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Huges and Pengelly, 1997; Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016), we have seen that a good relationship in supervision is the most important factor affecting whether or not supervisees succeed, achieve goals and implement changes. At the level of group interactions, we have seen that supervision based on a respectful alliance and working relationship is a way of providing firm support in situations where the supervisee is struggling to cope. It enables us to recognise the pitfalls of compassion fatigue

and helps us to handle more difficult situations. Organisations that offer supervision provide practitioners with support in their work both personally and professionally to grow and expand their capacity for action. Research (Kadushin and Harkness, 1992; Huges and Pengelly, 1997; Hawkins and Shohet, 2012) has shown that participants in supervision make up for more competent practitioners and, by participating in group supervision, enable the transfer of experiences and professional growth also to others.

I have shown that the most important skill of a supervisor is to motivate supervisees with their passion for work, their desire to find something new in everyday tasks when working with people who are experts by experience, and their positive attitude, showing them by example that something is possible.

*Supervision is part of a wider social, political and organisational scheme*

In recent years, it has become increasingly apparent in supervision that the way practitioners work depends on political decisions. The cuts in funding for social care, the merging of fields without the recruitment of new staff, the increasing volume of work and the growing pressure that social workers now face require supervision and a rebalancing of their roles. Social workers are expected to do more and more work in less and less time and for more and more people. The work is simply piling up. This is unacceptable.

Social workers are also confronted on a daily basis with the inequalities and oppression experienced by the people they speak to and their advocates (due to disability, age, ethnicity, skin colour, sexual orientation, etc.).

Most of the book focuses on the micro-level of the way supervision functions, on the possible ways of reflecting on professional practice and on the importance of relationships within supervision itself. Above all, I wanted to draw attention to the fact that today, even within supervision, there needs to be a shift from the traditional functions (administrative, supportive and educational) to a function that focuses on the potential and sources of strength of the supervisee.

Whatever the focus within supervision, as Donald A. Schön (1991, p. 278) has already written, it is dangerous to stop reflecting on our work and the way we work. It is clear that reflection does not free us from concern about how we work with people who are experts by experience and how we can provide them with the best possible support and work towards the realisation of their rights. When supervisees use reflection, they take responsibility for their actions and become reflective practitioners.

At a time when the structure of social work is becoming increasingly rigid and focused on the delivery of ready-made services, it is essential to create a space for discussion and reflection about what we do and how we do our work. Anything that is not predictable and compliant poses a threat to the organisation and its structure. But it is precisely these threats, this element of surprise, as Donald A. Schön (1991, p. 328) argues, that bring practice to life and provide practitioners with a basis for learning. Reflective practice enables practitioners' work to be grounded in the realisation of human rights and social justice, to respond to the needs of experts by experience rather than the needs of the organisation, and to change the content of work and increase innovation through reflection.

The bureaucratisation of work cannot be avoided, as Max Weber warned when he wrote that bureaucratisation drives the professionalisation of its members and that it requires and promotes a unique model of expertise and technical experience. And it is precisely because of excessive bureaucratisation that professionals need to reflect on their work and allow themselves to express their confusion, worry and uncertainty. We need to be critical of change and the existing system, we need to start rejecting the unacceptable, we need to start pushing the boundaries as social workers and resisting the status quo of relationships.

As Donald A. Schön (1991, p. 328) has already written, this contributes to the development and learning of the organisation. However, it is true that by voicing concerns we also "threaten" the stability of the organisation that must provide the technical expertise. But every organisation must also be aware that it must change. Organisations need to change in line with changes in the work because we are talking about learning organisations – and just as the

social worker learns from experience, the institution in which they perform their work needs to learn and change in line with practice and the needs of the people on the ground. This gives a new meaning to social workers and their work. It is a shift away from meeting the needs of the administration to carrying out social work with people, which takes time.

Based on 10 years of experience leading supervision groups in a vast variety of settings, as well as the literature studied, I can say with certainty that if we want to bring about change, we need to stop looking at what cannot be changed and focus on what can be changed. Only then can change take place. Experience from supervision practice has shown that it is necessary to move from learning from mistakes to learning from good experiences because social workers have a wealth of knowledge, they do excellent work and in their practice, they have succeeded in helping many individuals and families facing many challenges to change the status quo and bring about change. The social work relationship has gone well beyond the relationship between the expert by experience and the practitioner. Successful social work practice requires the inclusion of a broader context that no longer depends solely on relationships, but also on systems of action, not least those of the welfare state. This means that as practitioners they are able to look at their work and see what does not work in the system and draw attention to it. In this way, they contribute to respecting human rights, while performing anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice (Noble, Gray and Johnston, 2016) which is ethnically sensitive (Humljan Urh, 2013).

I would like to emphasise that supervision must become the norm and a fundamental tool of work if success stories are to be heard, if practitioners are to recognise the importance of their contribution to change, and if they are to be further motivated to continue exploring new terrain. This is both a prerequisite for high-quality professional work and a norm that enables lifelong learning.

Supervision must be made accessible to all. In Slovenia, we have the *Rules on Standards and Norms for Social Assistance Services*. It is essential that they are implemented.

A supervision group can increase the strength of social workers. This also has an impact on the development and promotion of the

social work profession, which has become an academic discipline in the 69 years of activity in Slovenia. This is also due to supervision and its help.

Supervision is a complex process that would merit a great deal of attention. However, I realise that I simply can not cover everything in one book. I wanted to give the reader an idea of how this process has changed as the science has evolved and how the relationships between those involved in the process have changed. I drew on the ideas that others have written and also those that I have gained from my own experience. In my writing, I was guided by the thoughts of Tanja Lamovec (2000), who said to me when we were writing the project together:

You will be at your most professional when you can express things in a way that even people who have no idea about what you are doing can understand.<sup>47</sup>

I was also guided by Steve De Shazer's (1985) thought on efficiency: keep it brief. The topics I have described have therefore been presented simply and may inspire further research.

Writing the book was a creative experience. The fears and anxieties about the dimensions of supervision were replaced by confidence and enthusiasm about all the things professionals do in practice and report on in supervision meetings.

---

<sup>47</sup> Personal interview, 20 October 2000.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramson, L. Y., Seligman, M. E., & Teasdale, J. D. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: critique and reformulation. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 87(1), 49–74.
- Addams, J. (1899). The subtle problems of charity. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 83, 496 (February 1899), 163–179. Pridobljeno 21. 8. 2020 s <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/settlement-houses/jane-addams-on-the-problems-of-charity-1899/>
- Adler, A. (1992). *Understanding human nature*. Oxford: One World.
- Ajduković, M., & Urbanc, K. (2009). *Refleksija o superviziji: Međunarodna perspektiva*. Zagreb: Biblioteka socijalnog rada Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu i Društvo za psihološku pomoć.
- Ajduković, M. (2009). *Refleksije o superviziji: međunarodna perspektiva*. Zagreb: Pravni fakultet Sveučilišća u Zagrebu.
- Ajduković, M., & Cajvert, L. (ur.), (2004). *Supervizija u psihosocijalnom radu*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć.
- Ajduković, M., & Urbanc, K. (2010). Supervision as a safety net: the case study of Croatia. Supervision meets education (str. 113–133). Maastricht: CESRT/ Zuyd University.
- Alkema, K., Linton, J. M., & Davies, R. (2008). A study of the relationship between self-care, compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, and burnout among hospice professionals. *Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care*, 4(2), 110–119. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <http://www.haworthpress.com>
- Anderson, H. (2002). Supervision as a collaborative community. *Music Therapy Today* (online), June. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <http://musictherapyworld.net>
- Anderson, H., & Goolishian, H. (1992). *The client is the expert: a not-knowing approach to therapy*. V S. McNamee, & K. J. Gergen (ur.), *Inquiries in social construction: therapy as social construction* (str. 25–39). London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1974). *Theory in practice: increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Abramson, L. Y., Seligman, M. E., & Teasdale, J. D. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: critique and reformulation. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 87(1), 49–74.
- Addams, J. (1899). The subtle problems of charity. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 83, 496 (February 1899), 163–179. Pridobljeno 21. 8. 2020 s <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/settlement-houses/jane-addams-on-the-problems-of-charity-1899/>
- Adler, A. (1992). *Understanding human nature*. Oxford: One World.
- Ajduković, M., & Urbanc, K. (2009). *Refleksija o superviziji: Međunarodna perspektiva*.

- Zagreb: Biblioteka socijalnog rada Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu i Društvo za psihološku pomoć.
- Ajduković, M. (2009). *Refleksije o superviziji: međunarodna perspektiva*. Zagreb: Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.
- Ajduković, M., & Cajvert, L. (ur.), (2004). *Supervizija u psihosocijalnom radu*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć.
- Ajduković, M., & Urbanc, K. (2010). Supervision as a safety net: the case study of Croatia. Supervision meets education (str. 113–133). Maastricht: CESRT/ Zuyd University.
- Alkema, K., Linton, J. M., & Davies, R. (2008). A study of the relationship between self-care, compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, and burnout among hospice professionals. *Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care*, 4(2), 110–119. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <http://www.haworthpress.com>
- Anderson, H. (2002). Supervision as a collaborative community. *Music Therapy Today* (online), June. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <http://musictherapyworld.net>
- Anderson, H., & Goolishian, H. (1992). *The client is the expert: a not-knowing approach to therapy*. V S. McNamee, & K. J. Gergen (ur.), *Inquiries in social construction: therapy as social construction* (str. 25–39). London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. (1974). *Theory in practice: increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Arnšek, T. (1999). Teze za okroglo mizo: supervizija v socialnem varstvu. V IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. *Socialni izzivi*, 10(5), 36–38.
- Ash, S. & Clayton, P. (2004). The articulated learning: an approach to guided reflection and assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29(2), 137–154.
- Atkins, S., & Murphy, K. (1994). Reflective practice. *Nursing Standard*, 8(39), 49–56.
- Bannink, F. P. (2014). *Handbook of positive supervision: for supervisors, facilitators, and peer groups*. Boston: Hogrefe Publishing.
- Bannink, F. P. (2015). *Handbook of positive supervision: for supervisors, facilitators, and peer groups*. Boston: Hogrefe Publishing.
- Bannink, F. P., & Jackson, P. Z. (2011). Positive psychology and solution focus – looking at similarities and differences: interaction. *The Journal of Solution Focus in Organizations*, 3(1), 8–20.
- Battison, T. (1999). *Premagujem stres*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije.
- Beaton, R., & Murphy, S. (1995). Secondary traumatic stress of crisis workers: research implications. V C. Figley (ur.), *Compassion fatigue: coping with secondary stress disorder in those who treat traumatized* (str. 51–81). New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Beckett, C., Maynard, A., & Jordan, P. (2017). *Values and ethics in social work*. London: Sage.
- Beddoe, L. (2010). Surveillance or reflection: professional supervision in 'the risk society'. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(40), 1279–1296.
- Beddoe, L., Karvinen-Niinikoski, S., Ruch, G., & Tsui, M. (2016). Towards an international consensus on a research agenda for social work supervision: report on the first survey of a Delphi study. *British Journal of Social Work*, 46(6), 1568–1586.

- Beresford, P. (2000). Service users' knowledge and social work theory. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30, 489–503.
- Berg, I. K., & Miller, S. D. (1992). *Working with the problem drinker: a solution-focused approach*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bernard, J. M., & Goodyear, R. K. (2013). *Fundamentals of clinical supervision*. University of Southern California, Los Angeles: Pearson (5. izdaja).
- Biesek, F. P. (1961). *The casework relationship*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Bogo, M., & McKnight, K. (2005). Clinical supervision in social work. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 24(1–2), 49–67.
- Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective practice: writing and professional development*. London: Sage (3. izdaja).
- Borton, T. (1970). *Reach, teach, touch: student concerns and process education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Boud, D. (1999). Avoiding the traps: seeking good practice in the use of self-assessment and reflection in professional courses. *Social Work Education*, June 18(2), 121–132.
- Boud, D., & Knights, S. (1996). Course design for reflective practice. V N. Gould, & I. Taylor (ur.), *Reflective learning for social work*. Aldershot, UK: Ashage.
- Boud, D., & Walker, D. (1998). Promoting reflection in professional courses: the challenge of context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), 191–206.
- Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (1985). *Reflection: turning experience into learning*. London: Kogan Page.
- Božič, M. (2003). *Stres pri delu*. Ljubljana: GV Izobraževanje.
- Brackett, J. R. (1904). *Pioneer social worker and educator*. Pridobljeno 12. 8. 2020 s <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/social-work/brackett-jeffery-richardson-1860-1949-pioneer-social-worker/>
- Brandon, D. (1994). *Jin in jang: načrtovanja psihosocialne skrbi*. Ljubljana: Visoka šola za socialno delo.
- Brandon, M., Belderson, P., Warren, C., Howe, D., Gardner, R., Dodsworth, J., & Black, J. (2008). *Analysing child deaths and serious injury through abuse and neglect: what we can learn? A biennial analysis of serious case reviews 2003–2005*. London: DCSF.
- Bride, B. E. (2007). Prevalance of secondary traumatic stress among social workers. *Social Work*, 52(1), 63–70.
- Bride, B. E., & Fingley, C. (2007). The fatigue of compassionate social workers: an introduction to the special issue on compassion fatigue. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 35, 151–153.
- Brisenden, S. (1989). A charter for personal care. *Progress*, 16, 9–10. London: Disablement Income Group.
- Brišar Slana, Ž. (1997). Vračanje supervizije v socialno varstvo. *Socialni izziv*, 6 (april), 4–7.
- Brown, A., & Bourne, I. (1996). *The social work supervisor: supervision in community, day care and residential settings*. London: Open University Press.

- Bruce, L. (2013). *Reflective practice for social workers: a handbook for developing professional confidence*. London: Open University Press.
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Buber, M. (2002). *The life of dialogue*. London, New York: Routledge (4. izdaja).
- Buckingham, M. (2007). *Go put your strengths to work: six powerful steps to achieve outstanding performance*. London: Simon/Schuster.
- Buckingham, M., & Coffman, C. (2005). First, break the roles: what the world's greatest managers do differently. New York: Gallup. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s [https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=sl&lr=&id=mo67BwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Buckingham+M.+Coffman+&ots=PqrvQyTZ1D&sig=cumjT9iNwbCAI86OMyat\\_HXxfSY#v=onepage&q=Buckingham%20M.%20Coffman&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=sl&lr=&id=mo67BwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Buckingham+M.+Coffman+&ots=PqrvQyTZ1D&sig=cumjT9iNwbCAI86OMyat_HXxfSY#v=onepage&q=Buckingham%20M.%20Coffman&f=false)
- Burnham, J. (2010). Creating reflexive relationships between practices of systemic supervision and theories of learning and education. V C. Burck, & G. Daniel (ur.), *Mirrors and reflections: processes of systemic supervision* (str. 49–78). London: Karnac.
- Burns, M. E. (1958). *The historical development of the process of casework supervision as seen in the professional literature of social work*. Ann Arbor: School of Social Work, The University of Chicago.
- Butler, G. (2015). *Reflection on emotion in social work*. V A. Mantell, & T. Scragg (ur.), *Reflective practice in social work* (str. 39–64). London: Sage.
- Cajvert, L. (2001). *Kreativni prostor terapevta: o superviziji*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Cajvert, L., & Ajduković, M. (ur.) (2004). *Supervizija u psihosocijalnom radu*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć.
- Carifio, M. S., & Hess, A. K. (1987). Who is the ideal supervisor? *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 18(3), 244–250.
- Chapple, A., & Rogers, A. (1999). 'Self-care' and its relevance to developing demand management strategies: a review of qualitative research. *Health Social Care Community*, 7(6), 445–454.
- Christian, C. & Kitto, J. (1987). *The theory and practice of supervision*. London: Centre for Professional Studies in Informal Education, YMCA National College.
- Cicak, M., & Urbanc, K. (2020). Role of ethics in creating supervision a safe place. *ANSE Journal*. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s [www.professioneelbegeleiden.nl/anse](http://www.professioneelbegeleiden.nl/anse)
- Clarke, C., Broussine, M., & Watts, L. (2015). *Researching with feelings, the emotional aspect of social and organizational research*. London: Routledge.
- Cooperider, D. (2001). Working paper: appreciative inquiry: realizing the power of the positive question. Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Cleveland.
- Corey, M. S., & Corey, G., & Corey, C. (2006). *Groups: process and practice*. Belmont: Thomson Brooks/Cole (7. izdaja).
- Cox, K., & S. (2013). *Self-care in social work: a guide for practitioners, supervisors, and administrators*. Washington, DC.: NASW Press.
- Curties, L., Moriarty, J., & Netton, A. (2010). The expected working life of a social worker. *British Journal of Social Work*, 50(5), 1628–1649.
- Čačinović Vogrinčić, G. (2002). Koncept delovnega odnosa v socialnem delu. *Socijalno delo*, 41(2), 91–96.

- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G. (2003). Jezik socialnega dela. *Sociano delo*, 42(4/5), 199–203.
- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G. (2006). Socialno delo z družinami, razvoj doktrine. *Socialno delo*, 45(3–5), 11–18.
- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G. (2009). Supervizija u socialnom radu: su-stvaranje supervizije kroz suradni odnos. V M. Ajduković (ur.), *Refleksije o superviziji: međunarodna perspektiva*. Zagreb: Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.
- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G. (2010). Soustvarjanje pomoči v jeziku socialnega dela. *Socialno delo*, 49(4), 239–245.
- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G. (2018). Soustvarjanje v superviziji. Predavanje 20. 4. 2018 v okviru Usposabljana supervizorjev/supervizork na področju socialnega varstva. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G., Kopal, L., Mešl, N., & Možina, M. (2005). *Vzpostavljanje delovnega odnosa in osebnega stika*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Čačinovič Vogrinčič, G., & Mešl, N. (2019). Socialno delo z družino: soustvarjanje zelenih izidov in družinske razvidnosti. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- de Beauvoir, S. (2013). *Drugi spol*. Ljubljana: Krtina.
- De Jong, P., & Berg, I. K. (2002). *Interviewing for solutions*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole (2. izdaja).
- De Shazer, S. (1982). *Patterns of brief family therapy*. New York: Guilford.
- De Shazer, S. (1985). *Keys to solution in brief therapy*. New York, London: W. W. Norton.
- De Shazer, S. (1988). *Clues: investigating solutions to brief therapy*. New York: Norton.
- De Shazer, S. (1994). *Words were originally magic*. New York, London: W. W. Norton.
- De Shazer, S., & Berg, I. K. (1992). Doing therapy: a post-structural revision. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 18(1), 71–81.
- De Shazer, S., & Berg, I. K. (1995). The brief therapy tradition. V J. Weaklands, & W. Ry (ur.), *Propagations: thirty years of influence from the Mental Research Institute* (str. 249–252). New York: The Haworth Press.
- De Shazer, S., Dolan, Y., Korman, H., Trepper, T., McCollum, E., & Berg, I. K. (2007). *More than miracles: the state of art of solution-focused brief therapy*. New York: Routledge.
- Deegan, P. E. (1988). Recovery: the lived experience of rehabilitation. *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal*, 30(7), 473–476.
- Dernovšek, M. Z., Gorenc, M., & Klanšček, H. (2006). *Ko te stresa stres: kako prepoznati in zdraviti stresne, anksiozne in depresivne motnje*. Ljubljana: IVZ RS.
- Dewey, J. (1910/1933). *How we think*. Boston, New York: D.C. Heath.
- Dewey, J. (1938a). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan Company.
- Dewey, J. (1938b). *Logic: the theory of inquiry*. Troy, MN: Reinhart and Winston.
- Dominelli, L. (2002). *Feminist theory and practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dominelli, L. (2009). Anti-oppressive practice: challenges of the 21st century. V M. Gray, J. Midgley, & S. A. Webb (ur.), *The SAGE handbook of social work* (str. 328–340). London: Sage.
- Dominelli, L., & Payne, M. (ur.), *Social work, themes, issues and critical debates* (3. izdaja). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan (str. 49–64).

- Dragoš, S. (1994). Socialno delo – sistemski vidik. *Socialno delo*, 33(3), 239–249.
- Dragoš, S. (1994). Socialno delo: sistemski vidik. *Socialno delo*, 33(2), 91–98.
- Dragoš, S., Leskošek, V., Petrovič Erelah, P., Škerjanc, J., Urh, Š., & Žnidarec Demšar, S. (2008). *Krepitev moči*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Dragoš, S. & Leskošek, V. (2003). Družbena neenakost in socialni kapital. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut.
- Edwards, J. K. (2012). *Strength based supervision in clinical practice*. London: Sage.
- El-Osta, A., Webber, D., Gnani, S., Banarsee, R., Mummary, D., Majeed, A., & Smith, P. (2019). The self-care matrix: a unifying framework for self-care. *Selfcare*, 10(3), 36–56.
- Evans, C., & Fisher, M. (1999). Users controlled research and empowerment. V: S. Wes, & M. L. Wells (ur.), *Empowerment practice in social work: developing richer conceptual foundation* (str. 348–356). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.
- Ferguson, H. (2005). Working with violence, the emotions and the psychosocial dynamic of child protection: reflection on the Victoria Climbié case. *Social Work Education*, 24, 781–795.
- Ferguson, H. (2017). How social workers reflect in action and when and why they don't: the possibilities and limits to reflective practice in social work. *Social Work Education*, 37(4), 415–427. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1413083>
- Field, R., & Brown, K. (2010). *Effective leadership, management and supervision in health and social care*. London: Sage (2. izdaja).
- Figley, C. R. (ur.) (1995). *Compassion fatigue: coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Figley, C. R. (2007). *Mapping trauma and its wake: autobiographic essays by pioneer trauma scholars*. New York: Routledge.
- Fink Hafner, D. (1992). *Nova družbena gibanja – subjekti politične inovacije*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede.
- Flaker, V. (1991). Sup-psihiatrične študije: hrastovski anali. Časopis za kritiko znanosti, XIX: 138–139.
- Flaker, V. (2003). *Oris metod socialnega dela: uvod v katalog nalog centrov za socialno delo*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo, Skupnost centrov za socialno delo Slovenije.
- Flynn, N. (2000). *Public sector management*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Folkman, S. (2001). Revised coping theory and the process of bereavement. V M. S. Stroebe, R. O. Hansson, W. Stroebe, & H. Schut (ur.), *Handbook of bereavement research: consequences, coping, and care* (str. 563–584). American Psychological Association.
- Fook, J. (2007). Reflective practice and critical reflection. V J. Lishman (ur.), *Handbook for practice learning in social work and social care* (str. 440–452). London: Jessica Kingsley Publisher (2. izdaja).
- Fook, J. (2012). *Social work: a critical approach to practice*. London: Sage.
- Fook, J., & Gardner, F. (2007). *Practicing critical reflection: a resource handbook*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

- Foucault, M. (1969). *Madness and civilization: the archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. New York: Harper.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1984). *Zgodovina seksualnosti*. Ljubljana: Škuc.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The Care of the Self*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (2007). *Življenje in prakse svobode. Izbrani spisi*. Ljubljana: ZRC.
- Foulkes, S. H. (1974). *Group analytic psychotherapy: methods and principles*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Fraser, M. W., Galinsky, M. J., & Richman, J. M. (1999). Risk, protection and resilience: toward a conceptual framework for social work practice. *Social Work Research*, 23(3), 131–143.
- Fredrickson, B. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: the broaden and build up theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218–226. Pridobljeno 5. 4. 2019 s <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3122271/>
- Fredrickson, B. (2004). The broaden and build up theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 359, 1367–1378.
- Fredrickson, B., & Joiner, T. (2002). Positive emotion trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological Science*, 13(4), 172–175.
- Freire, P. (1968). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: culture, power and liberation*. Westport: Bergin & Garvey.
- French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. (1967). The basis for social power. V D. Cartwright (ur.), *Studies in social power*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institut for Social Research.
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30(1), 159–165.
- Gantz, S. B. (1990). Self-care: perspectives from six disciplines. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 4(2), 1–12.
- Gardner, F. (2014). *Being critically reflective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ghaye, T. (2012). Empowered teams: strenghts through positivity. V T. Ghaye, & S. Lillyman (ur.), *Empowerment through reflection* (str. 129–145). London: Quay Books.
- Ghaye, T., & Lillyman, S. (2010). *Reflection: principles and practice for healthcare professionals*. London: Quay Books.
- Ghaye, T., & Lillyman, S. (ur.) (2012). *Empowerment through reflection*. London: Quay Books.
- Gibbs, G. (1988). *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Oxford Brookes University.
- Gibson, M. (2019). *Pride and shame in child and family social work: emotions and the search for human practice*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice theory: a new psychology of personal freedom*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Glišovič Meglič, D. (2004). Modeli supervizije: vodenje in dinamika supervizijskih skupin na slovenskih centrih za socialno delo. *Socialno delo*, 43(5–6), 265–275.

- Global definition of social work (2014). International Federation of Social Workers, International Association of School of Social Work. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work/>
- Globalna izjava o etičnih načelih v socialnem delu (2019). Mednarodno združenje šol za socialno delo. Pridobljeno 15. 12. 2020 s <https://www.iasw-aiets.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GLOBAL-SW-STATEMENT.-SLOVENE-TRANSLATION.pdf>
- Goffman, E. (1961), *Asylums*. New York: Doubleday & Co.
- Gogala Švarc, B. (2002). Supervizija skozi prizmo dveh modelov: primerjava nizo-zemskega koncepta s procesnim modelom supervizije. V S. Žorga (ur.), *Metode in oblike supervizije* (str. 49–77). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Goldfrey, C. H., Harrison, H. B., Lysaght, R., Lamb, M., Graham, I., & Oakley, P. (2011). Care of self – care by other – care of other: the meaning of self-care from research, practice, policy and industry perspectives. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Healthcare*, 9(1) 3–24.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Čustvena inteligenca*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga.
- Golja, M. (2004). Postavljanje vprašanj kot tehnika vodenja razgovora v superviziji. V A. Kobolt (ur.), *Metode in tehnike supervizije* (str. 195–204). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Gordon, W. E., & Schutz, M. L. (1977). A natural basis for social work specializations. *Social Work*, 22, 422–426.
- Graham Mekada, J. (2017). *Reflective thinking in social work: learning from student's narratives*. New York: Routledge.
- Grant, L., & Kinman, G. (2012). Enhancing wellbeing in social work students: building resilience in the next generation. *Social Work Education*, 31(5), 605–621.
- Gray, I., Field, R., & Brown, K. (2010). *Effective leadership, management and supervision in health and social care*. Exeter: Learning Matters Ltd.
- Greaves, C. J., & Campbell, J. L. (2007). Supporting self-care in general practice. *British Journal of General Practice*, 57(543), 814–821.
- Grebenc, V. (2014). Understanding the needs of older people: shifting toward more community based responses. *Revija za socialnu politiku*, 21(2), 133–160.
- Greene, R. R. (2009). *Human behaviour theory & social work practice* (3. izdaja). New Jersey: Aldine Transaction.
- Gremer, C. K. (2005). Mindfulness. V C. K. Gremer, R. D. Segal, & P. R. Fulton (ur.), *Mindfulness as a therapeutic intervention* (str. 1–35). New York: Guilford.
- Griffiths, M. (1998). *Educational research for social justice: getting off the fence*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Grimwood, C., & Popplestone, R. (1993). *Women, management and care*. London: Macmillan.
- Hacin Beyazoglu, K., Babnik, K., & Lep, Ž. (2020). Sto ur po prvem primeru okužbe s COVID-19 v Sloveniji: zaupanje in zaznana verodostojnost virov informacij ter čustveni odzivi. V Ž. Lep, & K. Hacin Beyazoglu (ur.), *Psihologija pandemije: posamezniki in družba v času koronske krize* (str. 11–22). Pridobljeno 13. 11. 2020 s <https://e-knjige.ff.uni-lj.si/znanstvena-zalozba/catalog/view/243/347/5746-1>
- Hanekamp, H. (1994). Intervizija. *Socialno delo*, 33(6), 503–505.
- Harkness, D. (1995). The art of helping in supervised practice: skills, relationships

- and outcomes. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 13(1), 63–76.
- Harkness, D., & Hensley, H. (1991). Changing the focus of social work supervision: effects on clients satisfaction and generalized contentment. *Journal of Social Work*, 36(6), 505–512.
- Hawkins, P., & Shohet, R. (2012). *Supervision in the helping professions*. Philadelphia: Open University Press (4. izdaja, prvič izdano 1989).
- Hays, K. F. (1999). *Working it out: using exercise in psychotherapy: using exercise in psychotherapy*. American Psychological Association.
- Healy, K. (2000). *Social work practice: contemporary perspectives on change*. London: Sage.
- Heen, S., & Stone, D. (2014). Find the coaching in criticism. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February (str. 108–112).
- Hefferon, K. (2013). *Positive psychology and the body: the somatopsychic side to flourishing*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Hefferon, K., & Boniwell, I. (2011). *Positive psychology: theory, research and applications*. Berkshire: Mc Graw Hill Open University Press.
- Henderson, P., Holloway, J., & Milar, A. (2014). *Practical supervision: how to become a supervisor for the helping professions*. London, Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hess, A. K. (1987). Who is the ideal supervisor? *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 18(3), 244–250.
- Honey, P., & Mumford, A. (1982). *Manual of learning styles*. Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK: Peter Honey Publication.
- Honey, P., & Mumford, A. (1986). *Learning styles questionnaire*. Maidenhead: Peter Honey Publication.
- Honey, P., & Mumford, A. (2006). *The learning styles questionnaire, 80-item version*. Maidenhead: Peter Honey Publication.
- Houston, G. (1995). *Supervision and counselling*. London: The Rochester Foundation.
- Howe, D. (2009). *A brief introduction to social work theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Howe, D. (2008). *The Emotionally Intelligent Social Worker*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Howe, K., & Gray, I. (2013). *Effective supervision in social work*. London: Sage.
- Huges, L., & Pengelly, P. (1997). *Staff supervision in a turbulent world*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publisher.
- Hughes, J. M. (2010). The role of supervision in social work: a critical analysis. *Critical Social Thinking: Policy and Practice*, 2, 59–73. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s [https:// www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/appliedsocialstudies/docs/Jeanne-Hughes.pdf](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/appliedsocialstudies/docs/Jeanne-Hughes.pdf)
- Humljan Urh, Š. (2013). Kulturno kompetentno socialno delo: etnična občutljivost in antirasistična perspektiva v socialnem delu za učinkovito delo s pripadniki etničnih manjšin in za učinkovito delo v večkulturnem okolju. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Hunt, R. (2019). Supervision in social work practice in UK. Osebni pogovor v

- Cambridgeu 24. 4. 2019.
- IFSW (2016). International Federation of Social Workers. National codes of ethics. Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <http://ifsw.org/publications/national-codes-of-ethics/>
- Ingram, R. (2013). Emotions, social work practice and supervision: an uneasy alliance? *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 27(1), 5–19.
- Ingram, R. (2015). *Understanding emotions in social work: theory, practice and reflection*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Ingram, R., Fenton, J., Hodson, A., & Jindal-Snape, D. (2014). *Reflective social work practice*. Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Inhelder, B., & Karmiloff-Smith, A. (1974). If you want to get ahead, get a theory. *Cognition*, 3(3), 195–221.
- Inskipp, F., & Proctor, B. (1995). *The arts, crafts and tasks of counselling supervision. Part 1. Making the most of supervision*. Middlesex, OH: Cascade.
- Jasper, M. (2003). *Beginning reflective practice: foundation in nursing and health care*. Cheltenham UK: Nelson Thornes.
- Jindal-Snape, D., & Ingram, R. (2013). Understanding and supporting triple transitions of international doctoral students: ELT and SuReCom models. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 1(1), 17–24.
- Jogan, M. (2001). *Seksizem v vsakdanjem življenju*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York: Hyperion.
- Kadushin, A. (1968). Games people play in supervision. *Social Work*, 13, 23–32.
- Kadushin, A. (1976). *Supervision in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kadushin, A. (1985). *Supervision in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press (2. izdaja).
- Kadushin, A., & Harkness, D. (2002). *Supervision in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press (4. izdaja).
- Kadushin, A., & Harkness, D. (2014). *Supervision in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kepecs, A., & Mainen Zachary, F. (2014). A computational framework for the study of confidence across species. V S. F. Fleming, & C. D. Frith (ur.), *The cognitive neuroscience of metacognition* (str. 115–145). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.
- Kickbusch, I. (1989). Self-care in health promotion. *Social Science & Medicine*, 29(2), 125–130.
- Klemenčič Rozman, M. M. (2010). Pomen supervizije za razvoj strokovnjaka. V A. Kobolt (ur.), *Supervizija in koučing* (str. 249–266). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
- Knott, C., & Scragg, T. (2016). *Reflective practice in social work*. London: Sage (4. izdaja).
- Kobolt, A. (1994). Skupinska supervizija in supervizija delovne skupine oziroma tima. *Socialno delo*, 33(6), 489–493.
- Kobolt, A. (1996). Supervizija med izobraževalnim in podpornim vidikom. *Psihološka*

obzorja, 5(2), 65–73.

- Kobolt, A. (2002). Je možno supervizijsko delo v večji skupini? V S. Žorga (ur.), *Modeli in oblike supervizije* (str. 77–100). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Kobolt, A. (2006). Supervizija skozi prizmo razvoja. V A. Kobolt, & S. Žorga (ur.), *Supervizija: proces razvoja in učenja v poklicu* (str. 21–51). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta
- Kobolt, A. (ur.) (2004). *Metode in tehnike supervizije*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Kobolt, A., & Žižak, A. (2010). Prispevek supervizije k uspešnosti in vzdušju v delovnih skupinah in timih. V A. Kobolt (ur.), *Supervizija in koučing* (str. 151–189). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
- Kobolt, A., & Žorga S. (1999). *Supervizija – proces razvoja in učenja v poklicu*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Kobolt, A., & Žorga, S. (2000). *Supervizija*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Kobolt, A., & Žorga, S. (20006). *Supervizija: proces razvoja in učenja v poklicu*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Kodeks etičnih načel v socialnem varstvu (2014). *Ur. l. RS*, št. 50/14.
- Kodele, T., & Mešl, N. (2015). Refleksivna uporaba znanja v kontekstu praktičnega učenja. *Socialno delo*, 54(3–4), 189–203.
- Kolb, D. & Fry, R. (1975). Toward an applied theory of experimental learning. V C. Cooper (ur.), *Theories of group process* (str. 33–57). London: John Wiley.
- Kolb, D. (1984a). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Kolb, D. (1984b). The process of experiential learning. V D. Kolb (ur.), *Experiences as the source of learning and development* (str. xx). London: Prentice Hall.
- Kolb, D. (2015). *Experiences as the source of learning and development*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Korinek, A. W., & Kimball, T. G. (2003). Managing and resolving conflict in the supervisory system. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 25(3), 295–310.
- Kramar, M. (1998). Klub supervizorjev pri Psihoterapevtski sekciji Slovenskega zdravniškega društva. (Interno gradivo Sekcije Slovenskega zdravniškega društva).
- Kristančič, A. (1999). Didaktična supervizija. IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, *Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. Socialni izziv*, 10(5), 38.
- Kubler-Ross, E. (1997). *The wheel of life*. New York: Station Hills Press.
- Ladany, N., & Bradley, L. (2010). *Counselor supervision*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Lamovec, T. (1995). *Ko rešitev postane problem in zdravilo postane strup*. Ljubljana: Lumi.
- Lamovec, T. (2000). Priprava programa izobraževanja za ljudi s težavami z druževnim zdravjem. Osebni pogovor, Ljubljana 21. 3. 2000.
- Lay, K., & McGuire, L. (2010). Building a lens for critical reflection and reflexivity in social work education. *Social Work Education, The International Journal*, 29 (5), 539–550.

- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). *Emotion and adoption*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer.
- Lee, J. J. & Miller, S. E. (2013). A self-care framework for social workers: building a strong foundation for practice. *Family in Society, the Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 94(2), 96–103.
- Lee, D. (2009). *We learn more from success, not failure: new research shows how the brain processes and remembers results*. Pridobljeno 17. 5. 2021 s <https://abc-news.go.com/Technology/DyeHard/story?id=8319006>
- Leskošek, V. (2006). Žensko gibanje in socialno delo. V D. Zaviršek, & V. Leskošek (ur.), *Zgodovina socialnega dela v Sloveniji: med družbenimi gibanji in političnimi sistemi* (str. 39–60). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Leskošek, V. (1995). Socialno delo ni politično (ali pač?). *Socialno delo*, 34(3), 195–203.
- Leskošek, V. (2010). *Socialno izključevanje*. Gradivo za kolokvij – praksa I. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Leskošek, V. (2011). Uvajanje neoliberalnega koncepta novega javnega menedžmenta v socialne dejavnosti: pripombe k predlogu zakona o socialno-varstveni dejavnosti. *Socialno delo*, 50(1), 43–45.
- Liddle, H. A., Breunlin, D. C., & Schwartz, R. C. (1988). *Handbook of family therapy training & supervision*. London: The Guilford Press.
- Lizano, E. L. (2015). Examining the impact of job burnout on the health and well-being of human service workers: a systematic review and synthesis. *Human Service Organizations Management, Leadership & Governance*, 39(3), 167–181.
- Lloyd, C., & King, R. (2004). A survey of burnout among Australian mental health occupational therapists and social workers. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 39(9), 752–757.
- Lloyd, C., King, R., & Chenoweth, L. (2002). Social work, stress and burnout: a review. *Journal of Mental Health*, 11(3), 255–265.
- Lopez, S. J., Teramoto Pedrotti, J., & Snyder, C. R. (2015). *Positive psychology: the scientific and practice exploring of human strenghts*. London: Sage.
- Lüssi, P. (1990). Sistemski nauk o socialnem delu. *Socialno delo*, 29(1/3), 81–94.
- Lynn, R. (2010). Mindfulness in social work education. *Social Work Education The International Journal*, 29(3), 289–304. Pridobljeno 17. 4. 2021 s [https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02615470902930351?casa\\_token=8sPm2xVJEygAAAAA%3AwQnPQcPzJAlkKWelySY4qZYGNsPMXR3N-FyoW6g5knucz6A63HvgiTqjWzjnAurWnemZZW5f3c2bgOg](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02615470902930351?casa_token=8sPm2xVJEygAAAAA%3AwQnPQcPzJAlkKWelySY4qZYGNsPMXR3N-FyoW6g5knucz6A63HvgiTqjWzjnAurWnemZZW5f3c2bgOg)
- Mantell, A., & Scragg, T. (2019). *Reflective practice in social work* (5. izdaja). London: Sage.
- Marchi, C., & Ghaye, T. (2011). *Appreciative reflection: how to feel positive and do work*. Gloucester: New Vista.
- Marks, E., & De Courtivron, I. (1981). *New French feminisms*. Sussex: Harvester Press Limited.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2002). *Resnica o izgorevanju na delovnem mestu: kako organizacije povzročajo osebni stres in kako ga preprečiti*. Ljubljana: Educy.

- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper.
- Maslow, A. H. (1962). *Toward a psychology of being*. Princeton, New York: Van Nostrand.
- McLaughlin, H. (2009). What's in a name: client, patient, customer, consumer, expert by experience, service user: what's next?. *British Journal of Social Work*, 19(6), 1101–1117.
- Merriam, S. B. (1997). Andragogy and self-directed learning: pillars of adult learning theory. V S. B. Merriam (ur.), *New updates of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (str. 3–13).
- Mesec, B. (2004). Interakcijska teorija socialnega dela s posameznikom: po L. Shulmanu. *Socialno delo*, 43(5–6), 231–255.
- Mešl, N. (2008). *Razvijanje in uporaba znanja v socialnem delu z družino: procesi soustvarjanja teoretskega znanja v praksi*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Mešl, N. (2013). Od razumevanja pojava naučene nemoči k razvijanju odpornosti v socialnem delu. *Socialno delo*, 52(6), 351–360.
- Mešl, N. (2018). K rešitvi usmerjen pristop kot podpora soustvarjanju zelenih izidov v delovnem odnosu. *Socialno delo*, 56(2), 91–110.
- Histed, M. H., Miller, E. K., & Pasupathy, A. (2009). Learning substrates in the primate prefrontal cortex and striatum: sustained activity related to successful actions. *Neuron*, 63(2), 244–253.
- Miller, R. (1969). *An experimental study of the observational process in casework: exemplars of social research*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.
- Miller, S. E., & Lee, J. J. (2013). A self-care framework for social workers: building a strong foundation for practice. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 94(2), 96–103.
- Milošević Arnold, V. (1994). Supervizija – metoda za profesionalce. *Socialno delo*, 33(6), 475–487.
- Milošević Arnold, V. (1997). Predstavitev in realizacija projekta usposabljanja supervizorjev za področje socialnega varstva I. *Socialni izziv*, 6 (april), 12–13.
- Milošević Arnold, V. (1999). (Možen) model uvajanja supervizije v socialnem varstvu. IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. *Socialni izziv*, 10(5), 20–30.
- Milošević Arnold, V. (2009). *Supervizija v socialnem delu*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo (študijsko gradivo).
- Milošević Arnold, V. (2017). Osebni intervju Petre Videmšek z Vido Milošević Arnold 6. novembra 2017.
- Milošević Arnold, V., Erzar Metelko, D., & Vodeb Bonač, M. (1995). *Uvajanje supervizorjev na področju socialnega varstva*. Pilotni projekt. Ljubljana: MDDSZ.
- Milošević Arnold, V., & Postrak, M. (2003). *Uvod v socialno delo*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba.
- Milošević, Arnold, V., Vodeb-Bonač, M., Erzar, D., & Možina, M. (1999). *Supervizija – znanje za ravnanje*. Ljubljana: Socialna zbornica Slovenije. Zbirka Socialni izziv.
- Milošević Arnold, V. (2004). *Priročnik za intervizijo*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Ming-SumMing-sum, T. (2005). *Social work supervision: contexts and concepts*. Lon-

- don: Sage.
- Mizrahi, T., & Davis, L. E. (1965). *The encyclopedia of social work: four-volume set*. Washington: NASW Press.
- Moon, J. (1999). *Reflection in learning and professional development*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Moon, J. (2004). *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: theory and practice*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Moore, S. E., Bledsoe, L. K., Perry, A. & Robinson, M. (2011). Social work students and self-care: a model assignment for teaching. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 47(3), 545–553.
- Morris, J. (1993). *Independent lives, community care and disabled people*. London: Macmillan.
- Morrison, T. (1993). *Staff supervision in social care*. Harlow: Longman.
- Morrison, T. (2005). *Staff supervision in social care*. Brighton: Pavilion (2. izdaja).
- Morrison, T. (2007). Emotional intelligence, emotion and social work: context, characteristics, complication and contribution. *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(2), 245–263.
- Možina, M. (2020). Skrb zase: od antike do danes. Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, 16. 9. 2020. Predavanje.
- Možina, M., & Rus-Makovec, M. (2010). Sistemska psihoterapija. V B. Lojk (ur.), *Psihoterapija na Slovenskem: pregled psihoterapevtskih šol, udeleženk strokovnega srečanja Psihoterapija na Slovenskem* (str. 195–224). Bled, 26.–28. februar 2010. Kranj: Inštitut za realitetno terapijo.
- Možina, M., & Stritih, B. (1999). Balintove skupine za socialne delavce. V IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. *Socialni izziv*, 10(5), 42–44.
- Munro, E. (2011a). *The Munro review on child protection final report: the child journey*. London: Department for Education. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf)
- Munro, E. (2011b). Learning to reduce risk in child protection. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(4), 1135–1151.
- Munson, C. E. (2002). *Handbook of critical social work supervision*. New York: The Haworth Social Work Practice Press.
- Myers, S. (2008). *Solution-focused approaches: theory into practice*. Dorset: Russel House Publishing.
- Nelson, T., & Thomas, F. (ur.)(2007). *Handbook of solution-focused brief therapy*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Newell, J. M., & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2014). A competency-based approach to teaching professional self-care: an ethical consideration for social work educators. *Journal of Social Work Education* 50(3), 427-439. Newman, S. (1999). Constructing and critiquing reflective practice. *Education Action Research*, 7(1), 145–161.
- Noble, C., & Irwin, J. (2009). Social work supervision: an exploration of the current challenges in a rapidly changing social, economical and political environment.

- Journal of Social Work*, 9(3), 345–358.
- Noble, C., Gray, M., & Johnston, L. (2016). *Critical supervision for the human services: a social model to promote learning and value-based practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publisher.
- Norcross, J., & Guy, J. (2007). *Leaving it at the office: a guide to psychotherapist self-care*. New York: Guilford Press.
- O'Connell, B. (1998). *Solution-focused therapy*. London: Sage.
- O'Hanlon, B. (1993). Possible therapy. V S. G., Gillian, & R. Price (ur.), *Therapeutic conversations*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- O'Hanlon, B., & Beadle, S. (1999). *A guide to possibility land – fifty one methods of doing*. New York: Norton and Company Inc.
- Oatley, K., & Jenkins, J. M. (1992). Human emotion: function and dysfunction. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 43, 55–86.
- Oko, J. (2008). *Understanding and using theory in social work*. Glasgow: Learning Matters.
- Oliver, M. (1995). *The politics of disablement*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Orme, J. (2009). Feminist social work. V M. Gray, & S. A. Webb (ur.), *Social work: theories and methods* (str. 65–75). London: Sage.
- Panny, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2005). Job stress, incivility, and counterproductive work behavior (CWB): the moderating role of negative affectivity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(7), 777–796.
- Pantić, Z. (2004). Povijesni pregled razvoja supervizije. V M. Ajduković, & L. Cajvert (ur.), *Supervizija u psihosocialnom radu* (str. 39–57). Zagreb: Društvo za psihosocialno pomoć.
- Parsons, R. J. (1991). Empowerment: purpose and practice principles in social work. *Social Work with Groups*, 14(2), 7–21. Pridobljeno 12. 8. 2020 s [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232603610\\_Empowerment\\_Purpose\\_and\\_practice\\_principle\\_in\\_social\\_work](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232603610_Empowerment_Purpose_and_practice_principle_in_social_work)
- Parton, N., & O'Byrne, P. (2000). *Constructive social work: towards a new perspective*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2006). *Critical thinking: tools for taking charge of your learning and your life*. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall (2. izdaja).
- Pavlov, I. P. (1897/1902). *The work of the digestive glands*. London: Griffin.
- Payne, C., & Scott, T. (1982). *Developing supervision of teams in field and residential social work*. London: National Institute for Social Work.
- Payne, M. (2002). Social work theories and reflective practice. V R. Adams, L. Dominelli, & M. Payne (ur.), *Social work themes, issues and critical debates* (str. 123–138). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Pečarič, E. (2005). *Neodvisno življenje*. Ljubljana: YHD.
- Perlman, H. H. (1957). *Social casework: a problem-solving process*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Perlman, H. H. (1970). The problem-solving model in social casework. V R. W. Roberts, & R. H. Nee (ur.), *Theories of social casework* (str. 131–179). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Piaget, J. (1961). The genetic approach to the psychology of thought. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 52(6), 275–281.
- Pines, A. M., Aronson, E., & Kafry, D. (1981). *Burnout: from tedium to personal growth*. New York: The Free Press.
- Pines, A., & Maslach, C. (1978). Characteristics of staff burnout in mental health settings. *Hospital & Community Psychiatry*, 29(4), 233–237.
- Podjed, K. (2014). Obvladovanje stresa med delovnim časom. *Delo in varnost*, 59(5). Pridobljeno 15. 10. 2018 s <https://www.dlib.si/stream/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-GMFA53XS/c16fa0dc-2a0a-4660-9a6d-1cc418a8926c/PDF>
- Polanyi, M. (1967). *The tacit dimension*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Pravilnik o načrtovanju, spremljanju in izvajanju supervizije strokovnega dela na področju socialnega varstva (2003). *Ur. l. RS*, št. 117/03.
- Pravilnik o standardih in normativih (2017). *Ur. l. RS*, št. 76/17.
- Pravilnik o standardih in normativih za delo na področju socialnega varstva (2010). *Ur. l. RS*, št. 45/10.
- Pretzer, C. (1929). Significant facts regarding the turnover of case workers in family welfare agencies during 1927 and 1928. *The Family*, X(6), 163–174. Pridobljeno 19. 4. 2019 s <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/104438942901000601>
- Proctor, B. (1995). *Group supervision: a guide to creative practice*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage.
- Proctor, B. (2008). *Group supervision: a guide to creative practice*. London: Sage.
- Prošt, Z. (1999). Pozdravljene besede. V IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. *Socialni izziv*, 10(5), 5–6.
- Radey, M., & Figley, C. H. (2007). The social psychology of compassion. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 35, 207–214.
- Ramon, S. (1999). Collective empowerment: conceptual and practice issues. V S. Wes, & M. L. Wells (ur.), *Empowerment practice in social work: developing richer conceptual foundation* (str. 38–49). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Ramon, S. (2019). *Success in surviving domestic violence*. Hatfield: University of Herfordshire (neobjavljen prispevek).
- Rape Žiberna, T. (2019). *Konceptualizacija timskega dela v socialnem delu v Sloveniji*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo (doktorska disertacija).
- Rapoša Tajnšek, P. (2007). Raziskovanje življenjskega sveta uporabnika v širšem kontekstu socialnega dela. V L. Šugman Bohinc, P. Rapoša Tajnšek, & J. Škerjanc (ur.), *Življenjski svet uporabnika: raziskovanje, ocenjevanje in načrtovanje uporabe virov za doseganje zelenih razpletov* (str. 7–25). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Rapp, C. A. (1998). *The strengths model: case management with people suffering from severe and persistent mental illness*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ratzka, A. (1997). Osebna asistenca: delovna definicija. V YHD: *Osebna asistenca za neodvisno življenje*. Ljubljana: YHD (str. 5–6).
- Revans, R. W. (1982). *The origin and growth of action learning*. Brickley, UK: Chartwell-Bratt.

- Revans, R. W. (1998). *ABC of action learning*. London: Lemos and Crane.
- Richard, A., & Shea, K. (2011). Delineation of self-care and associated concepts. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 43(3), 255–264. doi: 10.1111/j. 1547-5069.2011.01404.x.
- Richards, M., Payne, C. J., & Shepperd, A. (1990). *Staff supervision in child protection work*. London: National Institut for Social Work.
- Richmond, M. E. (1917). *Social diagnosis*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Rijavec, M., & Miljković, D. (2006). Pozitivna psihologija: psihologija čije vrijeme (ponovno) došlo. *Društvena istraživanja*, 15(4–5), 621–641.
- Ristič, M. (2017). *Soustvarjanje supervizijskega procesa* (magistrsko delo). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Robinson, V. (1936). *Supervision in social case work: a problem in professional education*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Robinson, V. (1949). The Dynamic of supervision under function control. A Professional Porcess in Social Casework. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press..
- Rogers, C. (1942). *Counseling and psychotherapy: newer concepts in practice*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Rogers, C. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: its current practice, implications and theory*. London: Constable.
- Rogers, C. (1980). *A way of being*. Boston: Houghton Mill.
- Rourke, M. T. (2007). Compassion fatigue in pediatric palliative care providers. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 54(5), 631–634. DOI: 10.1016/j.pcl.2007.07.004
- Rožič, T. (2015). *Supervizija v psihoterapiji: regulacija afekta v relacijski superviziji in terapiji*. Ljubljana, Vienna: Sigmund Freud University Press.
- Saleebey, D. (1996). The strengths perspective in social work practice: extensions and cautions. *Social work*, 41(3), 296–305.
- Saleebey, D. (1997) (ur.). *The strenghts perspective in social work practice* (2. izdaja). New York: Longman.
- Saleebey, D. (2002). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (3. izdaja). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Scaife, J. (2010). *Supervising the reflective practitioner: an essential guide to theory and practice*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *The Career Development International*, 14(3), 204–220.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Yossey-Bass.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: towards a new design for teaching and learning in the professionals*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schön, D. (1991). *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1972). Learned helplessness. *Annual Review of Medicine*, 23(1), 407–412.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1998). Building human strenghts: psychology's forgotten mission. *APA Monitor*, 28(1), 2.

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). *Learned optimism: how to change your mind and your life*. New York: Vintage books.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.
- Shulman, L. (1982). *Skills of supervision and staff management*. Itasca: Peacock Publishers.
- Shulman, L. (1995). Supervision and consultation. V R. L. Edwards (ur.), *Encyclopedia of social work* (19. izdaja) (str. 2373–2379). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Sicora, A. (2017). Reflective practice, risk and mistakes in social work. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 31(4), 491–502.
- Siegel, R. D. (2010). *The mindfulness solution: everyday practice for everyday problems*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Siegel, S. (1956). Friendly visiting and social casework: a comparison. *Social Casework*, 37(1), 20–25.
- Skinner, B. F. (1938). *The behavior of organisms: an experimental analysis*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: B. F. Skinner Foundation.
- Smith Z.D. (1884). »Volunteer visiting, the organization necessary to make it effective«. V *Progressing of the national conference of charities and corrections*, Boston: George
- H. Ellis. Pridobljeno 20. 4. 2019 s <https://books.google.si/books?id=1jpmAAAA-MAAJ&pg=RA5-PA3&lpg=RA5-PA3&dq=Smith+1883+administrative+supervision&source=bl&ots=MC3sU906bt&sig=ACfU3U3SIjh05IsL-7KT2tIrbfmeRMKhHAQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjIwuTfpJ7wAhXK16QKHf7JBaOQ6AEwDXoECBEQAw#v=onepage&q=Smith%201883%20administrative%20supervision&f=false>
- Smolić Krković, N. (1977). *Dinamika intervjuja u socialnoj anamnezi: supervizija u socialnom radu*. Zagreb: Savez društava socijalnih radnika Hrvatske.
- Solomon, B. B. (1976). *Black empowerment, social work in oppressed communities*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.
- Stamm, B. H. (2002). Measuring compassion satisfaction as well as fatigue: developmental history of the compassion satisfaction and fatigue test. V C. R. Figley (ur.), *Psychosocial stress series: treating compassion fatigue* (str. 107–119). Brunner: Routledge.
- Stoltenberg, C. D., & Delworth, U. (1987). *Developmental supervision: a training model for counselors and psychotherapists*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Šarotar Žižek, S., Treven, S., & Mulej, M. (2016). Vpliv psihičnega dobrega počutja na temelju zadostne in potrebne osebne celovitosti zaposlenega na uspešnost organizacije in pot iz sedanje krize. *ANALI PAZU HD*, 2(2), 112–146.
- Šeme, M. (2012). *K rešitvi usmerjeno postmoderno šolsko socialno delo* (diplomsko delo). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Škerjanc, J. (2010). *Individualizacija storitev socialnega varstva*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Štebe, S. B. (2004). Upoštevanje učnih in zaznavnih stilov v superviziji. V A. Kobolt (ur.), *Metode in tehnike supervizije* (str. 131–147). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.

- Šugman Bohinc, L. (2000). Kibernetika spremembe in stabilnosti v kontekstu svetovalnega in terapevtskega dela s klientskim sistemom. *Psihološka obzorja*, 9(2), 87–101.
- Šugman Bohinc, L. (2003). Pripovedovanje zgodb v socialnem svetovanju in psihoterapiji. *Socialno delo*, 42(6), 337–383.
- Šugman Bohinc, L. (2020). K rešitvi usmerjena supervizija. Predavanje dne 10. 1. 2020 v okviru usposabljanja supervizorjev, supervizork v socialnem varstvu. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Šugman Bohinc, L., Rapoša Tanjšek, P., Škerjanc, J. (2007). *Življenjski svet uporabnika: raziskovanje, ocenjevanje in načrtovanje uporabe virov za doseganje zelenih razpletov*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Švarc Gogala, B. (2002). Supervizija skozi prizmo dveh modelov: primerjava nizozemskega koncepta s procesnim modelom supervizije. V S. Žorga (ur.), *Supervizija: modeli in oblike* (str. 49–77). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Taylor, C., & White, S. (2000). *Practicing reflexivity in health and welfare: making knowledge*. Bingham: Open University Press.
- Taylor, W. (2007). *5th stage of reflective competence*. Pridobeno 19. 5. 2019 s [www.bunishhalls.com/consciouscomeptencelearningmodel](http://www.bunishhalls.com/consciouscomeptencelearningmodel)
- Tenny, M. (1895). Aid to friendly visitors. *The Charity Review*, 5, 202–211.
- Taylor, B. J. (2010). *Reflective practice for healthcare professionals: a practical guide*. Berkshire: Open University Press (3. izdaja).
- Thomas, F. N. (2013). *Solution-focused supervision: a resource-oriented approach to developing clinical experience*. New York: Springer.
- Thompson, N. (1995). Promoting anti-discriminatory practice. *Perspectives in Social Work*, 1, 21–31. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Thompson, N., & Gilbert, P. (2011). *Supervision skills: a learning and development manual*. Lyme Regis, Dorset, England: Russell House Publishing Ltd.
- Thompson, S., & Thompson, N. (2008). *The critically reflective practitioner*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tomašič, T. (2020). Koronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in bolezen covid-19. *Farmacevtski vestnik*, 71(2), 107–111. Pridobljeno 11. 11. 2020 s [http://www.sfd.si/uploads/datoteke/1fv2\\_107111.pdf](http://www.sfd.si/uploads/datoteke/1fv2_107111.pdf)
- Trbanc, M. (1996). Socialna izključenost: koncept, obseg in značilnosti. V I. Svetlik, M. Novak, N. Černigoj Sadar, & M. Trbanc (ur.), *Kakovost življenja*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede.
- Trenhaile, J. D. (2005). Solution-focused supervision: returning the focus to client goals. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 16(1–2), 223–228.
- Treven, S. (2005). *Premagovanje stresa*. Ljubljana: GV Založba.
- Tsui, M. (2005). *Social work supervision: context and concepts*. London, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Univerza v Ljubljani (1994). Seznam predavanj za študijsko leto 1994/5 (str. 566). Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani.
- Urbanc, K. (2004). Supervizija studenata. V M. Ajduković, & L. Cajvert (ur.), *Supervizija u psihosocijalnom radu* (str. 301–330). Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć.

- Urbanc, K., & Vlašič, T. (2019). Povezovanje s sosedi. Predavanje, 10. 12. 2020, Ljubljana: Društvo za supervizijo.
- Urbanc, K., Pačirski, D., Vlašič, T., & Laklija, M. (2019). Iskustva primjene elemenata mindfulnessa u superviziji studenata – eksperimentalni program za studente diplomskog studija socijanog rada.
- Urek, M. (1997). Od feministične socialne akcije k feminističnemu socialnemu delu. *Socialno delo*, 36(5–6), 383–397.
- Urek, M. (2003). Skrite zgodbe: ženske, hendikep in nasilje v družini. *Socialno delo*, 44 (1–2), 73–79.
- Urek, M. (2005). *Zgodbe na delu: pripovedovanje, zapisovanje in poročanje v socialnem delu*. Ljubljana: Založba / \*cf.
- Urh, Š. (2013). *Kulturno kompetentno socialno delo: etnična občutljivost in antirasistična perspektiva v socialnem delu za učinkovito delo s pripadniki etničnih manjšin in za učinkovito delo v večkulturnem okolju*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Van der Zijpp, J. (1999). Nizozemski model supervizije socialnega dela. V IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. *Socialni izziv*, 10(5), 9–16.
- Van Haaster, H., & Koster, Y. (2005). *Philosophy of curriculum*. V H. van Haaster (2007) (ur.), *Training programme for people with experience in the mental health crisis to work as a trainer and peer supporter* (str. 8). Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s [http://www.ex-in.info/produkte2.php?WEBYEP\\_DI=5](http://www.ex-in.info/produkte2.php?WEBYEP_DI=5). EX-IN\_Modules\_Curriculum\_engl.pdf
- Varga, R. (2003). Teorija motivacije Abrahama Maslowa v humanistični psihologiji. *Socialna pedagogika*, 7(3), 339–360.
- Videmšek, P. (2008). Krepitev moči kot temeljno orodje socialnega dela. *Socialno delo*, 47(3–6), 209–217.
- Videmšek, P. (2012). Vloga uporabniških gibanj pri spreminjanju vpliva uporabnikov. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti*, 39(250), 106–115.
- Videmšek, P. (2013). *Iz institucij v skupnost: razvoj stanovanjskih skupin na področju duševnega zdravja*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Videmšek, P. (2017). Osebno gradivo, intervjuji s supervizorkami na področju socialnega varstva, 28. 10. 2017–11. 11. 2017.
- Videmšek, P. (2018). *Supervizija v in za socialno delo: usposabljanje za supervizorje/supervizorke v socialnem varstvu 2018/2019 – priručnik za vodenje supervizijskih/intervizijskih skupin* (interno gradivo). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Videmšek, P. (2019). Supervizija kot prostor za učenje na podlagi dobrih izkušenj. V S. Bezjak, B. Petrović Jesenovec, D. Zaviršek, & J. Zorn (ur.), *Zbornik povzetkov: 7. kongres socialnega dela*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Videmšek, P., & Kodele, T. (2019). Uporabniška perspektiva v praktičnem usposabljanju na Fakulteti za socialno delo. *Socialno delo*, 58(3–4), 255–271.
- Videmšek, P. (2020a). Umeščanje refleksije strokovnih izkušenj s pozitivnimi izidi v supervizijski proces. *Socialno delo*, 59(2–3), 177–195.
- Videmšek, P. (2020b). Usposabljanje za supervizorje/supervizorke v socialnem varstvu. *Socialno delo*, 59(1), 99–101.
- Videmšek, P. (2021). *Skrb za strokovni razvoj v času razglasitve pandemije*. Še neob-

javljeno.

- Vigoda, E. (2002). Stress-related aftermaths to workplace politics: the relationships among politics, job distress, and aggressive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(5), 571–591.
- Vodeb Bonač, M. (1996). *Supervizija kot možnost za osebni in profesionalni razvoj strokovnih delavk in delavcev v pomagajočih poklicih* (diplomsko delo). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Von Foester H. (1967). Time and memory. V R. Fischer (ur.) *Interdisciplinary perspectives of time* (str. 866–873). New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Walmsley, C. & Bireback, J. (2006). Personal narrative writing: a method of values reflection for BSW students. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 26(1), 111–126.
- Walsh, R. (2011). Lifestyle and mental health. *American Psychologist*, 66(7), 579–592.
- Walter, G. A., & Marks S. E. (1981). *Experiential learning and change: theory design and practice*. New York: Wiley.
- Walter, J. L., & Peller, J. E. (1992). *Becoming solution-focused in brief therapy*. Brunner/Mazel.
- Watson, J. B. (1913). Psychology as the behaviorist views it. *Psychological Review*, 20, 158–177.
- Wei-Su, H. (2009). The components of the solution-focused supervision. *Bulletin of Educational Psychology*, 41(2), 475–496. Pridobljeno 21. 5. 2019 s [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Wei\\_Su\\_Hsu/publication/233245056\\_The\\_Facets\\_of\\_Empowerment\\_in\\_Solution-Focused\\_Brief\\_Therapy\\_for\\_Lower-Status-Married\\_Women\\_in\\_Taiwan\\_An\\_Exploratory\\_Study/links/5c62777845851582c3e18ef0/The-Facets-of-Empowerment-in-Solution-Focused-Brief-Therapy-for-Lower-Status-Married-Women-in-Taiwan-An-Exploratory-Study.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Wei_Su_Hsu/publication/233245056_The_Facets_of_Empowerment_in_Solution-Focused_Brief_Therapy_for_Lower-Status-Married_Women_in_Taiwan_An_Exploratory_Study/links/5c62777845851582c3e18ef0/The-Facets-of-Empowerment-in-Solution-Focused-Brief-Therapy-for-Lower-Status-Married-Women-in-Taiwan-An-Exploratory-Study.pdf)
- Wei-Su, H. & Kuo Ben, C. G. (2013). Solution-focused supervision with school counselors in Taiwan. V F. N. Thomas (ur.), *Solution-focused supervision: a resource-oriented approach to developing clinical experience* (str. 197–204 ). New York: Springer.
- Wetchler, J. L. (1990). Solution-focused supervision. *Family Therapy: The Journal of the California Graduate School of Family Psychology*, 17(2), 129–138.
- Wilkinson, A., & Whitehead, L. (2008). Evolution of the concept of self-care and implications for nurses: a literature review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* (New Zealand), 46, 1143–1147.
- Wonnacott, J. (2014). *Mastering social work supervision*. London, Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- York, R. O. & Hasting, T. (1985). Worker maturity and supervisory leadership behavior. *Administration in Social Work*, 9(4), 37–47.
- Zakon o zakonski zvezi in družinskih razmerjih (1976). *Ur. l. SRS*, št. 15/76.
- Zaviršek, D. (1994). *Ženske in duševno zdravje*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Zaviršek, D. (2005). »Ti jih boš naučila nekaj, ostalo bo naredil socializem«: zgodovina socialnega dela med leti 1945 in 1961. V D. Zaviršek (ur.), *Z diplomo mi*

- je lažje delat!:* znanstveni zbornik ob 50-letnici izobraževanja za socialno delo v Sloveniji. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za socialno delo.
- Zaviršek, D., Zorn, J., & Videmšek, P. (2002). *Inovativne metode v socialnem delu: opolnomočene ljudi, ki potrebujejo podporo za samostojno življenje*. Ljubljana: Skripta.
- Žnidarec Demšar, S. & Petrovič Erlah, P. (1998). Trening asertivnosti. *Socialno delo*, 37(3-5), 296-306.
- Žorga, S. (1994). Model supervizije na področju pedagoških dejavnosti. *Psihološka obzorja*, 3(3/4), 157-169.
- Žorga, S. (1995). Supervizija v razvojnih projektih. V B. Dekleva (ur.), *Supervizija za razvojne in preventivne programe* (str. 5-31). Ljubljana: Društvo za razvijanje preventivnega in prostovoljnega dela.
- Žorga, S. (1997). Vloga supervizije pri poklicnem in osebnostnem razvoju strokovnih delavcev. *Socialna pedagogika*, 1(3), 9-25.
- Žorga, S. (1999). Organiziranost in edukacija supervizorjev v Evropi in pri nas. V IV. Dnevi socialne zbornice Slovenije, Supervizija v slovenskem socialnem varstvu med vizijo in možnostmi. *Socialni izziv*, 10(5), 16-20.
- Žorga, S. (2000). Vzporedni proces (paralelizem) v superviziji. *Socialna pedagogika*, 4(3), 271-281.
- Žorga, S. (2002). Modeli in oblike supervizije. V S. Žorga (ur.), *Modeli in oblike supervizije* (str. 19-29). Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Žorga, S. (2004). *Metode in tehnike supervizije*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta.
- Levovnik, D. (2014). *Stres na delovnem mestu*. Pridobljeno 24. 1. 2020 s <http://www.sops.si/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Stres-na-delovnem-mestu.pdf>
- Elias, N. (1978). *The civilizing proces*. 1-3. New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Mesec, B. (2006), Očarani z močjo. *Socialno delo*, 45(3-5), 235-247.
- ACA Codes of Ethics (2014). Pridobljeno 1. 4. 2021 s <https://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>
- Zakon o socialnem varstvu (2007). *Ur. l. RS*, št. 3/07. Pridobljeno, 15. 4. 2019 s <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO869>

## REVIEWS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THE BOOK

The book covers the complex area of the development and approach to supervision and the creation and maintenance of supervision standards. Its main contribution is to provide a comprehensive overview of theoretical offshoots, models and procedures in conjunction with practical guidance and research findings in the field of supervision. The central value of this work lies in its reflection on the specifics of supervision in social work, particularly emphasising the need for process – which requires time for participants to reflect on and learn from their experiences. Here, the role of supervision as an intervening variable in the learning process is clearly conceptualised, because we do not learn from experience and learning does not happen by itself, but must be shaped and maintained taking into account the specifics of the individual and the environment. The book covers a variety of important topics for supervisors and the wider readership in the field, as well as those considering becoming supervisors. The added value of this work lies in strengthening the professional identity of supervisors as a further interest.

The work at hand addresses many important topics for supervision and provides an important basis for the conceptualisation of supervision in the field of social work.

At the same time, it is an important guide for the further development of supervision as a profession, both for those training future supervisors and those practising or thinking about practising supervision in social work.

I conclude that the book represents an important resource for the development of supervision as a profession and the identity of supervisors and can only recommend its publication.

Prof. Kristina Urbanc  
Social Work Study Centre  
Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb

In her work, Petra Videmšek provides an in-depth description of the development of theoretical trends and practical implementation of supervision in social work. She defines the multidimensionality of supervision processes as: a space for constructive discussions about practice; a support for overcoming challenges in professional work; a guide for working out possible solutions; a process in which the practitioner gathers and reflects on their professional experiences; a method for learning new experiences; and the development of personal and professional competences.

Both experience and research show that practitioners are strengthened by positive professional experiences. These contribute most to ensuring that we do not buckle under the increasing demands of fast pace, functionality, schematism and bureaucratisation.

In terms of empowering all those working in the mental health professions, the conclusion of the monograph is positive. It reminds us to take care of ourselves and even suggests developing a culture of self-care. I could not agree more! We are role models in the way we behave, both in our relationships with colleagues and in our professional support relationships. And if we know how to take care of ourselves, we are sure to spread this skill and culture.

Assist. Prof. Alenka Kobolt  
Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Petra Videmšek is a lecturer at the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Ljubljana. In addition to developing the field of supervision and conducting supervision processes in the field of social care, she also includes people with lived experiences into her research work. She publishes scientific articles in national and international journals and monographs. The main interests of her work are the role of people with lived experiences of distress in the care process and the endeavour to make the voices of people with support needs heard and ensure their inclusion. She is the author of the monograph *Iz institucij v skupnost: razvoj stanovanjskih skupin nevladnih organizacij na področju duševnega zdravja* [*From the Institution into the Community: The Development of NGO Housing Groups in Mental Health*] (2013) and her research also focuses on disability and violence. In 1999, she wrote the first easy-reading handbook, *Priročnik o dobrih in slabih dotikih* [*Handbook of Good and Bad Touch*] to raise awareness of the problem of sexual abuse experienced by people with lived experiences of disability.

More recently she has focused on developing the field of supervision, providing training for those wishing to train as supervisors and supporting a range of practitioners in their personal and professional development through supervision sessions.



The work before us has several advantages. First and foremost, Petra is a social worker who uses her understanding of social work to lead the supervision process. And most importantly, she is respectful. She does not see supervision as something you do on the side. She sees it as an obvious part of social work practice, a foundation for the development of the profession as a science and the development of the practitioner.

Today, it is very clear that what really ennobles social work and what is deemed as good and the best of social work is that we focus on the ability, the will and the commitment to engage with people, to be with them, to offer them help and support, to collaborate and to co-create change.

And these are elements that we are already using in supervision.

Gabi Čačinovič Vogrinčič, Professor Emeritus



UNIVERSITY  
OF LJUBLJANA

**FSD**

Faculty of  
Social Work

Price: 0,00 EUR

