

research
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for adults

A brief guide to...

supervision

Dartington

What is...

supervision in adult social care?



Supervision is when one worker in adult social care (the supervisor) is given responsibility to work with another worker or a group of workers (supervisee/s) to help them do a good job. The supervisor supports supervisees to meet professional and personal objectives, so that they can promote the best outcomes for the adults and carers they work with.

The aim of supervision is to promote the wellbeing of adults and carers who are receiving support.

Every worker in adult social care, whatever their job or experience, should have supervision. This usually happens every month for around 1-2 hours. The supervisor is generally their line manager and should have an understanding of the worker's professional background and role.

Good supervision means everyone working in the social care sector is supported and able to think about how to improve their practice. They can then make better judgements about how to help adults and carers. This should then lead to better experiences and outcomes for adults and carers. As the worker learns and develops from supervision they can help the organisation they work for understand how to improve, so that it becomes a better place to work and provides better services.

How ...

does supervision work?



Supervision influences how social care staff work with adults and carers. It is an important part of how they are supported. In supervision, supervisors and supervisees need to keep adults and carers in mind - along with colleagues, the wider organisation and other agencies.

There should be an agreement between the supervisor and supervisee/s about how they will work together, for example how often they will meet. They should also have an agenda for the things supervision should cover. The main areas are:

- > **Management**
The quality and quantity of workload.
- > **Development**
Any learning that is needed to help do the work.
- > **Support**
Any support the worker needs.
- > **Mediation**
Any ways of improving how the worker works with others.

These areas are important to help staff do good work that promotes wellbeing.

The supervisor and supervisee/s discuss the topics they need to. They will often talk about particular complex work situations. When they do this, they may use tools to help them. In particular, the 'reflective cycle' is often used. This helps someone to think through:

- > What has happened?
- > How this felt?
- > What it meant?
- > What could have been done differently?

At the end of supervision, the supervisee/s should have a plan for how they can improve and undertake their work. This plan is reviewed in the next supervision. They should also feel more supported and confident about their work.

Supervision works best when there is a good relationship between the supervisor and supervisee/s, and when there is time and space for thinking.

Practical advice



Adults and carers can provide feedback to workers and organisations about the help they get. This can include highlighting good practice. This can be discussed in supervision so that the worker can learn from it.

Adults and carers can let organisations know when their workers seem to be struggling.

Adults and carers can ask whether their situation will be discussed with a supervisor. Afterwards, they can ask for information about the advice the worker received.

Adults and carers may be asked if a supervisor can observe a worker that supports them. The worker's practise is then discussed in supervision. This helps the worker to learn.

How do ...

I know if things are working well?

The staff working with you are supported and confident in their work.

You feel that workers are able to work well with you.

You feel that workers are able to fully involve you in discussions and decisions.

You are told what decisions are being made, why they are being made and who was involved.

The staff working with you have advice from a supervisor when they need it.

You are able to let the organisation know what you think about the services you receive.

Adult social care organisations that work with you, including local authorities, home care agencies and care homes, should provide supervision to their staff. You can ask them about their supervision policy.

If you employ a Personal Assistant, you may want to talk to them about how they can get supervision. You may want to consider doing supervision training yourself and/or teaming up with another employer in your area who may be able to support you with this.

If you want to use an external service to carry out supervision, it is a service you will need to pay for. Your direct payment adviser, local support organisation or the organisation that provides any funding you receive may be able to help you find this type of service. See

www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk/managing-your-personal-assistant for more information.

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This guide has been produced by Research in Practice for Adults. We are a charity that uses evidence from research and people's experience to help understand adult social care and to improve how it works.

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