

Balint Study Day February 9 2018

Thoughts On Supervision Drs Judy Malone and Helen Sheldon

1. What is supervision and its purpose?

- What it is and its purpose are combined
- The clue is in the name super - 'above over and beyond' vision (*as well as review/oversee*)
- Supervision involves a clinician talking about his/her work with another colleague, often a colleague with more experience, on a regular basis
- Through the supervision process the clinician is offered an overview, another view, a view of his/her work from another mind, a fresh mind not involved in the work
- Supervision offers a containing enriching experience which enhances the clinician's work and experience of work
- Supervision supports the clinician and his/her thinking and awareness of the impact of his/her work
- The detail of the work of supervision helps the clinician develop skills and understanding

2. Why is supervision needed to facilitate good Balint leadership?

- Supervision is essential for good practice and ensures leaders are not alone with the work
- Supervision provides support and stimulates thinking and understanding about the work
- Supervision provides feedback and a perspective on the work for the leader(s)
- Supervision covers all aspects of the work
 - the practical aspects of how to create a safe space for a group to flourish and develop
 - anticipating what happens in groups
 - thinking about the content, common problems and challenges and how to manage these
- Supervision helps the leader(s) to think about the process, the relationships between group members, between group members and leaders, between 2 leaders who are working together and suitable interventions
- Supervision helps the leader(s) identify and think about feelings projected into them by group members.
- Supervision can help support the leader (s) to develop his/her /their own style of leadership

3. Format of Balint supervision

- Individual group leader sees an individual supervisor
- Co leaders see an individual supervisor
- Individual group leader/ co leaders join a supervision group with one or two supervisors
- Peer supervision individual/ group
- Balint the Balint

4. What are the obstacles to having supervision for Balint groups?

- Internal obstacles – unfamiliarity with supervision, “go-it-alone” mentality, anxiety about exposure and being critically evaluated (particularly when supervision is part of the leadership accreditation process), time constraints.
- External obstacles – time, geographical constraints, the culture of the profession, organisational ignorance and/or respect, lack of funding to support supervision, perception of Balint work and of its supervision as an indulgence, not valuing/understanding the process of reflection on feelings evoked by work and work relationships,

5. What are the benefits of supervision?

- To assist the leader(s) in thinking about the setting up of a group and its dynamic administration e.g. its location, number of group members, frequency, boundaries.
- The creation of a “third position” i.e. a triangular space between the group, the leader(s) and the supervisor within which it is possible to take a step back from the unconscious dynamics and reflect on the work of the group, the relationships between members, the relationships between members and the group leader(s) and the relationships between the group leaders when leadership is co - facilitated
- The supervisor can act as a model for the leader(s)
- To provide support and help the leader(s) to look at how they lead
- To help the leader(s) to digest and process feelings projected into them by the group
- To understand how the group may impact on the leader(s)
- To help the leader(s) to maintain a flexible stance with regard to the developmental maturity of the group and its members