‘A Model of Effective Fieldwork Supervision’ as part of a Symposium entitled Innovations in the Training of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales

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A Model of Effective Supervision for Trainee Educational Psychologists

ISPA Conference
Utrecht, July 2008
Dr Cathy Atkinson, University of Manchester
Supervision of Trainee Educational Psychologists in the UK

- Initial professional training extended from one year to three years in 2006
- Approximate three-fold increase in the number of trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) requiring supervision
- Increased supervisory demands on psychology teams
- Changes in the nature of supervisory requirements
Research Methodology
Stage 1 – Focus groups

• Focus group meetings between 2000 and 2006, conducted as part of supervisor familiarisation
• Groups contained approximately 12 members
• Data available from eight focus groups (approx. 12 per group), identifying the ‘facilitators’ and ‘barriers’ to effective supervision
• Discussions recorded by handwriting and validity of notes checked with the group
Stage 2 – Questionnaire design

- Opening coding used to derive key themes related to ‘facilitators’ and ‘barriers’ to effective supervision
- Ten key themes for each domain
- Additional information requested about respondents’ supervisory experience and psychology service context
Stage 3 – Postal questionnaire

- Completed by 93 educational psychologists (EPs) working within psychology services in the north of England and Wales
- Seventy-one respondents had supervisory experience (supervisor EPs); 22 did not (non-supervisor EPs)
- Forty-five respondents had had recent experience of being supervised (less experienced EPs); 43 had not (more experienced EPs)
Questionnaires

- Have a look at the ‘enabling factors’ (yellow paper) or the ‘barriers’ to an effective trainee placement (blue paper)

- Quickly rank order the statements. Note any additional issues in the blank boxes
## Facilitators of effective trainee supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean rank N=93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision offers guidance, problem solving and support appropriate to the needs of the trainee</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication between the supervisor and trainee</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate time is available to the trainee and activities are suitably paced</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The placement is seen as a partnership between supervisor and trainee</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The placement is emotionally supportive for the trainee</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainee is provided with a varied range of experiences</td>
<td>5.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service context is supportive</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The contribution of the trainee is recognised and appreciated</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainee has the opportunity to work with different EPs</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable office facilities and administrative support are available to the trainee</td>
<td>8.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Red** - Significant differences between the responses of supervisor and non-supervisor EPs

**Yellow** - Significant difference between the responses of experienced and less experienced EPs
## Barriers to effective trainee supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication/clarity of communication between the supervisor and trainee</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties in the relationship between the supervisor and trainee</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of capacity within the service to meet trainee learning needs</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time for supervisor to offer support for unexpected events or ‘difficult’ tasks</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing service pressures upon, and priorities for, the supervisor</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic workload or expectations for the trainee</td>
<td>5.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues relating to the competence or confidence of the trainee</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges in working with stakeholders (e.g. schools, multi-agency teams)</td>
<td>7.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home or personal issues for the supervisor or trainee arising during the placement</td>
<td>7.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic issues (e.g. lack of access to office equipment, unfamiliarity with geographic area)</td>
<td>8.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

• Have a look at your questionnaire responses to the ‘enabling factors’ or ‘barriers’ to an effective trainee placement

• What would you see as the most significant enabling factors and barriers to effective supervision?

• How are the facilitators/barriers to effective supervision similar/different to those identified by UK psychologists?
Future Developments

• A whole service approach to the development of supervision
• Links to continuing professional development opportunities for supervisors
• Supervisory contracts
• Improved links between training providers and fieldwork supervisors (e.g. HEA project)
Model for Effective Supervision

Guidance

Educational Psychology Service

Higher Education Institute

Problem Solving

Supervisor

Support

Trainee

Local Authority/Children’s Services
Reference