



One-minute guide
for middle leaders:

Maximising the impact of practice supervisors and the staff they supervise in your organisation

Introduction

The briefing for senior managers '[Maximising the impact of practice supervisors and the staff they supervise in your organisation](#)' draws together ideas from the other briefings in relation to the key role played by practice supervisors and the need to support them in that role. It explores the importance of the culture in organisations, looking at how we develop and foster a culture of learning. In addition, this briefing highlights the importance of evidence-informed practice with children and families.

Like the other briefings, the emphasis is on the strong links between:

- > High-quality support and effective, reflective supervision, which enable
- > emotionally resilient, analytical, reflective practice supervisors, leading to
- > excellent practice with children and families.

'Effective supervision is the cornerstone of safe social work practice. There is no substitute for it.' (Laming 2003 p11)

Accepting the premise that it is our frontline practice supervisors who most effectively and directly influence practitioners and inspire excellent practice, the role of middle leaders in managing, supporting and supervising them becomes vitally important.

Some opportunities to support practice supervisors to excel

Provide networking opportunities. Liaise with partner agencies to enable practice supervisors from different settings to meet. Ask your training dept / academy to set up regular 'lunch and learn' or breakfast workshops for practice supervisors from different parts of the service to meet and share experiences and expertise.

And then promote such opportunities and make supervisees available to attend!

Talk to your Principal Social Worker about ways to obtain feedback from practice supervisors about what is working well and what could be improved, and how to identify themes and patterns. Use this as an opportunity to hear the voices of practice supervisors with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Take seriously feedback about office space, the impact of remote working or parking issues and ensure you provide a service response that either resolves the issue or is clear and transparent about the reasons it cannot be resolved in the way staff would like.

Developing a learning culture

Learning from practice

Create spaces for practice supervisors to meet and share feedback and learning with you.

With other middle leaders, identify themes and then feed up identified learning needs to senior leaders and learning academies.

Make group supervision and team development sessions part of your 'business as usual'.

Recognise, respect and value the expertise of practitioners. Develop practice champions – find out who has particular areas of experience and expertise and utilise these to inspire and develop confident practice.

Learning from evidence

Interrogate decisions, ensuring they are underpinned by theory and best evidence.

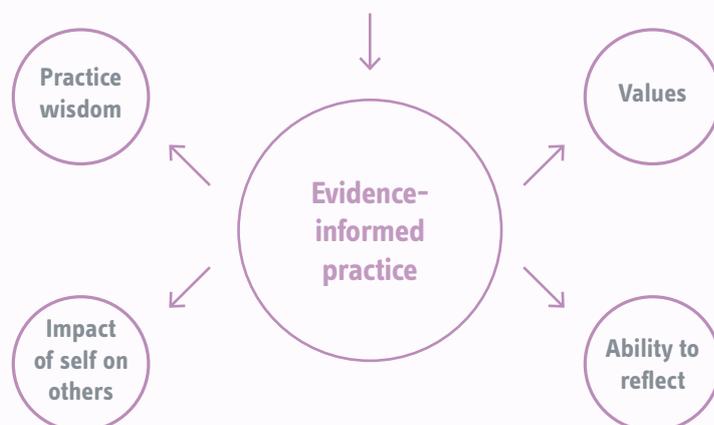
Encourage scrutiny in supervision. Are your practice supervisors ensuring information is triangulated and considering multiple hypotheses? Are these evidence-based?

Ensure practice supervisors and practitioners have opportunities to develop confident practice using evidence from research.

Practice what you preach: develop confidence in using research. This is a way of demonstrating what you mean by it.

Ask senior leaders to develop regular updates which highlight new research findings, and make sure they're accessible (e.g. one-minute guides) and that they encourage further learning.

Skills and qualities all informed by



References

Laming, W. (2003). *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry*. HMSO.

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