



# PSDP–Resources for Managers of Practice Supervisors: A template to guide you when observing supervision

## Introduction

This is one of three tools in this section of the website that focus on observing supervision. It includes a template you can use when observing supervision, and directs you towards providing feedback on seven key areas. This tool can be used in conjunction with 'An evidence-informed approach to observing supervision', which provides detailed information about each of the seven key areas for feedback. For this reason, we recommend you read that tool before using the template included here.

A third tool, 'Preparing to observe supervision and give feedback', provides detailed guidance on how to prepare for a supervision observation with a practice supervisor, and on how to give feedback supportively and effectively.

## Giving feedback on seven areas of supervision practice when observing supervision

We have developed a template you can use to guide your feedback and thinking when observing supervision based on the work of Morrison (2005), Wonnacott (2012, 2013 and 2014) and Wilkins et al (2018). The template asks you to focus on seven key elements of supervision, which are outlined below with prompt questions for you to reflect on.

### 1. Clarity about risk and need

Does the supervision discussion help the worker to:

- > Acknowledge dilemmas and reflect on areas of uncertainty?
- > Engage with different ideas and develop alternative hypotheses?
- > Balance short and long term risks alongside working in a strengths-based way and support families to identify and make changes?
- > Have a clear focus on outcomes for children and families?
- > Think about blind spots and areas of bias or subjectivity?

## 2. Child focus

Does the supervision discussion help the worker to:

- > Reflect on the needs of each child, how these can be met, and the meaning of each child to their carer(s)?
- > Explore what each child and family member thinks about the situation and their views on what needs to change?
- > Balance their observations and the meaning of the information gathered with the perspectives of a range of adults who know the child?
- > Reflect on how to build supportive relationships with parents while keeping a clear focus on the needs of each child?

### 3. Support for practice

Does the supervision discussion help the worker to:

- > Consider how best to build relationships with children and families?
- > Practice more autonomously by identifying their own solutions to dilemmas and building on their ideas and practice knowledge / experience?
- > Reflect on their work with children and families and with other professionals, identifying areas for improvement and what has gone well?
- > Analyse and assess needs within evidence-informed approaches?
- > Test hypotheses based on social work knowledge and research?
- > Develop a clear understanding about practice standards and what excellence looks like?
- > Continue to develop professionally by providing feedback, guidance and challenge where appropriate on how to progress work with a child or family?
- > Challenge the practitioner to consider alternative explanations and the relevance of different approaches to work with the child and family?
- > Assess supervisees' professional development and set a consistently high level of expectations?

## 4. Functions of supervision

Reflecting on the following functions of supervision:

- > **Management:** ensuring competent accountable practice and performance.
- > **Development:** supporting continuing professional development and promoting learning.
- > **Support:** providing a secure, restorative relationship.
- > **Mediation:** engaging the individual practitioner / team with the organisation and serving as a bridge between the world of direct practice and the world of senior management / politics.

- > Which function of supervision has more attention and focus in the session?
- > What function of supervision do you see less of than you'd like? Is this unusual or does it happen often?
- > Is there more focus on a management agenda than other functions of supervision?
- > How does the practice supervisor manage moving between the different functions of supervision?

It is unlikely that one observation of supervision will demonstrate an equal awareness of the four functions of supervision. However, it is still important to consider the questions above and to promote discussion about the balance between the functions of supervision, and the supervision session itself, when you provide feedback to the practice supervisor.

## 5. Structure of the supervision session

Is there evidence of:

- > Joint agenda and priorities for discussion agreed at the start of the supervision discussion?
- > Exploring the emotional impact of practice and how this is affecting the worker's judgement, decision-making and relationship with the family (and what support would help)?
- > Sufficient time being given to discuss work with children and families in depth where this is required?
- > Pausing to summarise, record and clarify agreed actions and next steps for each child and family discussed?
- > Collaborative feedback and reflection about the experience of supervision and any learning arising from this?

## 6. Skills demonstrated by the practice supervisor

Additionally is the practice supervisor able to:

- > Develop mutual trust and respect with the supervisee (and use the positive working relationship that develops skilfully within supervision discussions to enrich the quality of analysis and reflection achieved)?
- > Encourage practitioners to reflect on the impact of being uncertain, frustrated or not making progress with children and families?
- > Help the practitioner to reflect on the range of skills and knowledge required for practice and evaluate their own strengths and achievements alongside areas for continued development?
- > Model the exploration of social and structural inequality, culture, ethnicity and diversity in supervision and affirm a commitment to challenge oppressive assumptions and stereotypes?
- > Give constructive feedback, challenge the practitioner to think differently and set clear standards and expectations as required?
- > Demonstrate a good understanding of supervision knowledge, eg using a relationship-based approach, containment, reflective discussions etc?

## 7. Feedback from supervisee

Getting feedback from a supervisee is an important element when observing supervision. That's why part of the template prompts you to have a reflective discussion with them to understand their perspective of the experience. This is a useful opportunity to involve the supervisee in finding out how well their needs are met and what adjustment may be needed. You can do this directly by inviting the supervisee to give comments at the end of the observation with the practice supervisor present. But this conversation needs to be set up and managed carefully due to the power dynamics. You can find more information about this in the learning tool, 'Preparing to observe supervision and give feedback'.

Questions you might ask yourself include:

- > How did the supervisee respond to the practice supervisor in the session?
- > What do you think their behaviour and words communicated?
- > Did the supervisee share any observations about what they might be thinking or feeling during the session?
- > Did the practice supervisor acknowledge the supervisee's experience of supervision and invite feedback?

Having debriefed with the supervisee present, it is useful to reflect on the following questions:

- > Are the supervisee's views congruent with the supervisor, and with you as an observer?
- > How well is the supervision agreement used and referred to in order to develop the relationship between practice supervisor and supervisee?

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

Name of practice supervisor:		Date	
Observer		Venue	
<b>Clarity about risk and need</b>			
What did the practice supervisor do well?			
<b>Clarity about risk and need</b>			
What could be developed further?			

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

Child focus	
What did the practice supervisor do well?	
Child focus	
What could be developed further?	

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

Support for practice	
What did the practice supervisor do well?	
Support for practice	
What could be developed further?	

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

Structure of the supervision session	
What did the practice supervisor do well?	
Structure of the supervision session	
What could be developed further?	

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

Skills demonstrated by the practice supervisor	
What did the practice supervisor do well?	
Skills demonstrated by the practice supervisor	
What could be developed further?	

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

What skills were demonstrated by the practice in relation to the functions of supervision?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Management</li><li>&gt; Development</li><li>&gt; Support</li><li>&gt; Mediation</li></ul>	
What skills might the supervisor develop further in relation to the functions of supervision?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Management</li><li>&gt; Development</li><li>&gt; Support</li><li>&gt; Mediation</li></ul>	

## A template for you to use when observing supervision to guide your feedback

Supervisee's feedback



**We want to hear more about your experiences of using PSDP resources and tools. Connect via Twitter using #PSDP to share your ideas and hear how other practice supervisors use the resources.**

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