



## MOOC 2 - Learning Unit 4

### Chapter 5 - Methods

#### GOOD PRACTICES

**Title: Group supervision (a Greek model of supervision, IGAA).**

**Real vignette.**

According to the Greek model of supervision, introduced by I.K. Tsegos and applied at the Institute of Group Analysis of Athens (IGAA) since 1983, supervision takes place within a group setting. The supervision group consists of the presenter, peer colleagues and one experienced observer-supervisor. The supervision group sits in a semi-circle in front of a blackboard. The supervision process consists of three phases: Presentation, Analysis, and Synthesis.

During the first phase, the **Presentation**, a therapeutic session is orally presented, with the presenter reading out his/her notes and marking group exchanges on a blackboard. During the **Analysis** phase, the supervision group members take an active part: the peer colleagues record on a special format, the ***Supervision Protocol***, their own Emotions and Fantasies, evoked during the presentation, as well as the main Topics discussed in the presented therapeutic session. The Protocol provides structure for the whole process, enabling peer colleagues to participate in the supervisory procedure right from the beginning, actively and effectively. The various parts of the Supervision Protocol also provide



important information for dynamic, structural, and clinical, as well as research purposes (Tsegos, 1995).

After the Analysis, **Synthesis** begins with the presenter reading out loud the material gathered, under each column of the Protocol (Emotions, Fantasies, and Topics). Any peer colleague may ask for clarifications about the presented session and the whole supervision group begins to process the material of the blackboard. This process permits the supervision group to highlight differences and similarities between Emotions, Fantasies and Topics, and to capture the atmosphere of the supervised activity and the emotional state of the presenter, through the resonance created in the supervision group. The Synthesis of the dynamic processes emerging from the therapeutic session presented, in combination with the exploration of the dynamics evoked in the supervision group, are processed together, and offered to the presenter as suggestions.

### **Real Vignette**

**Group history:** this is a Group-Analytic group for Unaccompanied Minor Refugees at an Accommodation Center in Greece in 2019. The group is a homogeneous open supportive group, meeting weekly for 90-min session. The group always meets in the same room of the accommodation center. The 14<sup>th</sup> group session is described below, which is the last one before Christmas holidays.

### **Members of the group:**

- Six male unaccompanied minor (15-17 years old) refugees, hosted in an open refugee accommodation structure in Greece. They all abandoned their country of origin because of the war. Firstly, they were displaced in their country and across borders, surviving an extremely dangerous travel to Europe. Due to many different reasons, they all lost contact with their family members. Some of them are seeking asylum, and others are trying to reunite with their relatives and/or friends.
- One group conductor, a Greek speaking psychologist-group analyst.
- One Arabic-speaking interpreter.

To ensure the anonymity of the persons participating in this case study, the names of the group members will be noted with capital letters as follows: V, W, X, Y, Z.



### **A brief description of the 14<sup>th</sup> group session:**

The conductor welcomes the group members while two of them are late (10 min.), and one member is absent because he must settle his documents. After a short silence, discussion begins with conductor's encouragement to share their news.

Members express their concern about the conductor's seeming tired and very busy in his office lately. At the same time, they address him a complain regarding the possibility to forward their pending issues. Member V says that, because of this, he avoided to ask the conductor about the scheduling of his medical appointment. Member W agrees with member V and shares his reluctance to spend some leisure time in the coffee room.

All members ask the conductor about his forthcoming holidays, travelling abroad and air tickets costs. His answers give space to members' remembering of their own traveling experiences, under different and risky conditions, when they finally arrived in Greece. One of the main issues, discussed by all members, is how tired and sad they feel by the delays of the Greek state on their travel documents and accommodation. Also, how terrifying they assume it will be to travel for the first time by airplane, when they will finally receive the legal documents.

After member's X sharing a personal experience where he almost sank, the group members agree, in a humorous atmosphere, that airplane trips seem to be safer and share a moment of laughter. At this moment member Y enters the room, apologizes for the delay, and asks if there are any news about the probability of a new residence.

All the members complain about delays and uncertainty in accommodation placements. Member Z and member Y express their strong desire to leave immediately and settle in more stable homing conditions, while member W and member V feel safe and cared in the accommodation center and admit that they wouldn't like to be replaced.

For the rest of the session, the members continue to discuss, in a more pleasant tone, about the forthcoming Christmas break and the following postponement of two sessions. They all exchange greetings and the session ends.



## **Group Supervision**

The conductor brought this group session for supervision, by the means of the Greek model of supervision (Group-Analytic model). In this particular supervision group, three peer colleagues and one experienced observer-supervisor were present.

These are the recordings appeared on the supervision Protocol, noted by all members of the supervision group, except the presenter, after the Presentation of the therapeutic session:

### **Emotions:**

1. Peer colleague 1: confusion, sympathy, thrill, sadness, tiredness.
2. Peer colleague 2: intimacy, calmness, sadness, fun, tiredness.
3. Observer-supervisor: uncertainty (not feeling safe), interest, sympathy, sadness.

### **Fantasies**

1. A) Human hands crossed. B) “With planes and steamers” (Greek “rebetiko”/folk song about departure and separation)
2. A) Friends hanging out, drinking coffee. B) Flock formation of birds
3. Passengers on a train platform, are looking forward to boarding

### **Topics**

1. Medical exams
2. Legal issues and documents
3. Conductor’s work and Christmas break
4. Member’s X personal experience (almost sank)
5. Members’ delays
6. “God help us”
7. “I can’t stand changes”
8. Traveling by airplane
9. Travel prospects



From the Synthesis of the supervision group, the following observations emerged:

Feelings of uncertainty (about the legal issues, documents, medical exams, the delay of three members of the group), are mirrored on members' responses about the conductor's busy schedule and tiredness. Working through those feelings and issues enabled the group to move towards more positive emotions (sympathy, calmness, intimacy, and interest) and to cope with the sadness. We can see how the supervision group reflects the feelings expressed in the therapeutic session.

In addition, similar contents are recorded in the Fantasies, where representations of unity (i.e., hands, birds, friends), holding or traveling together, reflect the group coherence and mutual trust.

Concerning topics, they refer to members'/refugees' everyday problems or difficulties about accommodation and legal documents. Also, the topics mirror the anxiety about the delays, absences, and the conductor's imminent holidays, which means that group sessions will be suspended for two weeks.

From the Synthesis, the supervision group concludes that, in this specific therapeutic group session, the members, through discussing their personal issues, external to the group session, they manage to cope with distress related to the suspension of the sessions. The weekly sessions ensure the supportive and containing function of the group.

In this clinical vignette and the corresponding group supervision, the unsafety of the external world is alleviated by the safety nurtured in the group and in the dynamic matrix. A well trained in group psychotherapy health professional, can enhance containment in a group setting, when working with traumatized people. Moreover, regression originating from members' despair and hopelessness, expressed by expecting solutions from the conductor, can be tolerated, and processed within the group.

### **Questions:**

1. What are the emotions that you can recognize as emerged by the group members during the presented session?

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2. What are the topics that you can recognize as discussed by the group members during the presented session?

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3. Can you distinguish any therapeutic factors in this interaction between group members? If yes, can you name some?

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4. If you were a member of the supervision group, what would you say/suggest/propose to the presenter?

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#### **Special references:**

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- Tsegos, I. K. (1995). A Greek Model of Supervision. The Matrix as Supervisor-A version of Peer Supervision Developed at IGAA (Athens). In Sharpe, M. (ed.), *The Third Eye*. London: Routledge, pp. 116-129.
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