

MOOC 2 – Unit 5

Supervision of Complex Interventions

Chapter 3

Supervision in the Context of Trauma

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Chapter 3 : Supervision in the Context of Trauma

Introduction

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Introduction

During the training of new supervisors it is necessary to stress that the **general principle of supervision is applicable in most cases of supervision**, but sometimes the supervisor does **supervision in the specific context** and then **supervision could be** a little bit **specific**.

In the next few slides, you will learn information about what is useful to teach during the training of supervisors focused on the **supervision of helpers who work with clients surviving trauma**.

Introduction

Counselors providing **early psychological intervention**, but also other members of crisis teams often **face different types of crises**. These crises are very complex and emotionally demanding situations that **contribute to experiencing various emotions**. It can result to develop **indirect trauma, secondary traumatic stress, or vicarious traumatization**. Crisis-focused supervision is therefore very needed and also beneficial (Dupre et al., 2014).





TIS is **based on clinical supervision**, but it **differs in some aspects**. It reflects trauma-informed approach and trauma-related specifics. It is a supplement of clinical supervision models (Jones & Branco, 2020). Supervision focused on helpers in crises aims to **educate them about trauma**, the **impact of traumatic events**, and **treatment**. The aim is also to **communicate about the various physiological and emotional responses** associated with trauma. Such supervision focuses on the perception of one's reactions, feelings, and the need to take a **self-care approach to prevent the impact of work** in crises. (Courtois, 2018).

As the traumatic event itself is an unpredictable life situation, when working with patients in such situations, the methods of intervention and severity may differ, which requires **not only adequate preparation but also adequate care** from the assisting team and staff after overcoming such an intervention. **Specialized supervision** is therefore very much needed and it differs in some ways from clinical supervision.



3.1 Trauma informed supervision (TIS)

TIS consists of several important parts:

1. **Education about trauma and trauma treatment.**
2. **Communication about physical and mental reactions** that can serve as a tool for measuring and regulation of one's own responses that can intervene in therapy.
3. **Communication about emotional aspects of trauma** may lead to the identification of unrealistic expectations related to treatment.
4. **Stigma.** The need to communicate and know your own prejudices or misinformation that could negatively affect the healing process.
5. **Education about "wounded healers"**, discussion of the most common therapeutic errors. The need for empathy but also the pitfalls of emotional dysregulation.
6. **Support self-analysis, self-control, and self-care** (Courtois, 2018; Jones & Branco, 2020)

3.1.1 TIS and secondary traumatic stress or vicarious trauma

In the process of training of new supervisors focused on helpers working with trauma survival clients it is necessary to teach **what are the risk factors and symptoms** of secondary traumatic stress (STS) or vicarious trauma (VT), how to **screen** for these symptoms, and how to **prevent** their development.



Good practices_02

In the training of new supervisors focused on helpers working with trauma survival clients it is useful to offer a **list of the most common risk factors and symptoms of STS or VT**. Also provide them some examples of **how they can screen for these symptoms**, e.g., by using the **Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale** (Figley Institute, 2012).

Of course, it is also very useful to teach how they can teach the helpers from the position of supervisor how to avoid STS or VT. They can use the **ABC model** (Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996) for this purpose.



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3.1.2 Specifics of TIS (function and principles)

It is useful to teach new supervisors focused on helpers working with trauma survival clients about specifics of supervision in trauma-informed care in general:

- **it deemphasizes hierarchy and power differentials**
- puts more **self-disclosing** and **emotional** responses to **helper's sharing**
- helpers can benefit from a supervision model that incorporates many of the same elements as the practice model that you are asking them to implement with the adoption of trauma-informed care. For example, **viewing behaviours as coping strategies and symptoms as adaptations when considering how to address issues;**
- **is more reflective.**

3.1.2 Specifics of TIS (function and principles)



Good practices_04

Trauma Informed Supervision emphasizes **reflective supervision** and then is useful during the process of training of new supervisor to teach about **best practices in reflective supervision** and about how **to be motivational and supportive during the supervision** (e.g., by using the **OARS model**, Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

In trauma-focused supervision, for example, **meetings can be enriched with exercises that focus more on self-care, goals, and support.** During the training of new supervisor, you can offer tips for these exercises.



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