

Supervision in Shiatsu

The Value of Supervision

The ESF recognises that supervision is essential for all professionals working in the fields of medicine, health, and well-being. Supervision is designed to help practitioners, teachers and students understand problems arising from time to time in their relationships with clients and students. In this sense, it protects clients and students, helps to reduce the risk of serious oversight and helps practitioners, teachers and students reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, behaviour and general approach towards their clients and students.

In other words, supervision increases the value of our work by providing a safety net for clients, students, teachers and practitioners. Supervision therefore aligns well with the importance we attach to Continuing Professional Development.

Supervision in Shiatsu

The holistic form of touch used in Shiatsu activates the entire system - body, mind, emotion and spirit - and leads to multi-level relationships. Therefore, it is important for us to be aware of these various levels of interaction, reflect on our role in them and deal with the reactions we trigger in our clients and students and they in us.

The goal of supervision is partly the understanding of "one's own contribution" to the problem that is, how one's assumptions, behaviours, emotional responses, professional role, and positioning within the system may be influencing the situation. This reflective insight can reveal possible solutions that might otherwise remain unseen. From a systemic perspective, essential aspects of a difficulty may arise not only from clients or students, but also from the practitioner or teacher and the relational dynamics they are part of.

Definition

Supervision is a consultative approach that prepares professionals/practitioners and supports them throughout their professional lives.

It provides a structured space to reflect on professional practice and organisational structures from an external perspective—that is, with the support of someone outside the observed system. In the context of

Shiatsu, this may be a supervisor who is familiar with Shiatsu practice, or, when supervision is carried out by Shiatsu practitioners, someone from outside the institution.

During a supervision session, a professional describes their relationship with clients to a supervisor. The supervisor can make interventions based on either: 1) content - helping the practitioner to adjust their construction of the client or 2) process - highlighting and clarifying the patterns within which the practitioner views the client.

In many fields, professionals employ the services of a supervisor to review their work with clients, their professional development and even their own personal development.

The focus is on emotional development, creative thinking, understanding of organizational structures and the development of new perspectives for more effective professional action. Greater satisfaction and well-being in the relationship between private and professional life are other subjects for supervising consultations.

Goals of Supervision

- Improvement of social competence
- Promotion and strengthening of resources
- Formulation of goals, development of strategies
- Reflection on and expansion of professional competences
- Dealing with the different professional roles, tasks and functions
- Reflection, understanding and coping with difficult professional situations
- Support for more optimal handling of sources of stress and strain in work situations.

Origins and Methodology

Supervision is a professional service based on a variety of theoretical foundations and practical approaches. These include: psychoanalysis, communication theory, systems, behavioural and gestalt theory. Group, analytical and organization-theoretical concepts are integrated within the method.

For more information on this subject:

<https://www.stateofmind.it/tag/supervisione/>

Supervision in Europe: The Current Situation

Supervision is not legally binding in most European countries at present. However, at EASC, the European Association for Supervision and Coaching www.easc-online.eu there are lists of supervisors who guarantee professionally qualified training. The current regulations for some countries are here although not all countries are represented yet. This state of flux perhaps underlines the still emerging sense of importance attached to this discipline.

In Austria, for example, supervision is not legally binding but supervisors who are on one of the "official" lists (e.g. ÖVS, EAS, ÖBVP) are recognized throughout the professional world as fulfilling the necessary training criteria.

Implementation and Practical Aspects: Frequently asked Questions

We are aware that clear legal regulations do not exist in this field at present. This necessitates a highly developed sense of responsibility as we navigate our way through it. It is in this spirit that we invite the National Association members of the ESF to share these recommendations with their individual members.

1. Recommended or mandatory?

Supervision has relevance for teachers, practitioners and to some extent even students.

For teachers, we believe it should be a mandatory part of their training. They should be familiar with supervision and its benefits and have integrated it into their training as a teacher. They should thereby be able to communicate supervision as a professional tool to their students, especially in problem situations. It could for example be integrated into the review of practice sessions.

For practitioners, supervision should be a recommended part of their training and continued professional life. From an external perspective, if we want our profession to be respected by decision makers and the public opinion in general, then practitioners should also be encouraged to consider the value of supervision for their professional and personal growth.

For students, it can be helpful to undergo a few sessions with a professional supervisor, perhaps as a group exercise.

2. Who should undergo supervision?

As previously stated, supervision is relevant for both teachers and practitioners and also to some extent for students. However, the primary focus of involvement for supervision is in the training of those who teach. It is especially important for teachers to gain an additional point of view through supervision, to become aware of their relationship in their work both with clients and with students. They will then be able to bring this enriched experience to the regular Shiatsu training. In this way, fledgling practitioners will already be aware through their training that supervision is available as a supportive resource in case of professional difficulties.

3. How frequently?

In addition to the initial mandatory training in supervision for teachers, both teachers and practitioners should be encouraged to make use of supervision at times when they are experiencing difficulties in their practice with clients or in teaching situations with students.

4. Who should pay for it?

In principle, the person who receives the supervision should also pay for it. This is in line with the belief that we are responsible for our own development as practitioners and teachers. In the case of students, the cost of supervision could be built into the training itself.

5. Who can be a supervisor?

Supervision training is not tied to any particular or specific profession. In practice, psychotherapists often become supervisors. In the same way, Shiatsu practitioners, at least in Austria and Germany, can complete the supervision training and then work as supervisors.

It makes sense for Shiatsu practitioners - provided they have learned the tools of supervision according to the formal guidelines - to supervise Shiatsu training and practice, since they have the necessary knowledge of Shiatsu as a professional field. This approach is also taken in other professional fields where the supervisor should, wherever possible, possess the relevant professional expertise.

However, Shiatsu practitioners should never supervise colleagues from the same training institute, even if they have the necessary professional training, since they lack the necessary critical distance in these circumstances.

Distinguishing Supervision from other Modalities

Without a clear definition of Supervision, it is easy to mis-use the term. There are other competences and professions that are often confused with Supervision and without wishing to minimize their importance, it would seem important to distinguish them.

1. Counselling

Counselling is an activity, carried out by specialised personnel (counsellors) aimed at guiding, supporting and developing the potential of "healthy" people temporarily in difficulty. It supports the inner resources of the person to overcome difficulties related to a specific aspect of existence.

It does not aim to treat psychological disorders and does not offer diagnosis, treatment or psychological support, differentiating itself in this sense from the profession of psychotherapist. It is an activity of relational competence that uses communication to facilitate self-knowledge through awareness and optimal development of personal resources for a more satisfying, creative lifestyle.

2. Coaching

Coaching is a process relationship based on the discovery and development of personal potential. This is the process of developing the skills, resources and competences of a person managed by a qualified professional through the identification of areas of potential growth and the definition of a program aimed at achieving personal or professional goals.

The method offers the client tools that allow them to elaborate and identify their goals and strengthen their personal effectiveness and performance. Coaching cannot be used as a replacement therapy in case of psychic pathologies or personality disorders.

3. Mentoring

Mentoring is a training methodology that refers to a one on one relationship (formal or informal) between a person with more experience (senior, mentor) and one with less experience (junior, mentee, protégé) in order to develop skills.

It is carried out through a medium-to-long term relationship. This is prefigured as a guided learning path, in which the mentor voluntarily offers knowledge and acquired skills and shares them in the form of teaching and transmission of experience, to foster the personal and professional growth of the mentee.

4. Case control

Case control is carried out by teachers and coaches (i.e. not necessarily external). It is designed to address issues and technical difficulties within the Shiatsu encounter itself. It is also known as technical supervision or technical control.

5. Teacher treatment feedback

Teacher treatment feedback is known as “supervision” in some Shiatsu schools. Students treat their teacher and the teacher then gives feedback on aspects of treatment such as technique, pressure and quality of contact. Clearly, this differs in many respects from the formal definition of supervision as elaborated above.

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