

**СУПЕРВИЗИЯ В СОЦИАЛНАТА ПРАКТИКА НА
АРТТЕРАПИЯ И КОНСУЛТИРАНЕ**

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**SUPERVISION IN THE SOCIAL PRACTICE OF ART
THERAPY AND COUNSELING**

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Abstract: Supervision is viewed within the process of art-therapy and counseling in social work practice as an applied field of social pedagogy. The consulting and counseling within the helping professions in the social sphere is viewed as an important issue in the university training of specialists working with individuals, families and groups with different problems. The specifics of the consulting and counseling in the social sphere have been defined. On the basis of the analysis and the study of one's own teaching experience as well as the empirical study of the feedback from students' opinions conclusions have been made about the problems of the methodology of the preparation for the helping professions. Attitudes towards professional counseling, self-estimation of the level of education and expectations for realization in the social sphere have been viewed as indirect orientations. In the end some generalization are made about the practice of supervision in art-therapy and counseling in social practice and teaching.

Key words: supervision, art-therapy, counseling, creative therapy, creativity, helping process, social sphere, counseling supervision, helping professions, education, ethical frames and considerations

Introduction

The concept of supervision and counseling in the social sphere is a special area in social theory and practice. The term supervision and its definition in literature are the aim of this article. Another aim is to describe the role and function of the supervision and the supervisor in the counseling process. Discussing the tasks of supervision in the process of counseling and consultation are the third aim. Supervision as form and method of education of the counselors, therapists, social pedagogues and workers are the last topic mentioned in the article. The

perspectives of preparing the new professionals in social sphere and the role of counseling and supervision in this process are one actual problem for discussing and deciding not only on theoretical but especially on practical level in social work.

The basis is clarified and a term definition is made about the concepts of supervision and its part in counseling and preparation of professionals in order to be applied in the social sphere. The tasks of supervision in the process of counseling are discussed. Analysis of the present practice is made as well. Supervision is taken up as education of the consultants and its model is taken up as a teaching process in the social sphere. The place of supervision is defined and it is in the preparation of supporting professionals-counselors, advisors, therapists, psychologists, teachers and social workers.

Basis and Term Definition

In the Bulgarian language the term supervision is used as a professional term based on the English language in connection with counselling, advising and the preparation of professionals in the social sphere. It means professional counselling and analysis of the quality of the used practice techniques and methods of helping, as well the relationship between the client and the therapist /including psychotherapy/. In addition, supervision is one of the methods for increasing theory and practical preparation and qualification of the professionals not only in psychotherapy, but also in the social studies-management, in social work, organized and leadership counselling, different spheres of knowledge and social practice, in the sphere of supporting jobs. Supervision becomes essential part of people's every day activities that are practised in the sphere of people's relationships and help, such as psychologists, counsellors, advisors, psychotherapists, teachers and social workers.

The broad definition of the word is connected with the process of counselling and is viewed as one of the most effective methods in teaching counselling and psychotherapy. It helps professionals to place their attention upon the goals and the direction of their work, to form systematic ways to reach the strategies and tactics of helping and intervention. They manage to realize their mistakes and to correct the individual program for correction and modifying of the client's behavior. This research is based on seeing supervision, counseling and

advising, psychotherapy and psycho correction as parallel processes. They are connected in a common system, thanks to the formation of positive transfer, in which are included the unconscious identification and the imitation (Kulakov, 2002, p. 14).

The relationship between counseling and supervision is a task set in front of the theory and practice in social work and the methodology of the preparation of professionals. In most of the European countries supervision is part of the obligatory education of psychologists, psycho analysts and psycho therapists, and of counselors, social workers and teachers as well. The aim of the following research is to underline the specifics of supervision in counseling and in pedagogical work for preparation and qualification of professionals in supporting jobs.

Supervision as teaching process in the social help work

The summarized definition of the clinical supervision is a base for creating a single model of supervision that can be used in other spheres as well. Supervision is “organized, teaching process that consists of four interfering goals: administrative, valuable, therapeutic and supporting, where the principles are transformed into practical habits” (Kulakov, 17). There is focus on the counsellor’s forming and developing of personality and habits. The analysis of the different characteristics of supervision makes it purposive and organized process. Supervision is done when having preliminary planning, setting of the time and the parameters of observation and expectations. It is not good it to be achieved as a result of improvisation, impulsive or accidental actions. The unstructured and the unorganized supervision is non effective. The counselors should prepare and present interesting, typical or difficult cases. The supervisor should observe the cases prepared for the session. There could be a list with example questions that can be discussed during the supervision.

Supervision is a teaching process and without it the preparation of supporting professionals would be impossible. It includes the value of progress and the individual studying plan of every student. The required knowledge and skills are fixed in a plan.

It should be said that supervision is a process, based on the relationship of trust and respect, established by both sides. The supervisor is an instructor, advisor, friend, leader, teacher and colleague. There should be a cognitive agreement. This position is for

beginners in counseling and is quite important regarding the positive development in supervision. The principles are transformed into the practice. Many counselors have excellent habits. They demonstrate empathy, honesty, concreteness and strength. But sometimes they have difficulties in defining what and why they have done something. They need theory and principles towards which they can apply their practical habits. They need to know how to build and check hypothesis. This is an education for adults, not for students, and it is done by using andragogic means and methods. It is good the supervisor to make the supervisee to think over the conception (the theory) and the principles (the law) of intervention, which gives the counselor new perspective in the concrete situation. The counselor checks the principle by answering the questions “Why does this principle work” or “Why it doesn’t work”. By gaining experience it turns into habit and works automatically. In this way the main function of supervision is to help “the transformation of the practice into principles and visa versa”.

This is “organized process of teaching” that includes teaching, advising, modeling and learning. It is intensive, valuable and lasting relationship between two or more people that stimulates sensitivity and independence. This is “working alliance, that helps for learning and improving of specific skills, enlarging the interests of the client, understanding personal transfer in counseling and implying the theory into practice” (Kulakov, 2002, p. 19).

The experience around the world approves that supervision is obligatory condition for professional counseling and therapy. Its institutionalization begins with psychology, but the following development is connected with differentiation of different movements in psychotherapy and creation of specific models of supervision in all established institutions- behavioral, cognitive, personal, humanistic, systematic, didactic, developing, procedural, reflexional, and integrating. The common thing for all is that the goal is teaching professional and analysis of their work. Developed through psychotherapy the models of supervision are spread in all spheres of counseling including the social and the pedagogical sphere.

There are different ways, but the most universal in this sphere is the integrative way.

For every client is used a method, specific only for themselves and their concrete situation of typical surrounding and correspondence

with the micro-sphere- for every patient- their “own” therapy according to M. Ericson.

The integrative model of supervision is concentrated around different moments: process of communication in the counselling contact (verbal and non verbal, depth of the contact, emotions, rationalization, etc.); informal alliance structure of the session and the course; process of conceptualization of the psycho and socio genesis of the problem or the symptoms; chosen “target” for change and intervention (for example symptom, assessment of personality, level of personal organization, cognitive, emotional, motivating processes, inter-personal relations, etc); correspondence in choosing the aims and means of intervention; results in the counseling process as whole. The integrative model can be best realized through group supervision for developing the conception, the strategic and tactical practices, finding of “blind spots” and mistakes in the communication with the client (patient), defining of emotions and reaction- “ventilation of feelings”.

Creativity in counseling and psychotherapy in social help care

Usually counselors and therapists use verbal techniques in their work with people combining traditional talk therapy along with art making. Not surprisingly, mental health counselors, social workers, marriage and family counselors, and psychologists have also used various forms of virtual arts and other modalities to facilitate their client’ exploration of thoughts and feelings. S. Gladding (2004)as counselor educator and supervisor notes that counseling at its best capitalizes on creativity to help individuals to express themselves personally and uniquely. From this belief, the creativity in counseling movements emerged, embracing the ideas that all the creative arts invigorate and enliven verbal counseling and traditional talk therapy. Counseling which includes arts, music, movement and other form of expression, encourages playfulness, divergent thinking, flexibility, humor, risk taking, independence, and openness. These qualities are believed to be strongly associated with personal creativity and a healthy personality (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 40). Like art therapists, creative counselors and psychotherapists have to be supported in their believes that increasing an individual’s capacity for creative thinking and behavior through drawing, painting constructing, or using one’s imagination helps to reduce emotional distress and conflict and

enhances understanding of oneself and others. These creative behavior have to support in relationships between helping persons and clients. Ultimately it may contribute to good mental health, helping people of all ages become more adaptive, resilient, and productive when confronted with life's stress (Malchiodi, 2007, p. 41).

Counseling Process, Art Therapy and Supervision

Counselors in the field of helping professions working with children or adult clients can use various form of visual arts to facilitate different stages of the counseling process. The key to successfully employing art in counseling is to understand the goals of each stage the process and then carefully select art directives that are consistent with the process and needs to the client (Kahn, 1999). Counselors must ask themselves questions as “What needs to be expressed through art during this stage?” and “What art activity will help the client move through this stage of the counseling process?”. With some client art may facilitate the establishment the rapport. With others, it may help with the exploration of the clients world, issues, and concerns. In other situation, art may best be used to establish therapeutic goals and interventions. Counselors have to select art directives to confront inconsistencies in thoughts and behaviors, develop and narrow options, move a client to action, or help with termination of the therapeutic relationships (Gladding & Newsome, 2003, p. 244).

The art therapists need to be support by supervision in process of integrating into different theoretical approaches to counseling - especially in psychodynamic paradigm (Kahn, 1999). For example, a person-centered counselors may encourage clients to use art for self-actualization through self-expression and integration of perceptions of self and the environment (Cochran, 1996). A cognitively oriented counselor may ask the client to explore irrational thoughts by drawing the cartoon strips. A solution-focused counselors may encouraged to ask the client to reflect on a time when things were going well with drawing. Counselors following a constructivist approach might encourage a client to draw a life map representing important things that have happened over time, using different colors and symbols to represent positive and negative events (Malchiodi, 2003).

Specific of supervision in art-therapy is that rarely is possible to use art (dancing, music, drama), visual, kinesthetic, body oriented

movement shapes, symbols, metaphors, transferred use of word or phrase and different approaches, underlying on art. The art gives opportunities to reflex the experience that may be nonverbal, mono-sensual or multi-sensual, conscience and not entirely at all. By this reason the reflection becomes mediator between counselor and client that help them reach to the insight and in the same time to perceive and understand their relationships in individual or group therapy (Wilkins, 1995, p. 256). The art broadening boundaries to understand therapeutic relationships and their different aspects, helps insights through a delicate interacting projections, actualizes the question of transferences and counter-transferences, increases “the empathy ability, helps to investigate the mixed emotions or to give a new point of view, to shape them as unknown, unfamiliar” (Kielo, 1991, p. 14), to promote the decision questions with organizational context and so on.

Supervision in practice of the use of visual arts in counseling

In setting up situations for using the visual arts in counseling, the best-quality art materials should be purchased so that client who might otherwise be intimidated by the use of this media will become more relaxed and creative (Makin, 1994; Nadeau, 1984). Other conditions important to visual art counseling sessions are enough space, quiet, freedom of movement, encouragement, and time. It is essential for those who assist to be patient, too. Just as great art takes time, so does psychosocial change. It may take several session before clients actually begin to enjoy and benefit from visual art experiences and even longer to integrate art into their lives in a productive way (Gladding & Newsome, 2003, p.245).

As with all interventions, it is important in supervising to help counselors to establish a relationship with the client based on genuineness, empathy, and positive regard. Counselors can ensure a reluctant client that the experience is not about artistic ability but, instead, is an opportunity for self-exploration using a different medium than words. If a client continues to resist, it should be remembered that art interventions are not appropriate for all clients, and refusal to engage in an artistic experience needs to be respected (Ulak & Cummings, 1997). The field offers number of possibilities for clients who are willing to engage in visual art experiences are interventions involving client sketching, drawing, or painting, using counselor-made

drawings or photography. The selection of which artistic intervention to use should be based on the clients' issues and their preferred modes of self-expression. The many types of activities that involve sketching, drawing, and painting are limited only by the counselor's and client's imagination (Gladding & Newsome, 2003, p. 245).

Framing and ethical considerations of applying art in counseling

A number of considerations need to be taken into account when making decision about when and how to use art in counseling with adults (Gladding & Newsome, 2003, p. 250-151). If applied in a whimsical way, art can be distracting at best and dangerous at worst" (Kottler, 1993, p. 252). Approaches become unbalanced if counselors present activities without adequate reflection about their purposefulness or without allowing a adequate time for processing (Gladding, 1997). Related to this point is the potential of using art in a mechanical, gimmicky, or otherwise non therapeutic way. When used appropriately, the art involve fu use to one's imagination, enhancing client' problem-solving skills and broadening their perspectives.

The use of arts in counseling may not be helpful to clients who are professional artists. "For artists, the use of art in therapy may be counterproductive" (Fleshman & Fryrear, 1981, p. 6). In this situation the counselor should be directed that using the creative works in therapy may result in negative reaction. One reason of this phenomenon is that this type of client support themselves through creative expression and to be asked to perform in a therapeutic environment may fell too much like work. Conceivably, this barrier can be overcome if artists are asked to relate in creative ways that differ greatly from their professional specialty.

The another rule that supervisors have to regulate addressed the issue of professional other than trained art therapists using art with clients (Hammond & Gantt, 1998). Ethical codes dictate that other professionals should practice beyond that they were trained to do. However art-therapy trainers and authorities (Gladding & Newsome, 2003, p. 249) underline opinion stated that "any well-trained counselor should be able to talk with a client about a piece of art brought into a session" (Hammond & Gantt, p. 275). Further, counselors should be able to prompt a client to draw or paint an image when taking become difficult, clarification is needed, or the client is blocked to describing

something. However, it is important to avoid challenging ethical boundaries by interpreting the client's art to the client or making generalizations about the meaning of the art to others, such as agency treatment team. Counselors need to be conscientious in determining the limits of their ability to use art in therapy and recognize when the consultations or referral to an art therapist is indicated (Olivera, 1997).

Other issues associated with the use of art in therapy include confidentiality, documentation, ownership, research and publications, and displays. As a rule of thumb, artwork should be given all due consideration and protection as that of any other form of speech (Hammond & Gantt, 1998). Ramifications include using caution when entering material into client' records talking photographs of the clients' artwork only after informed consent has been granted, And adequately distinguishing the identity of a client whose work is used in research and publications (Gladding & Newsome, 2003, p. 251).

Supervision in preparation of professionals for counseling and art therapy

The preparation of professionals for social work includes obligatory basic knowledge –basic theory courses and some disciplines, in which the central place is taken by the methods of social work, theory and methodic of counseling. Deeper focus can be reached by specialized courses in different types of counseling, designed for specific problems, clients and people in need, families and groups. The different kinds of practice, training exercises, observation and practice in organizations are part of the practical preparation of the professionals. Specific methods that are implied in the sphere of education excluding the traditional ones are observation and discussion of different cases- real, imaginary, teaching cases, role play and drama techniques, games and exercises in pairs (counselor-client) and in groups of three with the participation of a supervisor, demonstrations, listening and observing of counseling records, sessions and discussion about press materials, fiction, sharing experience, interviews, talks, etc. The applied methods and the different techniques of building counseling skills wouldn't be effective without the role and the help of the teacher as supervisor. The supervisor helps students in all ways and also helps in communication with other teachers and advisors during their obligatory practice and the obligatory state internship. The main

element of the supervision is the help that is needed about practicing counseling in the social work. Supervision is an essential element in all kind of practice, super visional counseling is obligatory in the first years of the beginners. Their preparation and internship takes about three-five years and after that a certificate and license can be received, as it is made in many European countries. Supervision is essential part in the system of qualification and is connected with the requirement to be done in every five years, including classes for improvement under supervision.

The preparation of new professionals in the social sphere and the voluntary participation of people in different projects are also connected with the necessity of help from qualified counselors. Together with the necessity of professional improvement, development and self-development, supervision presents different types and forms of sharing experience, cooperative discussion and problem solving, group work, help and support of mental health, prevention of the so called “burning and distress syndrome”, in which supervision takes the first place. It is necessary to be included as obligatory component in the self-preparation programs, and in the qualification and increasing of professional preparation of the specialists in the social and educational sphere. This can be seen in the universities that prepare students for supporting jobs-social and special needs education, social activities/work, and psychology. The super visional practice isn’t introduced as a norm of education yet.

On the other hand the social practice requires establishment of obligatory points in proving different types of help using the methods of the psychological, pedagogical, medical or other kind of counseling. Different assessment and super visional forms and scales, self-assessment questionnaires, made in countries with long experience and traditions in this sphere are applied. In Bulgaria there is great possibility of applying an instrument that is not tested, adjusted and modified for the needs of counseling. It can be said that there is a process of intensive exchange and enrichment between practice and theory; even in some cases the practice goes forward the theory. The development of the theory and the methods in the social and pedagogical counseling and advising goes together with the approbation and popularization of typical for the Bulgarian practice models of supervision that are more and more approved. “What is their

scientific validity and effectiveness?” This is a problem which proof lies ahead.

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