

Supervising systemic therapies

This section describes the knowledge and skills needed for the supervision of systemic therapies. It is not a 'stand-alone' description of competences, and should be read:

- 1) As part of the supervision competence framework. Effective supervision of systemic psychological therapies depends on the integration of modality-specific supervision competences with the knowledge and skills set out in the other domains of the supervision competence framework.
- 2) With reference to the competence framework for systemic psychological therapies, which describes the generic, basic, specific and problem-specific competences which contribute to the effective delivery of systemic therapies.

Supervisor's expertise in systemic psychological therapies

An ability for the supervisor to draw on knowledge of the principles underpinning a broad range of systemic psychological therapies
An ability for the supervisor to draw on personal experience of the clinical applications of systemic psychological therapies
An ability to enable supervisees to make a relationship between theory and personal and professional identities
An ability to recognise (and to remedy) any limitations in knowledge and/or experience which have implications for the supervisor's capacity to offer effective supervision
An ability to hold in mind the multiple levels involved in supervision:
family relationships
the relationship between the family and the therapist
the therapist's personal and professional contexts
the relationship between the therapist and the supervisor
the supervisor's personal and professional contexts
the context in which the supervision takes place.
An ability to ensure that supervision integrates attention to generic therapeutic skills (such as the ability to maintain a positive therapeutic alliance or an ability to respond appropriately to client's distress) while also focusing on the development and /or maintenance of skills specifically associated with systemic psychological therapies

Supervisory stance

An ability consistently to apply the principles of systemic therapy to the conduct of supervision	
An ability to be self-reflective and reflexive, and so monitor the emotional and interpersonal processes associated with supervisor-supervisee interactions	
An ability to adapt supervision in relation to:	
	the supervisee's stage of learning and development as a therapist
	the supervisee's learning and therapy styles
	the organisational context within which supervisees are working
An ability to demonstrate flexibility in the application of theory and technical principles	
An ability to take a respectful attitude to the supervisee, including an ability to be supportive and nonjudgmental, especially in relation to the supervisee's discussion of clinical errors or mistakes	
An ability to demonstrate a willingness to give an account of the thinking which lies behind supervisory interventions	
An ability to maintain a relationship that is supportive of training but does not become "therapy"	
	an ability to maintain a primary focus on the educational and developmental goals of supervision
	an ability to maintain an appropriate balance between a collaborative and an authoritative stance
An ability to recognise and help the supervisee reflect on parallels in the relationships between the therapist and the family (or system with which they are working), and that between the therapist and the supervisor and/or the team	

Adapting supervision to the supervisee's training needs and their developmental stage

An ability to identify the supervisee's knowledge and experience of systemic therapies
An ability to monitor the supervisee's ability to make use of a systemic perspective to understand the client's presentation and the evolution of therapy
An ability to help the supervisee reflect on their development as a systemic practitioner in order to identify specific learning goals
An ability to help the supervisee consider what will be needed in order to maintain a systemic stance outside of supervision
An ability to link material covered in specific supervision sessions to the supervisee's learning needs and personal development
An ability to negotiate learning agreements which reflect the supervisee's learning needs

Specific content areas for supervision of systemic psychological therapies

An ability to help the supervisee to review and apply knowledge about systemic ideas and techniques
An ability to help the supervisee maintain a therapeutic stance appropriate to the systemic approach they are employing
An ability to help supervisees to make connections between systemic theory and their personal and professional lives, and hence apply the approach to themselves
An ability to link systemic concepts and principles to therapeutic strategies and techniques, developing a reflexive relationship between the levels of approach, method and technique
An ability to help therapists to develop systemic rapport (i.e. to align with one family member without compromising the ability to align with others at a later time)
An ability to adapt and apply systemic therapy techniques within supervision so that supervisees can gain direct experience of them (for example, applying action techniques to their own work, 'internalised other' interviewing, receiving a therapeutic letter from the supervisor).
An ability to recognise when the clinical material generates significant concerns, feelings or difficulties in supervisees, and to help them consider how these reactions can be used in the therapy
An ability to help the supervisee reflect on ways in which their experience of the supervision process may contribute to an understanding of the therapy they are undertaking
An ability to help the supervisee to recognise the role of their own family history and current circumstances as a resource and possible constraint in relation to each case
An ability to help supervisees to present clinical material in a variety of formats, including:
discussion and exploration of verbal reports
written reports
review of audio and/or video recordings
An ability to foster the supervisee's competence in working with difference, including real or perceived power differences:
an ability to attend to the relevance/impact of a broad range of social differences (e.g. gender, race, religion, age, ability, class, culture, ethnicity, spirituality and sexuality) in interactions with supervisees and in the supervisee's interactions with clients
an ability to explore the issues of difference and power within the supervisory relationship
An ability to help supervisees focus on the fact that by participating as a therapist with any system they become part of that system, and to help them consider the potential implications of this for the meaning of their actions

Live supervision and supervision in and through teams

Ability to intervene live in an ongoing session, taking into account the family's well being, the therapeutic relationship and the therapist's development and (if involved) the team behind the screen
an ability to consider the effects of live supervision on the family and on the therapist, particularly if the supervisor has intervened in a way that differs significantly from the approach taken by the therapist

An ability to utilise reflecting team interventions both as an intervention in clinical work and as part of a therapist's own development
an ability to engage a reflecting team in maintaining a reflexive systemic position in their manner of interacting with each other and while intervening in clinical work and in each other's development
An ability, when undertaking supervision of a team, to make explicit the multiple positions of team members and hence to ensure that relevant group processes are included in supervision
An ability to use live supervision to help therapists to develop their knowledge and skills and adapt interventions to particular client needs
An ability to observe and discuss the supervisee's clinical work through the use of one way screen, video link, in room observation or joint working

Monitoring the supervisee's work

An ability to make use of recordings/ direct observation and live supervision techniques to monitor the supervisee's ability to use strategies and techniques appropriate to the systemic approach being adopted
An ability to use systemic techniques to constructively challenge problematic performance of a supervisee

Sources of information about systemic supervision

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