

Supervision of humanistic psychological therapies

This section describes the knowledge and skills needed for the supervision of humanistic psychological 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 humanistic 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 humanistic psychological therapies, which describes the generic, basic, specific and problem-specific competences which contribute to the effective delivery of humanistic therapies.

The humanistic therapies competence framework accommodates a broad range of approaches to humanistic work. An explicit assumption is that individual therapists will practice only some of the competences it sets out, with a 'suite' of competences reflecting their particular humanistic approach. This description of supervision competences specific to the humanistic approach is similarly inclusive, which means that not all areas will necessarily apply to all practitioners.

Supervisor's expertise in humanistic psychological therapies

An ability for the supervisor to draw on knowledge of the principles underpinning humanistic psychological therapies

An ability for the supervisor to draw on personal experience of the clinical applications of humanistic psychological therapies

An ability to recognise (and to remedy) any limitations in knowledge and/or experience which has implications for the supervisor's capacity to offer effective supervision

An ability to ensure that supervision integrates attention to generic therapeutic skills (such as engaging the client) while also focusing on the development and /or maintenance of competences specifically associated with humanistic psychological therapies

Supervisory stance

An ability to be reflective and to self-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

An ability to be flexible about 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 maintain a relationship that is supportive but does not become 'therapy':
an ability to maintain a primary focus on the educational goals of supervision
an ability to appraise when it is appropriate to help the supervisee attend to personal and/or emotional reactions to their work
an ability to maintain an appropriate balance between a collaborative and an authoritative stance
An ability to adopt an approach to supervision which places the primary focus on the exploration of client issues and the therapists experience of the client, rather than on developing immediate solutions to problems

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

An ability to identify the supervisee's knowledge and experience of humanistic psychological therapies
An ability to monitor the supervisee's ability to make use of a humanistic perspective to understand the client's presentation and the way in which the therapeutic process develops
An ability to help the supervisee reflect on their development as a humanistic practitioner in order to identify specific learning goals
An ability to link material covered in supervision sessions to the supervisee's learning needs and personal development
An ability to negotiate learning agreements which reflect the supervisee's learning needs and are appropriate to their stage of development

Specific content areas for supervision of humanistic psychological therapies

An ability to help supervisees review and apply their knowledge of humanistic psychological therapy
An ability to listen actively to the supervisee in order to help the supervisee reflect on their work
An ability to employ empathic understanding to sense the supervisee's perceptions, experience and responses to their work
An ability to help the supervisee:
to maintaining a primary focus on clients affective experience
to reflect on their experience of the therapeutic relationship (including their affective, cognitive and somatic reactions to the client)
An ability to help the supervisee become more flexible and spontaneous in their therapeutic role by maintaining an empathic and challenging supervisory relationship which supports their capacity:
to be honest and open about their experience of offering therapy and to communicate this in supervision
to adopt a position of curiosity towards their experiences in offering therapy, and to be open to exploring the meaning of these experiences
An ability to help the supervisee maintain a therapeutic stance appropriate to the humanistic approach they are employing

An ability to link humanistic concepts and principles to therapeutic strategies and techniques:
with reference to the clinical material presented by the supervisee for example:
through discussion and exploration of the supervisee's verbal reports
through direct observation (e.g. through the use of audio or video recordings, or through co-working in humanistic group therapies)
using process notes (usually made immediately after the therapy session)
through modelling of humanistic principles in the context of supervision and the supervisory relationship e.g.
modelling "core conditions" such as transparency and congruence in responses to the material presented by the supervisee
modelling the process through which clinical ideas emerge (e.g. by "thinking out loud" to illustrate the development of ideas regarding clients and their issues)
through observation and discussion of the supervisee's clinical work (i.e. through the use of audio or video recordings, or through direct observation of the supervisee at work)
An ability to use recordings of therapy in a structured manner
to plan specific training tasks
to deepen awareness of relational processes in the therapeutic dyad

Specific supervisory techniques - "Parallel process"

An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which similar interpersonal dynamics may be concurrently enacted in both the supervisory and the therapeutic dyad
An ability to maintain a focus on the therapy with the client, while recognising the possibility of re-enactment within supervision of significant dynamics between the supervisee and their client
An ability to explore with the supervisee interpersonal processes occurring both between supervisor and supervisee and supervisee and client and how these relate to one another
An ability to help the supervisee identify when they have been drawn into "enactments" with the client and to explore their thoughts and feelings when such events occur

Monitoring the supervisee's work

An ability to make use of recordings/ direct observation to monitor the supervisee's ability to use humanistic strategies and techniques appropriate to the humanistic approach being adopted

Sources

- Patterson, C.H. (1997) *Client centred supervision* pp 134-146 in C.E. Watkins (Ed) *Handbook of psychotherapy supervision* New York: Wiley.
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- Tudor, K and Worrall, M (2004) *Freedom to Practice: Person-centred approaches to supervision*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books
- Yontef, G. (1997) *Supervision from a Gestalt Therapy perspective* pp 147-163 in C.E. Watkins (Ed) *Handbook of psychotherapy supervision* New York: Wiley.