3.7. Ability to make use of supervision

Supervision is understood differently in different settings. Here, it is defined as an activity that gives practitioners the opportunity to review and reflect on their clinical work. This includes talking about areas that the practitioner may experience as difficult or distressing. Usually supervisors will be more senior and/or experienced practitioners, though peer supervision can also be effective.

This definition distinguishes supervision from line management or case management.

- An ability to hold in mind that a primary purpose of supervision and learning is to enhance the quality of the treatment received by users of services

Ability to work collaboratively with the supervisor

- An ability to work with the supervisor to generate an explicit agreement about the parameters of supervision (e.g. setting an agenda, being clear about the respective roles of supervisor and supervisee, the goals of supervision and any contracts that specify these factors)
- An ability to help the supervisor be aware of your current state of competence and your training needs
- An ability to present an honest and open account of the work being undertaken
- An ability to discuss work with the supervisor as an active and engaged participant, without becoming passive or avoidant, or defensive or aggressive
- An ability to present material to the supervisor in a focused manner, selecting (and so concentrating on) the most important and relevant issues

Capacity for self-appraisal and reflection

- An ability to reflect on the supervisor's feedback and to apply these reflections in future work
- An ability to be open and realistic about your capabilities and to share this self-appraisal with the supervisor
- An ability to use feedback from the supervisor to further develop the capacity for accurate self-appraisal

Capacity for active learning

- An ability to act on suggestions for relevant reading made by the supervisor, and to incorporate the material into practice
- An ability to take the initiative over learning, by identifying relevant papers or books based on (but independent of) supervisor suggestions, and to incorporate the material into practice

Ability to use supervision to reflect on developing personal and professional roles

- An ability to use supervision to discuss the personal impact of the work, especially where this reflection is relevant to maintaining the likely effectiveness of the work
- An ability to use supervision to reflect on the impact of the work in relation to professional development

Ability to reflect on supervision quality

- An ability to reflect on the quality of supervision as a whole, and (in accordance with national and professional guidelines) to seek advice from others where:
  - there is concern that supervision is below an acceptable standard
  - where the supervisor's recommendations deviate from acceptable practice
  - where the supervisor's actions breach national and professional guidance (e.g. abuses of power and/or attempts to create dual (sexual) relationships)