

Episode 7 – February. Reflections on the ‘Supervisor Circle’

I'm Dr. Mish, and you're listening to the Craft of Supervision. Onto the next episode. Let's go!

Hello, hello everyone, and welcome to this episode of the Craft of Supervision. In this episode, I will be reflecting on my own experience of having facilitated the very first supervisor circle in January. And I wanted to bring it to your attention really, and just say that this is something that I'm offering on a bimonthly basis, it's free to attend, and it's for people who supervise others, across the helping professions. So, I'm really hoping that me spending some time thinking about how I experienced facilitating the very first Supervisor Circle, I'm hoping that, that will help you have a think about whether this space is right for you. And yeah, I just wanted to share my thoughts really. So off we go.

When I first thought about the idea for Supervisor Circle, I was really trying to think about what I needed as a supervisor. And I have my own supervision, of course, and I've spoken about that here before. But for me, there was something around spending a bit of time, just thinking and reflecting and sharing the space with other practitioners who are supervision enthusiasts, and people who really understood the nuances of what it takes to be a supervisor. So, I really set it up in response to what I needed, which may sound quite selfish. But actually, it felt like it would be a really, really useful space to offer to others as well. So that's why I set it up. And I thought how I could run it and, and different other things that I'd attended before regarding kind of mental health discussion places. And what I found really useful about attending other areas of connecting over mental health was, it could work perfectly well online, it didn't have to take up too much of everyone's time. But actually, the learning and connection from it was really valuable to me. So, I really wanted to recreate that in what I was offering other supervisors. And I came up with the name of Supervisor Circle, because a circle is a symbol of connection for me. And I just wanted to capture that in a kind of short and snappy name. And so hopefully this was understood by everyone else. I think it was, I think that worked. But yeah, so I set this up, and I decided to run them bimonthly. So, these are going to be, all the dates across 2023 will be out there now, so, and on the website. So in listening to this, if this is something that you think would be useful to you, you know, do go and check that out.

One of the things that I was quite nervous about was, ‘Would anyone turn up for the very first supervisory circle?’ I've got colleagues on there who've known me for years. So having their support there really was invaluable, but I realised that they were coming to the event because, they are supervisors and wanted to share the space and connect. And I was really, really glad to see their faces, but I was really nervous as well. I was really nervous about, ‘Would anyone turn up? Who would they be? Would it be a useful space?’ So, a few minutes before opening the Zoom room, I kind of, yeah, really felt nervous, was kind of pacing up and down and thinking, ‘I know what I want to encourage people to discuss’ and, ‘Will that work?’ and, ‘How is this space going to, to evolve?’ And so yeah, I had lots of, lots of nerves, but I was still keen to go for it and just thought well, ‘All I can offer is my way of

facilitating that. And hopefully that, that will be good enough.' And you know, I found it really useful, and the feedback so far is that it was really useful.

So, what I did is I set it up with a bit of a check in to start with, kind of connecting with how we as supervisors are. I then went on to introduce the kind of topic that we'd be discussing and reflecting on, then allowed everyone to reflect on those topics. And then before we discussed it, I thought it was really important for everyone to introduce themselves. And what I was struck with when everyone was introducing themselves was how, how amazing the level of skill and different areas that people worked in. And really, the talent in the room! I felt quite overwhelmed with that, if I'm being honest, it was... really amazing to see that I had in front of me, a group of really experienced practitioners who were really curious about supervision and wanted to connect with others. And I was, you know, I was totally blown away, I'm gonna be honest about it, I thought, wow, this is a group of practitioners who are not only wanting to reflect on their own, their own place in their supervisory practice, but also really generous about wanting to share that with others. So I was really quite humbled with that. So, once we introduce ourselves, we then got into the topics that we were going to discuss. And what I wanted to do is because this was the first one, I felt like, it was really important for me to set the topic focus for the hour that we spent together. And I focused on a number of questions that I thought might provoke some reflection. And what I thought would be useful was if I shared these questions here on this podcast, so that if you're someone who couldn't make the Supervisor Circle, didn't fit in with your diary that day, or you weren't sure whether to come, whether the place was for you. This is why I thought I'd do this special episode on the Supervisor Circle.

So these are the questions that I posed to the group. The first one was about, 'How do you feel about your supervision practice?' The second was, 'What areas do you feel confident in?' The third question was, 'What are the bits about supervision that either worry, alarm or you avoid?' And finally, it was, 'What would you like to develop in your supervision practice?' And I felt like that was a really good place for us all to start as supervision practitioners, in terms of really having a think about the bits of our work that, that we either don't look at, or the bits of our supervision work that we feel that we do well, and we feel confident in. But just really getting that idea of, 'How are you in your supervision work? And where do you see yourself? How do you kind of position yourself?' And, I obviously took part in this as well, whilst I was facilitating the space, I also took part in these questions. And what I found really interesting was that I felt quite confident about my supervision practice, but actually, there were quite a few areas that I felt like I need to develop. And I've been offering supervision for some time now. And I suppose what it bought for me was this idea that we don't, we're not a done deal, we do some level of supervision training, we do a bit reading around things, we engage in some supervision profession development. And I just feel like that is the ongoing, the ongoing commitment that we have as supervisors, and I was really struck by my own reflections on this, and I wanted to develop, was offering specific supervision areas, so those that are working with a specific presenting issue, or those that work in a specific area of helping others to... I really want to develop that bit of my practice, and also to develop my ability to challenge more in supervision. I think I do challenge, but I kind of like to focus on that as well. And things for me that came up about areas that I was kind of concerned about in supervision and particularly in the supervision I offer was, I'm aware that there seems to be a sense of urgency about some people in training, counselling, psychotherapy, sense of urgency in moving to being a supervisor really quickly. And that does worry me when that comes up. I wonder what that's

about. And also obviously in supervision, ethical dilemmas worry me. I feel like, 'Have I done the right thing in thinking about it in this way in my supervision practice?' you know, 'Am I, am I giving the right room for reflection and any... kind of very specific advice I suppose about ethical dilemmas?' because often supervisees come to us with very specific questions around an ethical dilemma. And, I do feel that there's a responsibility that we have as supervisors to provide a place to reflect and let the supervisee work out what they think but they also come in expecting an answer to their question. So yeah, that is an area that I feel could do with a bit more scrutiny on my part. And also, one of my worries and concerns about supervision is that, or the one that I provide is that it's, you know, it's an hour and a half. And I always wonder whether that meets the needs of my supervisees.

So basically, why I'm sharing my own reflections as part of the Supervisor Circle was because I just wanted to put it out there that, you know, I am a supervisor, and I have worries about my own practice, and whether I'm offering something that's good quality and hoping that it meets the needs of my supervisees. And, yeah, it feels important for me to share that. So, that's what came up for me when I was thinking about these prompts in the Supervisor Circle. And what I will do for you listeners is that I will put the prompts in the show notes so that you can, you don't have to jot them down now, or go back and try and find which bit I mentioned them in, you know, I'll make sure they're in the show notes for you, in case you want to reflect on your own, your own supervisory practice.

But after we had a bit of time to reflect on this and share some thoughts about this, we then had a bit of a moment where we checked out of the Supervisor Circle. And that checkout was about what, what you take away from today. And, you know, I took away the sense of connection off that I wasn't alone in wondering about some of my supervision, I kind of took away that there's a responsibility that we hold as supervisors. And we take that responsibility really seriously. But we also don't position ourselves as experts across the board. So, it's kind of holding that tension. And really, in, you know, to capture my overall experience of the very first supervisor circle is just so grateful that the people who attended allowed themselves the time to sit and reflect on their supervision work. And, were very generous with their warmth, and kindness in knowing that this was the first one that I'd put on. So, I was kind of finding my feet with it. So, I was really, really, really grateful for their input. And hopefully the feedback that I'll get, I will be able to evolve the Supervisor Circle groups, and hopefully, they're going to continue to meet the needs of the supervisors that attend, and if I can help with shining the spotlight on supervision more then this is hopefully the whole idea of me, me setting up Supervisor Institute and the podcasts, and these groups and the professional development I'll be putting on, and any bits of writing, highlighting I do off a wonderful world of supervision. But, I really felt like it was important to get my own process in putting this Supervisor Circle group on, I wanted to share my own process in my reflections on that.

So that was my experience of facilitating this first group. And hopefully, I'll be able to continue to offer something of value to the supervision world. So keep watching this space. But that's it for now. Just a quick short episode, just to say hi to you all! And thank you so much for listening to this. I really appreciate it, love to get your feedback as well. As usual, the details of where to find me are all on the podcast and you can just google Supervisor Institute and hopefully it will pop up for you. But do look out for the professional development events that are running across the year. These are all going to be supervision specific. So please feel free to book yourself a place if it works with your time your diary, your budget, please feel free to book onto those look out for future Supervisor Circle events as well.

These are all released for the rest of the year as well. So hopefully I'll see you at a Supervisor Circle soon. And yeah, give me a shout. If there's something you want to contribute, be a guest on this podcast! It will be great to include you and your thoughts about supervision here so but that's it for now. Take care. Go carefully, everyone and I'll see you next time.