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LEARNING FROM SUCCESS IN THE SUPERVISION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Supervision forms an essential component of professional social work practice. It supports the development of the capacity and skills of both students as emerging practitioners and of more experienced social workers. Reflection is a key part of supervision because social work practice is constantly evolving due to rapid change in society. Supervision provides social work practitioners and students with an opportunity to speak openly and honestly about their work, and the everyday feelings and emotions they face whilst in practice. This enables both improvement in practice and prevents the buildup of stress. In this article, we explore different methods of supervision utilised in social work and highlight implementation in Slovenia and England. We developed our own framework of supervision drawing on our knowledge of research from Slovenia and England; moreover, we engaged in informal discussion with colleagues in England, and a more formal process with supervisors in Slovenia, to inform the development of this model. This article thus reports the conceptual findings of a study and introduces our own model of reflective supervision, which is founded on the premise that we learn better from good experiences than from mistakes. We believe that through the proposed format of appreciative practice, we can move from deficit-based practice to strengths-focused practice.

Keywords:
social work, reflective practice, co-creation, group work, professional development.

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INTRODUCTION

Reflection is essential in enabling the development of skills and capacity in social work students and supports more experienced social workers to manage ethical dilemmas with the uncertain outcomes that often occur in practice (Beckett, Maynard and Jordan2017.; Kinman and Grant, 2014.). Supervision allows social workers to develop best practices through reflective processes, which are fundamental to promoting learning, and supports them in the management of stress and thus the prevention of burn-out. Our article draws on the assumption that to be effective, supervision must connect with the concepts and theories of postmodern social work and that it must permeate daily practice.

In this article, we explore different methods of supervision utilised in social work and highlight their use in Slovenia and England. We build on our understanding of processes of reflection and supervision that take place in pre-qualifying social work programmes and in the practice of qualified professionals. We have compared our study programmes and outlined how social work students can be reflective and how reflection can become a part of supervision in practice. We believe that reflection should be learnt early in the pre-qualifying programmes not only to avoid burnout but also to learn how to report your actions when supporting experts by experience to allow others to learn from your actions. We introduce our own model of reflection in supervision that is founded on the premise that we learn better from good experiences than from mistakes. We believe that through the proposed format of *appreciative practice,* we can move from deficit-based practice to strengths-focused practice (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2012.). To inform this debate, we drew on our knowledge of research from Slovenia and England and engaged in informal discussions with colleagues in England, and more formal processes with supervisors in Slovenia, to contribute to the development of this article. The first author is a supervisor and has more than 10 years of experience leading supervision in social care, whilst the second author identifies as both a social work academic and an expert by experience (Fox, 2016.).

AIM AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the article is to explore the use of supervision in social work. In this article, we highlight that not all supervision is good supervision and that not all reflection results in change to social work practice. Based on the literature review (Kandushin 1967., Hughes and Pengelly, 1997., Kobolt 2002., Ajduković, 2009., Hawkins and Shohet, 2012., Ming-sum 2005., Fredrickson, 2001., Ajduković and Cajvert, 2004., Ajduković and Urbanc, 2009., Ghaye and Lillyman 2012., Lopez, Teramoto and Snyder 2015., Fredrickson 2001.), we present how supervision

has changed over time in response to evolving paradigms and we introduce a new model of reflective supervision. Drawing on current research we outline how the model can be used in supervision sessions and has the potential to modify the experiences for both the supervisor and the supervisee in social work education. This model has been used to date in social work education but has the potential for use more widely in supporting more experienced practitioners.

Reflection as key competences in social work practice

Social work is an active science that is constantly changing; practice develops as social workers learn. Ferguson (2005.:781) proposes that social workers require more than merely knowledge of basic social work methods to be able to practise effectively. To ensure their professional development, they need to develop reflective skills, which help them to work in partnership with people who use services and to persevere in the demanding situations they encounter. Reflection is also part of social work education in both countries and it is a key competence. It is a process that requires a thorough consideration of a particular event or experience that happened which leads to a new perspective on the encounter (Ingram et al., 2014.). Maclean (2017.) notes the necessity of incorporating reflection, emotional intelligence and theory-building in practice; it requires social workers to develop an understanding of the self and a sense of resilience (Morrison, 2007.). Beckett, Maynard and Jordan (2017.) note how the self is made up of personal, cultural, and political aspects of our lives, which impact our personal and professional self in practice. Effective supervision thus combines an approach in which the social worker accesses support but also undertakes critical thinking to reflect on their feelings about a case to develop their own resilience (Morrison, 2007.) and emotional intelligence to support the service user effectively (Goleman, 1998.). Such exploration of the self and personal ethics is crucial to the professional development of both social work students and more experienced practitioners (Beckett, Maynard and Jordan 2017.). However, reflection, *per se,* does not precipitate a change in our professional conduct and does not make us good practitioners. To improve our professional behaviour, we need to implement reflective practice (Bolton, 2010.). Jasper (2013.:13) claims that reflective practice enables social workers to learn based on their experience, as they strive to understand the event and improve their actions; reflection enables us to reconceptualise our actions. Bruce (2013.: 32) adds that reflection only becomes reflective practice when it leads to new knowledge being transferred into practice and vice versa. Moreover, this process allows the formation of new theories and innovative forms of knowledge, as Polanyi (1967.:4) notes, reflection enables the transfer of »silent professional knowledge«.

Reflection enables practitioners to explore events from different perspectives by acknowledging what happened, what is happening and what the desired outcomes are; it allows us to test new knowledge in practice. Supervision is potentially one of the best ways to facilitate reflection; thus, good social workers need both peer support and mentorship from their supervisor.

Supervision as a form for reflection: Why do we need supervision in social work?

From the beginning of the social work profession, social workers have needed support in their working environment to reflect on their everyday practice to improve their support of experts by experience and furthermore to avoid potential burn-out (Kinman and Grant, 2014.; Curties, L., Moriarty, J. and Netton, A. 2010.). Many studies (Figley, 2007., Cox and Stainer, 2013.) additionally indicate that we need supervision to avoid compassion fatigue and thus, to engage appropriately with experts by experience. Supervision is therefore an essential part of practice to allow social workers to speak openly and honestly about their feelings and the emotions that they face. Howe (2009.: 187) has argued that organisations that fail to hold and contain workers are in danger of blunting, even destroying the most important resource they have – the emotionally intelligent, available and responsive social worker.

The literature review shows that supervision itself as a practice developed alongside the social work profession (Kandushin 1967., Hawkins and Shohet, 2012., Ming- Sum 2005., Wonnacott, 2014., Videmšek, 2020.) and has been implemented from the processes of reflection undertaken in the early days of social work in the Charity organization in USA, Buffalo, New York in 1878 (Hughes and Pengelly, 1997., Hawkins and Shohet, 2012., Ming-sum 2005.). The format of supervision has remained intact since its inception with a focus on case management augmented by reflection on what is happening. As supervision has developed in social work, there have been subtle changes in its composition and underlying philosophy. An interesting development can be found in the work undertaken by the Association of National Organisations for Supervision and Coaching in Europe (ANSE), of which Slovenia is a member. ANSE highlights how supervision “is a form of counselling serving the assurance and development of the quality of communication and cooperation in professional contexts”. ANSE provides a model in which supervision can be offered by standalone professionals who are independently trained consultants offering professional coaching to support and modify practice.

Despite this, social work has its own historical development of supervisory traditions. Based on the literature review (Kandushin, 1967., Hughes and Pengelly, 1997., Kobolt, 2002., Hawkins and Shohet, 2012., Ming-sum, 2005., Fredrickson,

2001., Ghaye and Lillyman 2012., Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti and Snyder, 2015., Fredrickson, 2001.) we can outline at least three periods that show the influences on a changing supervision in social work profession:

1. Lessons from psychiatry and psychoanalysis (from 1920- 1950)
2. Adoption of the ideas of social dynamics and solution focused work (from 1960-1990)
3. Development of specific social work concepts: strength perspective, ethics of participation, co-creation, empowerment (1985 onwards) (Videmšek, 2020a, 2021).

Research (Kandushin, 1967., Miloševič Arnold, 1997., Kobolt, 2002., Hawkins and Shohet, 2012.) shows that understanding of supervision has developed since its introduction and its conceptualisation relies heavily on the profession of the writer (be they social worker, psychiatrist, sociologist) and on the function of supervision (be it administrative, managerial, supportive, meditative); despite recent developments by ANSE, amongst others, whose members are trained to provide more general professional supervision as a profession in itself.

Videmšek (2021.) has clarified that earlier supervision procedures focused on how supervision could lead us to learn from our mistakes, whilst in the last decade, with the influence of positive psychology (Fredrickson, 2001., Ghaye and Lillyman 2012., Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti and Snyder, 2015.), we have started to learn from our success (Seligman 2011). It has become clear that if we want to learn from success, we need to study success (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2012.). Indeed, this research has evidenced that social workers often learn better from their good experiences and are more motivated to contribute to supervision if it is based on positive learning models (Videmšek 2020a, p.183); moreover, learning in social work is founded on the notion of reflection. Despite this, it is important to acknowledge that if the supervisor names a problem in the relationship with the user/client, then the supervision or supervisor is not necessarily deficit-oriented. In social work practice we need to talk about the risks, limitations, and obstacles as well as resilience, empowerment and resources. Having a safe place in supervision to talk about risks and problems has an important impact on reducing professional stress. Despite this acknowledgement, in this article we advocate a model based on appreciative practice. Reflection is a key part of social work education. In Slovenia[3], students learn about processes of reflection from the first year of study. In the last decade, we have witnessed how the Faculty for Social Work at the University of Ljubljana has reformed students' experience of placement to ensure that they are better equipped with the

3 Faculty of Social Work in Slovenia is part of the University of Ljubljana and is an independent Faculty. Social work education has been established from 1955, firstly as a two-year diploma study, from 1995 we have 4 years graduate study program, and 1 year master's program. From 2005 we also have PhD study program (from 2017/18 4 years Interdisciplinary study program in Humanities and Social and Social Science program Social work.).

practical knowledge that is needed to become competent social workers (Videmšek and Kodele 2019.). The placement is the main learning environment based on the notion of learning by doing. Throughout their placement experience, students have first-hand experience of reflection and supervision.

In England, supervision begins in practice education from the start of a student's training. In England and Wales, the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) sets out the standards that a social work student is required to meet at different stages of their training (BASW, 2018.); supervision is needed to evidence these stages. The PCF domains form the basis of student assessment on placement in England, and more recently the Social Work England standards (SWE, 2019.). Maclean (2017.) notes the importance of the placement for learning to be an effective practitioner:

> »*The placement is a key site of gatekeeping, in ensuring that not yet competent, incapable, not ready or even potentially dangerous students do not go on to qualify. The dominant concern of practice educators*[4]*, as well as university staff, is the need to protect service users from possible harm caused by incompetent practitioners.*«

The supervisory relationship, which guides the student through their placement, supports the development of their capacity and skills. However, the supervisor is the assessor; thus, it is essential to acknowledge the power imbalance in this process and supervision must therefore be based on transparency, clarity, and equity (Lefevre, 2005.). Moreover, reflection in supervision processes continues to be important beyond the point of qualification and throughout continuing professional development; documenting evidence of peer-to-peer reflection is required by Social Work England for annual re-registration as a social work professional.
Supervision is a process that requires collaborative learning allowing the supervisee to co-create ways of doing through reflection on experience. Videmšek (2020.a) highlights that

> »*Supervision is a place for constructive discussion about supervisee practice, how he/she works, it is a place to allow the supervisee to confront the challenges she/he faces in their social work practice and to signpost possible solutions, and solutions to set the supervisee on their own path. It is a process of learning new experiences, new competencies and a place to discover the unknown*«. (2020.a:180).

4 In the UK, practice educators are experienced social workers who have undertaken additional qualifications to supervise and assess students on placement. Practice educators may be practising social workers, already based in the student's practice learning environment, or they may work as independent practice educators who support students in an off-site capacity.

Supervision in social work is a unique work-based practice: we do not focus on the past, but, instead, use these experiences to rethink what could have been done better grounding our action and deciding what our next steps will be, what we aim to achieve and what we need to do to make change happen.

As we presented reflective practice is a key social work skill as identified in the UK and Slovenia because social workers often work in conflicting situations with many difficult and diverse ethical dilemmas (Banks, 2012; Beckett et al., 2017). In order to manage these issues, diverse models of reflection have been developed in social work (Graham 2017, Knott & Scragg 2016, Kolb, 1984; Mantell & Scragg 2019, Schön 1983, Thompson & Thompson 2008), which have led to the creation of tools for problem-solving which link the realities of practice with creative strategies of thinking based on reflexivity (Graham 2017, p.3). Perhaps the most well-known proponent of reflection in social work is Schön (1983) who formulated the concepts of *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*. Schön's great contribution was to bring 'reflection' into the very centre of understanding professional activities challenging the dominant perspective that professional practice is merely a technical-rational activity that involves the application of rules and expertise to solve problems.

Models of reflection in supervision

As this area of practice has evolved, a variety of supervision models have been developed ranging from cyclical models (Kolb, 1984) to those that used lists model of reflection (What, So What, What Now?). Specifically, Maclean (2017) argues that the What? Why? How? model (Borton, 1970) provides a useful framework for all social work reflective practice. Moreover, at the end of 1980s a new field of reflection was added: emotions. Howe (2009) notes that a social worker's daily life is »suffused with emotional context« (2009, p. 13); however, the subject of emotions has only recently come to the attention of researchers as emotions were often ignored, suppressed, or glossed over (Clare et al. 2015) because social workers (Graham 2017, p. 49) are expected to manage their emotional distress as part of their professional competence. It is important in supervision to address emotion; some supervision models already focus on this such as those developed by Boud et al. (1985), and also by Boud & Walker (1998).

Recent models of reflection have begun to adopt a postmodern lens, posing questions about the social work project itself, resulting in greater scrutiny of practice and professional life (Graham 2017, p. 51). Threads of critical theory often aligned with social movements have been found in social work, and critical reflective practice has moved beyond just being »critical« towards acting for social change, as indicated in the Global definition of social work (2014). We need to move from

preoccupation with ‘problems’ towards a more explicit acknowledgement of the role that reflective practice can play in improving what we do by focusing on strengths. (Ghraye and Lillyman 2012, p. 1). Social work practice has adopted the strength perspective (Seleeby 1997, Rapp 1998); thus, we should utilise a framework of appreciative reflection that seeks positive outcomes by asking: what is possible and what can be changed? We move from questions based on “What went wrong?” to a focus on strength-based questions such as ”What was your success?” This draws on De Shazer’s (1984) work founded on solution-focused brief therapy. If supervision can focus on the features of the social work role that foster positive as well as negative outcomes, such as job satisfaction and flourishing, this can also be advantageous. This can enable us to minimize job-related stress and build a resilience culture (Kinman and Grant, 2014.) because social work is an exciting and fulfilling career that presents many emotional and intellectual demands (Videmšek, 2021.). Social workers undertake complex tasks which require them to problem-solve. In this article, we explore how social workers manage this dilemma and discuss whether supervision helps them to manage complex and difficult decisions which are required by the standards in both countries (Slovenia *Ur.l.RS* and UK SWE, 2019.).

METHODOLOGY

In this article, we present a framework for the effective implementation of supervision that is based on the literature review and also on personal experience with leading the supervision sessions. We used several methods in the development of this model. Firstly, we employed a literature review. Based on the literature review synthesis authors of the text highlighted the need for a shift from learning from mistakes to learning from success. We drew on our own experiences as social work professionals and educators; and in both countries engaged in informal discussion with other colleagues who work as practice educators, offering supervision to students on practice. In Slovenia, six formal interviews were undertaken with supervisors who lead supervision sessions. For the research proposal we also used reflections that were written by each participant after the supervision. This entailed an analysis of 80 reflections that have been made.

The first author of the text undertook more in-depth research and the findings from the Slovene elements of the study that have been reported elsewhere (Videmšek, 2021). It is thus not described in detail here, and this article reports the conceptual findings of the research. Both authors had regular meetings about the main findings from the literature review and the Slovene research. (We were able to work collaboratively in the UK from April to June 2019). Ethical approval was not required for the study in Slovenia in accordance with the Slovene codes of practice, although ethical procedures were followed, such as preserving the anonymity of

participants and ensuring their informed consent to participate. The main aims of the research were:

- To undertake a literature review to understand the development of supervision and synthetise how the context of supervision developed in both countries
- To develop and test a new model of supervision based on the literature review and experiences of supervision.

This article comprises a conceptual analysis of the work and its outcomes and thus presents the findings that led to the development of the model of appreciative supervision.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We present our main findings derived from the literature review, the informal conversations in the UK and the more formal research in Slovenia, and draw on our experiences as supervisors. We highlight the commonalities and differences of supervisory approaches in both countries and propose a new model of supervision, which supports co-creation between the supervisor and the supervisee and is based on learning for success.

The literature review (Miloševič Arnold 1997, 1999, Glišovič Meglič 2004, Kobolt 2002, 2004, Žorga 2004, 2006, Ristić 2018, Videmšek 2019, 2020, 2021) shows that the topic of supervision has been less considered in social work research in Slovenia (Miloševič Arnold 1994, 1999, Glišovič Meglič 2004, Videmšek 2019, 2020, 2021, Palir, 2021), and received more attention in pedagogy (Kobolt 2000, 2004, 2006, Žorga 2004, 2006); despite this, many diverse frameworks to implement supervision have been proposed in social work. We have, however, found only one research study which has informed the development of a special education program to support supervisors to supervise effectively. This research (Miloševič Arnold et al., 1994) presents a model of supervision and underlines the requirement for supervisees to be supported effectively. However, publications on the topic of supervision have emerged in Slovenia recently (Glišovič Meglič, 2004, Čačinovič Vogrinčič 2009, Videmšek 2019, 2020) and one more in-depth research by Videmšek 2021 whilst in the UK, research in supervision continues to be of great interest (Morris, 2007, Wonnacott, 2012, Thompson and Thompson 2008, Tedam, 2020; Maclean, 2017; Mantell and Scragg, 2019).

A comparison of our supervision approaches shows that there are some similarities and differences in the models of supervision practice employed in the two countries. It is important to be aware of the context in which supervision takes place because this informs the development of our model of appreciative practice outlined later in the article.

In Slovenia, supervision is undertaken more often in groups than in individual meetings (Videmšek 2020, 2021); whilst, in the UK, a model of individual supervision predominates (Munro 2011, Wonnacott 2014, Henderson, Holloway, Milar, 2014). While group supervision is more predominant in Slovenia because they have outlined many advantages of this approach, recent experiences in the UK also recognise advantages to group supervision (Munro 2011., Bruce 2013., Wonnacott 2014., Proctor 2008., Howkins and Shohet 2013). Moreover, often social work teams in practice undertake their own processes of peer supervision as they reflect on experts-by-experience supported by their team members, offering advice and support on how to move forward and implement changes. Social work students also often participate in such processes of peer group reflection in their practice placement. Based on the literature review, the main advantages of group supervision are sharing knowledge, the ability to share more than one perspective on a situation, and the potential to learn from each other enabling social workers to learn from their peers. Moreover, group work stimulates social workers to adapt their practice because it enables them to express feelings when they recognise that others share similar fears. Finally, group supervision is financially more effective (Howkins and Shohet, 2012., Wonnacott, 2014.). Despite the many advantages of supervision, it is not offered to everyone. In Slovenia, it is written in Rules on standards and norms for social assistance services (Uradni list RS, 159/22), that supervision is required; however, it is not available to all social workers. Usually, the organisation must pay the cost of the supervisor and not all workers can attend supervision sessions because groups are limited to 10 members. While in Slovenia, we use more group supervision, in the UK individual supervision predominates, especially for new workers. Despite the advantages of group supervision, individual supervision can also be beneficial because the supervisor can support one person by being available just for her/him and can support him/her on many different levels (emotionally, professionally, and structurally). There are further differences in the implementation of supervision practice. There are differences in the way supervision is led. In the UK, the supervisor is someone in the department and in Slovenia the supervisor comes from the outside. Therefore, supervisees cannot learn from their manager but only from their peers.

The Social Chamber of Slovenia holds the list of supervisors so organizations can choose from that list who is the most appropriate for their work, whilst in the UK, the supervisor is often the manager. This context means that the supervisor's role in England can often be both administrative and managerial demonstrating a huge power imbalance between the worker and the supervisor. In Slovenia, the model of external supervision highlights the independence of the supervisor, removing the inherent power relationship or emotional involvement that may be derived from the English supervisory model. However, in Slovenia, this model may mean that the supervisor is not available all the time, as they are in the UK. However, the

independent role adopted in Slovenia facilitates a relationship in which the supervisor has a more often supportive and educative, rather than managerial, function. This also reflects on the advantages of the role of independent supervisor that is promoted by ANSE (nd).

Moreover, since the 1990s, social work began to develop theories and concepts based on empowerment, participation, and the strength perspective (Saleebey, 1997.; Oliver, 1990.). Such a focus suggests the potential for theories such as the solution-focused approach and solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) (De Shazer, 1985.) to influence supervision models. SFBT has reinforced that the person with the problem knows how best to find the solution; this framework is also reflected in the strengths approach (Saleebey, 1997) that moves away from focusing on problems (Oliver, 1990). The application of SFBT has the potential to shift the focus of supervision, enabling it to be based on:

- professional strengths
- the belief that the supervisee know best what to do, supported by the supervisor, and
- an emphasis on seeking positive outcomes.

As a consequence of the different approaches to supervision used in our two countries, our research shows that different modes of reflection are used in the supervision process and also different functions (administrative, educational and supportive).

Thus, understanding the implementation of the differing models is important for consideration of the process of appreciative supervision that was developed and used in the Slovene case, proposed in this article. We argue that appreciative supervision is best enacted in a group situation with a focus on an educative rather than a managerial (administrative) function. Based on our literature review and personal experience with leading supervision, Videmšek (2021.) developed and tested a new model of reflection. We would thus like to present a new paradigm for supervision: reflection as a learning process based on professional experience that focuses on positive outcomes.

The model is founded on learning theories based on positive experience (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2010.; Seligman, 2011.; Hefferon and Boniwell, 2011.; Lopez, Teramoto Pedrotti and Snyder,2015.) which integrate strengths-based social work concepts (Saleebey, 1997.; Rapp, 1998., Bruce, 2010.) and solution-focused therapy[5] (De Shazer, 1985., Nelson and Thomas, 2007.; Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2006., 2010.;

5 A relevant role in the development of solution-focused approach was taken predominantly by psychotherapists who worked in a therapy centre [*Milwaukee, USA, Brief Family Therapy Centre*]. The centre was established in 1978 by psychotherapist and social worker Steve De Shazer along with his wife Kim Berg, also a social worker. Steve De Shazer is the founder of solution-focused brief therapy as is known presently (De Shazer, 1982., 1985., 1988,, 1991., 1994.). Along with his collaborators within the therapeutic centre he researched what helped people with personal experience to reach changes and goals. He realised that in finding a solution to a given situation the conversation

Myers, 2008.; Mešl, 2018.). This paradigm shift thus incorporates an action-focused transfer from problems to solutions. Moreover, solution-focused supervision is founded on the assumption that supervisees already possess the answers and that the task of a supervisor is to help them put the solutions into words in their own way, as a respectful ally (Videmšek, 2021.).

Supervision with positive outcomes: The proposal of a new framework

We would thus like to present a new paradigm for supervision: reflection as a learning process based on professional experience that focuses on positive outcomes. The model was tested for one year, with one supervision group who had experiences with both the current and previous modes of supervision. After the testing period, we developed the central elements of the model. This framework consists of a seven-step cycle through which a supervisor leads a supervisee in reflecting on their practice. Besides the seven steps it is important that during the process, the language used is respectful and focused on the personal resources held by the supervisee. The phases incorporate: a positive beginning, researching the desired outcomes, presenting a situation based on the successful actions of a supervisee, finding potential opportunities, planning new steps, praise, and feedback.

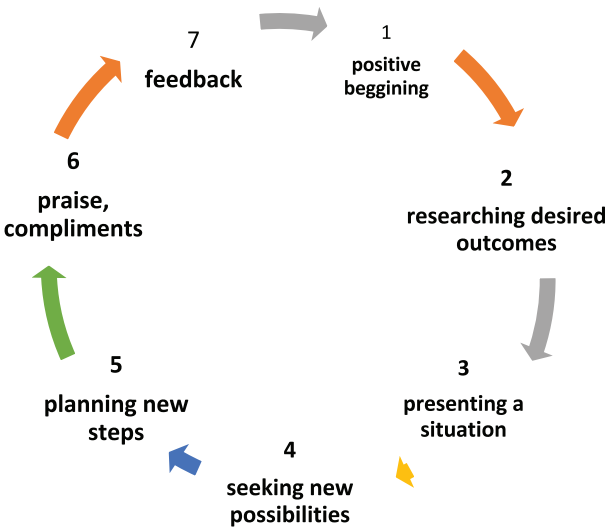

Figure 1. Model of supervision with the positive outcomes

focused on the future and the solution is more effective than a conversation directed to the understanding of the past. The next relevant finding was associated with the fact that they were the most relevant experts-by-experience. His approach in supervision is called a solution-focused approach (Myers, 2008.).

The supervisor always begins by asking the students (or social workers) in the group to reflect on the previous supervision session first and explore with supervisee changes in their practice. This achieves a *positive beginning.* Following this introduction, the supervisor asks supervisee to identify an issue for discussion. This discussion is always focused on the future and not on the past, as the supervisor explores what the student (social worker) hopes to achieve from this session. This forms the second phase of *researching desired outcomes.* The following questions may be asked in this second phase: »*What do you hope will happen?*«, »*What is the best possible outcome of today's meeting?*«,» *How will you know that supervision is useful for you?*«.

The next step involves *presenting a situation*[6] and consists of three parts. The first part is the presentation, which comprises the identification of what a supervisee wants to change. The supervisor asks: »*Tell us what actions have been successful*«. The supervisor's task is to listen carefully and during the presentation, the supervisee should not be interrupted. The supervisor waits for the supervisee to finish and only then asks questions to find out more details. The supervisor uses different techniques to pose questions; however, it is important to ask open questions (Benjamin, Hopkins and Nation, 1987.) because closed questions limit and discourage dialogue. Questions might include: »*Tell us more about your relationship with the expert-by-experience? I'm interested in what you were thinking when …*«

The next element is to check if the supervisor understood the presentation of the issues, what s/he told and what s/he would like to work on. This means respecting insecurity. A supervisor needs to avoid assumptions and therefore must check if they understood the supervisee. A relevant part of the presentation also involves focusing on emotions, because they are an important part of practice (Boud and Walker, 1988., Bolton, 2010.) and impact on actions and decisions. Often, supervisors may ask a supervisee: »*How did that make you feel? How did you feel about that? Where did you feel that? – in which part of your body?*« There is a focus on pleasant emotions to encourage the research of unusual and creative ways of actions, ideas and social connections and thus contribute to personal growth by increasing personal resources and expanding the repertoire of action (Ghaye and Lillyman, 2012.: 1.).

35). These questions, focused on success, help them to put a solution into action. The miracle question[7] developed by Insoo Kim Berg (1984.) may also be posed.

6 Intentionally in the Slovenian context, we do not use the expression »problem«, because we consistently follow the use of language that has the power to make changes (De Shazher, 1985., Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 2009., 2010.). By not focusing on the problems does not mean that we avoid or overlook them. This simply is not sufficient to get to solutions. The past helps us to see how we no longer wish to work or how something works and is consolidated, as stated by De Shazer (1985.). We depart from the point where supervisees come to those findings themselves by exposing this particular situation. Otherwise, they would not expose it as a question in supervision. The task of a supervisor is to help them go from the past to the desired changes.

7 The miracle question was incidentally discovered by Insoo Kim Berg (1984.) while working with an expert-by-experience. She asked an expert-by-experience what would need to happen. He hesitated and then said: »A miracle

The next step also involves seeking potential opportunities. In the first part the supervisor aims to understand the situation. The supervisee poses a clear question and the group focuses on collaboratively finding a solution. Questions might include: »*What would be a desired outcome for you?, How would you like to see this situation resolved?*« Supervisors are not interested in casual links or the nature of the situation, but rather in finding the solution to the situation, defined by supervisees asking: »*Where do you see solutions? What did you think about but not act on?*«. It is important that supervisors give supervisees enough time to explore what they perceive are the solutions. We may use the scale developed by Insoo Kim Berg. The scale is a useful tool used in supervision for measuring progress and can help identify even the smallest of changes (Myers, 2008., Shennan, 2014.).

In the next stage, the supervisor asks the supervisees: »*What is your next step*«*?* and invites them to think about the potential action. The solution-focused supervision emphasises the future. In this part, the supervisor invites the supervisees to consider the solution which either they proposed, or their peers suggested. Here, the following questions may assist*:* »*Which steps do you plan to undertake to realise the change?*« *»What little steps might enable you to enact a major change*?« The supervisor and the supervisee may think together about how the situation would appear if they had achieved their goals and who could help them (if the solution is associated with other systems).

The next step involves the use of praise and compliments. This enables supervisees to make sense of their work and efforts. The supervisees often doubt their ability to make relevant steps to improve the situation for people with lived experience, thus this stage of reflection is so essential. The solution-focused supervision is centred around supervisees' good characteristics and actions because people learn more effectively if they experience positive emotions and acknowledge that change is a process that requires other things to occur around it. At this point, we ask the supervisees about their personal resources of power. We ask*: »What gives them the power to develop resilience?*« Then, other members may give their opinions and praise what they have heard. This part may also be called positive feedback.

The final part of the meeting comprises an evaluation. The supervisee underlines this by considering: » *What is different now?*« *or* »*What was good?*« *or* »*What is a new thing I am leaving with?*« This stage enables supervisees to evaluate the process, and draw on their personal resources and skills to manage change in a specific time period in a way that is designed by them. Therefore, the evaluation aims to assess what the supervisees have gained for themselves and what their learning process has been. At this point, other members report what they have learnt and

would need to happen«. Insoo Kim continued: >>Well, let's suppose a miracle has happened«, and the expert was stuck in an awkward situation, but then replied «... (in Shennan, 2014.: 51). Since then the miracle question is an often used technique (see more in De Shazer, 1985.).

how they felt; and the supervisor may also give feedback about the progress of a particular supervisee and/or the group as a whole. It is thus important to evaluate the process, at the same time as providing space to ensure the well-being of the supervisee and other members. This final phase enables the supervisor to learn what helps the group to reach goals.

LIMITATIONS

This is a small-scale study that proposes a new model of appreciative supervision emanating from current research about supervision practices and discussions held in social work education settings in Slovenia and England. However, the model's current applicability to other wider social work contexts may be limited, and its employment may be limited to arenas that utilise group supervision processes. In order to validate the usefulness of this model, it would be helpful to pilot this new framework in both social work education settings and practice arenas to evaluate its effectiveness and inform its further development.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have highlighted the importance of reflective practice to social workers and furthermore identified how it links to processes of supervision (Maclean, 2017.). We have drawn together a conceptual analysis of the work by Videmšek (2020a.) to present a seven-stage cycle of appreciative reflection that can be used in group-facilitated supervision.

Until recently supervision was experienced as a place to learn from mistakes, but now we have developed a model that allows students to experience supervision to be a space to learn from positive experiences (Videmšek, 2020a., 2021.). We have demonstrated how we can use a solution-focused approach in supervision through a model of appreciative reflection, although each supervisor must find their own leadership style when facilitating supervision. From our experience, supervisees flourish when using this method of supervision because it provides appropriate support and encouragement to learn something new; moreover, it affords supervisees' confirmation and approval of their own strengths and abilities to enact change. Informal feedback from students using this model of appreciative supervision demonstrates that they recognise its strengths. Reports include: "*It was great to see, that what I am doing is important… with the examples of my courage, how they work in everyday practice, which methods they are using etc… I say, that we have great knowledge, that small steps are important for people with first-hand expertise and the relationship is the most important tool in social work….This supervision is a good example for building the identity of social work".*

In this proposed format of appreciative reflection, supervisees are asked to co-create solutions with their supervisors. Moreover, decision-making requires effective dialogue and reflection – key actions in supervision (Graham, 2017.). This process of appreciative reflection thus enables supervisors to support supervisees in making decisions in a safe place. Moreover, it provides them with the opportunities to reflect on their strengths and limitations systematically, using reflection and dialogue, to develop their capacity to problem-solve and manage ethical dilemmas.

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UČENJE IZ USPJEHA U SUPERVIZIJSKOM PROCESU

SAŽETAK

Supervizija je nužna komponenta prakse profesionalnog socijalnog rada. Ona podupire razvoj kapaciteta i vještina studenata kao budućih praktičara i iskusnijih socijalnih radnika. Refleksija je ključni dio supervizije jer se praksa socijalnog rada stalno razvija zbog naglih promjena u društvu. Supervizija pruža socijalnim radnicima i studentima mogućnost da slobodno i iskreno govore o svom radu i o svakodnevnim osjećajima s kojima se suočavaju u praksi. To omogućuje poboljšanje rada i sprječava nagomilavanje stresa. U ovom radu istražujemo različite metode supervizije koje se koriste u socijalnom radu i naglašavamo njihove primjene u Sloveniji i Engleskoj. Razvili smo vlastiti okvir supervizije oslanjajući se na naše poznavanje istraživanja u Sloveniji i Engleskoj; nadalje, vodili smo neformalne rasprave s kolegama u Engleskoj i formalniji proces sa supervizorima u Sloveniji u svrhu informiranja o razvoju ovoga modela. U radu se izlažu konceptualni rezultati istraživanja i predstavlja se naš model refleksivne supervizije utemeljen na pretpostavci da bolje učimo iz dobrih iskustava nego iz pogrešaka. Vjerujemo da se putem predloženog formata aprecijativne prakse možemo udaljiti od prakse utemeljene na deficitu prema praksi usmjerenoj na uspjeh.

Ključne riječi: socijalni rad, refleksivna praksa, zajedničko stvaranje, rad u skupini, profesionalni razvoj.