

Peer Supervision: Ideas & Resources

Reflection: What does/would good peer supervision look like to you?

Peer supervision can be a place to:

Why supervision for peer work?

- Like any skill, need constant practice and refinement
- Peer workers face unique challenges in the workplace
- Source of collective understanding and solidarity – place to create knowledge, resources and understanding together
- Challenge some of our internalised stigma/ways of thinking
- Sustain our own unique ways of working (avoid co-option)
- Self care: work through burn-out, coping with discrimination.

Which of these resonate with you?

Premise of peer supervision

Can be thought of as based on theories of 'social constructivism'. Constructivism recognises learning as a gradual process of building meaning and understanding by building on prior experiences and understanding. The social relationship is integral to this process. Together we reflect and build on each other's experiences to co-construct meaning.

This is different to traditional understandings of knowledge where a teacher 'instructs' a student (one is expert, one is learner).

What peer supervision is not:

- NOT managerial supervision/line management.
Why might this be an issue? How might peer supervision look different?
- NOT _____
- NOT _____
- NOT _____
- NOT _____

Supervision principles (adapted from VMIAC resource, listed below)

1. Founded on the values of peer work
2. Is a reflective learning relationship
3. All workers are entitled to supervision
4. Supervisors have experience in a role that uses a peer perspective and uses this perspective in supervision
5. Line management and peer supervision differ significantly in purpose, require different expertise and authority and therefore are performed by different people
6. Supervision involves a dynamic relational process of guidance, challenging thinking and developing practice
7. Provides a space to relate in ways that foster autonomy, strengths, initiative and creativity
8. Adopts approaches, methods and content based on the work related needs of the supervisee
9. Together peers discuss and negotiate terms of the supervision relationship (needs, intentions, expectations, role of power, approaches to work, addressing tensions)
10. Privacy is negotiated and respected
11. Responsible for own conduct
12. Can access a supervisor who is independent of the service
13. Able to be conducted in a location independent to service

*Reflections on these principles? Which are most important to you?
What are some of the ways you may advocate for this in your area?*

Some useful questions to reflect on for supervision formats:

- How often do I get an opportunity to reflect on and challenge my thinking or practices? Do I need more or less?
- When I have struggled to understand another's point of view or framework of thinking in the past, who or what has helped me most get past this?
- Is there someone in my life who can gently challenge me? What is it about them (their approach, values etc) that enable me to work through my thinking and not get defensive?
- What works best for me in terms of reflection and learning? (eg. Do I learn better if I can read something, reflect on it, and then talk it through? Do I learn better if I can talk about it in a group? Do I learn better by role playing a situation?)

Potential formats for peer supervision

- peer – peer (equal standing) / co-reflection?
- peer – peer (more experienced)?
 - * the more experienced peer should still be working from the values of mutuality and reciprocity
- group
- one-one

- internal – knowledge of the organisation
- external – removed, privacy

- How often? (*a dedicated regular time works best)
- How long?

What to look for in supervision

- Relational connection – supervisor who can deeply listen and a supervisee who can reflect on experiences
- Someone who can challenge you, create and hold a reflective space
- Holds peer values: self determination, connection, mutuality, curiosity
- Human rights perspective
- Supervision agreement – what’s important to you? How will you sit with discomfort? How will you work through tensions?

What strategies might we come up with to advocate for what we need?

Resources

VMIAC & Centre for Psychiatric Nursing, University of Melbourne (2018) *Consumer perspective supervision: A framework for supporting the consumer workforce*. Available: <https://cmhl.org.au/sites/default/files/resources-pdfs/FINAL%20CPS%20framework%2018.pdf>

Mead, S. (2014) *Co – reflection guide*. Available: <http://www.intentionalpeersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IPS-CoReflection-Guide-2015.pdf>

**The IPS website also has a section on co-reflection and some handy workbooks*
<https://www.intentionalpeersupport.org/coreflection/>

Nisbet, G, McAllister, L., and Heydon, M. (2014). *A Peer Group Mentoring Framework for the Development of Student Supervisors*. MHCC, Sydney. Available: <https://cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mentorship20Peer20group-Framework-FINAL20151.pdf>

**Whilst not developed specifically for peers, for those wanting to set up their own group supervision, it provides some good guides for reflection (pg 38 on)*