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Abstract

Name of paper: Supervision and Adventure Therapy: Fighting Burnout – Emotional First Aid for Practitioners

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The work of the outdoor and adventure therapy practitioner is both rewarding and challenging. Outdoor practitioners are generally not therapists yet frequently work therapeutically, but without the support therapists receive through regular supervision. This experiential workshop combines theory with practice and will present and explore how some of the constructs of supervision can be adapted from the field of counselling and psychotherapy, and can contribute toward best practice within outdoor and adventure therapy, delivering a duty of care and wellbeing for both client and practitioner. Taking account of several models, but drawing upon a solution focused model of supervision, we will provide a combination of both casework and experiential opportunities to enable participants to work with this model and recycle their learning through a contribution of feedback, discussion and participation. Drawing upon the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's Ethical Framework for Good Practice, we will consider issues of best practice alongside examining how supervision can be adapted to deliver emotional first-aid and the prevention of practitioner burn-out.

Key words: Supervision, Burnout, Best Practice, Emotional First-Aid

Introduction

According to Government statistics, one in five people suffers from workplace stress in the UK, with some half a million people reporting they have become ill as a result of this stress. Despite the healing properties of nature and the ambience of the wilderness, outdoor and adventure practitioners are not exempt from stress in their workplace, and have few mechanisms in place to support them, or respond to their state of wellbeing. In this article, based on our presentation at the 6th IATC conference in Prague, 2012, we will examine the issue of stress within the professional world of Outdoor and Adventure Therapy, and introduce the concept of supervision and how it can prevent emotional burn out and enhance practitioner wellbeing and best practice.

Background – where we began

At the 5th International Adventure Therapy Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, 2009, the focus of the conference centred on: ‘Adventure therapy as an emerging approach: Towards a profession’, encouraging practitioners to critically evaluate their industry and its approach to, and place within psychological therapy. The IATC has committed itself to: “ensuring that the appropriate knowledge and practice infrastructures are robustly developed and put into place in order to achieve that recognition.” (Richards, 2009 p8). This particular conference was co-hosted by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) – the leading professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in the UK, providing a strong platform of support and recognition of adventure therapy as a ‘legitimate therapeutic approach’ (Ibid p8). At that time, the BACP’s mission was to: ‘enable access to ethical and effective psychological therapy by setting and monitoring professional standards’ in its efforts toward the vision of an ‘emotionally healthy society’.

One of the key aspects of securing and maintaining ‘ethical and effective psychological therapy, and monitoring professional standards’ is undertaken through the medium of regular supervision. However, very little, if anything, is mentioned about this valuable resource, and its

potential contribution to adventure therapy and the wellbeing of its practitioners.

In her overview of the 5th IATC proceedings, now published in 2012, Richards asks some fundamental questions regarding “the psychological process of change and the benefits of adventure therapy approaches” (Ibid p9). In establishing adventure therapy’s value and contribution toward that ‘emotionally healthy society’, we would do well to keep these questions at the forefront of our minds: She asks: “How do we know what kind of adventure therapy intervention works best for what client and when? How can we ensure ethical practice and maintain professional standards? How can we understand the change process in action and develop theoretical models? How do we build the knowledge and practitioner base of adventure therapy that ensures it is an effective approach? How do we engage policy makers, clients, professionals, and the public in this emerging knowledge-base?” (Ibid p9).

In this article we consider the process and potential of supervision within adventure therapy as one tool that can assist not only with practitioner wellbeing but also contribute in the endeavour to answer these challenging questions. Set alongside the exciting developments in the field, supervision has much to offer in establishing and demonstrating ethical practice, practitioner wellbeing, and the professional stance of the work being undertaken in all its various forms. Briefly establishing the background of supervision within the UK, we examine its role, purpose & contribution within counselling and psychotherapy today, several models of supervision and what supervision can offer both practitioners and adventure therapy as an emerging industry today.

We will also engage in the debate around resistance to supervision, the tension the concept of supervision can create, and some of the suspicion and challenges to introducing supervision to adventure therapy.

Supervision: What is it and where did it come from?

Within the UK, supervision has become an integral part of any therapeutic undertaking. The British Association for Counselling and

Psychotherapy (BACP) regards the on-going provision of supervision as an essential aspect of good ethical practice, and requires supervisors to enable and facilitate practitioners to regularly and routinely, critically reflect upon their work.

At the outset, the BACP's Ethical Framework for Good Practice (2010) establishes the difference between supervising and managing: "There is a general obligation for all counsellors, psychotherapists, supervisors and trainers to receive supervision/consultative support independently of any managerial relationships" (BACP, p7) in order to: "enhance good practice... and protect clients from poor practice" (BACP, p8).

In considering the continuing development of outdoor and adventure therapy, it is expedient to examine the value and role of supervision and its potential contribution toward good practice and ethical mindfulness. There has, however, long been confusion and hesitancy regarding terminology where supervision is concerned. In many parallel fields, supervision is more closely aligned with management and this has created an unfortunate association, and has no doubt contributed to the hesitancy and resistance toward this concept in some quarters within Outdoor and Adventure Therapy. However, despite the confusion, no real effective replacement terminology has been found and the concept has advanced and now not only underpins all psychological therapeutic work within the UK, but is a requirement for practice.

According to Corey et al (2010) "Supervision has been part of the helping professions from the beginning, but it is only in recent years that supervision has come to be seen as a separate and distinct field with its own set of skills and tools." Since the early days of psychoanalysis, supervision has been an integral part of therapy, and Freud himself provided supervision to fellow analysts through both conversation and letter according to Wheeler & Richards, (2007). It is generally agreed that practitioners in training should receive supervision, but beyond that, it varies across nations as to how long it is essential to ensure best practice. Within the UK, it is understood that ongoing supervision is a key element of practice and some professional memberships such as the BACP, and now the UK Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists require it, providing a guide that confirms: "Supervision is a value of the Ethical Framework, and the Register requires that all

registrants agree to engage in supervision appropriate to their practice. Supervision offers the practitioner a reflective space in which to develop practice and as such benefits client safety” (BACP, 2012).

There is a growing body of knowledge and literature regarding supervision that examines the topic from a number of perspectives. Carroll and Holloway (1999) take a broad sweeping contextual view that takes a tour of supervision from considering racial and gender issues, to working with disabilities or sexual orientation. They also examine supervision and organisation issues, including medical and educational settings, school and workplace, religious and uniformed settings. Falvey (2002), Mitchels and Bond (2011) have taken a closer look at some of the ethical practice and legal issues that are part of any therapeutic undertaken and should be included within any supervision session. There are a range of supervision models that authors such as Hawkins and Shohet (2006), Carroll (2012), Page and Wosket (2001), Inskipp and Proctor (2001) to list but a few, have developed over the years. None to date, specifically designed for Outdoor and Adventure Therapy, but each has much to offer. Feltham and Dryden (1994) take a closer look at the supervision relationship itself and explore the supervisory alliance and relationship, its foci and methods along with some of the potential developmental opportunities supervision has to offer, its strengths and weaknesses and lastly the protective value it offers both the profession as a whole, and the client and practitioner in particular. In 2007, Wheeler and Richards undertook a systematic review of the literature regarding: The Impact of clinical supervision on counsellors and therapists, their practice and their clients. The findings of this review indicate: “supervision has positive impacts on the supervisee, whereby supervisees grow and develop through supervision.” Wheeler & Richards report: “It is further evident that supervision has some impact on key developmental areas, such as skills and self-efficacy.” They conclude however, more research should be undertaken that: “takes account of long term supervision, experienced practitioners, methodological plurality, including triangulation and last but not least, the client.” (Wheeler & Richards, (2007 p63).

Within supervision rests a unique triadic relationship between a supervisor, a supervisee (the practitioner) and his or her clients. While

the supervisor and supervisee meet on a regular basis, the client never attends but is always 'in the room' and this activity is in place to ensure their wellbeing as well as the supervisee's. But what happens in supervision and how does it work? There are many definitions, to correspond with the varying contexts and countries where it is undertaken. What can be said is that it is a: "formal relationship in which there is a contractual agreement that the therapist will present their work with clients in an open and honest way that enables the supervisor to have insight into the way in which the work is being conducted," (Wheeler & Richards, 2007), and both parties being held accountable to a formal professional body. A couple of generally accepted definitions are as follows:

"A working alliance between the supervisor and counsellor (practitioner) in which the counsellor (practitioner) can offer an account or recording of her (his) work; reflect on it; receive feedback and, where appropriate, guidance. The object of this alliance is to enable the counsellor to gain in ethical competence, confidence, compassion and creativity in order to give her best possible service to the client." (Inskipp & Proctor, 2001a).

In contrast is a definition given by Bernard & Goodyear (1992: 2004), which reflects more of the US approach: "Supervision is an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member of that same profession. This relationship is evaluated, extends over time and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person, monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients seen and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession." (2004:8).

Moving beyond definitions, perhaps it is easier to think about the function of supervision: In her Introduction, Henderson (2009) offers three main functions which are most commonly identified: Educative, Supportive and Creative and lastly, managerial. By Educative, Henderson is referring to: "encouraging the development of supervisee's skills, abilities, understanding, personal awareness, and academic knowledge." (ibid, p.xix). This is self explanatory and can readily be adapted to parallel therapeutic fields. The second function is perhaps a little more obscure in that it encourages the practitioner to

look within, and explore their own personal issues and life events and most importantly, how this might impact upon the relationship and therapeutic work with their client. In the world of adventure, it is acknowledged and generally understood that 'something happens for everyone', and it is very important the practitioner is given time and space for personal reflection, to enable them to separate out their material from the client's, to consider the impact of the event or activity, the client, and their work together upon his or her own life. Henderson (2009) also highlights the necessity for practitioners to be able to identify what is happening within their own life, to be self aware and more able to bracket off personal material from their therapeutic work. Understanding the nature and remit of their role and duties can also be addressed within this function. The third and final function Henderson discusses is the 'Managerial' function, whereby practitioners or supervisees have the opportunity to safely explore their work within the expectations of their profession, the ethical codes of conduct they subscribe to, the agency and context within which they work, the collegial relationships, organisational or legal requirements. It is important to clarify here, that this last function should not be interpreted as line management, but management with a small 'm', that addresses the areas mentioned above.

Corey et al (2010 p.5), discuss the goals of supervision, and identify four goals: "to promote supervisee growth and development, to protect the welfare of the client, to monitor supervisee performance and act as gatekeeper for the profession and lastly, to empower the supervisee to self supervision and carry out these goals as an independent professional." The promotion of an internal supervisor toward self supervision can be viewed in two ways: Developing an internal supervisor enables a practitioner to be in the moment and be self aware but does not preclude the need for an external supervisor for later reflection. Within the United States, ongoing supervision is not widely practiced, and practitioner independence is more the norm for licensed practitioners. Supervision is often seen as the domain of junior or trainee practitioners, which is in contrast to the UK in particular, where it is recognised as a highly beneficial ongoing activity for experienced and senior practitioners throughout their career.

Models of supervision

Over the years, supervision has developed and become a 'specialty field' with: "its own set of unique competencies (knowledge and skills), theories, methods, evaluations, and legal and ethical duties and obligations." (Corey et al, 2010). There are now a range of supervision models, some particularly related to a theoretical model e.g. person centred or cognitive behavioural approaches to supervision, and others taking a more generic approach.

What they all endeavour to do is provide a structure that identifies the roles, tasks and responsibilities of supervision alongside some of the dynamics related to process, development and context. The development model, for example, (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987) sets out the concept and framework that suggests practitioners have different needs depending upon their particular stage of development. This can also have a parallel within the supervisor's own professional development journey. Using the craft analogy, the practitioner moves through four stages; from being a novice (trainee), through to Master Practitioner - where the relationship may have a more collegial tone to it. According to Ronnestad & Skovholt (2013 p60) "Supervisors have a major impact in the Beginning Student Phase. The dependence and vulnerability of the beginning student, in combination with the intense need for confirmation and guidance, combine to make supervision an important learning arena." There is much to learn at this early stage, and a clear argument can be made for a high level of support, as 'therapists', and this includes Outdoor and Adventure Practitioners, engage with the complexity of human nature and their role in the change process. In contrast to this, is the Advanced Student or Intern, and Roonestad & Skovholt (2013 p71) identify five developmental tasks, the first three being closely akin to those identified for the Student Practitioner:

1. To learn more complex conceptual knowledge that meets the criteria set by the training institution
2. To demonstrate procedural competence; that is, sufficient mastery of assessment and therapeutic skills as assessed by supervisors in particular
3. To maintain an openness to information and theory at a meta-level, while also engaging in the “closing off” process of selecting therapy/counselling theories and techniques to use
4. To modify unrealistic and ‘perfectionistic’ images of psychotherapy and counselling and of the role of the practitioner
5. To manage the bewilderment that comes from seeing psychotherapy/counselling as increasingly complex.

While this is directed toward counselling and psychotherapy practitioners, parallels can easily be drawn with Outdoor and Adventure Practitioners, and again, it is clearly evident that supervision forms a highly influential element of the practitioner’s development. From this level of competence onwards, there is “more at stake” as Ronnestad and Skovholt point out, and certainly for experienced and senior Outdoor and Adventure Practitioners, this becomes the case as they take on both clients and activities of an increasingly complex nature. For those practitioners, one of the key elements that supervision has to offer is not only around career development and support, but also practitioner wellbeing and resilience against stagnation and burnout.

Alongside this developmental aspect of supervision, are those models such as Hawkins and Shohet (1989) and (2006), now in its 6th edition: *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, and Page and Wosket (2001) *Cyclical model*. Both models focus more on the process of supervision, while Carroll (1996) explores the tasks associated with supervision and also brings into sharp focus the element of context. Holloway picks this up as together with Carroll, they examine the systemic (organisational and context) issues that can arise (1995). Proctor and Inskipp (2001) focus on the relationship process that underpins supervision, and Clarkson (2003) also picks up on this crucial element in her *Relationship model*.

Beyond these models are those related to a particular theoretical stance such as Lambers’ (2000), or Tudor & Worrall (2007) who discuss a

Person-centred approach to supervision. Waskett (2009) also reflects upon a solution-focused approach to supervision, which we will discuss in greater length. Taking that perspective a step further, Briggs & Miller (2008) discuss Success Enhancing Supervision, exploring “strategies and practices that enhance clinicians’ sense of themselves as competent and successful professionals.” Their goal in supervision is to: “facilitate the development of a competent therapist, which ultimately affect his/her efficacy with clients” (Briggs & Miller, 2008 p200).

How can we adapt supervision and make it our own?

To date, there is little written and identified as a supervision model that is tailor-made to suit Outdoor and Adventure Therapy, and it is timely to consider what the profession needs to ensure both practitioner and client wellbeing. There are many elements that are directly transferrable and certainly room for more than one model to emerge, according to the needs of the practitioner, the context and/or agency of their work, and nature of the therapeutic work they undertake.

Given that supervision is there to promote the development and wellbeing of both practitioner and client, it is important to consider the needs of both parties and begin to explore a more bespoke model that accommodates the particular needs of this developing profession. Natynczuk & Schwenk (2012) began this work, as yet unpublished, by presenting some of the following key ingredients directly transferrable to Outdoor and Adventure Therapy.

Key Ingredients:

As previously stated, supervision provides a point of regular reflection and an opportunity for professional development and generative support. It ensures a duty of care is extended to both participant (client) and the professional. In order to deliver these ingredients, it is important that supervision has some form of structure and format, is undertaken on a regular and mandatory basis, is both personal and professional in offering a safe, reflective space while preferably not being seen as line

management, and lastly, that it can offer a critical appreciation of the factors associated with 'adventure' and 'therapy'.

According to Scaife (2012, p2) supervision is an "instance of thoughtful practice". She continues: "reflective practice involves thinking from a bird's eye view about an event and/or aspects of my practice. The perspective includes myself, encompassing my behaviour, thoughts and/or feelings in relation to my practice, with the implication that the reflection will impact on, although not necessarily alter, my practice." (2012, p3). We can begin to assemble some components of supervision: it provides an opportunity for a more 'distanced' perspective (a stepping back or helicopter viewpoint), there is a purpose towards analysis and challenge, and a focus on social, ethical and process issues alongside aspects of personal assumption, belief, judgement, cultural orientation to list just a few elements.

Supervision is an on-going journey of professional exploration and development. It is not a random occurrence – indeed, its' very regularity forges a relationship bond between practitioner and supervisor that brings trust and collaborative development to the endeavour. While not undertaken in a vacuum – it does offer a more 'removed' perspective in which reflection, expression, and processing can occur and this in turn, is re-cycled back into the practitioner's therapeutic world. Scaife (2010).

Scaife (2010) draws our attention to the multi-dimensional aspect of reflection: the process of active awareness about what we are thinking, feeling and doing in the here and now; the process of review, taking an observer's perspective of that occurrence; and lastly, the concept of 'anticipatory reflection' – put forward by Conway (2001) and Van Manen (1990) and as Scaife writes: "highlighting the circularity of the reflective process when it informs subsequent practice" (2010.p5). Schon (1983) writes about the reflective practitioner and coins the terms: 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action.' Reflection in-action: is described as 'thinking on your feet' (paying attention to what you are saying, to your feelings and attending to your theoretical modal etc) – while you are doing it! Reflection in Action is something that is in the moment, in the here and now. It is about what else is going on for you. While Reflection on Action is a process carried out *after* the session, possibly in writing up notes, de-brief with a colleague, in supervision, or through

the use of Interpersonal Process Recall. The purpose of reflection after the event, is to explore why you did what you did, the process between you and your client (interpersonal) and within you (intrapersonal). The third element is Anticipatory Reflection, which provides a forward-looking perspective and the opportunity to pause and examine hopes and intentions, requirements and potentially unforeseen areas for oneself, one's colleagues and especially for the client(s), set against the context of the anticipated activity.

Considering all three dimensions, this provides with a useful cycle of reflection or reflective continuum for supervision: Diagram 1 below:

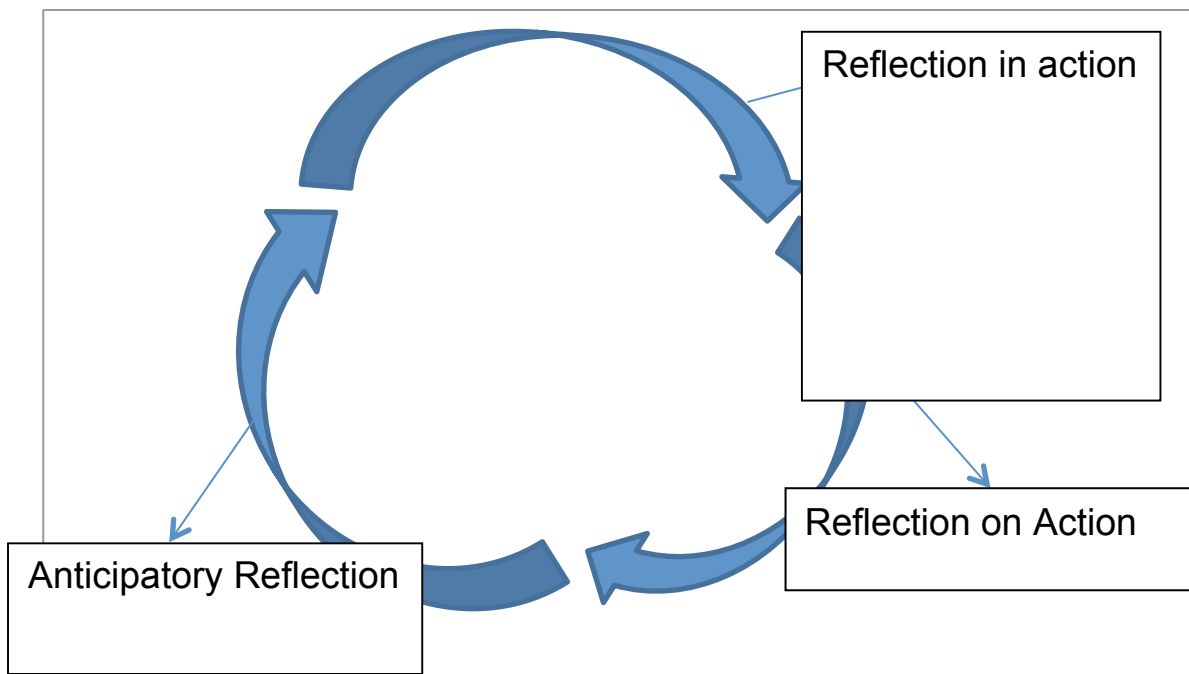


Diagram 1 – Reflective continuum

In addition to this reflective continuum, are the following key ingredients presented at the 6th IATC Conference (2012). These ingredients form the concentric rings of our model of supervision for Outdoor and Adventure Therapy (Natynczuk and Schwenk, 2012, unpublished - Diagram 2), that continues to be researched and refined. Taking each of the rings, and working from the outside toward the centre, we will briefly expand upon their relevance and contribution to supervision.

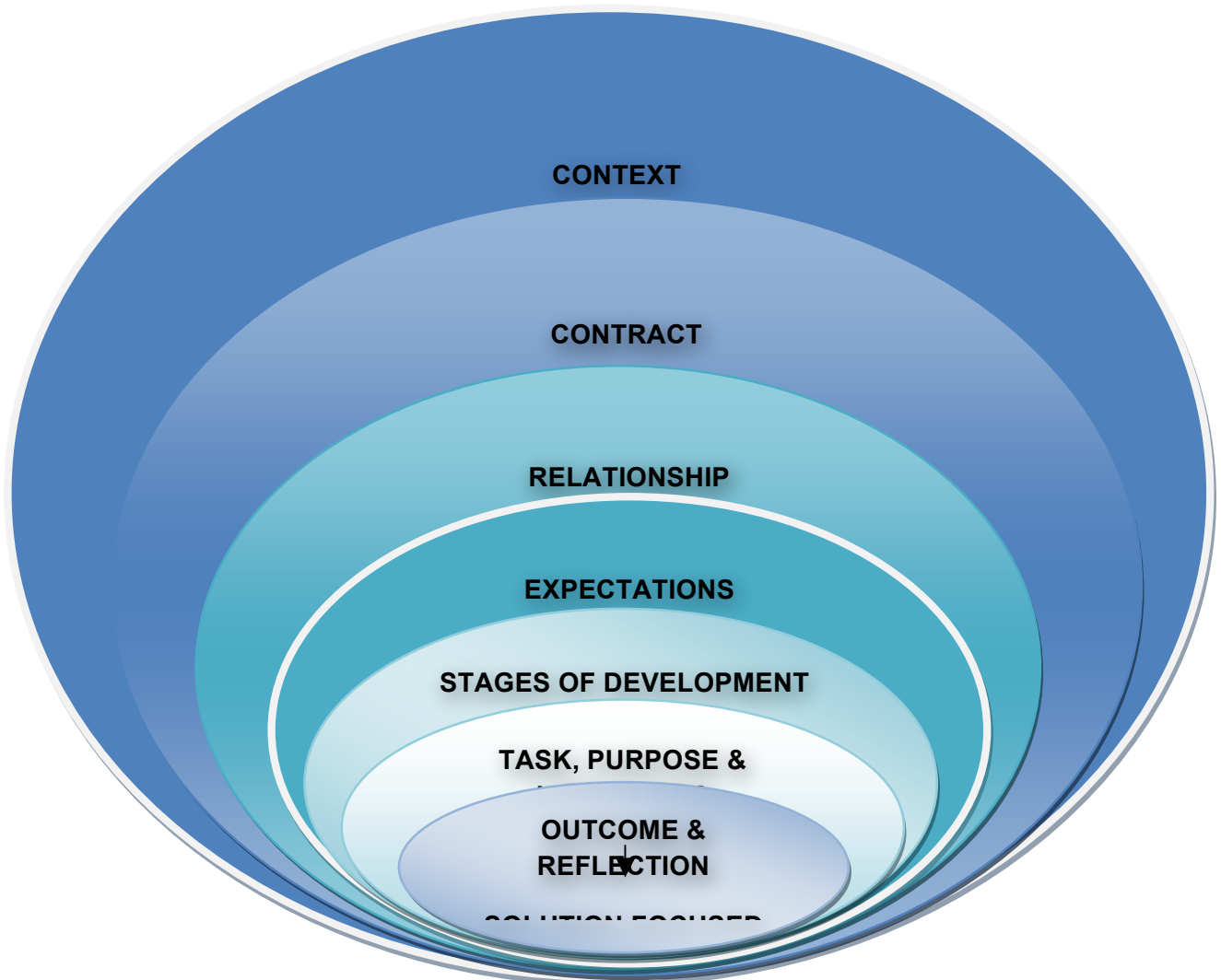


Diagram 2: Natynczuk & Schwenk, Supervision Model, 2012

1. Context: vision, purpose and setting.

Context is everything: it is essential for the supervisor to be clear regarding the context within which the adventure therapy is to occur. Context refers to the agency and its personnel, the vision of the 'agency' and their particular ethos in delivering adventure therapy. Context also

refers to the setting and purpose of the adventure therapy i.e. how it intends to draw upon and utilise adventure, what is meant by the terms 'adventure' and 'therapy', and to what extent adventure is used e.g. climbing, caving, canoeing etc. for therapeutic purposes.

Other key elements of Context are the issues of: Ethics, Responsibility & Boundaries. Working within an organisational context, that draws upon multi-disciplinary teams involves working with difference and respecting issues of equality and diversity, and managing organisational dynamics. Any supervisory work undertaken on behalf of the Agency needs to be cognizant of Agency's Mission and Vision. Ethics refers to the Ethical Framework for Good practice (2010) or Codes of Practice of the associated professional bodies linked to Adventure Therapy e.g. BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), and other professional bodies associated with the various adventure activities undertaken, thereby providing an over-arching framework of ethical practice and standards. Associated with this set of guidelines for good practice are the organisation's own policies and procedures, and principles of legal Responsibility and Boundaries – that relate in particular to the role of adventure therapy practitioners in relation to their clients, and referring agencies, and in working practice within the team itself.

Carroll (1994; cited in Carroll 1996) believes that supervisors working within or alongside an organisational context need to adopt a broad focus that embraces the following aspects:

- How to work within an organisation – i.e. getting to know the organisation.
- How to work with (control) the flow of information back to the organisation – i.e. knowing what is required, in what frequency and format, and to whom it is directed and for what purposes.
- How to multi-task and work with possibly maintaining several roles within and alongside the organisation.
- How to balance loyalty to both the practitioner and organisation – whilst also maintaining a duty of care toward the client and possibly the client's referring agency.

Given the above, it is essential for all supervision participants (supervisee/adventure therapist/practitioner), supervisor and organisation, to determine the role and scope of both Adventure Therapy and supervision. These ingredients are all part of the Contract Agreement.

2. Contract: Expectations and a Duty of Care

Taking a closer look at this contract, it is essential to be transparent regarding the contractual arrangements between the Agency and Adventure therapist/practitioner, the client, referring agencies and the supervisor. All parties need to be clear about what has been agreed, what is to be delivered and the associated methods of delivery i.e. walking, climbing, caving, canoeing, high ropes, bush craft etc.... and the embedded purpose or intention for the activity. Written consent needs to be in place to ensure all parties fully understand the risks associated with adventure therapy both from an adventure and therapeutic perspective.

Supervision and the Agency contractual arrangements enable the adventure therapy practitioner to be clear about these core ingredients (diagram 3).

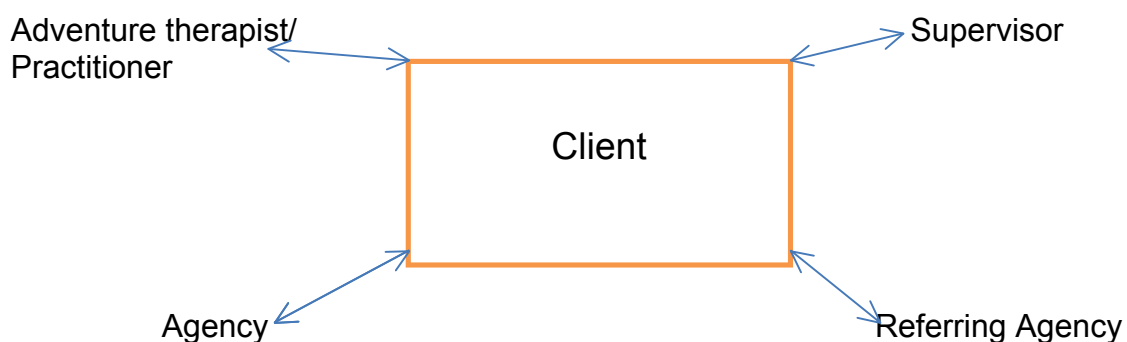


Diagram 3: Contractual Arrangements

Carroll (1996) established five roles the supervisor undertakes when working within an organisational context or setting: Firstly, to help supervisees work within and satisfy the contractual demands of the organisation. This may include consideration of values and practice, ethical dilemmas, and areas of responsibility. The second role is to enable supervisees to control and be mindful of the flow of information within the organisation. The third task centres more on the healthcare of the practitioner within the organisation while the fourth task supports the supervisee in their working interface with the organisation and finally the fifth task is to ensure the supervisee looks after themselves while delivering a service to the client on behalf of the organisation.

Returning to the multifaceted supervision contract, the supervisor also holds a responsibility or duty of care toward the agency or organisation as well as the client and practitioner. Dempsey (2012) cites Carroll and Tholstrup (2001) who offer a cogent outline of benefits the supervisor can offer to the organisation: To assist the organisation thinking through the theory behind what they do; by providing some 'time out' thinking space in which to reflect where the organisation has come from and where it is going; to enable the organisation to look within itself about the language it uses to reflect the values it holds; to help contain the emotional domain of the organisation and lastly to offer a neutral and objective perspective and a duty of care to the organisation itself.

3. Relationship: Ethics and Responsibilities, Power and Autonomy

In any therapeutic undertaking the relationship rests at the heart of its success. Both the practitioner and client bring the present and also the impact of past relationships into the here and now of their therapeutic relationship and this is replicated in supervision. In addition to this is the interplay of peripheral relationship dynamics e.g. client's family (past and present), practitioner's own family (past and present) together with their experience of the organisation or agency with whom they work, and then the supervisor's relationship experiences. It is particularly helpful therefore, to draw upon systems theory when examining the relationships within adventure therapy (Diagram 4).

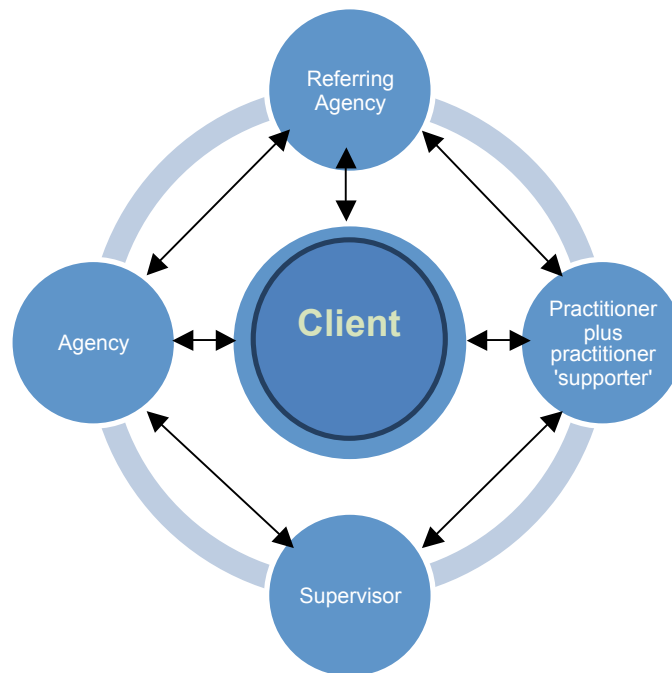


Diagram 4: Systemic Relationships

The supervisory process enables practitioners to consider the inter-relatedness of their work, the opportunity and necessity of co-dependence between practitioner and client, the implicit and explicit contract between agency and agency. The potential for parallel process and transference, counter-transference is more than likely as client material (and occasionally practitioner material) becomes less inhibited and the practitioner-client relationship becomes more intense.

Disequilibrium is a key component of adventure therapy and is dependent upon the levels of trust within the therapeutic alliance. For safe practice purposes, the adventure therapist does not work alone, but is accompanied by a third – who becomes an adjunct to the therapeutic process. Their role in relation to the Adventure Therapist and client needs to be fully explored. The question regarding supervision of this individual would also need to be explored – especially if either the therapeutic process or the adventure aspect became traumatic or personally disturbing.

Once again, Ethics & Boundaries play a key part in ensuring not only 'adventure' safe practice but also therapeutic good practice. This necessitates ongoing professional development for the practitioner and the ability to make key decisions on behalf of the client when the situation dictates. This calls into play the issues of Power and Autonomy and the ethical principles of beneficence and non-malificence (wellbeing – least harm) set against encouraging and facilitating the client's sense of self and right to be self-governing. In some situations, often quite isolated and intense, the inter-relationship among participants may become easily blurred. Supervision offers an opportunity for reflection (before and after) whereby a practitioner can review and prepare for what happened or should happen, and make sense of the situation, gain some learning and insight into themselves and adventure therapy and better understand and work with the client.

4. Expectations & Duty of Care

According to Gabriel and Casemore (2009 p.112) "The therapist has a responsibility to act on the basis of the principle of beneficence or welfare, in order that the therapy is of benefit to the client. In legal terms, this would translate as the therapist owing a duty of care to the client." Clearly this is an area that needs to be fully explored and agreed upon. The organisation and its Adventure Therapy Practitioners need to be clear and concrete regarding relevant aspects of the law and any child and Vulnerable People Protection issues. Supervision and the Agency can work together to ensure these areas are constantly revisited and woven into the fabric of any contract and delivery of adventure therapy. These safeguarding issues reflect best practice for all parties concerned.

Everyone needs to know who will do what and when and how, and who has professional responsibility and the extent of that responsibility. Creating an atmosphere where expectations can be voiced and explored simply models good practice when working with clients in any setting. This also applies to establishing an awareness around the practitioner's stage of development and recognising their particular on-going

professional development needs and aspirations, set alongside the agency's expectations of the practitioner.

5. Stage of Development: training and development needs of both practitioner and client

This is an area frequently overlooked and yet brings a valuable dimension of understanding both from an adventure therapy practitioner's perspective and also from the client's perspective. Supervision offers a safe space within which to explore the practitioner's own sense of competence (capability vs limitations) to both develop as a practitioner and deliver the contractual agreement. Because supervision is not line management, there is sufficient safety in exploring what went well and what did not, what skills were required and how competent the practitioner felt in deploying them, and what has surfaced as a potential area for future training and development.

This focus can also be directed toward the client's level of personal, physical, emotional and cognitive development, enabling the practitioner and supervisor to form a base-point to start from and to review the outcome of any interventions. Understanding the client's stage of development enables the practitioner to be realistic yet appropriately challenging in his/her work with the client. It informs the practitioner about what life issues/stages the client may be experiencing for example and provides a backdrop of developmental context in which to establish and mutually agree some of the tasks, purpose and limitations of the work with the client.

6. Outcome: Task, Purpose & limitations

Raising this aspect of the work in supervision enables the practitioner to become much clearer both with the client and agency about the why and how they are going to work together and to engage in a discussion regarding the Task, Purpose & Limitations as key aspects of the contract. This generates greater clarity about who the contract is for, any hidden agenda (e.g. desired outcome of the referring agency, or any other third party), potential areas of client concern and/or resistance,

client preference and viewpoint, creating a shared realistic expectations and issues regarding power and autonomy within the adventure therapy relationship.

A key element of supervision within adventure therapy is the necessity to review practice and issues related to the activity itself e.g. health and safety, preparation, procedures, and the skills and qualifications or fitness to practice (although it is the Agency who is the employer) necessary to do the job. It is important that practitioners remain competent, insured, with ongoing professional development in appropriate fields to expand their development both in terms of their own personal adventure experiences and developments in best practice. Accompanying in the role of the 'third person' can enable practitioners to refresh their skills and gain additional training. Doing risk assessments is an ongoing process in adventure therapy as the variables can change from moment to moment, taking into account not only the client's willingness and ability to engage and continue with the tasks, but the conditions associated with the activity itself, e.g. geographic location, weather conditions, physical and mental wellbeing of all participants, standard of kit etc.. Whilst probably discussed frequently in supervision, this also remains Agency responsibility.

7. Outcome and Reflection: Solution focused, generative support

In adventure therapy something happens for everyone! Supervision enables the practitioner to reflect upon the contract, the client, the relationship, the activity, what went well, what was unexpected, how things could be done differently etc. It offers a 360 review and de-brief and a way to capture and consider the event and process.

Supervision, while upholding an ethical stance, is a form of generative support. It encourages the practitioner to look inwards (a process encouraged for the client) and to think about what is going on for them – how they feel about themselves, in relation to the client, the 'third person', the contract, the outcome and so forth. Adventure Therapy is

shrouded in challenge and new experience and for the practitioner, it is important to give sufficient time to reflect on what has happened – to pause and catch up with the experience and discuss the journey. This brings new insight and learning and personal development for the practitioner which can only serve to enhance their work and ensure Best Practice.

Taking a closer look at a solution focussed model of supervision adapted to work within Outdoor and Adventure therapy, (Natynczuk, this volume) we are especially concerned with identifying what the supervisee does well, where their best competencies are, how they cope when things do not go well, and what they, their colleagues and clients notice when they are at their best. It must be remembered that the solution focused model is a model for change and not for risk assessments. In areas of high risk any muddling of change and risk assessment may be dangerous to the client and supervisee. As with using solution focused techniques for therapy, the supervisor and supervisee co-construct a future where the problem(s) being discussed in supervision are no longer present or are being coped with (solutions are good enough). We are equally keen to establish and maintain a climate of competence as we are to explore the signs of the supervisee working better, seen from the supervisee's own perspective and what their clients and colleagues would notice when things are going well. A solution focused conversation done well is particularly good at exploring the fine details of practice and identifying small changes, easily enacted, that will make a difference. It also helps staff become more aware of their own significance in influencing situations; more aware of their own skills, strengths and resources and more aware of how to avoid getting stuck with a piece of work. In this model the supervisor avoids giving advice and takes care to work with the supervisee's own situation avoiding solutions that involve other people.

Typical questions are:

How will you know that supervision is helpful to you?

What situations are hardest for you and how will you know you are moving forward?

What will tell you that you are working with this client's agenda and keeping the client's safety in mind?

What will you be pleased to notice about how you address the company's concerns in a way that informs the client and encourages their co-operation?

How will you know that your work is becoming more productive?

Imagine that you do become more hopeful about this piece of work. What will you be noticing that will be helping you to feel different about it?

These questions form part of a constructive supervision session that invites and enables the supervisee to explore issues of concern and celebration. It provides a backdrop of generative support, and building upon an effective working alliance that is open rather than collusive, facilitates the practitioner's well being and development.

Stress in the workplace

As we stated in the introduction, despite working in often enviable outdoor environments, doing work that yields both personal and professional gratification, this work is not without its own set of stressors. The hours are often unsociable, including long trips away from home and the family, potentially spending more time with clients than with loved ones. Weekends can easily get consumed, and for some, the work is away from home from a few nights to even a few weeks. Research undertaken by Marchand, Russell & Cross (2009) "confirmed a high turnover rate of instructors and high challenges experienced with non-work related issues, particularly in sustaining romantic personal relationships." They continue: "Factor analysis identified three constructs related to difficulty levels experienced on the job: a) time and schedule constraint; b) emotional anxiety and stress-related issues; and c) physical and mental challenges." The authors of this paper discuss some interesting factors, related to instructor age, and the impact of having a spouse or partner also in the profession or related activity. Tenure in a position was another factor the authors highlighted would benefit from additional research, looking at career progression

and opportunities for development within the field. Gass (1993), also believed additional research regarding personal relationships for outdoor and adventure instructors would be beneficial. Certainly, maintaining significant relationships, in addition to managing general obligations, and attending to personal matters while away for long or frequent stays in backcountry environments is a challenge and Marchand, Russell & Cross (2009) believe these ingredients may have a significant impact upon job retention in this industry.

Unlike counselling and psychotherapy, or social work or many parallel fields, the work can mean living at quite close personal quarters with clients, where the boundaries become blurred and relationships more intense. Since something is happening for everyone, practitioners are as much part of the process as clients and not exempt from their own material being drawn out into the open once more. The sense of being 'on duty' can feel stressful when it extends into 24-7.

Often the nature of the activity can draw upon and utilise a co dependency not only amongst the professionals within the group but on occasion toward the clients also. Indeed, this may even be a strategy to enable the client(s) to develop and gain a stronger sense of self through achievement and identity. Or it could occur during an emergency when additional help is required. This can be a stressful occurrence, and requires practitioners maintain a clear sense of their role, responsibilities and boundaries. Keeping in mind the numerous responsibilities can also become overwhelming when other things are on our mind. Maintaining a high level of focus during any extreme sport activity requires considerable mental stamina.

Another stressor is concerning the provenance of the work. In examining the rich diversity of outdoor and adventure therapy, there is an underlying hint of uncertainty about where and how the work comes. Contracts are often variable and/or seasonal and it is not unusual for practitioners to need a back up stream of income. The high level of unpredictability in work, can have a serious impact upon practitioner wellbeing. A line manager may well have tremendous empathy for the practitioner, but may also have to choose who to give work to if there is limited work available, or assign practitioners to work with one another

when there is unvoiced discomfort within the team. While these issues should be explored within management, practitioners might need to carefully tease out the issues and use supervision as a safe place in which clarify the situation in their minds first.

Outdoor and adventure practitioners are frequently passionate about the environments within which they work, and enthusiastic about the activities they undertake. However, combining work with pleasure can easily lead to burnout and practitioners can experience the inspiration of their work as well as the desperation. Not everyone responds well to this work, or has a positive experience, and being able to separate out their experience from one's own is not automatic and supervision can readily assist in this process. Practitioner's can also feel personally responsible for the outcome of the client's experience and again, it is essential that the practitioner draws upon supervision to gain insight into their work.

How can supervision provide emotional support and help prevent burnout?

Beyond employee's health and safety in a physical sense with appropriate and good use of ropes, buoyancy aids, harnesses and helmets etc goes without argument in the UK. Protecting employees' mental health is not as widely accepted and often the provision for supervision falls at the first hurdle for funding. Burnout is a chronic problem in the outdoor industry especially within the sector working with challenging youth (Natynczuk pers obs). Contributing factors include when organisational expectations are far greater than a workers ability to satisfy them, when working relationships with colleagues and clients become stressful as mentioned earlier, or when roles are under resourced. Some organisations provide supervision through their line management which might work in some cases through is less likely than independent supervision to provide a forum based on mutual respect, openness and honesty which allows one to be able to talk free of fear of an unfavourable job appraisal, or fear of not being re-employed when freelance contracts come around again. Good supervision gives an opportunity to unburden oneself of emotional baggage collected during

expeditions, to guard against transference and counter transference issues whereby emotions are transferred or projected between client and therapist.

Good supervision could leave the worker feeling competent, valued, capable, supported, enabled, and confident in their abilities with a sense of moving forward in their work. All of which is more helpful than being left to fend for oneself with the risk of taking unresolved and unexamined problems and difficulties home where partners, family and friends might understand and might be able to help.

Beyond the benefits to client work; where having a regular space within which to unpack the outcomes and process of our work, and where the emotional and psychological aspects of health and safety and client wellbeing can be fully explored, supervision has much to offer the Adventure Practitioner. As previously stated, supervision may have some contractual links with management, but it is **not** line management, and is therefore free to explore a host of potentially uncomfortable lines of discussion in safety.

In Summary, supervision helps the practitioner by:

- Providing a safe place in which to debrief
- Establishing clear contracts and boundaries
- Creating opportunities to discuss one's practice with another professional outside of line management
- Exploring what works well
- Exploring the supervisee's strengths, abilities and resources to move forward in their work and/or cope with difficulties
- Discuss any need for further support and to help staff become more aware of their own significance in influencing situations

When we think of supervision we generally think of: support, ethics, reflexivity, the normative, formative & restorative elements, boundaries, curiosity, and an enquiring mind and openness to explore & adventure. In sharing our curiosity we collaborate on a journey together. This includes considering new perspectives, critical thinking, generative learning, creativity and transformational thinking. In supervision, Michael Carroll () explores these valuable questions:

- Am I asking the right questions?
- Am I learning, particularly from my mistakes?
- What do I see? What do I not allow myself to see?
- Can I hold the tensions together?
- Am I using both sides of my brain?
- Am I doing what is healthy for me? What is my process in all of this?
- How does it all fit together? Can I combine and connect?

Supervision is a safety valve that helps locate and release the pressure that can easily build up within us. In a safe and supportive environment, it enables us to get in touch with our own material, to let go of 'baggage' we have collected on the way, to express what cannot be verbalised, to unblock our thinking so we can begin to see round and beyond a problem and reconstruct a way forward. This is an invaluable safety mechanism that prevents burnout, monitors our wellbeing and enables us to take proactive measures for ourselves.

The support a practitioner can gain from supervision is something akin to having a safety net in place. It provides room to rummage through our own thoughts and emotions without getting too lost, or feeling as if we will fall through the cracks. In offering a reflective space, supervision encourages us to stand back from the work, to separate ourselves from the entanglement of intense engagement with our clients, and look to our own needs as well as those of the client. This has a tremendous bearing on preventing burnout, or identifying practitioner needs and addressing them in good time.

Resistance to supervision within Outdoor and Adventure Therapy

Outdoor adventure instructors tend to be self-reliant and used to working and playing in difficult conditions where events have to be endured, some undergraduate students of adventure leadership even expect to have periods of burnout (Natynczuk pers comms). When burnout does come instructors will find employment outside the industry or take extended leave, perhaps never to return to working with challenging youth. There is undoubtedly a culture of accepting things as they are and being tough enough to see it through. Yet organisations that invest

in their employees and provide supervision see a very high retention rate for staff and it follows that we would expect less disaffected behaviour from staff, less absenteeism and presenteeism, and a better quality of adventure provision from cared for and motivated staff.

Natynczuk's experience of instructors working across the UK in various organisations with youth at risk is that supervision is not understood as being something helpful and is often confused with therapy. Suspicion and resistance to supervision is not restricted to adventure instructors (Cottrell 2002). Instructors who are clear that they are involved in facilitating therapeutic adventures might be receptive to supervision when it is part of being a professional in a better defined aspect of working outdoors (Adventure Therapy) whereby instructors are working within parameters of a therapeutic model which they understand rather than making it up as they go along because of some vague notion that doing adventures is good for personal development. Given that supervision is a requirement for working as a counsellor within the UK, the authors hope that when practitioners of therapeutic adventures are eventually recognised as being professional in a specialised aspect of adventure provision, supervision will be just as much of a requirement to practise as a current first aid certificate is needed to validate National Governing Body Awards for adventure sports leadership and coaching.

Where do we go from here?

As the field of Outdoor and Adventure and Therapy expands in all directions it is timely for supervision to become a natural and fully integrated component of this activity. The challenge that lies before us is twofold: to develop new models of supervision that best fit the needs and requirements of Outdoor and Adventure Therapy and secondly, to overcome the resistance that prevents practitioners from embracing this tool. These two aspects go hand in hand: Supervision is a concept and activity that can easily be adapted to suit practitioner needs, its flexible nature lends itself to a multimodal approach, and as such, perhaps one of the pathways to overcoming resistance is to take supervision out into the field and give it a go and by recycling the knowledge that comes from experience, adapt it and develop more appropriate bespoke formats or models. There are endless possibilities with supervision and its potential is only hampered by our reticence and resistance, lack of courage and vision.

The authors are extremely interested in any practitioner who would like to participate and contribute to the development and research into supervision within Outdoor and Adventure Therapy.

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