'Riding the juggernault': Tensions and opportunities in management supervision

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Introduction

Over the past couple of decades, the impact of neo-liberalism, globalisation and austerity on public services have influenced a move towards increased inspection and surveillance of professional social work practice alongside calls for greater management control (Lawler and Bilson 2009, Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2014). There has been a resurgence of counter narratives as we learn more about the significance of relationships in our day-to-day work and what this means for moving towards creating a healthier organisational culture to improve quality (Rønningstad 2019). We are also accumulating increasing evidence on trauma-informed approaches when working in difficult contexts (Easki 2020) and realising the potential that comes through working within flatter and more collaborative structures and processes which can better facilitate co-production (Jierk 2020). Within this context, professional supervision remains one of the main instruments of social work management and can be harnessed by managers in many different ways so as to promote their individual relationships with front line staff as well as providing a potential tool to mediate between staff and the organisations changing demands. More importantly, professional supervision has always been cited within the social work literature as one of the most effective tools for facilitating and supporting individuals to contain and work with the anxiety that naturally arises within social work practice and can be at the root of its many failings (Bourne and Hafford-Letchfield 2011, Hafford-Letchfield and Huss 2018). As we move to multi-professional, integrated arrangements in the UK, it has been important for social workers to be able to support and challenge decisions when working with other professionals (Department of Health and Social Care 2018). Through its different functions, supervision therefore provides an opportunity for managers to engage staff with the vision of the organisation and become an arbiter of the quality and standards of professional practice within it (Hafford-Letchfield 2006).

This chapter reviews some of the relevant literature and research findings on the specific features of management supervision and what we might learn from such a review for contemporary practice. Paying attention to some of the strategies and practice of managers in supervision systems, relationships and outcomes can help to challenge tacit or taken-for-granted modes of supervision as well as to challenge some of the negativity about the role that managers are seen to play and described in recent narratives of neo-liberalism (Lambley 2010). It is important to highlight the important functions of supervision that can be prioritised within management practice and the value given to creating a space for both managers and staff to reflect critically on the context in which they work and on the opportunities to lead change. Looking at supervision through a management lens highlights how supervision does not exist in a vacuum and at how wider organizational issues inevitably impact on the supervisory process. Giddens (1990, p. 53) used the term 'riding the juggernaut', to characterise the complexity of institutional frameworks and rapidly expanding information/ knowledge that comes with negotiating these. Cooper (2005) also pointed to clear tensions between surface and depth issues in social work often ignored in any ensuing critiques of social work practice following critical incidents. Cooper highlighted how managers may be only skimming the surface of some of the anxieties being contained in the organisation around the often difficult, complex and sometimes dangerous work that they and their staff are dealing with in social care. In this chapter therefore I will pay attention to some of the strategies that managers might use to mediate these uncertainties and to demonstrate balanced, nuanced and compassionate supervision practices which are also framed within maintaining and supporting the best standards of social work possible.

Not all supervision is concerned with conceptualised risks in providing care services. An enabling management style involves shared values, purpose and a collaborative culture as well as the sharing of authentic leadership - the value base of equality and empowerment underpinning social care which fits with this model of working (Haworth, Miller and Schaub 2018). It also fits with a strengths-based approach in the way that it values the voice of individuals and the experiences they bring to directly involve them in decision making processes.

Practitioners need to be able to shape strengths-based practice for people working with adults, families and communities. This can happen if managers themselves model the behaviour they want practitioners in the organisation to emulate, by behaving in a way that is aligned with the strengths-based practice – so as to cultivate and reinforce a culture and ethos that is relationship based and strengths-based (Department of Health and Social Care 2019). As far back as the 1960s, Winnicott, talked about creating a holding environment in which staff feel safe and supported in carrying out their work, and in which in turn benefits service users served by staff who feel well cared for (Winnicott1965). Such containment refers to meeting the basic needs of, and providing physical care and safety for, the people within the environment. Using both structure *and* support managers provide a lynchpin for working in the organisation in a way that is as predictable as possible organising roles and responsibilities, involving people and affirming their contribution. These should also be combined with support that includes kindness as the basis of a structure that fosters predictability and control.

Managers, managerialism and marketization of care services

The social work literature has been resplendent in its numerous critiques of the impact of managerialism and the extensive marketization of care services (Clarke and Newman 1997, Harris, 2002, Tsui and Cheung 2004, Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2014). The introduction of traditional management and leadership theory into environments where uncertainty, turbulence and issues of inequality and power are at the core of most of its business have given rise to tensions for everyone involved (Lawler and Bilson 2009). Within this context, social work appears to be in a continuous state of fluctuation or always at the point of a major transformation (Higgins 2016). In the UK for example, serious case reviews and national reports following critical incidents in social work, have cited the importance of effective oversight of practice through skilful managerial and professional supervision (Stanley and Manthorpe 2004, Laming 2009) and have led to major reforms mostly in social work education (Social Work Task Force 2009, Munro 2011, Narey 2012). The response has also given rise to reforms which seek to standardise practice for example in the many 'Knowledge and Skills Statements' published in specialist areas

thought necessary to guide future capabilities for the social work workforce (Department for Education 2015, Department of Health and Social Care 2018). These have resulted in a process-driven approach (Wilson 2013) rather than emphasising quality and effectiveness (Higgins 2016a). This reduction of the complexity of social work knowledge and skills to a series of statements or their 'commodification' (Brancaleone and O'Brien 2011) creates the illusion that all is needed is more guidance and standards and managers to oversee their implementation. Beck (1994) referred to these processes as 'linear' learning. Higgins (2016b) has also critiqued the concepts of linear learning or so called 'objective process of facts' and 'right decisions' to reflect on what he sees as an uncontested and unambiguous approach to managing practice which is not always helpful nor authentic and can actually promote failure to translate findings into specific, realistic and achievable goals.

One of the more important features coming out of reviews of critical incidents and failures in social work practice over the last decade is the need for closer scrutiny of those working at more senior levels in organisations with statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults, and of accountability at this level (Sidebotham, 2010, Francis 2013, SCIE 2015). Contributory factors such as the difficult conditions faced by practitioners working with complex and challenging situations in social care, together with criticisms about the decision-making and practice of front-line practitioners and their supervising managers in a range of professions for their failings to adequately safeguard vulnerable people in the front line are also being challenged (Laming 2009, SCIE 2015). Poor working conditions on the frontline of services, in which inadequate support for social workers, poor communication and even antagonistic relations between social workers and managers have to some extent worked against the capacity of managers to lead and manage services (Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2014). Sidebotham et al. (2010) for example in their study of learning from Serious Case Reviews recommended that engaging practitioners, and indeed organisations, with the process needs to be done in a constructive and supportive manner including effective mechanisms for feedback and debrief. The nature of the process can also feel threatening to organisations which may have an

internal agenda to protect themselves hence quality internal systems analysis may not occur. Further the emotional impact of Serious Case Reviews on practitioners, and the need to support professionals through the process, so that they are able to learn from it places dual emphasis on learning and support being clearly embedded in any process.

All these issues point towards the need for continuous assessment and development of management skills and the opportunity for managers to be adequately supported for providing good quality supervision. In summary, management supervision is one of the most significant and meaningful ways in which managers can gain insight into the everyday work of social work staff, maximise the potential of different stakeholders, manage the process of delegation and monitor and evaluate performance on behalf of the organisation (Bourne and Hafford-Letchfield 2004). This goes hand in hand with a more compassionate and ethical approach (Hafford-Letchfield 2019).

Finally, Carpenter et al. (2012) found strong links between supervisory support and actual turnover and retention rates in social care and drew conclusions that good supervision can help workers to stay in their jobs, given that leavers often cite poor supervision as a reason for having left. This latter point is crucial when we think about the challenges facing the social work workforce (Wermerling 2013). The combination of effective supervision arrangements, together with a suitable working environment, manageable workloads, supportive management systems and access to continuous learning, will help to ensure that social workers are able to provide good and responsive services for children, adults and families. By creating these conditions, employers will help to provide a setting in which social workers choose to work and remain. The UK Government set out its vision to develop a confident, skilled and capable profession which has received the best training; is supported through a clear, practice-based career pathway to enable progression from practitioner to supervisor to principal social worker or other senior practitioner or leadership roles; and has opportunities to specialise in key areas of practice and improve outcomes for people (Department of Health and Social Care 2018).

It is easy to forget that managers themselves may experience unmanageable workloads and unmet needs for support and continuing professional development (Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2014). Supervisors have reported that critical reflection and power issues were rarely considered within the context of their own supervision with senior managers despite the desire for a more open dialogue. Supervisors own supervision tended to focus on administrative aspects and modeling from their own managers is even more desirable (Bogo and Dill 2008). Experienced supervisors stressed the importance of receiving supervision themselves despite their knowledge particularly in respect of clinical decision making, critical thinking, parallel processes and personal issues related to using their power and authority.   However, they felt that these opportunities were rarely available to them (Bogo and Dill 2008).

Demarcating management and leadership

As seen in the previous chapter on leadership and supervision (Lawler 2020), there is a demarcated process of interpersonal influence when talking about the differences between management and leadership (Alvesson and Jonsson, 2016). Interpersonal leadership includes a wide variety of behaviors centering on the relationship between the manager supervisor and the supervisee, such as listening, discussing and providing feedback (Rønningstad, 2019). Rønningstad's research found that managers and supervisees or subordinates experienced managers' characteristics and behaviours *as* leadership, viewed leadership in relational terms, and characterized it as personable, emphatic, and showing engagement. These characteristics linked to their managers' interpersonal behaviours such as chatting and answering questions. This experience of supervisees who saw their supervising managers as leaders, illustrates this integration between management behaviours and leadership characteristics. Other examples given by Rønningstad (2019) included possession of knowledge, the evaluation of the quality of supervisees work and the combination of administration and decision making. What was stressed within these research findings was the importance of managers' reality or meaning-making influence which was found to be valuable in offering a structure for the supervisee's work and gave supervisees a frameworks within which to operate. Rønningstad (2019) concluded that it was these management structuring and

controlling actions that were motivating from the supervisees' perspective as it offered a means of acknowledging their contributions and provided feelings of security.

An unambiguous, clear, authoritative approach with clear expectations and willingness to help suggested in this study has been born out in government guidance:

Practice supervisors should strike a balance between employing a managerial, task focussed approach and a reflective, enabling, leadership style to achieve efficient day-to-day functioning (Department for Health and Social Care 2018, p.11).

In conclusion, Rønningstad's (2019) findings illuminate how management behaviours such as deciding, controlling, and structuring the work create arenas for leadership and how these arenas vary with the standardization of work tasks. The findings connect employees' leadership experiences to their need for management, and thus challenge the assumption that management tasks are a hindrance to leadership in the public welfare sector.

What 'works' in managerial supervision and its different functions?

The remainder of this chapter will look at some of the functions of supervision which have come to be known as the hard and soft knowledge and skills in the context of the literature providing evidence on what is working well or might work better.

Administrative functions and the use of power and authority

Managers should be able to explain to practitioners the full legal, regulatory, procedural and performance framework within which they operate and be accountable for their work within it. Structured supervision can provide opportunities for staff to give and receive constructive feedback on their performance and to respond by recognising and commending hard work and excellent practice so as to support the social worker build confidence in their practice as well as to challenge complacency and holding poor practice to account.

Abraham and Vinarski-Peretz (2010) have advocated the use of skills such as diplomacy, tact, persuasiveness by means of argument or entreaty by which socially skilled leaders are likely to design and shape healthy work relationships in their organizations and appropriate use of authority. They assert the value in these activities and associating costs with the investment in such skills for example, increased productivity, quality and financial returns. Central to the supervisory role is the way in which power and authority are understood and used as supervisors balance organizational and administrative oversight with their commitment to the empowerment and professional development of frontline staff (Bogo and Dill 2008).

Some research has found that front-line workers will engage in tactics to bend (or sometimes break) program rules if they view that policies and procedures are misaligned with service user needs (Borry and Henderson 2020). Similarly, Bogo and Dill (2008) suggest that exercising administrative functions are crucial to encompassing accountability for workers' practice including those made which involve life-changing decisions for service users and the means by which the organization takes responsibility for these. Managers as supervisors have to account for such controversial decisions to the public and in particular, senior managers need to account for decisions that result in negative consequences (see also Cooper 2005). According to Kadushin and Harkness (2020), using authority is legitimized in collaboration with directives to frontline workers.

Rai's (2013) research into management in long term care facilities suggests that staff want a certain amount of control exercised by upper hierarchal levels for direction, guidance, and coordination of different activities. His findings assert that both centralization and formalization of control can be positively correlated with job satisfaction and suggests that the use of rules and procedures maybe healthy for the organization in these circumstances Further, Rai considers the Weberian formulation of bureaucracy, in which centralization and formalization may be positively correlated with each other and the two different forms of control used simultaneously. Rai (2013) concluded that hierarchy of authority and rules and procedures are essential for the smooth functioning of the organization. The findings from this study reveal that bureaucracy may not always be bad for all organizations. In the long-term care

environment, staffs' perception of senior authority of and the rules were positively related and served to enhance satisfaction for them. This also served to minimize role conflict by the communication of clear expectations.

The way the supervisor negotiates and demonstrates this power and authority affects the supervisor/supervisee working relationship through in initial contracting and through their work together. There is a tension between the motivation and desire supervisors experience to be supportive, empowering and respect or when faced with instances where they need to set limits and hold workers accountable to organizational and professional expectations.

Research conducted by Bourne and Hafford-Letchfield (2004) looked at *how* managers actually conveyed expectations and mediated organizational culture. Organizational culture is commonly understood as "the way we do things around here". Handy (1976 p.176) argues that 'deep-set beliefs' about the way work should be organized and how authority should be exercised, and people rewarded and controlled are all parts of the culture of an organisation. Front-line managers have a key role in mediating organisational culture through the way in which they manage their staff, reward and control them and the extent to which they allow flexibility and initiative or expect obedience or compliance. Managers in Bourn and Hafford-Letchfield's study used devices such as the frequent use of humour, somewhat ironic apologies or other tactics for diffusing conflict and aggravation or for gaining compliance with the implementation of otherwise unwelcome procedural changes. For example, managers often used the pronoun "we" as in "We need to…" or "I need you to …", clearly indicating that they were talking on behalf of the organisation and reflecting some of the authority behind their supervisory role or they distanced themselves from the task required by indicating a lack of ownership so that the request was seen as cosmetic rather than a real meaningful 'demand'. This enabled them to assert a demand without any further explanation or sense of accountability – but nevertheless this was a 'rule' which required compliance. Such tactics were used to reduce tension around issues such as time management and implementation of new policies, suggesting a 'we're in this together' and 'it has to be done' stance. However, many settings are likewise characterized by continuing policy and

guidance, which renders the role of the supervisor challenging. Bogo and Dill's (2008) metaphor of 'walking the tightrope' (p.147) which accurately depicts this rebalancing of support with agency demands. They suggested that managers do not generally perceive themselves to be agents of organizational change but rather, more like conduits, or messengers between senior managers and frontline workers. Organizational culture is therefore a powerful and determining factor related to how power and authority issues are played out in supervision.   In research done by Bogo and Dill, participants identified a 'culture of fear' (p.148), seen in defensive and angry reactions to cases portrayed in a negative light in the media and thus reinforcing the message that accountability is the predominant driver in the supervisory relationship. Supervisors also reported that critical reflection and power issues were rarely considered within the context of their own supervision with senior managers despite the desire for a more open dialogue. Supervisors own supervision tended to focus on administrative aspects and modeling from their own managers was seen as desirable. Experienced supervisors stressed the importance of receiving supervision themselves despite their knowledge particularly in respect of decision making, critical thinking, parallel processes and personal issues related to using their power and authority.   However, they felt that these opportunities were rarely available. The sharing of authority through delegation of tasks and diffusing of power through this process has been suggested as one tactic (Conaway 2019).

Supervision strategies that enhance relationships with supervisees

As already stated, supervision offers a positive place where feelings of distress and anxiety can be expressed and the worker given appropriate support, Conaway (2019) found that trust was a feature of those supervisors sharing authority with supervisees in the belief that this promoted worker competence in decision making. Trust was also seen as a feature in unique relationships except where there were competency issues. Given that many supervisors have to trust in the information given and its accuracy, Conway found that the lack of trust influenced supervisor's interactions with supervisees and erode the capacity to develop an open and honest relationship.

As discussed earlier, hierarchical, competitive, power-based relationships discount the knowledge of the social worker and ignores larger social and political contexts (Tsui 1997, Hair and O'Donoghue 2009). Hair and O'Donoghue argue for a social constructionist lens which they say can help to shape supervisory relationships and thereby encourage transparency, collaboration, and an exchange of ideas. They also suggest that this can be strengthened when the supervisor is coming from a position of unknowing and curiosity. Similarly, Lusk et al. (2017) highlight the importance of incorporating the supervisee's cultural orientation, values and social position into the practice of social work supervision in view of the profession becoming more diverse and the requisite for culturally competent and effective practice. They suggest that the incorporation of critical analysis of privilege, power and intersectionality in both supervision *and* practice is one way to address the supervisor-worker relationship which can be fraught, with power differentials and distorted supervisory styles based on privilege. Asserting that the cultural humility is at the foundation of critical cultural competence. Lusk et al. (2017) therefore suggest taking steps to level the supervision relationship and to take steps to reframe this more in the terms of a peer professional partnership. This echoes the earlier theme of organisational culture, where the tone of supervision can mimic the organizational culture and becomes more didactic and thus nullify the rich intellectual discourse that supervision should reinforce. Lusk et al. (2017) also refer to managers who themselves may be from traditionally oppressed or marginalized groups. Such managers may have been acculturated to the dominant culture and traditional management styles and which may lead to acceptance and incorporation of dominant values and worldviews or be worried about how they are perceived. Their findings from a survey of 262 social workers to assess their experiences with their workplace supervisors found room for improvement in how supervisors are able to respond to cultural diversity and appreciate and respect cultures and identities over business imperatives. Building further on the strengths-based approach stressed at the beginning of this chapter, it is reiterated that recognising how the culture and identity of social workers are among the person's best assets will enable managers to operate from the perspective that the supervisee is already well trained,

competent, and ethical and that their role is to inspire, guide, and focus the work rather than to find fault. Further, Lusk et al. (2017) found a managers belief that the supervisee is capable and qualified provides the potential for to create an atmosphere of trust, safety, and shared leadership.

In an exploration of the use of compassion in practice supervision, Hafford-Letchfield (2019) utilised Nussbaum's (2017) seven dimensions of compassionate leadership to identify what can be used to support good social care practice. These included:

1. Attentiveness - to show an interest in others during a personal encounter.

2. Active listening – stimulating the person to tell their story and share emotion.

3. Naming of suffering – acknowledging what is going on, encouraging expressions of loss, paraphrasing a person's experiences and recognising the significance of these. This can be done both with the experiences of staff and people with lived experience.

4. Involvement by sharing emotion and establishing mutuality and trust so the person feels safe.

5. Helping and demonstrating an urge to be of value through one's actions.

6. Being present both physically and emotionally and noticing what is important to the person.

7. Having an understanding of suffering and loss and the emotions that go with it that draws on professional skills of inquiry and knowledge to promote these.

Hafford-Letchfield (2019) also drew on research by (Yuill and and Mueller-Hirth 2019) which involved social workers describing their 'compassionate self'. The 'compassionate self' is relevant to all professional caring roles. It may be formed early in life when recognising the suffering of others. It can also emerge from a disenchantment with a previous work life where one goes on to seek greater meaning and purpose to make a meaningful difference to the lives of others. For example, sometimes people change direction and follow a career in caring – a career which involves using skills such as counselling and therapeutic techniques.

Yuill and Mueller-Hirth's research revealed that despite the presence of some demoralising and damaging factors at work, where staff positively framed compassionate moments, and reflected on these, it made their job worthwhile. This positive reflection acted as a buffer against other less welcome demands in the job and kept people in the profession against the odds. Supervisors can support staff to balance job related demands with positive factors and to reflect on the impact compassionate moments have on them and the people they work with.

Hafford-Letchfield (2019) suggests that if people observe the systems they work in to be careless, with little social or emotional support, they may be reluctant to perceive themselves as a part of that organisation and seek other employment. They may also be less likely to engage in compassion or in exercising compassionate leadership. West et al. (2017) published evidence from the NHS which suggested that hierarchical and top-down approaches to leadership are ineffective ways of managing in care organisations. Leaders who model a commitment to high-quality and compassionate care were shown to have a profound effect on clinical effectiveness; service user's safety and experience; the efficiency with which resources are used and the health, wellbeing and engagement of staff.

Understanding and respecting dignity at work has been defined by Hodson, (2001) as 'the ability to establish a sense of self-worth and self-respect and to appreciate the respect of others (p.3). Manager supervisors have an important influence and through this can model and encourage dignity; resistance and resilience. Hodson talks about the idea of *organizational citizenship* where people pursue meaning and social relations at work. Being able to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of dignity is important for leading effective compassionate care services. Respecting the dignity of both people with lived experience and staff is important so as not to cause contradictions in the care environment. Staff dignity is as a critical factor in the development of healthy workplaces, work-life balance and quality services.

Enabling coping, compassion and resilience

At a micro level, compassion fatigue is a recognised phenomenon that may occur when social care professionals experience vicarious trauma related to the repeated

exposure of working with people who experience traumatic events (Figley 1995). This can negatively affect people's personal and/or professional lives, coping capacity, and result in a decreased sense of accomplishment. This can negatively impact the capacity of staff to support the wellbeing of people with lived experience and may also increase staff turnover. Managers will need to consider the risk factors for staff that may be have little experience in working with trauma, or have their own history of trauma which may surface when they are exposed to traumatic events within their work. Getting to know staff well and recognising and fostering compassion is important (Yuill and Mueller-Hirth, 2019). Conaway (2019) and Hafford-Letchfield (2014, 2019) have both referred to the need for managers to also be able to work with the diversity of front-line staff identities and appreciate how these interact in complex ways that might also in turn differentially shape service users experiences making these susceptible to discretionary decision-making that may result in divergent "treatments" even where there is a strong evidence-base. Mosely et al. (2019) further argues that combining a learning approach with a social work perspective that utilises research alongside relationships, allows for individual interpretation, and the organizational realities will only be effectively done when organizations are open to learning, not held at knifepoint (see also Conaway, 2019).

There is significant evidence of inequalities in opportunities for career progression and in the development of leadership more generally for people from diverse backgrounds. Factors include ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual identity and disability (Hafford-Letchfield 2011, Spillet 2014, Ryan et al. 2016). The role of managers in nurturing staff from diverse communities to bring something unique to organisations, can make a contribution at many levels and can give a sense of achievement to individual staff as leaders in making a difference to their community (Spillet 2014, p 34). Supervisors have a significant role in enabling discussions that promote equality and in providing opportunities and support to overcome barriers to taking up leadership opportunities. Compassionate managers take time to understand people's individual lives and experiences, to support them to identify their interests and make the most of leadership development opportunities (Hafford-Letchfield 2019).

To help develop resilience, Bourassa's (2012) study of nine social workers in adult safeguarding identified some protective factors for managers to be aware of in their supervision practice with staff experiencing challenges. Bourassa found workers with good training, that equipped them with knowledge and skills to make sense of the situations they were dealing with, were able to:

- Create boundaries, for example between their personal and work life and recognising the importance of recognising the roles of other professionals.

- Provide co-worker support such as initiating peer groups that openly discussed the signs of compassion fatigue and provided opportunities to discuss issues in a safe non-confrontational environment.

- Initiate self-care strategies such as taking exercise and holidays.

Bogo and Dill (2008) have also highlighted the importance of supervisors own professional development. Supervisors identified the value of experience and how they tended to more self-conscious about their perceived power and authority over staff members, which then became more integrated as they grew with experience and developed a more assertive style of working. Collaborative models require skillful practitioners able to engage and work with service user in a way that shares and does not abdicate power.

Again, many of the managers in Bourn and Hafford-Letchfield's study (2004) whilst very skilled in active listening and clearly committed to a participatory style of supervision, succumbed to demands and pressures such as inputting data into their laptops during supervision meetings and to collect information for auditing purposes and these diversions prevent managers from practically offering space for more reflective discussion and so inevitably impacts on the effective management of emotion in the workplace and ultimately affect staff morale. Busy managers need skills in balancing organisational and administrative oversight with a commitment to the empowerment of their staff and service.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused specifically on some of the unique functions and challenges for managers supervising social workers and has drawn on some of the relevant literature to make some distinctions here. Overall, the findings point to the central importance of relationships in supervision and the ability to create a supportive space for discussion and reflection and to balance these with other tensions encountered by supervisor managers which also talk to the different supervisory functions commonly described in the literature (Kadushin and Harkness 2002, Morrison 2006). As we learn more about what contributes to good relationships and thus organizational culture, one such tension is to ensure that staff support and development needs do not become more peripheral in the context of pressures on resources and the drive towards greater performance measurement and increasing management surveillance. These inevitably impact on the degree of trust and professional confidence within the supervisory relationship and will have a direct impact on their practice, service quality and the experiences of service users.

Investment in a manager's own supervision as they develop and cultivate their management roles can grow with experience to facilitate a more assertive style of working so that they can work in a way that shares but does not abdicate power. As will have been rehearsed many times within the contributions to this handbook, supervision is traditionally seen as having three functions: administrative/ managerial (to achieve competent accountable performance); welfare and personal (to support the professional in work which may be complex and emotionally challenging); and professional development (to ensure staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, values and ethics (Kadushin and Harkness 2002). A fourth role relates to mediation (between the individual worker and the organisation, and between other professions). Good quality supervision incorporates learning and support functions. Giving and receiving positive and also critical constructive feedback can create an atmosphere of learning, self-improvement and strong sense of security whilst contributing to organisational objectives (Hafford-Letchfield et al, 2008; 2019). Rogers (2002) suggests that facilitation of learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist within the relationship. Kadushin and Harkness (2002) highlight the need for supervising managers to have a good professional knowledge of the

field as well as skills in coordinating work, setting limits and manageable goals, monitoring progress for front-line workers and creating a climate of belief and trust.

Despite the intentions towards good supervisory practice, however, research suggests that managers themselves are not only among the most stressed workers within social services departments but also consider themselves to be the least well-prepared and supported to do their current job (Balloch et al. 1995, Bourn and Hafford-Letchfield 2004, Department for Children, Schools and Families 2009).

Positive relationships, communication and informal and supportive interactions are essential riding the juggernaut' for effective supervisory relationships. Being valued, encouraged, positively reinforced and appreciated are important for job satisfaction. Open communication between supervisors and social workers is a key element of empowerment strategies and allows social workers to access resources, information and support in the organisation to get the job done successfully (Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2014). Upward communication, job relevant communication, information exchange and supportive relationships are thus empowerment factors for staff, enabling them to vent their feelings and express their concerns, views and perceptions of the work and articulate service user needs.

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