

Book Review

Robin Shohet, Ed. (2008). *Passionate Supervision*. London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 222pp, ISBN 9781843105565 £15.99

The back cover makes the statement, 'this book presents examples of good practice that will help readers to enhance their own supervisory relationships'. With this purpose in mind, Robin Shohet has brought together a selection of individuals across the supervision spectrum to narrate their experiences and to demonstrate their passion for supervision - hence the title *Passionate Supervision*.

The first chapter suggests that the reader's beliefs and concepts - their 'story of me' - create a box within which they function. The reader is encouraged to step outside of their box and explore other viewpoints and stories. The next chapter explores more traditional supervision ideas, such as education, support and growth. Following this, David Owen identifies the importance of reflection by the supervisee. Next, the reader is informed about mindful supervision, which is the need to be aware that we interpret information in a way that is based on our own experiences and beliefs. As a result there is a need to be mindful, and to pay attention to the situation.

Chapter Five is about the relationship with the supervisor. The development of this relationship as a new supervisor is explored in the subsequent chapter. Anna Chesner examines the use of action-based approaches in the supervision experience. For example, she discusses the use of artistic materials (for example, different cloths or plastics) for symbolic expression, with the supervisor and supervisee exploring what is happening and developing possible solutions using these materials to facilitate the discussion.

Next there is a look at the role of change within supervision and different ways in which it can be considered. Chapter Nine is about the use of supervision in the school environment, and the final chapter looks at some emotional aspects of supervision and their reasons for occurring. Reading through the various chapters, the reader ends up feeling that supervision has a purpose and that its purpose is hugely affected by the attitude and attributes of the supervisor. There is also a consistently repeated theme about being passionate.

The book can be read as a complete item, chapter by chapter, or the informative index can be used to dip in and out. Each chapter is nicely structured with a brief paragraph at the beginning giving an overview of what the reader is about to find and the authors' intention for the chapter. This was useful because having an idea of what is about to be read allows the reader to gain more from the chapter.

This book is an easy read. There are no direct references to residential child care, but many aspects of the book are relevant to the supervisor's practice. This is done as the different authors cover a very wide range of viewpoints, some of which may not have

been considered in relation to supervision (for example the use of drama therapy). The various areas that are covered are structured and written in a way that is suitable for people who have experience of supervision, as well as those who are beginning their experience as a supervisor.

At times, the writing does seem to veer towards describing the supervisor as a counsellor rather than a supervisor. It does not make it clear as to where the boundary between the two roles should be, and this would be my main criticism of the book.

There is probably at least one chapter that will resonate with the reader. For me, it was the chapter about using visual imagery to discuss and explore specific areas. These are tools that are used with service users, but I had not previously considered using with supervisees (for example, the use of art to help express oneself).

Would I recommend this book to myself? Probably not. This is because I do not tend to read books that are narrative-based (i.e. ones that tell a story); I prefer to have something I wish to find out about and will dip into a variety of resources. So I usually need a quick 'in and out' process, whereas this book requires me to spend time to read and reflect on its content. I have to admit I have found this useful but despite this, it is not a book I would have been drawn towards naturally. However, for the many people who prefer this approach to studying I would strongly recommend it. It will take you on a journey that will make you think about a variety of different aspects in relation to supervision. I would be very surprised to find a supervisor who, after reading this book, does not walk away with additional or changed viewpoints that will change his or her supervision and make him or her passionate about supervision.

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