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Do you have a supervision plan?

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Introduction

Māori experiences of supervision and supervision training in Aotearoa have primarily been provided from a western mono-cultural framework (Webber-Dreadon, 1999; O'Donoghue, 2003). A void still remains; although a range of new exciting Māori models of practice are now influencing the area of supervision. If supervision is the most essential professional relationship for a kaimahi; then in order for it to be a positive experience, it is also important that it be culturally appropriate. Quality supervision leads to the delivery of quality services to clients. Supervision can and should be a rewarding process.

Twenty years ago it would have been a struggle to ensure supervision for Māori by Māori. Today, there have been changes with some acknowledgement of the importance of Kaupapa Māori supervision in ensuring the safety, accountability and professionalism of kaimahi Māori. Much of this derives from recognition of the relevance and significance of a Māori world view and its impact on social work practice.

As kaimahi Māori supervision provides support and guidance for

our practice, it offers learning opportunities and ensures that we are accountable, ethical and professional in our practice. Supervision keeps us safe as practitioners.

However, it is acknowledged that in the first instance kaimahi Māori in the social services need to receive 'good' supervision. While ultimately this should be provided by Māori, this is still evolving and therefore a variety of supervision functions can and are performed by different people.

This paper looks specifically at how and whether organisations have developed a comprehensive policy on supervision with a focus on culturally appropriate supervision for kaimahi Māori. It offers:

- definitions of supervision,
- what is necessary in order to have culturally appropriate supervision,
- what is necessary in a supervision policy, and
- some of the roles and tools that can be utilised in supervision.

The objective is to provide kaimahi with some direction in order to develop a supervision plan for themselves, within their organisations.

Currently there is much debate about what is 'cultural supervision', with many organisations stating that all staff need to be receiving

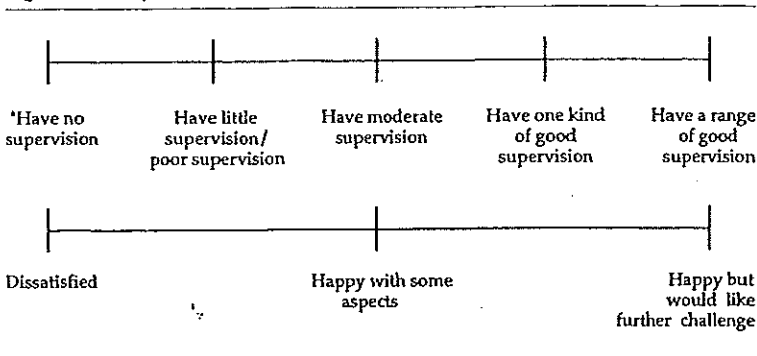
culturally appropriate supervision (whether Māori or Pākehā). While there are many facets to the discussion, including who should receive culturally appropriate supervision and who should provide this, for the purposes of this article culturally appropriate supervision is that provided for kaimahi Māori, hopefully by Māori (Bradley, Jacob and Bradley 1999). Hopefully this ensures the inclusion of tikanga Māori in the development of a model and the practices utilised within that.

While supervision is (supposedly) an integral part of practice to those in the helping professions, developmentally there still appears to be considerable work required in this area, as kaimahi describe a variety of experiences ranging from no supervision to very good supervision. The following continuum (see Figure one) allows kaimahi Māori to assess what kind of supervision they are currently receiving and whether they are satisfied with their supervision. If you are assessing your current supervision arrangements as a group, consider actively engaging in a continuum exercise to gauge where you are situated on the continuum. As well as assessing the current supervision context, this continuum should encompass the question about whether your current supervision arrangements are culturally appropriate. This continuum can form the basis for allowing kaimahi to discuss their current supervision arrangements and whether they believe that these are appropriate in terms of meeting their needs. It provides a foundation for then examining what needs to be changed or improved, and therefore to develop a plan for supervision.

These questions need addressing when using the continuum:

1. Do you have supervision and is it regular?
2. Are you enjoying your supervision?
3. Are you learning from and are you challenged by supervision?
4. Is your supervision culturally appropriate?

Figure one. Supervision continuum.



Definitions

While social service organisations attempt to define what supervision is, it is apparent that on a case by case basis, there is still considerable misunderstanding. This is not helped by people outside the profession utilising the word 'supervision' in completely different contexts (e.g. someone who gives orders).

As a part of developing a supervision plan, it is important that kaimahi have a clear understanding of their definition of supervision and what that means. Proctor (1988:4) defines supervision as:

...a working alliance between a supervisor and a worker or workers, in which the worker can reflect on herself in her working situation by giving an account of her work, and receive feedback and where appropriate guidance and appraisal. The object of this alliance is to maximise the competence of the worker in providing a helping service.

Kaupapa Māori supervision could be defined as:

...either a formal or informal relationship between members of the same culture with the purpose being to ensure that the supervisee is practising according to the values, protocols and practices of that particular culture. It is about cultural accountability and cultural development. (Note: definition adapted from CYPFS Risk Management Project, 30 June 1998: 11).

Wherever possible a good employer should be committed to ensuring that Kaupapa Māori supervision is available and offered within the organisation for kaimahi Māori. If it is not possible within the organisation then the responsibility of the organisation should be to work

with the kaimahi to find someone external to the organisation who can provide Kaupapa Māori supervision and ensure that cultural aspects of their practice are being addressed. This form of supervision should be in addition to other forms of supervision that the kaimahi might experience. There is also an added responsibility to ensure that a cultural component is inclusive in all aspects/kinds of supervision and not just left for cultural supervision or Kaupapa Māori supervision. In these instances the kaimahi might possibly know more about the cultural aspects of the issues being discussed, but a good supervisor will accommodate this in the supervision relationship.

Cultural supervision

The purpose of cultural supervision is to:

- build a worker's knowledge of Māori cultural values,
- provide a supportive context for kaimahi to manage complex cultural issues,
- ensure safe practice and culturally appropriate behaviour
- enable kaimahi to be clear about roles, responsibilities and accountabilities,
- define the parameters for cultural supervision as distinct from training and development or professional supervision,
- promote professional development by building skills, knowledge, confidence and competence in understanding Māori attitudes and behaviours in an area of practice,
- provide opportunities for the worker to appraise their responsiveness to Māori within their practice,

- support kaimahi learning by linking practice to cultural knowledge.

(adapted from Department of Corrections, Draft on Cultural Supervision, July 2001).

Cultural supervision has many facets. The goal is to assess how this impacts positively on the practice of the kaimahi. It is also important that there are clear goals in cultural supervision. It is not just a matter of meeting a kaumātua once a month with no form of feedback. Cultural supervision should be as professional as any other form of supervision though the approach (tikanga) or the model used, and the issues (take) discussed, may be different. Cultural supervision ensures that the worldview of the kaimahi is an integral part of supervision and not something that is simply left at the door. This may mean that at times the supervisee plays a lead role in ensuring that cultural values are introduced and maintained through out supervision sessions. It depends on the cultural knowledge of those involved in the supervision relationship.

The concept of 'ako' means both to teach and to learn and supports a relationship where both teacher and student can learn from each other. Transfer this into the context of supervision, and it offers a rich relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Another role in culturally appropriate supervision is that of tuakana and teina (generally translated to mean the elder and younger sibling of the same gender). In this context the terms could be given to the supervisor (tuakana) and the supervisee (teina). In Kaupapa Māori supervision, we do not always have appropriate kaumātua as supervisors but we might have someone of the same generation who has knowledge and wisdom and therefore may be a supervisor. The establishment and maintenance of such roles/relationships can provide a solid foundation to a supervisory relationship.

As supervision in Aotearoa/New Zealand continues to evolve, kaimahi and organisations are becoming more astute about the specific requirements of cultural supervision in terms of clarifying what cultural supervision is, what it entails, who can obtain/provide it and how it

contributes to their professional practice. Davis (2004) provides some foundation criteria that she believes are necessary when supervising kaimahi Māori:

- Actively encouraging the validity and legitimacy of a Māori world view.
- Negotiating an agreed set of ethical standards to be mutually upheld and followed in each session.
- Enabling the positive use of Māori customary practice and language.
- Providing opportunities for kaimahi to demonstrate their own ability to meet the needs of whānau, hapū and iwi.
- Negotiating and transforming identifiable Tangata Whenua models of practice that link kaimahi learning to all of the above.
- Attending to mutually agreeable, accountability requirements.

In some instances, particularly in Iwi/ Māori organisations, cultural supervision needs may be met internally. It is an organisation's responsibility to ensure that kaimahi are offered such opportunities. It should not be assumed that just because someone is Māori they will necessarily know how to handle situations in a culturally appropriate manner. Māori too may need to be supported and guided through a process of including cultural processes in their everyday practice. Good employers should ensure that such provisions are included in policy and in practice. This is as pertinent to kaumātua who work in organisations as it is to new young recruits. While in some instances the kaumātua could be the supervisor in terms of their knowledge of tikanga, in other instances they also need supervision in order to maximise their role as kaumātua/pakeke within the organisation.

A kaumātua was asked whether he received culturally appropriate supervision. He received regular supervision but because he was the kaumātua, it was presumed/ assumed that he did not require culturally appropriate supervision. He added however, that he was not of the iwi in which he was working and would very much appreciate supervision where he could talk about the differences in tikanga, whakawhanaungatanga and how

this could enhance his work practice. In some instances this kaumātua might well offer culturally appropriate supervision to others, but it is important to also ensure that his cultural needs are addressed in supervision.

Supervision policy

A supervision policy reveals whether an organisation is serious about having supervision and having good supervision. A policy also provides both a context and organisational culture to the supervision that is undertaken within it (O'Donoghue, 1998).

While most organisations would appear to have a policy/statement on supervision, there is a need to ensure the effectiveness of this policy in practice. It is therefore important to ensure that the policy is robust and inclusive of the following components/clauses.

A definition and purpose of supervision

Examine a variety of definitions of supervision before deciding what is appropriate for your organisation and the range of supervision you offer.

Philosophy of supervision and linkage to the overall organisation

Ensure that the philosophy of supervision links to the vision/ mission statement of the organisation as well as the practices of the organisation.

Link between supervision, job descriptions and performance appraisals

The policy needs to have a statement which aligns to all job descriptions and needs to ensure supervision is linked to performance appraisals. This enables kaimahi at point of entry to negotiate supervision arrangements and to discuss their supervision as a part of performance reviews.

Structure, timing and contract arrangements

The policy might also suggest the length of supervision and the structure or framework that encompasses supervision. Formalising the supervision process occurs via a supervision contract.

Resources for supervision

Within the policy there may be a

section which states the ability to contract supervision if necessary. This offers the kaimahi the opportunity to negotiate.

Functions of supervision

This ensures a clear outline of what supervision will achieve. It includes: management (service delivery), education (professional development), support (self care) and mediation (link between organisation and profession).

Recording

The policy should have a statement indicating that recording of supervision occurs at each session. It should state what gets recorded between the supervisor and supervisee and may include a framework for negotiating a contract. A number of service contracts now expect an audit trail of supervision sessions. There is an acknowledgement by contracting organisations that good supervision contributes to good and safe practice.

Conflict resolution

The policy should include how any conflict could be resolved. Even where both parties might believe conflict will not occur, it is still advisable that conflict resolution is discussed as a part of a supervision contract.¹

Roles and responsibilities of supervisor and supervisee

Clear outlines of the respective roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and the supervisee are needed in the policy.

Confidentiality

A clause on confidentiality should be included. Discussion about confidentiality within a Māori context needs to be included. While many service contracts and employment conditions discuss the importance of confidentiality, there can be aspects of confidentiality that warrant unpacking, in particular if working in an iwi/Māori organisation. It is important that workers do not agree to confidentiality without first thinking through some

¹ Matt Hakiaha (1997) has written an article entitled Resolving Conflict from a Māori Perspective and offers some culturally appropriate options for dealing with conflict.

possible scenarios so that they have a clear understanding of confidentiality from a Māori perspective (Selby, 1995).

Experience and training of supervisors
Supervisors are often allocated this role without any relevant training and yet being a good supervisor is a specialised area of work. It is important therefore for a policy to reflect the organisation's commitment to the training of supervisors and acknowledgement of their experience. Traditional Māori supervision would highlight the supervisory attributes of observation and analysis. This would therefore support the importance of body language and non-verbal behaviour as a form of communication and these traditional elements need to be considered as a part of training.

Evaluation and review of supervision
The policy should not only state the need for the supervision relationship to be reviewed on a regular and on-going basis, but the overall policy of supervision should also be reviewed and evaluated in terms of it being part of the review. If the supervisor is not carrying out their role responsibly there may be organisational policies and procedures to follow. Traditionally however, Māori would have to earn their role and hence their accountability was measured by a person's ability to execute their skill and knowledge and was regulated by those they served (Davis, 2004)

(Supervision Policy adapted from O'Donoghue, 1998).

Mana-enhancing supervision

This clause establishes the nature of the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. While the supervisor often plays a line management role there is still the need for mutual respect to be established and maintained between the parties. This emphasises the importance of relationship building in the early sessions of a supervision relationship.

Additional components could be included in a policy that is particular to an organisation and the range of service provisions it offers.

Supervisory roles

From a Māori perspective the role of supervisor has many facets. Bradley,

Jacob and Bradley (1999:4) discuss the road the Māori supervisee travels. At the beginning they may be the akonga (novice), then they progress to pia (learner) and onward to taura (student) before attaining the status of pukenga (graduate). They examine the traditional whānau, highlighting that there are already supervisory relationships which could also be transformed into a supervision context. They offer a range of roles such as kaiāwhina (helper), kaitautoko (supporter), kaiwhakahaere (organiser), kaiarahi (guider), kaiwhakariterite (planner), māngai tautoko (advocate), takawaenga (liaison or mediator), kaiwhakatutuki (implementor), kaiwhakaruruhau (shelterer), kaitiaki (guardian), mana whakahaere (manager) or pukenga (expert). They do suggest that 'kaiarahi is probably the most accurate because it refers to guiding, leading and/or showing the way without notions of being superior or bossy' (ibid). Selby (1996) also discusses different roles that supervisors can uphold, some similar to Bradley et al with additions: *Kaiākihāne* - encourager and mentor *Kaitautoko* - supporter *Kaiāwhina* - helper and encourager *Kaiwhakapakari* - an inspirer through their own strength. Someone who builds up your confidence, while gently reminding you of the importance of you and your work for your whānau, hapū and iwi.

Both sets of writers indicate that the role of supervisor is not a new one in the Māori world, though the roles they play can be quite diverse.

Māori models of supervision

Very little literature is available on Māori models of supervision. Webber-Dreadon (1997, 1999) has written about supervision using the 'awhiwhio' symbolism to describe a supervision process that could be utilised. She draws on the work of Judge Eddie Durie (1986) who discusses the cultural influences of the carvings in whare whakairo and how their symbolism can be used to explain practices for Māori. Symbolism is an important aspect of Māori lives and concepts that derive from a Māori world view and are utilised throughout supervision for example: Hongi/harurū, karakia, whakawhanaungatanga, wero and

kai to name a few.

Davis (2004) utilises the concept of tuakana/ teina as well as the concept of ako (meaning to learn as well as to teach) to describe the shifting roles from teacher to learner that can occur in a supervisory relationship. Such genealogical roles outline reciprocal obligations and responsibilities acknowledging the role model and guidance of older siblings and self learning and improvement from the younger siblings. Whanaungatanga is the binding principle in this context. Utilised in supervision this tuakana/ teina model expects rapport, trust, respect and hard work to be maintained. Aspects of other Māori models of practice (Whare Tapa Whā, Pōwhiri, Te Wheke, Whakawhanaungatanga, Poutama) are also evident in supervisory relationships. The future bodes well as further models are created, used and critiqued.

As a part of a supervision plan, kaimahi should examine the literature available, the practice models being used, the aspects of tikanga that they use in every day practice and consider how they might integrate aspects of this into their supervision practice

Government organisations have been grappling with the issue of cultural supervision in an attempt to develop policies/documents on supervision. Child Youth and Family and Community Corrections are two examples. Both draw on the works of the writers examined here. These organisations have considered the issues of cultural supervision from a broader perspective in terms of the range of staff that they have to cater for. As already stated some of these elements can be similar with a broader group of staff, however, there can also be distinctive differences for Māori staff.

There is a range of theorists currently contextualising their experiences of supervision as Māori. Their writing covers a range of practice settings and their work could offer a valuable contribution to Māori kaimahi in the area of supervision.

Tools for supervision

While Māori models of supervision continue to evolve, it is still important to ensure that supervision

can be conducted in the culturally appropriate manner. Even if you don't have a model there are components from a Māori cultural context that can be integrated into supervision. The utilisation of tools ensures that this occurs. Some examples are given here to assist in the supervision process, but these examples are simply the tip of the iceberg and warrant an article in their own right.

Karakia. The use of karakia is an appropriate way of opening and closing a supervision session. Karakia also allows both parties to focus on the supervision session. Karakia in its broadest sense can include Christian prayer, poetry and/or a thought for the day.

Whakatauki/Whakatauki. The use of whakatauki/whakatauki/proverbs can form an integral part of supervision used as a method of reflecting on current practice and/or practice issues.

Te Taiao/Te Ao Marama. Current supervision typically occurs in the office of the supervisor, whereas a change of venue can be more beneficial and effective to both supervisor and supervisee. This move away from the conventional office to places that encourage and advance supervision may include the marae, the beach, outside sitting under a tree or at another significance place. The use of the natural environment to dissipate tension and to connect with the complex issues discussed in supervision can be healing, cleansing, and can be used effectively to slow down the hectic pace of the supervisor and the supervisee.

Te Whare Tapa Whā Self-Care Plan. In supervision this tool can be used to develop a self-care plan for the kaimahi or can be used specifically to look at supervision and how it might integrate a holistic perspective (important for kaimahi Māori). Adapted from the work of Mason Durie, the dimensions are utilised to identify goals and tasks that the

kaimahi want to achieve within their lives and in their work to ensure safe practice and promote professional development and accountability.

Self-Care Plan	
Overall Goal: To have Kaupapa Māori supervision monthly	
Wairua Goal: Tasks	Tinana Goal: Tasks
Hinengaro Goal: Tasks	Whānau Goal: Tasks

As a part of the supervision plan workers should discuss culturally appropriate tools that could be integrated into the supervision session, a range of which have been considered here.

Conclusion

This paper is written to give kaimahi Māori, their supervisors and their organisations ideas that will contribute towards developing a supervision plan. All kaimahi are entitled to good supervision and the intent of many organisations is to provide this. However, there is often a difference between the intent and the practice. There is definitely the need for a much more focused approach or a plan by kaimahi and organisations, in order for good supervision to occur. For individual kaimahi, this article offers some strategies to integrate into their own supervision plan. For organisations it examines the importance of culturally appropriate supervision for kaimahi and encourages a plan as a part of their workforce development.

If quality supervision leads to the delivery of quality services then kaimahi Māori need to have the opportunity to reclaim the use of culturally appropriate models by developing a strategy for Kaupapa Māori supervision and culturally appropriate supervision across the board.

Ko te pae tāwhiti, whaia kia tata
Ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina
Haumiē, hui ē taiki ē

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