

Mentor, coach, consultant or supervisor?: defining the role

Receptive presence is hard, active work. We are not simply nodding and smiling, holding and comforting. We do demand.

(Daloiz 1999:246)

INTRODUCTION

Sitting opposite Lesley in the small committee room, I watch as her eyes filled with tears. My own sadness mirrored hers. This was the end of our journey together as supervisor and supervisee. Lesley was skilful in her role as workplace counsellor. She had worked for the company for many years as her role evolved into that of qualified counsellor. Within that role she was trusted to have influence with line managers when a client was stressed with an issue that emanated from their role at work. Additionally, she was renowned for helping those who were harassed at work. At any one time she could be dealing with many similar cases that tested her allegiance to the client, the organisation and also her emotional stamina. As her supervisor I worked with support and challenge to help her gain clarity when boundary issues threatened ethical practice.

However, increasingly I was aware that she was becoming disillusioned with the organisational culture, the pattern of change and its impact on both her clients and herself. She no longer felt valued by the organisation and was becoming burnt out. With her permission, I talked to her clinical manager about my concern for her psychological health during a period of leave from work due to stress. In this way I was able to work with the organisation, in my role as supervisor, to help them understand the pressures Lesley was encountering in her practice. Subsequently, Lesley and I worked together, during parts of our sessions, to plan a strategy that would enable her to leave the organisation for work that would be more fulfilling. In this part of our work I was a life coach, helping her to identify her unused potential and the possibilities for a change of career. My other role as a senior lecturer in higher education enabled me to have an insight into educational routes that might

help Lesley to gain more personal and professional fulfilment. Therefore, I was working both as a consultant and mentor, sharing my knowledge and experience of educational routes. As a result she undertook a course of study and was successful. Consequently, she gained employment as a lecturer in further education, a job that has given her a new outlet for her energy and still enables her to use counselling skills to facilitate the learning process in others.

My work with Lesley highlights the multi-faceted role of the supervisor within organisations. During our work together, had I been a mentor, coach, consultant or supervisor? It is clear that I was employed by the organisation to be her supervisor and the client work was not lost during those supervisory sessions, but to ignore the supervisee's psychological health and unfulfilled potential would have been folly. It could be argued that career development is the domain of the supervisee's therapist but I would argue otherwise in this case. From our work over many years together I knew her well, her strengths and areas for development. She also trusted me to be challenging and supportive in my feedback. I was also employed by the organisation and worked with three other supervisees within the same organisation. Therefore, I was aware of how the culture was impacting on her levels of stress. I was in a position to be mentor, coach and even consultant, alongside my role as counselling supervisor. At times it would have been easy to ignore the other roles and concentrate solely on the role of supervisor. However, this would have been counter-productive for Lesley, her clients and the organisation. A burnt out and dispirited counsellor will not do their best client work and neither will they add value to the organisational culture. So I had a duty of care towards Lesley, her clients and the organisation to help her to find alternative ways of regenerating herself. In this case that meant leaving the organisation for a different role in a new organisation, but it could also have led to leaving the organisation and working, as a counsellor, in a new setting. Alternatively, it could have led to Lesley remaining in the same organisation, in the same role but with renewed interest and energy for her work gained through more development and training and perhaps a move to a new team in a different geographical area.

In our discussions recently we deliberated over our past work together and came to the conclusion that as a mentor I had guided her along the path to further study and encouraged her to continue in order to gain more fulfilling employment. As a coach I had helped her to see the possibilities for the future based on divergent thinking. As a consultant I was able to give advice based on my own previous experience of working as a teacher-trainer in further education. In fact, even the day we talked I shared information about a book that would be useful for her work and study at Masters' level. However, during our work together as Lesley's supervisor, the clients were never lost and the therapeutic alliance was always at the forefront of our work. Professional boundaries were not crossed. It was only when she ceased to be my supervisee that we became friends, able to share our professional lives and

delight in one another's successes. Whilst we had been working together I knew I was her supervisor and the welfare of her clients was uppermost in my mind during our sessions. Nevertheless, looking back on our work, the role of consultant, coach and mentor were evident.

Therefore, in this chapter the three roles of mentor, coach and consultant will be considered in relation to the role of supervision within the organisation. The similarities and differences will be highlighted in order to work towards a more composite understanding of the supervisory role and how it can add value to an organisation. Initially this will be by helping the supervisee to work more effectively within the organisation, however, as the supervisor's profile increases they will find that managers acknowledge and use their skills more widely within the organisation.

THE SUPERVISOR AS MENTOR

The concept of a supervisor as mentor is plausible. Mentors have always been around in all walks of life yet recently they have become more visible. Mentors transmit wisdom. They take us on a journey through our lives and act as our guide. They help us to grow up and develop our identity (Daloz 1999). There is also a sense that mentors, as our guide, arrive at the right moment in our lives to assist us on the journey that we need to take (Coelho 1997). They may not be officially called a mentor but we recognise them as such by their ability to give us guidance on our developmental journey. Connor (1997:17) describes a mentor as a trusted and faithful guide who at different times may be called upon to be 'A facilitator; coach; counsellor; sounding board; critical friend; net worker; or role model.'

She was writing here about the mentoring role in the Health Service; the mentoring of young doctors to facilitate their journey through a challenging career. Mentoring is common in all professions and in education the role features strongly. As a new member of staff in my current post I was given a mentor who guided me on my journey through the labyrinth of organisational politics and the intricacies of assessment procedures. But he also provided a shoulder to cry on when I had a close bereavement and encouragement when my confidence faltered in my new role. Our joint understanding of the role of a mentor was clear. He was my guide when I needed him most but is now a trusted colleague and friend. Therefore, I have recognised my mentors in various aspects of my life by their ability to inspire, guide and aid my growth, both personally and professionally. I know that I have also become a mentor to others and this has often happened without me consciously having that title. It was not until I read the following acknowledgement in a book that one of my counselling skills students wrote, that I was aware of my mentoring role: 'I owe a debt of gratitude to Sue Copeland on whose course I gained the confidence to do so many things including writing this story' (Creese 2002).

We later talked about our working relationship and I felt immense humility that I was seen as a role model and mentor by a talented, black grandmother who herself had so much wisdom to offer. I anticipate that she will become a mentor herself, to those people who follow in her footsteps.

Mentoring is akin to supervising. A supervisor could consider becoming a mentor to the organisation. They would offer their knowledge, insight and perspective or wisdom, giving an overall picture of problem areas within the department or the organisation as a whole. Playing this role within the organisation would not be without its dangers. The possibility of confidentiality being broken, at various levels, would be there. However, a supervisor, in the role of mentor to the organisation, holds the collective information that organisations need to change and grow. When one departmental manager is the source of many clients' stress, a supervisor will be in a position to work with the organisation, guiding them to make changes within the department that will reduce the stress levels. The supervisor will have the knowledge, experience and skills to engage in this role whilst also maintaining ethical boundaries. The counsellor could also be in the position to engage in this mentoring role with the organisation, especially if they are very experienced.

This modern mentoring relationship, whether at a one-to-one or organisational level, is based on mutual, equal and collaborative learning. These features also apply to the coaching relationship and there are similarities between mentoring and coaching.

THE SUPERVISOR AS COACH

Currently, coaching is in vogue. In December 2003, the *Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal* (BACP) proclaimed on its front cover: Life coaching. The new kid on the block? The fashion for coaching extends to training for supervisors of coaches and I have a therapist/coach on my Diploma in Counsellor Supervision course. The word comes from all directions; life coach; executive coach; business coach, but what is it and what has it got to do with counselling, supervision and organisations?

Coaching is defined as many things: a conversation which is productive and results orientated; a learning experience in which patterns are observed and the stage set for new actions; asking the right questions rather than providing the right answers; finally it is about change and transformation. Zeus and Skiffington (2002:18) provide a useful comparison between coaching and mentoring (Table 1.1) which seeks to tease out the similarities and differences. However, the differences seem to be very small in comparison to the similarities of each role. Coaches work with emotions. In sports coaching much is made of the psychological mind-set of the sports person. Anyone watching a tennis player prepare for the crucial shot will observe the facial expression that indicates the schooling of the emotions to psychologically prepare for

Table 1.1 Similarities and differences between mentor and coach

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both require well-developed interpersonal skills • Both require the ability to generate trust, to support commitment and to generate new actions through the use of listening and speaking skills • Both shorten the learning curve • Both aim for the individual to improve his or her performance and be more productive • Both encourage the individual to stretch, but can provide support if the person falters or gets out of his or her depth • Both provide support without removing responsibility • Both require a degree of organisational know-how • Both focus on learning and development to enhance skills and competencies • Both stimulate personal growth to develop new expertise • Both can function as a career guide to review career goals and identify values, vision and career strengths • Both are role models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring invents a future based on the expertise and wisdom of another, whereas coaching is about inventing a future from the individual's own possibilities • Mentors are recognised as experts in their field • Mentoring is usually more specifically career-focused in terms of career advancement • Mentors usually have experience at senior management level, and have a broad knowledge of organisational structure, policies, power and culture • Mentors freely give advice and opinions regarding strategies and policies, whereas coaching is about evoking answers from the individual • Mentors have considerable power and influence to advance the individual's career and advocate promotion • Mentors convey and instil the standards, norms and values of the profession/organisation. Coaching is more about exploring and developing the individual's own values, vision and standards

Source: Zeus and Skiffington (2002:18).

the shot. Similarly, a footballer getting ready to take the vital penalty can be seen in comparable psychological preparation. Therefore, although coaching is about skill acquisition, there is also an attitudinal stance needed for transformation to take place in a person's life. So coaching is about learning in the widest sense of the word. Adult learners need an environment that is safe and nurturing so that they can work towards their own strategies and solutions. Here we could also be defining the environment of counselling. My first

counselling teaching experience was on a course entitled: Counselling Skills in the Development of Learning. In its purest form this course recognised the link between the use of counselling skills to enable learners to unlock their potential, to overcome their anxieties and old childhood messages concerning their ability to achieve. This is where some of the work of a coach lies. It is also embedded in the work of a counsellor.

Carroll (2003) is eloquent in his exploration of the similarities and differences between counselling and coaching. Williams and Davis (2002:5) also outline some of the reasons why they think that therapists are uniquely qualified to make the transition into life coaching. These include:

- being a skilful listener
- having the gift of reframing
- being able to suspend judgement
- having experience with confidentiality and ethics
- having the ability to seek solutions and think of possibilities.

So they also see the similarities between coaching and counselling and it is the skills needed in both roles where the biggest similarity lies. Zeus and Skiffington (2002:12) also outline the similarities and differences (Table 1.2). However, when exploring the similarities and differences between counselling and coaching, there is a gap that the role of the supervisor can fill in many subtle ways. As in coaching the power differential is less in supervision than it may be in counselling. The supervisor can also give advice in the role of teacher. Similarly, as in coaching, supervisors do not engage in therapy with their supervisees, but they focus on enhancing counselling practice. Supervisors also work with the future development of the counsellor.

So individually, supervisors can act as a coach to their supervisee when individual guidance is needed over professional development. However, the supervisor can also operate as a coach to the organisation. Supervisors are in a good position to engage in this role as they have information about the organisational culture gleaned from working with the supervisee and their clients. They also have the facilitation skills to ask the right question of managers who are open to change in the organisation. Working organisationally also needs courage and confidence. Good relationships are not forged over night. The supervisor needs to have a high profile within the organisation in order to engage in a coaching role. They need to be formally employed and have a tripartite relationship with the supervisee and their line manager. In this way the supervisor will gain a reputation for being skilled and ethical in their practice and a person who can add value to organisational processes, especially to the change process.

Therefore, organisations will notice that there is less difference between a coach and a supervisor than there is between a coach and a counsellor. This means that they will be valuable to an organisation. However, the supervisor

Table 1.2 Similarities and differences between therapist and coach

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both use assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapists are less self-disclosing than coaches, so the power differential is less in a coaching relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both investigate and clarify values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapists rarely give advice, whereas coaches are free to make suggestions, advise, make requests and confront the individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both are client centred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapists tend to focus on the resolution of old pains and old issues, whereas coaches acknowledge their historical impact but do not explore these in depth. Coaches are more inclined to reflect pro-active behaviours and move the person forward out of their feelings and into action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both listen and reflect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy tends to deal with dysfunction, either vague or specific, whereas coaching moves a functional person on to greater success and refers clients on for clinical issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both help individuals recognise the potential destructiveness of their actions and feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy tends to focus on past-related feelings, whereas coaching is about setting goals and forward action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both recognise strengths and weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy explores resistance and negative transference, whereas coaching attempts to rephrase complaints into goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both seek to situate the individual in a context of adult development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy is about progress, whereas coaching is about performance

Source: Zeus and Skiffington (2002:12).

as consultant also needs to be considered and this role links with the role of the coach within organisations.

THE SUPERVISOR AS CONSULTANT

The supervisor as consultant is consistent with working at an organisational level. Management consultants are known to originate from many backgrounds including human resources, training and development and organisational psychology. Consultants support organisational change. Yet they also help to solve problems, set goals and design organisational action plans. They are parachuted into organisations to engender a quick fix rather than work on problems that are deep seated. They do not engage in building more permanent relationships within the organisation but engage at a level that is about 'making it happen' (Harvey-Jones 1988:28). Increasingly, consultants

are being required to operate at a more individual level within the organisation. This type of role overlaps with a coaching role and once again Zeus and Skiffington (2002:16) usefully outline the similarities and differences between the role of coach and consultant (Table 1.3). Therefore, in the role of consultant to their supervisee, the supervisor will be engaged in a process that is similar to the teaching aspect of supervision. Indeed, in one organisation my supervisory work was labelled as 'consultative support'.

Yet a supervisor is well placed to operate as a consultant to an organisation especially if they have an in-depth knowledge of organisational culture and

Table 1.3 Similarities and differences between consultant and coach

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both aim to support organisational change • Both solve problems, set goals and design an action plan • Both can design and facilitate workshops and work with teams • Both can be seen as a quick-fix, remedial intervention for a targeted individual, rather than for a problem that is deep-seated in an organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching can be conducted outside of a consulting relationship • Consultants tend to be experts within a specific industry or business, whereas a coach's expertise is in the domain of conversation, communication, interpersonal skills and emotions. The coach does not have to be an expert in the business field • Consultants' services are information based, whereas coaching revolves around relationships • Consultants are frequently expected to provide answers, whereas coaches evoke answers from the individual • Consultants gather and analyse data, write reports and make recommendations that are frequently systemic and based on the needs of the organisation. They are rarely employed to deal with individuals during the period of transition and change. On the other hand, coaches work with individuals during and after organisational change • Consultants can tend to prescribe 'canned' or 'commercial' solutions, whereas coaching is more personalised and concerned with the individual's needs, values and goals • Consultants generally focus on work aspects, whereas coaching is more holistic and considers other aspects of an individual's life. Consultants tend to deal with specific problems, whereas coaches are more forward looking and always ready to create and take advantage of opportunities

Source: Zeus and Skiffington (2002:16).

an understanding of which department is resistant to change. They will straddle the line between mentor, coach and consultant, whilst still keeping their professional identity. That professional identity is important so that the focus of the work is not lost and currently the supervisory process, within the counselling profession, has a specific definition that could be open to interpretation.

DEFINING THE SUPERVISORY ROLE

The definition of the word supervision is controversial within the counselling and psychotherapy profession. Outside of the profession a supervisor is someone who has a hierarchical and managerial authority over others. There is a structured power differential and often the role has an appraisal function in line with the managerial function that it describes (Proctor 1997a, Carroll 1996). This is the primary meaning of the process of supervision as the general public understands it. Therefore, it corresponds to the dictionary definition (Williams 1992). Within the context of other helping professions such as social work, nursing, youth work, etc., the process of supervision does follow the dictionary definition as there is often a line management function embedded within the role. Similarly, in different professions within an industrial setting, a supervisor would certainly be someone who had a line management function that would include a disciplinary function when necessary. So, the different understanding of the supervisory role within an organisational setting can cause confusion to line managers outside the profession.

Within the counselling and psychotherapy profession the definition of the word supervisor differs from the dictionary definition and the common understanding of the word in an organisational context. Here supervision is an activity used to describe the process by which a counsellor gains support and guidance in order to ensure that the clients' needs are met appropriately (Edwards 1997) and that they receive at least a minimum quality of care (Coll 1995). The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) gives its own definition:

Counselling supervision is a formal and mutually agreed arrangement for counsellors to discuss their work regularly with someone who is normally an experienced and competent counsellor and familiar with the process of counselling supervision. The task is to work together to ensure and develop the efficacy of the supervisee's practice . . . It should take account of the setting within which the supervisee practices . . . is intended to ensure that the needs of clients are being addressed and to monitor the effectiveness of . . . intervention.

(BAC 1996:2.3)

This is a comprehensive definition including consideration of the context in which supervision takes place. This consideration of the context is important because it will inevitably influence the counselling process. The supervisor will need to be able to identify any organisational transference that is evident and help the supervisee to work with this effectively. Similarly, it is important that this definition outlines the experience and competence needed by the supervisor within this role. This signals to the organisation the standards necessary for anyone applying for this position.

Inskipp and Proctor (1995:1) also give a definition of counselling supervision as

A working alliance between a supervisor and a counsellor in which the counsellor can offer an account or recording of her 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 and creativity so as to give her best possible service to her clients.

This definition clearly states the collaborative nature of the supervisory alliance and the importance that alliance has in maintaining the counsellor's ethical practice. Therefore, any line manager who employs a counselling supervisor will be aware that, from this definition, part of the role of the supervisor is to ensure that the counsellor's practice is ethical.

The definition that Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987:34) provide is shorter and more allied to a training role for the supervisor, 'An intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person.' The educative function of supervision is part of the role of supervisor. However, from this definition a line manager may be confused, especially when employing an experienced counsellor, about the current competence of their employee.

Holloway's (1995:1) definition of the supervision process is more encompassing when she sees the process as: 'To oversee, to view another's work with the eye of an experienced clinician, the sensitive teacher, the discriminating professional.' Yet this definition is also allied to a training role for the supervisor, the role of a supervisor to counsellors in training. However, like the BAC definition, it ensures that the supervisor is a designated 'experienced clinician'. Thus, it is the organisation's role to ensure that the supervisor appointed for any trainee counsellor fits that description.

Definitions of counselling supervision abound and for an even more comprehensive exploration of definition see Tudor and Worrell (2004:43–48). Yet a definition that fully encompasses the organisational context of the work is needed. This ensures that a counsellor's line manager is clear about why they are employing the supervisor and the type of experience the supervisor needs to fulfil the role within the organisation.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

The organisational context of the therapeutic work can be where confusion exists amongst other professionals such as doctors, teachers and business people, when they seek to understand the nature of counselling supervision, especially when supervision is being 'marketed' (Proctor 1997a). Creating a succinct definition of counselling supervision within an organisational context is a difficult task. It needs to include a description of the supervision process and also give attention to the influence of the dynamics of the wider context upon the counselling work. So the following definition attempts to satisfy that criteria:

A working partnership/alliance in which a skilled and experienced counsellor regularly facilitates the other's growth in professional and ethical counselling competence. This takes place through contracting and working creatively with the client/counsellor/line manager dynamic, which is embedded within the organisational culture.

Such a definition will help counsellors to convince their line managers (if they are not counsellors) that supervision is a mandatory requirement for continuing ethical practice and therefore needs to be given priority each month. Counsellors have no choice, if they are a member of BACP, as to whether they engage in this process or not. It is not a luxury but a necessity, for life. However, the very word supervision suggests that the counsellor's work needs to be monitored, that even when qualified, they cannot be trusted to practise ethically without a more experienced person overseeing their work. It might seem that there is a surveillance culture within the profession and this will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3; nevertheless, mandatory, life-long supervision for all counsellors who are members of BACP is a fact of life.

Clear definitions help those people outside the counselling profession to understand the supervision process. They enable understanding to be established when the dictionary definition of the word is different to the profession's understanding of the role of the supervisor. This is essential when counselling and supervision is embedded within host organisations or when the trustees of counselling agencies are not counsellors themselves and therefore need to understand what they are paying for within their financial constraints.

From the discussion above it is clear that there is a difficulty around the definition of the word supervisor when it is used within a counselling context within organisations. So perhaps there is a need to use another word to describe the process?

IS SUPERVISION THE RIGHT WORD?

As discussed in the previous section, there is some agreement within the counselling profession that supervision is not the correct word to describe the process by which a counsellor or psychotherapist gets support and professional guidance (Proctor 1997b, Williams 1992, Zinkin 1995, Edwards 1997) and therefore some preference is given to the title 'consultative support'.

Increasingly there appears to be a move to use words such as consultative support, non-managerial supervision, facilitation, mentoring or coaching to describe the supervision process (Proctor 1997a, Edwards 1997, Carroll 2003). Such descriptions may be more easily understood in an organisational context but each one singly may not encapsulate any more than the word supervisor, the essence of the tasks that supervisors perform.

In any role, the title of the person performing that role carries with it not only the status, but also a basic understanding of what the person does within that role. As discussed earlier, the difficulty with the word supervisor is the hierarchical understanding of the word in organisational contexts. Yet in counselling and psychotherapy the supervisor is responsible for helping the counsellor to maintain competent standards of client work. How far they can take that responsibility depends on the practitioner themselves and their contract with the employing organisation. The organisation can decide to call the supervision process consultative support and therefore the supervisor and their supervisee have a dilemma; do they still refer informally to that process as supervision? Similarly, do the supervisors prefer to think of themselves as consultants? The answer lies with the supervisor themselves and their own view of their status within the organisation. The title consultant will give them more authority in an organisation that values 'expert' power. Additionally, the title consultant will help them to be more accepted within an organisational culture that views any outsider with suspicion and counsellors and their supervisor with even more scepticism than usual. Therefore, the supervisor can be proactive and give themselves a title that they know will be readily understood and respected within the organisational context of their work.

Counsellors, and by default, supervisors, are often seen as self-effacing individuals who do not pursue power for themselves but seek to empower their clients and supervisees instead. Yet this position is almost impossible to maintain if they are to survive in organisations where a source of power is equated with availability of resources. Even organisations whose sole purpose is to deliver counselling services to the public, will be managed by trustees who have to ensure that the organisation remains economically viable. So if supervisors are to be effective in gaining resources for themselves and their supervisees, they will need to consider their title carefully. The resources may be as simple as being paid for the supervision each month. Alternatively, it may be helping their supervisee to be paid an economic rate for the work that

they do. Being paid just over the basic minimum rate of hourly pay for counselling sessions belittles the work and undermines the counsellor's confidence in their role within the organisation. Therefore, for the supervisor to have any influence in a situation such as this, their title is important and will differ according to the nature of the employing organisation. For example, in a health service setting the title clinical supervisor would fit with the medical model prevalent in that type of organisation. Similarly, in a workplace setting a title which is an amalgamation of consultant, mentor or coach would fit with ease. In a voluntary counselling agency the title counselling supervisor would be appropriate for the work where there was an understanding of the counselling and supervision process that might also involve supervising trainee counsellors. However, there is a problem with a supervisor using a different title for each organisational context in which they work. They will need to be sure that the process they are engaged in with all supervisees, regardless of the organisational context, is consistent and could be described by the profession as counselling supervision. Even within counselling supervision there can be different types of supervision offered to both trainees and counsellors.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPERVISION

Hawkins and Shohet (2000:53) outline four types of supervision as:

- **Tutorial Supervision:** In some settings the supervisor may have more of a tutor role, concentrating almost entirely on the educative function, helping a trainee on a course to explore his or her work with clients.
- **Training Supervision:** Here the supervision also emphasised the educative function and the supervisees will be in some form of trainee or apprenticeship role . . . The difference from tutorial supervision is that here the supervisor will have some responsibility for the work being done with the clients and therefore carry a clear managerial or normative role.
- **Managerial Supervision:** This term is used where the supervisor is also the line manager of the supervisees. As in training supervision the supervisor has some clear responsibility for the work being done with the clients, but supervisor and supervisee will be in a manager-subordinate relationship. Rather than a trainer-trainee relationship.
- **Consultancy Supervision:** Here the supervisees keep the responsibility for the work they do with their clients, but consult with their supervisor, who is neither their trainer nor their manager, on those issues they wish to explore. This form of supervision is for experienced and qualified practitioners.

It is clear from these descriptions that the type of supervision on offer to a

supervisee will influence their perspective of what the process means to them. Elsewhere in this book I advocate that it is not good practice to combine the role of managerial and casework supervision (Chapter 7) yet Valentine (2004) maintains that to split both managerial and professional (case-work) supervision would be counter-productive within an organisational context. Whilst acknowledging the position of BACP on this point, Valentine upholds the view that:

the management supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that the organisation's duty of care to its clients is carried out, and that they therefore have a specific responsibility to ensure that employees are enabled to fulfil this responsibility. This gives them a right and a responsibility to observe or review the practice of their team members.

(Valentine 2004:119)

She goes on to stress that to add a secondary mandatory level of supervision creates another financial burden on the organisation. Nevertheless, research has shown (Copeland 2000a) that for line managers who are also supervisors within the same organisation, this dual relationship is constrictive.

CONCLUSION

New thinking is needed around defining the role of supervisor within an organisational context. Whilst a definition that is confined to the counselling profession will suit some supervisors who do not want to work organisationally, there is a need to widen the horizons of the work. The supervisor who is prepared to work with a wider definition of their role both with their individual supervisee and also with the supervisee's organisation will benefit all parties in the working alliance. The exploration of the role of mentor, coach and consultant has identified both similarities and differences with the role of counsellor and supervisor within an organisation. However, each supervisory dyad will need to decide what role their work will play within the organisation. If the supervisee becomes more aware of the impact of organisational culture on their client work, they will be useful, in a much wider sense, to the organisation. Similarly, if the supervisor is employed by the organisation on a formal basis they will eventually be in a position to offer their knowledge and skills to the organisation itself. However, this will need to be a gradual process as their profile within the organisation increases. Before that can happen there will need to be an understanding of the multi-faceted role of the supervisor by managers within the organisation.

Supervising in organisations: a multi-faceted role

Working within organisations can feel like a struggling octopus where each of the eight arms grapples with a different problem.

(Coles 2003:95–96)

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 the role of the supervisor was explored. Links were made between supervision and the roles of mentor, coach and consultant and it was argued that supervisors are an under-used resource within organisations. In a changing labour market they have knowledge and skills which organisations need. Yet they remain hidden, an untapped source of wisdom that is not utilised sufficiently within organisational structures that are rapidly changing in the twenty-first century. However, in this book I am advocating that a gradual approach to supervisory involvement is taken so that organisations become clear about the supervisory role. There is a need for a formal employment process to take place so that an understanding emerges of how the supervisor's knowledge and skills can benefit the wider organisation in the future.

Organisations are becoming less hierarchical, with structures that are flatter and more fluid. As the lines of authority become less clear, much more falls to the individual employee to negotiate, influence and persuade. Clearly, this work requires empathy, intuition and persuasion. In an individualistic society, the consumer wants to be recognised, and for the service to be personalised. This is especially evident in organisations like call centres where there is a need to be emotionally available to customers on the end of the phone every minute of the day. This is a relationship economy where the defining characteristic is ambiguity that requires immense skill to navigate. Employees and their managers need a level of interpersonal and listening skills to help them work with this ambiguity in order to avoid the stress that it inevitably generates.

In this chapter the nature of stress in all types of employment, whether

paid or voluntary, will be explored in order to understand, firstly the role of the counsellor within an organisation and secondly to outline the importance of supervisors within organisations and their need for formal employment status. Finally, a model of supervision in organisations will be outlined before a full exploration of each aspect of the model is discussed in Parts II and III of the book.

STRESS AT WORK

Stress has become an inescapable part of working life and a culture of overwork exacerbates the problem. Bunting (2004:177), in her exploration of the overwork culture, argues that:

Human beings have finite resources, physical and emotional and the overwork culture eats into them. For many, the result is illness: either debilitating mental conditions such as work related stress and depression, or life-threatening conditions such as heart disease. The health of the overworked employee is hit twice – first by working too hard, and second by not having the time to develop relationships, take exercise and pursue outside interests, all of which strengthen resilience to pressure. The cost to an increasing number of individuals is evident in the explosion in the number of days at work lost to stress, not to mention all those workers below the statistical radar, who resort to anti-depressants to keep going and whose lives are a frantic effort to cope.

In this type of culture there is the need for employees to be able to recharge their emotional batteries either within the work environment or outside with family and friends. Additionally, the emotional demands of work have increased dramatically over the last few decades. Counsellors and supervisors are not the only employees in organisations who are engaged in emotional labour; teachers, nurses, social workers, call centres employees and even the receptionist at the gym are engaged in emotional labour.

As I walked into the gym the receptionist was being harangued by a customer who was threatening to report her to the manager for incompetence and mismanagement of many aspects of the facilities within the centre. The customer was raging and threatening, both verbally and non-verbally. The receptionist was cool, calm and listening carefully, her face did not show her internal feelings. When leaving the gym I spoke to the receptionist and commented on her skilful handling of the situation I had witnessed earlier. She remarked that it was all in a day's work but her eyes filled with tears. I was struck by the emotional demands this exchange had made on the young

receptionist who was expected to subjugate her own emotions whilst the customer was allowed to vent her own emotions freely.

In the scenario above, I was a customer, not a counsellor or supervisor, yet I was aware of the skills needed by the receptionist to deal with the situation in order to ensure that the customer went away happy. In this situation she had no rights, only a responsibility to the customer on behalf of her employing organisation. Nevertheless, the situation had been stressful and no doubt she would be reliving it for the rest of the day, perhaps even recounting it to her partner at home that night. Therefore, the emotional costs of the encounter for this employee were high. Yet many other jobs are far more emotionally stressful and have always been so. The medical profession, teaching, the emergency services, to name but a few professions, have always been subject to high emotional demands on their workers. But when employees leave and are not replaced, the burden becomes even higher. There is little time for empathic responses as the practical demands of the role increase. As a result stress levels rise and line managers fear the worst, they are pushed from above and below. Their managers want increased productivity and their employees want to work in a less stressful environment; an environment where they have time to sit and talk to their patients or work with smaller student groups, giving individual attention when emotional blocks to learning are evident. In a service economy, employees want to be able to make a difference to people's lives. This includes counsellors too, yet often they are the employee who is brought in to reduce the stress levels within the organisation.

COUNSELLORS IN ORGANISATIONS

Organisations increasingly recognise that all employees need emotional support for the work that they do. Sometimes that recognition is driven by the fear of litigation, especially if the work is stressful, at other times it is driven by a genuine concern for the welfare of their employees. Therefore, a counselling service is instigated either by employing a counsellor directly or by engaging an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to provide a range of services, from debt advice to stress management courses, but which also includes the services of a counsellor. So counsellors become part of the emotional labour force. They have particular skills in enabling employees to become more emotionally intelligent and the cornerstones of emotional intelligence are self-awareness and empathy. Consequently, emotional intelligence can be defined as an array of non-cognitive skills, capabilities and competencies that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures. Emotional intelligence underpins many of the best decisions, most dynamic organisations and the most satisfying and successful lives

(Johnson and Indvik 1999). The requirements to raising emotional intelligence include:

- A desire to change;
- Self reflection (if a person does not know what is going on inside him/herself, it is unlikely he/she knows what is going on inside of others);
- Listen to the internal script that plays continuously;
- Develop emotional control;
- Practice empathy and practice active listening skills; and
- Validate the emotions of others.

(McGarvey 1997, cited in Johnson and Indvik 1999:85)

This list of requirements to change will be familiar to counsellors and within organisations their clients will have been developing the first three or four points in the list. The last two points on the list will be modelled by the counsellor as they engage with others within the organisation because emotional intelligence is often learnt by example as well as by experience.

Therefore, counsellors bring the particular skills of their profession that are useful in helping the organisation to become more emotionally intelligent. However, to fully utilise these skills it is important that counsellors integrate and become accepted as an equal member of the working community. Integration is vital. Without it counsellors will provide an individual service that does not give added value to the organisation. Nevertheless, integration into multi-disciplinary teams can be hard won for counsellors, when cultures clash. Organisations that rely on IQ rather than EQ will find that the counsellor cannot add value to their organisation because EQ is not regarded as a valuable commodity. But organisations that recognise the value of both types of intelligence will succeed.

In the early nineties I was a trained counsellor also working part-time in the capacity of an outdoor management development trainer with a large multi-national IT company. My task was to lead my team of managers in orienteering and outdoor tasks designed to develop the participants' skills in teamwork. In their organisation they were a team of highly intelligent employees who worked individually, solving complex IT problems. They did not integrate with one another during the working week. However, as the course progressed they had to learn how to interact effectively in order to fulfil their aim of becoming the winning team of the week's course.

Competition was a driving force, yet they could not jettison the team members who could not perform effectively in the wild as all team members needed to arrive at the final destination each day intact. Therefore, they soon realised that they needed to use skills of persuasion, empathy and active listening in order to enable all members of the team to perform each task successfully. When one of the team stormed off (I was to learn later that he

was the line manager, having stipulated that I did not want to know which person in the team held this role), they all pooled their collective persuasive skills to get him back on track. At that time the term emotional intelligence was not in vogue, nevertheless, my team members were learning how to access their emotions and to engage with one another on an affective rather than purely cognitive level. This led to their success; they were the winning team on the course. But before celebrating with the well-deserved glass of champagne they asked to have individual feedback about their emotional development during the course. We sat in the sunshine, cross-legged in a circle on the lawn. I gave them all feedback on their strengths and areas for development in maintaining their emotional engagement with one another in future work. I felt emotional during this process and showed it. My counselling work enabled me to be comfortable in this role and to model emotional intelligence at work. I was confident that this team would be more productive in future weeks and months and hoped that they would be able to use the organisation's counsellor for their further emotional development both individually and as a team.

Over a decade ago, as a counsellor and a trainer, I knew that developing self-awareness would enable employees to become more confident in their role at work. This is a task that counsellors now need to embrace with enthusiasm. Coming out of the counselling room and working organisationally rather than individually is vital if they are to be an added resource for the organisation.

SUPERVISORS IN ORGANISATIONS

Similarly, counselling supervisors can add value to an organisation if they are prepared to use their knowledge, skills and authority for the benefit of individual counsellors and also the organisation. For supervisors to use their authority there is a need for them to be aware of the types of authority available to them. Hughes and Pengelly (1997) outline three types of authority that mirror the types of power available to individuals working within an organisational context. First, role authority is an authority delegated to a position within an organisation so that the person in that position can do the work and meet the responsibilities of that position. A supervisor needs to have this formal position within the organisation in order to have role authority. Second, professional authority is based on competence within the role and can be gained through training. However, it is only manifested and recognised by being practised. Within an organisational context, the supervisee will recognise their supervisor's professional authority but their line manager may not. The manager is often unfamiliar with the competencies of a different profession to their own, especially if counselling and supervision is embedded within a 'host' organisation. Third, personal authority is the way a

supervisor establishes their natural authority within their supervisory role and communicates it to others. Therefore, all three types of authority are available to supervisors when they are formally employed within the organisation. How a supervisor exerts their authority, both individually and organisationally, will depend both on their personal style of working and its impact on the culture of the organisation.

Organisational cultures can be restrictive or enabling, a force for stagnation or growth. Supervisors are increasingly employed to work in organisational cultures and to be cognisant of their impact on the supervisory process. Additionally, they need to be aware of the impact of the culture on employees in general and line managers in particular. Along with their supervisee they will have information about how each department functions and the impact of the culture upon the employee's psychological health. This is information that organisations need to help them to grow and to develop a workforce that is both productive and emotionally secure. Counsellors and supervisors who have a high profile within the organisation can help to shape the culture. This is essential if they are to be an integral part of that culture. The scenario below illustrates this point.

A counsellor I talked to recently was engaged in a multi-faceted role that added value within a boarding school setting. She was engaged, not only in counselling on a one-to-one basis, but also as an academic tutor and targeted teaching tutor. She was also actively involved with the induction programme and with advising other tutors concerning student welfare. Additionally she was consulted on all pastoral matters within the school. Similarly, this counsellor was a member of a school committee that determined the developing culture of the organisation. Therefore, she was a valued member of an enlightened organisation that recognised the importance of her skills outside the counselling room. She was adding value, not only to individual pupils but also helping to shape the culture within the organisation. In doing so she was working actively in a preventative role, a role that enabled colleagues to understand the influence that organisational culture has on the well-being of the pupils. Additionally, she was modelling the skills and attitudes in all of the roles occupied within the school, promoting respect for others and a willingness to work with all the emotional aspects of institutional life. Her supervisor was assisting her to hold the boundaries between the roles and encouraging her to be actively engaged in committee work that shaped the culture for the future. The supervisor was not afraid to be actively engaged in this role because his formal employment by the organisation safeguarded his rights whilst also giving him responsibilities within that role.

Forward thinking organisations will be able to embrace the ethos of the counselling profession and use counsellors and supervisors to help shape a culture that enables all those within it to flourish. When the professional culture of counselling and supervision clashes with the organisational culture dilemmas can occur which will need to be managed. A full discussion of

this issue can be found in Part II. If a counsellor and their supervisor are encouraged to step out of the counselling room and be equal members of the community of employees, they will develop too. They will learn how to negotiate and not be afraid of the power of their emotional intelligence in organisations where emotions remain unacknowledged, buried in the debris of paperwork and deadlines.

In public and commercial sectors formal employment of supervisors is already occurring and systems are in place for auditing the quality of their work. Therefore, there is a need for formal systems of employment (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6) to become more extensive, leading to a management of the supervisory work (discussed in Chapters 7 and 8) that includes reporting back to the organisation (discussed in Chapter 9) and assessing the work that is undertaken (discussed in Chapter 10). Additionally, there is a need for formal termination of contracts of employment and new beginning for supervisors in organisations (discussed in Chapter 11). This process is ongoing in some organisations, but all organisations need to embrace this process with their counselling supervisors so that they become a valuable resource within the organisation. In this way the supervisor can exert all aspects of their legitimate authority in adding value to the organisation.

Formality in the appointment of a supervisor within an organisation is essential even for just one and a half hours a month. The process of securing this position will dictate the tenor of the work that follows. This means that the process needs to be significant for all parties in the working alliance: the supervisor, supervisee and their line manager. In many instances, however, when a supervisor is chosen, often only two out of the three parties in this working alliance are involved in the selection process. This can be either the supervisee and the supervisor or the supervisor and the supervisee's line manager. The best option is for all three parties to be involved, whether the process is formal or informal. A formal process of employment will fit organisations that are more corporate in nature and have stringent internal and external quality audit procedures. Less formal processes will suit organisations where collaboration and co-operative working are the norm. Whichever process is chosen for employing a supervisor, it needs to be fair and a detailed job description and person specification should be readily available for the prospective supervisor. When this happens, the possibilities for misunderstanding of the supervisory role in the future are decreased. When the post of supervisor is being advertised or offered within an organisation, the responsibilities required can be tailored to the needs of the organisation. If an organisation needs the supervisor to fulfil a wider role than one-to-one supervision of counselling work, they can specify that in the job description.

For some supervisors, extending their role within the organisation to act as a mentor, consultant or coach, might be an attractive addition to one-to-one supervision. However, the supervisor's additional responsibilities may feel threatening to the supervisee especially if the supervisor is new to them and

the organisation. It would be useful for an organisation that wants to make extended use of a supervisor in this way, to delay the additional work until the supervisor has developed a relationship with the supervisee first. Such duties will need to be written into the formal contract of employment forged between the supervisor and the organisation. Formal contracts are becoming more prevalent for supervisors working in organisations but it does mean that supervisors, working with many counsellors all working in different organisations, will have to contend with a plethora of contracts that could all be very different. So there is a need for a basic standard contract to be produced that can be adapted to suit individual organisations. Similarly, supervisors need to produce their own contract so that organisations know what their responsibilities are towards the supervisor. Both these contracts will form the basis of the relationships that need to be created between supervisor, supervisee and their line manager.

When a supervisor has received a contract of employment, they will be part of a supervisory rhombus that includes themselves as the supervisor, the supervisee and their line manager. Relationships within this rhombus can be complicated and will need to be fostered, along with good communication systems. For supervisees and supervisors, making such relationships with the supervisee's line manager may seem dangerous for the supervisor, with the potential for the breaking of the client's, and possibly the supervisee's, confidentiality. Nevertheless, these relationships are extremely important both to the counselling and supervisory process and also to the organisation. Counselling and supervision does not take place in a vacuum and relationships are even more complicated when the counsellor or supervisor have a dual role within the organisation. So clear systems for communication between all parties need to be developed to foster good relationships.

First of all, there needs to be commitment from all parties concerning the importance of the relationships and the part that they play in enhancing client work and organisational change. The systems by which ethical boundaries are kept need to be clear, including any reporting back procedures that are required by the organisation. Nevertheless, some supervisors will be reluctant to engage in making any relationship outside the supervisory dyad. They will be fearful that client confidentiality will be broken and they will also resent the extra time needed to undertake tripartite meetings with their supervisee and their line manager. However, this working relationship is essential if the client work is to be held safely and the organisation is to benefit from the supervisor's understanding of the impact of the organisational culture on employees.

When the supervision process encompasses the organisational context, the roles, functions and skills needed by the supervisor will expand. The formative function of supervision is concerned with the supervisee's skills, knowledge and understanding of their role as a counsellor. Therefore, within this function, it is important that the supervisor works with the supervisee

to enhance their knowledge concerning the influence of the organisational context on the client work. The normative function of the supervisory work is concerned with quality control in the supervisory work. As such, the supervisor and supervisee have a responsibility to evaluate their work together and feed back any relevant information that will be useful to the organisation. Once again, this links directly with a reporting process that maintains ethical standards whilst being of use to a change process within the organisation. Finally, the supportive function within supervision helps the supervisee to alleviate the potential for burn out when working with very distressed clients. It also supports the supervisee when working within an organisational culture that can be disabling. Therefore, the functions, encompassing the organisational context of the supervisory work, are clear and the tasks of supervision are the behavioural side of those functions.

For many writers, the tasks of supervision do not include the organisational context of the work. Yet Carroll (1999) is clear that the context of the work will influence the tasks in that they will encompass the influence of the organisation on the supervisory work. This will mean that contracts need to be three cornered and the extent of the boundaries of confidentiality stated including why and how information is released into the organisation. Similarly, another task for the supervisor is to help their supervisee to manage the counselling provision if that is part of their role within the organisation. Additionally, the process of helping the supervisee to care for themselves, within an organisational culture that is demanding, is a challenge for the supervisor. Finally, the task of enabling the supervisee to understand the culture and consequent parallel processes within an organisation can be daunting for the supervisor, especially if they are employed in-house and therefore subject to the same cultural influences. Engagement in the expanded functions and tasks of supervision within an organisational context will need the supervisor to have an enhanced level of skill to manage the process effectively. They will need to be able to negotiate, assert themselves, mediate, manage group dynamics and act as mentor and coach where necessary. Supervisors may already have these skills or need to acquire them in order to fulfil their expanding role as a supervisor within the organisation. They will also need to be disposed to working in this expanded role within the organisation especially when they are required to report back concerning the supervisory work and its impact on the organisation.

Reporting back to an organisation on the supervisory work is part of the accountability process that supervisors need to encompass when working in an organisational context. Whether the organisation itself requests the report or the supervisor and supervisee decides that they want to report back, it will be a useful tool for the organisation to use in measuring the effectiveness of the counsellor. As a measurement of effectiveness, the purpose of the report will need to be clear for all parties in the working alliance. The purpose will be to provide statistical information about the frequency of supervision sessions

and the therapeutic and administrative effectiveness of the counsellor. The report will also provide information about ethical and professional practice together with the supervisee's effective use of supervision. Finally, it will address the constraining influences of organisational culture and the future training needs of the supervisee. When the purpose of the report has been agreed with the organisation, mechanisms need to be developed for carrying out the process. Tripartite meeting would seem to be a good way of working in collaboration, but there will be a need for the supervisory dyad to work together initially to establish the limits of information that can be ethically divulged to the wider organisation. This information can be divulged in written form as a formal or informal report, or it can be delivered in oral form in a tripartite meeting. Whichever way is chosen, the reports need to be regular and fulfil the purposes for which they are required.

For an organisation, the evaluation, assessment and accreditation processes will be the benchmark of excellence for counsellors and supervisors. These processes will be especially important for line managers where the counselling service is embedded in a 'host' organisation, whether commercial, service or educational. They will give the line manager an indication of the standards of work provided by the counsellor and the supervisor. It is especially important for the organisation to be aware that they have employed a supervisor who is competent and will be able to feed back an accurate assessment of the work of the supervisee. Increasingly, line managers want to ensure that the supervisor is trained and accredited with a professional association in order to verify their competence. This is their assurance that they are paying for a quality supervision service, especially if they have no knowledge of counselling or supervision processes. All professional organisations are responsible for the competence of their members. They set benchmarks for all layers of membership and safeguard their ethical practice with complaints procedures that can exclude those members who no longer practise ethically. This ensures that a standard of work is maintained. How else could non-counsellors and supervisors know what to expect of practitioners they employ? If the professional standards are not maintained, the employer has the right to terminate the employment of the counsellor or supervisor.

Supervisors and counsellors are familiar with terminating relationships and making new beginnings. Nevertheless, when an organisation is involved with the process, there is an added complication that needs attention. Terminating a supervision contract can bring sadness or relief for either party in the relationship. If a counsellor is responsible for making their own beginnings and endings in the supervisory relationship, the organisation will leave the responsibility for the management of this process to them, but the organisation will need to be involved with the termination of contract of employment and payments. However, if the organisation is responsible for the direct employment of the supervisor, they will need to fully engage both the supervisor and the supervisee with helping to choose the new supervisor.

This will complete the cycle of employment. When the organisation does not involve the supervisee in this process, there can be resentment when relationships end and new supervisors are appointed without consultation. Consequently, the organisation needs to use the skills, knowledge and experience of its supervisor to add value to the organisation. The out-going supervisor will be aware of the boundary issues within the organisation that are sensitive and the relationships that cause stress for employees. This knowledge can be offered in a culture where the learning process and the development of employees is normal practice.

Figure 2.1 depicts how the model of counselling supervision is embedded firmly within organisational culture and the culture of counselling and supervision. From securing the supervisory position to ending the work and making new beginnings, the supervision work is profoundly influenced by employment procedures, relationships within the supervisory rhombus, the

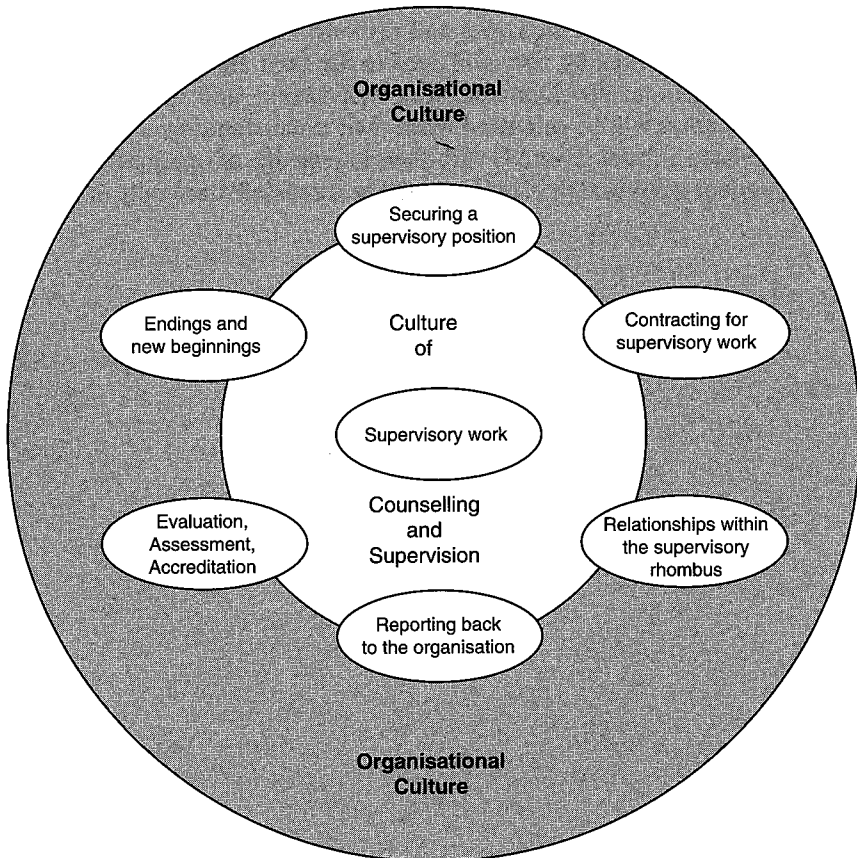


Figure 2.1 A model of counselling supervision in organisations

reporting back procedures and systems of evaluation and assessment. The supervisor who has an integrated position in the organisation will enable their supervisee to work more effectively within the organisation. Additionally they will have a higher personal profile within the organisation and so be in a position to work organisationally when the opportunity arises.

CONCLUSION

When the supervisor is an employee who is embedded fully into the organisation and its employment systems they can help the supervisee to work more effectively within the organisation. For some supervisors working in the caring sector, this will already be the norm. For others, working in diverse organisational settings, any contact with the organisation will be unfamiliar. However, supervisors need to be prepared to embrace employment status within organisations. This will enable them to feel a valued member of the working community with the rights and responsibilities that are engendered in that status. Additionally, they will need to use their emotional intelligence to foster change and development, both individually and organisationally. Their effectiveness will be enhanced when their understanding of counselling and supervision culture dovetails with their knowledge of organisational culture to produce a cultural fit. This issue will be discussed more fully in Part II.