

# Online Group Supervision with Assigned and Rotating Roles

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## 1. Topic: SOAD9036 Current Issues in Professional Practice

### Topic Aims

Social work supervision has a long history in social work. Despite this, corporate approaches to the delivery of welfare services and a restructured workplace have impacted significantly on social work supervision. The impact is evident in the purpose, structure and in links made between clinical governance and supervisory practice.

Using an analysis of current supervisory practice in mental health as a backdrop, this course aims to increase an awareness of current professional issues in social work supervision. This course explores theory and uses experiential learning to reflect on the theory of supervision.

## 2. Teaching Strategies:

### Detailed description of teaching strategy used

Students were required to explore the different roles in group supervision, with each student selecting one role from a suggested list and writing a detailed description of that role and posting it to a discussion area. They then were asked to develop a supervision issue or scenario which would be the basis for an online discussion. In a separate discussion area for each scenario, students presented their scenario and all students took on one of the roles that were defined earlier to solve this problem. The roles were rotated for each scenario.

[Instructions to students.](#)

## Assessment

Group supervision using collaborative learning strategies on line.

There is only one piece of assessment although this assessment requires involvement and participation across the whole semester.

### Task 1. A supervisory problem

You are required to write out a brief problem, issue or scenario that a supervisee would bring to supervision for discussion. Do not make the scenario too complicated. It should be no more than 250 to 300 words (i.e. no more than half a screen of text.) This scenario will not be assessed but will be posted to a discussion forum and used as the basis for a group discussion. Scenarios will be posted to the bulletin board at the end of

week 5.

## **Task 2. Group roles**

Group supervision uses strengths and specific roles of group participants to enhance discussion. In the next section of this assessment, each student will select one role from the list provided, write a role description and instructions for taking on that role. All students should submit this as a draft on the discussion board for comment and review.

In writing a description of this role, it is important to understand and describe how a person playing this role would operate in a group situation, the sort of questions they would ask, and how they might interact within a group situation. In developing this role, it is necessary to refer to group work literature. Although students will only write one role, all students will play each role in turn. A final draft of each role will be submitted to the bulletin board. This will be graded.

### **Suggested group roles**

#### *Forming roles*

Facilitator  
Presenter

#### *Functioning roles*

Summariser  
Helper

#### *Formulating roles*

Researcher  
Questioner  
Elaborator of theory to practice)

#### *Fermenting roles*

Critic (a social critical approach)  
Integrator  
Generator (new ideas and understandings)

#### *Finishing roles*

Observer

## **Task 3: on-line discussion**

Each student will present their scenario (on the webct bulletin board) for discussion by group members each taking a particular role. Students will respond according to their particular role. All students will present their scenario for discussion and take turns

responding in each role.

#### **Task 4: A review of on-line learning**

The purpose of this on-line assessment is to develop skills for group supervision. In this fourth task, briefly describe the process, your contribution including your scenario, the research undertaken and role description. Review the group work and supervision theories underpinning this work. Reflect on the purpose of this assessment and analyse the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. Discuss what you learned about each role and comment on the use of this approach for learning and for agency and student supervision.

#### **Weighting**

Scenario: nil

Role definition: 20%

On-line discussion: 30%

Review of learning: 50%

#### **Due dates**

Description of role: week 6

On-line discussion: after week 6, weekly responses required

Review of learning: 23 November 2001

### **3. Learning Outcomes**

#### **What were the intended outcomes?**

#### **(What did you want the students to achieve?)**

At the end of this course and using their knowledge of work based approaches to supervision, students will be able to:

- clarify the purpose and processes of supervision
- apply learning strategies to supervision practice
- use collaborative learning skills in group supervision
- develop personal practice theory in supervision

### **4. Technology Used**

#### **Detailed account of the technology used**

The WebCT discussion forum was divided up into areas for each scenario discussion and a 'roles' discussion. All students participated in all discussion areas.

When students appeared unclear or unsure of the material or process, the lecturer used

email to privately give feedback and direction

### **What were the barriers to the students using this technology, if any?**

Access to technology, workplace dependency for technology.

One student had a severe virus problem that prevented his access for 10 days disrupting his contribution and group processes.

Inexperience in using WebCT, hence lab sessions for initial activities.

### **What barriers did you encounter in using the technology, if any?**

None, but support from Flexible Delivery Unit was essential.

## **5. Strategy for Development and Implementation**

### **Where does this collaborative learning exercise fit into the context of your topic?**

Activity was an assessment item conducted as a learning and ongoing process, with continual feedback throughout the duration of the semester.

## **6. Preparation**

### **How did you prepare students for online group work ?**

Formal session in computer laboratory to use WebCT.

Initial session in collaboration was held in a laboratory with most students present and online.

Class sessions to discuss the disruption to the learning process due to one student not participating due to virus problems.

## **7. Results/Evaluation**

### **Describe any evaluation processes**

No formal evaluation, but plenty of built-in feedback in the process itself.

### **Student response/feedback?**

They were all very positive at the conclusion of the experience despite some anxiety about unexpected events during the semester (one student's access problems).

Daily internet connection to WebCT is essential to read messages. Delays in accessing material means too much to catch up.

### **Lecturer response to the experience**

All students engaged in the learning process, they experienced interdependence and the

problems that occur when it breaks down.

As a result, a wonderful teaching experience and would repeat it with no changes in future semesters.

However: Be aware of students' limited time for this sort of activity and that students, for whom English is not a first language, may have problems with the colloquial discussions.

**What were the results in relation to the initial learning outcomes illustrated in 4**

Students very successfully engaged in the supervisory processes and working in groups.