Supervising groups: A focus on the practical

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Goals of the session

- To focus on the practice of supervising groups
- To reflect on group theory and process
- To establish what you would find useful to know about supervising groups
Forming groups

- Find your regional colleagues
- Form a ‘mixed up’ group of 5
- Spend 10 minutes discussing your experience of groups
Your experience of groups

- What are your views about groups?

- Think about your experience of either being supervised in a group or supervising a group.

- Did anything go wrong? What was the most difficult aspect of this kind of supervision? What were the positive aspects of this form of supervision?
Supervising groups: the practical

- Two broad areas that you will need to reflect on when setting up group supervision
  - Creating the practical building blocks that help to support group learning
  - Your theoretical emphasis
  - CLARITY AND PREPARATION UNDERPINS SUCCESSFUL GROUP WORKING

(Taken from Scaife 2010, Proctor and Inskipp 2001)
Typology of supervision groups

- Authoritative
- Participative
- Co-operative
- Peer group

Skills for supervisors in groups

- Active leadership
- Clarity- defining the task and how to do it
- Preparation- taking responsibility for what is negotiated and how
- Skilled use of frameworks
- Purpose and preference stating
- Receptivity, imbalance and assertion
Supervisor roles and tasks 1

- Role
  - Manager
  - Supervisor
  - Inductor/trainer

- Task
  - Managing time, ‘the housework’
  - Normative, formative and restorative
  - Providing info, encouragement within supervision
Supervisor roles and tasks 2

- Role
  - Group manners
  - Group leader

- Task
  - Modelling good group manners
  - Creating a culture conducive to learning
  - Prioritise the task
Supervisee roles and tasks 1

- **Role**
  - Supervisee
  - Practitioner

- **Task**
  - To prepare work publically, use time
  - Identify own personal/ professional needs
Supervisee roles and tasks 2

- **Role**
  - Group member
  - Co-supervisor

- **Task**
  - Develop good group manners
  - Develop skills of a supervisor
Clarifying theory and process

- Tuckman (1965) forming, storming, norming, performing, mourning

- Bion’s model of unconscious process (1961)
  - Ba dependence, Ba pairing, Ba fight/flight

What do you understand/ manage primitive feelings?
Bion and Groups

- Working and being in groups is often overwhelming and can broadly be understood as an emerging tension of the longing to be connected vs the longing to be an individual.
- Bion’ writing in this area provides useful insight is key to Ba’s; his writing about thinking and development; and application in organisational settings.
- Work group mentality and the basic assumption mentality- either working on a primary task or evasion of reality through avoiding the task by meeting the unconscious needs of the members by reducing anxiety.

(with help from Paddy Howes)
Group exercise

- Each group will consist of:
  - a Leader/ timekeeper
  - 1 presenter
  - 3 additional group members
The task

- Allocate your roles. The presenter choose an important issue to discuss from work setting
- Work as a supervision group for 15-20 mins
- Each person observe the process and content and or structure
- Come together and discuss your learning to the larger group
What did you notice?

- What worked well and why?
- What was challenging to yourself and others?
- What made the difference?
- What do you need to know about supervising groups?