

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Challenges in Professional Supervision: Current Themes and Models for Practice**

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Liz Beddoe and Allyson Davys

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The book, *Challenges in Professional Supervision: Current Themes and Models for Practice*, by Liz Beddoe and Allyson Davys provides a clearly structured, evidence-based and practical guide for supervision in social work, social welfare and the health professions. It is a wide-ranging extension of Davys and Beddoe's earlier work, *Best Practice in Professional Supervision: A Guide for the Helping Professions* (2010), and considers the complex context of the professional environment that raises challenges and opportunities for social work and welfare practice. The book is divided into two parts. Part one explores current ideas and debates in professional supervision; and part two presents specific methods, models and skills for professional supervision. It comprehensively covers what it sets out to do, which is to critically explore the current challenges in professional supervision. The book also offers models, ideas, and strategies to work with these in order to provide, and partake in, supervision to develop and maintain career-long professional practice.

What I specifically like about the book is that it would be useful for novice supervisors or supervisees as well as experienced supervisors. The novice can use it to gain knowledge about the context of supervision, practice and skills. Although the authors focus on presenting information based on research and their own experience in supervision practice and training, experienced practitioners, whether supervisees or supervisors, can use the material to hone supervision, consolidate ideas and further develop knowledge, understanding and skills. The life-long career of a practitioner is well considered throughout the book. For example, one of the later chapters discusses the supervision of managers, exploring issues and challenges such as boundary issues, adjusting to new relationships, creating reflective space and the dual roles of managers. In a common pattern of the book, issues and challenges are not just presented and explored, but the chapter moves to present a three-stage model to support the development of managers. The model is detailed and includes practical supervision questions to encourage reflective supervision to establish and maintain the supervisory and management roles of managers.

Throughout the book there is a range of tables, diagrams, sets of questions and vignettes that present either core principles for practice in a specific area or guiding questions and models for practice relating to the specific focus of the chapter. These are always useful and applicable to practice. Examples of this can be found throughout: Chapter 6 includes a set of questions to guide supervisors to develop a supervisor's profile; Chapter 7 presents a diagram and table useful for setting up and implementing the reflective learning model developed by the authors for group supervision; and Chapter 9 provides guiding principles for setting up inter-professional supervision. Thus, while the authors use a research platform to theorise, explore, discuss, review and evaluate challenges and opportunities in professional supervision, they also provide practical tools that can be readily applied in professional supervision practice.

The book supports and encourages supervisors to feel comfortable and skilled in their role to build the relationships necessary to support practitioners in their work. At an early point I felt that the book was missing a further discussion on how to create safe spaces for supervision. The authors raise the importance of such safe spaces and further exploration of what this means in practice early on in the book would have been beneficial. Throughout the book, though, the focus is providing evidence, ideas and strategies to build positive supervision relationships in the various contexts of a professional career. One of the final chapters explores moving from difficult situations to courageous conversations, identifying that this is typically required "where the supervisor recognises the need to address an issue (or issues) regarding an aspect of the supervisee's practice (competence, values, boundaries, or professional relationships)"; or "... where the supervision relationship and/or process of their supervision together need addressing" (p. 194). A valuable discussion on the attributes, skills and attitudes then supports practical steps to prepare and run these difficult conversations.

This book can be used in its entirety, each chapter covers different aspects of the contemporary issues and contexts in professional supervision and the different modes, models and skills of supervision. There are themes that run throughout the book, such as the importance of the supervisory relationship, the different supervisory needs throughout a professional career, supervision as a portfolio and being in the moment of supervision. However, each chapter is organised in a way that it is complete in itself, thus readers could be selective in their reading and chose specific chapters to explore and focus on.

Overall, the book is well written, with easy-to-follow, logical organisation of the chapters and an eloquent style of writing. It includes a useful and comprehensive subject index. The one chapter I would have liked organised a bit differently, was the introductory chapter, as I was looking for a quick and easy access to the book. I would have liked a simpler, chronological guide to the book. The introduction is organised around topics and provides explanations why and how each chapter is relevant; and while it was not what I expected, it would probably suit most other readers.

Grounded in research and the professional experience of these two experienced writers, supervision practitioners and educators, the book is aimed at counsellors, health professionals, social work and welfare workers. It is a text that supports the supervisee and the supervisor. The exploration of a range of contextual issues, models and modes is particularly relevant

in exploring supervision as more than individual supervision of the supervisee with one supervisor, but as supervision accessed in a portfolio in various modes and contexts. Organisations, supervisors and supervisees will find the multitude of suggestions and information useful for the conceptualisation, delivery and evaluation of supervision.

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**Reference**

Davys, A., & Beddoe, L. (2010). *Best practice in professional supervision: A guide for the helping professions*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.