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**Enhancing Supervisory and Safeguarding Skills  
for Casework and Clinical Supervisors  
in Child Care Professions**

**Action Learning Set**

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Munro Review, DfE, October 2010:

1.26 'There is also strong evidence that workers, in seeking to engage with a family, can get pulled into relationships with one or more members that distort their overall perception of the family'

1.29 'Building strong relationships with children and families with compassion is crucial to reducing maltreatment, but trust needs to be placed with care, and 'respectful uncertainty' towards families, and interest and curiosity in their narratives, needs to be part of the practice mindset. To work with families with compassion but retain an open and questioning mindset requires regular, challenging supervision'

The Action Learning Set Model

- A series of seminars, which can be commissioned, to be delivered for a local safeguarding children board or single agency.
- For professional/clinical supervisors of frontline practitioners who work directly with children in need or at risk and/or who work with parents.
- Best delivered for a group of between 8 and 12 supervisors, in current supervisory roles and who have a minimum of 6 months' experience as a frontline supervisor.
- Can be delivered to a multi-disciplinary group or a single agency group. Experience has shown that in a multi-disciplinary group of supervisors there is added learning and understanding of the inter-agency roles and tasks.
- Suitable for supervisors of social workers, psychologists, children's centre practitioners, health visitors, school & community nurses, CAMHS practitioners and education workers. Has also been delivered to groups, including police and adult mental health supervisors.
- Comprises one full day (for the group to develop trust) and seven follow up half days; usually at two week intervals. Alternate models can be considered, however, experience shows this timeframe enables participants to reflect on the learning from the half days and test them in their work.
- Participants are expected to attend all the sessions to benefit from the learning process, as each session is linked to the others in a developmental and experiential series.
- The seminars comprise a mix of direct teaching, led group discussion of themes based on key themes in effective (clinical) supervision; and discussion of current work issues for the group members.
- Each participant is required to present examples of her/his own supervisory work for group discussion and reflection to ensure that the learning is experiential.
- The learning sets draw on the writing/teaching of Tony Morrison (1993 and 2006); Pengelly & Hughes (1997); Hawkins & Shohet (2006) and other systemic and psychodynamic models of human relationship dynamics (family or professional) and professional intervention to support these.

Aims

- To increase awareness of current theories and practice in casework supervision for professional supervisors in children and family work
- To develop a trusting learning environment for supervisors in a closed group to reflect on and develop their own supervisory skills;, self-evaluation and the use of self in their supervisory relationships
- To develop understanding of how the child's world and complex or dangerous family dynamics can both impact on and be influenced by supervision and the supervisory relationship with the frontline practitioner

Learning objectives

By the end of the series participants will:

- have been introduced to theories and models of supervision based on understanding of human helping relationships and will have been challenged to try some of these in their work
- have reviewed how to ensure dynamics relating to authority, accountability, ethnicity, culture, belief systems, gender, sexuality and disability are addressed in case supervision
- have explored the dynamics of at least one of their own supervisory relationships, through a case presentation, to learn more about how they personally act as supervisors in relation to a supervisee and to a case
- will have been introduced, through theory and reflection on real cases, to ways of thinking about the inner world of the child and her/his family situation and how this (or the supervisee's own personal experience) impacts on the work and the worker; and
- have explored how they personally learn, analyse, reflect, manage child protection risk, problem solving, ensure a change-focus and offer support & emotional containment through supervision.

Teaching/discussion themes covered in the series

- What is casework/clinical supervision? Purpose and outcomes
- How it differs to other forms of management / support
- Key principles/methods of casework supervision
- Effective supervisory relationships
- Professional Competence – inc developing analytic & reflective thinking
- Appraisal, feedback and professional development systems
- Adult learning styles and how adults learn
- Psychological processes in supervision and helping relationships
- Safeguarding through supervision, managing risks through practitioners - lessons from case reviews and how to embed them in practice (this will include any local lessons from SCRs or case audits if made available, as well as national lessons)
- Reflective risk analysis and planning interventions

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The series can be adapted to meet local agency need.

The headline themes can be included in a one day or two day 'taught' course which can act as an introduction to key supervisory concepts; but this is not as effective as the experiential learning process in the development of analytic thinking and supervisory skills for supervisors.

One day courses or seminars can also be offered on any of the themes in the series for supervisors and/or for practitioners (separately or together) to assist them in developing analytic and reflective thinking in their child protection work.

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