

professional supervision for clergy new, now and necessary

NICOLA LOCK BSC GRAD DIP EFT GRAD DIP TH M MIN
PACFA REG

COUNSELLOR, THERAPIST AND PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISOR

NLOCK@CSU.EDU.AU

Outline

- ▶ What Professional Supervision is and what it is not
- ▶ Results from my research about clergy attitudes towards Professional Supervision
- ▶ Steps for implementing a program of Professional Supervision
- ▶ Comments on changing culture in an organisation

What is Professional Supervision?

“supervision interrupts practice. It wakes us up to what we are doing. When we are alive to what we are doing, we wake up to what is, instead of falling asleep in the comfort stories of our routines and daily practice.”

Ryan, S (2004) Vital Practice. Portland, UK: Sea Change Publications.

Professional Supervision in a Pastoral Context:

"Pastoral Supervision is a regular, planned, intentional and boundaried space in which a practitioner skilled in supervision (the supervisor) meets with one (or more) other practitioners (the supervisees) to reflect together on the supervisees' practice".

(www.pastoralsupervision.org.uk/pastoral-supervision)

What is Professional Supervision in a Pastoral Context?

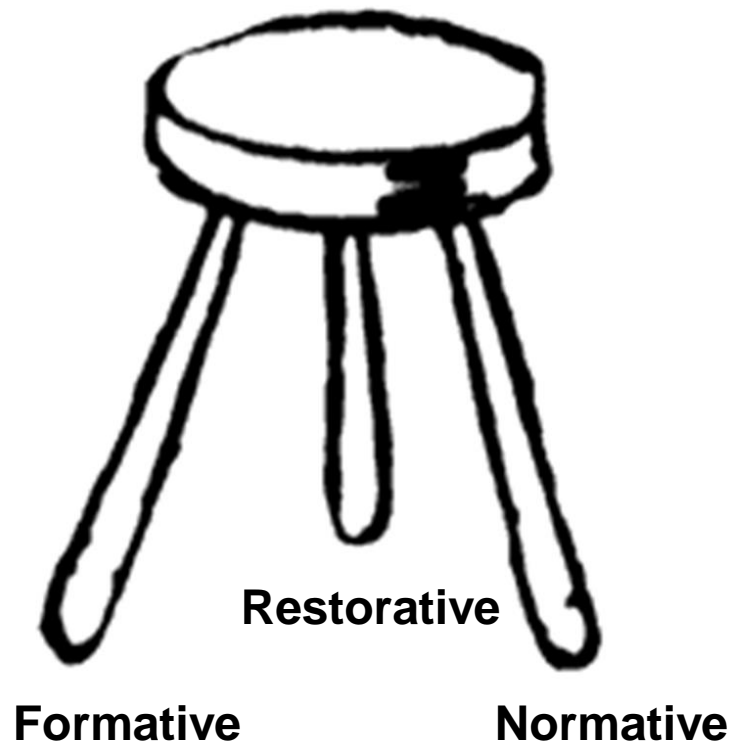
- ▶ *A broad space to talk about whatever is happening in ministry*
- ▶ *Sensitive to God's voice and the spiritual*
- ▶ *Effects transition and transformation, resulting in the minister having...enhanced self awareness, ministering competence, theological understanding and Christian commitment."*

(Pohly, K. (2001). Transforming the Rough Places: the Ministry of Supervision. Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers.)

Formal vs Ad Hoc Supervision

- ▶ Pastoral supervision is a relationship between two or more practitioners who meet to consider the ministry of one or more of them “ in an intentional and disciplined way; **a regular, planned, intentional and boundaried space** in which a practitioner, skilled and trained in supervision (a supervisor), meets with one or more other practitioners (supervisees) to look together at the supervisees’ practices.”
- ▶ On the other hand, ‘ad hoc’ supervision is informal, ‘on the run’ supervision which happens with experienced individuals or colleagues as issues arise. It is not formalized or contracted—it may look like a corridor chat or a brief phone call—but can be an important additional form of support. Collegial support and team culture depend on this, but **it is not an adequate substitute for formal supervision.**

Three functions of Professional Supervision



Where does “supervision” currently happen church contexts?

- ▶ *Commonly seen now in field placement programs that constitute part of clergy formation and training prior to ordination.*
- ▶ *May be limited to formation period.*
- ▶ *Strong emphasis on establishing learning goals and skill acquisition.*
- ▶ *Often carried out by a more senior person who is not necessarily trained in supervision*

Professional Supervision in a Pastoral Context is NOT:

- ▶ *Mentoring*
- ▶ *Coaching*
- ▶ *Spiritual accompaniment*
- ▶ *Line management*
- ▶ *Counselling*

Supervision vs Mentoring vs Coaching

Coaching:
Focus on skill
development

Professional Supervision:
**Supportive,
Educative, Boundary
setting,**
**Focus on person
AND those being
ministered to**

Commonalities:
**Relationship
Encouragement
Listening
Goals**

Mentoring:
Transfer of
'wisdom'

**Spiritual
Direction**
**Attends to
relationship
with God**

What is happening now in Australian Churches?

Professional Supervision is

- ▶ mandatory in Uniting Church and Salvation Army
- ▶ “strongly encouraged” and part funded by Anglican Dioceses of Newcastle and Perth
- ▶ Recommended in informal forms by other dioceses: e.g. Anglican Sydney retreat groups.
- ▶ Sought voluntarily by others

Survey of Sydney Anglican Clergy and their attitudes to Professional Supervision

Participants:

- ▶ *Pilot telephone survey of 10 clergy*
- ▶ *face to face interviews with a further 10 clergy*
- ▶ *Semi structured interview*
- ▶ *A balanced “convenience sample”.*
- ▶ *16 men, 4 women*

Four major themes about the usefulness of supervision:

- ▶ *For accountability and challenge*
- ▶ *For receiving practical advice and support*
- ▶ *To assist with examining ways in which personal and spiritual issues interfere with their ministry.*
- ▶ *To receive overall support and strengthening in their ministry.*

Negative Aspects of NOT Receiving Supervision.

- ▶ *It's a terrible thing. Chaps crash and burn.*
- ▶ *By the end of my 23 years in parish ministry I felt it was a great disadvantage not to have had regular supervision.*
- ▶ *There is no (place) for associate ministers to talk. I have felt very isolated.*
- ▶ *It's been unsystematic: more would have been helpful. Peer groups aren't challenging enough.*

Survey comments on 'formative' aspects:

- ▶ *Good to have an experienced practitioner as a sounding board, resource person and adviser.*
- ▶ *Provides a safe and secure environment to openly discuss people and matters without worrying about it getting back to the parish*
- ▶ *Challenged my preconceptions and helped me to be more discerning*
- ▶ *Has helped me develop my thinking about ministry.*
- ▶ *Helps me work out what a healthy pastoral relationship looks like.*

Survey comments on “support”:

- ▶ *Really helpful for offloading and getting a realistic perspective on the demands of my ministry.*
- ▶ *An absolutely essential support for me.*
- ▶ *Personal support from someone I respect gives me more resilience*
- ▶ *Provides a valve for me to let out emotional energy instead of bottling it up – very good for my marriage!*
- ▶ *Encourages me to escape from my own critical voice – normalises the stresses of ministry.*

Survey Comments on “normative”

- ▶ *They are honest with me – don’t simply reinforce what I am doing*
- ▶ *I like the accountability – so that if I need to change the way I work there is someone else encouraging me to do that.*
- ▶ *It gives permission to a discerning person to raise issues that they see I need to address.*
- ▶ *“the heart is more deceitful than all else...” Jer 17:9. Good supervision is essential to expose these things.*

Emergent themes

- ▶ There is limited understanding of Professional Supervision and its application to ministry life. Mentoring was more widely known and accepted.
- ▶ There is a need for some kind of pastoral support for clergy which is not adequately provided at the moment.
- ▶ Finding time is not an issue if the activity is seen as important.
- ▶ Mandating Professional Supervision could have the benefit of permitting clergy to give themselves the time to do it.
- ▶ Assurance of Confidentiality is very important
- ▶ Clergy are wary of opening up fully in front of others e.g. at clergy retreat groups due to the competitive nature of the diocese.
- ▶ There are problems with theology of “church” and the provision of pastoral support

What is required of Churches by the Royal Commission? (1)

Recommendation 16.45

- Consistent with Child Safe Standard 5, **each religious institution** should ensure that **all** people in religious or pastoral ministry, including religious leaders, **have professional supervision with a *trained* professional or pastoral supervisor who has a degree of independence** from the institution within which the person is in ministry.

What is required of Churches by the Royal Commission? (2)

Recommendation 16.5

The Anglican Church of Australia should develop and each diocese should implement mandatory national standards to ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry (bishops, clergy, religious and lay personnel):

- ▶ a. undertake mandatory, regular professional development, compulsory components being professional responsibility and boundaries, ethics in ministry and child safety
- ▶ **b. undertake mandatory professional/pastoral supervision**
- ▶ c. undergo regular performance appraisals.

What is required of Churches by the Royal Commission? (3)

Recommendation 16.20

In order to promote healthy lives for those who choose to be celibate, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and all Catholic religious institutes in Australia should further develop, regularly evaluate and continually improve,

- ▶ their processes for selecting, screening and training of candidates for the clergy and religious life, and
- ▶ their processes of **ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.**

Getting Professional Supervision Happening in Your Institution



- **Create appreciative inquiry into what supervision is already happening**
- **Develop interest in working on a supervision policy**



- **Try some experiments with sections of the organisation**
- **Deal with resistances to change**



- **Develop Supervision Policies**
- **Develop ongoing training and learning for supervisors and supervisees**
- **Engage in an ongoing review process**

Resistance to change

“Clashes always come when some newly experienced truth disturbs a privileged group. People generally get apprehensive when their traditional viewpoints are challenged.

This will happen unless they are open to new understandings and competent to test new insight and courageous enough to cross new frontiers.”

Ref: Brady, L (2018) Personal Communication, commenting on Jerusalem Council, Acts 15.

How do people change?

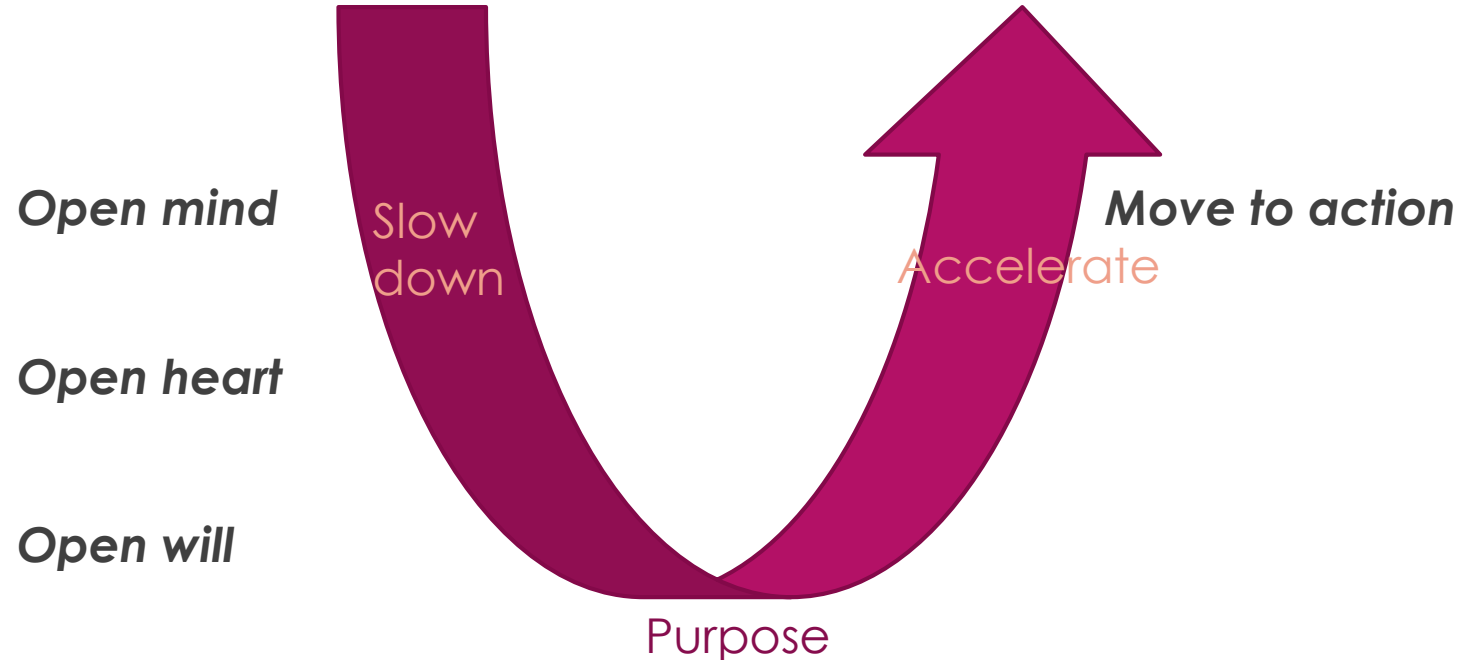
“People do not change, or change much, because of doctrinal argument or sheer cognitive appeal.

People do not change, or change much, because of moral appeal.

People in fact change by the offer of new models, images, and pictures of how the pieces of life fit together, that characteristically have the particularity of narrative to carry them.”

Breuggeman, W. (1993). *Texts Under Negotiation* (p. 24). Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.

"Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges"



Adapted from "Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges" (2007),
Otto Scharmer

At times of change, transitions occur across these continua:



What is an appropriate minimum level of training for supervisors?

- 1. A pre requisite of 5 years experience in a relevant field.**
- 2. Training hours of around 50 hours of face to face training in professional supervision.**
- 3. Supervised practice component, up to 200 hours.**
- 4. Evaluative reports from supervisors/trainers of the supervised practise, plus supervisee's self evaluations.**

(Adapted from supervision training standards of Australian Association of Supervision, Association of Pastoral Supervision and Education (UK), Association For Supervised Pastoral Education in Australia Inc, PACFA (Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia), & Christian Counsellors Association of Australia.)

Where can this level of training be received in Australia?

**St Marks Graduate
Certificate in Professional
Supervision
(Clinical)(Pastoral) 10706NAT
Sydney: Melbourne:
Canberra: Perth: Brisbane
in 2019**

Contact us at
<https://stmarks.edu.au>



Where can this level of training be received in Australia?

- ▶ **Graduate Certificate in Supervision, University of Divinity, Melbourne**
- ▶ **Transforming Practices, Sydney**
- ▶ **Clinical Pastoral Education programs**
- ▶ **Other internal denominational programs e.g. Uniting Church**

A Safe Holding Space

‘Supervision provides a safe, holding environment where, through wise conversation and creative attentiveness, individuals and groups can co create a deeper perspective and wisdom, that can lead to transformation’

Holton, G (2010) *Wisdom's Garden: a Metaphor for Cross Professional Supervision Training in The Soul of Supervision*, eds Benefiel, M & Holton G.

