

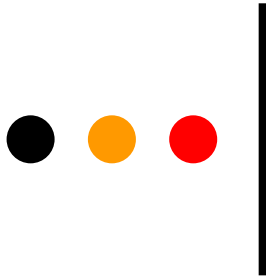


# **‘Mupervision’**

**; Developing a Peer-mutual  
Supervision process.**

November 2009  
by Mark Lynch





## STRENGTHS-BASED PEER SUPERVISION

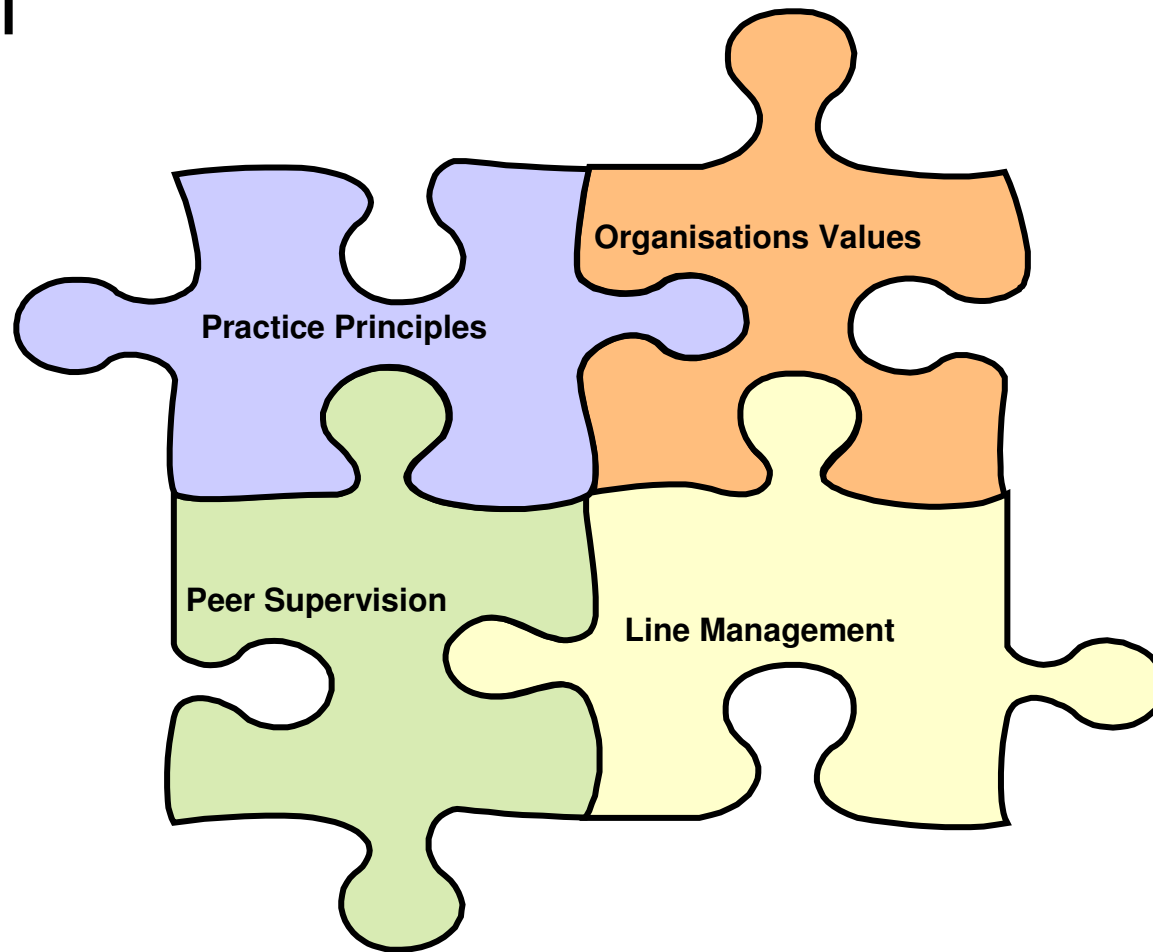
Strengths-based peer supervision is the application of strengths-based principles, processes and skills to the learning, education and support functions of supervision in a group environment. The focus is on practice review.

The supervision session is facilitated by the group and a key facilitator and focuses on the practice of one worker at a time.

# ● ● ● | Why peer Supervision ?

- Isn't peer supervision just a cheap way to reduce workloads for managers ?
  - *Complimentary*
- What about the quality of the supervision who ensures safety, good practice?
  - *May in fact invite more engagement and more learning and better practice*
- Isn't it just a talk fest?
  - *Structure, process and culture*

# Developing a Learning Organization





# Asking thoughtful questions

If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes

- Albert Einstein



# Developing Reflective workers

If we are to engage workers in being reflective, learning practitioners who ask thoughtful questions we need to resource them and ask them thoughtful questions

Reference:

The Art of Asking Powerful Questions

Eric E. Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs



# Examples of questions

<b>Reflective Practice questions</b>	<b>Current view</b>	<b>Future view</b>
What questions do you have as a result of ...?		
What aspects of the young person's story were you aware of avoiding? Why?		
How would you like to be in these kinds of situations?		



## Characteristics of Peer Supervision

In parallel with client-directed practice:

- Issues are identified and defined by the worker
- The worker decides and defines the goals of practice
- The worker identifies and describes strengths, exceptions and resources
- The worker decides what to try
- The practice solution is worker-owned
- Strengths-based practice principles, processes and skills are the points of reference for conversation

### Cautions

- Advice giving is avoided
- Workers do not jump to solutions



## THE PROCESS OF STRENGTHS-BASED PEER SUPERVISION

- **The worker is asked to provide the context in which practice is taking place – a brief description of the client’s goals, any other goals (eg. statutory authority) and outline of his/her role.**
- **Group members reflect back what they have heard as the issues without interpretation, as in work with clients.**
- **The worker presents his/her practice issues he/she would like to explore. No discussion takes place at this point.**
- **The group assists the worker to define the issues concretely.**
- **The worker is assisted to develop a picture of what his/her practice will look like when the issues are resolved. How will he/she be feeling? What will he/she be doing? (Concrete description is developed.)**

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## Importance and Usefulness of Peer Supervision

Provides opportunities for shared reflection and learning not otherwise available to workers (draws on the wisdom and skills of many)

Provides opportunities to develop strengths-based skills

Provides opportunities to practice facilitation skills

Enables a normalising experience for workers

Enables the opportunity for greater understanding of what others are doing

Enables greater access to support and challenge

Enables team building

*Note: Practice issues are those issues directly affecting the worker's practice, ie. anything relating to the skills and tasks involved in direct service delivery or other projects or responsibilities*



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE SUPERVISION AGREEMENT/CONTRACT

- What are the roles and responsibilities of each party?
- What preparation for supervision sessions is required?
- How often will supervision sessions happen and for how long?
- When and where will the supervision sessions take place?
- What are the “bottom line” expectations, requirements and responsibilities of workers within your organization?
- If these are not sufficiently met, how will these be addressed?
- What understandings need to be negotiated re confidentiality?
- How can “stuckness” be addressed?
- What arrangements for addressing harm or risk to the clients, worker or supervisor will be put in place?
- Will our conversations be recorded? If so, how?
- What points of reference will we use to monitor our supervision? (ie. strengths based practice principles and processes)
- How will “difference” be viewed, acknowledged and addressed?



# Useful References and Links

- **The Art of asking powerful questions**  
by Eric E. Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs  
<http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf>
- **Dr. Lawrence Shulman: Models of Supervision: Parallel Processes and Honest Relationships**  
<http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/podcast/episode.asp?ep=5>