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Supervision (not)needed.

Professional experiences of day-care room pedagogues

Introduction

Research of the phenomenon of stress in the context of professional burnout in social professions such as a teacher, a pedagogue or a tutor allowed to isolate four main reasons of frustration, decrease of activity and reluctance towards “professional daily life”. These reasons are: inappropriate behavior of pupils and helplessness towards it; pressure of time and change as the source of difficulties; dissatisfaction with work, lack of emotional and financial satisfaction; difficulties in relationships at work (Woźniak-Krakowian, 2013). The aim of this article is to present supervision as a method enabling not only the prevention of appearance of professional burnout syndrome, but also as an opportunity for development. Conducted pilot studies focused at exploration of the issue of supervision in the direction of further, intensified research, and conclusions and recommendations are intended for dissemination of supervision in pedagogical work. Care and educational pedagogues working in school, care and educational, social and socio-therapeutic day-care rooms in Krakow have participated in the research.

Work of a pedagogue in a day-care room

Pedagogical work in day-care rooms is governed by the Education Law Act (2017). It describes in basic terms the types of day-care rooms and their functioning. Article 105 is dedicated to school day-care rooms, which aim at providing care for pupils who stay at school after obligatory lessons.

§2. Day-care room provides day-care room's activities which include educational and developmental needs of children and teenagers, and also their psychophysical possibilities, especially activities that develop pupils' interests, activities providing appropriate physical development and doing homework. (Dz. U. z 2017 r., poz. 59 i 949)

The main tasks of a pedagogue working in each type of day-care rooms are the following:

1. Organization of help with learning and creation of the conditions for self study of pupils and preparing for independent mental work.

2. Organization of motion games and plays and the other forms of physical culture, including indoors and outdoors activities in the purpose of providing appropriate physical development of the child.
3. Discovery and development of interests, fondness and talents of pupils by organization of appropriate activities in this regard.
4. Creation of conditions for participating in culture, organization of cultural entertainment and shaping the habits of daily life culture.
5. Development of self-management and social activity of students.
6. Cooperation with parents and teachers of pupils, and – as needed – also with institutions for the promotion of culture, sport and recreation and other institutions and associations operating in the environment.
7. Creation of situations for satisfying the need for friendship and contact with peers (Rogińska, 2016).

This multitude of tasks, but encapsulated in 7 points, should be done in conditions that create a sense of security and trust. Moreover, a pedagogue is also obliged to individualize work with each of the charges so as to optimize the process of help, care and education, while fulfilling the mission of the institution.

The pedagogue, such as a teacher and a tutor, lives in the situation of “permanent change” and his/her activity and commitment to work (not only professional, but also work on his/her development) are conditioned by a sense of security, sense of accomplishment, experience of the connection between the effort put into action and the achieved result (Łukasik, 2016).

Supervision of pedagogues in day-care rooms

In Polish literature there are not clear and specific definition of supervision, although all of them point to a specific relationship between a supervisor and a supervised person in the process that heads to solve difficulties resulting from professional tasks and focuses on development of the labor and personal potential. According to Finnish Supervisors Association (STORY – FSA) “supervision is a process of transformative teaching, that takes place during the interaction between the supervisor and the supervised (individual interaction and in the group as well) and where content and emphasis, length and breaks, context and approach to problems are jointly agreed, in line with the objectives that also were jointly agreed” (2013: http://www.wspkorczak.eu/download/zrefleksje_nt_superwizji_cke_20.02.2013.pdf, page 5.). The given definition draws attention to the relationship between the supervisor and the supervised. These relationships should be equal, partnership, trust-based, co-operative and mutual understanding of needs, but – at the same time – not friendship. Cooperation during the supervisory session should have freedom and liberty so that the supervisor and the supervised (person or people) could feel satisfaction of being together and jointly solving difficult situations and problems.

Slow but effective popularization of the idea of supervision takes place in social work. In legislation, the legislator even recognized it as a necessity in view of the increasing threat of the emergence of occupational burnout and work with a high

emotional burden. Although supervision practice has its origins in the trade industry, it also adapts well in other areas. For many years psychologists and therapists have benefited from this form of support for their own development and the simultaneous “filtration” of experiences and experiences related to their affairs.

Supervision tasks

Because supervision usually involves activities that are undertaken by people whose work is to assist and support others, clear boundaries between work and personal life must be defined and attained. To maintain cooperation, participants of supervision should respect the principles of open and honest communication, be authentic, empathetic, and actively listen.

Supervision tasks are realized in the course of meetings, during which work is focused on improving the quality of work of those who support and help, that is who are mentally and emotionally overwhelmed. The specific goals and topics of the supervisory sessions are determined by the participants of supervision and related to what support and assistance they need, but there are several “groups” of tasks:

- 1) Tasks related to the supervised direct work with clients or wards¹, especially when therapeutic or educational actions do not bring the assumed effects or are ineffective. Supervisory meetings help to find the source of the problem and consider the necessary changes in the process of working with the client. “Sometimes it turns out that the source of the problem we considered to be substantive lies deeper in our emotions or convictions” (2017: <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/czytelnia/63-terapia-uzalenienia-i-wspouzalenienia/331-po-co-nam-superwizja.html>), that should be revealed, experienced again and emotionally reacted to. Emotions are often difficult, and convictions necessary to reformulate, that is why – and it should be stressed again – the atmosphere of safety, support and kindness is so important during supervision;
- 2) Tasks related to solving organizational or administrative difficulties that arise in an organization focused on supporting others (e.g. solving the problem of fundraising or daily support activities);
- 3) Tasks involving good interpersonal relationships in the supervised team (or, if individual supervision is concerned, the psychological well-being of a person), which promotes positive behavior without undue stress and additional psychological stress, especially in the event of conflict. Supervision (of the team) is when all of the difficulties or conflicts between the members of team should be revealed and explained so that relationships could be “clear” – do not include insinuations or misunderstandings;

¹ Individual supervisor work may remind of or be associated with tutoring, but keep in mind that these are not identical forms. Tutoring focuses on development of qualities, talents of a person in cooperation with tutor, who is “an expert” in some field. In supervision it is a secondary, supporting thread in the whole process. More about tutoring in pedagogical work can be found in publication edited by Czekierda P., Fingas B., Szala M., *Tutoring. Teoria i praktyka, studia przypadków*, Wolters Kluwer, Warszawa 2015.

- 4) Tasks connected with the ability to work on personal problems, if they interfere with effective work.

What is more, the supervisor and the supervised should focus on solving the emerging problems and planning activities aimed at improving the situation (appearing in work with clients or wards, as well as the one that is related to relationships in the team) and at evaluation of achievements.

Other classifications of supervisory tasks, such as the trio of assignments by authors such as Inskipp and Proctor (Henderson, et al., 2014) (normative, developing and strengthening tasks), and J. Rogers (three-level supervisory concept designed by J. Hay) (Rogers, 2014) are also worth noticing.

Jenny Rogers presents three-level supervisory concept designed by J. Hay. The concept lists three steps in professional supervision:

1. Normative supervision – for beginners, where the role of supervisor is to refer to professional standards and evaluation of the supervised progress;
2. Formative supervision – an offer for the intermediate, advisory and based on dramatic methods and direct feedback;
3. Supportive supervision – for advanced people, based on the exchange of experiences and reflections related to the discussed situations. This stage is closely related to work experience (Rogers, 2014).

Attempting to maintain a high quality of supervision (and also its effectiveness), the supervisor is required to professionally approach the problem resolved and to respect the process and care for its ethical dimension. Just as any other method of working with another person, the process of supervision is also prone to the emergence of difficulties. As noted by the authors of *“Supervision in practice”*, “in many professional situations, supervision is experienced as an inspection, control or «just chattering», and it is therefore perceived as a process that is avoided and arousing resistance” (Henderson, et al., 2014). Although goals and tasks are clearly defined, participants of supervision often feel anxious that others (supervisors, other participants in the meeting) will watch their work and – perhaps – negatively evaluate it or that supervision will be received as a situation where a teacher, pedagogue or educator uses the psychologist’s help in solving their own problems, which is associated with a sense of shame (Szymański, et al., 2013). Supervision is also seen as specialist help, and therefore participants are exposed to negative feedback from colleagues and clients. It can be accompanied by the same phenomenon of social ostracism as with teachers, pedagogues, etc. benefiting from therapy. During supervision emotions – positive or negative – connected with work with a client or a ward or related to relationships in a team can be revealed. Being aware of them, especially the unpleasant ones, is often painful and cause suffering. The difficulty is to make a decision of revealing, watching and working through them, and next to give them the proper meaning and possible change (2016: <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/czytelnia/63-terapia-uzalenienia-i-wspouzalenienia/331-po-co-nam-superwizja.html>). However, in consequence, watching difficult situations, coping with painful emotions makes work easier, and often our behaviors and behavior of the client, ward

or teammate are more understandable, and therapeutic or educational influences are effective.

P. Henderson, J. Holloway and A. Millar present the trio of basic supervisory tasks, that were defined by Inskipp and Proctor (Henderson, et al., 2014). There are normative, developing and strengthening tasks. The first ones are related to the duties and standards governing work during supervision and include, among other things, the standards of work, the methods of evaluation and monitoring of supervisory work and the appeal procedure. Developing, formative tasks include care for professional development of the supervised. "The process of supervision allows to reflect on what works, where, when, and what errors happen, by encouraging supervisors to analyze, think, and formulate their own judgments, thanks to that they can develop their own craftsmanship and professionalism. The main emphasis is on practice-based learning, so as to integrate experience with theory" (Henderson, et al., 2014). While strengthening tasks make supervisors more likely to acquire more self-awareness and professional resistance without treating supervision as a form of therapy or cumbersome interrogation (Henderson, et al., 2014).

Problems in supervision

Like therapy or psychological-pedagogical intervention, supervision often can be seen by society as the consequence of weakness or disorders. However, it involves little knowledge of these processes. It is not that supervision is free of obstacles and limitations. It may not be easy to (or rather to be able to) verify personal views. During the session, often difficult or inquisitive questions are asked to find out why someone applied the method in the workplace or did it in another way. In the course of conversations it may turn out that beliefs very close to the participant need to be changed.

Effects of supervision in pedagogical work

Although supervision is a process that requires effort and commitment (primarily internal, emotional) from the participants, it also brings important benefits. One of them is significant improvement in the quality of work. Sometimes, thanks to an ordinary conversation with "people in the industry", who are not directly involved in the relationship with client or ward, the solution of difficult situation can be found. As stated by R. Zuba, "the obvious professional benefit we receive from supervision is to gain, through a re-analysis of other people's experience, a better insight into the causes of the difficulties that arise in our work. The result of this analysis is to gain a new, broader perspective on the problem. It gives an opportunity of making more accurate diagnosis and adopting a better therapeutic strategy" (2016: <http://www.psychologia.edu.pl/czytelnia/63-terapia-uzalenienia-i-wspouzalenienia/331-po-co-nam-superwizja.html>). It is also very useful to exchange experiences (including difficult ones) and good practices. In case of exchanging difficult experiences people may see that a pedagogue or teacher is not alone in the difficult therapeutic or educational work and that other people also cope with troubles. When one succeeds

in defeating one another, the sense of incompetence, helplessness and insecurity decreases, and self-esteem and rationality grow. Supervision teaches optimism or positive attitude to difficult situations (Seligman, 2007).

Supervision supports pedagogues and teachers' development, that brings measurable, observable effects:

- greater knowledge, skills and adequate sense of competence,
- increase of self esteem based on realistic evaluation of one's own abilities,
- increase of sense of agency, belief that through your own actions you can influence what is happening in your environment,
- increase of motivation for decision-making, planning and accomplishment of goals,
- increase of internal motivation, strengthening of self-esteem,
- development of self-awareness, own potential,
- increase the importance of the presence of other people in human life (Łukasik, 2016).

Pedagogues' experiences related to participation in supervision

The study was a pilot study and could contribute to wider and more detailed research into supervision. It is not a permanent practice in pedagogical institutions, in various types of state (public) and private education centers. The generic impulse for undertaking research in this field was "natural" observation of supervision process and some, although positive, feedback that appeared in lobby (sic!) during pedagogical meetings, seminars and conferences, as well as information appearing in the media (mainly online).

The group consisted of 49 people and in gender terms it was definitely homogeneous: 47 women and 2 men, therefore the process of analysis excluded this variable as significant.

In the study were involved 19 pedagogues employed in school day-care rooms, 17 in social day-care rooms, 8 in socio-therapeutic day-care rooms and 5 in care and educational day-care rooms.

The view of the research group and the number of the institution are shown in chart 1.

In supervision participated 23 of 49 pedagogues. It turns out that such practice is more popular in Krakow socio-therapeutic, social and care and educational day-care rooms than in school day-care rooms. The reason is probably the mode of organization of the work of day-care room and the employment system. These factors may also be relevant for the duration of individual supervision sessions. The interviewed pedagogues were asked about how long the supervisory meetings, in which they participated, were held. It is assumed that meeting less than 15 minutes is not a supervision, and it can be treated as a simple check-in or just meeting.

Taking into account the respondents' answers about the length of individual meetings, two tendencies are noted. First of them is the duration of meetings that takes 45 minutes, as 48% of answers indicate. Second noted tendency shows that the length of meeting is connected with a type of day-care room. School day-care rooms, by the way of organization of work of the institution and often two-shift nature of

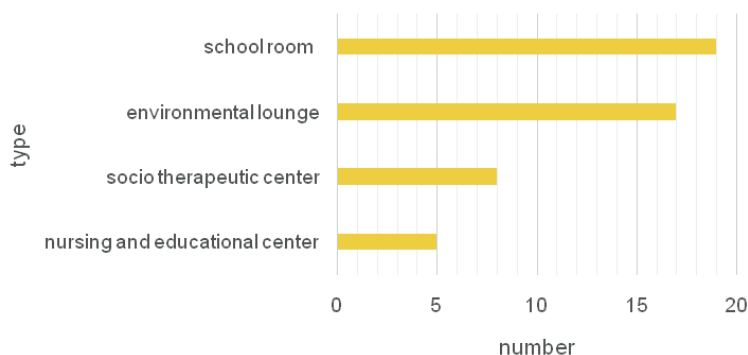


Chart 1. Diversification of the research group by place of employment – type of day-care room.

Source: Own study based on the analysis of own research results

employment, force the organization of supervision as 15–30 minutes meetings, while other types of day-care rooms which usually work in the afternoons, organizing care and extracurricular activities for children and youth, more often organize supervision lasting even over 1.5 hours. In Krakow day-care rooms longer supervision sessions do not take place in the experiences of the investigators.

From the perspective of organization of the process, an implementation of short- and long-term goals defined in the process of supervision and for its efficient course completed by the effective solution of the difficult situation, or the achievement of goals, it is important who initiates and conducts the meetings.

Participants of supervision were asked about initiators of the meetings and who led them eventually as well. It turns out that in the day-care rooms work interior supervisors (chosen from a team, in which they work, sometimes they are leaders of a group or headmasters) and exterior supervisors (experts of leading the process, outsourcers, people not employed in day-care rooms). The choice of supervisor is dictated by two determinants: human resources [i.e., whether the person in the group is trustworthy and competent (not necessarily qualified) and financial resources [the budget for employing the external supervisor and sometimes the motivational allowance or bonus for an employee in a given institution (although this is probably not the norm)].

The research shows that in the vast majority of cases (82.6%), the respondents used the services of an internal supervisor, who were: the headmaster/manager of the room (57.89%), a colleague (31.57%), colleague from outside the team (10.52%). Of all the participants in the supervision of their work, only 17% of the respondents benefited from external assistance.

Conjecture reappears that it is related to the organization and specificity of the work of the whole school, as well as to the multitude of tasks, functions and roles of school educators in day-care rooms.

The basis of effectiveness of supervision – on the one hand – subjective feelings associated with improving the quality of work, sense of justice and better coping

with difficult situations, and thus the decline of stress and dissatisfaction with the profession of pedagogue and – on the other hand – observed by other changes in the way of work and achievement of better results in working with others.

Pedagogues of day-care rooms were asked about their achieved results in the process of supervision both in professional and personal spheres. The results of supervisions that were indicated by participants of the process are presented in chart 2. Respondents were able to indicate more than one answer.

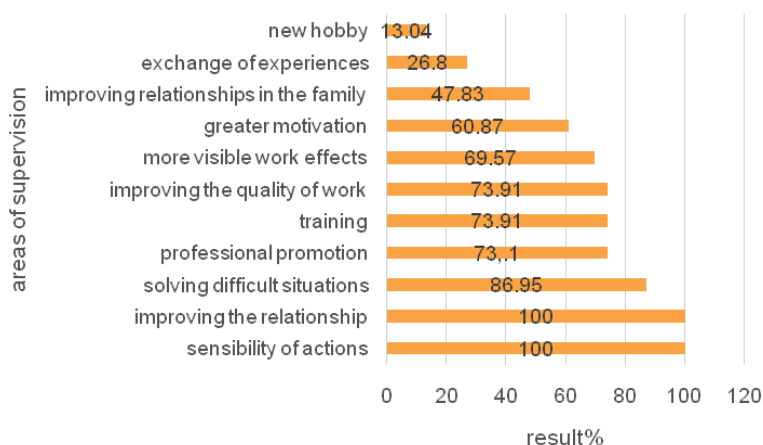


Chart 2. Effects of supervision process (N = 23)

Source: Own study based on the analysis of own research results

According to the opinion of all the respondents, supervision significantly improved the quality of their work by feeling the meaning of the tasks undertaken, and also by improving employee relations. These results have become more visible, which may mean that the effectiveness of the actions taken has also improved. What is more, for some participants (26.8%) supervision meetings have become the area of exchanging experiences, and thus sharing the so-called good practice. 13% of respondents indicated that thanks to participation in the supervision they found new interests, took up a new hobby. Among interviewed pedagogues who experienced supervision nobody indicated that supervision brings nothing to him/her or he/she did not benefit from the process.

Conclusions

In Krakow day-care rooms supervision is usually carried out by a member of the staff, in most cases a headmaster or manager of a day-care room. Supervision is difficult to implement not for organizational reasons, but for emotional reasons as well. In the process, thus, pedagogues have to share their failure. That is why it is necessary to build awareness of support for development and help for educators and also to promote knowledge about functions of supervision. It is the trustworthy method for those pedagogues who had the possibility of being a beneficent of it.

They observe positive changes of their work, especially in terms of effectiveness of activities and building relations with others.

It is certain that the research should be extended and deepened in the future, as they merely contributed to the subject in the Polish educational discourse. It may be interesting to see how durable are the achieved effects and what goals (short or long term) are achieved with this method. In the future it is also worth to consider the supervisor and the techniques he uses.

Supervision in Poland, especially in education, only increases both in theory and practice. Not all Western solutions in the area of supervision are possible to faithfully transfer to our culture, including the so-called corporate culture that manifests itself both in human resource management systems and employee behavior in the industry. Conducted reconnaissance and supervisory experiences in social work show that supervision can also be rooted in pedagogical awareness as one of the methods that support teacher development and prophylaxis of professional burnout.

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Supervision (not)needed. Professional experiences of day-care room pedagogues**Abstract**

Authors have carried out research among educators working in social, care and educational and socio-therapeutic day-care rooms. Such research is just a contribution to take into consideration the introduction of supervision into the daily pedagogical practice. The aim of the study was an initial diagnosis of state of supervision in pedagogical work and also personal experiences of pedagogues connected with participation in supervision.

Key words: supervision, work experience, daily life, pedagogue/educator, motivation, professional development

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