

## APPROACH TO CLINICAL SUPERVISION

# Using Multiple Frameworks

I Found Help | 26 July 2026

In my approach to clinical supervision, these models are not lessons delivered to a supervisee. They are maps that help me stay curious about what is happening in the client's work, the supervisee, the supervisory relationship and the setting. My starting point is an integrative-relational and person-centred position: supervision needs to feel safe enough for a counsellor or psychotherapist to bring work that is unclear, uncomfortable or unfinished, while holding responsibility for client welfare, ethical practice and professional development.

**The Seven-Eyed Model** helps me widen the conversation. I may begin with the client's experience or the intervention, then notice the relationship between client and practitioner, what the practitioner is carrying, what is unfolding between us, and how organisational, cultural or ethical pressures are shaping the work (Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Hawkins and McMahon, 2020). I do not move through the seven eyes mechanically. I follow the process: a pause, a sense of certainty, a feeling of stuckness, or a wish to rescue may tell us where to look next. The supervisee's responses and mine become information to explore, not conclusions.

**Clarkson's Relational Framework** helps me listen to the qualities of relationship present in supervision. I attend to the working alliance and contract, person-to-person contact, transference and countertransference expectations, and moments when the supervisee may need developmental support or thoughtful challenge (Clarkson, 1990). This allows me to ask, "What should happen next?" but also, "What is happening between us, and what might this relationship make possible for your practice?"

**Inskipp and Proctor's Functional Model** keeps the purpose of the conversation in view. At times the supervisee needs formative support to develop skills or think more clearly; at other times restorative space to process emotional impact; and sometimes normative attention to boundaries, safeguarding, risk or professional accountability (Inskipp and Proctor, 2001). These functions are negotiated rather than imposed and may shift within one session.

**Developmental approaches** remind me to adapt my pace, language and level of challenge to the supervisee's experience, confidence and emerging professional identity (Stoltenberg and McNeill, 2010). With trainees, I may offer structure, modelling and reassurance while encouraging increasing autonomy. With qualified practitioners, I may work collaboratively with complexity, recurring relational patterns, use of self and systemic pressures. I avoid treating development as a fixed ladder; an experienced practitioner may feel newly uncertain when facing unfamiliar work.

Bernard's Discrimination Model supports my choice of supervisory stance. I may be teacher, counsellor or consultant, but I do not assume that one role is always helpful (Bernard, 1979). I ask what the supervisee needs now and whether the intervention should clarify, support, challenge or invite reflection.

In **meta-supervision**, these same frameworks turn towards my supervisory practice. We explore my interventions, the alliance, parallel process, emotional responses, power and the professional context. This helps me recognise blind spots, remain accountable and develop an internal supervisory voice. Across trainee, qualified and supervisor-development work, the models work together to keep supervision relational, process-based, ethically grounded and responsive to the person in front of me.

## References / Bibliography

Bernard, J.M. (1979) 'Supervisor training: A discrimination model', *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 19(1), pp. 60–68. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6978.1979.tb00906.x.

Clarkson, P. (1990) 'A multiplicity of psychotherapeutic relationships', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 7(2), pp. 148–163. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0118.1990.tb01329.x.

Hawkins, P. and McMahon, A. (2020) *Supervision in the Helping Professions*. 5th edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education.

Hawkins, P. and Shohet, R. (2012) *Supervision in the Helping Professions*. 4th edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education.

Inskipp, F. and Proctor, B. (2001) *Making the Most of Supervision: Part 1*. 2nd edn. Twickenham: Cascade.

Stoltenberg, C.D. and McNeill, B.W. (2010) *IDM Supervision: An Integrative Developmental Model for Supervising Counselors and Therapists*. 3rd edn. New York: Routledge