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BOOK REVIEW

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O'Donoghue, K. and Engelbrecht, L. (Eds). 2021. *The Routledge international handbook for social work supervision*, Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-429-28594-3. Pages 676.

INTRODUCTION

This book on social work supervision is true to its title. It is an international handbook that provides a comprehensive guideline describing supervision theory, practice, and research within the context of countries across the world. Its extensiveness is underwritten by the structure of the book consisting of the following parts:

- International perspectives
- Supervision settings
- Roles, responsibilities, and relationships
- Models and approaches
- The interactional process
- Leading and managing supervision
- Emerging areas

The book, featuring 51 contributors, was edited by two well-known authors in the field of social work supervision: Kieran O'Donoghue (PhD), a Professor in the School of Social Work at Massey University, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Lambert Engelbrecht (DPhil), a Professor of Social Work in the Department of Social Work at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Both editors have extensive experience in supervision and are widely published on the topic.

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

The editors prepare the canvas with a valuable overview of the history of social work supervision and an explanation of the structure of the book. The history, flowing from the 1970's to the 2020s, indicates a growing internationalisation of social work supervision with

literature carrying the following main themes: 1) the differing perspectives of supervision internationally; 2) the differing practices of supervision across specific settings or areas of social work practice; 3) the roles, responsibilities, and relationships enacted in supervision; 4) the models and approaches used in practice and a growing call for evidence-informed supervision; 5) the interactional process and its importance in managing emotions, enabling reflection, and containing stress and conflict; 6) the role leadership and management have through supervision both organisationally and professionally; and 7) the emerging areas of the use of information technology in supervision, the engagement of service users, and the future research agenda (O'Donoghue & Engelbrecht 2021:xxiii). The structure of the book thus mirrors the main themes in literature and will guide the brief discussion of each section.

The first section, “International perspectives” (Chapters 1-10) provides a global view of social work across the world. Most authors focus on the historical development of social work, dividing it into a variety of phases e.g. in the case of New Zealand, a distinction is made between managerial dominance (1994–1997), professional response (1998–2008), and an evolving professional culture (2009–2019) (O'Donoghue, 2021). Other authors referred to types, roles, challenges and factors influencing social work. Contributions were made by authors from the Global North, the Global South, Asia and Africa, represented by South Africa. The kaleidoscope of countries is valuable, but it would have been meaningful to have a wider representation of African perspectives.

Chapters 11-17 form a shorter but interesting second section introducing social work supervision in the settings of field education, newly qualified social workers, child and family work, adult care, peer supervision and indigenous social work. A setting emphasised more and more within a global context, is that of the newly qualified social worker (NQSW). In an article titled “Supervision of newly qualified social workers” Engelbrecht and Ncube (2021) investigate the challenges that may emerge as a result of the transition from field instruction as a student to practice and the role of supervision in this regard.

The title “Roles, responsibilities and relationships” (Chapter 18-24) summarises the third section of the handbook. The roles of supervisor and supervisee in the transition from one role to the other are covered, as well as the responsibility of the supervisor to balance the dual role of conducting a clinical and administrative role, considering sometimes challenging ethical issues. Wong (2021) offers a comprehensive supervision tool, the PEACE-in-Context model (Place and Priority, Event Recounting, Appreciative Analysis, Collaborative Planning, and Experimentation and Evaluation), across various contexts to manage the challenges of dual supervision roles. External supervision, peer supervision, and group supervision are explored, reaching across all three “r”s.

A more comprehensive section four (Chapters 25-34) highlights models and approaches to social work supervision. These chapters form a resourceful palette from which social workers, as new or experienced supervisors, can experiment and find a fit. The reader can explore the comprehensive model of social work (Tsui, 2021); the 4x4x4 model (Mainstone & Wonnacott, 2021); an integrative child protection model (McPherson & MacNamara, 2021), a four-layered practice model (Rankine, 2021); the PASE model (Harris & Slattery, 2021); the SNAP model

(Sewell, 2021); the strength-based model (Engelbrecht, 2021); trauma-informed supervision (Knight, 2021) and ethical evidence-informed supervision (O’Donoghue, 2021).

Section five, titled “The interactional process” (Chapters 35-40), critically reflects on the supervision process across one session, as well as various phases. Practical topics like frequency, length, content, and the structure of a supervision session are described within an interactional process. The supervision process is also observed against the backdrop of the preliminary, beginning, middle, and ending phases of supervision. Conflict and challenges, as well as working from an emotionally sensitive perspective are explored as strategies of creating a safe space for development for both supervisee and supervisor.

The second-last section (Chapters 41-48) loosely brings together a variety of important topics under the heading “Leading and managing supervision”. Leadership, tensions and opportunities in management supervision, enhancement of performance, organisational culture, evaluation of supervision, development of policies, standards, and practices, and lastly, strength-based supervision in family-centered practice are pictured within the context of social work management. Davys (2021) concludes the section on evaluating supervision with an emphasis on the importance of the quality of the supervision relationship.

The book appropriately concludes with a section on emerging areas (Chapters 49-52), providing strokes of creativity and imagination. Chapter 49 aims to give “a theoretical understanding of how the mechanisms inherent to arts can enhance social work supervision” (Huss 2021:612). Chapter 50 critically explores the pros and cons of bringing in the voice of service users in social work supervision, while Chapter 51 examines how information and communication technology (ICT) is developing in supervision. In Chapter 52 O’Donoghue (2021) completes the picture by reviewing research since 2012, summarising topics covered and indicating the following gaps for future research:

- The influence of cultural and social differences, the decolonisation of supervision, and the development of indigenous supervision models.
- The emerging research areas of newly qualified practitioners, interprofessional supervision, rural supervision at a distance, cyber supervision, ethics, values, and power dynamics.
- The role of supervision in supporting the personal safety of social workers.
- The impact of work and a trauma-informed approach to supervision.
- Researching the support and supervision for supervisors.

O’Donoghue (2021:650) concludes the chapter and the book:

“In conclusion, the challenge for the next generation of supervision researchers is to build upon the past and develop the knowledgebase of the human relational practice of social work supervision so that it enhances and improves the well-being and development of all involved in the supervision system.”

CONCLUSION

This book is indeed a handbook, a valuable resource for especially post-graduate students, social work practitioners and researchers all over the globe to keep at hand when developing their studies, practice, research and professional careers.

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