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THE REFLECTIVE ACTION IN THE SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL WORKERS: PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

In the recent ten years supervision has become a topical issue not only in such professional fields as psychotherapy and psychology but also in social work, as well as pedagogy and its different sub-branches. The changing socio-economic situation in contemporary Latvia has created preconditions for the necessity of supervision as part of sustaining the quality of social work and professional development as it both provides social workers with emotional support and implements learning goals at the workplace. Social work specialists are employed both in state and municipal institutions, as well as do their professional job in non-governmental organisations, which deal with the complicated social problems of the clients, therefore life-long acquisition of new knowledge and skills takes place in a communicative environment by sharing experience, enriching it and adding new elements to the contents of the existing one.

Consequently, supervision is necessary for the development of the social workers' professional competence. Supervision as an integral part of the social worker's practice must both be approved by laws and regulations and its quality improved in everyday professional practice. Today no laws and regulations have been worked out in Latvia which would define the status of supervision (the professional standard of supervision and the code of ethics), therefore a direct link between the quality of social work services and supervision does not exist. Also, the issue of the interaction between social work and supervision and their mutual influence cannot be found in the Code of Ethics of Latvian Social Workers.

Supervision has been long known to social workers both in the U.S.A. and Europe and there is no reason to doubt its rational basis and necessity, therefore it is important to evaluate and develop it according to the needs of the professional development of Latvian social workers.

As a result of the research of the doctoral thesis 'The formation of the reflective action in the supervision of social workers' the definition of supervision has been improved. It has been dealt with as a reflective process taking place in a communicative environment, helping to evaluate the individual experience, analyse the professional activity and find alternative solutions. The professional competences of social workers are developed and the necessary support provided as well. By using particular supervision methods it is possible both to provide and receive emotional and educational support, solve problem situations, gain new professional experience and ideas, acquire useful supervision methods, build one's professional self-confidence and identity, be better at understanding the emotional response of the clients, improve the co-operation and professional relationship in the team, provide personal support, help to manage stress caused by work, be aware of the available resources, develop professional skills.

The results of the research prove that supervision is a purposeful reflective action where every participant is interested in the process of supervision: they acquire knowledge through deliberate communication between all the participants of supervision, including the supervisor. As for the supervisor, it is very important for him/her to apply pedagogical approach by combining the components of the interaction of learning styles, social and cultural context, subjective individuality and authenticity in order to facilitate the formation of motivation, attitudes and determination of the social workers. Therefore, in the context of the research a question arises: how to favour the formation of the reflective action in the supervision of social workers?

The data obtained in the empirical research and processed using the programme for qualitative analysis AQUAD 6 will be analysed in the presentation, namely, the reflective action of seven social workers in the supervision process. Four randomly selected social cases have been analyzed. These findings support the thesis that there is a correlation between the components of a reflective action indicating that a reflective action develops more favorably if problem identification, finding relevant information, critical thinking, decision-making and evaluation skills are developed during supervision.