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Social Work Practice in Botswana: Principles and Relevance

GLORIA JACQUES*

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the need for supervision in social work agencies and examines some of the functional components of supervision. Secondly, the article also examines social work supervision in Botswana and it is observed that effective supervision is hampered by a variety of constraints which include heavy work loads and lack of facilities and qualified supervisors. While supervision is not unique to social work, it has however, special importance in social work because of the nature of the problems the profession addresses. This article therefore sees supervision as a useful mechanisam for safeguarding the rights of clients, social workers and social work agencies.

Introduction

The study of the supervision of direct service or frontline workers and students in social work agencies has been deemed sufficiently significant to warrant its inclusion in the final year programme for both diploma and degree students in the Social Work Department at the University of Botswana. The initial reaction of some students, directly related to their field experience prior to embarking on the diploma or degree course or to the fieldwork component of the university programme, is often scepticism as to the relevance of the subject matter to the "real world" of social work practice in Botswana. The contention that historical relevance and present-day practice constitute evaluative tools for acceptable principles and methodology, exists in some social circles in Botswana. The familiar is deemed to be correct, relevant, and worthy of development and that which is new is probably inappropriate, foreign, and destined for the scrapheap of irrelevance and decontextual flotsam.

The dilemma here stands bold and strong, and balanced on a hairline of dichotomous argument and partisan rhetoric. Professional social workers must be wary of treading this flimsy path as a slip in either direction can spell disaster to

*Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Botswana.

the unsuspecting and uninitiated. There are, in all aspects of social functioning, "two sides to every story" and those who are social workers and social educators must take cognisance of that most important fact.

Institutions of learning in developing countries are now generally acknowledging that there is local structure and process, in situ and in action, to which attention must be paid on cognitive and developmental grounds in the teaching/learning arena. Also, the changing needs and dynamic nature of the community which gives life to social work must be assessed, studied, and considered. It must be realised that there are also concepts and principles, techniques and practices,as well as theoretical and applied bodies of knowledge from outside their area of operation and beyond their national,and even regional, boundaries. They may serve as developmental catalysts and academic yardsticks to determine the acceptability of what is in place, and to suggest developments which may embody aspects of the old and the new, the familiar and the unknown.

This is not to say that all such imported material is relevant or even worthy of consideration by local academicians, professionals, and/or students but there is great danger in closing the mind to influences that might prove positive, simply because they emanate from sources abroad.

As scholars and practitioners in the field of social work we have to keep our figurative doors open to everything that might have value to the growing profession. This is particularly true for countries where the history of social work is short and the foundations have been barely laid for the edifice of the future.There is also the important factor of goal orientation and the striving for a higher purpose and meaning as a constant spur to the professional's efforts. In the process there are aspects that must be discarded but even their irrelevance teaches us what we do *not* need and therefore points the way to what we *do* require for the enhancement of our professional systems.

Comparative assessment indicates gaps, inconsistencies, and needs and provides ideas for the development of structures and techniques for addressing such issues. Principles and processes which have their roots in scientific institutions abroad rarely can be applied in pure form in countries such as Botswana. They have to be adapted (if indeed they are acceptable at all) and honed to fit the local situation, taking into account the special needs and circumstances of the local society.

Social Work Practice

There are two main areas of social work practice, namely the direct and the indirect, and it is necessary to understand the relationship between the two in order to

appreciate the viability and codependence of each.

Direct social work practice involves the worker with individuals, families, small groups, and communities in direct, active participation usually within the context of a human service organisation (Hoffmann, 1987). There is a growing number of social workers now in private practice but they are few in relation to the size or the profession generally.

The goal of direct service intervention is to bring about positive change in the client's functioning and/or in environmental factors associated with human behaviour. The focus will differ according to the varying perspectives of case-work, group work, family therapy, or community work but the overall goal is the same — to provide effective and efficient direct service to individuals and communities so that their quality of life might be enhanced.

For effective direct social work practice to be implemented the social worker must, ideally, have completed a sound basic professional education and training programme; a body of knowledge must be documented on an ongoing basis so that others may learn from the social worker's experience and study; social work agencies must be properly administered so that clients are assured of high standards of service; and there must be continuous development of social workers' skills and knowledge.

Thus the indirect or enabling focus of social work practice must be in place in organisational structures to support, enhance, and strengthen the direct functions — hence the need for social work education, social work research, social work management, and social work supervision (Hoffmann, 1967).

The ultimate objective, of social work supervision then, is to provide effective and efficient social work services to clients. This is a long range goal which is facilitated by short term objectives formulated in terms of the tripartite functioning of supervision, namely administrative, educational, and supportive aspects of the process.

The primary goal in administrative supervision is to ensure adherence to policies and procedures of the social work agency; the primary goal in educational supervision is to dispel ignorance and enhance skills; and the primary goal in supportive supervision is to improve morale and job satisfaction. This constitutes a functional definition of social work supervision (Kadushin, 1935).

While acknowledging these principles, Middleman and Rhodes (1985) have grouped supervisory functions into three categories which they have labelled Integrative, Service Delivery, and Linkage. Within these three categories further subclassification embraces, respectively, humanising, managing tension, and catalysing; teaching, career socialising, and evaluating; and administering, advocating, and changing.

Of the integrative functions humanising is seen as encompassing the encouragement of self-acceptance and interpersonal regard as well as openness in the provision of feedback to social workers. Managing tension embraces methods of dealing with interpersonal and organisational environment tension, while catalysing covers the fostering of interdependence and enhances morale.

Of the service delivery functions teaching is seen to be connected with formal, spontaneous, and sharing activities, while career socialising is concerned with career development, making ethical choices, and enhancing commitments to social work values. Evaluating is considered as encompassing the assessment of supervisee, supervisor, and programme performance.

Finally, Middleman and Rhodes define the linkage functions as: administering workload management and information processing; advocating,at an internal and external level; and changing, which they envisage as procedural as well as programme oriented.

In order to consolidate and clarify the various definitions of social work supervision it might be said to be: the province of an administrative member of staff in a social work agency who is given the authority to direct, enhance, co-ordinate, and evaluate the performance of social workers who are accountable to her. The supervisor thus performs administrative, educational/teaching, and supportive/helping functions in positive interaction with the social worker, enhanced throughout by effective communication. The ultimate goal of this supervision is to deliver, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the highest possible standards of service to agency clients in accordance with the policies and procedures of the organisation. Supervisors indirectly affect the level of service offered through their impact on direct service supervisees.

Thus the supervisor has a middle management role to play in the social work agency, responding to those above and below her in the organisational hierarchy. In so doing she is utilising her knowledge of administration to enhance client services, her knowledge of client needs and problems to help administration meet the needs, and her knowledge and skill in social work practice to improve agency functioning through teaching, stimulating, and thus facilitating the staff in the effective assumption of their responsibilities (Kadushin, 1985; Pettes, 1976).

Need for Supervision in Social Work Agencies

Supervision is not unique to social work but it has special importance in this field because of the nature of the work, the problems and issues with which it is concerned, the clients or recipients of its services, and the characteristics of the social workers themselves.

Accountability of social work agencies to the community which provides both resources and clientele makes supervision necessary. Just as the agency is accountable to the community, so the social worker, through the supervisor, is accountable to the agency.

Social policies, implemented by welfare organisations, often originate at central or local government level or at least outside of the agency itself. Supervision is needed to address the interpretation of such policies by social workers. Examples in Botswana would be the Destitute Policy, the Day Care Centre Policy, the Children's Act and many others.

Because of the confidentiality ethic in social work,much of what the caseworker,in particular, does is not open to scrutiny. Thus poor practice and its results might not be obvious or observable. Also, many clients are involuntarily drawn into relationships with social work agencies, so they may be uncooperative, aggressive, and at odds with so called helping techniques. Thus the necessary protection of both clients and social workers makes regular review of worker activity important in this regard.

Worker autonomy in social work agencies is never complete as the nature of the profession indicates that one person's opinion or decision will rarely, if ever, be appropriate in the realm of human service provision. Where communities are hesitant about granting autonomy (or even full recognition) to the profession agencies will likewise respond with varying degrees of autonomy granted to social workers who must then share decision making with an informed and experienced supervisor. The ambiguity of many of the social work profession's objectives and the lack of clarity with regard to outcomes contribute to the general lack of desire to give full recognition to the profession , as evidenced in Botswana where social work is not yet regarded as a fully fledged (or comprehended) profession by government or the community at large.

The lack of professional associations of social workers in many countries, especially developing countries such as Botswana, creates a hiatus in relation to professional standards, integrity, and possible abuse of power by social workers and also protection of social workers from communities, clients, and demanding agencies. In the absence of such structures social work supervision can meet the needs of the profession and individuals in this area.

The limited knowledge base associated universally with social work, (which is even more relevant in developing countries) as well as the small number of professional social workers relative to community needs almost anywhere in the world, (but again especially in countries such as Botswana) makes the need for supervisors who can "fill the gaps" even more imperative.

Problems and issues dealt with by social workers are often traumatic, difficult to address, long-term, and closely related to the worker's own emotional experience or that of high family or close friends and to this extent it is not easy to maintain an empathetic approach to the work. Also, the nature of the problems with which social workers in case and community work come into contact is such that solutions seem unrealisable and methods only appropriate for symptomatic treatment. Such issues as poverty, street children, AIDS, crime,child abuse and others seem totally immune to the poor attempts of social workers at reducing their incidence or impact. The need to work through issues of this nature with supervisors is a factor that must be addressed.

Social work is a profession dominated by women in most cases, irrespective of a country's level of development. This is also true of Botswana, although there is a significant, and surprising number of men in the social work field at the present time. Research has indicated that women tend to favour supervision in the workplace more than do men and, in the social work field, this would appear to be even more evident. Also, the personality type of those who choose to make a career of social work is usually that of the idealist, the concerned, the sensitive and those who are aware of the plight of others. Such people would benefit from the supervisor who supports, facilitates, and encourages. In Botswana this factor has not always been applicable as many social workers came to the profession "through the back door" as it were or as a last resort when other fields of work or study were denied them on grounds of underqualification or through oversubscription of certain university faculty departments (Kadushin, 1985; Hoffmann, 1987). More scrupulous screening methods now seek to filter out those whose interests and commitment do not lie in the field of social work and who seek only *a* qualification.

Functional Components of Supervision

Although in this paper staff supervision has been emphasised, it must be indicated that the basic principles, knowledge, techniques, and challenges of supervision apply to the process in relation to both practitioner and student (the latter doing concurrent or block fieldwork in social work agencies) (Hoffmann, 1987; Pettes, 1967).

Supervisory practice is identified by three major areas of functioning which overlap to some extent, but which nevertheless all possess a primary focus which distinguishes them from the others.

Administrative Functions of Supervision

As a middle level manager the supervisor operates through the generic management processes of planning, organising, directing, decision making, and controlling, where she is constantly involved in multifarious tasks and situations.

Administrative tasks include many that are basic to management *per se* but which adopt a particular significance in the area of supervision.

Staff recruitment and selection is, ideally, the province of the supervisor as her median position in the organisation gives her access to information about community needs, through the social workers for whom she is responsible, knowledge of the components of frontline jobs and their specific requirements, and the attention of higher, policy-making/ influencing management levels. Drawing up of job descriptions/ specifications,interviewing prospective employees, and making recommendations for hiring are tasks well suited to the position and knowledge of the social work supervisor.

Induction of the new worker is also an area where the supervisor's expertise is required, as she knows the necessary components of the post, including significant people in both agency and community to whom the new employee should be introduced. Hierarchical structures, stratification, accountability, and responsibility (in terms of superiority and subordination) are important for the new worker to understand.

Work planning and assignment, that is, decisions on long and short range goals for her unit and the workers to whom functions will be allocated, utilises the knowledge of the supervisor in relation to community needs, agency capabilities and supervisee strengths and weaknesses. Ensuring that a variety of tasks and corresponding challenge (in just the right degree) is present is also important and the supervisor must marry these with the appropriate amount of autonomy for each supervisee. Competent social workers may differ in their desire and ability to make independent decisions and, of course, the issue of accountability is also significant in this regard.

Thus, the supervisor's leadership styles will vary according to the needs of the agency, the supervisee, the community, and the particular task or function which the worker is performing at a particular time. The worker's performance curve will generally move in the direction of greater autonomy and less need for didactic supervision as his period of service lengthens, but there will always be such times and tasks that will require greater or lesser amounts of supervisory intervention.

Coordination of work is a significant administrative task of the supervisor to ensure smooth workflow for effective and efficient service delivery and

therefore attainment of agency goals and objectives. Such coordination can be practised on various levels: organisation of the supervisee's tasks so that they occur in logical order (as far as possible) and constitute a rational and productive process (this also involves the supervisor in coordinating the supervisee's needs with agency resources) coordination of the work of each team or unit member with all the others; and coordination of the group for whom she is responsible with others in the agency and in the community at large. The supervisor also legitimises worker decisions on behalf of individual clients or the community as a whole and in so doing coordinates worker performance with agency preparedness.

A significant administrative task is ongoing monitoring and informal assessment of worker performance and agency or sectional programmes. She should also be responsible for regular, periodic, formal, structured evaluation of supervisees for the purpose of justifying (at an official level) administrative processes of promotion, transfer, dismissal, incrementation, and, in the case of student supervision, trading.

The supervisor as administrator also acts as an intermediary between client/community and social worker/student (where demands are too great) and between supervisee and agency (to protect the latter from supervisee deviance). Thus her role in conflict situations, as negotiator or arbiter, is very important for all players in the social work arena.

In the same vein the supervisor has to take the initiative in the process of positive change which must take place in the agency and the community being, as they are, dynamic entities, responsive to the altering needs of human beings and the groups in which they live and function. Her strategic position, in close contact with direct service workers, enables the supervisor to be aware of the changing needs of individuals and community groups and to advocate for accommodation of such changes, either within her own agency or elsewhere in the community (Kadushin, 1985) .

All these tasks have to be performed with specific emphasis being placed on effective communication. All organisations, whether bureaucratic or democratic by nature, mechanistic or organic in design; highly stratified or simplistic in structure, must have formal channels of communication in place so that information exchange is positive, productive, and acknowledged.

Feedback is an important factor in the communication system. Supervisors have the unique responsibility for translating and interpreting policies, procedures, rules, regulations, proposed changes and other administrative matters to direct service workers and likewise conveying the ideas, recommendations, queries, and reaction of the workers to upper management. On the basis of the effectiveness of her communication skills will often rest the success or failure of agency efforts in

the field of service provision. There will be both formal and written, oral, and visual communication within organisations . The supervisor will participate in meetings with superiors, in meetings, both individual and group, with her supervisees, and in general staff meetings. She will also meet, in lateral communication, with other supervisors in the same agency or in different agencies or community groups. The supervisor must also be aware of and utilise informal channels of communication and she must acknowledge their relationship with formal channels, as well as and take responsibility for seeing that appropriate matters are transferred from one to the other (Pettes, 1967).

Authority and power, as administrative facilitators, can be forces for constructive supervisory practice or for negative impact supervision. Authority is the sanctioned use of power (Kadushin, 1985), and to this extent can be used by the supervisor, sometimes inadvertently, to subordinate the needs or wishes of the supervisee. However, judiciously applied, it provides structure, sanction, and support for the social worker or student in the execution of their duties.

The various types of organisational power identified by French and Raven (1982) highlight the possible dichotomy of focus and suggest conceivable problematic situations for both supervisor and supervisee. Coercive and reward power indicate that the supervisor has the ability to punish or commend workers. Imitative behaviour and role modelling are related to this power base and can be a force for both good and ill. Expert power is sourced from the perception of the supervisee that the supervisor has specific knowledge and skills that he (the supervisee) does not possess while legitimate or positional power encompasses the organisational blessing which is bestowed on supervisory status and which controls, to a large extent, the supervisory relationship (Reitz, 1958). It is understandable that both supervisors and supervisees sometimes have misgivings about the nature of their relationship in terms of superiority and subordination and also that the expectations of both are often not clearly defined. Thus both participants in the supervisory process sometimes resort to game-playing, or the utilisation of techniques to either increase or decrease the power disparity in order to cope more effectively with the situation (Hawthorne, 1975; Kadushin, 1985). One of the prerequisites for supervisors is that they understand authority and use it appropriately (Scherz, 1958).

Educational Functions of Supervision

Educational supervision aims to expand and refine the social worker's knowledge and skill and to appropriately adjust his values as expressed in attitudes (Hoffmann, 1987). It is focused on the specific needs of an individual worker performing specific tasks within the parameters of a particular job notched in the organisational

structure of the agency.

Educational supervision promotes autonomy for the worker and thus decreases the need for in-depth administrative supervision. It seeks to enhance the professionalism of the social worker.

Although the principles of student and worker educational supervision are similar there is an extra dimension of university based objectives and expectations in the case of the organisationally placed student (Hoffmann, 1987).

Learning in social work practice involves three major aspects. Firstly, factual knowledge has to be transmitted facts about issues such as human behaviour, agency rules and regulations, and the functioning of other agencies. Secondly, attitudes may need to be learned or modified. This involves emotions and often affects factual learning. Thirdly, ways of working must be taught. The social worker must be able to apply what theory she is learning into practice.

These three aspects of educational supervision - intellectual learning, emotional learning, and learning by doing - are implemented simultaneously in the process of supervision (Pettes, 1967) As Austin (1952) expressed it: "Learning is made usable, largely through the support of a positive supervisory relationship which leads the worker to new insights about people, including himself" (quoted by Munson, 1975 in Munson, 1979).

As educational supervision is individualised, unlike other methods of human resource development and staff training, every social worker gets the opportunity to be taught what he needs to know as well as what he wants to know in the way that he wishes to learn. Thus, theorists agree that the supervisor should draw up an individualised educational diagnosis for each worker in her team or unit, identifying what he already knows well and the direction for development in line with his role as an adult learner in the organisation. Austin (1981), Munson (1983), and Kadushin (1985) have each suggested criteria for the diagnosis. Hoffmann (1987) has coordinated their contributions thus: Data should include information obtained from the worker's personal background where this directly influences job performance, academic performance, achievement potential, performance in previous jobs, level of motivation, attitudes towards and use of supervision, ability to utilise autonomy, personal preferences and interests, adaptability, ability to sustain professional relationships, and internalisation of knowledge, skills, and values.

The educational diagnosis should be constantly revisited, reviewed, and modified in order to ensure that it is relevant to the changing learning needs and level of development of the social worker.

Educational objectives should be formulated on the basis of the educational diagnosis. These objectives help channel educational supervision towards its

specific purpose. They also provide a focus for evaluation of worker performance. Each objective should specify the learning needed to overcome the deficiencies identified in the diagnosis, whether in the field of knowledge, skills, or attitudes (Kadushin, 1985; Hoffmann, 1987).

Perlman (1947) (as quoted by Kadushin, 1985) identified what she called the "Four Ps"— people, place, process, and problem — when considering the *content* of educational supervision; that is, areas to be addressed when imparting knowledge to the social worker if he is to be fully informed about his field of operation. To these Kadushin added a fifth "P" — personnel, in the person of the worker offering the service. The formula,therefore, concerns the client (people), individual, family, group, or community, coming or referred to a social work agency (place) for help (process) with social dysfunctioning (problem) by a social worker (personnel).

The supervisor must, therefore, ensure that the social worker acquires knowledge, skills, and appropriate attitudes in relation to the target population; the policies, procedures, and objectives of the agency and its practice; data gathering, assessment or diagnosis, and treatment in relation to the specific service offered by the agency; the nature and causes of social dysfunction and its impact on community groups; and an understanding of himself as a professional in relation to the other aspects of the situation.

Thus, the five Ps, together with the components of education — knowledge, skills, and attitudes — identify the educational needs of the organisation in relation to the learning process relevant for each worker (Kadushin, 1985; Hoffmann, 1987).

The supervisee should be involved in drawing up the diagnosis and in its constant modification;he should play an active role in formulating educational objectives; and he should have considerable input in selecting the content to be taught. In this way he should be much more committed to the learning process and therefore benefit to a greater extent which will, in turn, ensure the advantage, to the agency ,of educational supervision. Supervisors should bear this in mind, together with other principles of teaching/learning, including the need for high motivation levels of learners, the meaningful presentation of material, the accompaniment of positive satisfaction, the opportunity to concentrate on learning without distraction, and the uniqueness of each worker/student learner (Knowles, 1960; Bruner, 1571; Austin, 1981; Kadushin, 1985, as quoted by Hoffmann, 1987).

Methods of implementation of social work supervision, both administrative and educational, vary from the individual, one-on-one, tutorial conference through tandem supervision (where two workers with similar experience supervise each other with the supervisor acting as monitor), to peer group supervision (where

group members supervise each other with the supervisor having only a nominal role), and group supervision (where the supervisor is in control but obviously wields less power and authority than in the individual conference situation as each worker's degree of autonomy diminishes the influence of the supervisor) (Butler and Elliott, 1985 as quoted by Hoffmann, 1967).

The ideal situation is usually perceived by agencies in more developed countries as being a weekly, individual conference as well as a weekly group conference. The logistics of this in developing countries such as Botswana are, as shall be discussed later in this paper, sometimes complicated and difficult to manage. Group supervision, by its very nature, is not personalised to the needs of each individual social worker and so should, ideally, be used as an adjunct to the individual conference. Characteristics of these conferences are that they are regularly scheduled and the venue is private and free from distractions. Both super visor and supervisee prepare for the session by planning the agenda, both individually and cooperatively, and through the social worker providing documentation in advance for the supervisor so that the latter may acquaint herself with (and possibly prepare material for) issues which require clarification or discussion. Thus the supervisor keeps abreast of the social worker's workload and process and is able, herself, to place items on the agenda with which the social worker may not realise she needs assistance. Thus the supervisor engages the social worker in a critical analysis, which is both systematic and explicit, of work performed and planned (Kadushin, 1985; Hoffmann, 1987).

Feedback in the context of educational and administrative supervision is most necessary as it helps to correct deviance before inappropriate or incorrect practice becomes ingrained. It should be descriptive (rather than judgemental), specific, constructive, positive, and interactive through the participants sharing ideas and exploring alternatives together.

Evaluation is related to both administrative and educational supervision with specific reference to the latter. It should be an ongoing process on an informal level culminating in regular formal assessments carried out biannually or annually.

Effectiveness, which is imperative for the dynamic social work organisation, involves accountability for quality and quantity in the realm of service delivery. This is assured by setting job-specific standards and reviewing and adjusting them periodically; measuring the impact of services on clients and the community; and measuring quality and quantity of worker performance and outcomes. The supervisor should be involved in all these processes.

Thus, evaluating, as a supervisory function, focuses on developing and instituting ways to assess practice performance, worker impact, and service outcome. Frequently used methods in practice literature include rating scales,

essay comments, critical incidents, checklists, and results oriented formats (Middleman and Rhodes, 1985).

Rating scales specify ranges of performance qualities and characteristics which are related to responsibilities and expectations associated with the job. The essay format is based on written statements in answer to questions relating to employee strengths and weaknesses. The critical incident format involves systematic recording of specific examples of good or poor performance as they occur. Checklisting involves the supervisor selecting statements from a list drawn up for the position concerned that appropriately reflect the social worker's performance. The results-oriented approach is related to measuring performance against previously established quantifiable standards or objectives which are, ideally, agreed upon by both supervisor and supervisee. The Management By Objectives model is designed around this evaluative technique.

Evaluation, to be comprehensive, should embrace not only that of social workers by supervisors but also evaluation of supervisors by social workers and programme evaluation by both supervisors and social workers involved in the implementation of such programmes. Programme evaluation is beyond the immediate scope of a paper on supervision but suffice it to say that it is characterised by the following features:

1. It is a process of making reasonable judgments about programme effectiveness, efficiency, effort, and adequacy.
2. It is based on systematic data collection and analysis.
3. It is designed for use in programme management, external accountability, and future planning.
4. It focuses, particularly, on accessibility, acceptability, awareness, availability, comprehensiveness, integration, and cost of services. (Atkisson and Broskow ski, 1978 as quoted by Lewis and Lewis, 1983).

Supportive Functions of Supervision

This component undergirds the processes of administrative and educational supervision. Pettes (1971) refers to it as "helping" while Kadushin 1985) and Munson (1983) view it as a resource to help workers deal with job related tensions which may impair the effectiveness of their service delivery.

The aim of supportive supervision, according to Kadushin, is to reduce anxiety, allay guilt, increase self esteem, enhance the capacity of the social worker to adapt to the demands or the job, and to free psychological energy which can be channelled into effective job performance. This may be achieved through preventing the development of stress, reducing the impact of factors causing stress,

temporarily or permanently removing the worker from stressful areas, and/or helping him to adjust to and manage stress.

Kadushin identifies possible sources of job related stress as arising from administrative or educational supervision, the supervisor, supervisee relationship; the client; the organisation; community attitudes towards social work; and the personality of the social worker. Austin (1981) adds that there is stress outside the organisation itself which must be taken into account by the supervisor (Hoffmann, 1987).

These factors should be examined more closely:
Administrative supervision, embracing, as it does, control through procedural and policy statements of the agency, may induce tension through promoting conflict between service and bureaucratic expectations and orientations. Education presupposes change and change induces anxiety which is connected with admission of ignorance, acceptance of limitations, lack of autonomy, and general worker vulnerability.

The relationship between supervisor and supervisee embraces the potential for conflict and tension, imbued, as it is, with aspects of power and authority and all the complexities which can stem from such influences. Client systems are often complex and traumatic and can affect social workers emotionally and psychologically to the detriment of their service delivery.Organisational factors, especially those present in a bureaucratic context, can be frustrating and inhibiting to social workers. Communities often perceive social workers as interfering rather than intervening and they often simply do not appreciate the nature of the need for the practice which may have a considerable impact on social workers who are attempting to offer high quality service to such communities. This ignorance is particularly observable in developing countries such as Botswana but the view of social work as a less than benign profession is expressed also in first world countries.

Sources of stress outside the organisation can be located on the personal life of the worker and these include interpersonal relationships, formal study job mobility, financial problems, cultural conflicts and many others. Such factors might be particularly valid in developing countries where social systems still wield considerable influence over individual functioning and norms and values are changing in differential degrees within groups and between individuals and groups.

Some Thoughts on Student Supervision

Student supervision is a very important part of supervisory practice. Staff and student supervision are, in many respects, identical, but there are significant differences in function, focus, and the demands made on the supervisor.

Both supervisor and student have roles within the agency's administrative structure but they also have other functions and responsibilities. The student is enrolled in a programme for professional education; the supervisor is one of his teachers and thus has a dual responsibility to agency and educational establishment (Pettes, 1967).

The goal of student supervision is to enable the student to develop his knowledge and skill as a professional person. In the field the student is helped to apply theory in a practical manner. However, all theoretical teaching is not confined to the classroom and all practical teaching is not the domain of the field. Thus lecturers constantly make reference to application of theory and field supervisors regularly introduce theoretical knowledge to the student in relation to his work.

The student supervisor's chief function is teaching the elements of professional practice. The staff supervisor's teaching function is related to the specific job being performed by the supervisee. As student supervisor she utilises the job (the student's functioning within the agency) as a base for teaching and developing the knowledge and skills required generally for professional practice. The teaching, then, must be geared to goals beyond the immediate functioning of the student within the agency but learning must be demonstrated by successful functioning within the agency. The teaching has also to take into account the total educational experience of the student (Pettes, 1967).

As the supervisor has to protect the client she must ensure that agency policies and procedures are adhered to by the student and she also has to ensure that the student is psychologically free to make full use of all the knowledge and skills he possesses. Thus she is involved in all three traditional functions of supervision in her work with the student.

As was seen in the context of referent power in relation to staff supervision, the student supervisor provides a professional model which influences the student's sense of professional identity. The supervisor is teacher, guide, enabler, and mentor, and she is the professional social worker the student sees in action more than any other. The supervisor does not provide the only model but hers is the major role in the student's field experience (Pettes,1967).

Social Work Supervision in Developing Countries: The Botswana Experience

Although supervision, in one form or another, is in place in the administrative structures of human service organisations in Botswana, the quality and dimensions of its practice fall far short of the theory outlined in this paper.

The main thrust in developing, improving, and refining supervisory practice to meet the needs of social work in Botswana lies in the adaptation of the theory to suit local conditions and the incorporation of such theoretical adjustment into supervisory practice.

Problems Associated with Social Work Supervision in Botswana

The unique nature of social work in Botswana and the corresponding relationship between the practice and the society it serves render internationally traditional supervisory methods necessary, yet inappropriate in terms of sociological fit. Social work is a relatively new field of practice in Botswana, supporting, enhancing, and sometimes replacing the role of the extended family in society.

As economic structures move from subsistence to cash base the customary structures are increasingly unable to provide the services which rendered assistance, strength, and support to those who needed it in the past. Thus the role of social work is becoming more and more significant in terms of preventive and curative practice with regard to individuals, groups and communities.

A significant target group which needs to be educated about supervision as a distinct social work practice method in Botswana comprises top management of human service organisations. Informed top management will better understand the need for supervision and the nature of the middle management status occupied by the supervisor. This will enable them to plan and build organisational structure more affectively and also to utilise the supervisory service with more relevance and with greater effect. The necessity for educating a supervisor for the job will also be more readily acknowledged and this would encourage the provision of specialised training at both university and in-service levels. Increased knowledge and understanding by the employer will go some way towards modifying organisational features which at present obstruct the development and refinement of supervisory practices.

Provision should be made for promotion along a vertical and horizontal route so that good direct service workers can have increased status and remuneration without having to be appointed as untrained, unwilling, and sometimes ineffective supervisors. Likewise, those with specific aptitudes and training in the supervisory field can be installed in appropriate positions.

In addition, some organisations have no specific criteria for promotion to supervisory posts beyond years of services or more availability of staff. Criteria for promotion should, ideally, be knowledge and competence, based on formal assessment of worker performance. Unless the promoted worker is appropriately supported, prepared, and equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the new job there will be a tendency to utilise direct social work methods in the supervisory field instead of implementing relevant theory pertaining to supervision *per se*.

De Bruyn (1985) (quoted by Hoffmann, 1987) states that promotion to supervisor should imply a new occupation with its own role expectations and work procedures, not simply a new status. Learning needs and the need for support should be acknowledged and the employer should shoulder the responsibility for meeting these needs. The attitude of top management to supervision is critical, especially in developing countries, such as Botswana, where those in decision-making positions do not always possess a background of social work knowledge, skills, or training. If these administrators could appreciate that the ultimate objective of supervision is effective service delivery to consumers the process would be, to some extent, facilitated through the provision of physical space and ensuring that supervisors have time to carry out regular supervisory sessions. This is infrequently the norm in Botswana where supervisors, due to heavy workloads and consumer demands, are obliged to render direct service to a degree which precludes quality supervision. The problem is further compounded by lack of qualified social workers, lack of qualified supervisors, and lack of qualified *and* specifically trained supervisors.

Also the geographical distribution of social workers and their own heavy workloads (often covering several villages in the rural and remote areas) makes regular visiting and adequate attention by supervisors untenable. Lack of resources and facilities such as appropriate transport further hampers the efforts of those supervisors who appreciate the importance of regular contact with supervisees.

The limited knowledge base of the profession generally, is exacerbated by lack of precedent in many instances and also by uniqueness of needs and environmental conditions. Also, prescription and variation in culture, custom, tradition, values, and norms further identify the need for supervision as a support mechanism, particularly for inexperienced workers in the field.

Without a professional association for social workers (which has been under discussion for several years) the need for supervision, to protect the rights and interests of social workers, clients, and agencies is even more acute. Ethical practice and professional standards will not be adequately ensured without the

establishment of such a body *and* the implementation of more in-depth methods of supervision.

Of course, many of these factors are concomitants of levels of development, educational standards,value systems, societal norms social evolution, regional attitudes, and other environmental,psychological, and developmental realities which can neither be altered overnight nor eliminated to suit the emerging configurations of modern social planners. Both governmental and nongovernmental organisations in Botswana suffer from the malaise of inadequate professional supervision but the rigidity of bureaucracy of state structures, lack of resources, and lack of local, qualified personnel renders the task of governmental agencies a difficult one to accomplish effectively and with due attention to the needs of the social workers.

Though many of the changes can only be expedited in an evolutionary manner, steps must be taken to ensure that, as far as possible and as soon as is expedient, the necessary developments are considered, discussed, and implemented in order for the profession to be insulated from often deserved attack and moulded into one that truly addresses the needs of the society it serves.

The field of student supervision has been addressed by the Social Work Department at the University of Botswana and a comprehensive manual, supervisory visits by field liaison personnel from the university, regular seminars for field supervisors, and planned future improvements in university provision of fieldwork input, have already transformed the efficacy of the fieldwork programme for students.

The *staff* supervisor who is able to perform her job in the best possible way is in an ideal position, at middle management level, to act as an intermediary in the hierarchical structure of the social work organisation. She can guide and assist top management in decision making and not simply act as a conduit for information up and down the organisational ladder (Hoffmann, 1987). Initiative and creativity are called for as well as professional commitment to the social work profession and to supervision as an essential method by which social work can meet challenges faced by this relatively new field of practice in Botswana.

Aspects of supervision which have been addressed in this paper relate to its ideal application in a developed, structured setting. Obviously, all this material cannot be utilised in the Third World without careful scrutiny, informed assessment, selection of appropriate components, and staged implementation over, possibly, an extended period of time.

However, it should be borne in mind that , individual differences, cultural dynamics, and value systems notwithstanding, the needs of humankind are basically similar throughout the world. The principles of social work and the ethics

implicit in its professional practice constitute fundamental ingredients of a universal movement towards effective and efficient service to individuals, groups, and communities.

A dearth of qualified professional social workers and a particularly limited knowledge base in comparison with other older professions, necessitate the use of effective supervision in order to enhance the social worker's performance and improve his level of attainment anywhere in the world. Botswana is no exception.

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