

Some Questions for Supervisors to Ask Supervisees

Just as couples can get into stuck patterns in their relationship to each other, so can supervisors and supervisees. Opening a relationally reflexive space for supervisees helps them experience empowerment in co-constructing with the supervisor a relationship with more learning potentials. To facilitate this, a supervisor can pose questions - and questions about questions, such as:

Questions to foster a session-by-session mind-set

- "What kind of supervisor would you like me to be today?"
- "Are we talking about the issues that are important to you, in ways that are useful, at a pace that is OK?"
- "If this supervision were to stop now, what important issues would have been resolved already, and what issues would you feel we could have worked on further?"
- "I'm wondering- have I been challenging enough in today's supervision?"

Questions to alter an ongoing supervisory relationship

- "I've been thinking about how we might change how we do our supervision sessions. Do you have any ideas on this?"
- "Over our sessions so far, which aspect of your experience do you think has been explored/ changed most, and which do you hope to work on from now on?"
- "Usually I wait until you've finished what you have had to say before I say anything. I wonder what it would be like if I interrupted earlier and asked some questions to make sure I'm understanding you in the way that you want me to?"
- "How could our supervision be organized so that you don't feel that you're having a negative experience?" "If it started to go that way would you be able to speak out?"
- "If I want to say something positive or appreciative about your work, how could I do it in ways that you could use to improve your image of yourself as a therapist?"

Questions about supervisees' sessions with clients

- "How long did that hour last?"
- "When clients ask you questions, which questions are most useful to you, the easy ones or the difficult ones?"
- "When clients ask you questions that are really too difficult for you to answer, for whatever reason, are you able to tell them?"

Adapted from: Burnham, J. (2019). Relational reflexivity: a tool for socially constructing therapeutic relationships. In *The Space Between Systemic Thinking and Practice*. Carmel Flaskas, Barry Mason, Amaryll Perlesz (Eds.) Taylor & Francis Group, pp 1-17