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**Title**

What Makes Existential Supervision Effective?

**Abstract for**

Short Communication

**Abstract**

**Introduction.** Supervision is essential for training new therapists and helping experienced practitioners enhance the quality of their therapeutic work. However, research on what makes supervision effective is extremely scarce. To address this gap, we explored supervisory dyads across psychotherapy paradigms, focusing specifically on insights from existential supervision practitioners.

**Methodology.** Seven experienced existential supervisors (aged 43–59, six women and one man; six psychologists and one physician) reflected on their work with eight supervisees. The interviews explored their understanding of supervision effectiveness, evaluations of relationships, and impactful moments. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

**Results.** The findings revealed that existential supervisors perceive effective supervision as a process that responds to the unique needs of supervisees, sheds light on previously unseen dynamics in therapy, helps supervisees develop and reinforce new skills, and involves recognizing parallel processes between supervision and therapy. Supervisors also noted that their own personal maturity was an important factor in enhancing effectiveness.

An egalitarian, trust-based relationship emerged as essential for effective supervision. Supervisors emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and open environment, where humour, a measured pace, and clear boundaries between professional and personal challenges could flourish. Additionally, supervisee motivation and confidence were found to significantly enhance the supervision process.

Conversely, several obstacles to effectiveness were identified, including insufficient time, irregularity in sessions, lack of face-to-face contact, overly pedagogical approaches, avoidance of important topics, and supervisee anxiety or inexperience.

**Conclusion.** These findings reflect how supervisors perceive effective supervision. They identified the qualities and interventions required of supervisors, the qualities of supervisees that enhance the process, the type of relationship needed for effective work, and the obstacles that hinder success.

**About authors.** All authors work in the Department of Clinical Psychology at the Psychology Institute, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University, Lithuania.

Paulius Skruibis is a Professor who teaches existential therapy and works in private practice as a therapist and supervisor, with extensive experience in suicide prevention.

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