What is Supervision?

Summary Sheet

- There are many different models of supervision. This package supports the Reflective Supervision model.
- This model, originally pioneered by practitioners like Dr Daphne Hewson, suggests that supervision should be a safe space where group members reflect on their own practice and facilitate their own learning.
- The aim is to support the practitioner to improve their practice broadly, not necessarily to help out one particular person/family. Although talking about specific cases can provide a way to develop broader practice.
- Learning is achieved by asking questions that help the practitioner to reflect on their practice, rather than offering suggestions or trying to "fix" problems.
- Different stages of practitioner development or contexts of practice may require different kinds of supervision

Supervision is NOT:

1. *Line Management*

Supervision should be a place where people feel safe enough to discuss their own areas of growth. It should not focus on evaluating group members in the way a line manager might need to from time to time.

2. *"Puppet Therapy" or a "Fishmongers".*

Although practitioners at early stages of development might require very direct guidance, peer supervision should work to avoid a dynamic where a person presents a case and the group "tells them what to do". Instead the focus should be on supporting the practitioner to reflect themselves on how they might understand the case better and their options moving forward.

3. *The HR office*

Part of the supervision process is to support the well-being of group members and this sometimes means discussing what is causing them stress. However, if a group is only focused on complaints about various aspects of the workplace, particularly if these are aspects out of the practitioner's control, supervision may become ineffective for the practitioner and unhelpful for other group members.

4. *Purely social.*

Networking and feeling a sense of belonging is an important part of supervision but the focus should be on reflection and learning. Groups may choose to schedule additional time before or after group to catch up socially.