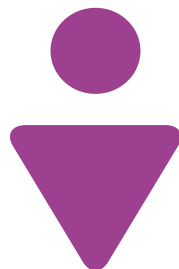




LOCAL RESEARCH ON SUPERVISION

of Social Workers and Other Care
Workers Working in Integrated and
Multi-Disciplinary teams setting in Child
Protection in Kosovo





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This research was conducted by the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE), part of Cardiff University, and within the framework of the Child Protection Hub project, funded by the Austrian Development Agency, Oak Foundation and Terre des hommes. All views expressed in the report are that of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the above-mentioned donors

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Local Research on Supervision of Social Workers and Other Care Workers Working in Integrated and Multi-Disciplinary teams setting in Child Protection in Kosovo

Introduction



This report provides the findings from a mixed-methods study of supervision for professionals working in multidisciplinary child protection teams across a range of Central, Eastern and South-eastern European countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, and Serbia).

Utilising existing services and professional connections within the Child Protection Hub network, this project aims to explore different understandings, standards, and challenges of supervision faced by social workers and other child protection professionals involved in multidisciplinary casework with children and families. The aims of the project were to:

- Provide a snapshot of supervision for child protection professionals working in multidisciplinary team settings across the region.
- Explore the attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of child protection professionals regarding supervision.
- Identify key factors that hinder and promote supervision practices in multidisciplinary team contexts.
- Provide a comparative analysis in the region.
- Identify good practices in supervision.
- Provide recommendations for strengthening supervision across the region and in specific countries.

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Overview of country situation and purpose of the report

This country report is part of the regional report which compares supervision of professionals working in multidisciplinary child protection teams across seven countries. The purpose of this report is to provide an insight into the findings and recommendations of the research project with regards to Kosovo. It aims to describe the current framework for supervision in Kosovo, explore

views and experiences of different actors involved in the process and make recommendations for further improvements.

The development of child protection services in Kosovo is closely related to decentralization which has underpinned the state-building process¹. The decentralization process initiated in Kosovo in 2008 aimed at transferring the decision-making power and provision of services from the central authorities to the local ones. (Kahlert & Danaj, 2018) In light of this process, in 2009, the responsibility for the provision of family services and social services shifted from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to the municipalities. The responsibility transferred to the municipalities is provision as well as management of Centres for Social Work (CSWs). The Centres for Social Work are the local institutions responsible for the delivery of social services in every municipality in Kosovo. The head of the centre is the one who deals with daily tasks such as: case management, monitoring, recommendation, and evaluation in order to ensure the quality of the social service delivery to both children and adults. Nonetheless, the responsibility for managing, monitoring, and inspecting social protection schemes remains within the competence of the Department of Social Policies and Family (DSPF) of Ministry for Labour and Social Work, now shifted to The Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers. The 2021 monitoring report on the process of decentralization of social services in Kosovo found that the process was not completed in any of the seven supervised municipalities. (Mala, 2021)

This has created a limbo in the delivery of social services from CSWs which are understaffed, underfinanced, and overloaded with cases. Against this background, supervision is a new concept, and it has not been regulated by a legal framework. The head of the CSW is the person who, by law, carries out daily tasks similar to supervision such as: case assignments, monitoring, recommendation, and evaluation to ensure the quality of the social service delivery to both children and adults. However, supervision as a word is not mentioned in the role description.

¹ Kahlert, R. & Danaj, S. (2018). Decentralization of Social Services in Kosovo – Policy Challenges and Recommendations. Policy Brief 2018/5. Vienna: European Centre

Social service provision in Kosovo is regulated by The Law for Family and Social Services. Until March of 2022 when this law was updated, supervision was never referred to as a term before. The updated Law for Family and Social Services mentions for the first-time professional supervision as vocational training and mentoring that the social services officers have a right to receive and should receive. The new law also mentions that supervision should be performed by persons who are "trained and licensed in their professional field, supervision, and mentoring". (Article 7.1, Law XX/2021) In the recent years, while there has been no regulation or legal framework for supervision in Kosovo, the civic society institutions have been active in bringing supervision to the attention of public institutions and social work professionals. Last year, TDH in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, provided training for thirty supervisors in Centres for Social Work, on the training module entitled "Supervising professionals involved in child protection in Kosovo", so that supervision can now be made available for a small number of child protection professionals, on a voluntary basis.

Reviews of child welfare practices have acknowledged supervision as an important aspect of the effective delivery of child protection services (Laming, 2009). Effective supervision can help staff feel valued, prepared, supported, and committed and improves retention (Munro, 2011). Lack of supervision can result in work overload, stress, as well as reduction in competence and confidence of social workers. Supervision addresses such issues by playing an administrative case management function where the supervisors regulate the social worker – organisation relationship; a personal support function where the supervisor helps the social workers explore and manage emotions that might arise during practice and an education function where the supervisor provides the social worker with the opportunity to reflect on practice and learn from it. (Bostock et al., 2019)

As mentioned, supervision is a new concept for social work in Kosovo which is reflected in the scarcity of policy documents or legislation that mention supervision in child protection services. According to the recent training module² on supervision developed with the support of Terre des Hommes Kosovo, there is added pressure on social workers when it comes to translating the new and constantly changing law on child protection into their work. The pressure to follow the correct procedures in compliance with the law when deciding to choose a certain course of action can cause great distress and confusion for the social worker, and in many cases, this can be transferred to the children. To bridge this gap between the law and the social worker, the authors highlight the importance of constant supervision as a regulatory mechanism. In this context, the supervisors must be professionals with expert knowledge of the legislative framework, of the policies and guidelines that safeguard social work in child protection in Kosovo and who can operationalize the expert knowledge into practice and communicate it effectively to social workers (Shahini, 2018). The fact that the module recognizes the confusion caused by the new law as one of the main obstacles social workers are faced with, indicates that the law does not serve its purpose of regulating social work in CSWs. Moreover, the author does not mention whether supervision is mentioned as a practice or activity in any of the laws that oversee social work in

² Training Module: "Supervising professionals involved in child protection in Kosovo".

Kosovo. This indicates that there is a lack of a well-defined legislative framework in place for supervision. In fact, the training module is an attempt to create a knowledge bank for supervision which can be used to increase inter-institutional cooperation and implement joint actions regarding the inexistent supervision practice. Another aspect of supervision which is highlighted as very important in the context of Kosovo is the evidence-informed supervision. This pertains to the idea that supervisors need to refer to evidence rooted in research when making a decision. Finally, the module recognizes the gap in local research on supervision of social work which poses the need for supervisors “to develop the ability to use evidence from research outside Kosovo”.



Methodology

This study adopted an observational and exploratory design and used a mixture of different methods to provide a snapshot of supervision in multidisciplinary child protection teams across seven different countries in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe. The study was organised into four work packages, running concurrently to complete the research within the required timeframe (between the start of February and the end of March 2022). The study was led by the lead author of this report, based in the UK, working with a team of local researchers and Country Associates, who were responsible for recruitment and data collection, as well as making a significant contribution to data analysis, writing the individual country reports and having input into the regional report as well.

Sampling

2.1

Purposive sampling was used to select people to take part in the research (Bryman, 2016) For the key stakeholder interviews, the aim was to be able to interview professionals from different stakeholder institutions that could benefit or provide supervision. This was done with the purpose to create a holistic picture of supervision in child protection in Kosovo. The four main institutions that were clustered were: the Division for Family and Social Work as the central government body, the civic society institutions as the non-governmental actor, as a crucial actor in supporting supervision, the Department of Social Work at the University of Prishtina as the institution where the next generations of social workers will be trained at and the Centres for Social Work as the main local government bodies responsible for the direct delivery of social services in the country. Two people per institution were contacted through an email which outlined the purpose of the research and the purpose of the interview. With regards to the survey, an email invitation to take part as widely as possible was sent out to professionals who were part of multidisciplinary teams. For the Q-sorts and follow up interviews the aim was to involve only social workers and supervisors considering the nature of the statements and question strictly related to supervision and social work. The recruitment of the participants was based on snowball sampling and on availability.

Data collection was organised into four work streams, as follows:

1. A brief desktop analysis of supervision policies and procedures
2. Interviews with key stakeholders
3. An online survey of managers and frontline workers in multidisciplinary child protection teams
4. A q-study and follow-up interviews of managers and frontline workers in multidisciplinary child protection teams

2.2 Work stream 1 – Desktop Analysis

The first work-stream involved a desktop review of existing policy and guidance. Available policy documents, white papers, or guidance documents on supervision of child protection workers in Kosovo were scanned. The purpose was to find at least one document that provided an overview of the current situation of supervision in Kosovo. One document was located and analysed using a standardised form of data extraction (Appendix 1). The aim of this work stream was to help understand the policy context for supervision within each country.

2.3 Work stream 2 – key stakeholder interviews

The second work-stream involved interviews with key stakeholders from Kosovo, for example senior managers in child and family-related services, to explore their understandings and conceptions of supervision for frontline staff in multidisciplinary and child protection teams. An interview schedule was developed for use in all seven countries, composed of nine qualitative questions, and an additional five questions for key stakeholders who themselves had direct experience of providing supervision (Appendix 2). The interview schedule was developed by the lead author and used in a consistent way in all the key interviews. Local researchers were able to add additional questions as needed, to respond to what the interviewee said and / or to explore local nuances in relation to the policy and practice of supervision. At the start of each interview, the local researcher provided a standard definition and description of supervision, as follows:

"A process which aims to support, assure and develop the knowledge, skills and values of the person being supervised (the supervisee). It provides accountability for both the supervisor and supervisee in exploring practice and performance. It sits alongside an organisation's performance management process with a particular focus on developing people in a way that is centred on achieving better outcomes for people who use services and their carers."

Interviews were conducted either in English or the interviewee's first language. Interviews were audio-recorded by the local researchers for later analysis.

2.4 Work stream 3 – online survey

The third work-stream involved an online survey, conducted via Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com), distributed via an anonymous, emailed link to supervisors and frontline staff in multidisciplinary and child protection teams. The survey was available in English, as well as Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, or Romanian. The

translation of the survey from English into the other languages was completed by the local researchers and Country Associates. (A complete English-language version of the survey can be accessed [here](#)).

At the start of the survey, respondents were asked to provide basic information about their personal and professional demographics (age range, gender, working pattern and environment, professional background), and provided with the same definition and description of supervision as used in the key stakeholder interviews. Respondents were then asked a screening question, about their own experience of either providing or receiving supervision. Those who provided supervision were asked questions in relation to their experiences of being a supervisor. Those who received supervision were asked questions in relation to their experiences of being a supervisee. If respondents said they both received and provided supervision, they were asked questions in relation to being a supervisor. Those who said they neither provided nor received supervision were asked questions about their attitudes and beliefs in relation to supervision, rather than their own direct experience of it.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to provide data on the provision and nature of their supervision (and / or what they would prefer), for example the frequency and length of supervision sessions, and to complete three standardised instruments - the Helpful Aspects of Supervision Questionnaire (Wheeler and Barkham, 2014), the Leeds Alliance in Supervision Scale (Wainwright, 2010) and the Supervisory Working Alliance (Efstation et al., 1990; Patton, 1992). Respondents were also asked several open-ended questions in relation to their best experiences of supervision, their views on how supervision makes a difference for them and for families they work with, and in relation to barriers and facilitators of effective supervision.

Work stream 4 – q-study and follow-up interviews

The final work stream involved a Q-study and follow-up interviews with supervisors and frontline professionals. Q-studies represent an especially useful method for exploring subjectivity, with a focus on the views, opinions, preferences, and beliefs of respondents. Taking part in a Q-study involves reviewing a list of statements and sorting them using a normalised distribution grid from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Appendix 3). The way the statements are sorted represents the respondent's subjective view about the topic. Alongside the sorting task, respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions to explore their response to the different statements (Appendix 4).

2.5

3

Data analysis

Survey data were analysed using basic statistical tests, to identify mean average responses and standard deviations (for example, for all Likert-scale questions about frequency and length of supervision sessions). The standardised measures within the survey (Helpful Aspects of Supervision, Leeds Alliance in Supervision Scale, and the Supervision Working Alliance) were analysed accordingly (Table 3). Open-text responses in the survey were analysed using Recursive Abstraction, a process also applied to the key stakeholder interviews, to the follow-up questions asked as part of the Q-sorts, and to the documents analysed as part of work stream 1.

Recursive Abstraction (Polkinghorne and Arnold, 2014) is a method for the analysis of qualitative data in various forms, involving a six-step process of data extraction, summation and analysis. Like thematic analysis more generally, the aim of Recursive Abstraction is to identify underlying patterns and trends (Polkinghorne and Taylor, 2019). The difference is that Recursive Abstraction works via an iterative process organised into a series of repeatable steps (Table 4).

Measure	Analysis
Helpful Aspects of Supervision	Contains Likert-scales (from 1 to 5), mean scores calculated in relation to groups of respondents (e.g., those from specific countries.). Higher scores are generally indicative of more helpful supervision.
Leeds Alliance in Supervision Scale	Contains Likert-scales (from 1 to 10), mean scores calculated in relation to groups of respondents (e.g., those from specific countries.). Higher scores are generally indicative of a more positive supervisory alliance.
Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory	Contains 19 items, organised into two subscales (rapport and client-focus). Subscale scores are calculated by averaging the Likert-responses (from 1 to 7) for relevant items (1 to 12 for rapport, 13 to 19 for client-focus). Normative scores derived from Efstation et al (1990) are as follows - 5.44 for rapport, 5.85 for client-focus.

Table 3 Analysis of the standardised measures within the survey

The Q-sorts were analysed using factor analysis, a common method for identifying underlying dimensions within data collections, to describe and account for the variance. It starts, in a Q-study, by looking at the correlations between each of the individual respondents, with clusters of Q-sorts being identified, and combined into idealised representations of different perspectives. Each idealised Q-sort captures and represents the variance of several different participants whose own Q-sorts correlate highly with one another. These resulting factors are interpreted using a qualitative approach, based on the sorting of the statements, and what this suggests about the views, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants it represents, while also drawing on the follow-up qualitative interviews.

Step	Heading	Notes
1	Highlighting the data	Points of interest within interview transcripts are highlighted
2	Extracting the data	Highlighted portions of the transcripts are extract. and placed into a table or spreadsheet, organized by question
3	Paraphrasing the data	Interview extracts are paraphrased while maintaining the original meaning
4	Grouping the data	Paraphrased data extracts are grouped together to form initial themes, with extracts within the same group related. to one another, as well as the theme itself
5	Generating codes	Paraphrased data is replaced with codes, to encapsulate as much of the meaning as possible, in the smallest number of words (steps 4 and 5 are repeated iteratively until the data analysis process is completed)
6	Review of codes	The date emerging at step 5 are the findings. This step is a review process, to check that meanings have not changed or been lost between the previous steps, and to identify patterns in the data (for example, thematic differences between groups)

Table 4 An overview of the process of Recursive Abstraction

4

Findings

To explore the current situation of supervision, desk research of available documents on supervision in Kosovo was carried out resulting in only one module available together with an updated version of the Law of Family and Social Services that vaguely outlines supervision in the context of social work. Furthermore, 30 professionals working in multidisciplinary child protection teams in Kosovo were interviewed and surveyed. Specifically, a total of 5 key informant interviews, 5 Q-sorts, 5 follow-up interviews and an online survey were completed.

	Key information interviews	Survey	Q-method and follow-up interviews
number	5	15	10

Profession	Number
Social worker	8
Medical / health	2
Academics	3
Education / school	1
NGO staff	10
Other	6
TOTAL	30

4.1 Document Analysis

There is a paucity of documents that mention or define supervision in the context of social services in Kosovo. While this research could not locate any specific legislation, government policy or guidance that defines supervision in Kosovo. In Kosovo supervision is a relatively new concept which is not regulated by any official document or law. Terre des hommes has designed the first supervisory training module entitled "Supervising professionals involved in child protection in Kosovo. The module defines supervision as "an interpersonal interaction that increases the effectiveness of a person, group, or team through the provision of expertise by the supervisor" (Shahini, 2018). According to the module, the purposes of supervision include administrative case management, reflecting on and learning from practice,

emotional support, mediation and professional development for social workers. In the case of social care and children's services, the purpose of supervision is said to optimise the capacity of people who use services to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Finally, another main purpose of supervision is to ensure standards of practice of staff, individually and collectively. Supervision is important to both the supervisee and the receiver of the service because it enhances capacities and as a result, it strengthens the support delivered. Also, the knowledge exchange between the supervisor and the supervisee creates a more transparent service delivery. Practitioners from all agencies involved in child protection should receive high quality, consistent and accessible support, and supervision. In the case of Kosovo, it is mentioned that social workers are the ones who should get supervision, especially due to the law of child protection having been adopted only recently (Shahini, 2018)

The document mentions the moral and emotional complexities of the role of the practitioners in child protection as a growing issue worldwide. As such, the authors highlight the importance of constant supervision as a regulatory mechanism. In the context of Kosovo, it is said that due to the child protection law being fairly new, there are even more issues that social workers have to face which increases the pressure on them. Therefore, supervisors can act as the solution to bridge the gap between the social workers and the new legislative framework, leaving less room for confusion and mistakes. While the exact time that should be spent on supervision is not stated, it is highlighted that the need to have constant supervision in child protection in Kosovo is key to deliver better child protection services by social workers. The document mentions the moral and emotional complexities of the role of the practitioners in child protection as a growing issue worldwide. As such, the authors highlight the importance of constant supervision as a regulatory mechanism. In the context of Kosovo, it is said that due to the child protection law being fairly new, there are even more issues that social workers have to face which increases the pressure on them. Therefore, supervisors can act as a support system for the social workers and the new legislative framework. It is highlighted that the need to have constant and continuous supervision in child protection in Kosovo is key to deliver better child protection services by social workers. At last, the module points out the lack of local research on supervision as an added burden to supervisors who are obliged to draw from best practices from outside the country. The lack of research on supervision shows further the little attention that has been paid to supervision not only from a legislative perspective but also from an educational perspective.

It is of importance to mention that the Law for Family and Social Services, which shortly refers to supervision for the first time in an official document, was updated while the research was ongoing. The first draft of the Law was open to public consultation on 1 March 2022. The Law refers to professional supervision as vocational training and mentoring. It is also said that supervision is the social services officers lawful right and should be performed by persons who are "trained and licensed in their professional field, supervision, and mentoring" (Article 7.1, Law XX/2021). However, it does not set out a specific agenda for supervision in Centres for Social Work where social services are provided.

4.2 Results of Key Informant Interviews

For the key informant interviews, 5 professionals were interviewed, respectively:

Supervisor/ trainer in Centres for Social Work as well as NGO representative, Professor of social work at the Social Work Department at the University of Prishtina, Official of the division of Social Work at the Department of Social Policies, Manager of social services at the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers in Kosovo, Social worker at the Centre for Social Work in Prishtina.

The interviewees were asked in relation to the policy and practice of supervision and on their perceptions of the effectiveness, importance, and challenges of supervision. Based on the recursive analysis that followed the interviews, three overarching themes emerged with regards to supervision in Kosovo.

1. Bottom-up approach in effective supervision in Kosovo

Despite the many challenges of supervision in Kosovo such as the lack of legislative regulation and newness of the concept, effective supervision practices were identified when interviewees talked about the history and providers of supervision in Kosovo. While it was mentioned that the local Centres for Social Work should be the providers of all social services, supervision as a concept has been introduced and implemented only by civil society organizations or educational institution officials. Attempts to introduce and implement supervision in Kosovo by the civil society seem to have come in the form of training of local supervisors, training of students of social work, raising awareness in the Centres for Social Work and collaborations with the central government to draft new by-laws for supervision. As one of the interviewees mentioned,

"Supervision in Kosovo has been introduced as practice by civil society organisations who would bring in international experts in supervision to train local staff".

The work of organisations such as Terre des hommes and UNDP was mentioned by 4 out of 5 interviewees as of key importance for introducing, funding, and developing supervision capacities until now. To illustrate this, one of the social workers at the local CSW mentioned as an example of good supervision the current model of double supervision she was receiving as the result of an agreement between Terre Des Hommes and the Centre for Social Work. Considering the overload of cases at the CSW on a daily basis, the Head of the Centre who has purely managerial and monitoring functions, could not perform supervision functions which made the presence of the professional supervisor by TDH very helpful for her and others.

Another interviewee also highlighted how donor funded projects have been the main and only source of funding that supervision has received in Kosovo in the last years.

2. Impact of supervision in Kosovo

The key informants identified how good supervision positively contributed to taking informed decisions in compliance with legislation, manage heightened emotions and feel safer and more confident when delivering services especially for medium and high-risk cases. For example, as one of the social workers put it: *"I am a social worker, not a lawyer so I have to be careful not to make any legal mistakes while carrying out my job. Having someone who has provided me with readily legal advice has made me feel confident to continue with my job without worrying that I will make a mistake."*

Most of the interviewed professionals mentioned the emotional support as one of the main benefits that supervision provides. For example, one of the social worker mentioned how: *"Supervision has helped me as a social worker deal with heightened emotions and with things such as cognitive dissonance that I have often experience while managing cases, especially complex ones"* One of the interviewees also pondered on the confusion that might arise within the social worker as a new graduate due to the difference between theory and practice. The impact of the supervisor in this case was seen as "knowledge transferer" and the bridge between the theory and practice.

On the other hand, interviewees from public institutions paid more attention to the impact of supervision in terms of increased accountability and improved quality of service delivery which goes hand in hand with the individual impact of supervision abovementioned. The improved quality, according to them, stands on the fact that supervision allows a process of knowledge exchange which creates fertile ground for ideas to develop into better tailored action plans for service delivery and thus better outcomes

"As a supervisor, I can see how supervision helps my supervisees learn how to be comfortable and not overloaded emotionally and professionally in managing cases especially the high-risk ones. The cases are overloaded emotionally and can cause great distress on the worker which affects their ability to deal with the case in the best way possible. This is something the law dismisses"

Survey results

4.3

A total of 15 people responded to the online survey in Kosovo, among which 13 were in the role of supervisors and 2 in the role of supervisees. Respondents were mostly female (7) and worked in a range of different fields of practice, with the majority working in social work (11) and the rest in education (1), and NGOs (2). All the respondents worked directly with children and families in the field of child protection and all of them were involved in work within a multidisciplinary team.

Role	Supervisor	Supervisee	Other
Number of respondents	13	2	0

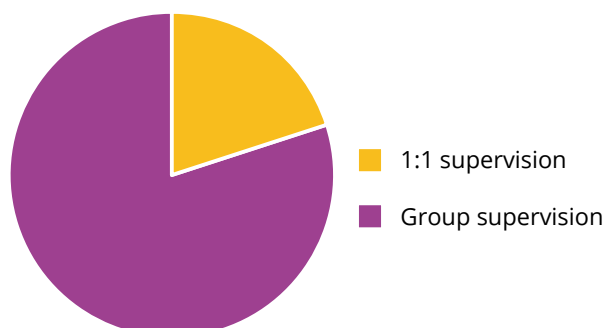
Sex	TOTAL	Male	Female	Full-time working
Number of Respondents	15	2	7	12

Having a high number of respondents in the role of supervisors has provided a clearer picture on the challenges and needs of supervision in Kosovo from the providers' perspective. From a gender perspective the fact that most survey respondents are women complements the key informant sample where men would dominate the direct supervisor roles. This shows that there are no barriers such as gender in overtaking the role of a supervisor in child protection.

Area of practice	Health	Social work / social care	NGO	Education	Other
Number of Respondents	0	11	2	1	1

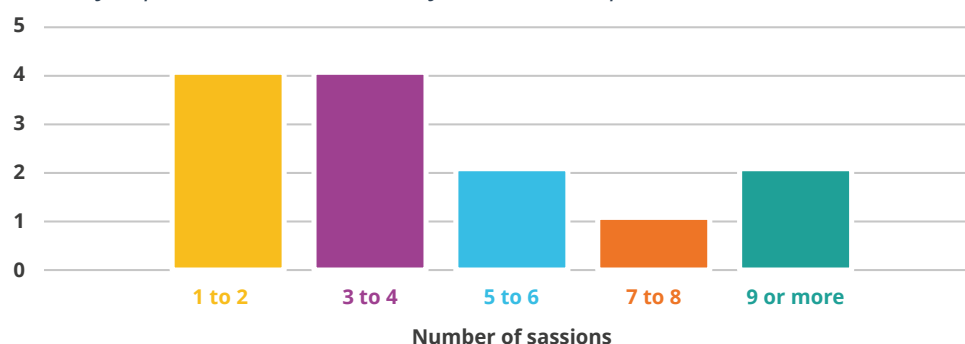
For those respondents who received supervision, the majority (11) have group meetings with professionals who all work with the same family/families, some have group meetings with professionals who might not all be working with the same families, while a significant minority said they received 1:1 supervision (only 3 respondents).

What is the main type of supervision that you receive?



In terms of frequency, the majority of both supervisee and supervisor respondents (9 people) agreed to have received or delivered a small number of sessions over a period of six months (one to four sessions). Only 3 respondents said to have received or delivered five to eight sessions and only 2 respondents said to have received or delivered seven or more supervision sessions in the timespan of six months.

How many supervision sessions have you had in the past six months?



Having a majority of supervisors participating in the online survey proved to be of importance to better understand what was most helpful for the worker during supervision. One of the supervisors mentioned that having daily updated and evidenced documentation on the interventions carried out in case managements for child protection was most helpful to the social worker in terms of providing structure. Moreover, the support on law interpretation further strengthened this structure. Another supervisor said that the most helpful aspect of supervision for the worker was gaining the knowledge on how to match the needs of families and children while reaching the professional objectives as required and constrained by the law or budget cuts. The social workers were eager to learn more on how to improve their approach towards the families and children they were responsible for. This support helped the worker feel more powerful and safe in decision making which in turn was of major help for children and families.. Lastly, it was noted that supervision was helpful to the worker because they discussed the difference between theory and practice. In most cases, theory was very different from practice, and this could cause the worker confusion if it was not talked about.

In terms of rapport, which is used to measure the working alliance between a supervisor and a supervisee, an average rating was calculated based on the responses from all respondents. An average rating of 5.51 was given to rapport and an average rating of 5.34 was given to client focus rapport. The above-average ratings show that there is a strong working alliance between supervisors, supervisees and families and children in Kosovo.

To the question on how supervision can make a difference for social work in Kosovo, all of the respondents to the particular question (5) had written that supervision would make a difference by improving the quality of service delivery to families and children. Furthermore, supervision meetings spark discussions on new approaches that can be used in practice, and this can be used to develop action plans for the future of service delivery. In most cases, theory is not similar to practice, and this could cause confusion on the worker if it was not talked about. This connects to the observation made from the interviewees

of the UP social work department who claimed that the practice can be very demanding for a student who has only been exposed to theory which differs a lot from theory. The common theme connecting these answers pertains to the impact of supervisors in bridging the gap that exists between theory and practice in social work

When asked on what they would change about supervision, all the respondents said they would increase the time dedicated to supervision and ameliorate the conditions in which supervision takes place. They pondered on the importance of having a specific time of the working day dedicated solely to supervision and a well-defined agenda. Others mentioned that they would unify the process of supervision and improve accountability on how the services are provided to families and children. All supervisors mentioned the importance of having a team of experts for the licensing and training of supervisors and legally regulated supervision at the central and local level.

To conclude, supervisors talked about the impact of supervision on families and children. They mentioned how the supervisee felt encouraged to apply the discussed methods in practice proving to be very effective. Moreover, he/she was claimed to have felt more comfortable with regards to confrontation of different situations created with families. This made the supervisees feel more confident. Increased confidence came up in the vast majority of supervisors and supervisees asked on the difference that supervision had made for families and children. This has been vastly connected to having improved decision making as result. Finally, it has been mentioned that both these elements i.e. increased confidence, and improved decision making, have driven more accurate case evaluations and better outcomes for children and families, especially the cases that required urgent help which usually put a lot of pressure on the social worker as it requires rapid decision making.

4.4 Results of Q-method and follow-up interviews

In total, five Q-method interviews were completed. As outlined above, each participant was presented with a list of thirty-seven statements and asked to sort them into a pre-defined grid. The statements were re-used from a previous study of supervision in the UK (Pitt, 2021), and covered a variety of supervision-related areas, including the benefits of supervision for the worker, and for children and families, the ways in which supervision may help support good practice, and potential limitations. The Q-sorting procedure was treated as an interview and completed face-to-face or via Zoom. After completion of the sort, participants were also asked six follow-up questions:

1. Thinking about the statements and the way you have arranged them, are there any that you found particularly easy or difficult to think about? If so, what ones and why?
2. What are the main aims, would you say, of having supervision, for you or for child protection professionals within multi-disciplinary teams more generally?
3. During your supervision meetings, when you're thinking about work with a particular family, what sorts of things would you talk about it?
4. What difference does your supervision make for you? And for the families you work with?
5. What is the best thing about your supervision? Can you give a specific example of something that has been helpful to you?
6. If you could change one thing about your supervision, what would it be?

Q-method participants

Role	Social Worker
Number of respondents	5

Principal Component analysis with Varimax rotation resulted in three distinct factors, each with an Eigenvalue of >1.0 and with at least three significant factor loadings. These factor loadings indicate the degree to which each Q-sort (and therefore each participant) is associated with each factor (table x). Correlations between the factors were moderate, falling between 0.5 and 0.6 (Dancey and Reidy, 2007). The full list of statements and the factor arrays (how they were sorted within each factor) are shown in table 4.

Factor analysis (what each factor represents) is based on the overall configuration of the statements, distinguishing statements, and consensus statements. Distinguishing statements are significantly unique for specific factor, while consensus statements reveal commonalities between participants irrespective of which factor, they are associated with.

Q-sort	Factor A	Factor B	Factor C
35 (Kosovo)*	0.8695	0.212	0.2259
36 (Kosovo)*	0.8695	0.212	0.2259
37 (Kosovo)*	0.8645	0.2042	0.239
33 (Kosovo)*	0.8266	0.3225	0.1435
34 (Kosovo)*	0.779	0.3416	0.1778

Table 4 Factor matrix, with * indicating a defining sort ($p < 0.05$)

	Statement	Factors		
		A Rank	B Rank	C Rank
1	Supervision involves thinking about how the worker's feelings affect their practice	5	-2*	4
2	Supervision involves analysing the worker's thoughts	3*	-4*	1*
3	Supervision involves analysing the worker's values	1	-1*	0
4	Supervision does not require the worker to have much self-awareness	-5	-5	-1*
5	Supervision involves applying theoretical knowledge to practice	-1	2*	1
6	Supervision involves applying research knowledge to practice	-1*	1	2
7	Supervision involves thinking about things that have gone well in practice	2	4*	1
8	Supervision does not include thinking about what went wrong in practice	-4	-3	-1*
9	Supervision involves thinking about what could have gone better in practice	5*	3*	2*
10	Supervision involves the worker thinking about 'why did I do that?'	4*	-1*	-3*
11	Supervision involves thinking about taken for granted assumptions that are held in society	2*	-2*	-1*
12	Supervision does not involve thinking about the worker's personal biases	-1	-1	-1
13	Supervision involves thinking about imbalances of power between professionals and the children and families who use services	0	-4*	-1
14	Supervision involves discussing ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in practice	4*	0	2
15	Supervision helps the worker manage his or her emotions	3	4	3
16	At times, workers may actively avoid having supervision	0	-1	1
17	Supervision can be emotionally difficult for the worker	2	1	0*
18	Supervision has little impact on the worker's decision making	-5*	-3*	1*
19	Supervision enables the worker to think more clearly	3	3	5*
20	Supervision does not enable the worker to develop as a professional	-4	-5	-4
21	The worker does not learn a great deal from supervision	-3*	-2*	-4*
22	Supervision allows the worker to consider different ways of approaching the same problem	1	2	5*
23	Supervision allows the worker to think more 'curiously'	0	1	0
24	Supervision allows the worker to practice in a more anti-discriminatory way	0*	2*	-3*
25	Supervision leaves the worker open to showing his or her weaknesses	-1	0	0
26	Workers can have 'too much' supervision	-3*	0	-2

	Statement	Factors		
		A Rank	B Rank	C Rank
27	Supervision is more about supporting the worker, and not helping children and families	-2	0*	-2
28	Supervision allows the worker to better understand the children and families they work with	1	1	4
29	Supervision helps improve outcomes for children and families	0*	5*	3*
30	Supervision makes it harder for the worker to do their job	-3	-3	-5*
31	Supervision usually ends up producing more questions than answers	-2	-1	-2
32	Supervision allows the worker to practice with children and families in a more relational way	1	3*	2
33	Group supervision for workers in multi-disciplinary teams helps them reach a common understanding of the case	2	2	3
34	It can be dangerous for children and families when child protection workers do not have supervision	-1	0	-3*
35	There are more important things for workers to do than have supervision	-2	-2	-5*
36	I would like more time in supervision to be spent on reflecting	-1	1*	-2
37	Group supervision is especially important for workers in multi-disciplinary teams in the context of child protection work	1	5*	0

Table 5 Factor scores for each of the thirty-seven statements relative to the Q-sort grid. Statements marked with a * are distinctive to the specific factor ($p < 0.05$). Consensus statements are in bold

Factor A – Helping workers identify more clearly what to do in practice

Factor A is labelled “Helping workers identify more clearly what to do in practice”. Participants who highly associated with this factor seemed to consider supervision an important forum for thinking - especially in relation to what has gone well (and why), and about what could have gone better in practice with families. It also includes thinking about feelings in relation to how they affect the worker’s practice, more so than to provide emotional support per se. As one respondent said, in his supervision they talk about how the worker felt, what course of action was chosen and why. As a result, workers think more clearly, having been helped to discuss ethical issues and dilemmas and to reflect on taken-for-granted assumptions. For example, another participant said that one the best parts of his supervision was the possibility to gain experienced advice “on how to persuade parents that he has their best interest at heart”.

This type of supervision has its most significant impact on the worker’s decision-making (although not directly on outcomes for children and families), and the more supervision the worker receives the better. Supervision also helps workers to learn from practice, and this aids their professional development. Yet while supervision helps workers to think clearly, and requires the worker to be very

self-aware, it is not always or necessarily a space for reflecting on what went wrong, for thinking curiously, for applying theory or research to practice, or for exploring multiple ways of approaching the same issue. Supervision is not primarily intended to provide a space for broader reflections on the worker's values, anti-discriminatory practice, or relationship-based practice. It is relatively important for workers in multi-disciplinary teams, but no more so than for workers in other types of teams.

Overall, this suggests a model of supervision in which the worker is helped to think about and learn the right things to do in practice while also being supported emotionally and to develop professionally.

All Q-sort respondents (5) from Kosovo highly associated with factor A as shown in the values presented in Table 5. In fact, this was the highest degree of consensus even when compared to factor B or C. The fact that all participants were social workers explains the reason why they associated more with this factor than the others. From the follow-up interview analysis, the common theme that emerged from respondent's answers on the best thing about supervision pertained to "the discussions about ethical issues and dilemmas that come up in practice."

Factor B – Helping workers to manage their emotions to improve outcomes for families

Factor B is labelled "Helping workers to manage their emotions to improve outcomes for families". Participants highly associated with this factor are ones who consider supervision to be an important forum for emotional support and as a way of improving outcomes for families. This type of supervision also includes some focus on anti-discriminatory practice and more relational ways of working, as well as helping workers to apply theory to practice, and to identify what has gone well (but not why). Supervision thus provides emotional support for workers, requiring self-awareness, as well as making a difference for their decision-making. Supervision is especially important for workers in multi-disciplinary teams.

Overall, this suggests a model of supervision in which the primary aim is emotional support for the worker, and as a method for facilitating work between colleagues. This helps to improve outcomes for children and families, by supporting anti-discriminatory practice, helping workers apply theory to practice and by facilitating more relationship-based work. While in Factor A, the aim is on supporting workers to do the right things in practice, in Factor B there is a more explicit suggestion of what doing the right thing means – namely, being anti-discriminatory, and working in relationship-based ways. No participants from Kosovo were associated with this factor. Drawing from the follow-up interview analysis, this could be explained due to a less frequent practice of supervision for the interviewed participants. For example, when asked to mention one thing they would change about supervision, all the 5 participants mentioned "the frequency of it happening within the Centres for Social Work". The survey results also showed the frequency of supervision varied from 1-5 times in the timespan of 6 months. Less frequent supervision meetings might not leave enough room to create a sustainable emotional support system between the supervisor and the supervisee which might be the reason why no participants from Kosovo associated with it.

Factor C – Helping workers to understand children and families

Factor C is labelled “Helping workers to understand children and families”. Participants highly associated with this factor seemed to consider supervision to be an important forum for developing understanding. Supervision benefits the worker, via emotional support and professional development, but it primarily aims to improve outcomes for children and families. It does so by helping workers develop a better understanding of children and families, especially in the context of multi-disciplinary teams, and of considering different ways of approaching the same problem. Supervision thus helps workers do their jobs more effectively and is one of the most important components of good practice. It also helps to some extent in applying theory and research knowledge to practice. Despite how helpful it can be, workers may sometimes avoid supervision, even though it does not require a great deal of self-awareness on their part or involve an examination of their personal biases or taken-for-granted assumptions about how society works. No participants from Kosovo associated with Factor C. There is a variation between this result and the findings from the follow-up interviews where most of the participants mentioned that their supervision helps them understand families and children better. As mentioned above, he stated that conversations with the supervisor helped him provide better help by *“persuading parents that he has their best interest at heart”*. He gave the example of the 72-hour law that allows him as a social worker to take any decision regarding a child’s situation. However, as he said, he would always prefer to avoid it and find ways how to approach parents and guardians on the matter and that is where the supervisor could help him greatly.



Discussion

As gathered from the key informant interviews, it was learned that more attention has been paid to the importance of supervision of social work in child protection in the recent years through awareness raised by civic society organisations. In light of this increased attention, the DSW at UP has created a module for supervision in collaboration with TDH which has been incorporated in the curricula for the students aspiring to become social workers. In addition, there have been partnerships between organisations such as TDH, the Centres for Social Work and the university to train social workers to become supervisors. Currently there are four social workers at the CSW of Prishtina being supervised and paid for by a contracted supervisor from TDH and by the head of the CSW. In addition, the department of Social Work in collaboration with officials from the state division of social work and UNDP have established a partnership to employ students of social work in CSWs for a year.

Another best practice is the design of the by-law "Multidisciplinary tables for case management" due to the work done by Terre des Hommes in cooperation with Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), now known as the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers. For almost a year, TDH coordinated working groups with members involved in child protection and in cooperation with the MLSW drafted the new by-law mentioned above. However as one of the supervisors mentioned: "The Multidisciplinary tables for case management are a very good idea and regulated by law but they are still on paper."

The initiative of MLSW and the University of Prishtina for the engagement of Social Work students as interns in the CSWs, Residential Centres for the Elderly and Disability in Kosovo as well as in NGOs and licensed by MLSW is another best practice applied last year. This has been the first time that students of social work have had the possibility to receive training in centres for social service delivery. Following this initiative, the development of the training module "Supervising professionals involved in child protection in Kosovo" with support of Terre des hommes Kosovo, has been an important milestone for supervision since it is the first document of the kind written by local experts in Kosovo. The module will not only serve as reference for policymakers, trainers, and trainees but also as a teaching module for Social Work Master's students.

In terms of addressing the lack of trained supervisors, last year 30 professionals were trained and engaged as supervisors for intern students by Child Protection Hub

in Kosovo in cooperation with the MLSW and the Department of Social Work at the University of Prishtina. These practices are important because they show the first steps toward inter-institutional cohesion on supervision of social services in Kosovo.

Challenges

5.1

Lack of legislative regulation of supervision

Despite notable progress in the recent two years in strengthening capacities for supervision there are still major issues prominent in Kosovo. To begin with, provision of supervision in a bottom-up approach is not sustainable anymore. The Centres for Social Work are the institutions entitled to provide social services locally. However, the failure to complete the transfer of decision-making powers from the centre to the local level i.e. the incomplete decentralization process has created major lack of accountability in the context of social service delivery. The limbo in sharing responsibilities from the ministry to the municipalities has caused the Centres to fall behind. This is very problematic in terms of how the processes take place, what are the capacities of the ones who carry out the job, how familiar are they with what they are doing. Child protection in Kosovo needs institutional harmonisation and to strengthen regulation.

The design of a legislation that regulates supervision came up in most survey responses and interview answers as one of the main issues that is hindering the practice of supervision in the country. As one of the supervisors mentioned during the interview:

“The most basic principles in supervision are not respected as I have witnessed during my work in Centres for Social Work. Lack of regulation in local government institutions is the main challenge because it creates a lack of sustainability”

Lack of governmental funding for supervision as a profession

Another issue that has been outlined often in interviews has been the lack of government funding for supervision. For instance, as also elaborated by interviewees, providing supervision is similar to having a full-time job which requires getting paid. If one is providing one's services for free then the entire process will depend on the person's individual will, drive and desire. If processes are dependent on volatile elements such as desire and one's personal will, the system of supervision will be just as non-sustainable.

Lack of trained supervisors

The lack of trained supervisors comes as a direct derivative of the above mentioned challenge of not having proper funding to train new supervisors and incentivize the trainers to deliver it as a service. Despite efforts from civil society. A system needs to be in place.

Lack of inter-institutional cohesion

Although there is more collaboration between different stakeholders involved in supervision in Kosovo in the past 2 years, there is still a lack of the desirable inter-institutional cohesion. From the interviews with professionals from the academia it was observed that there is not much attention being paid to the academia as a place that holds the expert knowledge. The academia should be considered as a point of reference for building a well-established system of supervision in social work in Kosovo. A well-known issue in Kosovo is also the lack of research as it comes up in the document analysis. When interviewing professors from the department of Social Work in Kosovo, the willingness to conduct more research came up often. However, this was hindered by a lack of funds, structure and attention. *"We produce the next generations of social workers, so we should be included in the designation and as partners in the projects for supervision, not only as external tools"*

Another issue that might arise from the lack of local research and reliance on research and evidence that comes from other countries could sometimes prove to be ineffective considering that culture and country conditions are key determinants of the problems that children and families experience.

Risk of getting stuck in a vicious circle

While the local level does not yet have a specific procedure to follow for supervision, the system remains largely unregulated. The reliance on civil society organisations and donor projects provides no solid basis for supervision to flourish. *"Having a sustainable system is necessary to avoid getting stuck with one-time projects that only repeat how supervision can be executed but do not build an infrastructure."*



Recommendations

Establish a legislative framework for supervision within the Law for Family and Social Services to better regulate supervision through undertaking the following actions:

- Extend the current definition of professional supervision by establishing supervision as a profession with clear role and duties at the Centres for Social Work. Defining and profiling supervision will help differentiate between the monitoring function that the Head of CSWs has to perform by law and the supervising function that should be carried out by a trained supervisor. Differentiation of tasks will help alleviate the burden on CSWs at large since it will eliminate some services while increasing the quality of provision of social services.

Division of responsibilities of central and municipal level institutions, to increase accountability at the CSWs and create a sustainable ground for the development of supervision within this system

- Separation of inspection and monitoring functions. It is recommended to define responsibilities between the central and municipal level regarding inspection and monitoring. Inspection should be done from the central level, while monitoring should be done from the municipal level. Supervision is in many cases confused with monitoring and inspection and this will help draw clear lines between the concepts.

Improved financial planning regarding supervision through the application of the financing formula for social services drafted but not yet applied.

- There should be specific funds allocated to supervision as a training process and to supervisors in the form of a fixed financial compensation to address the non-paid work that supervisors undertake while training others. This will form the basis for sustainability in supervision provision. Without payments the provision of supervision remains voluntary, based on the time and the willingness of the individual supervisors.

Supervisors of social work officials and social work officials should be graduates of the social work department to help draw clearer lines and create a more sustainable provision system considering that supervision is a module recently created and taught at the Social Work Bachelor and Master's programme.

- Modify Article 7.1, Law XX/2021 from the "social services officer" can be someone with qualifications from the field of social work, psychology, sociology, law, pedagogy or any other field "closely related to social and family services, licensed and registered in the register of the Ministry." to the "social services officer" can be someone with qualifications from the field of social work.

Establish a sustainable training and licensing unit which will train and retrain social workers to become licensed supervisors. It is recommended that the training unit be accredited, annual and required to increase quality in the delivery of supervision.

Fund more research on supervision of child protection workers in Kosovo

- It is recommended to collaborate with the Social Work Department of UP, both professors and students to fund more research into supervision of child protection workers in Kosovo.



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8

Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1.

Document analysis framework

Is there a separate policy document and / or practice guidance in relation to supervision for child protection professionals?

Link to the document (if available) -

When was it published?

(Year)

When was it last updated?

(Month / year)

Who is it aimed at?

(Which services / professionals?)

How does it define supervision?

What does it say is the purpose of supervision? (Why do it?)

How does it say supervision makes a difference? For who or what and how?

Who does it say should get supervision?

Who does it say should provide supervision?

How often does it say supervision should take place?

What topics does it say should be discussed in supervision?

How does it say supervision should be recorded?

Appendix 2. Key informant interview questions

8.2

In this interview, I want to ask about your knowledge and experiences of professional supervision. Supervision is commonly used in social work and other child protection settings, and usually involves a manager meeting regularly with a worker (or with a group of workers).

During these meetings, the supervisor and worker will talk about what the worker has been doing and whether they are working to agreed standards (accountability), about whether the worker has the skills they need to do their job effectively (development) and will attempt to maintain a positive relationship between the worker and the supervisor (support).

Supervision has been described as:

"A process which aims to support, assure and develop the knowledge, skills and values of the person being supervised (the supervisee). It provides accountability for both the supervisor and supervisee in exploring practice and performance. It sits alongside an organisation's performance management process with a particular focus on developing people in a way that is centred on achieving better outcomes for people who use services and their careers."

Q1. What do you make of this description? Do you recognise it as something that is happening in (your country) or field of work?

Generic questions (for all respondents)

Q2. What is your professional role, how would you describe what you do day-to-day and what your responsibilities are in relation to child protection work?

Q1a (If not clear) Do you directly provide supervision for child protection professionals as part of your role? (Yes / No).

(If yes, encourage them to complete the survey as well).

Q3. How would you describe the current state of supervision in the context of child protection work in (your country) or field of work? How is it provided, what is it for and what does it achieve?

Q4. Can you say something about the history of supervision in child protection work, how has it developed in (your country) or field of work and why?

Q5. Why is supervision important (or not important) in the context of child protection work in (your country) or field of work?

Q6. What policies and procedures guide the provision of supervision for child protection workers in (your country) or field of work?

Q7. How effective do you think supervision is for workers and for families in (your country) or field of work, and how do you know?

Q8. What do you think are the main challenges facing the provision of supervision in (your country) or field of work?

Q9. Thinking ahead to five- or ten-years' time, what would you like supervision to 'look like' in (your country) or field of work and what would need to happen to get there?

Additional questions for supervisors

Q10. Thinking now about the supervision that you provide; how often would you meet with the same worker and what sorts of things would you talk about with them?

Q11. What are the main aims of having supervision discussions with these workers, would you say?

Q12. Thinking specifically about your most recent supervision meeting, how would you describe it? What happened, what did you talk about, and how did you feel at the end?

Q13. How do you think your supervision helps the worker? And how does it help children and families?

Q14. And the final question, if you could change one thing about the provision of supervision in (your country) or field of work, what would it be?

8.3 Appendix 3. Q-sort list of statements

Thinking about the supervision you receive (or provide), to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(If you receive supervision, 'the worker' or 'workers' refers to you; if you provide supervision, think about workers in general).

1	Supervision involves thinking about how the worker's feelings affect their practice
2	Supervision involves analysing the worker's thoughts
3	Supervision involves analysing the worker's values
4	Supervision does not require the worker to have much self-awareness
5	Supervision involves applying theoretical knowledge to practice
6	Supervision involves applying research knowledge to practice
7	Supervision involves thinking about things that have gone well in practice
8	Supervision does not include thinking about what went wrong in practice
9	Supervision involves thinking about what could have gone better in practice
10	Supervision involves the worker thinking about 'why did I do that?'
11	Supervision involves thinking about taken for granted assumptions that are held in society
12	Supervision does not involve thinking about the worker's personal biases
13	Supervision involves thinking about imbalances of power between professionals and the children and families who use services
14	Supervision involves discussing ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in practice
15	Supervision helps the worker manage his or her emotions
16	At times, workers may actively avoid having supervision
17	Supervision can be emotionally difficult for the worker
18	Supervision has little impact on the worker's decision making
19	Supervision enables the worker to think more clearly
20	Supervision does not enable the worker to develop as a professional
21	The worker does not learn a great deal from supervision
22	Supervision allows the worker to consider different ways of approaching the same problem
23	Supervision allows the worker to think more 'curiously'
24	Supervision allows the worker to practice in a more anti-discriminatory way
25	Supervision leaves the worker open to showing his or her weaknesses
26	Workers can have 'too much' supervision
27	Supervision is more about supporting the worker, and not helping children and families
28	Supervision allows the worker to better understand the children and families they work with
29	Supervision helps improve outcomes for children and families
30	Supervision makes it harder for the worker to do their job
31	Supervision usually ends up producing more questions than answers
32	Supervision allows the worker to practice with children and families in a more relational way
33	Group supervision for workers in multi-disciplinary teams helps them reach a common understanding of the case
34	It can be dangerous for children and families when child protection workers do not have supervision
35	There are more important things for workers to do than have supervision
36	I would like more time in supervision to be spent on reflecting
37	Group supervision is especially important for workers in multi-disciplinary teams in the context of child protection work



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LOCAL RESEARCH ON SUPERVISION

of Social Workers and Other Care
Workers Working in Integrated and
Multi-Disciplinary teams setting in Child
Protection in Kosovo

April 2022