Chapter 12
Is There Anybody Out There?
The Role of Technology in Supporting Counsellors and Play Therapists

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ABSTRACT
This explores the possibilities of using technology to support counselling supervision in Africa, with a focus on Kenya, where the cost, both in time as well as financially, can mean that it is not accessed as regularly as it perhaps should be. The purpose and nature of counselling supervision is examined, and the challenges that therapists face in accessing it are reported. Through an evaluation of the literature relating to the effectiveness of technology in supporting counselling supervision, drawing on the authors' own experience of telephone supervision and the views of practising counsellors and play therapists, recommendations are made regarding its use.

INTRODUCTION
In my work as a trainer of counsellors and play therapists in Kenya, it is often commented that, because of the size of the country and the poverty commonly suffered, it is very difficult to access regular counselling and/or play therapy supervision. This chapter begins by examining the concept of supervision and looks at the necessity for counsellors of receiving it. It will explore the possibility of using technology (telephones, email, and Web forums) to provide counselling supervision support through an evaluation of the literature relating to the effectiveness of this type of supervision and draw on my own experience of telephone supervision. The views of practising counsellors and play therapists in Kenya as to the difficulties of accessing supervision in Kenya...
and the possibilities that technology may offer will be reported.

The objectives of the chapter are to explore the concept and necessity for counselling supervision and the role that technology may play in making it more accessible.

BACKGROUND: SUPERVISION, BENEFITS, AND CHALLENGES

What is Supervision and Why do Counsellors and Play Therapists need It?

Supervision is obligatory for Counsellors and Play Therapists in the UK (Feltham, 2002; BACP, 2010a). It is an opportunity to meet regularly with another experienced practitioner to discuss client work. Its purpose is to safeguard the client (Henderson, 2002, p. 26) and to maintain and develop fitness to practice (Lambers, 2003). Supervision has monitoring, evaluative, educational, and quality control functions (Hawkins & Shohet, 2000; West & Clarke, 2004), and Leeke (2008) suggests that supervisors need to be able to be poets, policemen, and plumbers. In other words, she argues that practitioners need the poet to understand the sometimes complex and overwhelming feelings engendered by our therapeutic work and to respond to the hurt inner child that our work may connect us to. We also need our supervisor to be a ‘policeman’—to have knowledge of the law, agency policy, and the principles of ethical decision-making. In addition, the plumber in the supervisor needs to support the supervisee in the ‘how’ by offering their own experience and increasing the confidence of the therapist to try out their own ideas. The supervisory relationship needs to be an adult-to-adult one and what Page and Wosket (1994) call “a reflective alliance.”

What does Supervision Need to Do?

Supervision needs to be able to support the therapist in their work with clients in order to ensure safe, ethical, and effective practice. Both supervisor and supervisee need to focus on the client therapist relationship from a variety of angles to enable this to happen. Inskipp (1999) suggests the supervision process needs to focus on the following areas:

1. The client’s life and experiences
2. The counsellor’s interventions and techniques
3. The process and relationship between client and counsellor
4. The internal experience of the counsellor
5. The here and now relationship and process between counsellor and supervisor
6. The internal experience of the supervisor
7. The systems which may affect any of the others above.

This is encapsulated in the Hawkins and Shohet (1989) ‘Six Eyed Model of Supervision’ with the addition of another ‘eye’ by Inskipp and Proctor (1995), making it the ‘Seven Eyed Model’ described above.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) and Inskipp and Proctor (1995) make the following suggestions regarding working with these seven foci.

In focusing on area 1: ‘The client’s life and experiences, the supervisor and the supervisee are reflection on the content of the session. The focus is on what the client chose to share, which area of life they wanted to explore, how they presented and how this content relates to content from other sessions. The aims of this focus in supervision are to help the therapist pay attention to the client, the choices the client is making and the relatedness of the various aspects of the client’s life.

“It is the task of the supervisor to enable the supervisees to become more aware of what actually takes place in the session” (Shainberg, 1993).