SUPERVISION: SUPERVISED

By

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Based on Consumer Perspective Supervision Framework and Consumer Perspective Supervision course, delivered by inside out and associates

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FADE IN:

1. LAPTOP COMPUTER SCREEN – ZOOM – DAY

WE OPEN on a laptop screen, open in a Zoom call.

SUPERVISOR (29) composed, wearing a black T-shirt is already sitting in front of their computer, patiently waiting. SUPERVISEE (29) hurried, dishevelled, wearing a white t-shirt, appears in their screen, clearly flustered, re-arranging headphones, laptop position.

***NOTE: OUR TWO CHARACTERS 'SUPERVISOR' and 'SUPERVISEE' MUST BE PLAYED BY THE SAME PERSON*.**

A message appears in text superimposed over SUPERVISEE's screen "SUPERVISEE is connecting to audio"

SUPERVISEE
Sorry I'm late

SUPERVISOR
That's okay, we have previously discussed that punctuality can be a challenge for you

SUPERVISEE
Yeah, and I really appreciate your flexibility. I also struggle with time management… I often underestimate how long things are going to take me.

SUPERVISEE looks directly in to the camera.

SUPERVISEE (CONT'D)
(Pointedly)
Like, for example, my final piece of coursework for CPS

SUPERVISOR
(Exasperated)
Don't do that.

SUPERVISEE
What?

SUPERVISOR
No one wants to tolerate your ‘meta’ bullshit

SUPERVISEE
They might…

SUPERVISOR
(Interrupting)
They don’t.

SUPERVISEE
I was thinking, should we make it clear that this is a pretend supervision session between two versions of myself?

SUPERVISOR
Well, they’ll know now, you just told them

SUPERVISOR gesticulates towards camera

SUPERVISEE
But maybe one of us should put on a hat, or a fake moustache …?

SUPERVISOR
No.

SUPERVISEE
Or I could put on accent… (IN AN IRISH ACCENT) Top o’ the morning to you, let’s do some supervision.

SUPERVISOR
Stop it!! They understand, I’m sure…

SUPERVISEE
How can you know?

SUPERVISOR
I’ll ask them, look, you folks understand what is going on right?

Both SUPERVISEE and SUPERVISOR stop talking and look directly into the camera, pausing expectantly

SUPERVISEE
(After a beat)
But we can’t hear them, this is a recording

SUPERVISOR
I know. Shall we get back to it?

SUPERVISEE
(Now in a Scottish accent)
Och, aye

SUPERVISOR rolls their eyes

SUPERVISOR
Well thank you for joining me for our online Supervision, and I'm glad that we can both agree that this is the most convenient way for the two of us to meet. We do find it difficult, if not impossible to be in one room at the same time…

SUPERVISEE looks straight at the camera and winks knowingly

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
We were speaking last time about how you were feeling about your Consumer Perspective Supervision course drawing to a close, have you thought more about that?

SUPERVISEE
I honestly feel a bit conflicted.

SUPERVISOR
Can I ask you to explain that more for me?

SUPERVISEE
Even just the time commitment has me feeling a bit torn. I'm looking forward to getting two hours of my week back, and knowing that I won't need to structure my Wednesdays around needing to have a private space in front of a computer anymore. But at the same time, I have found it really grounding to commit this time to connecting with other Peers and with the Consumer Perspective, and I do not think that I am going to be able to safeguard that amount of time to develop as a Peer practitioner moving forwards. And I worry, will my practice suffer as a result?

SUPERVISOR
That must be a difficult position to be in. I'm curious about what you mean when you say 'your practice will suffer'?

SUPERVISEE
(Pausing to think)
I suppose I just worry that all the people that I currently supervise, and the supervision that I receive myself, it's all internal to my own organisation. I worry that without a connection to something… broader, that I'll get caught up in small, insular problems that affect the Lived and Living Experience Workforces within my organisation, and that I'll get lazy and lose fidelity in working authentically within the Consumer Perspective Supervision framework, and to the Consumer Perspective in general.

SUPERVISOR
Okay, there is a lot to unpack there, but if I may, I'll just remind you that you have a copy of the CPS Framework that you can refer back to at any point, don't you?

SUPERVISEE
Yes, that's true

SUPERVISOR
Just to remind you that you do have that resource. Now in terms of the Consumer Perspective, and your concerns of "losing touch" with it; I wonder if it would be useful to explore what you know about the Consumer Perspective currently. Could you take a moment to describe your understanding of the Consumer Perspective?

SUPERVISEE
Yeah, I can. So I guess my understanding of the Consumer Perspective, and the Consumer Perspective movement is an all-encompassing overview on the collective experience of consumers of mental healthcare services, and I think that Consumer Perspective also has a really firm grounding in the context of time as well; in that we consider the historical experience of consumers/ psychiatric

survivors in the past, and all the progress that has been made by the people who have come before us.
Furthermore I think that consideration of time has to apply to the future as well, I think the Consumer Perspective has to be aspirational and focussed on what as a collective we want for the provision of mental healthcare for people who experience mental ill health or emotional distress in the future.

SUPERVISOR
So, and correct me if I have misunderstood, you see the Consumer Perspective as something that is evolving, or growing?

SUPERVISEE
(Pausing in consideration)
Yeah, I think it is a constantly moving and evolving thing, because consumers' experiences of mental illness and mental health services are constantly changing. And because of that, I think it is really important to consider an "all-encompassing" view of the consumer experience. In that, the consumer perspective includes the viewpoints of people who are pro-psychiatry, anti-psychiatry, and ambivalent to psychiatry. It should include both the voices of people who have only had limited interactions with mental healthcare services, and who may have only had brief experiences of mental distress and also include the voices of people with chronic, ongoing and profound experiences of mental distress or "illness" and with long-standing interactions with mental healthcare services. And of course include all the people that exist somewhere in-between.

SUPERVISEE pauses to think, and SUPERVISOR sits in silence, nodding in gentle encouragement

SUPERVISEE (CONT'D)
And I do think that holding space for newer, or more positive experiences is something that the Consumer Perspective is

currently struggling with and will continue to struggle with.
As a collective of consumers I think we have to push ourselves to grow, and to constantly check in that we are holding the elders of the consumer movement in the highest regard, and with the highest respect, but not falling into holding them in reverence.
It is the similarities and consistencies that exist in all of our individual 'lived and living experiences' that underpins the Consumer Perspective. As we include more experiences, even entirely contrasting experiences, then the depth and nuance of the Consumer Perspective will only grow.

SUPERVISOR
(Earnestly)
That is really interesting to me, I would love to hear more about that. I can relate to the experience of having had a "positive" experience of the mental healthcare system, and that experience feeling misaligned with the general consensus of people's experience of mental healthcare services.
But I would also invite you to consider that the positive experiences that you and I may have had, or that people engaging with services now, instead of five/ ten/ twenty years ago, the very reason that these experiences were positive is directly because of the advocacy of the consumers who have come before us, and who endured the negative experiences and worked hard to change things.

SUPERVISEE
Oh, undoubtedly! And that is why I will always hold the elders of the consumer movement with the highest respect; and acknowledge the traumas and hardships they endured.
But I think it's important to also acknowledge and to celebrate where things have changed, and how some experiences are more likely to be more positive, or perhaps more honestly less actively harmful, than they would have been in the past.

And also bearing in mind the social justice lens across the whole consumer experience, and that my privileged position as a well-educated, white, cis-gendered straight person contributes significantly to my "positive" experience of the mental healthcare system too.

SUPERVISEE pauses for a beat

SUPERVISEE (CONT'D)
(Emphatically)
I think that is the challenge facing the consumer perspective; the difficulty of acknowledging both how far we have come, and also how far we still have to go.

SUPERVISOR
(Nodding)
It is such a good point to remind ourselves of the broader social context that our consumer perspective occurs in. And to consider that while holding these multiple truths, or considering multiple experiences is certainly a challenge, it is also a privilege to get to bear witness to progress, limited though it may be.

SUPERVISEE
Yes, it is! What is really exciting to me, is that it's not only me, it's the people that I provide supervision too and receive supervision from, we are all, right now, building and strengthening that growth of the Consumer Perspective in real time.

SUPERVISOR nods enthusiastically

SUPERVISEE (CONT'D)
I wonder, in the spirit of holding multiple truths; does that align with your interpretation of the Consumer Perspective?

SUPERVISOR
Well, I mean that aligns perfectly with my interpretation of Consumer Perspective because we are literally the same person

SUPERVISEE
Oh, so are we done being coy about the premise now?

SUPERVISOR
Oh, one hundred percent. Being coy is for fish.

Both SUPERVISEE and SUPERVISOR laugh in a self-satisfied/ self-congratulatory way to the point of repugnance.

SUPERVISEE
Ah ha-ha, we are funny.

SUPERVISOR
I wonder if you mind if I come back to something that you said earlier.

SUPERVISEE
Yes, of course

SUPERVISOR
And I actually think this relates really well to what you just described about the Consumer Perspective, before you were talking about being concerned about only providing and receiving supervision within your organisation?

SUPERVISEE
Yes

SUPERVISOR
Well, one of the principles of CPS is precisely that; that Supervisee's can access Supervision that is independent of their organisation. And with that in mind, you made that very clear in the first interaction that you had with each of the people you work on supervision with. And you were told, in these exact words, by the Consumer Lived Experience Worker who is leading the Supervision Project within your service that people's faces "lit up" when they heard you were one of the people they could receive supervision from.

SUPERVISEE
Well yes, that is true.

SUPERVISOR
Ultimately it has to stem back to the value of self-determination. While everyone has the option to choose an external supervisor, they importantly also have the choice to choose someone to offer supervision internally to the organisation. Some people, including the people you supervise might actually like that you do have an intimate understanding of the internal workings of your organisation. Or perhaps they don't like that you work for the same organisation, but they feel they have a connection with you and they are willing to tolerate the fact that you work alongside each other because of that connection. Which is ultimately their compromise to allow or disallow.

SUPERVISEE
See, I sometimes worry that they do just like who I am, but not me as a Supervisor…?

SUPERVISOR
At the end of the day, your self-doubts about being a Supervisor are your responsibility to deal with. And I hope you can sense that I am not trying to be dismissive of the difficulty of trying to be the best supervisor you can be, while grappling with those feelings.
You could always share those experiences of self-doubt with your supervisees, and you might actually find that generates a meaningful conversation. That sense of being an "imposter" is very common among Lived and Living Experience Workers.

SUPERVISEE
That is true, and when I have been honest and a bit vulnerable with Supervisees in Supervision previously I have found it has led to really deep conversations.

SUPERVISOR
And again, I'll remind you, we allow folks to self-determine what successful supervision looks like to them, and as supervisors we don't hold the weight of

the responsibility for them receiving quote unquote good supervision. That is a shared responsibility we have to each other, not for one another. Together we build a trusting mutual relationship, where we both learn together.

SUPERVISEE
And I do feel like I am learning a lot within Supervision when I am the one "providing" Supervision!

SUPERVISOR
That's great! How else do you feel about the experience of providing Supervision?

SUPERVISEE
It can be draining… it can "take" a lot from me. But I feel good about myself when I am doing it, and I definitely feel a deeper connection to the work in providing Supervision.

SUPERVISOR
It sort of makes sense that it should be a bit draining or exhausting. I think that probably demonstrates that you are really being present and focussing on the person in front of you, and what it is they need from you in that moment.

SUPERVISEE
I certainly try to

SUPERVISOR
So long as you're making sure it is sustainable for you, and you're taking steps to know your own limits and boundaries.

SUPERVISEE
That is something I think I will have to work on, as I start providing more Supervision.

SUPERVISOR
Would that be something you would like to work on or discuss more in a future Supervision session?

SUPERVISEE
Yeah I think so

SUPERVISOR
Would you like for me to bring it up, or wait for you to prompt me to have that conversation?

SUPERVISEE
I think I would appreciate you bringing it up to remind me, because I think it is important but I might forget in the moment

SUPERVISOR
Of course, no worries, would you mind if I enter a note into my phone as a prompt for myself?

SUPERVISEE
Yeah that's okay.

SUPERVISOR
Thank you. That makes it a lot easier for me to remember.

Well this probably feels like an organic place to wrap things up.

SUPERVISEE
I am a bit unsure how exactly we ought to finish this thing up. Usually in real Supervision, I'd arrange our next session now, or at least suggest that we arrange the next session and see what the Supervisee thought about that. But seeing as how this is just a pretend conversation that I scripted with myself, there won't be a next session

SUPERVISOR
I too was wondering about how we could end this. I thought we could maybe go back to one of your earlier, more frivolous suggestions.

SUPERVISEE
Go on…

SUPERVISOR
Where we adopt Irish accents

SUPERVISEE
(In an Irish accent)
I love it, and you know, I also suggested hats and I do actually have a hat available!

SUPERVISEE reaches out of frame and grabs a helicopter hat (one of those colourful caps with a propeller on top). They puts it on their head, and then tap the propeller to start it spinning

SUPERVISOR
Excellent! I'll see if we can get Danny Boy to start playing now… That'll really ramp up the Irish-ness. Surely that is in the public domain?

SUPERVISEE
Surely

The song DANNY BOY STARTS PLAYING slowly increasing in volume as the conversation slowly starts decreasing in volume.

SUPERVISOR
(In an Irish accent)
You know, I'm not actually that good at an Irish accent. I don't know why I suggested it

SUPERVISEE
(Now in a Scottish Accent)
Aye, I dunnae know why you didn't say Scottish, you wrote the script

SUPERVISOR
(Normal voice)
Our Scottish is no better, American is easier. (ADOPTING A SOUTHERN AMERICAN ACCENT) Let's do Supervision y'all

SUPERVISEE
(In a British accent)
I find the word yoghurt really helpful as a hook. Yoghurt, yoghurt.

SUPERVISOR
(In a Californian accent)
Yoghurt, yoghurt, yoghurt.

SUPERVISEE
(Back to a Scottish accent)
Yoghurt, yoghurt.

SUPERVISOR
(Normal voice again)
Okay, okay, let's put us all out of our misery

DANNY BOY is playing at a loud volume now.

SUPERVISOR furrows their brow and moves the mouse on the screen, to the Leave Meeting button. The message 'End Meeting for all' appears on screen. A mouse hovers over, and then clicks 'End Meeting'.

BLACKOUT

FIN

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