

Reflecting on your role

Accessing professional supervision in a COVID-19 environment

by JASMINE HARDING

For most of our client organisations, many people's day-to-day roles have had to rapidly adapt to COVID-19, and navigate what comes next. Understandably, this can be an unsettling time as organisations work out which daily business operations are viable and which need to be set aside or managed differently. At an individual level, people are working out their new work duties and responsibilities.

As we navigate these times, accessing “professional supervision” becomes even more important and ideally should be viewed as a sign of professionalism. Professional supervision is not task-focused “supervision”, for example of workflow or outputs, such as a line manager might carry out in a work planning session. Instead, it is designed to support you to reflect on your work practices, to monitor the impact of your work and maintain a good and sustainable level of wellbeing. It is a way of learning – and building - invaluable self-supervision skills to apply across many of the work challenges you, and your colleagues, will face.

Right now, COVID-19 presents some challenges to maintaining relationships with clients, stakeholders and colleagues. In some work settings, it has led to a sudden increase in highly reactive work or unpredictable fluctuations in workload and work tempo. It also makes it difficult to put clear boundaries in place around our work and to physically and mentally detach from work at the end of the day.



Professional supervision can be set up internally within your organisation and can be carried out one-to-one or as a group. It can enable people to reflect on their work, and to consider for a moment not just how to react to the next crisis, for example, but to proactively think through how to maintain wellbeing and team cohesion through those crises as they arise. Professional supervision can also be carried out with an independent professional external to your organisation, who can help you apply evidence-based principles and practices for work that is both productive and healthy. Ideally, employees have access to both internal and external forms of supervision.

Within our Umbrella clinic, we have a team of highly trained psychologists who are able to offer professional supervision as we navigate COVID-19 and move forward. Supervision can help explore how you most effectively operate within your role during this time, identify and plan for self-care, and receive objective feedback and guidance related to work issues and decisions.

Professional supervision is about taking care of yourself and about becoming more self-aware and skilled – and is therefore useful for everyone in any professional role.

Contact Jasmine to find out more. jasmine@umbrella.org.nz