
Editorial

In compiling this special edition of *Self and Society* on supervision, we are expressing our strong belief in the value of regular ongoing supervision for all those in the helping and caring professions. What may have in the past been seen as an indulgence, is increasingly being recognised as an essential part of working with others. Even in the time of cutbacks, as teachers of supervision skills we have still found that organisations in the helping professions acknowledge that without supervision, staff burnout would be higher, and the quality of work would suffer. This we think is just as true, if not more so, for the therapist who is working freelance. Certainly, in the times when we have not been in regular supervision, we have noticed that our work might have ticked along alright (although sometimes it didn't), but on restarting supervision we became aware of how much we had been missing.

So many professions act on the assumption that supervision is important for those in training, or those newly qualified, but "once you know what you are doing" the need for receiving supervision ceases. This belief is the opposite of the fundamental beliefs of Humanistic Psychology that see learning and development as a life long process; that nobody arrives at the point where they have no blind spots, areas of restimulated distress or nothing to learn about how they relate to others. Indeed the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners in this country has written into its membership criteria that all members must be in either individual or peer-group supervision and committed to: "continuing personal and professional development for practitioners".

Although there is plenty of literature on different forms of therapy, the literature on supervision, and especially humanistic therapy supervision, is comparatively scarce. In this edition we have tried to provide an overview with Peter Hawkins' article on a variety of different supervision approaches and techniques. Gaie Houston gives useful guidelines for peer supervision groups. Having been in one for several years, we are both advocates of this form of supervision. Joel Badaines shows how different supervisory

methods and ways of getting data affect what is brought to supervision, and weighs up advantages and disadvantages of each method. Jerome Liss focuses on non-verbal methods, and the article by Joan Wilmot and Robin Shohet shows how the relationship between supervisor and supervisee can parallel the supervisee's work with their clients. Finally David Smith's article provides an understanding of how to use the information from the client's unconscious as a source of supervision.

This collection of articles opens up some of the important issues and themes in supervision, and we would welcome comments, further articles, and personal accounts of either giving or receiving supervision so that we might, at a later date, compile another special edition.

Robin Shohet and Peter Hawkins
