

## ***Dialoguing about Supervision: From Technique to Relationship***

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this dialogical article is to draw attention of a professional audience to the role and place of supervision in contemporary Gestalt therapy, to raise questions related to its characteristics, complexities, and contradictions, and to highlight potential developmental prospects.

The article presents the dialog between the editorial team and three experienced Gestalt therapists with extensive supervision practice: Peter Schulthess, Bertram Müller, and Pablo Herrera Salinas, who respond to the questions on supervision in Gestalt therapy.

Their answers allow a rich tapestry of perspectives and insights on the topic. The therapists brought their own unique experiences and expertise to the discussion, offering valuable reflections on the role of supervision in Gestalt therapy. The article particularly emphasises the importance of relational dynamics in supervision and accentuates the parallels between therapy and supervision, advocating for a holistic approach that integrates personal aspects into the supervisory process. It draws the reader's attention to Gestalt terminology, the nuances of language and concepts (such as the self, personality-function, diagnostic assessments, etc.), and brings a focus on practical considerations in supervision, stressing the need for structured approaches to supervision, especially for novice therapists.

A significant part of the discussion is devoted to the topic of shame and vulnerability in both supervisee and supervisor. Strategies for minimising a fear of judgment, recognising shame, and fostering opportunities for growth are explored. In conclusion, "blind spots" and areas for further analysis are illuminated. Notably, there is a need for more literature and theoretical framework concerning the relational Gestalt approach in supervision. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of clinical supervision in enhancing client outcomes is identified as essential, suggesting a call for the evaluation and refinement of supervision practices.

*Keywords:* supervision, Gestalt therapy, theory of organism/environment field, the self, contact.

## ***Supervision in Gestalt Therapy: The Situational Perspective as an Antidote to Shame***

### **Abstract**

This article draws on the various Gestalt studies on supervision, highlighting how each apply the principles of Gestalt psychotherapy. However, the humanistic turn that places the patient/therapist relationship in existential equality does not find clear application in the examples of Gestalt supervision, in the background of which the gap between those who know more and those who know less remains as the epistemological definition of the supervisory relationship. The author therefore proposes to revise the concept of supervision in Gestalt psychotherapy as a recognition of the therapeutic intentionality of the supervisee, within the

phenomenological field co-created by supervisor and supervisee. In practice, the supervisor will apply this concept by shedding light on what the supervisee already knows about the patient, diagnostically, anamnethetically, aesthetically, and relationally, and by supporting the intentionalities of both therapist and patient, which form the phenomenological field or supervisory situation. The author proposes at this point guidelines for how supervisors can actualise this perspective in clinical practice.

*Keywords:* phenomenological field, situational supervision, recognition, Aesthetic Relational Knowledge, humanistic psychotherapy.

## ***Gestalt Supervision During Stages of Development***

### **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to give attention to supervision in childhood and adolescence.

Although supervision is a vitally important part of clinical training in child psychotherapy, it does not seem to have been addressed adequately in the literature.

This article will also emphasise the specific characteristics of therapeutic work with children and adolescents, which requires supervisors and supervisees to share knowledge of the complex world of minors and its ecosystem (Dowling & Kitchener, 2023). This work also requires greater responsibility on the part of the supervisor, both due to the young age of the patients and the complexity of the field in which we move as therapists and as supervisors.

The content in this article stems from the author's experience as an individual and group supervisor of psychotherapists who work with children and adolescents in both private and institutional contexts. The reflections that are brought forward also emerge from the context of the international training for supervisors at the Gestalt Institute HCC Italy, where she leads a seminar on supervision in the developmental age according to Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb's model (Spagnuolo Lobb, 2024).

The supervision case presented here is not intended to be an exhaustive example of supervision in the various stages of development, but rather is an interesting example, because it shows the complexity of working with minors, the need to deal with different actors, the delicacy of the encounter with the young patient, and the need to work inside and outside the setting. Following Spagnuolo Lobb's supervision model, we will see how the supervisor gives support to the therapist's intentionality of contact, knowledge, and resources, while maintaining a broader view of the situation.

Through a clinical case, we will see how to work in developmental supervision through specific realms of recognition, also including the therapist's relationship with parents, family, and the social and educational community.

*Keywords:* supervision, child psychotherapy, intentionality of contact, reciprocity, recognition.

## ***Supervision from a Gestalt Therapy Perspective***

### **Abstract**

This article is an edited version of a chapter entitled “Experiential Supervision”, which appeared in the book *Handbook of Psychotherapy Supervision*. The article examines quality supervision as an application of the philosophy of Gestalt therapy (i.e., the principles of phenomenology, dialogue, and field theory) and how the practice of Gestalt therapy supervision follows from Gestalt therapy principles. Supervision is discussed as creative adjustment and in terms of the Paradoxical Theory of Change and the Dialogic Relationship. Three functions or components of supervision (administrative, educative, and consultative) are discussed in terms of the requirements of each function and variations that arise from the requirements of agency, community, and the experience level of the supervisee. Gestalt therapy theory and supervision practices are discussed in reference to each component. Supervision and psychotherapy are compared and the methodology of Gestalt therapy supervision is discussed, including the experiential method, parallel process, the role of theory in supervision, the sequence of supervision and interferences with supervision.

*Keywords:* Gestalt therapy, supervision, consultation, training, parallel process.