

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED BY SUPERVISORS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE
SUPERVISION FOR CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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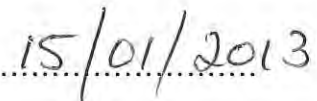
DECLARATION

I declare that KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED BY SUPERVISORS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION FOR CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.


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Signature

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Date

15th January 2013

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ABSTRACT

Many child and youth care organisations in South Africa struggle to implement adequate supervision structures for their child and youth care workers. If supervisors in this field had adequate knowledge and skills, they could enable child and youth care workers to grow and develop competently and provide more professional services to troubled young people in South Africa. This qualitative research sought to identify what knowledge and skills supervisors need in child and youth care settings in South Africa to provide effective supervision to workers. This research confirmed that there are specific skills and knowledge required by supervisors in child and youth care settings in South Africa and while there is an awareness of these in some settings, they are not being fully utilised in organised supervision structures.

Key terms:

Child and youth care worker; child and youth care; supervisor; developmental work; parallel process; knowledge; skills; multi-disciplinary team; supervision; relationship.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

This chapter is an orientation to the research study and provides an introduction and background to the knowledge and skills required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa. After presenting an introduction and problem formulation, the research question, goal and objectives of the study are formulated. In presenting an overview of the research methodology the attention falls on the research approach and research designs followed; the population, sample and sampling techniques; preparation for data collection; data collection as such; verification of the data; and ethical considerations. Key concepts are clarified, the challenges and limitations experienced during the research are pointed out and in conclusion of the chapter the structure of the research report is presented.

In the researcher's experience of dealing with numerous facilities in the child and youth care field in South Africa since 1972, the lack of adequate supervision in this field has been clearly apparent and has often been highlighted by personnel concerned as a gap in their support systems. In the researcher's experience, supervision structures may sometimes be in place, but are seldom used adequately. As Henry Maier (1987:195) generally regarded as the "father" of child and youth care practice emphasises, "Supervision serves to assist child/youth care workers to become more effective in their work through an enrichment of skill and knowledge repertoire." However, if workers have skills and knowledge, but do not receive support through adequate and professional supervision, they may find it difficult to implement what they know and are able to do in any meaningful way.

Child and youth care workers use the knowledge from their training in their work with children and families. Thumbadoo (2005:149) adds that supervision is of critical importance to child and youth care workers as it gives workers the chance to reflect

on their knowledge application and their use of themselves, thus developing professional practice and knowledge utilization in child and youth care.

It has long been a concern amongst practitioners that adequate supervision in the field of child and youth care is apparently lacking, and the researcher has the impression that one of the reasons why child and youth care workers often fail to translate theory into effective practice is that they lack the support derived from regular, professional supervision. Beukes (1990:129) substantiates this in her study on the training of child and youth care workers in South Africa, by saying that the training of workers needs to be supplemented by training and supervision in the children's homes themselves. The author stresses that social workers receive little training in supervision and yet they are often expected to supervise child care workers (Beukes, 1990:129, 135). It has been the researcher's professional experience that in South Africa, many supervisors in the field of child and youth care do not have the knowledge or skills needed to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers.

Unfortunately, supervision is the task that is most frequently sacrificed to deal with the daily crises, for unexpected meetings, and administrative demands that always arise in child and youth care settings. As Garfat (2001:2) says in this regard, "There is always a reason; justifiable and important which keeps us from supervision."

Garfat (1992:2) emphasises that a direct relationship exists between the quality of supervision and the quality of service delivery to clients. If child and youth care workers are not provided with effective supervision, they will not grow or develop and, consequently, neither will their services. According to Borders (2001:3) good supervisors are aware that they are responsible for what happens to, or for, the client as well as what happens to the supervisee. Supervisors (in child and youth care), Borders (2001:3) states, should remember that the focus is the young person and his or her family, and that the support of the worker is the most important means of ensuring quality services.

Scott (2005:96) adds to this by emphasising that supervision should improve the quality of the interactions and interventions of child and youth care workers, so that they are able to develop and grow.

Garfat (2001:3) states that child and youth care workers focus on the relationship between themselves and young people, and that supervision should focus on the relationship between the supervisor and the worker. He stresses that supervisory interactions are a good opportunity to assist workers to learn about the 'doing' of their work by experiencing a similar process in their supervisory relationship, emphasising that as we work with youth, so too should we work with staff.

In the researcher's experience as a supervisor in the field of child and youth care in South Africa, she has encountered some of the following difficulties pertaining to supervision in the field:

- Many child and youth care workers in South Africa who have formal qualifications in the field, have obtained these through distance learning. This means that they have needed practical assistance and supervision to implement what they have learnt.
- Because many of them have been supervised by professionals who themselves are not child and youth care workers such as social workers, teachers or psychologists, who have not studied in this field, their supervision has not always been appropriate to child and youth care.
- Another observation made by the researcher is that organisations often place child and youth care workers who have a formal qualification, into supervisory positions because they have a qualification. Some of these workers may not have had a chance to feel competent as on-line workers and are then placed in supervisory positions with little or no training in how to supervise. Hence they struggle with their competence as workers and supervisors.

It therefore seems that there is a need to expand the knowledge base and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa. In order to gain more understanding of this situation and the problems experienced by organisations, supervisors and workers concerning supervision practices and to draw guidelines to rectify it, this research has focused on what knowledge and skills supervisors require to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

In order to deal with the research problem as set out in the preceding section, a research question, goal and objectives for this research, each respectively entailing the following were formulated:

1.2.1 Research question

In the problem-definition phase of a research project, the research process begins with an area of interest and gradually generates specific ideas for the study. One or more clearly posed questions are formulated, based on a well-developed knowledge of previous research and theory, as well as on the scientist's own ideas and speculations. The conceptualising and phrasing of the research question is regarded as being critical as the complete research process will be aimed at answering that research question (Graziano & Raulin cited by Fouché & de Vos, 2005a:100).

Against this background and derived from the title of this research report, the research questions explored in this research undertaking are the following:

- What knowledge is required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa?
- What skills are required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa?

1.2.2 The research goal

A research goal (purpose or aim) is regarded as being the “dream” that one wants to achieve with the research project (Fouché & de Vos, 2005a:104). It is regarded as being the phase that answers the “what” question – what is it that one wants to find out? “This phase is sometimes called ‘focusing’ ” (Fouché & de Vos, 2005a:100).

The research goal of this study is to develop an in-depth understanding of the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

1.2.3 Research objectives

The research objectives of a research project are the measurable steps taken to realize the goal of the research (Fouché & de Vos, 2005a:104). In order to achieve the above research goal the following research objectives were identified for the study:

- To explore the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.
- To describe the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

To execute these research objectives they were broken down into the following task objectives:

- To obtain a sample of focus groups consisting of directors of organisations and programmes responsible for child and youth care; supervisors of child and youth care workers; and child and youth care workers.
- To conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with the focus groups to explore the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers.
- To sift, sort and analyse the data obtained according to the eight steps of qualitative data analysis constructed by Tesch (in Creswell 2009:186).

- To subsequently describe the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers.
- To analyze and interpret the data and conduct a literature control in order to verify the data.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In a research report of this nature “the research methodology is described comprehensively, so that the reader develops confidence in the methods used” (Strydom, 2005c:252). The methodological outline of this study is structured in terms of the research approach; research design; population, sample and sampling techniques; preparation for data collection; data collection; data analysis; data verification; and ethical considerations, that comprised the following:

1.3.1 Research approach

In this research project a qualitative research approach was followed. Henning (2004:5) states that qualitative research refers to the type of inquiry in which the qualities, characteristics and/or properties of a phenomenon are examined in order to gain a better understanding and explanation of the situation. She says that when using this approach, we want to find out not only *what* happens, but also *how* and *why* it happens in the way it does (Henning, 2004:3).

Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson (2002:717) define qualitative research as “...a broad umbrella term for research methodologies that explore, describe and explain persons’ experiences, behaviours, interactions and social contexts without the use of statistical procedures or quantification.” They add that qualitative research allows one to develop knowledge in poorly understood and complex areas. Denzin and Lincoln (2003:5) state that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their

natural settings, attempting to make sense of them and interpret them in terms of the meanings which people give them. These authors also mention that qualitative research implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured, but rather stress the socially constructed nature of the reality, the relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln. 2003:13).

Fouché and Delport (2005:74) emphasise that the qualitative research paradigm refers to research that elicits participant's accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions, producing prescriptive data from participants and involving the participant's beliefs and values which underlie the phenomena.

Creswell (2009:175-176) highlights the following specific characteristics of qualitative research:

- Natural setting – Data are not collected in a contrived setting – it is usually collected in the participant's place of work or a similar setting. Instruments are not sent to individuals to complete, but information is collected by means of talking to people and observing their behaviour and interactions within a specific context.
- The researcher is a key instrument – Researchers using this methodology collect data themselves using interview guides or instruments which they have developed.
- Multiple sources of data – Qualitative researchers tend to gather data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and documents, rather than rely on a single source. They then review and organise this data.
- Inductive data analysis – Researchers using this methodology build patterns, categories and themes from 'the bottom up' by organising the data and themes until they have established a comprehensive set of themes. This may often involve participants.

- Participant's meanings – Throughout the qualitative research process, the researcher keeps the focus on participant's ideas and the meaning they have ascribed to the issues at hand.
- Emergent design – The initial plan for the research may change as more data is collected and themes emerge. Qualitative research involves learning about the issues from participants and adjusting the research if necessary.
- Theoretical lens – Qualitative researchers may use a social, political or historical context in their data collection.
- Interpretive – In qualitative research, researchers make interpretations of what they see, hear and understand and obviously this will be influenced by their own backgrounds and personalities. Those reading the document will also make interpretations as well as the participants. Thus, many views of the problem can emerge.
- Holistic account – Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex and in-depth picture of the topic being studied and include various perspectives. Because many aspects are reported and identified a holistic picture is often presented.

As accounted in the next section, in selecting the topic of the knowledge and skills needed by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa, the qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate research approach to supply the necessary information and allow for the flexibility in the collection and interpretation of data.

1.3.2 Research design

Creswell (cited by Fouché, 2005:268) defines research design in the qualitative context as “the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing the narrative.” Creswell (2009:3) then expands on this by explaining that research designs or approaches are plans and procedures that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. He highlights three types of research designs or approaches as follows:

- Qualitative research designs – a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems.
- Quantitative research designs – a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship between variables.
- Mixed method research designs – an approach which combines both qualitative and quantitative forms (Creswell, 2009:3-4).

In this research, the qualitative design approach was the most appropriate approach as the topic required exploring and understanding how groups felt about the knowledge and skills needed by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa. Therefore the research design applied in this research comprised an exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design.

Fouché and de Vos (2005a:106) describe *exploratory research* as the type of research which is undertaken to gain insight into a situation or phenomenon when there is a lack of knowledge on a specific area or out of interest in a specific topic relating to the situation or phenomenon concerned. This research design was chosen for all of these reasons. The researcher wanted to gain insight into how professionals in the field of child and youth care understood the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers, gain knowledge about what the current problems in this area are, and because the researcher has been involved in supervision in this field for many years and has a particular interest in the subject.

Fouché and de Vos (2005a:106) say that although exploratory and descriptive research are similar, *descriptive research* focuses on more specific details of a situation and the 'how' and 'why' questions relating to the topic. Descriptive research has a well-defined subject, wanting to understand basic facts and create a general picture of conditions. In this research paper, although exploratory research was used, descriptive research was applied more thoroughly because the researcher had

specific questions to ask the focus groups and wanted to understand and describe basic facts about the general situation regarding supervision in the field as experienced by the participants.

As Babbie and Mouton (2001:272) say, qualitative research aims to understand events in *the context* within which they take place. They maintain that the events can only truly be understood if seen in the context of their background. Neuman (2000:146) emphasises the importance of the social context surrounding a study, saying that the researcher needs to take cognisance of what came before the study, what surrounds it and how essential it is to take into account cultural and historical factors. Therefore a contextual research design was applied in this research to gain insight into how professionals in the field of child and youth care understood the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers and gain knowledge about current problems in this area.

1.3.3 Population, sample and sampling techniques

The concepts population, sample and sampling techniques and their application in this study entail the following and their application in this study, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.3.3.1 Population

Strydom (2005b:194) describes a population as “the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned.” Babbie and Mouton (2001:100) add to this that the population is a group of people about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions. They add that because the researcher can seldom study all members of a population that interests them under every condition, they select a sample from the population which gives an adequate reflection of the whole population which interests them (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:100).

The researcher wanted to draw conclusions about what knowledge and skills would be helpful to supervisors across South Africa in child and youth care settings. Therefore, the population for this research study comprised child and youth care practitioners in South Africa.

1.3.3.2 Sample

As stated by Neuman (2000:196) the qualitative researcher's primary aim is to choose a sample which will clarify and deepen understanding of the topic. A sample is described as "a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons which together comprise the subject of our study" (Seaberg cited by Strydom, 2005b:194). In this study the sample comprised 16 participants who were all practising as directors of organisations or programmes, supervisors or child and youth care workers in various child and youth care settings.

The factor which determined the number of participants comprising the sample was that of data saturation. Thomson (2010:45) says that saturation is affected by the scope of the research question, the sensitivity of the phenomena and the ability of the researcher. Strauss and Corbin (cited in Thomson, 2010:46) mention that data saturation is reached when no new or relevant data emerges. Seidman (in Greeff, 2005:294) adds that saturation is "the point ... where the researcher begins to hear the same information repeatedly being reported and he no longer learns anything new." Thomson (2010:50) refers to the fact that saturation can only be assessed during the data collection process. A sufficient number of participants have been involved in a sample once saturation of data is achieved.

Three focus groups were convened, one group for each of the three sets of participants, namely, directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers. All three groups met a second time for feedback, allowing for the fact that in the feedback group, there would be an opportunity to collect more data if necessary. Certain new information was collected in the feedback groups, but the majority of the

discussion was repetitive, which indicated to the researcher that data saturation had occurred.

1.3.3.3 Sampling techniques

In qualitative studies non-probability sampling methods are used (Strydom & Delport, 2005:328). The types of non-probability sampling techniques applied in this study were purposive sampling, convenience sampling and snowball sampling. The selection of the sample and the application of the sampling techniques are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 (paragraph 3.4.1).

Durrheim and Painter, (2006:139), state that non-probability samples are selected not according to statistical randomness, but rather according to accessibility and convenience. Strydom (2005b:202) mentions that the danger of this is that, because the researcher plays a very prominent part in the selection of these participants, there is the possibility of bias.

In this study the researcher made use of non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling, convenience sampling and snowball sampling, as there is no comprehensive list of the population being researched and the researcher wanted to do an in-depth study of the topic under research.

1.3.4 Preparation for data collection

Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles (2005:13) state that it is crucial that researchers understand the information needs of the group they want to research and use this knowledge to provide information in a way that will enable potential participants to understand what participation will involve. Therefore, the researcher began the process of data collection by contacting participants individually at their places of work to explain the research to them and ask them whether they would be prepared to participate in the study. Some of these were face to face contacts and others were telephonic. The criteria for inclusion were explained to participants and they were told

that their participation would be voluntary and their agreement or non-agreement to participate would in no way jeopardise their rights or privileges in any future relationship with the researcher.

When participants were initially requested to be part of this research process, they were given the names of the other participants and organisations in case they did not feel comfortable being part of the group. The reason for this was that some of them were coming from the same organisations and some of them were from organisations where the researcher consulted. They were free to decide whether or not they wanted to participate.

When participants were approached, the researcher discussed with them the fact that she knew them, was currently working with some of them and had worked with all of them in the past and checked how they felt about this. None of them had any difficulties with this. One of the participants had already discussed with the researcher the problems she was having in supervision and said that she trusted the researcher and felt that being part of the group might clarify some of her thinking about her difficulties.

Prior to participants agreeing to join the study, the researcher explained to each one what the research would entail, what was expected of them and how the information would be used. Thus, they could make an informed decision whether or not to participate. Those who agreed to participate after all of the above points were discussed with them, then had the preamble to the consent form (Annexure A) explained to them. As Wiles et al. (2005:16) say researchers have to give people sufficient time to consider whether or not they want to participate once they have the information.

Wiles et al. (2005:16) point out that many researchers see it as important to obtain *signed* consent forms from research participants as it increases the likelihood that participants understand what their participation will involve and what their rights are in

relation to participation and issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore, once the participants indicated that they understood the contents of the consent form, the researcher arranged to deliver a copy of this to them. They then faxed or delivered a signed copy to the researcher within 7 – 14 days.

One child and youth care worker was unable to attend the focus group at the last minute due to illness and one of the other child and youth care workers from the same facility asked if she could attend instead. The researcher spoke to her over the telephone, explaining what was involved, and she was quite happy to be part of the study.

In the preparation and consent form (Annexure A), participants were notified that they would receive feedback from the first focus group in order for them to check the accuracy and validity of data collected and they would be given a chance to add to or correct this information at the follow-up focus group. In line with the above, as Smyth (cited in Wiles et al. 2005:18) says, consent is not necessarily confined to consent to data collection at the time which this takes place. He says it is appropriate to send transcripts to participants so that they can check that they are happy for what they said to be included in the study.

Once signed consent forms were received from all 16 participants, they were notified of the times and venue for the focus groups. Three focus groups were held, one for directors, one for supervisors and one for child and youth care workers. The sessions for each group started by clarifying the purpose of the research and explaining how the data received from them would be used. Participants were asked if they were comfortable with the sessions being recorded on tape and typed by the secretarial person present and they all agreed to this. Group members were thanked for their time and willingness to participate and it was explained that shared information would be confidential. No names would be mentioned in any of the documentation compiled; only general themes would be referred to; and if any quotes were used, the speakers would not be identified. Because the researcher has been in the child and

youth care field for many years and has trained and been a consultant to many of the people involved in it, it would have been virtually impossible to find participants whose superiors or subordinates she did not know. She therefore explained that because she knew their colleagues in the other groups, nothing they said in the focus groups would be shared with anyone in the other groups. Group members were told that after the first focus group, the data collected would be summarised and sent to them for comment prior to the second focus group meeting. They were also told what would happen to the research information once the research was completed. The researcher felt it was important for participants to know and agree that their information would be shared in the final research report.

The importance for researchers to be aware of numerous issues in preparing for data collection was also borne in mind. Wiles et al. (2005:20) mention that the researcher should pay attention to the format, style and timing of information provision and the form of consent that is appropriate. They emphasise that consideration needs to be given to the context in which the research takes place and the researchers' ethical orientation inevitably influences the approach researchers have to these issues.

1.3.5 Data collection

Fossey et al. (2002:726) state that interviews, focus groups and participant observation are common ways of collecting data in qualitative studies. In this research, due to its limited scope, focus group discussions were chosen as the best way to collect the data, rather than conducting interviews with individuals. It was felt that this method would allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how different groups felt about the topic researched. Focus groups are group interviews and a means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue, product or service (Greeff, 2005:299). Fossey et al. (2002:727) say that focus groups are facilitated group discussions which use the group interaction to explore the topic being researched. For this reason, participants are usually selected because they share a common interest in the topic. The group is 'focussed' as it involves some kind of collective activity (Greeff, 2005:299). The researcher chose this method of

collecting data because it was regarded as being the most appropriate way to gather information on this topic and would encourage participants in child and youth care settings with a commitment to, and interest in the field of child and youth care, but from different settings, to share their experiences about supervision.

The data for this research were collected by means of an interview guide used for the discussions in the three focus groups that dealt with the issues on which data were required (Annexure B). The interview guide comprised the following open ended guiding questions, and met the requirement to be clear and thoughtful (Greeff, 2005:308):

- *What **knowledge** do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa? What do they need to **know**?*
- *From your experience and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care worker, can you give some examples of this?*
- *What **skills** do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa? What do they need to **know how to do**?*
- *From your experience and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care worker can you give some examples of this?*

By including directors, social workers and child and youth care workers involved in child and youth care work from diverse settings in the focus groups, the researcher was able to collect enough data to make comparisons regarding views on the knowledge and skills that supervisors need to have in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

1.3.6 Data analysis

Neuman (1997:426) states that data analysis means a search for patterns in data, and that once these patterns are identified; they are interpreted in terms of social

theories or the settings in which they occur. Having examined the data, sorted it, compared it and synthesised it, the researcher then moves to a more general interpretation of the data. Creswell (2009:186) adds to this that data analysis is making sense of the data collected and he describes three steps in this process, namely: -

- organising and preparing the data for analysis – this involves transcribing interviews, typing up notes and arranging data into different types;
- reading through all the data – this gives one a general sense of the information collected and allows the researcher to reflect on its overall meaning and tone; and
- beginning a detailed analysis by coding the data – organise the material into segments and categories and labelling these with terms which may be those used by participants.

In analysing the data obtained in this study, the researcher used and applied the eight steps provided by Tesch in Creswell (2009:186), which entail the following:

- **Step 1: Get a sense of the whole** – The researcher typed the transcripts of each session from all three groups and checked these against the tape recordings of each session. Gaps in the transcripts were filled in from the tape recorded sessions which were then listened to for a second time to ensure that nothing had been omitted. The researcher then read through the transcripts from all three focus groups to get a sense of the whole.
- **Step 2: Pick one document, go through this and write thoughts in the margin** – The researcher read all three transcripts and made comments in the margins. These comments referred to issues which were repetitive, points which were important and needed special mention in the analysis or those which the researcher felt needed to be clarified with participants in the follow-up group sessions (Annexures D, E and F).
- **Step 3: Make a list of the topics that emerge and cluster similar topics together** – Thereafter, the researcher listed topics in the transcripts of each group

and clustered together similar themes from each group. These were then colour coded and organised into a chart format under the names of each group viz. Directors group, Supervisors group and Child and Youth Care Workers group. The colour coding made it easier for the researcher to identify which data belonged to which group (Annexures G and H).

- **Step 4: Abbreviate the topics and organise data into categories** – The researcher then summarised the data for each group, abbreviated the topics and organised the data into categories. The researcher attempted to organise the data into similar categories for each group. However, there were some data which were specific for only one or two of the groups.
- **Step 5: Reduce the total list of categories by grouping topics that relate to one another** – The researcher combined certain categories and grouped topics which related to one another in order to reduce the number of categories and ensure some uniformity of themes between the three groups.
- **Step 6: Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category** – Thereafter, the researcher abbreviated categories and organised data under each category.
- **Step 7: Assemble the data belonging to each category and perform a preliminary analysis** –The researcher checked this data against the original transcripts and tape recordings and against the data clusters made in Step 3. In some instances, the data were reorganised if it appeared to fit better into another category. The data were then taken back to the follow-up groups of participants in this format for them to check whether their thoughts and ideas had been captured accurately.
- **Step 8: If necessary, recode existing data** – In some instances, the researcher recoded and moved data to different categories.

1.3.7 Trustworthiness of data

It is essential in any research to ensure that the data collected are valid, reliable and accurate, in other words, trustworthy. As Babbie and Mouton say (2001:276), the basic issue of trustworthiness is whether researchers can persuade themselves and

others that the research findings are worth paying attention to. Guba (in Krefting 1991:215) proposed a model appropriate for qualitative research that would ensure the trustworthiness of data. This model was applied to verify the data of the study.

Guba's model (in Krefting, 1991:215) is based on four aspects of trustworthiness, namely truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Each of these aspects entails the following and was applied in this research study:

- **Truth value** – This questions whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings based on the research design, participants and context. The researcher felt that the truth of the findings in this study was consistent with literature and her experience in the field. She also checked these findings with her study supervisor who was able to substantiate their truth value from his extensive experience and research in the field. As Marshall and Rossman (cited in de Vos, 2005:345) state, research must respond to norms that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated and the truth value can be measured. These norms are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. De Vos (2005:346) refers to Lincoln and Guba who explain that credibility demonstrates that the research was conducted in a way to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. The researcher believes that the research project was conducted in a way that ensured that the subject was accurately identified and described and that data gathered were from participants who have good standing in the field and are credible practitioners.
- **Applicability** – As Krefting (1991:216) explains, applicability refers to the fact that the research findings can be applied to other contexts and settings and be generalised to larger populations. Guba (cited in Krefting, 1991:216) mentions that in qualitative studies, this principle, also referred to as transferability occurs when the findings of the research fit into contexts that are similar to that of the research. Lincoln and Guba (cited in Krefting, 1991:216) added that as long as the original researcher presents enough descriptive data to allow comparison, the issue of applicability has been addressed. In this research, it is possible for the

information gained in the study to be extrapolated to other settings and used comparatively.

- **Consistency** – According to Krefting (1991:216), this refers to whether the findings of the study would be consistent if the research were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context. As Field and Morse (cited in Krefting, 1991:216) point out, qualitative research emphasises the uniqueness of the human situation, so there will be variations in experience if the study is repeated. Therefore, variability is expected and consistency is defined in terms of dependability. De Vos (2005:346) says that in terms of dependability in qualitative research the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study. In conducting this study, the researcher was ever aware of the possible effect of changing conditions in the phenomenon being studied.
- **Neutrality** – As pointed out by Guba (in Krefting 1991:217), neutrality is not researcher objectivity, but data and interpretational conformability. Lincoln and Guba (cited in Krefting, 1991:217) mention that in qualitative research, neutrality has to be shifted from the researcher to the data because the researcher will have relationships with the subjects and in order to exclude bias as much as possible the neutrality of the data becomes paramount. The researcher had to be mindful of the fact that she had relationships with all participants prior to the focus groups. She had to focus on the data collected and remain neutral in interpreting the data, basing it on facts and not her knowledge of the participants.

As is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, in applying the above aspects, the researcher took data back to participants in the follow up group session of each focus group for them to check its validity and allowed them to make changes and add information.

1.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Strydom (2005a: 57) elaborates as follows regarding “ethics”:

“Ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.”

He then goes on to say that these ethical guidelines serve as standards and a basis against which researchers can evaluate their own conduct (Strydom, 2005a:57).

Social service professions regard research in accordance with sound research ethics, as so important, that it is referred to in strong terms in at least two codes of ethics. In the FICE Bulletin (1998:12) in which the code of ethics for child and youth care professionals is discussed, it is stated that one of the professional responsibilities of people in the field is to contribute to the extension of the professional knowledge, theory and practice by supporting and undertaking research and ensuring that it is designed, conducted and reported in accordance with sound research ethics. Another point made in this code of ethics is that child and youth care practitioners need to apply the results of research for the benefit of service users. In the Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers (SACSSP, 2011:8) it is clearly stated that social workers should protect, enhance and improve the integrity of the profession through research. As the researcher has practised in both child and youth care and social work since 1971, the above mentioned codes of ethics of both professions are relevant and were adhered to in the conducting of this study.

Tolich and Davidson (1999:70) cite five main principles that determine ethical conduct in social science research. They mention that in different research settings, different principles will dominate, but they should always be used in concert with one another.

The principles they mention are - do no harm; voluntary participation; informed consent; avoidance of deceit; and anonymity and confidentiality. These ethical principles were followed in this research study as follows:

➤ **Do no harm**

As Tolich and Davidson (1999:70) highlight, this principle sounds obvious, but researchers may not always be aware of ways in which participants in their studies might be harmed. The researcher realised this when some of the participants in the focus groups became quite emotional about the topic as they had previously had negative experiences of supervision. They were allowed to talk about this in the group and, in some instances, the researcher spoke to them after the group session telling them that they could contact her between the two focus group meetings, if necessary. In one instance, the researcher contacted one of the participants after the group meeting to check if she was alright. The researcher knew her from one of the programmes where she had consulted and was aware that she was having difficulties with her supervisor, who was not in the supervisors' focus group.

The participant had discussed her problems with the researcher prior to the focus group and the researcher had encouraged the participant to speak directly to her supervisor. The researcher and the participant discussed the participant's feelings telephonically after the first focus group and the participant said that she had been able to sort out the issue with her supervisor herself by talking to her. It should be pointed out that in conducting the research, the researcher focused on her role of being a researcher conducting research, and consciously distinguished between this role and that of a child and youth care practitioner / social worker having to render professional assistance to participants. The latter assistance was rendered outside and apart from the research situation.

As Strydom (2005a:58) says, one of the ways to minimise harm in this context is to ensure that participants are thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the research. In this way, participants can withdraw before the study.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:522) add to this that social research should never harm participants even if they have volunteered to be involved. They also mention that one has to guard against any harm being done to participants in the analysis and reporting of data as the researcher may think she or he has disguised the data sufficiently, but participants may read the research report and find that they can identify themselves in the feedback (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:522).

Neuman (1997:447) stresses that researchers should never create unnecessary stress and that if participants do become stressed, then counselling should be offered. As indicated above, the researcher, apart from her capacity as researcher, provided support and counselling separate from the research situation, to one of the participants who became stressed when talking about her supervision experiences. She was already having difficulties with her supervisor and being in the focus group possibly exacerbated this. In assisting her to deal with the matter, she was debriefed after the sessions and assisted to work through her experience and its aftermath, to minimise any possible harm which may have been done, in spite of all the precautions taken (Strydom, 2005a:66-67).

With reference to the above situation as experienced by the researcher, the following points refer:

- Bell and Nutt (cited in *The ethics of social research*, n.d.:76) talk about “divided loyalties” in terms of how professional and occupational commitments can pull a researcher in different directions, creating ethical dilemmas arising from the multiple roles they bring to a research setting.
- Homan (cited in *The ethics of social research*, n.d.:77) talks about the difference between the terms *ethical codes* and *ethical values*. By agreeing to comply with **ethical codes**, a researcher is not absolved from adhering to the underlying ethical values contained in these codes.

As described above the researcher had divided loyalties to the participant who needed extra support and could not ignore the fact that she needed support because

of what had been evoked by the focus group. As mentioned, researchers have to pay attention to how they behave ethically as well as to the ethical codes of research. The researcher felt it was ethical to provide supportive counselling to the participant in question to assist her in resolving her feelings. Therefore in this instance, the necessary arrangements were made to deal with the participant and her situation.

➤ **Voluntary participation**

As Tolich and Davidson (1999:72) stress, participation in research *must* be voluntary and informants must know what is involved before they take part. He says that participants can only give their consent to something if they know exactly what is involved. Babbie and Mouton (2001:521) add to this that even though participation is voluntary, the researcher will still require a significant portion of the participant's time and energy and disrupt their normal activities. Babbie and Mouton (2001:521) also mention that social research requires people to reveal personal information. Although the participants in this research study were not answering personal questions as such, they did reveal personal information about their own experiences of supervision, their work experiences, relationships with supervisors and current work related issues. The researcher had briefed participants prior to the group that the questions for the group discussion would be about the knowledge and skills needed by supervisors in child and youth care settings in South Africa. However, it is not always possible to anticipate the type of information, interactions and dynamics which may arise in discussions, especially in a focus group. The researcher informed participants that the research questions would be about the knowledge and skills relating to supervision in child and youth care settings in South Africa. The topic and an explanation of the focus groups were clearly stated in the informed consent letter (Annexure A) which was sent to participants prior to the focus groups.

The researcher stressed to all participants, especially those whom she knew quite well and who worked in programmes where she consulted, that there was no obligation at all to take part in the research. She explained to them how the research would work and that there would be absolutely no repercussions if they did not want

to be part of the focus groups. None of the participants had any problems with participating.

In facilitating the groups, the researcher did not pressure anyone to speak, although the quieter people were invited to contribute if they were comfortable doing so. This was done because some of the participants dominated the discussion and the researcher wanted everyone to feel free to speak.

➤ **Informed consent**

Neuman (1997:450) emphasises the importance of informed consent in research as follows:

“A fundamental ethical principle of social research is: Never coerce anyone into participating; participating *must* be voluntary. It is not enough to get permission from subjects; they need to know what they are being asked to participate in so that they can make an informed decision.”

Tolich and Davidson (1999:72) add to this that informed consent involves an exchange of information where the participants are given information and they agree in advance to participate voluntarily. This information should outline the objectives of the research and exactly what the participants will have to do and they should be asked to sign a consent form. Participants in this particular research study were informed about what the study involved and then asked to sign a consent form (Annexure A). The researcher checked with each participant whether or not they were comfortable signing this letter and none of them objected to doing this.

➤ **Avoid deceit**

As highlighted by Tolich and Davidson, (1999:74) it is unethical and constitutes serious misconduct if a researcher deliberately deceives informants about the research in any way. Neuman (1997:449) says deception may increase the public's mistrust and cynicism about research and decrease their respect for the process. Tolich and Davidson (1999:76) add that if researchers think they have been deceitful

in any way, they should debrief the participants after the research and explain whether or not the deceit was intentional and why it was necessary. Another ethical issue here is to avoid deceit in the interpretation of the data.

As Creswell (2009:90) stipulates, in this regard, researchers need to provide an accurate account of data and employ strategies to check the accuracy of the information gathered to avoid data being misconstrued or represented inaccurately. Wassenaar (2006:76) emphasises that the application of a rigorous analytical process is essential to ensure that valid conclusions are drawn from the data collected. The integrity and honesty of the researcher is paramount. To assist with the accurate analysis of data, the roles played by the researcher, a secretarial assistant and the tape recordings of the sessions were analysed on numerous occasions.

McElwie (2003:2) states that researchers should treat the people with whom they do research, as *partners* in the process, not *subjects*, and they should explain clearly to them not only the immediate use of the information, but also the potential future use of the information so that they are fully aware of how the information may be used.

When participants were asked whether or not they would be prepared to be part of this research, they were told the researcher was undertaking this study as part of her Master's degree and would hopefully be publishing the information from the groups in a summarised format with the view to developing some training materials for supervisors based on learning gleaned from the research. When told that the researcher was hoping to eventually use the information from the study for possible training on supervision, participants responded very positively and were pleased to be part of the study. All participants indicated that they had clarity about the research, felt very interested in and committed to the topic and said that they would like to be part of improving this area in the child and youth care field generally, and in their own organisations specifically.

➤ **Anonymity and confidentiality**

As Tolich and Davidson (1999:76) explain, anonymity and confidentiality are often confused. They clarify that participants are anonymous when the researcher cannot identify responses as belonging to specific participants, and confidentiality is where the researcher can identify certain responses but promises not to make the connections public. As Strydom (2005a:62) says, confidentiality places a strong obligation on the researcher to guard the information that is confided in them. Neuman (1997:453) adds to this by saying that anonymity protects the identity of participants from being known and even if anonymity is not possible, researchers should protect confidentiality. He further clarifies that confidentiality means that recorded information may not have participant's names attached to it, and that the researcher must keep it confidential and secret from the public so that a participant's name cannot be linked to specific information.

When participants were asked to be part of this research process they were given the names of other participants and organisations in case they did not feel comfortable being part of the group. The reason for this was that some of them were coming from the same organisations and some of them were from organisations where the researcher consulted. At this stage, they were free to decide whether or not they wanted to attend the focus groups.

When participants were asked if they wanted to take part in the focus groups, the researcher discussed with them the fact that she knew them and was currently working with some of them and had worked with all of them in the past and checked how they felt about this. None of them had any difficulties with it. As mentioned previously, one of the participants had already discussed with the researcher the problems she was having in supervision and said that she trusted the researcher and felt that being part of the group might clarify some of her thinking about her difficulties. Thus, this matter was addressed before she attended the focus group.

Prior to participants agreeing to join the groups, the researcher explained to each one what the research would entail, what was expected of them and how the information would be used. They could therefore, make an informed decision on whether to participate. Only after this did they sign letters of consent.

One child and youth care worker was unable to attend at the last minute due to illness and one of the other child and youth care workers from the same facility asked if she could attend instead. The researcher spoke to her over the telephone, explaining what was involved, and she was quite happy to be part of the child and youth care workers' focus group.

The issue of confidentiality was discussed at the beginning of each group meeting and the researcher explained that her role in the research was that of a student conducting research for her Master's degree, not a consultant or supervisor. However, she also stated that if useful information came out of the research concerning their programmes and they wanted help to implement any of this, she would subsequently be willing to help them do this in her role as a consultant. The researcher discussed at the beginning of each focus group that information given in the group would be anonymous; and that only the themes from each group would be included in the research report and shared with the other groups, not anyone's names.

Wassenaar (2006:76) mentions that focus groups present complications in terms of confidentiality, as the researcher cannot guarantee that all group members will treat the information shared by others confidentially. To address this, the researcher appealed to participants to respect the confidentiality of other group members and discussions ensued about issues not being taken back to the workplace or discussed outside of the focus groups. It was also clarified with participants that although their directors, supervisors and subordinates would be in the other focus groups, specific information concerning the organisations would not be shared should it be revealed.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The researcher consulted numerous literature sources pertaining to the topics of child and youth care work and knowledge and skills in supervision. From these sources, the following concepts, which are key concepts used in this study, are defined:

- Child and youth care
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Supervision and supervisor

These concepts respectively entail the following and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2:

1.5.1 Child and youth care

Beukes and Gannon (1993:4) give the following formal definition of *child and youth care* as agreed by the International Child and Youth Care Education Consortium in 1992:

“Professional child and youth care practice focuses on the infant, child and adolescent, both normal and with special needs, within the context of the family, the community and the life span. The developmental-ecological perspective emphasizes the interaction between persons and the physical and social environments, including cultural and political settings.

Professional practitioners promote the optimal development of children, youth and their families in a variety of settings, such as early care and education, community – based child and youth development programmes, parent education and family support, school-based programmes, community mental health, group homes, residential centres, rehabilitation programmes, paediatric health care and juvenile justice programmes.”

Anglin (2001:2) defines child and youth care as work that promotes the social competence and healthy development of children and youth, by participating in and using day-to-day environments and life experiences and forming therapeutic relationships with them.

In the researcher's experience, social work and child and youth care work are often seen to be in competition with one another, rather than complementary. There is often confusion about these two professions and the similarities and differences in their roles and tasks. In dealing with this matter, Veeran (1990:146) emphasises the value of these two professions working closely together as a team in the field of child and youth care. In agreeing with this, Anglin (2001:4) states that while child and youth care has diverse origins and an eclectic history, the two professions of social work and child and youth care complement one another.

Veeran's findings (1990:146) highlight the interdependency of social work and child and youth care in working with children and youth. She says that social workers often depend on child care workers for information and knowledge about the child and rely on them to implement and coordinate treatment plans. Child and youth care workers on the other hand, because they often have less training and experience than social workers, require guidance and support in their tasks. This support is frequently received from social workers.

Anglin (2001:2-3) highlights some of the differences between social work and child and youth care work as listed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Focus points of social work and child and youth care work regarding the care of children and youth (Anglin, 2001:2-3)

| SOCIAL WORK FOCUSES MORE ON: | CHILD & YOUTH CARE FOCUSES MORE ON: |
|--|---|
| Social and community networks | Individual and interpersonal dynamics |
| Social problems | Human Development |
| Organisations and policies | People and relationships |
| Knowing about children and families | Living and working with children and families |
| A wide variety of societal groups and issues | The needs of children and youth |
| Problem solving | Helping and growth process |
| Gaining power and societal influence | Gaining self-awareness and personal growth |

One of the unique aspects of child and youth care work is that it focuses on the life-space of children and youth. VanderVen (1991:15) highlights this by saying that: “Child and youth care work is different from other fields; it focuses on children and youth in their life-space, improving quality of life in that space and ensuring that the space is developmentally and holistically growth producing.”

She explains that - “there is no other field that embraces the nature of the spaces that contain its clients, works to adapt these spaces to the clients’ needs, and uses the spaces as a context to empower its other services.” VanderVen (1991:16) continues to say that child and youth care workers must respond to the ongoing shifts in these spaces, pay attention to the other people in the child’s space, the context of the child’s space and everything happening to the child in that space. Hence, the term life-space, which is often used to refer to child and youth care work. Veeran (1990:38) refers to the fact that concepts such as milieu therapy and the perception of child care workers as the practitioner in the life space of the child have influenced current practices in the field.

The importance of child and youth care's focus on the life-space of children and youth is also emphasised by De Kock (1999:31), when she defines child and youth care as "care that includes the physical, emotional and educational care of the child, within the life space of the child, in various situations, whether in the school, community or institution relationship."

To concur with these thoughts, the researcher's experience has been that over the years, the field of child and youth care has moved from seeing the work as one of providing physical care and 'substitute parenting' to one that involves much more focused care and is now defined as working specifically in the life-space of children and youth. Therefore, in the context of this research report –

child and youth care refers to therapeutic interventions in the life-space of troubled children and youth, their families and caregivers.

1.5.2 Knowledge

Feibleman (cited in Eisikovits, Beker & Guttman, 1991:7) defines *knowledge* as a "structure of ideas" that can be divided into two parts. The first of these is "knowledge-at-hand" – knowledge which one uses every day; and the second is theoretical, abstract knowledge, which is more remote from one's daily experiences (Schutz, cited in Eisikowitz et al., 1991:7). The first type is also referred to by Polanyi (cited in Eisikowitz et al., 1991:7) as "tacit knowledge" and the second as "abstract knowledge". The author clarified that *tacit knowledge* consists of habits and culture that we do not recognise in ourselves, known only by an individual and difficult to communicate to others; while *abstract knowledge* comes from data that we have been exposed to from external sources and internalised or integrated into our own thinking processes; it is objective knowledge that we have acquired from outside sources (Polanyi, cited in Eisikowitz et al., 1991:7). Eisikowitz et al. (1991:7) mention that child and youth care workers own and use tacit knowledge in their everyday work, but that abstract knowledge is more remote from everyday child and youth care experiences.

They state that: “The dual process of creating tacit knowledge by making abstract knowledge tacit and making tacit knowledge explicit is the process of knowledge utilization” (Eisikowitz et al., 1991:7). Ainsworth as cited in Anglin (1996:20) adds to this by describing knowledge as first being acquired through study and only secondly being tempered by direct experience. These definitions highlight the fact that we both “have” and “acquire” knowledge, which we then use by making it explicit.

For the purposes of this research, *knowledge* refers to facts, information and the understanding of a two-fold nature. On the one hand *tacit knowledge* refers to those inferred or inherent habits and culture of a person, whilst on the other hand *abstract knowledge* refers to facts, information and understanding acquired from outside sources integrated into a person’s own thinking processes.

Kiffiak (1994:150) maintains that knowledge about certain topics is the basis for therapeutic interventions by child and youth care workers, namely -

- theoretical approaches to behaviour;
- human growth and development;
- assessment principles and methods;
- case planning and management frameworks;
- principles and models of intervention;
- communication theory;
- professional ethics and issues in current practice;
- legislation and policies; and
- atypical development and behaviour.

Therefore, the knowledge required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa, refers to *tacit and abstract knowledge* concerning child and youth care work. Knowledge is specifically required with reference to theoretical approaches to behaviour, human growth and development, assessment principles and methods, case planning and management frameworks, principles and models of intervention, communication theory,

professional ethics and issues in current practice, legislation and policies and atypical development and behaviour. Supervisors should have this knowledge to give the necessary guidance to the child and youth care workers whom they supervise.

1.5.3 Skill

The concept *skill* relates to knowledge and its application. Skill is defined as “familiar knowledge of any art or science combined with dexterity” (Concise English Dictionary, 1982: s.v. “skill”). Denholm (1989:8) and Kiffiak (1994:150) both describe skill as the ability to use one’s knowledge readily and effectively in child and youth care practice situations. Kiffiak (1994:150) adds to this that the workers’ level of skill will increase according to their experience and how they have integrated their experience and knowledge. These explanations highlight that knowledge needs to be in place first, and is then translated and integrated into practice – becoming skill. As Covey (1992:47) says, skill is the “how to do”.

For the purposes of this research, *skill* encompasses the worker’s and the supervisor’s ability to apply their knowledge and translate thoughts into practice in the context of child and youth care work.

1.5.4 Supervision and supervisor

The key concepts “supervision” and “supervisor” are discussed and defined in detail in the literature review presented in Chapter 2. In the clarification of key concepts used in the dissertation, suffice it to say that for the purposes of this research, “supervision” and “supervisor” respectively mean the following:

1.5.4.1 Supervision

Supervision is regarded as the: “Process whereby a supervisor performs educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote, efficient and professional rendering of services” (Terminology Committee for Social Work: 1995, s.v. “supervision”).

Bailin (1989:29) defines supervision as a “goal directed, contractual, interpersonal relationship which has jurisdiction over all aspects of a supervisee’s job responsibilities, performance and organizational interpersonal functioning.”

Brown and Bourne (1996:1) and Anglin (1992:8) expand on the latter part of Bailin’s statement, saying that the primary purpose of supervision is to enable staff to carry out their work as effectively as possible and to ensure standards of practice. Hawkins and Shohet (2000:1) refer to supervision as a “container that holds the helping relationship within the ‘therapeutic triad’” – this being the supervisor, the worker and the client.

These statements demonstrate the fact that supervision is directly related to job performance and that supervision is an intrinsic part of contributing to the ongoing development of workers and effective standards of practice.

Against the above background, supervision in child and youth care work is used in this research report as referring to –

a goal directed, contractual, interpersonal relationship established in child and youth care work between a supervisor and a child and youth care worker (supervisee), in terms of which the supervisor gives educational, supportive and administrative guidance to the supervisee to promote, efficient and professional rendering of child and youth care services to meet practice standards.

1.5.4.2 Supervisor

Maier (1987:195) emphasises the development function of supervision by stating that learning is about what to do and what to know rather than “to be”, and that it is up to the supervisor to assess *what* and *how* supervisees can learn effectively. He identifies three areas of worker responsibility with regard to supervision, namely: helping workers to fulfil their work proficiently; giving them “hurdling help” to

accomplish their tasks; and providing them with professional training. He states: "Supervision serves to assist child/youth care workers to become more effective in their work through an enrichment of skill and knowledge repertoire" (Maier, 1987:195). Scott (2005:102) further stresses that supervisors need to be reflective practitioners who examine their values and attitudes in order to assist workers' development. She refers to the supervisor's ability to adjust constantly to the situation at hand; adapt to change; and listen to and hear the supervisee's perspective.

In the context of this study and by "borrowing" from social work literature, a supervisor is a child and youth care worker to whom authority has been delegated to coordinate, promote and evaluate the professional service rendering of child and youth care workers through the process of supervision (Terminology Committee for Social Work, 1995,:s.v. "supervisor"). For the purposes of this study, the supervisors who were selected were people who were currently supervising child and youth care workers in their settings.

1.6 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS EXPERIENCED IN CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

The challenges and limitations experienced in this research and how they were dealt with comprised the following:

1.6.1 Challenges

In carrying out the research, the following challenges were experienced:

- One of the greatest challenges faced in conducting this research was finding participants who represented a cross-section of the residential and community-based child and youth care fields. There are fewer community based child and youth care programmes than there are residential care facilities. In order to address this challenge, the researcher used some residential programmes which also had community-based outreach projects.

- It was a challenge to find group members who were on a similar level of functioning in terms of their understanding of supervision in child and youth care settings. In order to overcome this, the researcher selected participants from programmes that she knew practised some level of supervision and settings where there were supervision structures in place.
- Controlling the more vociferous members of the focus groups and encouraging the quieter ones to talk and participate in the focus group discussions, was quite a challenge. However, the researcher is an experienced facilitator and was able to do this by using her social work skills.
- It was a challenge for the researcher not to want to problem solve when participants mentioned difficulties in their organisations with regard to supervision practices. The researcher kept reminding herself that she was a researcher and not a consultant in this setting and forced herself to listen and note the information presented for possible attention outside the research process.
- Some of the participants had experienced negative supervisory practices and relationships and these had to be dealt with sensitively in the focus groups without allowing them to dominate the discussions or allowing the supervisor/s concerned to be identified for the sake of confidentiality. The researcher allowed participants to express themselves and then gently asked other participants to share. If issues appeared to need more input or individual assistance, the researcher suggested that group members saw her afterwards. This, in fact, did happen in one particular case and the matter was dealt with outside the research process.
- It was a challenge to contain the emotions of some participants who shared difficult experiences relating to supervision, but the researcher was able to do this by using reflection and social work and facilitation skills.

- Because the researcher has a personal interest in supervision, it was a challenge to remain objective in this study. The researcher's supervisor was of great assistance here in helping the researcher to remain objective about the data and interpret it with minimum subjectivity.
- In analysing the data collected, it was a challenge to sort all the information into categories or themes which made sense and would be useful for future reference. The researcher used the literature as a guide here so that data would be interpreted using existing terminology. Where there was no existing terminology for what was expressed, this was recorded separately in the findings.
- Literature available on supervision in South African child and youth care settings and especially on community child and youth care settings is very limited. The researcher did extensive research on the topic by using the Internet, child and youth care and social work resources and the CYC-Net website which is a scientifically reliable source and from her knowledge of the field, applied this knowledge to the South African settings. Libraries were also used to obtain reference materials.

In spite of the challenges, the researcher felt able to obtain a representative cross section of directors, social workers and child and youth care workers who could provide adequate information for this study.

1.6.2 Limitations

The following limitations were encountered during the research process:

- Some of the participants in the groups, specifically the child and youth care workers, had never had formal training in supervision and therefore struggled to answer some of the questions. The researcher addressed this in the groups by describing situations to which they could relate, so that even if they did not know

the formal terminology, they could identify with the situation or experience (or the need for it).

- All of the directors who participated were social workers, who although working in child and youth care settings, had never worked as on-line child and youth care workers themselves. All of these directors had supervised child and youth care workers at some stage, but had no hands-on experience of what child and youth care workers' actual tasks were in the life-space of young people.
- English was not the first language of some participants and this may have made them feel self-conscious to share their ideas at first. The researcher made it clear that participants could ask other group members to translate for them if necessary and this happened from time to time. The researcher made use of reflective listening and explained and clarified concepts when necessary. If group members seemed unsure of anything, the issues were discussed and repeated. Participants were encouraged to express themselves in their mother tongue and someone else in the group translated if necessary. The researcher is fluent in Afrikaans, so she encouraged Afrikaans speaking participants to express themselves in Afrikaans and translated their thoughts and ideas to the group. A few times, participants expressed words in African languages and these were then translated by other group members. This only occurred in the child and youth care workers group.
- Only one male participant took part in the research and he was in the directors' group. All the other participants in the three groups were female. Although this was not deliberate, the researcher believes this is reflective of the field of child and youth care which is predominantly a female profession. The programmes from which the participants were selected were staffed mainly by females.
- The researcher was working with some of the participants at the time and they may have felt intimidated by this. As Wolcott (cited in Van As & Van Schalkwyk

2001:49) says, one of the limitations of using people one knows for research is that one is a 'colleague'. This can mean that findings may substantiate certain preconceived ideas rather than being a true reflection of what people really think. Because the researcher had previously trained and consulted with most of the participants in the focus groups, they may have felt that they had to say what they had been taught. The researcher made it clear to participants at the time they were asked to become involved in the focus groups, that their participation had nothing to do with previous or current training or consulting, but was an independent task to do with her Master's degree. This issue was also discussed before the start of each focus group.

The researcher did not feel that any of these limitations detracted from the focus groups or the trustworthiness of the data collected. Participants were all keen to be involved in the research as they wanted to contribute to the development of supervision in the field of child and youth care in South Africa.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This research report is structured as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction and background - This chapter deals with an introduction and background to the research, the researcher's interest in the topic and focuses on the problem formulation and statement. The planning of the research methodology is discussed before certain key concepts are clarified and the challenges and limitations experienced during the research and the structure of the report are summarised.

Chapter Two: Supervision – a literature review – This chapter pertains to literature about the topic of supervision which has been gathered from books, journals and the internet. In it, both local and international literature on the subject of supervision, with specific reference to the field of child and youth care are discussed.

Chapter Three: Research methodology and design – In this chapter the researcher's application of the qualitative methodology, the use of focus groups to gather data, how participants were identified and how data were collated are explained.

Chapter Four: Discussion of research findings – This chapter outlines how the data were collected and analysed and includes excerpts from the transcripts of the focus groups. It looks at the common themes which emerged from all three focus groups and issues specific to the South African context in regard to the research question.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendations – in this chapter, the researcher makes certain recommendations based on the findings of the research and the data collected from research participants.

CHAPTER 2

SUPERVISION – A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this research is on supervision in child and youth care work. The aim of this research was to explore and understand what knowledge and skills supervisors in child and youth care settings in South Africa need to provide effective supervision. The empirical part of this research consisted of focus groups that were convened to explore and understand what participants felt was important in this regard. In this chapter, in order to understand how supervision is defined and understood, in the literature generally, and specifically in child and youth care settings, various literature sources were consulted to compare with the findings of the empirical research.

According to Van As and Van Schalkwyk (2001:196), the literature review broadens the researcher's horizons and ensures that he or she does not duplicate research that has already been done. They state that the literature review places the research in context, allows comparisons to be made and may give researchers new insights into their topic which they can then explore further (Van As & Van Schalkwyk, 2001:196).

The supervision of child and youth care workers requires supervisors to have distinctive knowledge and skills. In this literature review, in expanding on the defining of the concepts *supervision* and *supervisor* (paragraph 1.5.4) reference is made to readings on these topics and their relevance to this dissertation is highlighted. In this chapter the purpose, functions, different components, context and characteristics of effective supervision, and supervision within a child and youth care context are analysed.

2.2 PURPOSE OF SUPERVISION

Michael (2005:61) says that, historically, supervision in child and youth care practice has been modelled on the supervision of other professions. As a result, it is typically

based on the values, beliefs and approaches of those professions. However, because child and youth care work is unique, the application of supervision in this field must be unique and specific. Pioneer writers on the issue of supervision of child and youth care staff, whose work remains relevant, Fant and Ross (1979:627) emphasised as long ago as 1979, that supervision is the backbone of residential treatment programmes for children, and stated that child and youth care makes enormous emotional and physical demands on workers. Supervision is regarded as being essential to help them cope with these demands, and is in fact referred to as “the primary mechanism sustaining an organisation” (Fant & Ross: 1979:628).

Beddoe (1997:11) and Hawkins and Shohet (1989:132) state that good supervision in an organisation starts from the top down and should be part of the culture of the organisation. They mention that there should be a clear policy statement in organisations about supervision and that any organisation that has a learning and development focus would see supervision as essential for the development of all staff, even the most senior members, who should set an example. Ricks (cited in Digney, 2007:2), adds to this emphasis on development, stating that supervision will enhance and increase specific content areas along with self-awareness, competency/knowledge and actual practice. Anglin (1992:8) supports this theme, saying that the purpose of effective supervision is to assist workers to develop self-control and skills, rather than simply to manage their behaviour and set limits. He stresses that an effective supervisor should encourage internal motivation rather than create external motivators. Garfat (2007:1) identifies supervision as a means of developing staff members as “reflective practitioners”.

As mentioned previously (paragraph 1.5.4.1), Bailin (1989:29) highlights the importance of the supervisory relationship by referring to supervision as a “goal directed, contractual, interpersonal relationship which has jurisdiction over all aspects of a supervisee’s job responsibilities, performance and organizational interpersonal functioning.” Brown and Bourne (1996:1) and Anglin (1992:8) expand on the latter part of Bailin’s statement, saying that the primary purpose of supervision is to enable

staff to carry out their work as effectively as possible, and to ensure standards of practice.

All the authors referred to above, therefore, place emphasis on the fact that supervision is directly related to job performance and emphasise that supervision is an intrinsic part of the organisation's culture, contributing to the ongoing development of child and youth care workers and ensuring effective standards of practice.

Against this background and as indicated in paragraph 1.5.4.1, supervision in child and youth care work, is defined for the purposes of this research as a goal directed, contractual, interpersonal relationship established in child and youth care work between a supervisor and a child and youth care worker (supervisee), in terms of which the supervisor gives educational, supportive and administrative guidance to the supervisee to promote efficient and professional rendering of child and youth care services to meet practice standards.

2.3 FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

Fant and Ross (1979:628) in their pioneering work, see the functions of supervision in child and youth care work as enabling child and youth care workers to provide effective services to clients; meeting the needs of the organisation; and helping the organisation to integrate its services. They add that supervision provides support for the emotional stress of the work; helps workers to maintain a high level of practice competence; enables them to grow by developing the understanding and attitudes they need in their profession and by learning specific skills.

Hawkins and Shohet (2000:1) expand on this by likening supervision to Donald Winnicott's classic concept of the "good enough mother". They postulate that it provides a useful analogy for supervision, in which the "good enough" helping professional can survive the negative attacks of clients through the strength of being held within and by the supervisory relationship. They explain that the supervisor's role is not just one of reassurance, but also allows the emotional disturbance of clients,

which is projected on to workers, to be felt within the safety of the supervisory relationship, where it can be reflected upon and learned from.

From the above, it is apparent that the main functions of supervision are the development, support and containment of workers within organisational structures, with the supervisor providing care and playing a “holding” role for staff members.

2.4 DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF SUPERVISION

Kadushin (cited in Beddoe 1997:11), highlights the three components of supervision as being administration, support and education; while Garfat (1992:1) describes the three main processes in supervision as being support, education and training. Mitchell (2007:1) adds to this the concept of the personal component for supervisors, which she describes as the person being able to manage the change from direct service to supervisory practice and the personal frustrations that may accompany this change. New supervisors may go from being practitioners, a role in which they feel competent, to being new supervisors, a job in which they do not, at first, feel competent and which may leave them feeling inadequate and frustrated about their own performance. This is emphasised by Phelan (2003:53), who also identifies the need for support for new supervisors who are making this transition.

Ultimately, however, as Beddoe (1997:11) comments, it does not really matter what terms are used to describe the components of supervision. What is essential is that supervision practices should examine the relationship between workers’ inter- and intra-personal issues, and their work with their clients. For the purposes of this review, the components of supervision have been organised into three sections namely administration and management, support, and education and training, each entailing the following:

2.4.1 Administrative and managerial component of supervision

Kadushin (cited in Smith, 2012:4) defines the administrative function of supervision as being primarily concerned with ensuring that the agency's policies and procedures are implemented correctly, efficiently and appropriately. This function focuses on the needs of the organisation, and on ensuring that services are provided according to legal requirements, practice standards and the agency's policies and procedures.

Hilton (2007:1) sees the administrative component as supervision's 'structural frame'. According to him, within this framework workers are given and learn policies; rules; roles; codes of conduct; guidelines for practice and performance; and treatment and case-management models. He emphasises that the framework allows supervisors to provide workers with clear, written guidelines about areas of job performance and provides a sense of safety for supervisees.

Maas and Ney (2005:3) and Bailin (1989:29) all stress the importance of having clear guidelines for workers in terms of job descriptions, expectations, procedures, philosophy and ethics of practice in order to ensure that workers' tasks are measurable. Fant and Ross (1979:630) add to this that administrative tasks vary with individual organisations, but generally cover issues such as staff deployment, the clarifying of agency policies for staff members, the assessment of agency needs and the evaluation of staff. They say that the administrative aspect of supervision deals with the coordinating, integrating and monitoring of all aspects of a worker's service delivery to clients. Supervisors are also called on to advocate for staff and are the link between the administration and workers.

Mitchell (2007:1) too, mentions the advocacy role of supervisors as an administrative component and states that supervisors may find themselves playing mediating roles between supervisees, team members, workers and management, needing to provide constructive feedback, both positive and negative, to management and supervisees.

Smith (2012:11) explains that the administrative role of supervisors in managerial positions is to attend to professional concerns, to the interests of the clients and to the wider community through the framework of agency policies and procedures. Supervisors in non-managerial roles have an administrative responsibility to act if workers fail to live up to the standards of the profession, by discouraging them from practising, or by reporting them to the appropriate professional boards.

According to the fourth draft of the Professional Policy Guidelines for the Child and Youth Care Workers regarding Professional Ethical Behaviour (NACCW, 2011:5) every child and youth care practitioner who intervenes with young people and their families has a responsibility -

- for self;
- to children, young people and their families;
- to colleagues;
- to the employer or employing organization;
- to the profession; and
- to society.

This implies that professionals in this field are answerable, responsible and accountable for all interventions made with clients. In addition, Hudson (1994:1) states that 'managers' are accountable for their subordinates' work, and this can be extended to supervisors being accountable for the work of their supervisees. Bailin (1989:28) stresses that organisations are accountable to the recipients of services and to the community that entrust them with the care of clients, as well as to provide staff members with an environment that is conducive to their optimum performance and job satisfaction.

When the State places clients into the legal care of organisations to ensure that their needs are taken care of, accountability to the State, as well as to any funders who donate resources for the implementation of programmes, is essential. Brown and Bourne (1996:1) say that accountability is a complex issue and that ideas differ about

to whom the supervisee is primarily accountable. They agree, however, that workers are accountable to service users, the profession and the agency.

As seen from the literature covered above, the administrative component of supervision covers a wide range of functions: from procedures and policies, through clarification of the roles of child and youth care workers, to advocacy and accountability for good supervision.

2.4.2 Support component of supervision

Maas and Ney (2005:2) refer to four areas of support needed by workers, namely -

- *emotional support*, which helps workers become aware of and understand their own emotional reactions to certain youth and their families, and also to certain themes in their work;
- *instrumental support*, which assists workers in managing their work schedule and their tasks within the team (this includes assistance while workers are on duty, and agency support for staff development);
- *conceptual support*, which helps workers to link their understanding of theoretical knowledge to their personal concepts of family dynamics; their parenting; their own development and childhood; and their personal concepts of child and youth care; and
- *institutional support*, which assists workers in understanding job descriptions and expectations; the philosophy, vision and policies of the organisation; supervision and in-service training of staff.

Hilton (2007:2), who previously referred to the administrative component as the structural framework for supervision, calls the supportive component in supervision the 'human resource frame', with the focus on compassion, support and empowerment of the supervisee and placing people and their needs first. Brown and Bourne (1996:1) state that while supervision bears the responsibility for ensuring that agency policies are implemented, it has the parallel responsibility of enabling workers to do their best implying a person-centred, caring function. They warn that

organisations need to guard against becoming too task focused, thereby overlooking the support and caring function of supervision.

Fant and Ross (1979:631) emphasise that the unpredictable nature of child and youth care work and dealing with emotionally troubled people can be very draining. As a result, workers need ongoing and consistent support – not only during supervision, but whenever they have had to manage a difficult incident. They stress the importance of making workers feel important in the team by giving them encouragement and reassurance. Reinsilber (2006:5) adds to this theme by saying that child and youth care workers need to have someone who will listen to them and assist them in building their confidence. Very often, staff may not need help in meeting the challenges of their job, but rather need emotional support and motivation as front-line workers because of the demands of the profession. Kadushin (cited in Smith 2012:5) supports this by stating that this function should improve the morale and job satisfaction of workers; and adds that, because of the stresses they face, workers will ‘burn out’ if they do not receive the necessary help.

Maas and Ney (2005:1) mention that youth care is a highly complex, well-timed series of interventions incorporating practical and theoretical knowledge and skills. As mentioned above, they refer to the fact that youth care workers need emotional, instrumental, conceptual support as well as the support of clear institutional guidelines (Maas & Ney, 2005:2). The supervision ‘support’ function focuses on the needs of the worker, and helps to identify the stresses of the work and their impact on the worker. This function is closely linked to the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee. The better the relationship between the two parties, the more effective the support will be. Maas and Ney (2005:2) emphasise that supervision must be a safe space, one in which workers can discuss the positive and negative emotions triggered by team members, the children with whom they work and the supervisory relationship. Both Garfat (1992:3) and Mitchell (2007:1) see this component as an essential one in providing emotional and psychological support, thus encouraging workers to gain knowledge and promoting self-development.

From the above, it seems that there is agreement that child and youth care supervisors need to give child and youth care workers a safe space in supervision in which to react emotionally to what child and youth care work evokes in them. Workers need to be able to discuss this openly in supervision, where their attitudes, beliefs and feelings, which have been triggered by certain behaviours and interactions, can be explored. As pointed out above, the authors emphasise the importance of support and encouragement for workers, based on the difficult nature of working with troubled children and youth. Open discussion during supervision sessions hopefully facilitates workers' awareness of their personal issues, thus preventing them acting out these issues while on line with young people and their families, as far as possible.

2.4.3 Educative and training component of supervision

Authors defining the educative and training component of supervision mainly refer to the knowledge and skills that supervisors need to have, and have to impart to workers. Kadushin (cited in Smith 2012:4) sees the primary goal of this function as dispelling ignorance and enhancing the skills and knowledge of workers. Garfat (1992:3) differentiates between the educative function which refers to the provision of information, teaching skills and new experiences; and training, which means actually doing the work and learning from work experiences.

Maier (1987:195) emphasises the importance of professional training as part of supervision and stresses that supervision helps workers obtain increased skills and knowledge, thereby becoming more effective in their work. He states that supervisors become the trainers and teachers of their staff. In this role, they have to shift from a reactive stance where they are dealing with problems presented by the worker, to a pro-active stance where they anticipate what it is that workers need to know in order to do their jobs effectively.

Delano (2003:3) and Bailin (1989:32) both emphasise that an important skill for supervisors is to be able to assess the learning styles of supervisees and then adapt their own input to each worker's learning style. Bailin (1989:32) adds to this that a

theoretical and practical grasp of human ecosystems will help supervisors to analyse, evaluate, mediate and advocate, so that they are capable of carrying out their function of linking the supervisee and the organisation's administration.

Hawkins and Shohet (cited in Smith 2012:4) mention that the educational function of supervision should help workers to understand clients better and to become more aware of their own reactions and responses to those with whom they work. Supervisors need to help workers understand the dynamics taking place between themselves and their clients, how they interact with them and the consequences of their interventions, while simultaneously exploring possible alternative interventions. Fant and Ross (1979:631) mention that the educational and training function of supervision focuses very much on teaching the worker the required knowledge and skills to enable them to provide services to children and families. In order to do this effectively, they need a strong conceptual base of child and youth care practice and knowledge of specific teaching techniques.

As Maier (1987:198) says, "The supervisors are the ones who have to assess *what* and *how* the supervisees can effectively learn." This component involves supervisors encouraging workers to expand their knowledge and skills repertoire and enabling them to develop through education and training.

In conclusion, regarding the different components of supervision, it is evident that good supervision requires the combination and balance of all components, namely administration/management; support; and education and training, in order to provide a caring, developmental structure for workers.

2.5 CONTEXT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

There are certain characteristics associated with effective supervision that are examined briefly in the context of child and youth care work. Because of the frequent mention and importance of the 'supervisory relationship' in the literature, this concept is discussed below in some detail. Thereafter, transference and counter-transference

in relation to the supervisory relationship are examined and the qualities and characteristics required of supervisors considered.

2.5.1 The supervisory relationship

Many authors in the field, namely Caruso (1982:22), Brown and Bourne (1996:1), Delano (2003:3) and Burnison (2007:3) emphasise the importance of the relationship between the supervisor and the child and youth care worker and highlight that trust and respect are essential elements in this dynamic relationship.

Young (cited in Ford & Jones, 1989:65) sees the supervisor's duties as creating a climate for learning that will focus on their relationship and through which the worker will receive encouragement and feedback, as well as support in integrating knowledge and practice.

Hilton (2005:3) states that the supervisory relationship is built on support and challenge. A relationship built only on challenge can be very tiring and one built only on support could become condescending and not encourage growth or development. He states that effective supervision involves recognising when the supervisee needs to be challenged and when he or she needs to be supported. A relationship that combines both elements with compassion and humility can be truly inspiring.

2.5.2 Transference and counter-transference

Owing to the parallel nature of the worker/child relationship and the supervisor/supervisee relationship, it is useful to understand the concepts of transference and counter-transference in relation to the supervisory relationship.

Garfat (cited in Scott 2005:94), states that the relationship between what the supervisee experiences in supervision and what the young person experiences in the child/worker relationship, is related to the concept of parallel process, which has its

origins in the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and counter-transference. This process can also work in the opposite direction, which means that dynamics originating within the supervisory relationship may become mirrored in a worker's behaviour with an individual or family.

Doehrman (2000:1), in an article on the parallel process in supervision, explains transference as the process which occurs when the worker (or counsellor) recreates the problem and emotions of the therapeutic relationship they have with the young person within the supervisory relationship. She states that counter-transference takes place when the supervisor responds to the worker in the same way as the worker responds to the client (the young person). In this way, the supervisory interaction between worker and supervisor is parallel to the interaction between worker and client.

A difficult issue that supervisors must guard against is the crossing of the supervision/therapy border with the supervisee. Hilton (2005:3) makes the point that supervision is not meant to be therapy even if the experience of supervision is therapeutic. If one starts to examine unconscious projections with supervisees, this will evoke personal issues, some of which may need to be dealt with in supervision because of their impact on the worker's interventions with young people, while others may well be the domain of personal therapy. The supervisor needs to develop the skill of understanding the difference and knowing when to refer the worker for personal therapy.

Child and youth care supervisors must be skilled in understanding and interpreting the dynamics taking place between the young person and the worker. If done well, this will assist workers to develop insight into the therapeutic nature of their work with young people and will also deepen their interventions beyond superficial responses and meaningless reactions. An understanding of transference and counter-transference is essential for supervisors in order for them to help workers gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the dynamics taking place between them, their clients and their supervisors.

2.5.3 Qualities and characteristics of supervisors

At the 16th Biennial Conference of the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) held in July 2007, Michael (2007a) presented a paper on supervision that depicted the qualities required of supervisors using the letters of the word 'SUPERVISION', as follows (Figure 2.1):



Figure 2.1 Qualities needed for SUPERVISION (Michael 2007a)

This framework identifies some of the important qualities that supervisors need to have, such as support, empathy, encouragement and nurturance which are part of the support function of supervision. Maier (1987:119) stresses that it is only if caregivers are nurtured and have ongoing care and support that they can deliver quality care to others. Magnuson and Burger (2002:7) add that the supervisor – worker relationship must be characterized by mutuality, empathy, active listening, and discussion of feelings. Reinsilber (2006:5) mentions that in supervisory positions, staff must be given the encouragement to be confident in the work they do.

Gilberg and Charles (2007:5) support the point made by Michael (2007a) as depicted in Figure 2.1, in terms of the fact that supervisors need to be patient. They emphasise that supervisors with patience see the environment for employees and clients in a big picture and a little picture and realize that supervision is not a series of tasks but rather a process which takes time (Gilberg & Charles, 2007: 5). Michael (2007a) points out that people's growth, knowledge and skills will be at different levels, and the supervisor needs to be patient in helping workers to grow at their own pace.

In differing from other professions, supervisors in child and youth care work need to be 'present' in the work space of child and youth care workers as is discussed in the next paragraph when referring to life-space supervision. Garfat (2007:1) sees supervision as a means of developing staff members as reflective practitioners, and being reflective refers to validating workers and their experiences and treating them individually. An important concept is that of trusting one's instincts in terms of knowing what dynamics are taking place between workers and clients and having the strength to stand up for what one believes in. This may sometimes mean challenging the policies of the organisation or confronting workers in regard to their practice.

Various important qualities are needed by supervisors. Digney (2007:3) mentions the importance of humour and how this can place people at ease and Michael (2007a) also identified this as a quality necessary for supervisors. Being able to use one's initiative and address issues as one sees fit, as well as having a balance between working as part of the system and working independently, are other important qualities needed by supervisors. Bailin (1989:32) states that supervisors should model desirable attitudes and in doing so, be secure, flexible and self-aware. They should be able to confront issues objectively and accept criticism without becoming defensive; should always be respectful of the supervisee as a professional; and should be committed to helping him or her achieve professional autonomy. She also states that, besides being committed to the supervisee's growth and development, supervisors must have an ongoing desire to learn and grow professionally (Bailin

1989:32). They should be committed to their own role and responsibilities as supervisors and to strengthening themselves as reflective practitioners.

Gilberg and Charles (2007:2) list the desirable characteristics of supervisors as acceptance and a non-judgemental attitude, friendliness, positive role-modelling, positive interactions with clients, confidence and professionalism, availability, approachability, flexibility, creativeness and having a positive attitude to work. They emphasise that supervisors must have a strong set of core values and a strong sense of their own identity. These values must include respect for others, a belief in the value of all people, honesty and integrity.

The above authors have mentioned the importance of objectivity, respect, being non-judgemental and believing in the value of people, and Michael (2007a) highlights all these qualities as being important in supervisors dealing with child and youth care workers.

2.6 SUPERVISION WITHIN A CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CONTEXT

There are aspects of specific relevance to supervision in a child and youth care context where supervisors need to model for workers the same approach they want workers to use with their clients. As Hilton (2005:1) says, supervision can be more useful if it is congruent with the approach which the service provider sets out to achieve. Many of the aspects important in the worker/child relationship are equally important in the supervisor/supervisee relationship. Supervisors need to model for workers the same approach they want workers to use with their clients.

One of the defining concepts of child and youth care is working in the life-space of children and youth. Garfat (2001:2) highlights that child and youth care work takes place in the context of *young people's everyday lives* which means that the supervisor should be present when the worker is intervening with youth, in other words, in the *worker's everyday life*. He points out that interventions with youth are short and focused on the immediate, and that supervisory interventions having these

qualities may be beneficial in helping the workers to be brief and to focus on the '*here and now*'.

Mann-Feder (2002:1) supports this concept of congruence between the worker/youth relationship and the supervisor/supervisee relationship by saying that supervisors must remain open to workers' emotional responses and be willing to look at the supervisory relationship in the 'here and now', as this will improve their understanding of what is actually happening in the relationship between the worker and the young person. However, this can only take place if there is an understanding that the relationship itself can be discussed. This openness with workers will model for them a way of interacting with their clients. Workers could learn about how to work with young people if this were modelled for them in their relationship with their supervisors.

Another important aspect concerning child and youth care is that of working developmentally. While workers should intervene with youth in developmentally appropriate ways, so too should supervisors take into account the developmental levels of workers. Phelan (2003:52-53) identified the following three levels of development for child and youth care workers:

- During **Level 1**, which usually applies to the first 18 months of practice, workers need to master personal safety and create safety for others. During this stage, their main task is to establish a personal adult presence that communicates both competence and authority.
- At **Level 2**, normally the next 12 to 18 months of practice, the worker is required to relax external controls and to support young people in taking control of themselves. It is during this stage that workers have the opportunity to use theory and relationships to effect change; and also that the process of *living alongside* the youth/family also becomes a *living with* them. Workers should make the transition from acquired knowledge to practical skills application, integrate theory and initiate and individualise creative strategies to help youths. Until workers

have mastered all this, they will not be effective supervisors as these are the skills they will need to support, teach and educate workers and to provide growth-promoting supervision experiences.

- At **Level 3**, workers should have the characteristics of reflective practitioners and be able to use themselves consciously in the helping process. This is the level at which workers should develop their mentoring skills. Ideally, supervisors should be workers who have mastered the skills, knowledge and self-development of a Level 3 worker.

As Phelan (2003:53) says, many workers who have been in the field for a number of years have remained at Level 1 and become supervisors without having made the transition to Level 2. This situation creates severe limitations for child and youth care programmes as the focus on Level 1 is on creating a personal safe space and adult presence that communicates both competence and authority. If a supervisor has not mastered this, they will not feel safe enough to relax external controls and when there are discussions about youth/families, an agency that is at level 1 will only focus on the negative behaviour of the youth/family and how to control it (Phelan 2003:53).

As far as supervisors are concerned, Phelan (2003:53) highlights the fact that new supervisors will experience the same developmental challenges faced by new workers as follows: **Level 1 supervisors** will find their personal safety and authority challenged and their main tasks will be to create safety for themselves and others and to establish their competence. **Level 2 supervisors** will rely on relationships established with supervisees, and attempt to reduce external control by encouraging workers to be more creative; while **Level 3 supervisors** will have the ability to inspire and motivate workers to grow and develop. Supervisors on this level will consciously use themselves in the way they deal with people. From Phelan's stages of development, the parallel processes that are mirrored in the development of the child/worker relationship, the worker/supervisor relationship, and the relationship between the supervisor and managers are noted.

Caruso (1982:24) already mentioned that supervisors may be responsible for supervising workers at various levels and of different ages. Because of this, supervisors need a sound knowledge of life-span development to help them understand workers.

In discussing congruence, Gilberg and Charles (2007:3) look at the attributes child and youth care workers need in order to work well with young people; and at how these apply in the supervisor/worker relationship. The attributes are as follows:

- **A strengths-based approach** - Just as workers are encouraged to find strengths in young people, so too, supervisors need to build on the strengths of workers.
- **An experiential approach** - Both child and youth care workers and supervisors need to look for “learning moments” and to create learning opportunities.
- **Patience** - Patience is required of workers and supervisors to allow young people and supervisees to work at their own pace.
- **The ability to translate** - While workers need to translate the meaning of behaviour to young people and their families, supervisors need to translate policies, dynamics and interventions to workers.
- **An approach based on guidance, not rules** - Both child and youth care workers and supervisors use consequences and reasoning, helping youth and workers to think through situations in order to achieve the desired outcomes.
- **The fostering of autonomy** - Encouraging independence and doing *with*, not *for*, is as relevant for workers dealing with youth as it is for supervisors dealing with workers.
- **Creativity** - Because of the individuality of each young person and worker, creativity is essential when intervening with youth and when responding to workers in supervision.
- **Being action-focused** - Just as workers take the goals of young people and help to turn them into action, so too, supervisors must help workers analyse difficult situations and turn their goals into action.
- **Being able to “walk the talk”** - Workers and supervisors should demonstrate and model qualities and skills for young people and supervisees respectively.

It is apparent from the above that there are many parallels between the practice of child and youth care work and supervision in this field. Supervisors who understand these parallels will be able to use them to aid the professional growth and development of workers they supervise.

There are various types of supervision and for the purposes of this research, it is worth referring to *life-space supervision*, which is particularly well suited to and utilised in the child and youth care profession. Formal supervision, used in many other professions, is less appropriate in child and youth care settings, owing to the nature of the work. Formal supervision usually takes place in an office setting at specific times, while life-space or “on-line” supervision takes place in the work space of the child and youth care worker.

Michael (2005:61) postulates that life-space supervision is a more appropriate type of supervision than formal supervision in the child and youth care field, because it assists the worker to respond differently “in the moment” while working in the life-space of young people – just as an effective worker might intervene “in the moment” to help a young person respond differently. Life-space supervision parallels the processes and characteristics of child and youth care practice and, as such, it is an approach to supervision grounded in the values, beliefs and practice of child and youth care (Michael, 2005:63).

Fant and Ross (1979:629) highlight the following aspects of life-space supervision:

- *Modelling* – which refers to the supervisor practising child and youth care skills within view of the worker and discussing them with the worker subsequent to the event.
- *Evaluation* – which occurs when the supervisor and the worker discuss the intervention that took place or should have taken place. This can be discussed at the time, or later, in formal supervision.

- *Anticipation* – which refers to the supervisor discussing the possible consequences of an intervention with the supervisee prior to it taking place.
- *Directing* – which takes place when the supervisor carries out an intervention with the worker.
- *Providing a tone for learning* – which refers to the supervisor inviting the worker to give feedback on his/her intervention with youth and asking for the worker's suggestions on how the situation could have been handled differently.

2.7 CONCLUSION

From the literature review, it is evident that supervision is an essential element in providing support for workers to enable them to carry out their tasks. The various components of supervision give workers opportunities for professional growth and personal development in knowledge, skills and self-awareness and as pointed out, the importance of the relationship between the supervisor and the worker is referred to on numerous occasions. Probably one of the most important points made is that of the parallel between the relationship between child and worker being the basis of good practice and the relationship between supervisor and worker similarly being the basis of good supervision.

Delano (2003:1) says that workers should be encouraged to see supervision as a personal and professional growth opportunity rather than as a threat, and urges workers to be willing to take the risks involved in the process of supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (1989:132) stress that good supervision needs to be “built into the fabric of an organisation” and has to be led from the top.

Carver (2007:3) emphasises that supervision with child and youth care workers is about working with the individual as a whole and not just about work performance. She talks about being able to engage with the “spirit self” of workers, defining spirituality as learning to understand one's place in the world, emphasising that -

“It is my way of being or existing, and how I offer hope to others along with a sense of being valued. I believe that the process of integrating spirituality into our everyday lives is more about learning how we can be with others in a way that has meaning for them” (Carver 2007:2).

From the writing on the topic it is evident that supervision of child and youth care workers is a complex but essential process. Just as obvious is the need for child and youth care supervisors to have a real commitment to young people and their families, and to the development of those child and youth care workers they are supervising.

The first chapter of this dissertation provided an introduction and background to this research. In this chapter, supervision is dealt with by means of a literature review that focuses on the purpose of supervision; different components of supervision; the context and characteristics of effective supervision; and supervision within a child and youth care context. The next chapter deals with the application of the research methodology and design by describing qualitative research, the research design and explaining the application of the research method in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the application of the methodology and design followed in this study. This chapter therefore, is an expansion of Chapter 1 that, after explaining the research problem, focused on a theoretical overview of the research methodology identified to deal with the research problem. In the present chapter, the choice of methodology is discussed and described in dealing with the matter of qualitative research and the research design as applied in this study. This is followed by an explanation of the research method as applied in the research.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As already indicated (paragraph 1.3.1), owing to the complexities of the topic under research and the need to reflect on it, link it to theory and understand how the knowledge and skills of supervisors impact on the everyday life experiences of clients, a qualitative research approach was chosen as appropriate for this study. This approach firstly allowed the researcher to collect data in a semi structured manner about a topic of which very little has been written from a South African perspective. Secondly, it enabled the researcher to deal with the research goal of the study which was to develop an in-depth understanding of the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

Saint-Germain (1997:1) says, qualitative research is aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of organisations or events, and generates data about human groups in social settings. She states that qualitative research is more flexible than quantitative research, in that it adjusts to the specific setting and allows meaning to emerge from the participants. It aims to understand how the participants make meaning of their

surroundings and how this meaning affects their behaviour (Saint-Germain 1997:1). Creswell (cited in Van As & Van Schalkwyk, 2001:36) adds that one of the criteria for selecting a qualitative research paradigm is the nature of the research problem. He explains that when little information is available on a topic this method allows for more exploration of the topic and helps to explain the context of the phenomenon being studied.

Fouché and Delport (2005:74) emphasise that the qualitative research paradigm refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions, producing prescriptive data from participants and involving the participant's beliefs and values which underlie the phenomena. Qualitative research as maintained by Babbie and Mouton (2001:272) aims to understand events in the context within which they take place. Neuman (2000:146) too, emphasises the importance of the social context surrounding a study, saying that the researcher needs to take cognisance of what came before the study, what surrounds it and how essential it is to take into account cultural and historical factors.

Creswell (cited in Van As & Van Schalkwyk, 2001:36) says that the reasons for a researcher selecting a qualitative research design are often influenced by the factors listed below. As these resonated with the researcher, she used them as parameters for her choice of research methodology:

- The **worldview** or outlook favoured by the researcher. This implies one's personal *view and interpretation of the world*. Because the researcher is a trainer and helping professional, her worldview is based on listening to and making sense of how people experience themselves and interpret their situations.
- The researcher's **training and experiences**. Most of the researcher's training has been as a facilitator and counsellor in the fields of child and youth care work and social work. For this reason she preferred to use a research method where she could facilitate a group process, using her skills to guide and understand the

dynamics of the group process and analyse the meaning and relevance of these dynamics.

- The researcher's **psychological attributes**. The qualitative method requires the researcher to take more risks and live with more ambiguity than does the quantitative research, but given her professional training and experience, the researcher was comfortable with both aspects.
- The **nature of the research problem**. When little information is available on the topic being researched, the qualitative method is preferable as it allows an opportunity to collect information through focus groups and discussion. The focus groups gave the researcher the opportunity to collect and discuss data from a variety of people in the field.
- The **intended audience**. These are the people for whom the research is intended and Creswell says that they should be comfortable with the methodology used in the qualitative research. Fewster (1996:vi) highlights how this method of data collection has integrated research, theory and practice in such a way that practitioners can make use of it to examine their own practice. Hence, the intended audience will find the research beneficial in child and youth care settings.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

As pointed out in paragraph 1.3.2 an underlying qualitative research approach formed the basis for the exploratory, descriptive and contextual research designs in terms of which this research was structured.

In this research, the researcher's intention was to *explore* and gain insight into the under researched aspect of supervision with child and youth care workers in general, and in particular to explore what knowledge and skills are required by supervisors to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers in South Africa. In view of the fact that not much is known about the matter being researched, the researcher employed an *explorative* design in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of the

knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers.

A *descriptive* research design was employed to enable the researcher to describe how professionals in the field of child and youth care understood the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers and gain knowledge about what the current problems in this area are. This was done by observing and then describing the behaviour of the participants in the focus groups to obtain the necessary data, without influencing them in any way.

As qualitative research aims to understand events in *the context* within which they take place, the events or phenomena researched can only truly be understood if seen and analysed in the context of their background and the context and milieu in which they are manifested. Therefore, a *contextual* research design was also employed in this research. In this regard Mouton (1996:155) points out that there are two factors to bear in mind when looking at contexts, viz. broader factors that are determined by history, socio-political and economic aspects on one side, and the narrower research setting on the other. Regarding the former, he states that the researcher must be aware of external events such as unemployment, civil unrest, cultural differences and customs and political factors. Regarding the latter, he mentions that the research setting can influence the research outcomes. Therefore, in this research, the history of child and youth care in South Africa is one of the contextual factors to be noted, as well as the cultural differences of participants. The effects of apartheid on the development of workers are highlighted in the analysis of the data.

3.4 THE RESEARCH METHOD

Following on the discussion of the research methodology in paragraph 1.3, the research method applied is examined according to the target population and sampling, preparation of participants for data collection, the data collection method, data analysis and findings, validity and trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

3.4.1 Target population and sampling

Babbie and Mouton (2001:100) describe a population as a group of people about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions. They say that because the researcher can seldom study all members of a population that interest them under every condition, they select a sample from the population which gives an adequate reflection of the whole population which interests them.

The population for this research study comprised all directors of programmes and organisations, supervisors and child and youth care workers in child and youth care settings in South Africa. Because it was not possible to research all of these participants due to time and cost considerations, the target population was defined as directors of programmes and organisations, supervisors and child and youth care workers working in the Johannesburg Metropolitan area as they were more accessible to the researcher. It was important to include participants from residential and community based settings as well as those who had some experience and knowledge of supervision in the field.

A sample had to be drawn from the population, and the sampling method used for this research was non-probability sampling. In qualitative investigations, non-probability sampling is used almost without exception (Patton, cited by Strydom & Delport, 2005:328). Non-probability sampling is divided into various types. Grinnell (1997:245-249) identified four types of non-probability sampling, namely; convenience, purposive, quota and snowballing (which were utilised in this research) and describes them as follows:

- **Convenience sampling** – this type of sampling relies on the closest and most available subjects to constitute the sample - the researcher applied this type of sampling as the participants living in the Gauteng area were the most easily accessible. They represented seven different programmes operating in Johannesburg, the East Rand and the West Rand in Gauteng. These areas cover a geographical distance of approximately 120 kilometres.

- **Purposive sampling** – this is also known as judgemental or theoretical sampling where researchers use their own judgement to select a sample which can provide the data required. Galloway (n.d.) adds to this description by saying that a purposive sample is one that is selected by the researcher subjectively. She says that the researcher tries to find a sample that is representative of the population and ensures that a range of people are included. In this research project purposive sampling was used in that the researcher identified a range of child and youth care programmes representing both community and residential child and youth care settings. These programmes were also selected because some level of supervision was taking place in the organisations and because all of them were aware of, and attempting to implement the Minimum Standards, as laid down by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, Interim Policy Recommendations, 1996 (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, 1996).
- **Quota sampling** - this strategy consists of identifying characteristics of the sample that are relevant to the study, determining the quota of these characteristics in the population and then selecting participants in each category until the quota is filled. This type of sampling was used as it was important to have participants from black, white, coloured and Indian population groups represented as well as a representation of directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers with varying years of experience in the field.
- **Snowball sampling** – in applying this strategy a few individuals in the population of interest are identified and asked to identify others in the same group. They, in turn, are asked to identify others and the cycle continues until an adequate sampling size is achieved, The researcher used snowball sampling when two of the child and youth care workers who had originally agreed to take part in the research, were unable to do so for personal reasons. They identified other workers in their organisation who could take their place and contacted the researcher to check out the credentials of these participants. These replacement participants were then briefed and accepted.

As Dawson, Manderson and Tallo (1992:16) state, there are many methods for selecting participants and the type of sampling will depend on how one plans to use the information. They explain that the most common method used to select participants for focus groups is called “purposive” or “convenience” sampling, which means that one selects community members who will provide the best information (Dawson et al. 1992:16). It is not a random selection, but rather a selection of people who one believes have knowledge about the topic being researched. They go on to say that because focus groups are discussions among people with similar characteristics, it is important to ensure that participants in each group have something in common with each other, as people talk more openly if they share similar backgrounds and experiences (Dawson et al. 1992:16).

Kelly (2006:304) states that when using focus groups, one is looking for particular types of participants because of what one already knows about the field being researched. The researcher then targets certain individuals who are often willing to participate to form the focus groups because the topic is of interest to them. In this research, this was the method used by the researcher as organisations and participants were approached whom the researcher knew had a specific interest in the topic of supervision.

Bearing in mind the above, the following child and youth care programmes and participants were involved in the research:

- A residential care treatment centre for 18 sexually abused young people of both sexes and all cultures, aged between 6 and 18 years. Participants from this programme were the director of the organisation, a supervisor and a child and youth care worker.
- A faith-based residential and day-care facility catering for 40 young people, 25 of whom were placed by the courts and 15 of whom were in day care. They offer reunification services to families and services to young people of both sexes aged between 4 and 20 years. Participants from this programme were the programme director and a supervisor from one specific religious and cultural group only.

- A residential care facility catering for 20 young people of both sexes from various cultures and religions and ranging in age from 6 to 18 years. Participants from this programme were the programme director, the supervisor and a child and youth care worker.
- A residential care facility catering for 20 young people of both sexes from various cultures and religions and ranging in age from 6 to 18 years. Participants from this programme were the programme director, the supervisor and a child and youth care worker.
- A community outreach programme working with families in the community to prevent family breakdown and the subsequent removal of children. The participant from this programme was a child and youth care worker.
- A community programme offering psycho-social support to children and their families infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty. The participant from this programme was the programme director.
- A residential care and day-care independent living skills programme for 25 young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years who are no longer in the formal schooling system. The participants from this programme were the supervisor and a child and youth care worker.

Besides these fifteen participants, the overall director of three of the programmes attended the directors group, taking the total to sixteen participants. Patton (cited by Strydom & Delport, 2005:328) states that in qualitative research, sample size depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the study, what will be useful and credible and what can be done with available resources and time. In qualitative research, sample size is determined by applying the principle of data saturation (referred to in paragraph 1.3.3.2). In terms of this principle the sample size is not determined at the start of a study, but determined whilst the research is in progress. The researcher continues to collect information until the information becomes repetitive, the themes resulting from the discussions become fully developed, the process is completed and no more additional participants or focus groups are

involved (Fossey. et al., 2002:72). The principle of data saturation was applied in this research and determined the number of participants comprising the sample.

Thus, six directors of organisations and programmes, five supervisors and five child and youth care workers participated in this study. Their ages ranged from 22 years to 60 years and each had between 2 and 16 years of experience. There were seven black, four white, one coloured and four Indian participants. In summary, the particulars of the participants according to category were as follows (more details about them are provided in paragraph 4.2):

- The members of the directors group had all been in the field in excess of five years and they were all social workers.
- The supervisors were all child and youth care workers and four of them had either the National Diploma or the B. Tech. Degree in Child and Youth Development. The fifth participant had 15 years' on-line experience as a child and youth care worker and was a qualified social auxiliary worker.
- Of the child and youth care workers in the sample group, two had a formal qualification in child and youth care. The other participants had been in the field as on-line child and youth care workers for over five years.

The child and youth care programmes concerned were all committed to supervision structures, but had struggled to implement them as efficiently as they would have liked. The target population was directors of programmes and organisations, supervisors and child and youth care workers working in the Johannesburg Metropolitan area.

3.4.2 Preparation of participants for data collection

While there are various ways in which one can collect qualitative data, *participative research* in the form of focus groups was used to collect the data for this research, as the researcher felt that this would be the most appropriate way to collect data for this study. Marczak and Sewell (n.d.) explain that focus groups give information on what people think and feel about a certain topic and also insight into why people have

certain opinions. They state that advantages of focus groups are that they can be used in situations where people struggle with literacy, provide data quickly at lower cost than individual interviews and allow the interviewer to interact with group members and ask directly for clarification (Marczak & Sewell, n.d.). Gibbs (1997:2) concurs with this and adds the importance of the interaction between group members and the fact that members are able to challenge each other's attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions and make them conscious in a way that would not be feasible using other methods. Kitzinger (cited in Gibbs 1997:3) emphasises that interaction is the crucial feature of focus groups as it allows participants to question each other and evaluate their own understanding of the topic.

Greeff (2005:299) mentions that participants are chosen because they have common characteristics and are involved in a collective activity. The focus groups for this research project were chosen because the topic of supervision concerned all of them, albeit from different perspectives and the researcher wanted to collect data from the perspective of all three groups pertaining to the same research questions and then compare this data. Greeff (2005:304) emphasises the importance of recruiting participants for focus groups and says that while participants should be homogenous, they should ideally not know each other. The participants for this study were homogenous in that they all worked in child and youth care settings. However, some of them did know each other prior to the research and some were in fact colleagues.

The importance of researchers taking cognisance of the information needs of the group they want to research and their need to be adequately prepared for participating in the research, are indicated in paragraph 1.3.4. In preparing participants, Greeff (2005:305) adds that prior to the focus groups taking place, participants should be told the subject of the research, who else will be there, what is required from them, whether or not there will be any incentives, the venue, what refreshments will be provided and what contact the researcher will have with them prior to the focus groups.

The researcher had contacted all the directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers concerned telephonically and personally and explained that she was doing her Masters research on the topic of supervision. She explained that she was planning to run three focus groups – one for directors, one for supervisors and one for child and youth care workers. She enquired if they would be prepared to attend a focus group for directors for approximately two hours initially and a subsequent follow up group of approximately one hour about three weeks after the initial focus group. The researcher then gave these directors the names of supervisors and child and youth care workers in their programmes that she would like to approach as well and asked their permission to include them in the research. They all agreed that she could contact their staff members.

The supervisors and child and youth care workers were then contacted telephonically and the research explained to them. All participants were told that the focus groups would concentrate on exploring what knowledge and skills supervisors needed in child and youth care settings in South Africa. Each participant was given a letter of consent personally or this was faxed to them and these were all returned to the researcher within seven days prior to the focus groups (see Annexure A).

3.4.3 Data collection method

In this research study, the researcher used focus groups as a self containing method serving as the principal source of data (Morgan cited in Greeff, 2005:300). Three focus groups consisting of 16 participants in total were selected and each group met twice. The groups and participants represented seven different child and youth care programmes operating in Johannesburg, the East Rand and West Rand in Gauteng. These areas cover a geographical distance of approximately 120 km and the programmes chosen represented a cross-section of residential and community child and youth care programmes. The first group consisted of six directors of programmes or organisations; the second group comprised five supervisors of child and youth care workers; and the third group was made up of five child and youth care workers.

Krueger (quoted by Kingry et al. and cited in Greeff 2005:300), refers to the focus group as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.” Morgan (cited in Greeff, 2005:300) adds that focus groups are “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher.” Marczak and Sewell (n.d.:1) define focus groups as “... a group of interacting individuals having some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue.” They add that groups normally consist of between seven and ten people, selected because they have certain common characteristics relating to the topic of the focus group. The researcher limited the number of each group to five participants but was then approached by the programme director of three of the programmes who asked if he could join the focus group.

Possible disadvantages of using focus groups to obtain research data were also borne in mind. Marczak and Sewell (n.d.:1) describe some of the disadvantages of focus groups as follows:

- The moderator (cf. paragraph 3.4.3.1) has less control over the group.
- The moderator is less able to control the information because focus groups are not a structured process but allow for discussion.
- Data analysis is difficult, as a great deal of information is collected and this may be fairly chaotic and unsystematic.
- Smaller numbers and convenience sampling may limit the ability to generalise the findings.
- The moderator has to be well trained in group dynamics
- Strong members may dominate the group leaving others hesitant to speak.

The researcher had to keep these disadvantages in mind throughout the research, and endeavoured to obviate any negative effects wherever possible.

Creswell (2009:178) mentions that data collection in qualitative research includes setting boundaries for the study, collecting information, documents and visual materials in a structured or unstructured manner and establishing the protocol for recording information. He says that initially one has to *purposefully select* participants who will assist the researcher to understand the problem and the research question. The author refers to Miles and Huberman's four aspects of the **setting**, the **actors (participants)**, the **events** and the **process** as being the starting point for any qualitative research (Creswell, 2009:178).

With reference to the first of these four aspects, a neutral **setting** was chosen for the groups to meet, namely the researcher's home, as the participants came from a variety of settings. All the meetings of the focus groups were held at the researcher's home, around the dining room table. Tea and refreshments were served to participants prior to the group starting and participants were introduced to each other. Most of them already knew each other – some were working together, while others had been in the field for some time and had worked together previously, or knew each other from child and youth care conferences or training courses.

The participants (**actors**) were purposefully selected (as explained in paragraph 1.3.3) from a range of residential and community child and youth care programmes, because of their varying years of experience in the field and because they represented programme directors and directors of organisations, supervisors and child and youth care workers. The programmes were selected because some level of supervision was taking place in the organisations; and because personnel in all of them were aware of, and attempting to implement the minimum standards laid down by the State for child and youth care facilities. Group members had to be articulate in English and also had to be culturally representative in terms of the field of child and youth care in South Africa. The participants were from the white, black, coloured and Indian population groups – the four main groups referred to for statistical and social analysis in the South African context – and all were comfortable speaking English or Afrikaans.

The mid year statistics report for 2011 indicates that 79.5% of the South African population is African, 9% is Coloured, 9% is White and 2.5% is Indian. It was therefore important that all population groups should be represented (Statistics South Africa 2011:3).

The **events** as described by Creswell (2009:178) refer to what the participants will be doing. As Greeff (2005:286) explains the purpose of the research will guide the method of data collection and issues not likely to emerge in one-on-one interviews are more likely to emerge in focus groups because of the dynamics among group members. Therefore, focus group discussions rather than interviews with individuals were chosen for this research in order to gain a deeper understanding of how different groups felt about the topic. Kelly (2006:304) states that when using focus groups one is looking for particular types of participants because of what one already knows about the field being researched. The researcher then targets certain individuals who are often willing to participate to form part of the focus groups, because the topic is of interest to them (Kelly, 2006:304). In this research, this was the method used by the researcher as organisations and participants were approached whom the researcher knew had a specific interest in the topic of supervision. In addition, Greeff (2005:299) mentions that participants are chosen because they have common characteristics and are involved in a collective activity. The focus groups of this research project were chosen because the topic of supervision concerned all of them, albeit from different perspectives, and the researcher wanted to collect data from the perspective of all three groups pertaining to the same research questions and then compare this data.

The fourth point mentioned by Creswell (2009:178) namely the **process**, refers to the nature of events undertaken by the participants. In this study, participants attended one focus group meeting each, the data obtained were then summarised and circulated to them to check that their thoughts had been accurately captured. Thereafter, they returned for a follow-up group session to discuss if there was anything they wanted to add to the information already collected and collated.

The first group session for each group was approximately two hours long. The aim of each session was to gather information from group members on the topic of what knowledge and skills supervisors need in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers. As clarified above, the purpose and process to be followed was explained to participants, and the management of information and the ethical principles applied were also made clear to them. As Kelly (2006:304) states, the facilitator in a focus group needs to be aware of the personal and interpersonal dynamics at work all the time in the group. He emphasises that good facilitation requires a balance between listening and leading.

The researcher was very conscious of this in conducting the focus groups, as some of the participants were more verbal than others and the facilitator's task was to continually keep the group members focused and on track and create opportunities for everyone to participate. Participants were thanked for contributing to this research in the South African context, as there are very few investigations conducted regarding child and youth care in the South African context. It was explained to them that their input will be useful in developing supervision practices for child and youth care workers in our country.

Data collection is further discussed in terms of the practicalities of the focus group meetings and the researcher's role in the focus groups.

3.4.3.1 Focus group meetings

Barnett (n.d.) uses the term moderator for the person conducting the group meetings and states that the moderator is vital to the success of the focus groups, explaining that he or she must establish rapport immediately with group members, by giving them name tags and refreshments on arrival. The moderator must explain the audio equipment and the fact that notes will be taken. Furthermore, the moderator has to tell the participants that the data collected will be confidential.

The researcher acted as the moderator for all the focus groups which were held at her home, around the dining room table. Tea and refreshments were served to participants prior to the group starting and participants were introduced to each other. Some already knew each other – some were working together, while others had been in the field for some time and had worked together previously, or knew each other from child and youth care conferences or training courses. All participants were greeted individually on their arrival, given name tags and introduced to the person who would be taking notes during the group session. They were supplied with refreshments and these were left on the table to allow them to help themselves throughout the session. Once everyone was welcomed, they were thanked for their willingness to participate in the research and told what would happen with the information that they provided. The researcher explained that she would be taking notes and that her assistant would be capturing the discussion on the laptop. The participants were also consulted about the use of a tape recorder, and all stated that they felt comfortable with this.

The sessions were started by clarifying the purpose of the research and explaining how the data would be used. Group members were thanked for their time and willingness to participate and it was explained that shared information would be confidential. It was again emphasised that no names would be mentioned in any of the documentation compiled; only general themes would be referred to; if any quotes were used, the speaker would not be identified; and that only the researcher would have access to the documentation. The issue of confidentiality among participants was also discussed as some of them worked together. It was agreed that whatever was said in the focus group was being said for research purposes and would not be taken outside of the group.

Because the researcher has been working in this field for many years and had trained and consulted with many of the people involved in it, it would have been virtually impossible to find participants whose superiors or subordinates she did not know. She explained that because she knew their colleagues in the other groups, nothing

they said in the focus groups would be shared with anyone in the other groups. Group members were then told what would happen to the research information once the research was completed.

The first group session for each group was approximately two hours long. The aim of each session was to gather information from group members on the topic of what knowledge and skills supervisors need in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

The general research topic was described to the participants and it was explained that the data for this research were to be collected by means of a focus group discussion. The interview guide used in the three focus groups that dealt with the issues on which data were required, comprised the following open ended guiding questions:

The central question:

What knowledge and skills do supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa?

It was explained that the question had two main foci – knowledge and skills – and the two foci were each addressed as follows:

| Knowledge | Skills |
|--|---|
| What <i>knowledge</i> do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth workers in SA? <i>What do they need to know?</i> | What <i>skills</i> do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth workers in SA? <i>What do they need to know how to do?</i> |
| From your <u>experience</u> and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care worker, can you give some examples of this? | From your <u>experience</u> and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care workers, can you give some examples of this? |

3.4.3.2 Researcher's role in the focus groups

At the beginning of each session, once the purpose of the group had been explained, it was agreed to discuss a definition of supervision to ensure a common understanding of the term. These definitions are included in the analysis of the data in chapter four. The researcher guided the discussion to keep it focused, and summarised participants' thoughts and feelings throughout. Once a definition of supervision had been discussed, participants were asked to consider and deliberate the abovementioned questions.

In the supervisors' group specifically, there was a person who tended to dominate, whilst other participants had to be drawn into the discussion by specifically being asked what they thought about a matter under discussion. In all the groups, quieter members were encouraged to participate to ensure contributions from all the participants. As Dawson et al. (1992:63) say drastic measures sometimes need to be adopted with dominant members of focus groups. They suggest that one should thank such members for their comments, and then ask other group members to comment. They caution that one should always be tactful and kind as other members will watch how the facilitator handles all the members of the group. They also mention that there will always be shy members in groups; and that one way to draw them out is to make eye contact with them and very gently encourage them to participate while using their names. One has to be very careful though, as sometimes this can embarrass them and prevent them from speaking again. The researcher followed the above guidelines, continually summarised and reflected back what members had said and at times asked for clarification on issues.

Participants were reluctant to stop discussing the issues and it was difficult to end the meetings after almost two hours. There seemed to be a cathartic element to the group discussions, especially for the directors' group, who seemed to have found a space to vent their frustrations and concerns about the lack of supervision in their organisations. Each time one of the participants introduced a topic in the discussion this seemed to trigger issues for other participants who then felt able to discuss their

concerns. Initially, the directors were a bit guarded as possibly they did not want to share their difficulties in case this revealed weaknesses in their programmes. However, once they all realised that they were struggling with the same issues, they were much freer in sharing their problems.

The researcher felt comfortable allowing the group to talk and encouraging the flow of information between group members. Most of the time, the researcher simply listened and directed the discussion only when necessary. She felt in control of the group process at all times, and was confident that, between the tape recording and the taking of notes, all the data would be adequately captured.

Group members were informed that they would receive a summary of the first group discussion prior to the next focus group meeting, so that they could correct any misconceptions that might have been recorded or add to the information they had shared. They were thanked for contributing to research in South Africa in this way, as there is very little investigation into child and youth care topics in the South African context and their input would be useful in developing supervision practices in our country.

The data from the first group meetings were collated and emailed to participants prior to the second group meeting. At the second meeting they further discussed some of the issues mentioned in the collated data.

By including directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers from diverse settings in the focus groups, the researcher was able to collect enough data, by applying the principle of data saturation. This enabled her to make comparisons regarding the views of participants on the knowledge and skills that supervisors need to have in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

3.4.4 Data analysis and findings

The discussions were recorded on a Sony handheld Dictaphone recorder and the researcher and her assistant both took copious notes. Following the discussions the recordings were transcribed, collated and compared with the notes in order to clarify any obscure points, thus ensuring that accurate transcriptions were made of the discussions.

As Tolich and Davidson (1999:165) say, the construction of themes in the analysis is the most crucial part of the research process. This was probably the most difficult part of analysing the data as the discussions in the focus groups did not follow a specific order. All the points made, subsequently had to be grouped into themes.

From these notes, the researcher then compiled lists of what had been said. (See Annexures D, E and F). These were emailed to members of the respective groups, who were asked to check the accuracy of the information prior to the second focus group meetings. Van As and Van Schalkwyk (2001:63) state that this process is necessary when using qualitative research methods: the researcher should validate his or her findings by taking themes that have emerged back to the participants in order to check their accuracy.

Once the researcher had collected all the data from the first and second meetings of the focus groups, the eight steps as suggested by Tesch (cited in Van As & Van Schalkwyk, 2001:62 and Creswell, 2009:186), were applied by the researcher to collate the information systematically by the researcher -

- getting a sense of the whole;
- picking one document, going through this and writing thoughts in the margin;
- making a list of the topics that emerge and clustering similar topics together;
- abbreviating the topics and organising data into categories;

- reducing the total list of categories by grouping together topics that relate to one another;
- making a final decision on the abbreviation for each category;
- assembling the data belonging to each category and performing a preliminary analysis; and
- where necessary, recoding existing data.

All the data were then tabulated into two tables¹, dealing with the two main foci of the research namely -

- the knowledge supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa; and
- the skills supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa.

3.4.5 Validity and trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the data obtained in this research were validated by means of Guba's model for ensuring the trustworthiness of data in qualitative research (in Krefting 1991:215), based on the four aspects of trustworthiness, namely; truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality, as expounded in paragraph 1.3.7.

Regarding the **truth value**, the researcher conducted the research project in a way that ensured the subject was accurately identified and described and that data gathered were obtained from participants who have good standing in the field and are credible practitioners. With reference to the **applicability** aspect, the researcher regards it as possible for the information gained in this study to be extrapolated to other settings and used comparatively. According to the model, **consistency** is defined in terms of dependability and in conducting this study, the researcher was ever aware of the possible effect of changing conditions in the phenomena being

¹ These tables are attached as Annexures G and H. In the tables the directors' comments are listed in red, the supervisors' comments in blue and the child and youth care workers' points in green. This is explained in more detail in paragraph 4.3.2.

studied. As far as **neutrality** is concerned, the researcher had to be mindful of the fact that she had relationships with all participants prior to the focus groups. She had to focus on the data collected and remain neutral in interpreting the data basing it on facts and not her knowledge of the participants.

Furthermore, in order to validate that the data had been captured correctly, it was checked against the tape-recorded versions of the focus group sessions and then summarised into points or themes. Van As and Van Schalkwyk (2001:62) mention that feedback from members is called “member checking”, which is one way of validating findings. Once the data were summarised, it was sent to participants for them to check. The participants also had to comment on whether they felt that their thoughts and ideas had been captured accurately. During the second focus group meetings, participants clarified points captured in the first discussion and added in some thoughts. Thereafter, their ideas were analysed into themes regarding what each group had expressed.

Creswell (cited in Van As & Van Schalkwyk, 2001:65), makes two important points related to validity namely -

- The issue of *critical subjectivity*, which implies that researchers must have a heightened level of self-awareness in the research process in order to help them understand their psychological and emotional states before, during and after the research process. Throughout the process, the researcher made a concerted effort to attend to her ‘inner self’ and to be consciously aware of her own thoughts and feelings, to ensure that she was not influencing the process or content of the discussions unnecessarily.
- That validity involves *reciprocity* between the researcher and the participants. This implies that sharing, trust and mutuality should exist. The researcher felt that this was evident, possibly because of her pre-existing relationships with participants over many years and the fact that she had trained most of the participants at some time in their careers in child and youth care.

In processing the data for this research, its validity and trustworthiness were ensured as far as possible by means of implementing the above measures.

3.4.6 Ethical considerations

As already discussed in detail (in paragraph 1.4), the following ethical considerations were agreed on before conducting the focus groups and applied diligently during the research: doing no harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, avoidance of deceit, and anonymity and confidentiality.

Another important ethical consideration observed and referred to (in paragraph 1.4) was the researcher's existing relationships with the participants. The researcher was aware that her previous relationships with them and their organisations might be problematic and was very careful during the groups not to refer to any prior relationship or to previous discussions on supervision. She explained to participants that the groups were intended to ascertain how they felt about the topic, and not to discuss her views on the matter.

The researcher's previous role in relation to all the participants had not been one of direct authority. Rather, it had been a supportive relationship in which she had acted as a consultant. The focus had been on training and support to assist group members in improving their practice and discussing their frustrations and concerns about ineffective supervision structures within their organisations. While this was not referred to during the focus groups, participants were obviously aware that adequate supervision is something the researcher had always encouraged in practice.

It was made clear to participants that whatever was said in the groups would be taken by the researcher in her role as a student and researcher and not as their consultant, trainer or advisor. (Regarding this topic, see also Annexure C which relates to the researcher's professional relationship with the participants).

From an ethical perspective, Durrheim (2006:56) refers to the fact that researchers need to think about their presence in the research context and the effect and impact this may have on the findings, and this was very important to the researcher. When participants were recruited to take part in the focus groups, the researcher discussed with them the fact that she knew them and was currently working with some of them and had worked with all of them in the past and checked how they felt about this. None of them had any difficulties with it. This was proved by the fact as mentioned previously, that one of the participants had already discussed with the researcher the problems she was having in supervision and said that she trusted the researcher and felt that being part of the group might clarify some of her thinking about her difficulties. Furthermore, while the group members were discussing confidentiality at the beginning of the child and youth care workers' group, one of the participants said, *"We know we can feel free with you"*. Likewise, in the directors' group, one of the participants said, *"We've known you for many years – we know we can trust you and we'd like to be involved in this important topic."*

3.5 CONCLUSION

A qualitative research design was used for this study as it allowed the researcher to collect data on the complex subject of supervision in child and youth care settings in South Africa. The researcher was interested in understanding what knowledge and skills were thought important by professionals in the field in order to compare them with existing literature on the topic.

Participants were selected from a variety of organisations in both residential and community child and youth care programmes. Three focus groups were selected namely; directors of organisations and programmes, supervisors and child and youth care workers and each group met twice. In the first focus group meeting, all three groups were asked the same questions:

- What *knowledge* do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth workers in SA? *What do they need to know?*
- From your experience and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care worker, can you give some examples of this?
- What *skills* do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth workers in SA? *What do they need to know how to do?*
- From your experience and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care workers, can you give some examples of this?

Once the data were collected from the groups, it was collated and taken back to each group in the second meeting to check the accuracy of the information gathered. Thereafter, the data were organized into themes to facilitate comparisons between the three focus groups.

The following chapter comprises the research findings and a literature control. In it the data obtained are discussed and analysed, common themes extracted between directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers and interesting findings are highlighted in relation to supervision in a South African child and youth care context. The themes identified are confirmed and/or contrasted by means of a literature control.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings of the research conducted, using focus groups consisting of directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers in child and youth care settings in South Africa, are elucidated. The themes which emerged from the focus group discussions are explored and compared, discussed, analysed and linked to relevant literature in the field of child and youth care and supervision as it relates to child and youth care work specifically. Details of the focus group participants are also provided in this chapter.

Eisikovits (1991:280) says that child and youth care workers are often portrayed as ignorant and non-professional, and are treated as the subjects of research rather than partners in the process. In the researcher's experience, directors and supervisors in general seem to be more articulate about child and youth care issues than the workers themselves. For this reason child and youth care workers were included as a focus group in this study. The research process did in fact validate this as, although the child and youth care workers were able to share what it was that they wanted from supervision in the focus group discussions, they were not as verbal in the groups as the directors and the supervisors. However, after some prompting and a lot of encouragement, they seemed to feel more comfortable to express their ideas. From what the researcher has observed in child and youth care settings generally, child and youth care workers often seem quieter than other participants in meetings. The researcher observed and postulates that this may be because they do not always feel confident to articulate themselves using professional terminology used by other professionals in the field. However, it is this researcher's contention that their exposure to the youth with whom they work on a daily basis gives them a great amount of knowledge about the young people in their care. This

knowledge, gained through their experience, placed the child and youth care workers that participated in this research in a very good position to make a valuable contribution.

4.2 PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

There were three focus groups in this study and each of the groups met twice. The focus groups were respectively divided according to directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers. Participants were drawn from residential and community based child and youth care settings. The child and youth care programmes concerned were all committed to supervision structures, but had struggled to implement them as efficiently as they would have liked.

There were six participants in the directors group, five in the supervisors group and five in the child and youth care workers group. All three groups met with the researcher twice. The details of the programmes from which these participants came are explained in detail in Chapter 3 (paragraph 3.4.3). The participants ranged in age from twenty two years to sixty years and each had between two and sixteen years experience in the child and youth care field. There were seven black, four white, one coloured and four Indian participants.

Details of the three categories of participants were as follows:

- The **six members in the directors group** were all social workers who had been practising in the field of child and youth care in excess of five years. None of them had ever worked as on-line child and youth care workers and only four of them had directly supervised child and youth care workers in the course of their careers. They were all directors of their child and youth care organisations or directors of child and youth care programmes within their organisations.
- All **five supervisors** were child and youth care workers and four of them had either obtained the National Diploma in Child and Youth Development from UNISA (a three year course) or the B. Tech. Degree in Child and Youth

Development from UNISA (a four year course). The fifth person was qualified as a social auxiliary worker with 15 years on-line experience as a child and youth care worker. Three of the five supervisors had over 15 years on-line experience each, while the other two had only two years practical on-line child and youth care experience. Compared to supervisors in many of the child and youth care facilities in South Africa they were well-qualified supervisors.

- Of the five **child and youth care workers** in the sample group, two had a formal qualification in child and youth care. The worker working in the community had the four-year B. Tech qualification in child and youth development from UNISA and two years' experience in the field, while a second worker had the three-year National Diploma in Child and Youth Development from UNISA and over five years' experience as an on-line worker in a residential setting. Each of the remaining participants had been in the field as on-line workers for over five years and had the Basic Qualification in Child Care (BQCC).

4.3 DISCUSSION OF THE DATA FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

In this section, based on the data obtained from the three focus groups, a definition is formulated for the concept supervision in child and youth care work. This is followed by the presentation of the research findings pertaining to the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for South African child and youth care workers.

4.3.1 Discussion on the definition of supervision

At the first meeting of each focus group, the topic and purpose of the groups was introduced and a discussion ensued about the participants' definition of supervision to ensure that all had a common understanding of what was meant by supervision in child and youth care work. None of the groups actually came up with a clear and comprehensive definition of supervision until the second time each focus group met. The groups were then requested to identify specific points they felt could be included

in a definition of supervision in child and youth care settings. The groups highlighted the points listed below in their respective first meetings. The points of each focus group were circulated to participants for discussion at the second meeting of each group.

- The group of *directors* identified the following ideas concerning a definition of supervision in child and youth care settings during their group's first meeting:
 - Building the capacity of workers to do the job through the transfer of knowledge and skills, within a supportive, guiding environment. This implied holding workers accountable.
 - The skills to empower and encourage staff to think critically and analytically by helping them to apply theory to practice; and to support their growth, education, administrative skills and development.

- The group of *supervisors* identified the following ideas concerning a definition of supervision in a child and youth care setting during the group's first meeting:
 - A coaching, supportive and nurturing relationship.
 - A place where the supervisor 'is present' and can empathise with the worker.
 - Education and training and providing a measurement tool with which to evaluate a worker's performance.
 - Role-modelling, growth and understanding where the worker is.
 - Assessing the needs of the worker and the organisation.
 - Motivating and empowering child and youth care workers.
 - Making confrontation with workers possible.

- The group of *child and youth care workers* identified the following ideas concerning a definition of supervision in child and youth care settings during their first meeting:
 - Supervision makes sure you have someone to oversee your work and ensure you are on the right track
 - Supervision ensures you are keeping to the code of ethics of the profession

- Supervision ensures the worker is working in a strengths-based and professional manner
- Supervision gives guidance and support
- Supervision gives understanding and clarity
- Supervision provides knowledge to the supervisee.

Collectively, the three groups offered facets of a definition of supervision in a child and youth care context that appeared to cover all the essential elements of supervision such as that offered by child and youth care practitioners, Delano and Shah (2007:7) namely: –

“Supervision is a professional relationship that provides support, education, monitoring of quality and creates a safe forum to reflect on professional practice. The dynamics in the supervisory relationship can create a parallel process in all other relationships including that of the client/worker. Ultimately, supervision should be the vehicle to create dynamic growth, establish high professional standards and enhance quality and culturally competent services.”

Although initially, only the supervisor’s group specifically mentioned the notion that supervision is a ‘relationship’ – an aspect that was highlighted in the literature earlier – all three groups referred to supervision as involving growth, support, guidance, understanding and education/knowledge which would be unlikely to occur if there were no relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Bailin (1989:29) in a social work context, refers to supervision as a “goal-directed, contractual, interpersonal relationship which has jurisdiction over all aspects of a supervisee’s job responsibilities, performance and organizational interpersonal functioning.” This same definition could easily apply to supervision in a child and youth care setting if one takes cognisance of what the focus group members expressed.

The points highlighted by all three groups cover the aspects mentioned in the definitions of both Delano and Shah (2007:7) and Bailin (1989:29) referred to above. During the second focus group meeting of the supervisors they refined their definition of supervision as follows:

“Supervision [in child and youth care work] is an ongoing process that involves motivation, education and the support of child and youth care workers through a coaching, mentoring and relationship-building process that enhances the growth and development of individuals and groups.”

Although the child and youth care workers never came up with a specific definition of supervision, they clarified that for them, the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is indeed the most important part of supervision. They stated that supervisors should be supportive of them emotionally, be open-minded and honest and listen to them without judgement and with understanding. The directors emphasised the education, growth and development aspects of supervision. Although the three focus groups never came together to discuss the definition of supervision developed by the supervisors' group, it was shared with them in their second focus group meeting and they concurred that it was a good summary of all their thoughts.

An aspect not covered in the supervisors' definition, but implied by the child and youth care workers in their use of the word 'oversee', is that of the controlling function of a supervisor. The directors felt they would have liked more emphasis on accountability in the definition. In all other ways the definition given by the supervisors' group encompassed most of the elements discussed by all three groups.

4.3.2 Research findings: Knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for South African child and youth care workers

In processing the data gathered in the focus groups, the researcher compiled a table with the discussion points sorted into themes and then tabulated the information to enable comparisons between the three groups' responses. These tables were arranged under the headings of "What knowledge do supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care work in South Africa?" (Annexure G) and "What skills do supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care work in South Africa?" (Annexure H). The directors' comments are in red, the supervisors' comments in blue and the child and youth care workers' points in green.

Because the focus groups were unstructured, members' discussions and opinions were not elicited using specific headings. While the tabulated data referred to above are arranged under certain headings, the discussion below highlights the themes that emerged in the research during the focus group discussions. As suggested by Creswell (2009:189) "a small number of *themes* or categories, perhaps five to seven categories" were regarded as being sufficient for this research study. The following themes reflecting the knowledge and skills required by supervisors to provide effective supervision for South African child and youth care workers emerged in the research during the focus group discussions:

- Culture, religion and language
- The development of child and youth care workers
- Parallel practice in supervision
- The supervisory relationship
- Supervision in a child and youth care context
- Teamwork and leadership

Each of these themes and their storylines confirmed or contrasted by means of a literature control, respectively entail the following²:

4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Culture, religion and language

As explained by Allsopp and Thumbadoo (2002:2), when South Africa's democratic government was elected in 1994, it was faced with having to find ways to care for, develop and protect children whose growth and development had been distorted by the political, social and economic policies of apartheid. Allsopp (2005:22) adds that the child and youth care field at this stage, as a result of the divisions of the past, had to pay close attention to the matter of cultural diversity and to ensuring that workers in the field were 'culturally competent.'

Although some facilities had started to integrate their services racially prior to 1994, integration became mandatory once the new government came into power. This resulted in challenges to programmes in terms of catering for the diversity of children admitted to these facilities. As Delano (2005:1) says, delivering culturally competent services to children and families requires more than being "diverse". He maintains that agencies and individuals must accept that cultural competence is a journey on which we are continually learning about others and accepting that our own potential biases and strong core values affect our ability to be culturally competent. He emphasises that culture includes not only ethnicity, but also aspects such as family make-up, traditions, music, food and literature. In addition, he mentions that agencies need to create as broad a tolerance as possible for the diversity of cultural practices (Delano 2005:1).

Given the fact that South Africa is a multi cultural society, it was not surprising that one of the first issues mentioned in relation to supervision in all three focus groups was that of culture. All participants saw this as an important aspect for supervisors to

² In research, themes can be broken up into sub-themes and segments of data (Creswell in de Vos, 2005:338; Delport & Fouché, 2005:354). The different points pertaining to the various themes raised during the group discussions are mentioned and briefly discussed as part of each theme. Due to the limited scope of this dissertation they are however, not presented and discussed as sub-themes.

pay attention to, both in relation to workers and children. Under the discussions on culture, the groups referred to race, language and religion and the particular challenges faced by child and youth care settings in regards to these aspects. Weaver (1991:11) points out that when we work with those who are culturally different, we find out more about ourselves as our cultural values, beliefs and attitudes are constantly challenged.

In the group discussions, confirmed by the above literature, the following points were made regarding the theme culture, religion and language and its importance for child and youth care workers from a supervisory perspective:

- Supervisors need to have knowledge of and understand the beliefs, values and contexts of different cultures, religious and language groups of young people, their families and staff members and be prepared to find creative ways of managing diversity in programmes. As mentioned by one of the child and youth care workers in the focus group, *“I also think that a supervisor has to be culturally confident – in that they must understand our culture, our background and our beliefs.”*
- South Africa’s history made the discussion in the focus groups about supervisors’ understanding of different cultural groups particularly relevant. In this regard, workers said, *“they must understand your culture and your background and your beliefs”*.

Gaffley (2007:1) says when discussing leadership in the human services field that we are shaped by our past and are always challenged to transcend it in order to be effective leaders. He emphasises that this was something leaders in South Africa had to fast-track post-apartheid. Gaffley (2007:3) emphasises the need for child and youth care leaders to embrace the diversity in the field and to manage this change in themselves, others and their organisations.

- The understanding or lack thereof, of culture has ramifications for teamwork, staff conditions, the issue of empowerment of previously disadvantaged people and different cultural attitudes to the management of young people's behaviour. All three groups mentioned that supervisors needed to be sensitive to the different cultures, languages and religious practices of both staff and children in child and youth care programmes.
- Child and youth care workers emphasised that supervisors do not have to know everything about all cultures, but that they should ask if they do not understand. This was stated as follows: *"Yes they must know what is happening in other cultures - not only in one culture - get knowledge about one's culture so that they understand what is happening."*
- Supervisors stressed that cultural "worldviews" impact on the management of young people's behaviour and that *"expected behaviour in one culture can cause confusion for a child coming from another culture"*. As one of the directors said: *"Supervisors should have an understanding of the different cultures of staff and children ... there will be different mindsets and we work with children and staff from many, varied cultures"*.
- The Director's group mentioned that, *"the cultures of the kids may be different to the cultures of the supervisors, social workers and child and youth care workers, for example counselling is a Western concept and not really accepted in black cultures who traditionally resolve family problems by consulting other family members and/or elders. In some black cultures, it is disrespectful for a child to make eye contact with an adult if they are being reprimanded whereas in white cultures, it is disrespectful for a child **not** to make eye contact with an adult if they are being reprimanded."*

In this regard, Hogan-Garcia (cited in Delano, 2005:4), points out that cultural competence can be inhibited by language differences, overt discrimination, stress

and different perceptions of issues such as personal space, eye contact, body smell and body gestures.

- Another issue discussed by directors and supervisors was the need for supervisors to understand how the values, ethics and culture of the organisation are impacted by the cultural diversity of staff and children. Members in the supervisors group commented that "*behaviour management of youth can differ according to cultural beliefs.*"

In confirmation of this, Nadesan (2005:1) says, "Every child and youth care organization has a culture which strongly influences its daily functioning.

This author adds that organizations should have a clear set of values which serve as behavioural guidelines for staff members (Nadesan, 2005:3). This would include values from a cultural, religious and language perspective.

In summary, it was apparent that culture, recognising and working with diversity were important issues in all three groups. Group members expressed their challenges concerning diversity and the need for understanding and that this poses great challenges for supervisors in child and youth care settings in South Africa.

4.3.2.2 Theme 2: The development of child and youth care workers

From the focus group discussions, it was apparent that in discussing the development of child and youth care workers and their needs, participants referred to the development of specific skills, knowledge and training in the field of child and youth care and put a high premium on it. Participants expressed themselves as follows about particular issues concerning the development of child and youth care workers:

- **Expectations:** Workers felt they needed to know what is expected of them, to be supported in meeting these expectations and to be held accountable for meeting goals. One worker said that: "*supervision is growth and development as*

supervisors might pick up something you could do better and suggest other ways of doing things.”

In this regard, Garfat (1992:6) mentions that we all have certain expectations about the supervisory relationship and the expectations we bring directly affect the interaction, the relationship and therefore, the outcome of supervision.

- **Development:** Directors and supervisors agreed it was necessary to acknowledge each worker's strengths and developmental areas. The directors expressed that supervisors should have a growth plan and performance appraisal for each child and youth care worker: *“Supervisors need an individual growth plan and growth path for each child and youth care worker who wants to grow and develop.”* One of the supervisors expressed that *“supervisors need to draw out from the child and youth care workers what their strengths are and use them with the children.”*

This is borne out by Maier (1987:198), who stresses that supervisors have a responsibility to assess *what* and *how* supervisees can effectively learn. Each worker ought to have an individual development plan that sets specific measurable goals for them. Child and youth care workers said that they wanted supervisors to encourage and motivate them to achieve these goals. One of the workers expressed it as follows: *“when we are in the process of learning, we need the goal; we need them [the supervisors] to go with us.”*

During the first focus group meeting the workers requested that supervisors be realistic about their ability to develop, based on their educational backgrounds and levels, talents, commitment and competence. As expressed by one of the workers - *“a one year experienced child and youth care worker needs to be treated differently from a three year experienced worker because she needs more knowledge, more support and more understanding.”*

- **Needs:** As Michael (2007b:1) says, the supervisor can assess the worker's level of functioning and growth by using the daily life events of the worker because she would have observed them in the context of the child's world. Workers agreed with

this - as one worker said – *“supervisors must observe us and take time to think, assess our needs and understand where we are coming from.”*

Workers also mentioned that even though they might have formal qualifications in child and youth care, they still needed support; and that those who do not have formal qualifications must be recognised for their experience in the field. As one worker said, *“Even if workers have the Diploma in Child Care – they may have the theory – they are still new and need support because they are working here for the first time.”*

- **Training:** Supervisors agreed that it was their function to provide training and supervision on an ongoing basis; that they needed to be able to translate knowledge and skills into practice to help workers implement training and that they could help workers to think more creatively.

The directors added to this that *“supervisors must ensure that training received is being implemented practically and that theory is being put into practice.”*

Workers mentioned that they want supervisors to have *“knowledge of child and youth care – you actually want them to be able to teach you the profession.”*

In this regard, Maier (1987:195) emphasises that an essential element of supervision is training as this enables workers to become more effective in their work by enriching their skills and knowledge.

- **Job descriptions:** All three groups mentioned the fact that it is important for supervisors to understand the role of the child and youth care worker and have the skills to compile a job description setting out their tasks and expectations.

The workers expressed frustration that supervisors and directors did not fully understand their jobs and that often they were expected to do far more than they were trained for - *“the expectations of managers and supervisors are too high - we are expected to be everything. They must understand we need training to be able to cope with these things.”*

- **Role clarification:** The directors' and supervisors' groups felt that supervisors need a good understanding of the field of child and youth care and a knowledge of authors, models and theories influencing the field.

A director remarked that - "*A supervisor needs a good understanding of the role of child and youth care workers as they need to clarify this to the management who often do not understand this role.*"

The importance of roles in this context is verified by Michael (2005:50) who says that in order for supervision to be effective both supervisor and supervisee must have clearly defined roles and understand what each other's job entails.

- **Nature of child and youth care work:** As Scott (2005:95) mentions, the hallmark of child and youth care is that child and youth care workers work in the life-space of young people and their families, and use every day events as the medium of involvement for relationships.

One of the supervisors highlighted the fact that "*we should not forget the nature of child and youth care work which is tiring as it is 24/7 with the children – online and in the life space of the youth.*" Another supervisor added that "*supervisors need to know about life space intervention.*" The directors stressed that "*it is very important that supervisors know about life- space intervention!*"

Child and youth care workers were adamant that supervisors needed to understand the stresses of being with the children for twenty four hours a day. They felt that at times their workload was excessive as the staff/child ratio in some organisations was unrealistic. This impacted on the quality of their work and they could not undertake in-depth work with young people when they were the only person on duty with twelve to fifteen children. The workers agreed with this by stating that "*supervisors should also be on the ground level with us in the life space of children and the community that we work in.*" This is confirmed by Gannon (1990:10) who says that - "Supervision is something which should be available to you on the floor, when and where you are working." One of the workers added that she had been supervised by someone who had been a child

and youth care worker and this was helpful because *“he knew all the frustrations of child care workers.”*

- **Job stress:** Workers emphasised the fact that the on-line nature of child and youth care is very demanding and stressful and stated that supervisors must be able to understand this. As emphasised by one of the workers, *“Yes – acknowledge the stress– because maybe sometimes we work in fields that are very stressful you can’t always do something– but just to say – hey I can see this is a difficult thing and you are ~~trying~~ acknowledging stress and give encouragement.”*

All three groups recognised that “burnout” should be prevented, that the symptoms of “burnout” in workers should be identified and dealt with by supervisors; and that support and extra care must be provided for workers at these times. As one of the directors said, *“... good supervision can prevent burnout.”*

Supervisors felt that they too become very stressed, as they constantly have – *“people looking over their shoulders, they have to model and teach and are constantly between management and workers.”* For these reasons, supervisors need the skills to care for themselves, personally and professionally.

- **Encouragement and motivation:** The workers felt that supervisors should *“acknowledge their stress and give encouragement and continuous motivation. It does not cost a cent if you do something right for them to come and say ‘you know you did a good job- well done!’ ”*

In corroborating this, Reinsilber (2006: 5) says: “We need to catch our staff doing the right things, recognize their efforts, and reward them.” Supervisors must be able to communicate the work’s inherent stressors and demands to other team members, advocating for workers when necessary by helping other professions and management to understand the pressures faced by child and youth care workers. This means that supervisors must be “tuned into” staff members, observe them, identify their feelings, and know when they are not coping and

need extra support. As pointed out by Reinsilber (2006:5) the challenge of leadership in supervision is to motivate staff under difficult circumstances. He adds that there are a number of ways in which we can motivate staff, for instance; by listening to them, providing frequent feedback about their performance, involving them in decision-making, allowing them the opportunity to grow and learn, providing them with a sense of ownership in their work and creating a work environment that is open, trusting and fun (Reinsilber, 2006:5).

- **Needs of children:** For their part, supervisors expressed the opinion that in spite of all the issues expressed by workers they still have to ensure that the needs of the children in care are met. They expressed concern as to how long one keeps “*making excuses for and understanding these issues*” while balancing the needs of workers and clients and ensuring that both have their needs met. This remains an ongoing challenge for supervisors.

From the content of this section, it is apparent that the development of child and youth care workers requires specific knowledge, skills and training – all of which need to be based on a developmental plan for each worker. Workers need to know what is expected of them; to be supported in meeting these expectations; and to be held accountable for meeting goals (or not meeting them).

4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Parallel practice in supervision

All three focus groups mentioned that the supervisor/worker relationship should mirror the worker/client relationship, but this was emphasised most of all by the child and youth care workers, who felt that they needed to experience from their interaction with supervisors what they were supposed to implement with children and families.

In the literature review (See Chapter 2) it was mentioned that Garfat (2001:2), Mann-Feder (2002:1) and Gilberg and Charles (2007:3) discuss the parallel process between the worker and the child, and also how there should be a similar process

between the worker and the supervisor. Garfat and Fulcher (2012:91) mention that supervision, in many cases, parallels the form of practice and should reflect the type of work undertaken. They say that the approach to supervision should share the same characteristics as the approach to practice. They explain this by saying that if child and youth care work is done in the life-space or with families at home, supervision could take place in these settings; if child and youth care focuses on the relationship between child and worker, supervision should focus on the relationship between worker and supervisor and so on. The phenomenon of the parallel process in supervision has been discussed in Chapter 2 and some examples of this became evident in the focus group discussions.

One of the parallel processes in child and youth care and supervision is that of working developmentally with children which means assessing their strengths and developmental areas. The same process should take place between child and youth care workers and supervisors. Doehrman (2000:1) refers to counter transference taking place when the supervisor responds to the counsellor (supervisee) in the same manner that the counsellor (supervisee) responds to the client (child). Thus, the supervisory interaction replays, or is parallel to, the counselling interaction. He goes on to say that using this awareness as an intervention in facilitating growth in the counsellor (supervisee), and thus helping the client (child), is the ultimate goal.

The parallel processes mentioned in the focus groups, included the following:

- Workers felt that a **strengths-based approach** should be used with them and that they should not be criticised all the time. Their faults should be pointed out in a constructive way, and they should be given guidance and support in rectifying them. As one of the workers stated – *“instead of picking up the failure all the time, give you strength-based feedback.”* To this the workers added: *“We would like them to work developmentally with us like we try to do with kids ... and use principles of empowerment and participation – how we work with children.”*

One supervisor stressed that *“supervisors must be tolerant of workers, as they are expected to be tolerant of the children”*.

As Maier (1987:196) emphasises in this regard, “workers’ service can be enhanced if supervisors focus on what a worker is expected to learn rather than what they “should not do.” In this way behaviour is framed positively rather than negatively which is how one wants workers to work with young people.”

- Another parallel process mentioned by the workers’ focus group was that they are expected to **meet the needs of** children according to Maslow’s well-known hierarchy of needs as mentioned by Crain (1992:320). These are physical needs, safety needs, the need for love, belonging, self-esteem and realising one’s potential. Workers felt that these same needs are not taken into account as far as they are concerned. They felt that if supervisors concentrated on ensuring that their needs were met in terms of this hierarchy, they in turn would be better equipped to meet the needs of the children. In contrast, supervisors expressed that while *“workers’ basic needs need to be met – where do we draw the line? One cannot accept all their problems for ten years, if they are not meeting the needs of the organisation?”*

- There is often a distinct parallel between the **conditions** of the children and youth with whom the child and youth care workers work and their own living conditions. In the researcher’s experience, workers have verbalised their desperation, envy and at times feeling “cheated” when seeing what is provided for children and families in child and youth care programmes, while their own families are living in the same, or worse, conditions. Supervisors felt that they have to strike a careful balance between meeting staff members’ needs and meeting the children’s needs.

Allsopp and Thumbadoo (2002:9) bear this out by highlighting the fact that child and youth care staff may need to support families in the face of abject poverty as well as families affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS while often these staff members themselves come from poor families who may be affected by or infected

with HIV/AIDS. This brings the pain and vulnerability very close and supervisors need to be constantly aware of these parallels.

From the above, it is apparent that there are parallels between child and youth care work supervision and practice. The relationship between the supervisor and child and youth care worker should mirror that of worker and youth and families being served. Hence, the relationship should be developmental and needs driven both for the worker/supervisor and the worker/young person (client).

4.3.2.4 Theme 4: The supervisory relationship

In the focus groups, much of the discussion was on the relationship between the supervisor and the child and youth care worker and it was the latter group in particular who were fairly vociferous about this topic. As one of the child and youth care workers said; *“If you don’t have that good relationship with the supervisor, your job is a hundred times harder.”*

Participants in the focus groups expressed themselves as follows about particular issues concerning the supervisory relationship:

- **Importance of building rapport** - All three groups in this research stressed the importance of respect and trust in the supervisor/child and youth care worker relationship, and referred to the supervisor’s skills in building and maintaining a relationship with workers.

One supervisor stressed – *“another skill is to connect and build rapport (with the supervisee).”* One of the workers emphasised that *“to share emotionally with your supervisor, there has to be trust because if there isn’t, one cannot be open and honest and be yourself.”*

This is confirmed by Young, in Ford and Jones (1989:65), who states that the relationship between the supervisor and the worker is important because it is the

means through which the worker will receive encouragement and feedback as well as support in integrating knowledge and practice.

- **Trust and respect** - All three groups highlighted the importance of keeping confidentiality around issues discussed in supervision as a means of fostering trust and a sense of safety between the parties. As one of the child and youth care workers stressed, *"They must respect and trust us."*

Another comment by one of the workers was *"anything you share with your supervisor has to be confidential or if she has to share it in the group supervision, she needs to check with you first, especially if it is personal."*

Supervisors agreed with the issue of trust but added that *"there are times when even if issues are confidential one has to break that confidence. The skill is knowing when this is appropriate."*

Caruso (1982:22), Brown and Bourne (1996:1), Delano (2003:3) and Burnison (2007:3) all emphasise the importance of the relationship between the supervisor and the worker and highlight that trust and respect are essential elements in this dynamic relationship.

- **Trust and self-confidence** - While directors said that supervisors should not undermine workers, workers phrased this as supervisors trusting the workers' ability. In this regard, Hills, as cited in Anglin (1992:2) mentions that it is important for workers to trust themselves and have confidence in their interventions. As professionals, they should have the ability to make sound judgements and decisions that will enable them to perform effectively.

- **Supervision versus discipline** - An issue of concern for supervisors was that of supervision versus discipline – knowing where one begins and ends and the line between them. They felt that the trust built up in supervisory relationships is often betrayed when they are involved in disciplinary matters relating to workers. Supervisors added to this the need to balance care for workers with accountability, and also the skill to know when to refer issues to management for

disciplinary action. As they said *“staff come with confidential issues and then sometimes one has to pass matters to higher levels which has negative connotations and breaks trust.”*

Workers added that supervisors need skills *“in conflict resolution to help us.”*

In dealing with this contentious matter, Delano and Shah (2007:7) state that supervision is a professional relationship that provides support and education and creates a safe forum to reflect on professional practice. It should encourage constructive confrontation and critical thinking that informs and improves the practice of all parties. If this confrontation were to take place within the safety of a trusting relationship, it would serve as an important learning opportunity for workers in terms of their management of young people. As Delano and Shah (2007:7) say, the dynamics in the supervisory relationship can create a parallel process in all other relationships including that of the client/worker.

- **Caring, support and role clarification:** An interesting point made by the child and youth care workers was that supervisors need to help workers anticipate situations and protect them. They experience this as caring and support, and as an important part of the supervisory relationship.

Directors expressed the view that supervisors *“need a good understanding of their role as supervisors – supervision is not just a chat – it is a purposeful activity.”*

- **Skills:** Common issues raised by all three groups were that supervisors need to have good listening skills; to show empathy, patience and understanding towards workers; and to communicate clearly with them, explaining what is expected, as this is the key to establishing and maintaining a relationship.

Directors summarised this as *“supervisors need good communication skills”* while supervisors added to this the *“importance of genuineness.”*

The workers emphasised that supervisors *“must be non-judgemental and apart from having good listening skills, they have to be able to understand you.”*

Garfat (1992:6) states that both supervisor and supervisee bring skills to the relationship and these skills should be acknowledged. Those pertaining to human interaction are especially significant and valuable.

- **Personal vs. professional life:** Directors felt that supporting workers was important, partly because it helped workers to separate their personal from their professional lives. As one director emphasised, *“workers are expected to be professional when they are at work, which means leaving personal issues at home.”* The directors further mentioned that supervisors must be able to identify *“when personal matters of workers are having an impact on how they are working and send them for outside help.”*

With reference to the necessary balance between workers’ professional and personal lives Gannon (1990:11) points out that the children workers encounter on a daily basis are difficult children with their own pain and workers often become discouraged by this. However, all workers need to understand the background of the children’s behaviour and also their own shortcomings, skills, abilities and vulnerabilities. All workers need support and it is their responsibility to ensure they develop their own personal knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis.

- **Challenges and difficulties:** In line with modern child and youth care practice, many programmes in South Africa have moved away from the traditional model of “living-in” staff members to that of shift workers. This means that living-in accommodation is seldom provided for staff members in programmes and they are expected to travel to work on a daily basis, working day and night shifts. This poses a challenge for programmes and workers, as many of the black, coloured and Indian workers reside in areas which the previous apartheid government assigned to these “population groups” prior to 1994 and which are often far from the main centres and their workplaces. Transport is a challenge for many workers working shifts, as they use public transport which can often be unreliable and unsafe. The pressure on organisations to transform has meant that management and supervisors have had to accommodate workers in terms of travel

arrangements, shifts, “living out” pay adjustments, travelling time, attendance at training that is not held during work hours and overtime.

As expressed by one of the child and youth care workers: *“They [supervisors] must understand our daily stresses. ...In certain communities catching taxis is a normal part of living– and they need to understand. Maybe they drive cars and they don’t have an understanding of what we have to cope with.”*

The directors and supervisors groups mentioned that while they understand the difficulties of workers as mentioned above, supervisors need to have the skills to confront workers constructively. If these issues interfere with their work they need to be held accountable when work standards are unacceptable. As one director said, *“How long do we continue to coddle when the basics are not being met?”*

- **Therapy:** Workers needed to know that supervisors understood their personal circumstances. There was some discussion by supervisors and directors about the need to draw the line between therapy and supervision.

As previously mentioned by Hilton (2005:1), supervision is not meant to be therapy even if the experience of supervision is therapeutic. Supervisors need to know when to refer workers for therapy for personal issues and when these issues can actually be dealt with in supervision.

- **Motivation:** Both supervisors and child and youth care workers felt that supervisors must have the skills needed to motivate workers; give constructive, positive feedback acknowledging good work and hold workers accountable in a caring and respectful way.

Regarding the necessity of supervisors having motivational skills, Reinsilber (2006:4) mentions that the challenge supervisor’s face is motivating staff under difficult circumstances. He stresses that we need to catch them doing the right things, recognise these efforts and reward them.

- **Availability of supervisors:** Directors and workers expressed the need for “supervision in between supervision”. Incidents with young people do not take place only during office hours, and workers often need support and debriefing outside of set supervision times – *“we cannot predict the crises and it is hard if they (supervisors) are not available in between formal supervision.”*

Workers felt that incidents with young people frequently happened when everyone went home and they were left alone. They felt unsupported and uncontained at these times.

Therefore, the feeling from both these groups was that supervisors needed to be available, or to make arrangements for support for workers, at all times, particularly after hours.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the essence of good supervision involves an open and honest relationship between workers and supervisors. Burnison (2007:3) emphasises that knowing how to build a respectful, trusting relationship and finding ways to interact “formally and informally with those you supervise makes it easier to offer help, support and encouragement at times when it can be heard or utilized.”

4.3.2.5 Theme 5: Supervision in a child and youth care context – knowledge and skills

As Garfat (1992:2) states, support, education and training of child and youth care workers are essential aspects in ensuring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of services offered to young people and their families. “This outcome is achieved directly through the development of workers’ knowledge and skills and indirectly through the enhancement of their feelings of self-esteem and self-respect when they receive supervision that supports increased performance effectiveness. There is a direct relationship between the quality of supervision and the quality of services delivered. When we fail to provide effective supervision, we impede the growth and development of our workers and with them, our services” (Garfat 1992:2).

Therefore, knowledge and skills for supervision in a child and youth care context should include the following:

- **Developmental stages of children:** When discussing what knowledge supervisors need, the directors and supervisors emphasised that supervisors must *“have knowledge of developmental stages of children and what is age appropriate.”* Directors also highlighted the need for knowledge on *“moral development and attachment theories.”*
- **Grief and trauma:** Other knowledge seen as important by directors included knowledge of what is referred to as - *“grief reactions, behaviour around childhood trauma and knowledge of the grief curve.”*
- **Standards:** Supervisors added to this the importance of possessing knowledge of *“the Minimum Standards for child and youth care, South African laws and international instruments.”*
- **Developmental approach and developmental stages of workers:** Supervisors felt they should *“know the developmental approach in working with children and also know the developmental stages of workers as mentioned by Phelan [2003:52-53].”*
- **Online/life-space supervision:** Both directors and supervisors mentioned that it is necessary for the supervisor to be able to do “on-line” or life-space supervision, but this need was not mentioned by the child and youth care workers. One of the directors said *“online supervision is important – not taking over, but observing ... without undermining the worker.”*
Workers felt that supervisors must have knowledge of life-space work and interventions in order to supervise them effectively – *“I think that they should also be on the ground level with us in the life space of children and the community that we work in.”*

Michael (2005:61) says that life-space supervision is an effective way of assessing the client's needs and the worker's response to these needs "in the moment" and then assisting the worker to respond differently, if necessary. She adds that this is similar to how an effective worker might intervene "in the moment" to help a young person respond differently. Life-space supervision parallels the process and characteristics of child and youth care practice. In other words, it is an approach to supervision grounded in the values, beliefs and "a way of being in relationship" fundamental to child and youth care.

- **Personal attributes:** In discussing the skills of supervisors, the directors group emphasised the importance of them having to have "*self confidence, initiative and knowing themselves before they can supervise others, adding that they need life experience, passion for the work, and knowledge of case management and individual development plans.*"

Borders (2001:2), makes an important point confirming the above, by saying that good supervisors really enjoy supervision and are committed to seeing the supervisee grow.

- **Professional development of supervisors:** Directors said that supervisors needed to receive their own supervision, care for themselves and advance their own professional development; and that all these aspects would impact on the quality of supervision supervisors give to workers.

- **Supervisors to be child and youth work professionals:** Directors and child and youth care workers both expressed the opinion that it would be advisable for supervisors to be child and youth care professionals themselves, as they would then have many of the skills mentioned as being required, would understand workers better and be able to supervise them more effectively.

As one worker expressed – "*I did have a supervisor who was a child and youth care worker and I learned a lot from that – he put himself in our shoes in all situations and knows all the frustrations of child care workers.*"

Whilst not necessarily referring to the same points, all three focus groups agreed that certain knowledge and skills are required for supervision in a South African child and youth care context.

4.3.2.6 Theme 6: Teamwork and leadership

The views and points regarding teamwork and leadership mentioned in the focus groups included the following:

- Supervisors need to **lead** their teams, and to create team spirit and a sense of togetherness. As supervisors said *“team spirit needs to be built ... if not, [the effects] will filter down to the children.”*

In this regard, Fulcher cited in Eisikovits (1991: 219) says that the major function of a team leader (in this case the supervisor) is to serve as a symbol for a team’s successes and failures.

- Workers felt that supervisors should have the skills to work in a **multidisciplinary** team and treat child and youth care workers as equals – not denigrating them in any way, and showing loyalty towards them in the team. They felt that they are often not given recognition in teams and stated that the *“supervisor is already on a hierarchy because she is already seen as higher than you – because she is a social worker.”* As one worker stated – *“Why can’t we as child care workers be the same as social workers? We were always taught in our course everyone works in a multidisciplinary team...even those higher than me... because each person comes from a different angle – looks at things differently.”*

In this regard, Demers (2003:4), says that if child and youth care workers do not feel acknowledged by the team, they should take some responsibility for changing this pattern. He suggests that workers gain confidence to put into words, in a convincing manner, what they are trying to do and the reasons behind their ideas. Supervisors felt they needed the skills to handle the dynamics in the team. They stated: *“we must be able to pick up team dynamics and be team leaders.”* Team dynamics are complicated by the fact that the team is comprised of different

professions and so supervisors are often called upon to bridge the gap between child and youth care workers and other professions.

- The supervisor needs to feel confident enough to make the **therapeutic nature** of child and youth care work clearly discernible to other team members. In this regard Fulcher (in Eisikovits,1991:233) states that workers are employed to operate in teams in order to “enact” a caring environment for young people and that in creating this, they need to consistently provide “good enough” services. He adds to this the fact that teams should constantly seek clarity about their goals and methods and acknowledge the emotional issues ever present in this type of work.

Workers mentioned that in teams *“they are sitting together and you are getting more quality out of that interaction.”*

The point is made that child and youth care workers are part of a team and that supervisors need to provide leadership for their teams, create a team spirit and a sense of togetherness amongst the members of the team.

4.4 CONCLUSION

From the discussion above on the themes that emerged from the research, it is apparent that many of the directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers share the same ideas and frustrations in terms of supervision structures in their organisations. Without giving specific names to the components of supervision, they did actually identify the need for administrative, supportive, educative and training functions for supervisors, and were able to articulate the importance of the relationship in supervision and the need to have more structured supervision practices in their organisations.

As previously mentioned (see Chapter 2), Fant and Ross (1979:628) in their classic work see the objectives of supervision as: -

- providing effective services to the client;
- helping the staff to deal with the emotional stress of the work;
- ensuring the integration of the many disciplines of the service;
- aiding the organisation in meeting its needs; and
- helping workers maintain a high level of practice competence.

The discussions in this research report refer to all of these issues in one way or another and add to this the significance of the relationship between the worker and the supervisor as a means of accomplishing all or most of these goals.

All three focus groups showed a keen desire to improve supervision practices in their organisations and had a sense of what needed to change. They were able to identify the knowledge and skills they believe supervisors require to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers. They were frustrated by the slow pace of development of their own supervision and by their organisations' lack of adequate supervision structures.

Magnuson and Burger (2002:1) talk about the importance of developmental supervision and liken the difficulties and discontents of workers to those of the young people for whom they care. They maintain that some of this discontent has to do with thwarted development and stress that, if we want to work developmentally as practitioners, we have to promote the ability of young people to think and act in more complex, reasoned and principled ways (Magnuson & Burger, 2002:1). They expand on this by saying that if we want workers to accomplish this with youth, then supervision must consist of practices that lead to developmental growth.

In the discussions with the focus group members and the themes analysed from the data, it seems as if the developmental growth of workers may have to become the focus of supervision in organisations as it encompasses many of the thoughts, feelings and frustrations mentioned (Magnuson & Burger, 2002:1).

In the final Chapter of this research report, conclusions are made based on the focus group discussions and the shared thoughts of the directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers, forming the research outcomes. The points highlighted by these three groups had many common themes and these were collated into recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher evaluated, by summarising the research, whether the aims and objectives of the research were achieved. Conclusions are respectively made about the research process and the research findings as a result of the research undertaken. The conclusions are followed up by appropriate recommendations and a conclusion of the chapter.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section conclusions are firstly drawn from the researcher's experience in conducting the qualitative research process in this study. This is followed by conclusions derived from the research findings that were made during the research.

5.2.1 The qualitative research process

As Babbie and Mouton (2001:309) postulate the chief strength of the qualitative method is the fact that it allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being researched and gives the researcher more flexibility in the research process. This was evident for the researcher in this study because it was possible to explore issues in the focus groups on a more personal level as experienced by the participants. This would not have been possible if a quantitative methodology had been applied, i.e. the testing of objective theories by examining the relationship among variables and measuring these variables typically on instruments in order to analyse numbered data by using statistical procedures (Creswell. 2009:4). Conclusions are made in terms of the researcher's experience pertaining to the application of the qualitative research process, in addressing the research problem,

the design of the study, the research method, and the ethical considerations of the qualitative research process in this study.

5.2.1.1 Addressing the research problem

The researcher conducted this study in order to gain more understanding of supervision practices and problems experienced by programme director and directors of child and youth care organisations, supervisors and child and youth care workers in child and youth care settings in South Africa. It was required to gather information on what knowledge and skills supervisors need to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa and then make some recommendations on how this situation might be rectified in the field. The information gathered from the three focus groups made it possible for the researcher to obtain the data required. Therefore, a research question and research goal were formulated before setting the research objectives to achieve the goal and provide answers to the research question.

➤ Research question

Neuman (1997:119) describes that researchers need to narrow down a topic into a problem or question. In this study, the researcher was interested in the topic of supervision in child and youth care settings in South Africa. However, various questions had to be explored to ensure that the correct questions were asked to obtain data that would be useful. After much discussion with the supervisor at the time, it was agreed that the research questions which would elicit the most relevant data in this research undertaking would be the following:

- What knowledge is required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa?
- What skills are required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa?

It was also important for the questions to be appropriate for directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers – all of whom would make up the three focus groups from which the data were to be obtained to deal with the questions.

➤ **Research goal**

The research goal in this study was to find out whether directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers could identify the knowledge and skills needed by supervisors in child and youth care settings in South Africa. The researcher realised and came to the conclusion when compiling the data that the three focus groups could in fact identify the knowledge and skills needed in child and youth care settings in South Africa, although it seemed that in practice, there were huge gaps in terms of supervisors actually possessing the necessary skills and knowledge.

➤ **Research objectives**

As stated by Fouché and de Vos, (2005a:104) the research objectives are the steps one takes to attain the goal. In evaluating this research, the conclusion is drawn by the researcher that the research objects or the steps taken, indeed served to achieve the research goal and provided an answer to the research question.

5.2.1.2 Design of the study

In this research report, although an exploratory research design was used, a descriptive research design was also applied because the researcher had specific questions to ask the focus groups. She wanted to understand and describe basic facts about the general situation regarding supervision in the field as experienced by the participants. Neuman (2000:146) emphasises the importance of the social context surrounding a study, saying that the researcher needs to take cognisance of what came before the study, what surrounds it and how essential it is to take into account cultural and historical factors. Therefore, in addition to the above, a contextual research design was applied in this research, to gain insight into how professionals in

the field of child and youth care understood the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers and gain knowledge about the current problems in this area. The themes that emerged in the study highlighted how historical and cultural factors have impacted on the provision of supervision in child and youth care settings in South Africa. It is therefore concluded that the research design and all its facets as applied in this research, were most suitable to the research and instrumental in the research objective being achieved.

5.2.1.3 The research method

In this research, as far as the research method is concerned, the choice was made by the researcher to undertake a qualitative study by allowing the type of information required for the study to emerge from the participants in the project. The type of data to be analysed was text information, recording and reporting the voice of the participants (Creswell, 2009:16). The research method comprised the population and sampling, method of data collection, method of data analysis, and data verification.

➤ Population and sampling

Strydom (2005b: 194) describes a population as “the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned.” Babbie and Mouton (2001:100) add to this that the population is a group of people about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions. Because researchers can seldom study all members of a population concerned, they select a sample from the population which gives an adequate reflection of the whole population which interests them (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:100). The researcher wanted to draw conclusions about what knowledge and skills would be helpful to supervisors across South Africa in child and youth care settings. Therefore, the population for this research study comprised child and youth care practitioners in South Africa. The sample comprising the participants was drawn from a range of child and youth care settings representing residential and community programmes in order to give an overview of knowledge and skills needed in both settings.

In reflecting on the results of the research, it is concluded that the sample used adequately met the requirements of this research.

➤ **Method of data collection**

Focus groups to discuss a broad list of questions in the form of a discussion guide, pertaining to the topic being researched, were chosen and convened as the sources from which to obtain the data required. As Babbie and Mouton (2001:310) say focus group discussions provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in opinions and experiences of participants. It was therefore concluded that for this research, focus groups were an appropriate way to gather information on the topic being researched.

➤ **Method of data analysis**

Neuman (1997:426) states that data analysis means a search for patterns in data, and that once these patterns are identified they are interpreted in terms of social theories or the settings in which they occur. Having examined the data, sorted it, compared it and synthesised it, the researcher then moves to a more general interpretation of the data. As can be seen in Chapter 4, the data collected were sorted into various themes which emerged from the discussions. These were culture, religion and language, the development of child and youth care workers, parallel practice in supervision, the supervisory relationship, supervision in a child and youth care context and teamwork and leadership. It is concluded that the eight steps as suggested by Tesch (cited in Van As & Van Schalkwyk 2001:62 and Creswell, 2009:186), followed in analysing the data, indeed ensured that the process of data analysis made “sense out of text and image data” (Creswell, 2009:183).

➤ **Trustworthiness of data**

It is essential in any research to ensure that the data collected are trustworthy, valid, reliable and accurate. As Babbie and Mouton say (2001:276), the basic issue of

trustworthiness is whether researchers can persuade themselves and others that the research findings are worth paying attention to. From the data collected in this study, it was apparent that many of the same themes emerged from all three focus groups which verified that the data were reliable and consistent. The trustworthiness of the data is furthermore confirmed by having validated it using Guba's model for ensuring the trustworthiness of data in qualitative research (in Krefting 1991:215). Based on the four aspects of trustworthiness in this model, namely truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality, the data were reliable and consistent.

5.2.1.4 Ethical considerations

As discussed in detail in paragraph 1.4, and mentioned in paragraph 3.4.6, the following ethical considerations were agreed on before conducting the focus groups, and applied diligently during the research: doing no harm, voluntary participation, informed consent, avoidance of deceit, and anonymity and confidentiality. In applying these ethical considerations, the researcher has met her "obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informant(s)" (Creswell, 2009:197-198).

5.2.2 The research findings

In summarising the research findings and presenting the conclusions regarding these findings the themes which emerged in the research are highlighted and suggestions are made of how they could be dealt with in practice. The research findings were broken down into six main themes, namely culture, religion and language; the development of child and youth care workers; parallel practice in supervision; the supervisory relationship; supervision in a child and youth care context – knowledge and skills; and teamwork and leadership.

5.2.2.1 Culture, religion and language

The theme of culture, religion and language was one of the first to emerge in all of the focus group discussions. It was generally accepted that supervisors should have knowledge of, be sensitive to and understand the beliefs, values and contexts of different cultures, religious and language groups of young people, their families and staff members and be prepared to find creative ways of managing diversity in programmes. The following conclusions and suggestions were made by the researcher regarding managing diversity in programmes:

- It would be worthwhile to educate supervisors in how to encourage diversity in programmes by running workshops or facilitating an outside person to do this on an ongoing basis for the programme.
- Diversity cannot be addressed as a once off issue but needs to be continuously placed on the agenda of staff training and development.
- Workshops with young people and their families should be encouraged as well the celebrating of diverse cultural practices. Heritage Day which is celebrated on the 24th September every year in South Africa is an ideal time to raise awareness around the issues of diversity in culture, religion and language and how these can be integrated into every day life.
- Organisations should have a set of standard values guided by universal values and International and constitutional principles. Basic values do not differ from one culture and religion to another. However, the practices and traditions of implementing these may differ and staff and young people could be educated in these traditions.
- Programmes should be wary of encouraging the use of only one dominant language, culture and religion.

5.2.2.2 The development of child and youth care workers

Each child and youth care worker should have a clear understanding of what their position entails within the organization. This could be facilitated by -

- having a clear job description when child and youth care workers commence their position or drawing this up in conjunction with their supervisors if they are already employed;
- linked to this job description, having an individual development plan for each worker highlighting their strengths and developmental areas, which should be drawn up within three months of them commencing their positions;
- setting manageable goals with each worker and discussing it briefly in supervision on a monthly basis (workers would then know what is expected of them and it would necessitate supervisors knowing what is expected of each worker and identify areas of further training and supervision required);
- supervisors reporting to management on a quarterly basis on the training and supervision needs of their child and youth care team and be assisted to arrange external or in-service training to meet these needs (in this way, supervisors will be held accountable for their service delivery to workers); and
- introducing quarterly reading/study groups where supervisors and/or workers source a relevant article which is circulated and presented to the child and youth care team for discussion (enabling the team to stay abreast of relevant literature in the field).

5.2.2.3 Parallel practice in supervision

While it is evident that supervisors cannot become involved in the personal lives of supervisees, the conclusion is drawn that supervisors should be aware of the worker's personal circumstances and assist them to address these outside of the work environment, if necessary. Supervisors could pay attention to the parallel process in supervision by bearing the following in mind:

- Ensure that the child and youth care worker's strengths are acknowledged. This can be done in supervision sessions based on the individual development plan of the worker or publicly if this is warranted.
- It is important that workers receive feedback if they are not achieving their developmental goals.

- Regular performance appraisals should be done in the same way as progress is monitored with children and families in the system.
- Supervision in child and youth care is about growth and development and if feedback and support are not given in time, opportunities for growth and development are lost.
- Payment of performance bonuses could be an incentive and may not need to be cash but could be a reward system which enhances status or meets any of the needs which would aid the development of workers. This is parallel to the way in which young people in care are treated.

5.2.2.4 The supervisory relationship

In child and youth care work the relationship between the child and the worker is primarily aimed at the growth of the young person. So too, in supervision, the relationship between the worker and supervisor is primarily aimed at the growth of the supervisee (worker). It is only natural that supervisors may struggle with relationships with some of their supervisees. To assist them with this, it is concluded that it would be helpful if supervisors -

- received training on how to be supervisors – preferably before they take up their positions. (As this is often not possible in practice it is recommended that supervisors receive training once they are in the position of supervisor); and
- have regular support on how to supervise which should include managing staff, basic management principles, handling authority, confidentiality, discipline vs. supervision, how to motivate staff members and other aspects pertaining to their jobs as supervisors.

5.2.2.5 Supervision in a child and youth care context – knowledge and skills

Sub-themes which emerged under this heading referred to the knowledge and skills necessary for supervisors to have to be most effective for workers. They were the following:

- Knowledge of the field of child and youth care and child development. It is important that supervisors have as much and preferably more professional knowledge than those they are supervising. If supervisors are not from the field of child and youth but from a related field, it is essential that they read and gain as much information about the field as possible.
- Supervisors must have knowledge of the legal requirements pertaining to the field of child and youth care in South Africa.
- An important skill for supervisors to have or be trained in is *how* to supervise using different methods. They can make use of one-on-one supervision, group supervision, on-line supervision or a combination of all three methods. It is important for management to provide training for supervisors in the methodology of supervision as many supervisors have been promoted into supervisory positions without the necessary training.

5.2.2.6 Teamwork and leadership

In order to assist child and youth care workers to gain confidence, supervisors need to know how to encourage them and highlight their strengths, especially in the team setting. This implies that supervisors should have a good understanding of how to work developmentally and obtain a sound understanding and comprehension of team dynamics.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions made above, recommendations are made pertaining to the qualitative research process; child and youth care work practice; child and youth care work policies; further education and training; and further and future research.

5.3.1 Recommendations pertaining to the qualitative research process

The qualitative research process was the most appropriate research process to use for this study. It provided adequate information and data to explore and describe what knowledge and skills supervisors need in child and youth care settings in the South African context.

It is therefore recommended that –

- further aspects of child and youth care work in the South African context should be explored and described by means of qualitative research according to the well tested qualitative research process; and
- this approach to research should be applied to continue building and compiling a sound body of scientific knowledge about child and youth care work in South Africa and making it available to other researchers in the form of subject literature about child and youth care work. In due course this research approach could be supplemented by research by implementing the quantitative research approach to research (Fouché & de Vos, 2005b:93) “that tests a theory by specifying narrow hypotheses and the collection of data to support or refute the hypotheses” (Creswell, 2009:16).

5.3.2 Recommendations for child and youth care work practice

From the information gathered in this study it is noted that directors, supervisors and child and youth care workers were able to identify relevant knowledge and skills needed by supervisors in child and youth care settings in South Africa. However, it was also apparent that although they knew what should be in place, many of these practices were not happening in their organisations and this caused them considerable frustration.

In relation to child and youth care work practice, it is recommended that child and youth care organisations should -

- train supervisors by providing them with basic knowledge and skills about child and youth care work (as these supervisors are frequently members of other professions not trained as child and youth care workers);
- train supervisors in supervision prior to them being appointed as supervisors;
- if this is not practical these supervisors should be given formal supervisory training as soon as possible after their appointment as supervisors;
- have clear job descriptions for both child and youth care workers and supervisors; and
- be encouraged to budget for and make use of an outside consultant at least once a month to work with their child and youth care team assisting them with relevant issues and looking at supervision structures as one of the issues.

5.3.3 Recommendations for child and youth care work policies

The nature of child and youth care work practice in organisations rendering this service is determined by the policies of the organisation concerned. With reference to such policies, arising from this research, the following is recommended:

- No child and youth care worker should be allowed to practice unless they attend supervision on a regular basis. This should be a standard policy in all organisations as laid down by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (1996) for child and youth care facilities.
- It should be mandatory that supervision sessions are recorded and signed off by supervisees, supervisors and management on a regular basis because supervision is often done informally and not recorded.
- An individual development plan to be attended to in supervision should be drawn up for both supervisors and workers. This would ensure accountability of supervisors as well as child and youth care workers and management could then monitor the quality of supervision provided to workers.
- The Department of Social Development should be approached to ensure that when Quality Assurance Audits of child and youth care facilities are undertaken

the issue of supervision is given greater importance and is always included as a goal in the Organisational Development Plan.

5.3.4 Recommendations for further education and training

To promote, improve and further the knowledge and skills required by supervisors through further education and training in supervision and for them to provide effective supervision to child and youth care workers in South Africa, it is recommended that –

- supervisors should be required to attend formal and informal training in the skills of supervision in order to help them understand the importance of this position and its responsibilities;
- courses in supervision, both accredited and non-accredited, should be developed and offered by role players concerned to child and youth care organisations at an affordable fee; and
- no person should be appointed to a supervisory position unless they have a basic understanding of the field and are prepared to undergo further training as a supervisor.

5.3.5 Recommendations for further and future research

It is recommended that further and future research in child and youth care work should focus on the following:

- With specific reference to supervision in child and youth care, attention should be given to compiling a syllabus for and developing a training course addressing the issues highlighted in this research. This would equip supervisors with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to render effective supervision to child and youth care workers.
- In general terms the current situation regarding the education and training of child and youth care workers should be evaluated to determine whether child and youth care workers entering the field are sufficiently prepared for their task and whether

these courses and programmes adequately address the needs of the client system – the children assisted by the child and youth care workers.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a summary of the research on what knowledge and skills are required by supervisors in order to provide effective supervision in child and youth care settings in South Africa. The research goal and processes have been briefly summarised and the common themes and their resulting conclusions, evolving from the focus groups, have been discussed. The researcher has also made recommendations based on the results of the research and has given some ideas as to how the findings might be implemented to improve supervision in child and youth care settings in South Africa. The researcher was encouraged by the amount of information gleaned from the focus groups and felt that there are many areas which could be addressed through in-service training of staff as well as workshops and courses that would help to develop the knowledge and skills of supervisors of child and youth care workers in South Africa.

It is hoped that this study will lead other professionals to take more urgent and active interest in the provision of relevant and high-quality supervision in child and youth care work in South Africa. The ideal is also expressed that all supervisors of child and youth care workers should themselves have worked in the field, prior to them becoming supervisors of child and youth care workers, because this will ensure that they have a better understanding of the field and the child and youth care worker's role, job description, expectations and frustrations.

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ANNEXURE A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

September 2005

Dear ,

As you may know, I am in the process of doing my Master's Degree in Child and Youth Development through UNISA and have to complete a research project.

The aim of my research is to identify the **knowledge and skills** that supervisors need to have in child and youth care settings in South Africa and I would like to conduct focus groups with Directors, Supervisors and Child and Youth Care Workers to gather information on this topic.

If you are prepared to be a participant in one of these focus groups, I would be most grateful. It will involve a first group discussion, which will last approximately two hours, and then a second group for about one hour, where I will give you feedback on collated data and themes to check the validity and accuracy of the information I have collated.

The focus group which I would like you to attend will be held on 20th September from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and will be at my home. The address is 37 High Road; corner African Street, Gardens (which borders on Orchards).

The feedback group will be held on the 2nd half of October and I will confirm these dates in due course.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to continue once you have started.

There may be participants from your organisation in the other groups and all information will be anonymous. Nothing you say will be directly attributed to you – only themes and information about the topic will be shared. No one in the other groups will know what was said by any individual.

As a result of my research, I am hoping to publish my findings and compile training material for supervisors in child and youth care settings in the future.

If you are willing to be part of this research, please sign this form in duplicate and keep a copy for yourself. Please fax me the signed form to 011 728 6384 before the 16th September 2005 and then bring me an original when you come to the group.

Sincerely

Jacqui Michael

(084) 401 8459

Signed:

Date

ANNEXURE B: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

*What **knowledge** do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa? What do they need to **know**?*

- *From your experience and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care worker, can you give some examples of this?*
- *What **skills** do you think supervisors require in order to provide effective supervision for child and youth care workers in South Africa? What do they need to **know how to do**?*
- *From your experience and practice as a director, supervisor or child and youth care worker can you give some examples of this?*

ANNEXURE C: ANNEXURE CONCERNING THE RESEARCHER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GROUP PARTICIPANTS

I have been in the field of child and youth care in South Africa since 1972 and have worked with, trained, supervised and consulted to, many of the people in this field. Therefore it would have been virtually impossible for me to find participants whose superiors or subordinates I did not know.

I supervised and consulted with five of the six directors who took part in the focus groups for five years prior to them being part of the research, and occasionally consulted with the sixth one over the past six years. I have trained all of them at some stage in various courses over the past 25 years, since the field in South Africa is relatively new and I have been involved in child and youth care since the beginning of its emergence in this country.

I tutored two of these supervisors for part of their studies; supervised two of them during 2005; have known three of them for the past 15 years by virtue of being in the field; and was the consultant to two organisations where four of them were working at the time of the research.

I have also trained four of them in various courses over the past 20 years.

In summary, as can be seen from the above, I have a good knowledge of the organisations from which I drew my sample, have known most of the participants for many years, and have been associated with the children's homes and programmes involved for over 25 years.

ANNEXURE D: ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS: DIRECTORS' GROUP FEEDBACK

DEFINITION OF SUPERVISION

- Definition given by one of the directors: Capacity-building of worker to do the job through the transfer of skills and knowledge within a supportive, guiding environment. Holding worker accountable.
- Another definition provided: the skill to empower and encourage staff to think critically and analytically, help them to apply theory to practice and help the growth of the person to find their own way.
- Further aspects put forward: Support, education and administration. One person added development.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

1. DOCUMENTS

- Know the documents that govern our profession and accommodate and be guided by these, e.g. the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter, and the South African Minimum Standards. Have the skill to translate these documents into practice and know how to make decisions keeping these documents in mind.

2. CULTURE AND RELIGION

Supervisors should:

- understand the different cultures of staff and children;
- have a knowledge of various South African communities and of the communities the children come from – their beliefs, values and contexts;
- know about, and be sensitive to, cultural differences;
- know about main differences between cultures, e.g. male and female roles in different cultures, teaching independence, attitudes to sexual practices;
- know about religious practices in the specific Home, e.g. know what is expected of children in Jewish culture, etc. Understand different religious practices as well as cultures;
- be sensitive as to whether we have the right to impose western culture;
- realise that South Africa is in transition – there is going to be a culture that dominates – supervisors must have the skill to identify, acknowledge and incorporate differences in culture;
- have knowledge of different cultures; and not hide behind culture.

3. ORGANISATION

- Know the organisational and office culture, ethics and values.

4. THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

Supervisors should know about and understand:

- the framework of child and youth care, keeping abreast of developments in the field in order to develop their staff;
- the theories that inform child and youth care practice;
- residential care settings;
- the developmental stages of children and youth and what behaviour is appropriate for what age;
- the stages of moral development and attachment theories. It is important to know that attachment is essential to the work we do, about what happens if attachment has been affected and the effect of this on moral development;
- theories of belonging;
- childhood trauma – secure and insecure attachments and the effects of these;
- grief trauma and the grief curve as they relate to children and where they are in the grieving process, reactions to grief, behaviour when grieving;
- family functioning and the child within the family. Children within their ecology, the child in the family, in the community – children in their context;
- human behaviour and how people interact with one another; and
- human nature, how people function and the dynamics of relationships.

The directors also said that supervisors need to be willing to grow and to find out about new developments in the field; and to have a supervision structure and framework in place.

5. KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

- Supervisors need to know the child and youth care worker's job, what child and youth care workers need in order to function, and the expectations of the job.
- They should know about social work versus child and youth care work, and the differences between the two – they should understand the child and youth care worker's role.
- Ideally child and youth care workers should be supervised by child and youth care workers.
- Supervisors must help staff not to bring personal problems to work – they must understand how people's personal issues will affect their work and be able to help them to separate their personal from their professional lives.
- They should understand the human development of adults.
- Supervisors must know the levels of their child and youth care workers' development.
- They require skills to empower staff.

- Supervisors must be able to help child and youth care workers to change their attitudes, if necessary.
- They must consider clients' grief and workers' grief – where does supervisor's role begin and end? The supervisor must be nurturing and empathic and have the skill to recognise workers' grief, but must also be able to refer them for additional support if necessary.
- Must be able to identify when personal issues are affecting work – this is a highly tuned skill – to empathise and acknowledge – example was provided of a child and youth care worker who lost a baby and had to be referred to therapy.
- Supervisees need a growth plan – an independent development plan – for them as well as the child and family. Supervisor must be able to draw this up based on performance appraisals.
- Supervisor must know how to draw up a job description/job profile and have measurable outcomes for workers, e.g. care routines.

6. SUPERVISION

- Supervisors must have a good understanding of the role of supervision and all its components, that it is not therapy, nor a social chat, but a relationship with a purpose.
- They must know their role, expectations and their own job description.
- They must know about on-line supervision – it is role modelling and working with people in their work space.
- Supervision has three purposes – support, education and administration.
- Supervisors must be self-aware regarding their own feelings of grief.
- They must have a wide and thorough knowledge of life-space interventions in general; and of Response Ability Pathways (RAP) – a life-space intervention technique – in particular.
- Supervision is needed for accountability.
- The purpose of supervision is to develop a professional identity.
- Supervision is the joint responsibility of workers and supervisors.
- Supervision is interactive.
- The work is a shared responsibility.
- There are three types of supervision – group, on-line and one-on-one.
- Supervisors need to be trained to perform the role of supervisor.

7. MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Supervisors need medical knowledge. Workers who may have grown up in underprivileged situations may not have had the experience of identifying and treating medical conditions, as they may not have had that type of care themselves. Workers should know how to pick up basic medical problems, e.g. ear problems.
- Supervisors need to be able to recognise the symptoms of drug abuse, e.g. red eyes, etc., and to get training in this.

8. SUPERVISORS' SKILLS AND QUALITIES

Supervisors need to:

- be self-aware – they need confidence to be able to absorb knowledge;
- be committed to their own personal growth;
- have life experience;
- have passion for what they are doing – they must want to be in the field and have a calling for this type of work;
- understand that they are in the powerful position of moulding new staff;
- know about case management and communication skills;
- know the individual plan for each child;
- know each child;
- understand the context of practice;
- provide a model for child and youth care workers;
- know the different disciplines involved in child and youth care work; and
- understand the dynamics of the field of child and youth care.

SKILLS REQUIRED

1. SKILLS RELATING TO STAFF MATTERS

- Supervisors must have communication skills – they must know about communication style, tone of voice and their approach – how they “come across”.
- They must have the skills needed to cope with the stress of children in their ‘life-space’ – to cope with the stress of running a home where others “are watching all the time”.
- They need skills to cope with the stress of child and youth care workers.
- They must be able to identify burnout in the workers – good supervisors can prevent burnout in workers.
- They should be able to support workers’ decisions and to communicate understanding towards the workers.
- Supervisors should be tolerant and should try to put themselves in the workers’ shoes – i.e. to have empathy. They should also communicate this empathy.
- They must know how to do on-line supervision – which involves role- modelling and working with people in their work space.
- They must have the ability not to foster dependence – and must give praise and encouragement.

2. RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- There must be a high level of trust between child and youth care workers and supervisors – the latter must show respect and a willingness to be open.
- Supervisors must be approachable.

- Supervisors must be objective and careful not to project issues onto staff.
- They must have relationship skills.
- They must not “take over” – they must allow supervisees to work in the ‘life-space’ without taking over or undermining them.
- They should “be there” for the worker.
- They should be able to provide after-hours supervision.
- They need to understand the fine line between policing people and holding them accountable.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

- Strong administrative skills are necessary.
- Supervisors need to know how to standardise care routines, rules and rights so that there is consistency, especially with respect to shifts. They should create a climate of consistency.
- They must teach staff how to write incident reports – and be able to put in place reporting mechanisms for when they are not around. They have to know how to keep staff accountable through reporting. Supervisors must have the skills required to frame formats for reports that can be easily and comprehensively filled in.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES SKILLS

- Supervisors need to know about performance management and continual reviews.
- They must know how to draw up a job description/job profile and have measurable outcomes for workers, e.g. in the form of care routines.

5. CONFRONTATION SKILLS

- Supervisors must be able to confront constructively and to mediate.

6. TRAINING SKILLS

- Supervisors must take responsibility and have the skills to help workers to implement the training that they receive.
- They must monitor that training is being implemented.
- They need to fill in the gaps between training and practice.
- Supervisors must be trained in life-space interventions in general, and in the life-space intervention technique, RAP, in particular. They must know how to use RAP.
- Supervisors must be able to transfer practical skills.

ANNEXURE E: ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS: SUPERVISORS' GROUP FEEDBACK

DEFINITION OF SUPERVISION

In this group supervision was defined in terms of the following:

- coaching;
- providing support;
- role-modelling;
- empathising;
- working in the moment;
- being present;
- growth;
- education and training;
- understanding where the worker is at;
- assessing the needs of the worker and the organisation;
- problem-solving;
- enabling confrontation;
- sometimes giving advice;
- motivating child and youth care workers;
- nurturing;
- evaluating performance and performance appraisals;
- taking the staff member's history into account;
- empowering staff; and
- providing a measurement tool.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

1. DOCUMENTS

- South African laws affecting children and their families, especially the Child Care Act.
- Practice Principles.
- The South African Minimum Standards.
- International instruments – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter. Knowledge of the universal values contained in the international instruments.
- The Constitution of South Africa.
- South African labour laws.

2. CULTURE

When it comes to cultural aspects, supervisors need to:

- understand different cultures, languages and religions;
- have knowledge of different cultural practices, beliefs and values, and possess the skill to act on this knowledge. They must also understand the overall approach of different cultures towards behaviour management, as certain behaviour management approaches may not be acceptable in certain cultures; and
- know and understand children's and staff members' cultures, and accept and be open to the diversity of these cultures, thus ensuring appropriate responses. The process of responding to the needs of clients and staff needs to include attention to cultural differences.

3. ORGANISATION

- Supervisors must know the values, ethics and culture of the organisation, and also its mission and goals.
- They must understand the needs of children. The focus of the organisation must be to meet these needs.

4. THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Supervisors must be familiar with theories of child development.
- They must have a thorough understanding of attachment and other developmental theories, such as those of Bowlby, Maslow, Erikson, Kohlberg, Bronfenbrenner, Piaget and the Circle of Courage.
- They need to understand the knowledge, skills and self-awareness (KSS) model.
- Supervisors must know the different theories informing child and youth care, and have the skill to understand and use different theories.
- They should understand the developmental approach, and know how to apply it to staff and children.
- They need to understand and be able to use different supervision frameworks and styles of supervision.

5. PROGRAMME PLANNING

- Supervisors must have the knowledge to draw up programmes and the ability to teach this skill to the child and youth care workers.

6. KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Supervisors need to know and understand:

- individual staff members – their past and their present. They should know staff members well enough to be able to recognise situations that will be triggers for child and youth care workers;

- parallel processes happening to both staff and children, e.g. death, loss, illness and AIDS;
- the strengths, weaknesses and talents of individual staff members;
- the place of supervision, and supervision as a shared role between worker and supervisor;
- the job descriptions of child and youth care workers;
- how to use a strengths-based approach with staff, as this makes them feel empowered;
- the developmental stages of child and youth care workers, so as to avoid trying to push them towards a higher level when they do not have the skills, knowledge, education or emotional readiness for it;
- what to expect at each worker's level of development;
- the work of Phelan and Garfat, in order to be able to guide workers and meet their needs at various stages of their professional development. The primary task at Level 1 is for supervisors to create a safe environment for workers;
- that it is important to exercise caution when staff members want to improve their skills and position, and to be realistic about their ability, background, educational level and competence. Supervisors should know staff members well enough to be able to do this;
- when to "give up" on a staff member – if he or she does not show any improvement, then one cannot continue to support him or her to the detriment of the children;
- when to draw the line between protecting staff and making allowances for them, and when to say that they are not competent and that the children are suffering as a result;
- that staff must be made to take responsibility for their work, and how to enforce this;
- how to motivate staff members; and
- how to plan together with staff.

7. SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT

- Supervisors must be able to decide when a situation has to change from supervision to discipline. This is difficult, but supervisors must know that if the safety of clients is compromised, then they have no choice but to take disciplinary action. This is hard to cope with because it affects staff morale.
- Supervisors have to be able to ascertain whether needs are the children's or the staff's. For example, if staff members want the TV turned off early, is this because they want to go to sleep early or is it because the children need to spend time on their studies?
- Supervisors must be aware of the workers' conditions – their shifts and the overtime they work, the ratio of staff to children, their tiredness and general staff conditions at the place where they work.

- They need to understand Maslow's hierarchy of needs – if staff cannot meet their own basic needs, how can they meet the needs of their clients, and how can they be held responsible?
- If staff members have long shifts, do not get paid well, have transport problems and do a lot of overtime, how can supervisors hold them accountable? If a worker's own child is ill and they are worried but cannot go home – that is hard for them.
- Supervisors must take staff members' needs into account, but this cannot always be an excuse.
- Supervisors must know the workers individually and understand the actual job each one does.
- Supervisors must know the level of commitment of each staff member and who will go the extra mile – some do better, and some worse, in the same context.
- They must understand what acceptable levels of staff performance entail.
- They must know what the best child-to-staff ratio is.
- It is difficult to be both a supervisor and a manager, as sometimes the lines are blurred. Supervisors felt that it was more important to be available to support workers than to take up disciplinary issues. They felt that the disciplinary issues should be handed over to someone else on the team.
- Sometimes staff members build trust in you and then you have to hand matters over to management or manage them yourself, and then trust is broken. Supervisors must know when it is appropriate to hand over things to management.

8. GENERAL

- Supervisors must have the ability to look after themselves – an outside supervisor and outside support are good ideas.
- They must have the knowledge and skills to deal with resistant supervisees – they require general knowledge about resistance.
- They must be able to translate the knowledge and skills they gain from their own supervision.
- They need the required knowledge and skills to work with workers in their work/life space.
- They must know how to conduct themselves professionally.
- They must be able to pick up team dynamics.

SKILLS REQUIRED

1. CULTURE

- Supervisors must have knowledge of different cultural practices, beliefs and values and the skill to implement this knowledge.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

- Supervisors must know the different theories that inform child and youth care; have the skill to understand and use different theories; and possess the skill to help staff apply them.
- They must be able to translate theories of development into practice according to the needs of individual children.
- They must know how to apply the developmental approach to both staff and children.

3. STAFF MATTERS

- Supervisors must have the skill to match the workers' talents to the needs of the children. They must be able to help workers to keep children meaningfully occupied and develop activities to meet children's needs.
- They must be able to observe the workers' skills and abilities and identify their talents.
- They should know how to grow a worker based on his or her skills.
- Supervisors must be able to set boundaries and draw the line between therapy and supervision.
- They must be able to give workers the opportunity to offload, but still draw a line between this and therapy/counselling. They cannot ignore the workers' personal issues and thus must have the skills to know the difference and to refer the worker for counselling when necessary.
- Some of the same skills are needed for supervision as for counselling, e.g. listening and empathy.
- Supervisors need counselling skills to help workers and to be able to identify what is going on for them; and to refer them to outside counselling if necessary.
- Parents bring much emotion to situations and this is often dumped on the staff and evokes issues for staff and affects them. As a supervisor, if you see triggers for staff, you must be able to refer them. When you know it is not the client causing the feelings, refer them.
- Repetitive themes would alert the skilled supervisor to workers' need for therapy or counselling.
- Trauma requires outside counselling.
- Counselling is not part of supervision – supervisors must know when to draw the line – and to set expectations based on the needs of clients.
- Supervisors must remain focused and not lose sight of the potential of staff.
- Supervisors must have patience.
- Sometimes a supervisor has to admit that a staff member is not capable and must have the skills to deal with this.
- Supervisors must keep repeating the same things and be role models for child and youth care workers.
- They need the skills required to empower staff, but must put time- frames in place and must be able to review this process.

- They also need the necessary skills to use a strengths-based approach with staff, as this makes the latter feel empowered.
- Supervisors need skills in observation and on-line supervision – observation skills help them to identify the strengths of staff.
- They must be able to work “in the moment” and from a strengths-based perspective with staff, as is done with children.

4. TRAINING

- Supervisors must provide training and supervision regularly, or provide access to training and motivate staff to use these opportunities. However, if staff members don't make use of these opportunities, then supervisors have to know when to draw the line.
- Organisations pay for training either totally or in part, and supervisors must hold people accountable in terms of using the training they receive. They must also be able to help staff to implement what they have learnt.

5. CONFRONTATION

- Supervisors must have the skills to tell the staff that they are not suitable – i.e. confronting skills.
- If staff members miss work repeatedly, the supervisor must have the skills to confront and know when to call management in. When it is a repetitive pattern of behaviour, the staff member may need to be referred to a higher authority.
- It is unethical to keep someone who is not performing just because finding staff is difficult.
- Supervisors are in a difficult position. In the commercial world, working as a doctor, accountant, etc. there would be zero tolerance for non-performance. But in child and youth care we tend to nurture and protect people. Supervisors must have the skills to balance care for staff with accountability.

6. TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP

- The supervisor must be able to function as a team player, build team spirit and keep a sense of togetherness in the team. A lack of these filters down to the children.
- Supervisors need the knowledge and skills to pick up on team dynamics.
- They need to have leadership skills, as sometimes they will be members of the team, but at other times will be the team's leader.

7. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- We encourage staff to read articles and present them – but when we do this they don't pitch up – are we expecting too much? Expectations must be realistic.

- We try to teach children responsibility, so we must teach staff to be responsible as well. All the staff who are parents, would they treat their own kids the same way?
- Supervisors must be able to motivate staff to improve.
- They must be able to motivate for improvements and changes with management, as managers often have no idea of child and youth care workers' jobs or of what supervision entails.
- They must have the skills to give positive feedback, encourage and praise.
- They must be genuine
- If child and youth care workers cannot develop responsibility, they cannot teach this to children, and supervisors will then need to act.

8. RELATIONSHIPS

- Supervisors must have the skills to build and maintain relationships.
- They must be able to build trust with workers – the relationship is a journey.
- They must know when to keep issues confidential and when to break this confidence.
- They need the skills to connect and build rapport with staff members – starting with their concerns.
- Supervisors must have the skills to deal with resistant supervisees – and therefore to have general knowledge about resistance.

9. GENERAL

- Supervisors need the skill to translate knowledge and skills from their own supervision.
- They have to have the knowledge and skills to work with workers in their work/life space.
- Supervisors must be able to think creatively and to be able to help staff to think creatively.
- Supervisors must have the skills to teach workers how to draw up programmes and implement these.

ANNEXURE F: ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS: CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS' GROUP FEEDBACK

DEFINITION OF SUPERVISION

In this group, supervision was defined in the following way:

Supervision is when you have someone to oversee your work to make sure that you are on the right track, that you are keeping to the code of ethics, and that you are working in a professional and strengths-based manner.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

1. DOCUMENTS

Supervisors must know about the Minimum Standards, children's rights, the relevant laws, and the codes of conduct of the profession and the organisation they are working for.

2. CULTURE

When it comes to cultural aspects, supervisors must:

- be culturally confident and understand your culture, background and beliefs – not criticise your culture – ask if they don't understand;
- have knowledge of different cultures; and
- understand your daily stresses e.g. catching taxis and other transport problems, etc.

3. THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

Supervisors should:

- know the field;
- offer support in both the practical and the theoretical aspects of the job; know the profession of child and youth care and be able to teach it to workers– they must have studied or be studying the profession. Those supervisors who do not have this experience look down on child and youth care workers and are critical of them;
- know about group work to help workers run groups;
- give workers knowledge about the job, the clients and the contexts within which they will be working;
- know and give workers background information on clients;
- give workers information regarding the child's Individual Development Plan (IDP);

- know about social skills and communication and group work; and
- understand trial-and-error learning for workers.

4. STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Supervisors must be able to:

- work developmentally with workers and give them goals and support in achieving those goals, otherwise workers become de-motivated;
- have realistic expectations of the worker – sometimes supervisors' expectations of workers are too high – workers are not psychiatric nurses who know about medication for children. Supervisors must know what you can do;
- treat workers according to their level of experience – a worker who has been there one year must be treated differently from a worker who has been there for three years. The more recent worker needs more support and supervision;
- understand that even if new staff have a diploma, they must be supported. In practice things can be really difficult– e.g. in the case of a child who is feeling suicidal;
- understand that sometimes people who have practical experience but not the theory can also be good at the job; and value experience as well as studying;
- understand that even if you have experience you will need support and time to build relationships; and
- know the stresses of being with the children for 24 hours at a time.

SKILLS REQUIRED

1. STAFF MATTERS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Supervisors should be able to do the following:

- give guidance and support, and help workers understand things;
- mentor and coach;
- encourage workers to use peer supervision;
- help workers when they get stuck;
- help workers with their growth and development by suggesting other ways in which you could do things;
- give workers other options in the way of doing something;
- give constructive feedback and not be critical all the time – acknowledge workers' strengths;
- work developmentally with workers and give them goals and support them in achieving those goals otherwise workers become de-motivated;
- give the workers feedback as to whether they are on the right track;
- do more staff appraisals and set goals and standards, monitor performance and give goals for workers' development; and
- give the time that is necessary if workers need more time.

2. RELATIONSHIPS

As part of their skills, supervisors should be able to:

- allow you to be yourself;
- help you with your stress;
- have a good relationship with you;
- be supportive;
- show you respect;
- share things with you;
- listen to you;
- be available regularly when you are struggling with something – in between the formal supervisions;
- help you with your feelings towards the children and understand these;
- check on how you are after an incident;
- build a relationship of trust with you – you must be able to trust them;
- not be judgemental;
- understand you and where you are coming from – your worldview;
- avoid making you feel as if they are watching everything you do, as this makes you nervous;
- make workers aware of dangerous situations – in other words, protect workers;
- keep confidentiality or check things out with you first if she is going to share it in the group;
- not hold things against you;
- acknowledge things that are affecting you emotionally;
- take note of you professionally and personally;
- recognise when you are burnt out and show caring about you taking some time off – acknowledge the stress and give encouragement;
- be generally caring;
- motivate staff and praise them for something they did well and say thank you;
- hold workers emotionally;
- give credit to workers when they have done something well;
- be honest with workers;
- not favour certain staff members over others – treat everyone individually;
- trust workers' ability;
- support workers even if they have the diploma or degree in child and youth care as the situation may be new;
- treat workers with respect;
- recognise workers;
- not get defensive if you speak to them about something;
- be open-minded;
- respond, not react;
- take time to think about what workers are saying and avoid just reacting;
- communicate well;
- show engagement skills – be able to connect with the workers;

- show workers that they value them;
- "Hold the worker's emotions" by providing support and a containing environment;
- have the skills to give workers "I messages";
- do things together with the workers;
- be neutral about situations and hear workers' side of the story; and
- know how to handle your trauma if you are traumatised.

At the same time, supervisors cannot give quick fixes for things – "they cannot work miracles".

3. TRAINING

- Supervisors must make sure that workers get the training they need to cope with the types of things they encounter at work.
- They should train child and youth care workers in developmental assessment.
- They must share with workers what they learned during training or rather send workers themselves to training.
- Supervisors need to ensure that there is equal access to training for all.
- They must orientate you properly in a new position or a new job.

4. SUPERVISION

- Supervisors must be able to observe how you are working.
- They should not exaggerate what you have done or not done.
- They must take time to think about what you have shared with them, and must not just dismiss it – they must give value to your thoughts and ideas.
- They must be able to be on the ground with the worker in the life-space of the children and the community. There should not be a hierarchy between the worker and the supervisor. Supervisors must treat workers as equals.
- Supervisors must realise that the workload is sometimes too much – "we are specialists but end up being general caregivers".
- They must evaluate the workload.
- They must know the stresses of being with the children continuously.
- Workers would like supervisors to be child and youth care workers/ professionals themselves.
- Supervisors must not expect perfection.
- Supervisors expect workers to practise the principles of child and youth care, e.g. empowerment or participation, but often don't do so themselves. If they say you should do this or that with the children, then they should do it with the workers.
- Supervisors must be sensitive to clients' needs and treat them all the same, irrespective of their situation. For example, clients may be dirty but should not be judged for this.
- Supervisors should share practical skills.

- They must help staff to feel safe and protected.
- They must stand up for workers in the team.
- They must be able to draw a line between their personal and their professional lives.
- Supervisors should give immediate feedback after on-line supervision.
- They should do *with*, not *to*.
- They must be able to do hands-on work.
- Supervisors must be accountable in the same way as they hold workers accountable.
- They must have the skills of how to supervise.
- They should not undermine you by changing your decisions.
- Supervisors must empower workers to work towards meeting clients' needs.
- If a supervisor knows the needs of the clients, then he or she must share this with the workers.
- Supervisors must pass on information about children from all the meetings they attended during which the child and youth care worker was not present.
- Supervisors must be good role models. They must not tell workers not to do something, e.g. not touch kids in certain ways, and then do it themselves.
- Supervisors must practise what they preach.

5. GENERAL

- Supervisors must have the ability to comment in your reflection book – the book where you record your thoughts and feelings about your work.
- They must be able to work in a multidisciplinary team.
- Supervisors must participate in programme planning, help workers to put programmes together, do the necessary research and support workers in implementing the programme.
- They must help workers to evaluate programmes.
- They need behaviour management skills so that they can help workers to manage children.
- They must follow up on children's progress once they have left the programme.

ANNEXURE G

COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS FROM ALL THREE FOCUS GROUPS ON THE QUESTION: "WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO SUPERVISORS REQUIRE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION FOR CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA?"

| DIRECTORS DOCUMENTS | SUPERVISORS DOCUMENTS | CYCW'S DOCUMENTS |
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| <p>• UNCRC, African Charter and Minimum Standards</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African laws affecting children and their families, especially Child Care Act • Practice principals • Minimum standards • International instruments – UNCRC, African Charter • Know the universal values on which the International Instruments are based • SA Constitution • Must have knowledge of current Labour Laws | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must know about Minimum Standards, Children's Rights, laws, code of conduct of the profession and the organisation |
| <p>CULTURE AND RELIGION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors should understand the different cultures of staff and children • Knowledge of South African communities and the communities the children come from – their beliefs, values and contexts • Knowledge and sensitivity to cultural differences • Know difference in cultures e.g. male and female roles in different cultures, teaching independence, attitudes to sexual practices • Knowledge of the religious practices in the Home e.g. if a Jewish culture, must know what is expected of the children. | <p>CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need an understanding of different cultures, languages and religions • Supervisors must have the knowledge of different cultural practices, beliefs and values and the skill to implement these. They must also know the worldview of different cultures when it comes to behaviour management as certain behaviour management may not be acceptable in certain cultures. • Know and understand children's and staff member's cultures, accept & understand all cultures. Respond to culture when addressing the needs of clients and staff. | <p>CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be culturally confident and understand your culture, background and beliefs – not criticise your culture – ask if they don't understand • Have knowledge of different cultures • Must understand your daily stresses e.g. catching taxis, transport problems etc. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must understand different religious practices as well as cultures • Be sensitive as to whether we have the right to impose western culture? • SA is in transition – there is going to be a culture which dominates – supervisor must have the skill to identify, acknowledge and incorporate differences in culture • Have a knowledge of different cultures • Don't hide behind culture | | |
| <p>THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should know the framework of child and youth care and keep abreast of developments in the field in order to develop their staff. • The theories that inform child and youth care practice. • Know re residential care settings • Needs to know the developmental stages of children and youth and age appropriate behaviour • Supervisor must be willing to grow and know new developments in the field • Must have a supervision structure and framework • Supervisors must have knowledge about the stages of moral development and attachment theories. It is important to know that attachment is essential to the work we do and what happens if attachment has been affected and it's affect on moral development. • Know Theories of belonging. | <p>THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have knowledge of theories of development of children • Knowledge of attachment theories and theories such as: Bowlby, Maslow, Erikson, Kohlberg, Bronfenbrenner, Piaget and the Circle of Courage. • Know the KSS model – knowledge, skills and self awareness • Supervisors must know the different theories which inform child and youth care and have the skill to understand and use different theories. • Know the developmental approach and know how to apply it to staff and children • Knowledge of supervision frameworks and styles of supervision. | <p>THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should have knowledge of the field • Offer support in the practical and the theory • Must have knowledge of child and youth care and be able to teach workers the profession – must have studied or be studying the profession • Supervisors who do not have this experience look down on CYCW's and are critical – they must have knowledge of the field • Supervisors need knowledge about group work to help workers run groups • They must give workers knowledge about the job, the clients and the contexts within which they will be working |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of childhood trauma – secure and insecure attachments and the effect of these. Must have an understanding of grief curve and trauma as it relates to kids and where they are in the grieving process, reactions to grief, behaviour when grieving. • Knowledge of family functioning and the child within the family. Child within their ecology, child in family, in community - in their context. • Supervisor must have knowledge of the field • They need knowledge of human behaviour and how people interact with each other • Know human nature, how people function and the dynamics of relationships | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must know and give workers background information on clients • Supervisors must give workers information re the child's IDP • Must know about social skills and communication and group work • Understand trial-and-error learning for workers |
| <p>ORGANISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills to run the Home while acting professionally • Know the organisational and office culture, ethics and values | <p>ORGANISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the values, ethics and culture of the organisation as well as the mission and goals. Balance these to achieve the goals. • Supervisor must have knowledge of the needs of children and the focus of the organisation must be to meet these needs. | <p>ORGANISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't mention any knowledge related to organisation |
| <p>KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF MEMBER'S AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors need to have knowledge of the child and youth care worker's job, what CYCW's need in order to function and expectations of the job. • Understand CYCW's role | <p>KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF MEMBER'S AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have knowledge of each staff member – their past and their present • Must know staff members well enough to be able to recognise situations which will be triggers for CYCW's | <p>KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF MEMBER'S AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how to work developmentally with workers, give them goals and support to achieve those goals. Otherwise workers become de-motivated. |

- Know social work vs. child and youth care work and the differences between them
- Ideally CYCW's should supervise child and youth care workers
- Supervisors must help staff not to bring personal problems to work – they must understand how people's personal issues affect their work and be able to help them to separate their personal and professional lives
- Know human development of adults
- Supervisors must know the levels of their CYCW's development
- Know how to empower staff
- Supervisors must know how to help staff to change attitudes
- Know client's grief and worker's grief – where does supervisor's role begin and end – skill to empathise not necessarily to deal with it. Supervisor may need to be more nurturing at times.
- Must know how to identify when personal issues are affecting work – to empathise & acknowledge – e.g. CYCW who lost a baby had to be referred to therapy
- Supervisees need a growth plan – an Independent Development Plan – for them as well as the child and family – supervisor know how to draw this up based on performance appraisals
- Supervisor must know how to draw up a job description / job profile and have measurable outcomes for workers e.g. Care routines

- Supervisor must have knowledge of parallel processes happening between staff and children, e.g. Death, loss, illness, AIDS
- Have personal knowledge of staff, their strengths, weaknesses and talents
- Know the place of supervision and share the role of supervision with the worker.
- Know the job descriptions for the worker
- Know and use a strengths based approach with staff as this makes them feel empowered.
- Know the developmental stages of child and youth care workers and not push them to a higher level when they do not have the skills and knowledge, education or are emotionally ready.
- Know what to expect at each worker's level of development – know Phelan and Garfat, so that they can guide workers and meet their needs. Primary task in level 1 is for supervisors to create safety for workers
- Take care when staff want to improve and be realistic re their ability, backgrounds, educational level, and competence – know them well enough to know this.
- Must know where staff responsibility begins and ends – supervision is the buffer between kids and organisation.
- A supervisor must know when to 'give up' on a staff member – if they do not show improvement one cannot continue to the detriment of the children

- Have realistic expectations of workers – sometimes supervisors expectations of workers are too high – “we are not psychiatric nurses to know about medication for children.” Know what they can do.
- Treat workers according to their level of experience – a worker who has been there one year must be treated differently to a worker who has been there for 3 years. The one year worker needs more support and supervision
- Understand new staff even if they have the diploma, they must be supported with practice as this can be difficult e.g. a child who is about to kill themselves
- They must understand that sometimes people who have the practice and not the theory can also be good at the job and they must value experience as well as studying
- Understand the fact that even if workers have experience – if working in a new place they will still need support and time to build relationships
- They must know the stresses of being with the children for 24 hrs

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors must know when to draw the line between protecting staff and making allowances for them and when to say they are not competent and the children are suffering. Must expect that staff take responsibility and are able to enforce this Must know how to motivate staff members Know how to plan with staff | |
| <p>SUPERVISION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have a good understanding of the role of supervision and all its components, that it is not therapy, not a social chat but a relationship with a purpose Must know their role, expectations and their own job description Know about online supervision – it is role modelling and working with people in their work space Supervision has 3 purposes – support, education and administration Supervisors must be self aware re their own feelings of grief Supervisor must have good knowledge of life-space interventions, RAP – a Life Space intervention technique and all knowledge about life-space interventions Supervision is necessary for accountability The purpose of supervision is to develop a professional identity | <p>SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors must know when issues must move from supervision to disciplinary matters. Supervisors must know if the safety of clients is compromised then must take disciplinary action. This is hard as it does affect staff morale. Supervisors must know when needs are the children's or the staff's. Supervisors must be aware of the worker's conditions – their shifts, overtime, ratio of staff to children, their tiredness and other working conditions. Know Maslow's needs – if staff cannot meet their own basic needs, how can they meet the needs of the clients and how can they be held responsible? If staff have long shifts, do not get well paid, have transport problems, do a lot of overtime, how can they be held accountable? If their child is ill and they are worried and cannot go home – this is hard for them. | <p>SUPERVISION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing mentioned on this by CYCW's |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision is a joint responsibility between workers and supervisors • Supervision is interactive • The work is a shared responsibility • 3 types of supervision – group, on-line and one-on-one • Supervisors need to be trained as supervisors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must take the staff member's needs into account but this cannot always be an excuse. • Supervisors must have a knowledge of the actual job and of the workers individually • Supervisors must know the level of commitment of each staff member and who will go the extra mile – some do better and some worse in the same context • Must have knowledge of acceptable levels of staff performance • Must know best child to staff ratio • It is difficult to be a supervisor and a manager as sometimes the lines are blurred – support supersedes management if one can hand over the management issues. • Sometimes staff build trust in supervisors and the then they have to hand disciplinary matters over to management or manage them themselves and this breaks trust. Supervisors must know when it is appropriate to hand issues over to management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must have the knowledge to draw up programmes and the ability to teach this skill to the workers |
| <p>MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors need medical knowledge. People who may have grown up in underprivileged situations may not have had the experience of identifying and treating medical conditions as they may not have had that type of care themselves. | <p>PROGRAMME PLANNING</p> | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should know how to pick up basic medical problems e.g. ear, sight problems etc. • Supervisors need to be able to recognise the symptoms of drug abuse e.g. red eyes etc and get training in this. | | |
| <p>SUPERVISORS – SELF AWARENESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must be self-aware – need confidence to be able to absorb knowledge. • Need to be committed to their own personal growth • Have life experience • Need passion for what they are doing, they must want to be in the field and have a calling for this type of work • They are in a powerful position as they are moulding new staff • Knowledge of case management and communication skills • Need to know individual plans for each child • Knowledge of each child • Context of practice • Must model for CYCW's • Know the different disciplines involved in CYC work • Know the dynamics of the field of CYC | <p>GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must have the knowledge to look after themselves – an outside supervisor and support is a good idea • Supervisors must have the knowledge and skills to deal with resistant supervisees – general knowledge about resistance • Be able to translate knowledge and skills from one's own supervision • Knowledge and skills to work with workers in their work/life space • Knowledge to conduct yourself professionally • Need knowledge and skills to pick up team dynamics | |

COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS FROM ALL THREE FOCUS GROUPS ON THE QUESTION: "WHAT SKILLS DO SUPERVISORS REQUIRE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION FOR CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA?"

| DIRECTORS | SUPERVISORS | CYCW'S |
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| <p>STAFF MATTERS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have communication skills – know about communication styles, tone of voice and their approach – how they come across • Supervisor must have the coping skills to cope with the stress of children in their life –space, skills to cope with the stress of running a home when others 'are watching all the time' • Skills to cope with the CYCW's stress • Be able to identify burnout in the workers – good supervisors can prevent burnout in workers • Be able to support workers decisions and communicate understanding to the workers. • Be tolerant and try and be in the workers' shoes – show empathy and communicate this empathy • Know how to do online supervision – it is role modelling and working with people in their work space • Skill not to foster dependence – must give praise and encouragement | <p>STAFF MATTERS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill to observe the workers skills and abilities and identify their talents. • Supervisors must have the skill to match the worker's talents to the needs of the children. Supervisor must be able to help workers to keep children meaningfully occupied and develop activities to meet children's needs. • Must have ability to grow the workers based on their skills • Must be able to set boundaries and draw the line between therapy and supervision. • Allow worker to offload, but still draw a line between this and therapy/counselling. Cannot ignore personal issues of the workers. Must have the skills to know the difference and how to refer the worker. • Some of the same skills are needed for supervision as for counselling e.g. listening and empathy. • Need counselling skills to help workers and be able to identify what is going on for them and refer them to outside counselling if necessary | <p>STAFF MATTERS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors should give guidance and support and help workers to understand issues • Mentoring and coaching • Encourage workers to use peer supervision • Supervisors must help you when you get stuck • They should help one with own growth and development by suggesting other ways one could do things • Give one other options of how to do something • Have realistic expectations of the worker – sometimes supervisors expectations of workers are too high – "we are not psychiatric nurses to know about medication for children." |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents bring much emotion and this is often dumped on the staff and evokes issues for staff and affects them. If you see triggers for staff, must be able to refer them. • When you know it is not the client causing the feelings, refer them. • Repetitive themes would alert the supervisor to worker needing therapy or counselling. • Trauma needs outside counselling. • Counselling not part of supervision – supervisors must know when to draw the line – set expectations based on the needs of clients. • Supervisor must stay focused and not lose sight of the potential of staff • Supervisors must have patience • Sometimes a supervisor has to admit that a staff member is not capable and have the skills to deal with this. • Supervisors must keep repeating the same things and be a role model for CYCW's. • Skills to empower staff, but must put in time frames and be able to review this process • Skills to use a strengths based approach with staff as we do with children as this makes them feel empowered. • Need skills in observation and on-line supervision – observation skills help the supervisor to identify strengths of staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must treat workers according to their level of experience – a worker who has been there one year must be treated differently to a worker who has been there for 3 years. The one year worker needs more support and supervision • Understand new staff even if they have the diploma, they must be supported with practice as this can be difficult e.g. a child who is about to kill themselves • They must understand that sometimes people who have the practice and not the theory can also be good at the job and they must value experience as well as studying • Understand the fact that even if one has experience – if you are working in a new place you will still need support and time to build relationships • Must be able to give constructive feedback and not be critical all the time – acknowledge your strengths • Work developmentally with workers and give them goals and support them in achieving those goals - otherwise workers become de-motivated |
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| <p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be a high level of trust between CYCW's and supervisors – they must show respect and a willingness to be open • Must be approachable • Supervisor must be objective and careful not to project issues onto staff • Must have relationship skills • Must not take over – allow supervisee to work in the life space without taking over or undermining the worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be able to work 'in the moment' • Encourage staff to read articles and present them – when we do this they don't pitch up – are we expecting too much? Expectations must be realistic. • We try to teach children responsibility, so we must teach staff to be responsible as well. • All the staff who are parents, would they treat their own kids the same? • Must be able to motivate staff to improve • Must be able to motivate to management for improvements and changes as they often have no idea of child and youth care workers jobs or supervision • Must have the skills to give positive feedback, encourage and praise. • Must be genuine • If CYCW's cannot develop responsibility they cannot teach this to children and supervisors will then need to act. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give feedback as to whether one is on the right track • Do more staff appraisals and set goals and standards, monitor your performance and give goals for workers development • Give necessary time if workers need more |
| <p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be a high level of trust between CYCW's and supervisors – they must show respect and a willingness to be open • Must be approachable • Supervisor must be objective and careful not to project issues onto staff • Must have relationship skills • Must not take over – allow supervisee to work in the life space without taking over or undermining the worker | <p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have the skills to build and maintain relationships • Must be able to build trust with workers – the relationship is a journey • Must know when to keep issues confidential and when to break this confidence • Needs the skill to connect and build rapport with staff members – start with their concerns | <p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow you to be yourself • Someone to help you with your stress • Must be able to have a good relationship with you • Must be supportive • Must show you respect • Must be able to share things with your supervisor • Supervisors can't give quick fixes - cannot work miracles |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to 'be there' for the worker • Should be able to provide after hours supervision • Fine line between policing and holding people accountable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must have the skills to deal with resistant supervisees – general knowledge about resistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors need to be able to listen • Must be available regularly when you are struggling with something – in between the formal supervision • Must help you with your feelings towards the children and understand them • Check how you are after an incident • Must be able to build a relationship of trust with you – you must be able to trust them • Must not be judgmental • Must be able to listen to you • Must be able to understand you and where you are coming from – your worldview • They must not make you feel as if they are watching everything you do as this makes you nervous • Make workers aware of dangerous situations – in other words protect workers • Must be able to keep confidentiality or check things out with you first if they are going to share it in the group • Must not hold things against you • Must acknowledge things which are affecting you emotionally |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take note of you professionally and personally • Recognise when you are burnt out and show caring about you taking some time off – acknowledge the stress and give encouragement • Must be caring • Must be able to motivate staff and praise them for something they did well and say thank you • Must be able to hold workers emotionally • Give credit to workers when they have done something well • Must be honest with workers • Must not favour certain staff over others – treat everyone individually • Must trust workers ability • Support workers even if they have the diploma or degree as the situation may be new • Supervisors must treat workers with respect – need skill in this • Must recognise workers • Must not get defensive if you speak to them about something • Be open-minded • Respond not react • Take time to think about what workers are saying and don't just react |
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| <p>TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must take responsibility and have the skills to help workers implement training they receive. • Monitor that training is being implemented • Fill in the gaps between training & practice • Supervisors should be trained in life-space interventions e.g. RAP – a Life Space intervention technique - and know how to use this • Supervisors must know how to translate training (theory) into practice (skills) and help workers to do this. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate well • Must have engagement skills – be able to connect with the workers • Must show workers they value them • Hold emotions • Must have the skills to give workers “I messages.” • They must do things with the workers • Must be neutral about situations and hear worker’s side of the story • If workers traumatised, supervisors must know how to handle their trauma |
| <p>TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must provide training and supervision regularly or provide access to training and motivate staff to use these opportunities. If they don’t they must know when to draw the line. • Organisations either pay totally or partly towards training and supervisors must hold people accountable to use the training and help them to implement what they have used. | | <p>TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They must make sure workers have training to cope with their job • Train CYCW’s on developmental assessment • Share with workers what they learned on training or send workers rather • Ensure there is equal access to training • Must orientate workers properly in a new position or new job |

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| <p>ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong administrative skills • Knowledge and ability to standardise care routines, rules and rights so that there is consistency especially with shifts. Create a climate of consistency. • Teach staff to write incident reports – skill to put in place reporting mechanisms when supervisor is not around. Know how to keep staff accountable through reporting. • Supervisor must have the skill to frame report formats so that they can be completed easily and comprehensively. <p>CONFRONTATION SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must be able to confront constructively and mediate | <p>ADMINISTRATION SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment on this | <p>ADMINISTRATION SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment on this |
| | <p>CONFRONTATION SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have the confrontational skills to tell staff they are not suitable for the position. • If staff miss work repeatedly, supervisor must have the skills to confront and know when to call in management. If it is a repetitive pattern of behaviour may need to be referred to higher authority • Unethical to keep someone who is not performing because it is hard to find staff • Supervisors are in a difficult position – in the commercial world working as a doctor, accountant etc there would be zero tolerance for non-performance – but in CYC we tend to nurture and protect people. Supervisors must have the skills to balance care for staff with accountability. | <p>CONFRONTATION SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment on this |

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| <p>HUMAN RESOURCES SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to implement performance management systems and continual reviews • Supervisor must know how to draw up a job description / job profile and have measurable outcomes for workers e.g. Care routines • Ability to empower staff members • Must be able to identify when personal issues are affecting work – this is a highly tuned skill – to empathise and acknowledge – example of a CYCW who lost a baby had to be referred to therapy • Supervisees need a growth plan – an Independent Development Plan – for them as well as the child and family – supervisor must be able to draw this up based on performance appraisals | <p>HUMAN RESOURCES SKILLS</p> | <p>HUMAN RESOURCES SKILLS</p> |
| <p>CULTURE</p> | <p>CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must have the knowledge of different cultural practices, beliefs and values and the skill to implement these | <p>CULTURE</p> |
| <p>THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING</p> | <p>THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the different theories which inform child and youth care, the skill to understand and use different theories and the skills to help staff apply them. • They must have the skill to translate theories of development into practice according to the needs of individual children. • Know how to apply the developmental approach to staff and children | <p>THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING</p> |

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| <p>TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP</p> | <p>TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors must be able to function as team players, build team spirit and keep a sense of togetherness in the team, otherwise this filters down to children Need knowledge and skills to pick up team dynamics Supervisors need to have leadership skills as sometimes they will be members of the team and sometimes the leader | <p>TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP</p> |
| <p>GENERAL</p> | <p>GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill to translate knowledge and skills from one's own supervision Knowledge and skills to work with workers in their work/life space Supervisors must be able to think creatively and be able to help staff to think creatively Supervisors must have the skills to teach workers how to draw up programmes and implement these | <p>GENERAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to comment on worker's reflection book Supervisor must have the skill to work in a multidisciplinary team Supervisors must participate in programme planning and help workers to put programmes together, do the research necessary and support workers in implementing the programme Help workers to evaluate programmes Need behaviour management skills so they can help workers to manage children |
| <p>SUPERVISION</p> | <p>SUPERVISION</p> | <p>SUPERVISION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have skills to observe workers performance accurately and not exaggerate or underplay what the worker has done Must take time to think They must know the stresses of being with the children for 24 hrs |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They must be able to be “on the ground” with the worker in the life space of the children & the community - must not be a hierarchy between worker and supervisor • Supervisors must realise that the workload is sometimes great – “we are specialists but end up being general caregivers.” • Skill to evaluate the workload of workers • Must treat workers as equals • Would like supervisors to be child and youth care workers/professionals • They must not expect perfection • Supervisors must practice the principles of CYC as they expect workers to do e.g. empowerment or participation – if workers should do this with the children, they should do it with workers • Supervisors must be sensitive to clients needs and treat them all the same irrespective of their situation e.g. don't judge clients • Share practical skills • Skills to help staff feel safe and protected • Supervisors must stand up for workers in the team |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors must be able to draw a line between their personal and professional lives • Give immediate feedback after on-line supervision • Do WITH not TO • Be able to do hands on work • Supervisors must be accountable as they hold workers accountable • Must have the skills of how to supervise • Don't undermine by changing workers decisions • Empower workers to work towards meeting clients needs • If supervisor knows the needs of clients, share this with workers • Supervisors must pass on information about children from all the meetings they have when the CYCW may not be there • Supervisors must be good role models and not tell workers not to do something like touching kids and then they do it • Supervisors must practice what they preach |
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