

**SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISORS
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE**

by

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SUMMARY

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Due to the emotional draining and potentially stressful nature of social work practice, the availability of social work supervision becomes desirable and necessary. Supervision has to be implemented continuously in order to render an effective and sufficient service to clients, families and communities. Social work supervisors have very important and necessary roles to play in the professional development of social workers and the effective functioning of the social services organisations in which they are employed. Additional to the responsibility pertaining to the social workers, supervisors are middle managers and thus have specific management responsibilities as well. The result is that the supervisor has to implement both supervision and management functions. Supervisors function under stress that is enforced by expectations from social workers and senior management.

Social workers do have formal channels of feedback and support in the supervisors that provide opportunities for commendation. Supervisors have no such formally assigned sources of feedback or support. There is little recognition for their accomplishments and little or no support when they encounter problems. The problem is that the lack or absence of support and support systems for social work supervisors has a negative influence on their supervisory and managerial services to social workers.

The supervisory and managerial expectations were identified as prove of the demands placed on supervisors as well as the work-related stress that they are subjected to. A few management strategies have been identified as possible support systems for supervisors in the management of supervisees. Support systems that were identified and discussed are employee benefits, employee incentives, job description, knowledge of the budget and financial controls, employee

assistance program, supervisors' peer support group, career planning, organisational culture, organisational climate and the immediate superior.

The empirical research was done through the quantitative research technique and a mailed questionnaire as data gathering method. The social work supervisors of the Department of Welfare were the research population and the participating provinces were Mpumalanga, Free State and Eastern Cape. The data received through the questionnaires supported the indication that supervisors do not receive support in the execution of their responsibilities. It was confirmed that the identified support systems, if utilised and applied effectively, could provide supervisors with support.

The empirical research and the literature study have confirmed the following research statements:

1. Insufficient support systems are available to supervisors in the social work profession.
2. The available support systems for social work supervisors are inadequately administered and utilised.
3. Due to the inadequate utilisation of support systems, supervisors experience lack of support resulting in neglected supervisory and managerial practice.

Relevant data from the questionnaires and the literature study formed the basis for the development of guidelines for application of the support systems. It is recommended that these guidelines be implemented for the support systems to be effectively utilised and applied.

KEYWORDS:

Supervision

Management

Support

Strategies

Guidelines

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OPSOMMING

TITEL: ONDERSTEUNINGSTELSELS VIR MAATSKAPLIKWERK SUPERVISORS
IN DIE DEPARTEMENT VAN WELSYN

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As gevolg van die emosioneel uitputtende en potensieel spanningsvolle aard van die maatskaplikewerk-praktyk, is die beskikbaarheid van maatskaplikewerk-supervisie wenslik en noodsaaklik. Supervisie moet voortdurend toegepas word ten einde 'n voldoende en effektiewe diens aan kliënte, gesinne en gemeenskappe te lewer. Maatskaplikewerk-supervisors speel baie belangrike en noodsaaklike rolle in die professionele ontwikkeling van maatskaplike werkers en die effektiewe dienslewering van die maatskaplikewerk-organisasie waar hulle werksaam is. Addisioneel tot die verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van die maatskaplike werkers, is supervisors middelvlak bestuurders en het hulle dus ook spesifieke bestuursverantwoordelikhede. Die gevolg is dat die supervisors die funksies van supervisie en bestuur moet implementeer. Supervisors werk dus onder druk as gevolg van die verwagtings wat aan hulle gestel word deur maatskaplike werkers en senior bestuurders.

Maatskaplike werkers beskik oor formele kanale van terugvoer en ondersteuning deur die supervisors wat geleenthede daarstel vir erkenning. Supervisors beskik nie oor hierdie formeel toegewysde bronne van terugvoer en ondersteuning nie. Daar is min erkenning vir hul werkverrigting en min of geen ondersteuning wanneer hulle probleme ondervind. Die probleem is dat die gebrek aan of ontbreking van ondersteuning en ondersteuningstelsels vir maatskaplikewerk-supervisors 'n negatiewe invloed het op die supervisie- en bestuursdienste wat aan maatskaplike werkers gelever word.

Die verwagtings ten opsigte van supervisie en bestuur is geïdentifiseer as bewys van die vereistes wat aan supervisors gestel word asook die werkverwante spanning waaraan hulle blootgestel is. 'n Paar bestuurstrategieë is geïdentifiseer as moontlike ondersteuningstelsels vir supervisors in die bestuur van maatskaplike werkers. Ondersteuningstelsels wat geïdentifiseer en bespreek is, is werknemervoordele, pligtestaat, kennis van die begroting en finansiële

beheersisteme, werknemerhulpprogram, ondersteuningsgroep vir supervisors, beroepsbeplanning, organisasiekultuur, organisasieklimaat en onmiddellike toesighouer.

Die empiriese navorsing is uitgevoer met behulp van die kwantitatiewe navorsingstegniek en 'n posvraelys as data insamelingsmetode. Die maatskaplikewerk-supervisors van die Departement van Welsyn was die navorsingspopulasie en die deelnemende provinsies was Mpumalanga, Vrystaat en Oos-Kaap. Die data verkry deur die vraelyste ondersteun die aanduiding dat supervisors nie ondersteun word in die uitvoering van hul verantwoordelikhede nie. Dit was bevestig dat die geïdentifiseerde ondersteuningstelsels, indien effektief benut en uitgevoer, supervisors kan ondersteun.

Die empiriese navorsing en die literatuurstudie het die volgende navorsingstellings bevestig:

1. Onvoldoende ondersteuningstelsels is beskikbaar vir supervisors in die maatskaplikewerk-professie.
2. Die beskikbare ondersteuningstelsels vir maatskaplikewerk-supervisors word ontoereikend geadministreer en benut.
3. As gevolg van die ontoereikende benutting van die ondersteuningstelsels, ervaar supervisors 'n gebrek aan ondersteuning wat lei tot verwaarloosde supervisie- en bestuurspraktyk.

Relevante data verkry van die vraelyste en die literatuurstudie was die basis vir die ontwikkeling van die riglyne vir die toepassing van die ondersteuningstelsels. Dit word aanbeveel dat hierdie riglyne ge-implementeer word vir die effektiewe benutting en toepassing van die ondersteuningstelsels.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Supervisie

Bestuur

Ondersteuning

Strategieë

Riglyne

Voordele

Kultuur

Klimaat

Pligtetaat

Opleiding

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