

**CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION**

by

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Dedicated to the memory of my dearest late younger brother: Mabuti Michael Simelane who I never had an opportunity to say goodbye, who contributed to what I am today.

To my living mother, friend and sister, thank you for being an encouraging good parent to me.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION**

**by**

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND CRIMINOLOGY**

**DEGREE: MSD SOCIAL WORK MANAGEMENT**

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Contracting is a fundamental aspect of social work supervision. Supervision without sufficient or proper contracting can become ineffective. Therefore, if contracting is not properly applied in practice, it can undermine the effective implementation of social work supervision.

In view of the above, the goal of this study was to explore the nature and role of contracting in social work supervision in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF). The research question stemming from the goal of the study was: What is the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF?

A qualitative, explorative study was conducted, with the following objectives:

- ❑ To determine the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision by conducting a literature study on the topic.
- ❑ To conduct an empirical study to explore the nature and role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

- To propose recommendations and guidelines regarding the implementation of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

All the supervisors and social workers in the Tshwane Metropolitan Region (Pretoria) of the SANDF formed the sample for the study. After the conclusion of a literature study and pilot study, data collection was based on semi-structured interviews with supervisors and focus group interviews with supervisees.

The main conclusions drawn from the research findings were that contracting in social work supervision plays an important role in the SANDF and [that supervision] is viewed as a building block towards both personal and professional development. Although supervisors seem to have knowledge and understanding of the nature and role of contracting in social work supervision, supervisees seem to be unsure about certain aspects involved in such contracting.

The study indicated a need for the generation of more in-depth literature on contracting in social work supervision and an enrichment of the theoretical base thereof. The study was concluded by relevant recommendations to the SANDF.

**Key words:**

Social work supervision

Supervisor

Supervisee

Contracting

Contract

## **OPSOMMING**

### **KONTRAKTERING IN MAATSKAPLIKEWERKSUPERVISIE**

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Kontraktering speel 'n sleutelrol in maatskaplikewerksupervisie. Die afwesigheid van voldoende en doeltreffende kontraktering kan tot oneffektiewe supervisie aanleiding gee. Die regmatige implementering van maatskaplikewerksupervisie kan gevolglik ondermyn word indien kontraktering nie voldoende aandag in die praktyk ontvang nie.

Die doel van hierdie studie was derhalwe om die aard en rol van kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie in die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Weermag (SANW) te ondersoek. Die navorsingsvraag wat uit hierdie doel voortgespruit het, was: Wat is die aard en die rol van kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie in die SANW?

'n Kwalitatiewe en verkennende studie is onderneem om die volgende doelwitte te bereik:

- Om die aard en rol van kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie deur middel van 'n literatuurstudie te bepaal.

- Om die aard en rol van kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie, soos in die SANW toegepas, empiries te ondersoek.
- Om riglyne te verskaf en aanbevelings te maak insake kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie binne die SANW.

Die steekproef vir die studie het uit al die supervisors en maatskaplike werkers in die Tshwane Metropolitaanse Gebied (Pretoria) van die SANW bestaan. Na afhandeling van 'n literatuurstudie en 'n loodsondersoek, is data-insameling deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude met supervisors en fokusgroeponderhoude met maatskaplike werkers gedoen.

Op grond van die navorsingsbevindinge is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie 'n belangrike rol in die SANW speel en [dat supervisie] beskou word as 'n belangrike geleentheid vir persoonlike en professionele ontwikkeling. Supervisors blyk kennis en begrip te hê vir die aard en rol van kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie, maar maatskaplike werkers blyk onseker te wees oor sekere aspekte van sodanige kontraktering.

Die studie het op 'n behoefte aan die ontwikkeling van meer diepgaande literatuur oor kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie en 'n verbreding van die teoretiese grondslag van die onderwerp gedui.

Die studie is afgesluit deur aanbevelings oor kontraktering in maatskaplikewerksupervisie aan die SANW voor te hou.

**Sleutelbegrippe:**

Maatskaplikewerksupervisie

Kontraktering

Supervisor

Maatskaplike Werker

Kontrak

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## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Page and Wosket (1994:34-35) contracting in social work supervision performs a vital function in underpinning the entire supervision process and relationship. The authors elaborate by stating that “a contract is an agreement entered into by both parties which contains, supports, gives structure and provides direction and purpose to the work undertaken.” Page and Wosket (1994:35) substantiate their argument by stating that “a clear and specific contract sets the agenda for the task and process, reduces anxiety by helping to de-mystify the process and lays down the ground rules.” The two authors’ description of contracting in social work supervision clearly indicate that contracting in social work supervision is a deal between the supervisor and supervisee that seals what is agreed upon in practice and lays down the foundation for the completion of tasks.

From practical experience contracting has become a topic of debate in social work supervision but has, until recently, not been fully included in social work practice. Although supervision is in place in agencies, it has not yet reached the stage where contracting is deemed the point of departure by supervisors and neither does it form part of organizations’ guidelines or policies. Contracting in social work supervision is therefore going to be discussed throughout the study.

To broaden the discussion further, the purpose of the study would be to conduct an empirical study in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF), by establishing to what extent contracting in social work supervision is applied in practice. SANDF is known as the organization that has an effective training programme in place and trains other organizations on social

work supervision and contracting. The researcher will therefore use the SANDF as her respondent group.

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the motivation for the study, the problem formulation and the aim and objectives of the study. A brief overview of the type of research, the research design, procedure and strategy, the pilot study, a description of the research population, ethical issues as well as the definition of key concepts will be provided. The chapter will end with an overview of the contents and limitations of the study.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE STUDY**

Potgieter (1998:154) defines a contract as “an explicit stated agreement between a helper and someone who specifies goals for change, identifies tasks and roles for the participants in the process and lays down criteria that will be helpful during the measurement of progress towards the desired ends.” From this definition it can be deduced that contracting in social work supervision is crucial, as it enables both the supervisor and the supervisee to be more professionally effective. Through this negotiated agreement they find a binding way in which to utilize resources in an effective and efficient way, whilst meeting the daily demands of the organization. The need for this study was motivated by the following:

- At a Consultative Forum of social workers organized by the South African Council for Social Service Professions in 2002, the Chief Director of Social Services and Population Development of Gauteng, Janet du Preez, took a strong and crucial stance on the importance of supervision. She further emphasized that the role of supervisors in the agency is to guide the inexperienced social workers through effective and productive supervision. Du Preez (2002) pleaded with supervisors to “guide, coach and give mentorship to supervisees with the aim of reducing unethical cases.” The researcher was motivated by this call for action and decided to take on the challenge.

- Another motivation for the study was that the researcher has developed personal interest in the subject of contracting in social work supervision and has endeavored to investigate the way in which contracting is utilized in the SANDF.
- Although the researcher has been a practicing social worker for the past thirteen years, she has neither received any supervision during this period nor has she been contracted for supervision.

As an experienced social worker, supervisor and manager, the researcher could now argue that issues emanating from a lack of proper supervision could be successfully addressed through contracting in social work supervision. This research undertaking would also assist the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) in developing a guideline on contracting in social work supervision.

### **1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION**

Yegidis and Weinbach (2002:47) define a research problem as “an intellectual stimulus calling for an answer in the form of a scientific inquiry.” These authors further describe research problems as situations that are characterized by doubt and ignorance and that represent felt difficulties. Strydom and Delport (2005:320) maintain that the problem formulation is thus the researcher’s broad conceptualization of the problem that should be refined in due course.

Both the supervisor and the supervisee should be involved in the designing of an explicit contract for social work supervision. Having a more explicit contract can encourage cooperation with the task environment in such a way that interaction with it becomes more predictable and therefore less potentially threatening (Weinbach, 1994:26). In the process of designing a contract for social work supervision, the supervisor and supervisee should reach consensus on the outputs and the level of efficiency when performing tasks.

The positive impact of contracting in social work supervision is associated with the creation of opportunities for growth and education, and the provision of structure for supervision sessions. Such sessions are ideally scheduled at regular intervals and at times convenient to both the supervisor and the supervisee. In cases where the supervisee is expected to submit a report in advance to the supervisor, it implies that both parties have to prepare for the session and stick to an agenda. Comprehension of the supervisee's knowledge, practice skills and attitude, and a clear understanding of his/her strengths and weaknesses, personality enrichment, administrative program, motivation, modeling and supportive functions of supervision is required to facilitate the identification of areas that need attention. Knowing this, the supervisor will be able to influence the supervisee's learning experience through contracting. Supervisors should devote more time teaching practice skills and providing feedback on performance (Edwards, 1995:2373).

Contracting can enable both the supervisor and the supervisee to understand what supervision is all about. Weinbach (1994:152) alludes that a manager at any level in the organization needs to understand what supervision is and to be aware of some of the options available for providing it. Failure to do so will result in the supervisor taking responsibility for a supervisee who does not grow professionally.

Establishing the extent of usage of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF would enable the researcher to understand to what extent contracting is applied in practice. Where there is an absence of proper and efficient contracting in social work supervision, the following problems may be experienced:

In practice the supervisees may not know what is expected of them; they are left in the dark and make professional mistakes that could be referred to the Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). It may happen that both the supervisor and the supervisee do not dedicate enough time to discuss the exact tasks that must be performed and how those tasks should be performed. Although the supervisee may have a good professional working



relationship with the supervisor, there is a missing link when it comes to tasks which must be performed and how those tasks should be performed for service delivery. The missing link according to the researcher's own point of view is contracting in social work supervision. Contracting in social work supervision may effectively indicate the best manner in which tasks should be performed, learning should take place and the best level of output of a professional growth chart of a specific social worker. Through a structured, carefully planned learning process, the social worker's milestone of professional growth can be positively affected by the process of contracting.

Without a social work supervision contract, it may happen that supervisees do not grow professionally. Lack of professional growth may be due to the fact that learning needs, preferences and styles are neither identified nor prioritized. Learning needs, styles, and preferences according to the researcher, are the umbilical cord which dictates the road to professional growth or development of a supervisee. From the researcher's professional experience she observed that supervision is and can be carried out in a vacuum if both learning needs and learning styles are not identified and accommodated. People have different preferences on how to learn. Van Dyk, Nel, Van Loedolff and Haasbroek (1997:179) define learning preferences as a gap between the way things are and the way they ought to be. It can also be seen as the difference between what is expected and what actually exists. Learning needs, styles, and preferences are interrelated and intertwined and must be clearly identified in a supervision contract.

The practical situation is that it seems from the researcher's professional experience that there is lack of contracting in social work supervision because of the following reasons:

- Supervisors lack enough time for supervision.
- Supervisors are overloaded with administrative work.
- Supervisors lack the formal training and competency to carry out the task or they simply have other priorities.

Therefore, the researcher wants to investigate empirically what the reality is of contracting in the SANDF in order to enhance effective social work service delivery.

#### **1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The Webster's third International Dictionary (1961) in Fouche and De Vos (2005:104) defines goal as "the end toward which effort or ambition is directed ... while 'objective' denotes the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conception of such an end toward which effort or ambition is directed."

The goal of this study was:

To explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF).

In order to obtain the above-mentioned goal, the following objectives were formulated:

- ❑ To determine the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision by conducting a literary study.
- ❑ To conduct an empirical study to explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.
- ❑ To give guidelines and recommendations regarding contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Johnson (2002:27-28) asserts that "the first step in the research planning process is figuring out what you want to know which means developing a good research question." She further notes that "a question should be clear, focused, and relevant."

As this is an exploratory study, the following research question would give direction to the research:

**What is the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF?**

## **1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH**

There are two types of research approaches, namely the qualitative and quantitative research approach. The nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research approach (De Vos, 1998:15). For the purpose of this study the qualitative approach was used in order to collect information about contracting in social work supervision.

Cooper and Lesser (2002:212) define qualitative research as “a ‘naturalistic inquiry’ into human interaction since the researcher is also a participant who relies on conversations between herself and her respondents to understand the problem that is being studied”, whereas Patton (2002:39) on the other hand, sees qualitative research as naturalistic inquiry to the extent that the research takes place in real world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon. Qualitative research refers to research about persons, lives, stories and behavior, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:17). A qualitative approach helps to gather data focusing on the real life experiences of people.

Through qualitative research a researcher gains first hand and holistic understanding of the phenomena and gathered data presented in the form of words and quotations from documents and transcripts. Qualitative research is used to determine beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of persons (Patton, 2000:39). The researcher found this approach relevant to the study because respondents gave their perceptions, experiences and feelings about

contracting in social work supervision during face-to-face interviews as well as focus groups.

## **1.7 TYPE OF RESEARCH**

The type of research utilized in this study was applied research. According to Clover (1990:18) applied research is problem-orientated in the sense that the research is carried out to solve a specific problem in practice, while De Vos (1998:8) sees an applied study as a study to develop solutions for problems and applications in practice. Applied research was appropriate for this study because the focus was on a problem in practice namely a lack of knowledge regarding the nature and role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:63) describe research design as “planning on any scientific research from the first to the last step.” Thyer (in De Vos, 1998:123) views a research design as a blueprint or detailed plan for conducting a research study. Fouche and De Vos (2005:137) define a research design as “a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting the research.” Mouton (2000:15) shares the same view and maintains that research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends on conducting the research. These four definitions have something in common, i.e. a research design involves planning as well as a provision of guidance to the researcher when collecting the relevant facts to address the research question.

Exploratory design was used in this study as it was based on an open research question. Mouton and Marais (1994:43) argue that an exploratory study is not guided by a hypothesis, but rather tends to give rise to the development of the research question. Rubin and Babbie (2007:28) assert “much of social work research is conducted to explore a topic to provide a beginning familiarity with it.” This is used to explore a relatively unknown

research area (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2002:106). According to De Vos (1998:124) the aim of exploratory design is to:

- Gain insight into the phenomenon;
- Determine priorities for future research; and
- To develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon

Due to the lack of clear guidelines on contracting in social work supervision in the literature as well as the practice of supervision, the phenomenon needed to be explored more extensively. Using an exploratory design enabled the researcher to gain information about the feelings, perceptions and experiences of social work supervisors and supervisees about the topic and what could be done to address the gaps that may exist in the SANDF.

## **1.9 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND STRATEGY**

The following data collection and data analysis procedures and strategies were applied:

### **1.9.1 Data Collection Methods**

Data collection, according to Marlow (1993:65), refers to the way in which the information regarding the phenomenon is collected. On the other hand Creswell (1998) sees data collection as a “series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions.” The unit of analysis from which the data was collected was supervisees and supervisors from the SANDF based at Tshwane Metropolitan Region (Pretoria). According to De Vos (2005:104), the unit of analysis is the person or object from whom the social researcher collects data.

The researcher used two different methods of data gathering, namely focus group interviewing to collect data from supervisees and semi-structured interviewing to collect data from supervisors. Both focus groups and one-on-one semi-structured interviewing processes are discussed broadly below:

□ **Data gathering with focus groups**

In this study two focus group discussions were held. Each group comprised of four respondents (supervisees) who work for the Department of Defense Force based in the Gauteng Province in the Tshwane Metropolitan Region. In total 8 respondents (supervisees) were thus involved in focus group interviewing. Greeff (2002: 306) defines a focus group interview as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions of a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.”

The advantage of using focus groups interviews is that participants were allowed to simultaneously share their thoughts with one another (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1997:113). Yegidis and Weinbach (2002:130) however warn that data collected in focus groups must be used cautiously as there is the possibility of group influences on individuals. In other words, the researcher should guard against possible influences, which would be difficult to ascertain.

Focus groups continued until a saturation point was reached with each group. Saturation, according to Cooper and Lesser (2002:213), refers to “the cooking process drawing to an end.” Saturation occurs when additional analysis no longer contributes anything to a category.

□ **Data gathering through semi-structured interviews**

The researcher used one-on-one interviews with a semi-structured interview schedule to collect data from supervisors. According to Greeff (2005:292) semi-structured interviews are defined as those “organized around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth.” An interview schedule, as defined by Greeff (2002:302), refers to a questionnaire written to guide interviews. This semi-structured interview schedule was used to gather information from supervisors. The advantage of using semi-structured interviewing is that the researcher was able to follow up on particular interesting avenues as they emerged in the interview, which gave a fuller picture about contracting in social work supervision.

## **1.9.2 Data analysis**

According to De Vos (2005:333) data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. On the other hand Marlow (1993:65) defines data analysis as a process of making sense out of the information gathered. To analyze the qualitative data in this study the researcher utilized text analysis. All the interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed by carefully going through all the transcripts, following a code system. Categories and sub-categories were then identified, interpreted and verified with literature.

## **1.10 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study is defined by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) as “a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate.” According to Hague (1993:95), piloting is “where a small number of interviews are conducted in the field to see if there are any of the questions which do not work.” The researcher sees pilot study as a preparatory study before the actual research can take place.

The following elements/components of a pilot study were included:

### **1.10.1 Feasibility of the study**

Part of the pilot study was to investigate the feasibility of the study. The study was feasible based on the following procedures: The South African National Defense Force was informed verbally and in writing about the study. All the protocol, as according to their rankings, was followed. The higher authority at SANDF gave written permission to conduct the study. Interviews with supervisors and supervisees were conducted at Tshwane Metropolitan Region (Pretoria). Research subjects were informed about the purpose and the intention of the study and they gave consent to participate. No transport costs were incurred. Respondents decided on suitable venues themselves.

There was adequate time for the study, although some delays beyond the researcher's control were experienced.

### **1.10.2 Pilot testing of semi-structured interview schedule and focus group questions**

Rothman (in De Vos, 2002:218) states that “pilot testing provides the first elements of substantiation and reality contact for the application concept.” Yegidis and Weinbach (2002:206) broaden the concept by adding “the process of pilot testing a measurement instrument with a few individuals who are similar to the research participants can help to make measurement more reliable.”

#### **1.10.2.1 Semi-structured Interview Schedule**

Two SANDF supervisors, one from Mpumalanga and one from Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, were used to pilot test the semi-structured interview schedule. These two supervisors were not part of the main study. They responded well and accurately to the themes posed to them. Piloting proved that the interview schedule was reliable and accurate as supervisors did not recommend any changes and adaptations to the interview schedule.

#### **1.10.2.2 Focus Group Questions**

Greeff (2002:316) alludes that the questions used in focus group interviews are hard to separate from the environment of the focus group. The researcher therefore pilot tested the focus group questions by conducting a focus group discussion with four supervisees who did not form part of the study. Participants were satisfied about the topic and did not make any adjustment to the questions.



## 1.11 RESEARCH POPULATION

### □ Population and Sampling

It is important for the researcher to explain the distinction between a universe, a population and a sample. Strydom and Venter (2002:198) refer to a universe as “all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested.” Population, on the other hand, is a term that sets boundaries on the study units. A population comprises the totality of persons, events, organizational units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned (Strydom, 1998:190). Rubin and Babbie (2007:153) define population as “that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected.” Strydom and Venter (2002:199) define a sample as “the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study.” Brynard and Hanekom (1997:43) view a sample as “the small group or portion selected from the population” and further say that “for the purpose of sampling, population does not refer to the population of the country but to objects or cases which the researcher wishes to research in order to establish new knowledge.”

The target population for this study was supervisors and supervisees working for the SANDF and based in Gauteng Province in the Tshwane Metropolitan Region. No sample was selected because the whole population in the Tshwane Metropolitan Region formed part of the study.

As per research procedure, the researcher visited respondents (supervisors) at their respective social work units as per appointment. The researcher planned to collect data from all the supervisors, namely two social work supervisors who work for the SANDF stationed at Tshwane Metropolitan Region (Pretoria) and another one stationed in Heidelberg (Gauteng). The process did not go according to the researcher’s plan of getting data from three supervisors as the one supervisor stationed in Pretoria was not available. The result was two responses from two supervisors interpreted instead of three. The researcher also planned to collect data from three

different groups of social workers. One group (stationed in Pretoria) was also not available, which resulted to two sets of data being interpreted instead of three. The one focus group, stationed in Heidelberg, comprised of 4 respondents and the other focus group, stationed at Pretoria, comprised of 4 respondents. In total 8 social workers were involved in the study.

## **1.12 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Strydom (2002:63) emphasizes that, ethical guidelines exist that serve as standards and a basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate his/her own conduct. It is therefore important for the researcher to conduct himself/herself ethically when using research subjects. According to Rubin and Babbie (2007:36), “ethics is typically associated with morality, and deal with matters of right and wrong.” The following ethical issues were important in the context of this study:

### **1.12.1 Informed Consent**

Grinnel and Williams (1995:8) state that obtaining an informed consent is the first and most important precaution to take when doing a research study. For this research study, respondents were informed about the goal and objectives of the study as well as all the research procedures so that they could make informed decisions and give informed consent for participation. This was achieved through communicating with respondents. All gave written consent to participate in the study.

### **1.12.2 Violation of Anonymity/Confidentiality**

Confidentiality refers to handling information in a confidential manner. Babbie (2001:472) notes that confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few members of his staff should be aware of the identity of participants and that they should be committed to the principle of confidentiality. He states that anonymity refers to not revealing the identity of

the subjects afterwards. In this study the researcher has handled information in a confidential manner and did not disclose the identity of respondents.

### **1.12.3 Deception of the subjects**

According to Neuman (1993:229), deception occurs when the researcher intentionally misleads subjects by way of written or verbal instructions, the actions of other people or certain aspects of the setting. In this case subjects were not misled at all. The purpose of the study was clarified from the onset and there were no hidden agendas by the researcher.

### **1.12.4 Release or publication of the study**

According to Strydom (2002:71) a researcher should compile the report as accurately and objectively as possible so that it will serve as a guide to future researchers who will conduct research on the topic under discussion. The researcher has compiled the report as accurately and objectively as possible. Findings of this study will be made available to the SANDF and the University of Pretoria.

### **1.12.5 Debriefing of the respondents**

Debriefing sessions give the subjects opportunity after the study to work through the experience and its aftermath (Strydom, 2002:73). Contracting in social work supervision was an exciting topic to deal with and the respondents experienced no harm. The sessions were about professional, challenging experiences which needed to be explored, with no emotional or physical harm to respondents and therefore there was no need for debriefing sessions.

## **1.13. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.13.1 Supervision**

Bernard and Goodyear (in Cooper & Lesser, 2002:34) defines supervision as an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person, monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the client and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the profession. On the other hand, Cooper and Lesser (2002:34) define supervision as “a contractual learning process that begins with an agreement between the supervisor and the supervisee (student) on what is to be learned, and how the learning will take place.”

Rue and Byars (1990:63) define supervision as “the first level of management in the organization which is concerned with encouraging the members of work unit to contribute positively toward accomplishing the organization’s goals and objectives.” On the other hand, Hawkins and Shohet (1992:42) summarize the definition of supervision as “consisting of developing skills and understanding the abilities of the supervisees.”

Supervision is therefore a platform for the supervisor to demonstrate his/her professional ability to guide the supervisee through a learning experience, by creating a fairly warm, comfortable, conducive and non-threatening environment to enhance the supervisee’s professional functioning.

### **1.13.2 Social Work Supervision**

Social work supervision is a relationship based activity which enables practitioners to reflect upon the connection between tasks and processes within their work (Davies, 2000:340). According to Kieran (1999) professional social work supervision is “a process which facilitates critical reflection upon the perceptions, actions, processes, persons, and the context of social work

practice. This process takes place within a professional relationship between a social work supervisor and social worker(s) (supervisee) that models best social work practice. The purpose of professional social work supervision is best practice with clients.”

According to the researcher’s view, social work supervision refers to carefully planned and agreed upon monitoring, reflection and feedback sessions by an experienced social work supervisor with long service in the field of social work supervision; discussing tasks and responsibilities centred around performance with the supervisee in order to achieve a purposeful and goal-directed service delivery.

### **1.13.3 Supervisor**

A supervisor is a social worker to whom authority has been delegated to coordinate, promote and evaluate the professional service of rendering of social workers through the process of supervision (New Dictionary of Social Work, 1995:64). Kadushin (1992:23) notes that a supervisor is “an overseer, one who watches over the work of another with responsibility for its quality.”

The supervisor, according to the researcher, is a program manager who possesses the following skills:

- Technical skills, which implies having exact knowledge of the work to be carried out.
- Human skills, that is, interpersonal skills to deal with different people at an equal level.
- Conceptual skills which enable him/her to see things in a broader picture in order to answer prevailing challenges.

The supervisor’s role is to implement and formulate policies and procedures, and to coordinate administrative functions. The supervisor’s role is further to become an enabler, motivator, progress monitor, facilitator and reservoir of

knowledge and to capacitate the supervisee in a carefully planned process of supervision.

#### **1.13.4 Supervisee**

According to Harrar, Van der Creek and Knapp (1990:3), “a supervisee is a person who is not yet ready to practice independently.” It is for this reason that supervisors are held responsible for what happens with clients being seen by the supervisee.

Bernard and Goodyear (in Cooper & Lesser, 2002:34) do not use the word supervisee when they explain who receives supervision. Instead, they use the word “more junior member”, referring to social workers in a more junior position who do not have enough experience to practice independently.

From the researcher’s point of view the term ‘supervisee’ refers to a social worker who is the recipient of educational, administrative, expressive-supportive, motivational, modeling and personality enrichment functions of supervision from the senior social worker who has experience in social work. Such a social worker is expected to receive planned supervision from the more senior social worker, discussing and reviewing agency tasks and other tasks the profession entails.

#### **1.13.5 Contract/ing**

A contract is an agreement entered into by both parties which contains, supports, gives structure and provides direction and purpose to the work undertaken (Page & Wosket, 1994:34-34). Parsloe, Robinson, Thomas and Tierney (in Ford & Jones, 1987:32) define ‘contract’ as a specific and explicit way of identifying the expectations between the student and the supervisor which will govern the learning opportunities in the placement. The bottom line here is that contract/contracting involves an agreement between two individuals. In the context of this study it refers to an agreement between the supervisor and the supervisee, or a manager and sub-ordinate. Weinbach

(1998:27) sees contracting as a special kind of cooperation with the task environment designed primarily to make interaction with the task environment more predictable and, therefore, potentially less threatening.

#### **1.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- Literature on contracting in social work supervision is scarce, especially recent literature.
- Not all supervisors and supervisees targeted for the study were available to take part in the study which was a frustration to the researcher.
- Based on the small number of respondents, no generalisations regarding contracting in social work supervision could be made.

#### **1.15 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

##### **CHAPTER 1**

Chapter 1 discusses the motivation for choice of the subject, problem formulation, goal and objectives of the study, research question, research approach used, type of research, research design used, research procedures and strategies used, pilot study, population of the study, ethical issues and definition of concepts.

##### **CHAPTER 2**

Chapter 2 will give a theoretical overview regarding contracting in social work supervision.

##### **CHAPTER 3**

Empirical data and the main findings will be discussed in chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 will give an overview regarding conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings.



## CHAPTER 2

### CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Contracting in social work supervision is very fundamental for the success of supervision per se as it serves as a point of departure and a guideline for the educational part of supervision. However contracting in social work supervision cannot be carried out without a well-discussed contract. Therefore contracting in social work supervision serves as a mandate of what should be viewed as a theme for promoting education and learning in social work supervision. Munson (2002:28) has the same view and correctly points out that the supervisor plays a key role in promoting education and training for supervisees. The whole notion of contracting in this regard will pave a way to the educational function of supervision.

The contract in social work supervision should be seen as a crucial component in making sure that the learning process on the part of the supervisee does take place through different phases as it was already indicated that learning cannot be carried out in a vacuum. Social work supervision as a mechanism is the process whereby learning, professional growth and development take place in a purposeful manner through contracting. It is geared to help the social worker better understand social work philosophy and agency policy, become more self aware, know the agency's and community's resources, establish activity priorities and refine knowledge and skills (Barker, 2003:424).

Contracting in social work supervision helps to ensure that the supervisee grows in every phase of his/her professional development and therefore his/her needs differ in every phase. Contracting will enable the supervisor as a tutor to evaluate the supervisee's level of learning. Though there is consensus in literature that supervision is a process, it differs according to the phases of this process, but all are geared towards promoting learning.

Kadushin (1992:22) and Preller (1991:14) identify the phases of supervision as follows:

- Initial phase
- Intervention phase
- Utilization phase
- Termination phase

Contracting as an important element of supervision aims at achieving these learning phases (Munson 2002:176).

In order to understand contracting in social work supervision this chapter will focus on the following: conceptualization of the concept contract and contracting in social work supervision; rationale for contracting in social work supervision; key elements in compiling a supervision contract; format of supervision contract and advantages of contracting in social work supervision. Having mentioned the above, the conceptualization of the concepts contract and contracting in social work supervision, needs first attention.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT CONTRACT AND CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION**

For the purpose of this study it is important to understand the meaning of the concepts contract and contracting in the context of social work supervision.

### **2.2.1 Contract in social work supervision**

In general terms a contract is “an agreement between two or more persons which gives rise to personal rights and corresponding obligations” (Dictionary of Legal Words and Phrases, 2003:279). In other words, it is an agreement which is legally binding and enforceable by the parties. Where parties have entered into an agreement intending to bind themselves by their words, the court will enforce the agreement if the contract contains sufficient information

to enable the object to be accurately ascertained” (Dictionary of legal Words and Phrases, 2003:279). It is thus clear that the concept “contract” originates from a legal frame of reference and ultimately extends to other disciplines like social work.

In the context of social work supervision a contract does not imply a legal agreement, rather a professional agreement between a supervisor and a supervisee. Therefore Page and Wosket (1994:34-35) define a social work supervision contract as an agreement entered into by both persons (in this case the supervisor and the supervisee) which contains, supports, gives structure and provides direction and purpose to the work undertaken.

### **2.2.2 Contracting in social work supervision**

In the context of social work supervision the term “contracting” refers to an ongoing relationship, supported by a contractual agreement (Perker & Harding, 2003:7). According to Austin and Hopkins (2004:28) contracting can be defined as “delineating the terms for working on a mutually agreed-on problem or goal.” Parsloe, Robinson, Thomas and Thiery (in Ford & Jones, 1987:32) define contracting as a specific and explicit way of identifying the expectations between the student (in this case supervisee and student social worker) and the supervisor which will govern learning opportunities in the placement agency.

Weinbach (1998:27) sees contracting in social work supervision as a special kind of cooperation with the task environment designed primarily to make interaction with the task environment more predictable and therefore potentially less threatening.

It is clear from the above statement that contracts need to be formalized. Formalizing social work supervision contracts would mean entering into a written supervision contract where all is explicitly clarified to avoid future misunderstandings. Contracting commences during a supervision session, normally at the beginning of supervisory relationship between supervisor and

supervisee, which is done during the initial phase of negotiations. Contracting could be of an informal nature, but a formal contract is essential. A mutual contract on essential issues such as the manner of cooperation between supervisor and supervisee is an indispensable requirement in contracting (Weinbach, 1994:27).

Contracting in social work supervision should be an ongoing process and it should take the form of re-contracting at various stages of the supervision relationship, which indicates a healthy and growing relationship and a developing task in supervision. Both the supervisor and supervisee should agree in principle about the following: clear structuring of goals and aims they both want to achieve; the stating of mutual expectations between the supervisor and supervisee; a clear description of the role of the supervisor and the supervisee; and the way in which the contract will be revised and changed must be indicated (Page & Wosket, 1994:34-35).

Contracting, therefore, is very important and should be done at the initial phase of supervision in order to eliminate all misunderstandings from the start. It is during this phase that the basis is laid for the supervision relationship where the supervisor is expected to clarify the importance of a supervision contract.

The above statements are confirmed by Botha (2000:308) who emphasizes that contracts should be formalized. On the other hand Potgieter (1998:154) states that, within the context of social work, a contract is an explicitly stated agreement between a helper and a client system that specifies goals for change, identifies tasks and roles for the participants in the process and lays down criteria that will be helpful during the measurement of progress toward the desired end. The author cautions that a contract in this context should not be confused with a legal contract, but should be viewed as a process (Potgieter, 1998:154). Although Potgieter (1998:154) refers to a “helping contract” in social work context, it is also applicable to a supervision contract.

The researcher agrees with the above stated authors and further views contracting in social work supervision as a process which will regulate, clarify or direct the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. A supervision contract will assist to clarify the expectations about how they should act, who must do what, where and when; what can and cannot be done during the supervision process and what steps are to be taken if one of the parties does not honor the conditions of contract.

It is thus clear that the concept contract in the context of social work means a binding written statement of agreement between the supervisor and supervisee specifying clear goals for supervision.

### **2.3 THE RATIONALE FOR CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION**

The importance of contracting in social work supervision ensures that the main aim of supervision, which is that of equipping inexperienced supervisees, takes place through delivery of purposeful and efficient service. Contracting has a set goal, which implies that supervision will be terminated as soon as the supervisee is capable of functioning autonomously. McLeod and Terreblanche (in Botha, 2000:308-310) note that “a contract is terminated when all legal obligations created by it have been fulfilled.” The set goal of supervision in social work implies that learning will take place and must cover the following areas which are aimed at capacitating and enhancing the supervisee’s learning process: goals of supervision, systems, ethics, functions, process and series, methods, phenomena, aids and models (McLeod & Terreblanche as cited by Botha, 2000:207).

Contracting is done during the initial contact where the supervision relationship has been established in order to clarify issues and the roles that each will play during supervision and which might have a negative bearing on bonding if not clarified in the initial phase. The contracting session between the supervisor and supervisee is vital to underpin the whole of the supervisory relationship (Page & Wosket, 1994:66). Rothmund (1991:10) postulates that a

supervision relationship is an indication of a professional and interpersonal relationship between the worker and supervisor. The relationship is of psychodynamic nature because it happens within a structural learning situation. A structured learning situation develops through contracting in social work supervision.

Contracting in social work supervision, as in counseling, performs a vital function in underpinning the entire process and relationship between supervisor and supervisee. The supervision contract is, therefore, seen as an agreement entered into by both supervisor and supervisee which contains, supports, gives structure and provides direction and purpose to the work undertaken. A clear and specific contract sets the agenda for the task and process, reduces anxiety by helping to de-mystify the process and lays down the ground rules. Page and Wosket (1994:64) suggest that the content and style of supervision and its ultimate success depends to a large extent upon the quality of the supervisor/supervisee relationship and the researcher wants to add that the content of a supervision contract is also important.

If the supervisor and supervisee have some tools and framework for addressing the beginning of a supervision relationship, they are able to make an ordered and intentional start to the work (Page & Wosket, 1994:43). Bernard and Goodyear (1998:213) are of the opinion that contracts not only help to clarify the supervision relationship, but can also be used to promote ethical practice by itemizing important ethical standards and their implementation within supervision. Page and Wosket (1994:66) contends that contracting gives the opportunity to negotiate not only what is expected of both parties (in terms of preparation prior to supervision), but also the nitty-gritty issues of frequency and other aspects.

The researcher contends that a structural learning situation is far more effective where there is a clear contract, negotiated and entered into between supervisor and supervisee. With the contract the supervisor sets the tone of supervision early. Shulman (1993:168) supports the statement by saying that the supervisor can also prepare an opening statement to begin the contracting

with the worker. In other words the supervisor must take the lead as a tutor, tutoring by teaching the supervisee contracting skills through simply demonstrating them in the supervision context (Shulman, 1993:167). Clear contracting can help create a climate where as much as possible is explicit. Hunt (in Hawkins & Shohet, 1998:28) emphasizes the value of having a clear contract and states that supervision can become a more effective and satisfying activity for both supervisor and supervisee in any setting if there is a more explicit contract whereon the supervision is based. Page and Wosket (1994:43) allude that “establishing a contract is a good way to ensure that supervision gets off the ground as smoothly as possible.” In other words a solid professional background between supervisor and supervisee is built through contracting in social work supervision.

Having more explicit contract can encourage cooperation with the task environment whereby the interaction with it becomes more predictable and, therefore, less potentially threatening (Weinbach, 1994:26).

The supervisee should be pro-active in the process of contracting. Being pro-active in the drafting of a contract will ensure that the supervisee gets the supervision that he/she wants. Hawkins and Shohet (1998:28) are of the opinion that a supervisee needs to take full responsibility of his/her part in contracting and negotiation of how supervision will operate, what it will focus on and how the process will be monitored and reviewed. The author shares the same views of Page and Wosket (1994:46), who point out that contracting for the duration of the supervision arrangement should always contain an agreement to review that contract after an agreed period of time.

Contracting should not only assist the supervisee to ensure that he/she gets supervision, but should also be clear about the boundaries of the supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 1998:44). This means that boundaries such as times, frequency, place, what might be allowed to interrupt or postpone the sessions and other aspects related to supervision must be clarified up front. The above authors share the same views with Hepworth and Larsen (1996:270) who outline the following boundaries of a supervision contract:

- Achievable objectives
- Role clarification
- Educational methods and techniques
- Frequency, hours and time schedule
- Conditions in terms of further negotiation on reformulation of objectives

The researcher is of the opinion that effective communication regarding the items stipulated by Hepworth and Larsen (1996:270) are crucial for the successful negotiation of a contract. This view of effective communication is emphasized by Cusworth and Franks (1993:196) who point out that effective communication, at individual and organizational levels, must be ensured in order to understand the individual's needs, preferences and changes in attitude. They further suggest that individuals should be provided with adequate feedback concerning their performance and achievement in order to become better performers. On the other hand, Page and Wosket (1994:44) are of the opinion that the supervisor should be sensitive to the needs and preferences of the supervisee in the way that the contract is constructed and implemented.

It is crucial that the supervisor creates a climate of openness during the drawing up of a contract. Openness goes with trust. Fox (1983:43-44) confirms this by stating that "during the process of designing a contract the supervisor should create a climate of trust, respect and support."

Contracting in social work supervision encourages cooperation between the supervisor and the supervisee. It clarifies the expectations of both the supervisor and the supervisee and it specifies the roles that have to be played by both the supervisor and the supervisee. Hawkins and Shohet (1998:46) concur with the above by pointing out that "the contract should also include some form of sharing of mutual expectations; the supervisors also need to state clearly what their preferred mode of supervision is, and any expectations they have of the supervisee." The contract must be realistic and as practical



as possible. It must also be flexible enough to accommodate new changes, problems and developments.

Bernard and Goodyear (1994:125) touch on the fundamental core of the supervisor's competence and point out that the supervisor needs to know everything and more than what is expected of the supervisee. The supervisor must be the expert in the process of supervision. They further allude that the contract between the supervisor and the supervisee must ultimately result in better skills for the supervisee.

History tells us that contracting in social work supervision has been in existence since the 1980's (Ford & Jones, 1987:35-63). This statement clearly indicates that contracting in social work supervision is not a new concept in the field, although it may be a new concept to social workers at entry level. Social work managers and supervisors, however, have a responsibility to introduce this concept to social workers at all levels.

The researcher concurs with the above and argues that today's supervisory settings are mostly characterized by a supervision process which is either one-sided or the supervisor decides about the content of the supervision process, which is not what it is meant to be. The supervision process should benefit both parties involved. To be able to satisfy the purpose of supervision, contracts need to be negotiated independently and entered into so that tasks are clear and both parties' expectations are spelt out clearly, amicably and unambiguously and should be respected.

If contracts are to have any value, they must be honored (Munson, 2002:176). Contracting for supervision as Munson (2000:176) asserts, means supervisors must confront supervisees who do not meet conditions of contracts. However, it must be clearly stated in the contract how conditions are going to be met and what will happen if such conditions are not followed. There is presently no literature on contracting in supervision which provides guidelines regarding what supervisors and supervisees need to do when conditions of contract are not followed. Hence, it is important for both the supervisor and supervisee to

set out their own favorable conditions if either of them would fail to honor the contract.

The researcher once listened to a colleague who was very stressed by the fact that the supervisee had failed on two occasions to fulfill task assigned to her at a supervisory session. The researcher's first response was "Have you entered into any supervision contract?" The response made it obvious that there was no contract at all. One can allude that the supervisor had no basis for blaming the supervisee, as there was no supervision contract entered into. Writing something down is a useful discipline to check for meaning and gives everyone a chance to correct it (Doel & Marsh, 1992:53).

The colleague was endorsing the importance of contracting in supervision. Supervisors must confront supervisees who do not meet conditions of contract, or they risk loss of authority and respect as well as unhappy clients.

**An important question in this regard is: What happens then if the supervisor fails to meet the conditions of the contract?** From a practical point of view it is difficult for the supervisee to confront the supervisor about failing to meet conditions, because there is a great risk that the supervisee will not get supervision at all and it can lead to more trouble, confusion, anger and miscommunication. Munson (2002:176) suggests that it is good to include in the contract what procedures can be used if either party does not meet the conditions of contract, or does not honor/respect the conditions of the contract. Cooper and Lesser (2002:35) refer to it as "when the tone has been set for mutuality and respect."

There is no doubt that the point of departure in supervision is to set a contract with boundaries (Page & Wosket, 1994:44-50). Brown and Bourne (1996:50) support this statement and allude that the first step in entering into a supervision relationship, is to negotiate a clear agreement or contract between supervisor and supervisee. The authors, however, point out that getting a contract right does not in itself guarantee successful supervision, but does provide a firm foundation for effective work.

The researcher concludes by stating that a supervision contract is an important means to get effective supervision in place. Without a meaningful contract endorsed by both supervisor and supervisee, supervision is likely to be beset with difficulties and misunderstandings (Brown & Bourne, 1996:50).

In order to compile an effective supervision contract it is, however, important to know what the characteristics of such a contract are. These characteristics will briefly be mentioned in the next section.

## **2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION**

Based on different sources, Potgieter (1998:153) has identified the following characteristics of a contract in social work supervision:

- ❑ A contract is a mutual agreement between two persons (in this case the supervisor and supervisee). It has to be agreed through a process of negotiation that enhances success due to commitment and a sense of ownership.
- ❑ The contract has to be formulated in terms of being understood by all and has to be acceptable to every role player. It has to be clear and explicit and fosters openness in the relationship between the parties.
- ❑ A contract has to be realistic, achievable and pragmatic and never demand actions or tasks that are beyond the capacity of either party.
- ❑ The contract in social work supervision has to be flexible and dynamic and has to be utilized as a vehicle to enhance change.
- ❑ It has to be a two-way partnership with shared responsibilities and an appropriate task allocation.
- ❑ A contract is time limited. It has to avoid the danger of drift and has to provide definite targets and deadlines to aim at.
- ❑ A contract should be formulated in positive behavioral terms and focus on what should happen, rather than on what should not.

- It has to be dynamic and flexible and has to represent a plan rather than a set of rigid rules.

On the basis of the above-mentioned characteristics, it is clear that pertaining to effective supervision there should be contracting in social work supervision subsequent to effective rendering of effective services. It is however also important to know what the key elements in compiling a supervision contract must be.

## **2.5 KEY ELEMENTS IN COMPILING A SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

According to Hawkins and Shohet (2006:63) “all forms of supervisory relationship need to begin with a clear contract, which is created and formed by both parties, and also reflects the expectations of the organizations and professions involved.” Page and Wosket (2000) as quoted by Hawkins and Shohet (2006:63) propose that a contract should attend to the following:

- Ground rules
- Responsibilities
- Boundaries
- Accountability
- Expectations
- Relationship

Carroll (1996) as cited by Hawkins and Shohet (2006:63) elaborates by referring to the following principle areas that need to be explored:

- Practicalities
- Working alliance
- Presenting in supervision
- Evaluation

Hawkins and Shohet (2006:63) propose that in contracting there are six key areas that should be covered:

- Practicalities and meeting arrangements
- Boundaries
- Working alliance
- The session format
- The organizational and professional context
- Taking notes

Brown and Bourne (1996:50-51) outline key elements in compiling a supervision contract which Hawkins and Shohet (2006:33-34) refers to as “ground rules and responsibilities.” The term ground rules refers to the principles by which the supervision task and process are to be regulated in order to run as smoothly and efficiently as possible (Page & Wosket, 1994:45). According to Brown and Bourne (1996:50-51) the following elements, rules or principles are therefore important in compiling a supervision contract:

- Forming a relationship, including sharing each other’s experiences, values and expectations of supervision.
- Type of supervision
- Confidentiality
- Accountability
- Preparation, agenda setting, record keeping and methods
- Focus
- Timing and frequency of meetings
- Evaluation and review

Also compare Munson (2002:176); Bernard & Goodyear (1998:213).

From the researcher’s point of view, Brown and Bourne’s (1996:50-51) elements are the most appropriate for the purpose of this study as it focuses more on the practical application of elements in practice. Each element will be discussed briefly.

### **2.5.1 Forming the relationship: sharing experiences, values and expectations**

The first important element in compiling a supervision contract is the issue of forming a relationship between supervisor and supervisee based on sharing experiences, values and expectations. Brown and Bourne (1996:50-51) point out that developing a supervision relationship implies the sharing of past experiences of supervising and being supervised. These two authors however emphasize the fact that it is a two-way process where a supervisor does not just draw information out of a supervisee, but demonstrates his/her preparedness to self-disclosure in a mutual way (Brown & Bourne, 1996:51).

Furthermore, Brown and Bourne (1996:51) emphasize other important aspects of contract negotiation, namely that of sharing mutual expectations and what exactly must be involved in supervision. They warn that serious misunderstandings can occur when the respective expectations of both supervisor and supervisee are not shared at the outset. Agreeing in principle on the point of departure, which in this scenario is described above, will lay a good foundation for accountability (Brown & Bourne, 1996: 52).

The researcher holds the opinion that the emphasis with regard to the relationship between supervisor and supervisee should be strictly on a professional supervision relationship, otherwise there is the possibility that both the supervisor and supervisee can abuse the relationship. Practical experience has shown that supervisors especially, often use the formation of a relationship to get back at the supervisee and capitalize on the supervisee's personal weak points. Boundaries should be spelt out with regard to the type of relationship. A professional and "functional relationship" is appropriate at this level (Page & Wosket, 1994:64).

The contracting session between supervisor and supervisee is vital to underpin the supervisory relationship. The supervisory relationship between

the supervisor and supervisee will inform and influence the type of supervision to be engaged in, which is discussed below.

### **2.5.2 Type of supervision**

The second key element in the supervision contract is a description of the type of supervision. Due to the fact that supervisees go through a growth process before achieving professional maturity, the supervisor must use different types of supervision at different times as outlined underneath.

According to the different types of supervision, Brown and Bourne (1996:52) identify four types namely:

- Tutorial supervision
- Training supervision
- Managerial supervision
- Consultancy supervision

Hawkins and Shohet (1989:44) identify only three types of supervision namely:

- Tutorial supervision
- Training supervision
- Managerial supervision

In their latest edition, Hawkins and Shohet (2006:60) agree with Brown and Bourne (1996) and also identify four types of supervision namely:

- Tutorial supervision
- Training supervision
- Managerial supervision
- Consultancy supervision

The researcher will briefly discuss each type of supervision elaborated by Hawkins and Shohet (2006:60) in more detail. It is however important to note that the different supervision functions – namely the educational, administrative, supportive, motivational and personality enrichment functions – are incorporated in all four types of supervision. Based on the focus of this study the researcher will however not discuss the different functions of supervision in detail, but rather the different types of supervision as a key element in compiling a supervision contract.

It is further important to remember that all types of supervision mentioned above are of paramount importance in social work supervision. Each type of supervision serves a particular purpose and they are complimentary to one another. As a point of departure Hawkins and Shohet (2006:60) note that “the first step in contracting for social work supervision is to be clear which of the main categories of supervision is being requested by the supervisee and being offered by the supervisor and what sort of match or mismatch exists.” Each type of supervision will now briefly be discussed.

#### **2.5.2.1 Tutorial supervision**

The first type of supervision implies that in some settings the supervisor may have more of a tutor role, concentrating almost entirely on the developmental (educative) function, helping a trainee (supervisee) on a course to explore his or her work with clients, where someone in the trainee’s workplace is providing the resourcing (managerial) and qualitative (supportive) supervisory functions (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006:60).

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990:1319) describes a tutor as someone who is generally in charge of a person’s education. Thus in this scenario a supervisor is regarded as an educator in charge of educating the supervisee through contracting in social work supervision. The education process should enable the supervisee to reach a professional developmental chart growth of his/her milestone in social work.



According to the researcher's point of view, tutorial supervision enables the supervisee to perform better at work by structuring the work environment and supplying the resources through contracting in social work supervision. In the process the supervisee develops the necessary knowledge and instrumental skills that are needed for effective practice. It is for this reason that Skidmore (1995:246) points out that "supervision in social work is concerned with helping staff members (supervisees) use their knowledge and skills to do their job efficiently and effectively." That process can mainly be achieved through contracting in social work supervision.

#### **2.5.2.2 Training supervision**

In this second type of supervision, the supervision emphasizes the developmental (educative) function and the supervisees will be in some form of training or an apprenticeship role. The difference from tutorial supervision is that the supervisor will have some responsibility for the work being done with the clients and will, therefore, carry a clear qualitative (managerial) or normative role (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2006:60).

The researcher sees training supervision as a supervisee's developmental/growth chart aimed at capacitating and enabling the supervisee to function independently and efficiently in order to reach an expected level of professional maturity. The supervisor, through his/her professional intervention and contracting in social work supervision, trains the supervisee about those technical and conceptual responsibilities so that the supervisee can be able to carry out his/her duties efficiently and effectively. The type of training the supervisor offered to the supervisee in this category would determine and influence the kind of managerial supervision to be applied to the supervisee's type of responsibilities on a daily basis.

#### **2.5.2.3 Managerial supervision**

According to Hawkins and Shohet (2006:60) in this third type of supervision, “as in training supervision the supervisor has some clear responsibility for the work being done with the clients, but supervisor and supervisee will be in a manager-subordinate relationship, rather than a trainer-trainee one.”

According to the researcher’s point of view, this type of supervision entails that the supervisor plays a role in managing the flow of work within the scope of social work service delivery. The supervisor is, in this case, in a management position where he/she is coordinating and facilitating service delivery as agreed upon by both parties in contracting for social work supervision. The term management has been defined by Haimann (1991:9) as “a process of getting things done through and with people, by directing and motivating the efforts of individuals toward common objectives.” Thus, it is generally a process of coordinating and integrating human, technical, and other resources to accomplish specific results. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to oversee and manage the supervisee’s daily work through contracting in social work supervision. The researcher would therefore argue that the supervisor’s job is basically getting things done through and with supervisees by enabling them to get as much satisfaction in their professional needs as possible, while at the same time motivating them to achieve both their own objectives and the objectives of the agency they are working for. The stage of being able to function independently through achieving both objectives would influence the decision of whether the supervisee is ready to be moved to consultancy supervision, which is also contracted for. At this stage of growth the supervisee’s developmental professional growth chart should indicate that he/she has reached the optimal level of growth, reaching the point of consultancy supervision. The researcher would coin it “**the developmental professional growth rite of passage of a supervisee milestone**”. Passage, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990:869), refers to “a transition from one state to another; the liberty or right to pass through.” This crucial yet complex rite of passage would lead to the discussion of consultancy supervision.

#### **2.5.2.4 Consultancy supervision**

The forth type of supervision which must be described in more detail and which forms part of the contract, is consultancy supervision. This type of supervision is still part of the educational (developmental) function of supervision. According to Botha (2000:287), consultation is executed according to a process. Depending upon the situation for which consultation is sought, the process could change or even in some cases vary in nature.

Hawkins and Shoheit (2006:60) emphasize that in consultancy supervision the supervisees keep the responsibility for the work they do with their clients, but consult with their supervisor, who is neither their trainer, nor manager on those issues they wish to explore.

Consultancy supervision, as a type of supervision, also goes through a contractual phase. When all aspects involved have been solved to the satisfaction of both parties, they conclude the contract. With consultancy supervision or consultation the supervisor has no direct responsibility for the supervisees or their work; he/she is only in consultative capacity (Brown & Bourne, 1996:52). This statement clearly implies that there is no direct responsibility; it does not say there is no responsibility at all. Therefore, the researcher points out that this statement may create confusion in the sense that some may think that consultation does not need contracting because there is no direct responsibility. Contracting will however assist in situations where the consultee is faced with strategic or problematic issues. The supervisor will have to see if those tasks were successfully achieved in social work where practice is very complex.

In the context of consultancy supervision it is important to make a distinction between supervision and consultation as the latter should not be seen as a replacement of supervision.

This distinction between supervision and consultation as viewed by Ford and Jones (1987:63) is as follows:

Ford and Jones (1987:63) view 'supervision' as planned, regular periods of time that student (supervisee) and supervisor spend together discussing the student's work in the placement organization/agency and reviewing the learning progress. Consultation means that the consultee can move on to the next stage in a piece of work, where he/she will need on-the-spot consultation, which need not necessarily be from the supervisor, but could be a colleague or senior specialist worker.

According to Barker (2003:93) social work consultation is a problem-solving process in which advice and other helping activity from the consultant is offered to an individual, or organization, or community that is faced with a job-related problem. Unlike supervision, which is relatively continuous and encompasses many areas of concern, consultation occurs more on an ad hoc or temporary basis and has a specific goal and focus.

The researcher views supervision as a growth-promoting process that facilitates professional growth which results in quality service delivery, while consultation wants to achieve the same objective, but takes place for a specific reason to solve a specific short term problem.

The bottom line here is the whole question of what supervision indeed is. Hess (in Hawkins & Shohet, 2006:57) defines supervision as "a quintessential interpersonal interaction with the general goal that the supervisor meets with the supervisee, in an effort to make the latter more effective in helping people."

Thus, supervisees who have achieved professional growth are able to manage their work independently. They can be moved from frequent supervision to consultation, whereby more professional responsibility will shift from the supervisor to the supervisee. Consultation, therefore, differs from supervision in the sense that administratively it is not accountable, whereas supervision is formalized by written agendas and written reports for every session that is held. Consultation should thus not be viewed as a replacement of supervision, even if the supervisee consults with his/her supervisor.

It is however important to remember that in social work radical changes are eminent as a result of the impending legislations that came into place (also seen as external factors) and the fact that many social work agencies have also undergone continuous restructuring in recent years. As such, a social worker that was moved to consultation by virtue of having reached a satisfactory level of maturity is likely to be re-contracted for supervision so that he/she may be taken to all the functions and types of supervision identified above.

The researcher would, therefore, argue that both supervision and consultation require the process of contracting in order to ascertain both the supervisee's learning needs, as well as the needs of the organization.

The researcher's own synthesis here is that there is no way that the supervisor can achieve all these types of supervision without contracting with the supervisee. The contracting process will present opportunities for the supervisor and supervisee to clearly state their expectations regarding a specific type/s of supervision in a structured environment.

### **2.5.3 Confidentiality**

The third key element or principle in compiling a supervision contract is confidentiality.

Confidentiality is a professional undertaking that nothing about an individual (supervisee) will be revealed except under agreed-upon circumstances (Munson, 2002:317).

Confidentiality is fundamental to the ethical and safe practice of supervision. It is the supervisor's responsibility to make the importance of absolute confidentiality explicit at an early stage in contracting. Page and Wosket (1994:58) go a step further to say "in order to manage the mind-boggling complexities of these relationships, those of us involved have negotiated

confidentiality through careful and specific contracting which ensures that any discussion of clients and supervisees within supervision will be done without names, the playing of recognizable audio or video tapes, or the mention of any distinguished characteristics.”

Both supervisor and supervisee must define, as part of the supervision contract, what would be confidential to both and what should be shared with colleagues. The problem arises when the supervisor or the supervisee breaks the confidentiality by disclosing material or information agreed upon. According to Bernard (1994), the supervisee should be able to trust the supervisor with personal information, yet at the same time be informed about exceptions to the assumptions of privacy. Brown and Bourne (1996:57) allude that “it can be very galling for the supervisor to discover that while they have drawn clear boundaries of confidentiality around supervision, the supervisee has been gossiping to all and sundry.” Therefore, as part of the supervision contract, there should be clear boundaries as to whom and when information can be disclosed.

#### **2.5.4 Accountability**

The fourth key element or principle in compiling a supervision contract is accountability. Brown and Bourne (1996:53) describe accountability as a developmental magnet. In other words, as development is taking place on the supervisee, this development touches on the fundamental core of the supervisee being accountable to himself/herself in terms of learning, and being accountable to the supervisor, in terms of performing specific tasks.

Brown and Bourne (1996:53) continues to allude that tutorial and consultancy supervision emphasize accountability that the supervisees have to themselves (towards consultancy), while managerial and training supervision emphasize the supervisee’s accountability to the supervisor (towards management). They further say accountability should be clearly clarified especially in interdisciplinary supervision. If third parties are involved then these parties should also participate in some contract negotiation.

It is important that the line of accountability is clear from the moment the contract is drawn up. The researcher agrees with Brown and Bourne and argues that in practice, involving a third party in supervision should be avoided as it can create shifting of responsibility and accountability. Exceptions can be done when there is an emergency or crisis, but the researcher maintains that it should be clearly spelt out in the contract for supervision that when there is emergency or crisis the supervisee will consult with an alternative supervisor identified at the time of drawing up contract for supervision. The name of that particular alternative supervisor should be mentioned in the contract for supervision, to avoid ambiguity.

### **2.5.5 Preparation, agenda setting, record keeping and methods**

The fifth element or principle in compiling a supervision contract is the whole issue of preparation and being prepared by having material to discuss ready for supervision. All these aspects must be clearly described in the supervision contract.

Preparation is a state of being prepared (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990:941). Preparation goes hand in hand with having an explicit and clear agenda under discussion on the day of supervision. In this regard material for discussion posted to the supervisor in advance for discussion would be part of the discussion. In the context of supervision and consultation, it means that the supervisee/consultee needs to do his/her assignments in advance in order to be ready for supervision or consultation. Part of being prepared for a supervision session is thus agenda setting.

#### **2.5.5.1 Agenda setting**

Contracting in social work supervision, in the context of setting an agenda, entails including all those aspects for discussion highly relevant to the session of a particular day. The researcher's view is that supervision is basically a formal meeting between supervisor and supervisee. Any formal meeting is

characterized by the agenda guiding the type of discussion to be conducted. Agenda refers to a series of things to be done such as items to be considered at a meeting (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990:22). Setting refers to the position or manner in which a thing is set for example place, time, and scenery (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990:1109). In the context of supervision it means that the supervisee needs to sensitize himself/herself about areas of focus for discussion in a session, at a particular time and place agreed upon with his/her supervisor.

Shulman (1993:180) concurs with the above and points that “in any supervision session the supervisee should present an agenda for discussion in advance so that the supervisor can be able to prepare for the session and this agenda should be contracted for.” According to him, sessional contracting involves an attempt at the beginning of each session to determine the central area of concern, which implies that the supervisee has an opportunity of discussing his/her concerns (Shulman, 1993:180).

The agenda basically sets the tone of the programme of education to be followed on the day of supervision, be it individual or group supervision. The supervisor must prepare the session on the basis of the supervisee’s agenda. A competent supervisor will know that the supervisee’s agenda which was submitted in advance should be the starting point.

However, although the supervisee has the main responsibility to set the agenda, the right of both participants to contribute to agenda items needs to be established, and a clear system for doing this must be agreed upon including how agenda priorities are set (Brown & Bourne, 1996:56).

It is thus essential that both supervisor and supervisee must stipulate in the supervision contract clear, specific terms of reference regarding the agenda for supervision. An agenda contracted for, for supervision holds more water than an agenda that comes tentatively.

#### **2.5.5.2 Record keeping**



Another aspect that needs attention in the supervision contract is the whole issue of record keeping. According to Barker (2003:425), recording is the process of putting in writing and keeping on file relevant information about the client: the problem, the prognosis, the intervention plan, the prognosis of treatment and the procedures for termination or referral.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to make sure that the client's records are complete (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:218). The authors go further to say "a wise supervisor reviews the record keeping system occasionally to be sure that it is in concurrence with national trends." Richards *et al.* (in Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:213-218) allude that supervision recording is a useful tool to keep track of the workload and important issues arising, and also ensures that supervision practice is adequately recorded. "What" and "how" forms part of the supervision contract.

Bernard and Goodyear (1998:219) emphasize that supervisors must keep accurate and complete supervision records. According to Van Zyl (in Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006:111) detailed case notes are essential for supervision, and will help both supervisor and supervisee to track performance and growth. Munson (in Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:219) suggests the following outline for the supervision record:

- The supervisory contract.
- A brief statement of supervisee's experience, training and learning needs.
- A summary of all performance evaluations.
- Notation of all supervisory sessions.
- Cancelled or missed sessions.
- Notation of cases discussed and significant decisions.
- Significant problems encountered in the supervision and how they were resolved, or whether they remain unresolved.

Thus record keeping will serve as ammunition, shield and protection instrument for both supervisor and supervisee in times of difficult moments, and the nature thereof must form part of the supervision contract.

#### **2.5.5.3 Social work skills and methods**

The identification, development and use of relevant professional skills and methods must form part of contracting in social work supervision.

A social work supervisor does not only become a supervisor by virtue of acquiring necessary skills through relevant training and experience, but those unique skills coupled with talent and being proactive are what makes a good supervisor. A talented and skilled supervisor would apply contracting in social work supervision. Thus, skills emanating from talent are an added advantage and determine the kind of session the supervisor is going to have with the supervisee, whether or not those skills are going to be successful.

Skills, according to Barker (2003:399), refer to proficiency in the use of one's hands, knowledge, talents, personality, or resources. Barker (2003:399) elaborates by saying that a social worker's professional skills include being proficient in communication, assessing problems and client workability, matching needs with resources, developing resources and changing social structures.

Brown and Bourne (1996:59) warns that the supervisor (the researcher wants to add the supervisee as well) can use whatever skills he/she may have to achieve the best possible use of the session, and at the same time the same supervisor (and/or supervisee) can play games, oppress and avoid difficult issues. Thus contracting can be useful in making both the supervisor and supervisee recognize sinister and unusual behaviors which may derail the process of contracting in supervision.

Skills and methods are interrelated entities in social work supervision. Here the supervisor establishes if the supervisee does use methods and skills

available at his/her disposal to make supervision an interesting platform to demonstrate those skills and methods. On the other hand, the supervisee would be interested to know whether the supervisor does practice what he/she teaches. Brown and Bourne (1996:59) goes a bit further by pointing out that “techniques either than talking are envisaged by the supervisor.” They go on to say that “all these possibilities should be discussed at the contract stage with both parties sharing their particular skills and their feelings about using different methods.”

The supervisor as a rational manager, should also contract for additional skills such as: functional skills, task-related skills, formation-processing skills, people skills and role-related skills (Cusworth & Franks, 1993:68-82). All these skills are equally relevant to the supervisor’s scope of responsibilities on a daily basis and the basis for intellectual capital within the organization. Naidoo (2002) is of the opinion that both the supervisor and supervisee should give attention to the following skills as part of a supervision contract:

- Foundation skills, (like writing, speaking, listening).
- Thinking skills (reasoning, making decisions, solving problems, thinking creatively, knowing how to learn, visualization).
- Resource skills (identifying, organizing, planning, allocating time).
- Personal qualities (responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, honesty, integrity)
- Competency skills (using a computer for processing information).
- Systems and process skills (understanding systems, correcting performance, improving and designing systems).
- Technology utilization skills (selecting technology and applying it to a task).
- Interpersonal skills (negotiating, exercising leadership, working with diversity, teaching others new skills, servicing clients and participating as a team leader).

The researcher maintains that all these important skills are rooted in intellectual capital. In order for both supervisor and supervisee to be able to evaluate supervision tasks completed, these skills should be contracted for

intensively. A good strategic supervisor and manager would encourage the supervisee to contract for these skills so that intellectual capital can be retained within the helping profession.

### **2.5.6 Focus**

Focus as the sixth element of a supervision contract means that following the establishment of a contract between supervisor and supervisee, the work of supervision can begin. The point of entry into the work is called the focus. Both supervisor and supervisee should focus on the material under consideration at that particular point or stage of supervision. Focussing normally starts with the supervisee presenting some aspects of his/her work and then exploring the aspects together with the supervisor. For both the supervisor and supervisee to be able to focus on their supervision task, they should have already entered into a contract for supervision (Brown & Bourne, 1996:62).

The function of the focus is to ensure that supervision starts with a significant issue for the supervisee and is relevant to client work. Focussing as a process develops the supervisee's responsibility for making the best use of the supervision opportunity. It encourages intentionality (direction and purpose) and reflection, and ensures that the supervisee has prepared for the supervision in advance for the meeting (Page & Wosket, 1994:34-69). More detailed information is provided by Exley (2006:68) regarding steps in the supervisory process and attention is paid to focus in supervision.

There is another aspect of focus that sometimes leads to misunderstandings and frustrations among supervisees, namely the content of supervision sessions and in particular the extent to which the supervisee, as opposed to the work, comes under scrutiny. A frequent complaint from supervisees in practical situations is that they go into supervision session expecting to talk about the needs of the clients and supervisee learning areas only to find the spotlight on them. Thus, contracting in social work supervision presents a scenario for focusing, where both supervisor and supervisee cruise through

supervision without any difficulties. Where there is lack of contracting in social work supervision there is an absence of focus, where it is found that both parties meddle with issues out of context.

### **2.5.7 Timing and frequency of meetings**

The seventh key element, namely timing and frequency of meetings in compiling a contract, is very important. Timing and frequency give consideration to the optimum number of supervisory hours undertaken in relation to counseling hours and to the actual time of the day in which the supervision session takes place. The timing of the session is important in that bad timing can easily detract from the efficacy of the work. It is often easier for supervisor and supervisee to arrange for a meeting to take place at the end of a busy working day, or squeeze it into lunch hour, than to make time during a hectic daily schedule. Ideally, the supervisor and supervisee should arrange, in advance, to meet at regular intervals and at times where they can make the psychological space for the work. For the supervisee, particularly, this might mean giving half an hour before the meeting to a quiet time for reflection and composure (Page & Wosket, 1994:48).

In practice it is sometimes difficult for both supervisor and supervisee to stick to the above arrangement and it is even worse if there is no contract or arrangement entered into. Whatever type of supervision, it is crucial for both parties to enter into a contract and to stipulate the time and frequency of supervision sessions. As Brown and Bourne (1996) assert, the regularity of supervision helps both supervisor and supervisee to think of the session not as separate meetings to discuss prevailing difficulties, but as being developmentally linked, providing direction and purpose.

### **2.5.8 Evaluation and review**

The element of evaluation and review must always be part of a supervision contract. McMahon (1996:249) defines evaluation as “a time to study and measure the results of the actions taken during intervention.” Kadushin

(1992:341) defines evaluation in terms of supervision as “the objective appraisal of the worker’s total functioning on the job over a specified time.”

Evaluation is an objective process that aims at assessing whether the desired outcome has been achieved or not, and if it has been achieved the extent is also established through this process. It therefore follows that there has to be specific markers that will be utilized to establish the extent of achievement or failure.

The step of evaluation in supervision provides the opportunity for supervisor and supervisee to determine the value of the supervision experience and to consider any implications for change (Page & Wosket, 1994:132). The same authors connote that review in supervision may take the form of evaluation or assessment of the supervisee’s work. It should be done on a regular base and ongoing mutual feedback should take place. Exploring on review as an integral part of the supervision process ensures that practitioners actively reflect upon and monitor the standard and quality of their own professional practice and their mutual endeavor (Page & Wosket, 1994:36).

The researcher sees both evaluation and review as a vehicle geared towards personality enrichment and performance appraisal/management, where the foundation was laid through contracting, as the supervisor/manager is in position to identify learning and development areas. This statement is alluded to by Teke (2002:12), where he says that organizations are battling to develop, implement and maintain a vibrant performance management system. Teke (2002:12) points out that for a performance management system to be successful it must be able to measure an individual’s performance over a period of time. He maintains that the effectiveness of performance system must be able to address the following:

- ❑ To remedy any identified performance problems
- ❑ Outline and measure behavioral competencies
- ❑ Career path appreciation process

Therefore provision of evaluation is necessary to determine goal attainment and proper termination of a relationship between supervisor and supervisee.

Both parties need to remember that it is up to them as to how they draw up this contract, but it must be in the form of an official document, committing both parties to achieve the objective of drawing up contract work in such a manner that it becomes professionally binding to both parties. However it must be done in a flexible manner to be able to accommodate changes. It should be noted that the content of contracting depends entirely on the supervisor and the supervisee's discretion.

## **2.6 FORMAT OF SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

It seems as if there is presently no literature providing specific formats for contracting in social work supervision. Different authors used in this chapter have come up with brilliant and superb techniques and strategies for contracting, but have not provided recommendations on what the contract should look like (Munson, 2000:176-178; Page & Wosket, 1994:134).

Based on the above discussion about the key elements in compiling a supervision contract, the researcher's own practical supervision experience as well as discussions with social work supervisors in practice, the following formats can be used as examples of a supervision contract:

### **EXAMPLE 1: SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

## SUPERVISION CONTRACT

I, Ms/Mr.....and Ms/Mr.....  
Supervisee Supervisor

Hereby declare the following:-

### **Frequency of supervision**

That we shall have supervision sessions once a month every Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month from 8:30-12:30 and agree that when there is a crisis we shall re-schedule accordingly.

We agree that every supervision session shall have an agenda at the beginning of each session.

### **Pre-submission of supervision material**

Both the supervisor and supervisee agree that the supervisor will get written files/reports, tape records like a process record, or video recordings prior to the actual supervision session, for the supervisor to prepare and enable her study recordings and reports produced for feedback.

### **Crisis**

We agree that when the supervisor is not available, for whatever reasons, and there is an urgent matter or crisis, the supervisee should approach the senior social worker agreed upon when this contract was drawn up.



### **Induction sessions**

We both agree that when we have supervision sessions we shall also have induction sessions where policies, regulations, rules, conditions of service and ethics in social work and supervision are revised so that we can avoid situations where ethics are infringed.

### **Review-Clarification of job description**

The supervisor shall always review and clarify the supervisee's job description before supervision sessions, including responsibilities and tasks.

### **Performance**

The supervisor shall be honest and open, transparent about the supervisee's working performance whether positive or negative. The supervisor shall be duty bound to inform the supervisee both verbally and in writing.

The supervisor shall be responsible for the supervisee's learning needs, but the supervisee shall identify styles and preferences with the guidance of the supervisor. The supervisor shall be responsible for the supervisee's lack of performance but the supervisee is responsible for his/her own professional development.

The supervisor shall always be supportive of the supervisee's work-related needs. The supervisee's work performance shall be evaluated verbally and in writing.

To measure the supervisee's performance, a performance assessment tool shall be used and written feedback be given.

### **Expectations of the supervisor**

The supervisor shall expect the supervisee to perform well and honor supervision sessions; to be prepared for supervision sessions and be open about issues of concern which would require deliberations.

Though the supervisor would be responsible for the supervisee's learning needs, the supervisor shall expect the supervisee to identify learning needs. The supervisee will be expected to be open to discuss her/his fears and needs and conduct himself/herself in a professional manner.

The supervisee is expected to know his/her duties and responsibilities to the best of his/her knowledge and consult regularly for guidance.

### **Expectations of the supervisee**

#### Confidentiality

- The supervisee expects the supervisor to keep supervision material confidential; information can only be disclosed with the supervisee's consent.

#### Support

- The supervisee expects the supervisor to be supportive towards his/her work.

### **Review of contract**

Both the supervisor and the supervisee shall review this contract six-monthly to see if it is in line with both their expectations.

**Failure to meet conditions of contract**

Failure to meet the conditions of this contract will result in drastic steps being taken against the party which failed to honor the contract.

Signed at.....on (day).....(Month).....and  
(year).....(place).....

.....

Supervisor

.....

Supervisee

Example 1 was used by the researcher in social work practice with great success.

Example 2 of a supervision contract utilized by Pretoria Child and Family Care Society can be displayed as follows:

**EXAMPLE 2: SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

<b>SUPERVISION CONTRACT</b>			
	<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	<b>SUPERVISEE</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
<b>PARTICULARS</b>			
<b>CAPACITY</b>			
<b>DATE</b>			
<b>SUPERVISION EXPECTATIONS</b>			

## **1. FUNCTIONS EXPECTATIONS**

The supervision will consist of three functions namely:

- ❑ Administrative supervision
- ❑ Educational (training) supervision
- ❑ Supportive supervision

## **2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION**

Administrative supervision will entail that the supervisor:

- ❑ Give orientation about new aspects of the job (work)
- ❑ Give support in the planning of tasks (projects)
- ❑ Delegate tasks
- ❑ Allocation of new tasks
- ❑ Monitor, evaluate, give assistance where problems occur
- ❑ Assist in the coordination of work with that of other workers
- ❑ Act as spokesperson in regard to work rendered by the supervisee

Responsibilities of supervisee:

- ❑ To ask questions about new work that he/she does not understand
- ❑ To show that work/projects are properly planned
- ❑ To discuss feelings and opinions about newly referred work with supervisor
- ❑ To be honest about the evaluation of its own work and to show areas of growth to supervisor.
- ❑ To discuss yearly evaluation of work with supervisor in-depth because the supervisee's professional growth is assessed.
- ❑ To discuss problems with supervisor first. If necessary and if problems are of such a nature that an arbitrator will be appointed to solve the matter.

- ❑ To take initiative for change by discussing it with the supervisor.
- ❑
- ❑ To inform the supervisor, when necessary, when another must act as a spokesperson in work-related matters.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION**

Educational supervision entails that the supervisor will give guidance regarding the following aspects:

- ❑ Human beings (the individual, family, group, community)
- ❑ Area (organization)
- ❑ Process (work-related processes)
- ❑ Personal (colleague, clients, own relationship within a work-related context)
- ❑ Problems (work-related and personal where it influence the functions of the organization)
- ❑ Identify areas where more information might be needed.
- ❑ Encouraging the supervisee to attend training opportunities within the given structure.
- ❑ Create chances (opportunities) for critical self-evaluation of all staff.
- ❑ Supply information about resources to supervisee and assist in the obtaining of resources.

The supervisee has the responsibility:

- ❑ To bring training needs under the attention of the supervisor.
- ❑ To bring training opportunities under the attention of the supervisor.
- ❑ To critically evaluate himself/herself as well as the supervisor in relation to professional growth.

### **4. SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION**

Supportive supervision entails that the supervisor:

- Allow the supervisee to discuss his/her feelings around work-related matters.
- Bring under supervisee's attention any personal aspects that may influence his/her work.
- When needed, lead the supervisee to get professional help for personal problems.
- Bring under the attention of the supervisee unhealthy pressure that the supervisee creates for himself/herself in the working environment, as well as that the supervisor assists in time-management, stress-management as well as planning.

The supervisee has the responsibility:

- To discuss his/her feelings that are work related.
- To act in his/her own interest when personal aspects impacts on his/her productivity by seeking professional help.
- Request assistance from supervisor in areas where possibly needed, but also to point out possible ways of working, action or solutions in this area to the supervisor.

## **5. SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

- I have read the contract and understand the contents of supervision.
- I know and understand what is expected from me during supervision.
- I take responsibility for my role as supervisor/supervisee
- I undertake to make myself regularly available to supervise or to be supervised.

<b>SIGNING OF CONTRACT:</b> .....		
	<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	<b>SUPERVISEE</b>
<b>PARTICULARS</b>		
<b>SIGNATURE</b>		
<b>DATE</b>		

Regarding Example 2 of a supervision contract the researcher acknowledges the fact that there is a supervision contract between supervisor and supervisee in place. Secondly, the researcher mentioned that both participants in a contract should draw up a contract which is favorable for both their situation, which is exactly what has happened with Example 2. It is also acknowledged that all three critical functions of supervision have been covered in the contract.

The researcher's critical evaluation of the contract in Example 2 is that aspects such as the agenda for supervision, time of supervision, place, how often supervision will take place, how to deal with crisis, how to deal with phenomenon in supervision, how often the contract is going to be reviewed, what exactly to be discussed and what would happen if conditions of contract are not met by one of the parties, is missing. However, the format is a good basis for formulating a constructive supervision contract that is user friendly to both supervisor and supervisee.

Having discussed the above two formats for contracting in social work supervision, it is imperative to discuss the advantages of contracting. The following advantages are outlined in the next section.

## **2.7 ADVANTAGES OF CONTRACTING IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION**

The advantages of a contract of a supervisory nature are elucidated by Wilcoxon (in Botha, 2003:308) in the following manner: "Formal contractual

agreement may be the best means of protecting against misunderstanding that could have legal repercussions.”

The following advantages of contracting in social work supervision exist:

- Experience proves that supervision and consultation relationships and processes tend to run smoothly where both parties are fully aware of their roles, obligations and expectations. Only a contract in supervision and consultation is able to ensure this state of affairs (Botha, 2000:308).
- Problems arising from the first phase that have not been solved can be addressed contractually (Botha, 2000:308).
- A supervision contract enhances essential issues such as the manner of cooperation between the supervisor and supervisee.
- Contracting in social work supervision helps with skills development and professional growth.
- What the supervisee has learnt in well-structured supervision is ultimately transferred to clients and colleagues.
- Setting an expectation of mutual feedback as part of a supervision contract, allows for conflicts to be brought out into the open at an early stage, Richards *et al.* (1990) as cited in Bernard & Goodyear (1998:214).
- Assists with basis for promotion for social workers who have been in service for a long time.
- A contract decreases the amount of discomfort when confrontation is justified when one party does not live up to the agreement (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:214).
- A contract in supervision is an ongoing process which shapes and provides structure and direction to the supervision relationship and the professional task. It covers the management and administration of the work and delineates the boundaries between supervision, therapy and training. It also ensures that the supervision is contained within ethical and professional boundaries such as those governing confidentiality as well as work, social and sexual relationships.
- Contracting deals with issues of accountability and responsibility and clarifies mutual expectations. It establishes the kind of relationship which



will govern the supervision and enables the supervisor and supervisee to discuss how they would prefer to work together. Effective contracting ensures that a firm foundation is laid and dispenses much of the uncertainty and mystery which can otherwise imbue the supervision process (Page & Wosket, 1994:67).

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

The chapter basically equips both supervisor and supervisee with the contents of a supervision contract and how to go about fulfilling the conditions of the contract; what should happen if the conditions of contract are not met as well as formats of contracting in social work supervision. Different authors' views are explored. The chapter also indicates the characteristics of contracting in social work supervision; the key elements in compiling a supervision contract as well as a brief indication of the advantages of contracting in social work supervision.

The following chapter contains a detailed presentation and analysis of the research findings.

## CHAPTER 3

### EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

With the ever-increasing demand of professional social workers in human service because of challenges facing the profession, it has become necessary for both supervisor and supervisee to contract for social work supervision. Contracting would include how case material will be discussed, how the supervisee best learns and what kind of help he/she would like to, and can expect to receive from the supervisor (Austin & Hopkins, 2004:28).

The call for this action prompted the researcher to formulate the following goal for the study:

To explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To determine the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision by conducting a literature study.
- To conduct an empirical study to explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.
- To develop guidelines and recommendations regarding contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

Having delineated the above background the following research question was formulated:

**What is the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF?**

### 3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study the qualitative approach was used to collect information about contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF. This undertaking was relevant for the study, as the researcher's intention was to gain first hand information about the perceptions, experiences and feelings of respondents about contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF. As contracting in social work supervision remains an appealing topic in human service it is pivotal to have a contract for supervision in place.

Applied research was adopted in this study as a means to explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF. Exploratory design formed the basis for the study, as it is qualitative in nature and assisted the researcher to gain insight into the phenomenon (Weinbach, 2002:106). The researcher intended to get crucial information on experiences and perceptions from research subjects regarding contracting in social work supervision.

The data collection methods used in this study was one-on-one, semi-structured interviewing with social work supervisors and focus group interviewing with social work supervisees. The researcher used an interview schedule to collect qualitative data from the supervisors and a focus group interview schedule to collect information from supervisees following the themes constructed. The data was collected at the research site and refined away from the site.

The target population for this study was social work supervisors and supervisees working for the SANDF, and based in the Gauteng Province in the Tshwane Metropolitan Region. No sample was selected because the whole population in the Tshwane Metropolitan Region formed part of the study.

As per research procedure, the researcher visited respondents (supervisors) at their respective social work units as per appointment. The researcher

planned to collect data from all the supervisors namely two social work supervisors, working for the SANDF stationed at Tshwane Metropolitan Region (Pretoria) and another one stationed in Heidelberg (Gauteng). The process did not go according to the researcher's plan as the one supervisor stationed at Pretoria was not available. This resulted in data interpreted from two supervisors instead of three. Focus group data was collected from two different groups of social workers, as one group (stationed in Pretoria) was also not available, which resulted to two sets of data being interpreted instead of three. The one focus group interview was conducted with supervisees stationed in Heidelberg and comprised of four respondents. The other focus group interview was conducted with supervisees stationed at Pretoria and comprised of 4 respondents. In total, eight social workers were involved in the study.

### **3.3 EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

The primary aim of this chapter is to present, analyze and interpret the qualitative data respectively collected by semi-structured interviews with social work supervisors as well as focus group interviewing with social workers. Data analysis, according to De Vos (2005:332), is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Neuman (1993:106) describes qualitative analysis as proceeding by extracting themes or generalization from evidence and organization of data to present a coherent and consistent picture.

To analyze the qualitative data in this study the researcher utilized text analysis. All the interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed by carefully going through all the transcripts following a code system. Categories and sub-categories were then identified, interpreted and verified with literature.

The empirical results are divided into two sections namely section A and B. Section A covers information collected from social work supervisors and

Section B covers information gathered from supervisees. Hereunder, section A is discussed.

### **3.3.1 SECTION A: Information collected from supervisors**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two social work supervisors. The semi-structured interview schedule utilized by the researcher was based on an in-depth literature review. The interviewing schedule comprised of biographical details of respondents as well as themes regarding contracting in social work supervision which are listed below:

- Understanding of contracting in social work supervision.
  - Perceptions regarding the concept contracting in social work supervision.
  - Characteristics of contracting in social work supervision.
  - Importance of contracting in social work supervision.
  - Elements and format to look at when compiling a social work supervision contract.
  - Advantages and disadvantages of contracting in social work supervision.
- (See Appendix A: Semi-structured interview schedule).

#### **3.3.1.1 Profile of respondents (2 supervisors)**

- **Gender**

Both respondents (100%) were female. This finding correlates with the trend that females dominate the social work profession.

- **Age**

One of the respondent's age was 29 years while the other respondent's age was 32 years.

The findings suggest that the supervisors are still young professionals, which implicate that there is still the possibility of an increase in knowledge and experience regarding supervision.

- **Highest academic qualification**

The aim of this question was to get information from supervisors about their highest level of education and how their status of education could possibly impact on the subject of contracting in social work supervision.

The findings of the study indicated that one (50%) supervisor holds a BA Honors Degree in Human Resources Development while the other one (50%) holds a BA Social Work Degree.

The fact that one respondent has an additional honors degree in human resource development, indicated that she should possibly be knowledgeable about management systems and operations as well as supervision in social work. The other respondent has a BA Social Work degree with minimum experience of 3-6 years, which implied that she had perhaps less knowledge regarding social work supervision.

- **Social work supervision experience**

The aim of this question was to get information from the respondents about their years of experience in social work supervision in the SANDF.

The results showed that both respondents have between 3-6 years of working experience as social work supervisors in the SANDF.

The findings reflected that the respondents had a certain amount of supervision experience which implied that they were in a position where they could give their perceptions, experiences and feelings regarding contracting in social work supervision.

The above section concludes the biographic information of both subjects. The following section will focus on the perceptions, experiences and feelings of the respondents (supervisors) regarding contracting in social work supervision. The information will be given according to the identified categories.

### **3.3.1.2 Qualitative information according to categories**

Categories refer to “any relatively fundamental philosophical concept, class or division” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990:177). Based on the analysis of the two transcripts the researcher has identified the following seven categories of information:

- ❑ **Understanding of the concept** contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Perceptions** regarding contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Characteristics** of contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Importance** of contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Elements and format** of a social work supervision contract
- ❑ **Advantages** of contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Disadvantages** of contracting in social work supervision

Each category will be described according to the following structure:

- ◆ Summary of findings
- ◆ Quotations to verify findings and
- ◆ Integration of literature
  
- **Category 1: Understanding of the concept contracting in social work supervision**

In this category both respondents have agreed that contracting in social work supervision is a process characterized by a written negotiated agreement between supervisor and supervisee which informs the supervisory working relationship and gives direction to the learning structured process.

The following quotations confirm the respondents' understanding of the concept contracting in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

*“Contracting is a process where the mutual expectations for the supervision process are formulated between the supervisor and the supervisee. Contracting should be done at the beginning of the supervision relationship and should preferably be in writing”.*

Respondent 2:

*“Contracting is a form of an agreement that a supervisor and a supervisee enter into, that will inform their working relationship throughout the whole process of supervision.”*

The respondents' understanding of the concept contracting in social work supervision correlate with Austin and Hopkins (2004:28) who describe contracting as “delineating the terms for working on mutually agreed-on problem or goal”. Page and Wosket (1994:64) also confirm by stating that contracting in social work supervision refers to “an agreement entered into which contains, supports, gives structure and provides direction.” It seems thus as if the respondents have a good understanding of the concept contracting in social work supervision.

- **Category 2: Perceptions regarding contracting in social work supervision**

In this category both supervisors have more or less the same perceptions regarding contracting in social work supervision namely: that it helps both parties to conduct themselves in a professional relationship; gives direction to the process of supervision; sets standards and that it also clarifies the roles



and expectations of both supervisor and supervisee in the professional relationship.

These perceptions can be confirmed by the following comments of the respondents:

Respondent 1:

*“I have the following perceptions regarding contracting in social work supervision:*

- It is important to formalize the process*
- It sets definite guidelines in terms of set standards*
- It is a form of role clarification*
- It is binding in terms of set standards*
- It is unique- individualized for the specific supervisee*
- It also addresses the demands/ expectations of the organization and/ or specific post description of the supervisee.”*

Respondent 2:

*“Contracting helps the supervisor and supervisee conduct themselves in the professional relationship. It informs the two parties on the process of supervision. It also informs the parties about their roles regarding the goals of supervision or of the relationship.”*

The respondents' responses should be seen in the context of Bernard and Goodyear (1992:163) who maintain that a contract for supervision should contain the following: activities to be performed; responsibilities of parties involved; expectations; goals and an evaluation plan. All these activities mentioned above are within the foundation of a good professional relationship built through contracting between the supervisor and the supervisee. In this

case the supervisor assists the supervisee through the contracting process to blend professional knowledge and personal qualities.

- **Category 3: Characteristics of contracting in social work supervision**

Both supervisors have agreed that the most important characteristics of contracting in social work supervision entail the following: it must be individualized, mutually agreed upon, goal-oriented, specific, clear, understandable and it must address the learning needs of a particular social work supervisee.

The following quotations confirm the respondents' understanding of the characteristics of contracting in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

*"The following characteristics are typical of contracting in social work supervision:*

- ❑ *Specific to roles, work methods, methods of evaluation, etc.*
- ❑ *Binding*
- ❑ *Mutually accepted*
- ❑ *Individualized."*

Respondent 2:

*"Contracting should be characterized by the following:*

- ❑ *It should be individualized*
- ❑ *It should be mutually agreed upon*
- ❑ *It should be goal orientated*
- ❑ *It should be specific, clear and understandable*
- ❑ *It should address the learning needs of a particular supervisee."*

The respondents' responses described above correlate with Austin and Hopkins (2004:28) who concur and correctly emphasize that the contract is negotiated, agreed upon, and the best way the supervisee can learn.

The following authors' point of view with regard to the characteristics of contracting in social work supervision correlate with the above-mentioned authors who assert that a contract has to be realistic, achievable and pragmatic and never demand actions or tasks that are beyond the capacity of either party. - Thompson 1996:193; Gavin & Seabury, (1984) as quoted by Potgieter, 1998:153.

- **Category 4: Importance of contracting in social work supervision**

In this category both respondents have emphasized the reasons why contracting in social work supervision is important. According to them contracting in social work supervision is important because it sets rules and expectations; it protects both parties; it addresses needs and it contributes to effective services.

The following quotations confirm the respondents' understanding of the importance of contracting in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

- *“It sets definite rules/expectations between the two parties even before building a relationship in supervision. In other words there should be no misunderstandings or surprises in the future process.*
- *Protects both supervisor and supervisee to the expectations from the SACSSP.”*

Respondent 2:

- *“Inform supervision relationship*
- *They make it easy for the parties to confront each other for the wellbeing of service rendering.*
- *They address the parties needs for growth*
- *They contribute to effective and efficient social work services.”*

The respondents’ responses are alluded to by Brink (2006:10) who says “matching the expectations of the supervisor and supervisee is crucial for a good working alliance between them, without which the process will not evolve satisfactorily.”

#### **Category 5: Elements and format of a social work supervision contract**

Although each respondent has mentioned different elements, their responses indicated that they have a good understanding of the elements of a social work supervision contract. They also agreed that the elements dictate the format of the contract.

The following responses indicate that they have a good understanding of the elements and format of a social work supervision contract:

Respondent 1:

*“A contract for supervision must have the following elements:*

- *Job description, both to the organization’s expectations and unique demands as well as the professional level of the social work officer*

- ❑ *Specific supervision process to be utilized (work method)*
- ❑ *Evaluation- and feedback methods and procedures*
- ❑ *Routine to scheduled meetings, when and where*
- ❑ *Mutual expectations of preparation for supervision sessions*
- ❑ *Signature and date blocks-contract not effective if not signed by both parties.”*

Respondent 2:

*“The following elements are important:*

- ❑ *What is supervision?*
- ❑ *What are the supervisor’s roles?*
- ❑ *What are the supervisee’s roles?*
- ❑ *What are the functions of supervision?*
- ❑ *The authority vested on the supervisor.”*

In terms of the format for contracting in social work supervision the respondents gave the following responses:

Respondent 1:

*“Unfortunately I’m not in my office to give an example of the contracts we use, but all the elements that I have mentioned should be included.”*

Respondent 2:

*“The format of a contract in social work supervision should be formed by the elements.”*

The respondents’ understanding of the elements and format of a social work supervision contract are in agreement with those elements listed by Brown and Bourne (1996:52) as discussed in chapter 2 of this study.

- **Category 6: Advantages of contracting in social work supervision**

Regarding the advantages of contracting in social work supervision, both respondents have emphasized that the contract bound both parties, so whether they like it or not, supervision has to take place. The respondents also mentioned that contracting in social work supervision gives structure and guidance to the process of supervision. One respondent mentioned that a supervision contract helps in preventing misunderstandings in the professional relationship while the other respondent emphasized that it protects both parties.

The following quotations confirm the respondents' understanding of the advantages of contracting in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

- *“Protection of both parties to under-achievement and/or illegal practices.*
- *Formalize supervision process and give structure to working methods.*
- *Binding - should emphasize the importance thereof.*
- *Definite set standards prevent misunderstandings and conflict in future.”*

Respondent 2:

- *“They can be revisited whenever one of the parties involved does not meet expectations.*
- *They are informative.*
- *They give guidelines on service delivery.*
- *They contain information on service as well as professional relationship of supervisor and supervisee.*

- *Both parties are involved and can therefore bind themselves.”*

In a nutshell, the advantages mentioned by the respondents correlate with Bernard and Goodyear (1992:163) who note that contracting is that kind of quality control ensuring that certain supervision standards are adequately met. Another advantage is elucidated by Wilcoxon (in Botha, 2000:308), namely that “experience proves that supervision and consultation relationship and processes tend to run smoothly where both parties are fully aware of their roles, obligations and expectations. Only a contract in supervision and consultation is able to ensure this state of affairs.”

- **Category 7: Disadvantages of contracting in social work supervision**

Both supervisors have mentioned that there are certain disadvantages regarding contracting in social work supervision. They emphasized aspects like enforcement, resistance and feelings of being threatened. These aspects are clearly confirmed by the following quotations:

Respondent 1:

- *“Can’t force it down, as supervisor has no control status.*
- *People that are not so structured might feel threatened by contract-complexities in relationship building*
- *Contract is the ideal-not always realistic to expectations.*
- *Still just a piece of paper-not seen as important by everybody.”*

Respondent 2:

- *“Both parties are bound by contract even if they do not wish to engage in supervision.*
- *Supervisors may lack authority of enforcing contracts as supervisees regard them as soothers.*
- *The whole exercise of drawing up the contract could be useless if not drawn up together with the supervisee.”*

### 3.3.1.3 Summary of information collected from supervisors

The findings of the study suggest that supervisors interviewed displayed a high level of knowledge and understanding of contracting in social work supervision. It seems as if they have the clear perception that contracting in social work supervision boils down to a negotiated written agreement between supervisor and supervisee which informs the whole supervisory process. Both supervisors mentioned that all negotiations should be clear, explicit and be understandable to both supervisor and supervisee, and hence they agree about the importance, elements and format of a contract in social work supervision as well as advantages and disadvantages.

This section concludes the discussion of qualitative analysis of data derived from interviews with supervisors. Section B will focus on the qualitative findings collected from supervisees (social workers) through conducting focus group interviewing.

### 3.3.2 SECTION B: Information collected from supervisees

Information was collected from two different groups of social workers (in total eight respondents) through conducting focus group interviewing. All the respondents were employees of SANDF based in Tshwane Metropolitan Region (Pretoria) and Heidelberg (Gauteng). The focus group interviewing schedule utilized by the researcher was based on an in-depth literature review. The interview schedule comprised of biographical details of respondents as well as themes regarding contracting in social work supervision, which are listed below:

- ❑ **Understanding of the concept** contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Perceptions** regarding contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Characteristics** of contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Importance** of contracting in social work supervision
- ❑ **Elements and format** of a social work supervision contract



- **Advantages** of contracting in social work supervision  
(See Appendix B: Focus group interview schedule)

The researcher will first give an overview of the respondents' biographical information and then information regarding their perceptions, experiences and feelings about contracting in social work supervision.

### 3.3.2.1 Profile of respondents (supervisees)

- **Gender**

The gender information was aimed at obtaining the composition of the respondents in terms of their gender.

The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents, namely seven, were females with only one respondent a male. It confirms the previous statement that females dominate the social work profession.

- **Age**

This question aimed at identifying the ages of respondents (supervisees) who took part in the study.

Table 1 gives an overview of the respondents' age.

**Table 1: Age of respondents**

Age	N	%
20-29	2	25%
30-39	6	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

The findings reveal that one male was 29 years of age while one female was also 29 years of age. The other six respondents' ages were as follows: two were 30 years old, two were 32 years old, another one was 35 years old and one was 36 years old. Thus 75% of the respondents were between 30 and 39 years old.

The results indicated that the majority of supervisees are still young in the profession and therefore would need to be contracted until a certain level of maturity is arrived at, or until the supervisor is satisfied that the supervisee can be moved to consultation.

- **Highest academic qualification**

The question is aimed at obtaining information regarding the highest academic qualification of respondents (supervisees).

In terms of academic qualifications the findings indicated that seven of the respondents' highest academic qualification were a BA Social Work degree while one respondent's highest academic qualification was a Masters degree in Social Work. As part of their undergraduate training program they have learnt about social work supervision and as trained social workers they have experience of social work supervision. They were thus in the position to give comments regarding contracting in social work supervision.

- **Years of social work experience in the SANDF**

The aim of this question was to get information from supervisees about their years of working experience in social work in the SANDF.

The findings of the study indicated that all eight respondents' social work experience was between 3-6 years. It is thus clear that all the supervisees were still young in the profession and therefore would need to continue to be contracted until a certain level of professional maturity is arrived at, or until the

supervisor is satisfied that the supervisee can be moved to consultation. Based on the fact that the respondents' working experience were between 3-6 years, the possibility is great that most of them may still need a lot of professional guidance in terms of carrying out the SANDF's protocol and responsibilities.

The above section concludes the biographical information of the subjects (supervisees). The following section will focus on the perceptions, experiences and feelings of the respondents (supervisees) regarding contracting in social work supervision. The information will be given according to the identified categories.

### **3.3.2.2 Qualitative information according to categories**

Based on the analysis of the two focus group interview transcripts the researcher has identified the following five categories of information:

- **Perceptions** regarding contracting in social work supervision
- **Characteristics** of contracting in social work supervision
- **Importance** of contracting in social work supervision
- **Elements and format** of a social work supervision contract
- **Advantages** of contracting in social work supervision

Each category will be described according to the following structure:

- ◆ Summary of findings
- ◆ Quotations to verify findings and
- ◆ Integration of literature
  
- **Category 1: Perceptions regarding contracting in social work supervision**

In this category the findings indicated that although respondents formulated their perceptions differently it boils down to an agreement that the contract in

social work supervision should be in a written form and that the content should carry explicit, clear goals of supervision. Respondents emphasized the fact that contracting in social work supervision should address each supervisee's learning and developmental needs.

There was a strong perception that contracting in social work supervision should be clarified explicitly by the supervisor from the beginning of a working relationship. Another prominent perception was that contracting should address all methods of social work and should also touch on the fundamental core elements of contracting.

The respondents' perceptions regarding contracting in social work supervision are confirmed by the following quotations:

Respondent 1:

*"It is a good way of doing things in supervision, it is about time built into a supervision programme. Contracting needs to be clearly explained as to why it is taking place; for what reason and what it aims to achieve. Contracting encourages learning and is binding at the same time. It only has a purposeful meaning if it is done in writing. It's like a legal binding paper containing crucial responsibilities like everything to be done in supervision clearly spelt out. Being educated about it is the bottom line here."*

Respondent 2:

*"My perception regarding contracting in social work supervision is that the supervisor and supervisee compile a contract based on our needs. We identify development needs; discuss it and formulate a contract. Of-course it definitely won't be the same development needs, needs would differ according to individual supervisee. It basically focuses on you as a person, professionally and as an individual. The content of contract is divided into*

*casework, group work, administration, as well as research; and occupational social work; it is basically the methods of social work.”*

Respondent 3:

*“My idea of contracting in social work supervision is that contracting further attributes to frequency of supervision sessions, the venue, what needs to be prepared, expectations of both supervisor and supervisee, content of verbal and written feedback and the common need of both supervisor and supervisee like what must be achieved at the end of the session.”*

The respondents' responses correlate with Brink (2006:10) who says that “a clear discussion and a signed contract at the beginning of the supervision may help clarify most of all these issues.” Doel and Marsh (1992:53) support this statement and allude that “writing something down is a useful discipline to check for meaning and gives everyone a chance to correct it.” The respondents' perceptions regarding the fact that contracting should address all methods of social work and that it must focus on individual needs also correlate with Brown and Bourne (1996:58), who also deal extensively with the methods and needs in contracting.

The response of respondent 3 rather addressed elements instead of perceptions in contracting. The response relates to elements covered by Brown and Bourne (1996:51-60), who deal with elements in chapter 2 of the study.

The respondents' response with regard to verbal and written feedback correlate with Patti (2000:254) who links written feedback with evaluation used as a tool to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of individual program components. Thus, for contracting to be effective, both oral and written feedback should be provided by the supervisor.

- **Category 2: Characteristics of contracting in social work supervision**

It seems as if the respondents were not sure about the specific characteristics of contracting in social work supervision.

The following responses illustrate their confusion and lack of ability to describe the characteristics of contracting in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

*“Contracting in social work supervision involves the amount of sessions both the supervisor and supervisee should have at a particular given time. Characterized also by aspects to be covered in supervision and developmental needs, for instance seeing confidentiality as part of contracting.”*

Respondent 2:

*“Confidentiality where the supervisor and supervisee both agree about aspects of which may not be disclosed to other supervisors or which may be harmful to the profession and to the supervisee.”*

Respondent 3:

*“We’ve mentioned the amount of sessions and aspects to cover. Apart from confidentiality there are other aspects involved, aspects like duration, need for a thorough supervision before consultation, based on a learning goal directed towards producing efficiency in the Department and producing a very competent supervisee. It is further crucial to look at the aspect of both the expectations of the supervisor and supervisee, not forgetting the style of learning of the supervisee, as the style of supervising of the supervisor might not be suitable for a particular supervisee, so that aspect should be given further attention.”*

Respondent 4:

*“Expectations also involve a plan, how to plan, provide information on certain issues and report during the next supervision session, re-schedule sessions resulting from crisis situations and keeping records of what transpired during the previous supervision session.”*

According to the literature study in chapter 2 the following are characteristics of contracting in social work supervision: a contract has to be realistic, achievable and pragmatic and never demand actions or tasks that are beyond the capacity of either party (Thompson (1996) as well as Gavin & Seabury, (1984) as quoted by Potgieter, 1998:153). Furthermore, a contract should be formulated in positive behavioral terms and focus on what should happen, rather than on what should not (Miller & Janosik, (1980) as well as Gilliland, James & Brownman (1994) as cited in Potgieter (1998:153).

- **Category 3: Importance of contracting in social work supervision**

It was clear that the respondents realized the importance of contracting in social work supervision.

The following responses confirm the reasons why respondents' think that contracting is important.

Respondent 1:

*“Contracting is important as it simply serves as a platform for learning. It reminds you about theory, which you might have forgotten for a while. The skills, values, principles and methods are the same in social work and need to be contracted for as you need continuity on what has been learned.”*

Respondent 2:

*“Contracting is important to identify learning needs. Contracting serves as a guide to achieve set goals. The other important factor is that through contracting you eventually know what you have achieved.”*

Respondent 3:

*“It is very important, very, very important because it keeps both parties focused. Contracting helps because as a supervisee you go through different levels of growth-you keep track on milestones - there is growth if you achieve something in supervision.”*

The respondents' responses with regard to the importance of contracting in social work supervision correlate with Hersey and Blanchard (1992:161-166) who outline the different levels of professional maturity in which the worker, as the supervisee, goes through before he/she reaches the optimum level of maturity. The set goal with reference to contracting in social work supervision according to McLeod and Terreblanche (in Botha, 2000:207) implies that learning will take place and must cover the following areas which are aimed at capacitating and enhancing the supervisee's learning process: goals of supervision, systems, ethics, functions, process series and methods, phenomena, aids and models.

The following authors emphasize the importance of contracting in social work supervision:

Page and Wosket (1994:43) allude that establishing a contract is a good way to ensure that supervision gets off the ground as smoothly as possible. Bernard and Goodyear (1998:213) note that contracts not only help to clarify the supervision relationship, but can also be used to promote ethical standards and their implementation within supervision. Weinbach (1998:26)



refers to the importance of contracting by stating that it encourages cooperation with the task environment and makes interaction more predictable and, therefore, less potentially threatening.

- **Category 4: Elements and format of a social work supervision contract**

In this category the respondents mentioned that a social work supervision contract must focus on the following elements: supervisory relationship, job description, frequency of meetings, session planning, venue, expectations, how to handle crisis, developmental needs, performance assessment, learning needs, nature of feedback and the issue of confidentiality.

The following quotations confirm the respondents' understanding of the elements and format of a contract in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

*“The elements depend on both supervisor and supervisee’s discretion but timing should be involved; frequency; duration, sessional planning; submitting supervision material in advance in preparation for actual session; agenda; learning style; relevant policies; learning areas; expectations of both supervisor and supervisee, and how to deal with a crisis.”*

Respondent 2:

*“Another element involved is that of meetings for supervision, venue, agenda, planning in advance, case work methods to be discussed, developmental needs, contracting for supervision style, supervision relationship, feedback both verbal and in writing, as well as the issue of confidentiality.”*

Respondent 3:

*“The following elements are important for me:*

*Open communication; frequency of supervision; venue; goals of supervision; expectations of both supervisor and supervisee; how to handle a crisis; identifying developmental needs; performance appraisal; and the issue of confidentiality.”*

All the respondents concurred and referred to the elements covered by Brown and Bourne (1996:51-60) which were discussed in chapter 2. The respondents responses also correlate with Wilson (1993:50) who shares the same sentiments and mentions the following elements: goals to be achieved; duration of supervision relationship; duration of each session; frequency of supervision sessions; venue and media instruction. According to Potgieter (1998:155) goals and objectives are crucial elements of the contract.

It further seems as if the respondents were of the opinion that the elements and the format for contracting in social work supervision contain the same aspects and that such elements and format were regarded as crucial for cementing the content of contracting in social work supervision.

The following responses in relation to the format of contracting confirm the respondents' understanding of the format:

*Respondent 1:*

*“The format itself should contain the same mentioned elements and everything else the supervisor and supervisee may deem necessary for the importance of drawing up a contract for social work supervision, but the contract should be very specific and clear.”*

Respondent 2:

*“The format must basically address the mentioned elements. However it boils down to what will suit the two of you. Preferably it must be a written contract so that both of you can always fall back to it in order to evaluate if objectives and goals were met or not.”*

In practice it is crucial for the supervisor and the supervisee to have their own suitable format when drawing up a contract for supervision. In literature there is presently no specific format recommended to follow when compiling a supervision contract, which is an aspect most authors failed to address. Chapter 2 of this study delineates clearly that pioneers who write about contracting in social work supervision failed to come up with a specific format for contracting in social work supervision.

- **Category 5: Advantages of contracting in social work supervision**

The respondents endorse contracting in social work supervision as a platform for learning and developmental needs; it gives support; it helps the supervisee to work in a focussed manner; it encourages commitment and enhances accountability.

The following quotations confirm the respondents’ understanding about the advantages of contracting in social work supervision:

Respondent 1:

*“Contracting serves as a support system as well as a means of orientation especially when entering the organization. The other advantage is that you are focussed throughout; it is a developmental process and you are always on track.”*

Respondent 2:

*“Another advantage of contracting is that as a supervisee you get free coaching and mentoring towards the right direction, when in other instances the organization has to pay for coaching and mentoring as they are outsourced to outside consultants”.*

Respondent 3:

*“Contracting is a platform for developmental needs and it encourages commitment and determination as well as accountability; there is also the issue of support and the feeling that you are not alone.”*

The respondents' views regarding the following issues: support system, being focussed, developmental process, commitment and accountability, correlate with Richards *et al.* (in Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:218) who maintain that the advantage of contracting in social work supervision is that the supervisee learns in a well-structured supervision. Being focused, according to Page and Wosket (1994:69), means developing the supervisee's responsibility to make the best use of the supervision opportunity. With regard to a support system the views of respondents' are in line with Botha (2000:308) who says supervision relationships and processes tend to run smoothly where both parties are fully aware of their roles, obligations and expectations. Accountability is discussed broadly by Brown and Bourne (1996:53) in chapter 2 of this study. Coaching in relation to contracting refers to facilitating change and development (Hall & Duval, 2004).

### **3.3.2.3 Summary of information collected from supervisees**

It seems as if all the respondents did agree about the importance of contracting in social work supervision and that contracting should be an agreement negotiated between supervisor and supervisee and put in a written form in a manner understandable to both parties. Respondents also indicated that contracting helps the supervisor and supervisee conduct themselves in

the professional relationship. It informs the two parties on the process of supervision. It also informs the parties about their roles regarding the goals of supervision or of the supervisory relationship. The significance of these findings is that contracting in social work supervision creates an opportunity for both supervisor and supervisee to negotiate a climate for a good professional working relationship.

Although it also seems as if the respondents are confused about certain aspects regarding contracting in social work supervision, i.e. characteristics and disadvantages of contracting, they do however have some kind of understanding of what the contract for supervision should entail.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the researcher presented, analyzed and interpreted qualitative research findings based on the responses of supervisors and supervisees regarding contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

The next chapter summarizes the conclusions and recommendations of the study on contracting in social work supervision. The chapter also outlines the proposed guideline for contracting in social work supervision.

## CHAPTER 4

### GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Contracting in social work supervision is very fundamental for the successfulness of supervision. Contracting is very important and should be done at the initial phase of supervision in order to eliminate all misunderstandings from the start. It is during this phase that the basis is laid for the supervision relationship where the supervisor is expected to clarify the importance of a supervision contract.

A supervision contract assists both the supervisor and supervisee to clarify the expectations about how they should act, who must do what, where and when, what can and cannot be done during the supervision process, and what steps are to be taken if one of the parties does not honor the conditions of contract. According to Doel and Marsh (1992:53), writing something down is a useful discipline to check for meaning and gives everyone a chance to correct it. Page and Wosket (1994:66) contend that contracting gives the opportunity to negotiate not only what is expected of both parties in terms of preparation prior to supervision, but also the nitty-gritty issues of frequency and other practical aspects.

The researcher concludes by stating that a supervision contract is an important means to get effective supervision in place. Without a meaningful contract endorsed by both supervisor and supervisee, supervision is likely to be beset with difficulties and misunderstandings (Brown & Bourne, 1996:50).

The aim of this study was to determine and explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the South African National Defense

Force (SANDF) while the objectives to achieve the goal were realized as follows:

- ◆ To determine the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision by conducting a literature study.
- ◆ To conduct an empirical study to explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.
- ◆ To give guidelines and recommendations regarding contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

The study was thus structured to determine and explore the nature of contracting in social work supervision, involving supervisors and supervisees in the SANDF. The following qualitative research question was thus formulated:

**What is the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF?**

The research study brought certain insights that are now discussed in the form of a general summary, conclusions and recommendations. The latter is presented according to the following discussion points:

- ◆ Research methodology:
- ◆ Detailed literature review focussing on:
  - Contracting in social work supervision
  - Characteristics of contracts in social work supervision
  - Conceptualization of relevant concepts
  - Rationale for contracting
  - Key elements and a format in compiling a supervision contract
  - Advantages of contracting in social work supervision.

- ◆ Empirical research findings:
  - Qualitative findings based on the experiences and perceptions of supervisors regarding the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.
  - Qualitative findings based on the experiences and perceptions of supervisees regarding the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

## 4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### ❖ Summary

Chapter one provides an introduction and general orientation to the study. The researcher started with the motive for the choice of the research topic, followed by a formulation of the problem. The goal and objective of the study were also identified and the research question was formulated. Furthermore, a description of the research approach, the type of research, research design, research procedure and strategy followed is mentioned. Aspects concerning the pilot study were also explained and a description of the research population is given. Ethical aspects and limitations of the study were briefly outlined and key concepts of the study defined. The chapter ends by highlighting the topics of the subsequent chapters in the dissertation.

### ❖ Conclusions

Based on the methodology of the study the researcher concludes:

- ◆ The qualitative type of research used in this study was effective as it enabled the researcher to focus on the perceptions and experiences of supervisors and supervisees.
- ◆ The type of research, i.e. applied research, selected for this study was suitable as the study was in essence problem-orientated in the sense that



the research was carried out to explore a specific problem in practice, which was contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

- ◆ The utilization of the exploratory design was appropriate as the aim of the study was to explore the respondents' perceptions and experiences about contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.
- ◆ A major limitation of the study is that the findings are inconclusive and cannot be generalized to the larger population, given the fact that the target population was comprised of only ten respondents.
- ◆ Although this study can make a valuable contribution to SANDF and to the social work profession as it gives valuable information about contracting in social work supervision.

#### ❖ **Recommendations**

- More in-depth research regarding contracting in social work supervision should be conducted in the entire SANDF involving all the regions.
- In order to enhance social work supervision research regarding contracting in social work supervision should be broadened to the entire welfare sector.

### **4.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### ❖ **Summary**

Rubin and Babbie (2007:73) note that “until literature is reviewed, there is no way of knowing whether the research question has already been adequately answered, of identifying the conceptual and practical obstacles that others have already encountered in the line of research, of learning how those obstacles have been overcome, and of deciding what lines of research can best be built on the work that has already been done in a particular problem area.”

Thus the literature study in chapter 2 has focused primarily on the following aspects: characteristics of contracting in social work supervision, conceptualization of the concepts contract and contracting in social work supervision, as well as the rationale for contracting. Furthermore, key elements in compiling a supervision contract and the format of a supervision contract were outlined, and advantages of contracting in social work supervision were discussed.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the literature review the researcher concludes that:

- ◆ Although the literature describes certain focus areas of contracting in social work supervision, the researcher has experienced a lack of in-depth discussions regarding the implementation of contracting in practice as well as the format and disadvantages of contracting in social work supervision. It was clear, however, that the literature emphasizes the importance of contracting in social work supervision.
- ◆ Contracting in social work supervision will continue to be an issue of never-ending debate in the helping professions, unless proper mechanisms are put in place to address issues such as the content of the contract, format of a contract, what needs to be done if one party fails to honor conditions of contract and other important issues of contracting, specifically in social work supervision.
- ◆ In essence, contracting can be used to promote learning and development of social workers in service delivery.
- ◆ Contracts raise everyone's consciousness about what is to transpire and how things are to evolve in structured supervision.
- ◆ Contracting in social work supervision decrease the amount of discomfort when confrontation is justified when one party does not live up to the agreement (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:214).
- ◆ A contract in social work supervision is an ongoing process which shapes and provides structure and direction to the relationship and the

professional task.

#### ❖ **Recommendations**

- ◆ Research experts in the field of supervision should generate more in-depth theoretical literature on contracting in social work supervision.
- ◆ Post-graduate students should focus more on formal research regarding contracting in social work supervision in order to enrich the theoretical base of contracting.

### **4.4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.4.1 Qualitative findings based on contracting in social work supervision (supervisors)**

##### ❖ **Summary**

The nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF was empirically explored with two supervisors as described in chapter 3 of the study.

##### ❖ **Conclusions**

The following conclusions are drawn from the empirical research findings:

- ◆ Contracting in social work supervision plays an important role in the SANDF. It is viewed as a milestone for personal development and a building block towards professional development.
- ◆ Supervisors seem to have more knowledge about the nature and role of contracting in social work supervision than supervisees.
- ◆ There is no way that supervision can be carried out without contracting in the SANDF. Contracting is viewed by supervisors as a guideline in itself.

- ◆ The supervisors reflected an understanding of the concept 'contracting in social work supervision', characteristics of contracting, elements and format of a contract as well as advantages of contracting in social work supervision.

#### ❖ **Recommendations**

The researcher wants to recommend that the social work sector in the SANDF must formulate guidelines regarding contracting in social work supervision and then make it part of internal supervision policy.

#### **4.4.2 Qualitative findings based on contracting in social work supervision (supervisees)**

##### ❖ **Summary**

Contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF was empirically explored with two groups of supervisees as described in chapter 3 of the study.

##### ❖ **Conclusions**

- ◆ It seems as if all the respondents did agree about the importance of contracting in social work supervision and that contracting should be an agreement negotiated between supervisor and supervisee and put in a written form in a manner understandable to both parties.
- ◆ Respondents also indicated that contracting helps the supervisor and supervisee conduct themselves in the professional relationship. It informs the two parties on the process of supervision as well as in the supervisory relationship. The significance of these findings is that contracting in social work supervision creates an opportunity for both supervisor and supervisee to negotiate a climate for a good professional working relationship.

- ◆ Research findings however also showed that respondents were confused about certain aspects regarding contracting in social work supervision, namely characteristics and disadvantages of contracting.
- ◆ This research study was exploratory in nature and its findings cannot be generalized to the entire SANDF, since it was only conducted in Gauteng Region (Pretoria). This implies that the study provides incomplete knowledge about the exact nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

#### ❖ **Recommendations**

- ◆ The researcher recommends that an advanced research study on an advanced professional level, regarding contracting in social work supervision, should be undertaken in the SANDF.
- ◆ Social work supervisors and supervisees should be given training about the content of a supervision contract as well as how to compile a contract for supervision.
  - It is recommended that a survey with regard to contracting in social work supervision be conducted across the board in the SANDF, with special reference to the following aspects:
    - Different contracts for supervision used by other supervisors within the SANDF.
    - Wording utilized for drawing up professional contracts for supervision in the SANDF.
    - New ways, methods and innovations to make contracting in social work supervision more effective.
- ◆ Based on the empirical data and literature review, the researcher wants to recommend the following guidelines for contracting in social work supervision:
  - Supervision should be an ongoing exercise based on the negotiated contract between the supervisor and the supervisee. The goals and objectives of supervision should be to help the supervisee improve his/her job performance. The frequency of the supervision needs to be

determined by the level of maturity of the supervisee.

- Contracts should be general and limited to short periods (Munson, 2000:176) that create opportunities to review and clearly determine if the process is still working or not, and to make adjustments if necessary.
- It is important for supervisor and supervisee to formulate a clear contract for every supervisory relationship and to decide on the managerial, educative and supportive responsibilities of the supervisor in this contract (Dryden & Thorne, in Bernard & Goodyear, 1998: 213).
- It is important for supervisor and supervisee to formulate a clear contract for every supervisory relationship and to decide on the managerial, educative and supportive responsibilities of the supervisor in this contract (Dryden & Thorne, in Bernard & Goodyear, 1998: 213).
- The first step in contracting is to be clear which of the main categories of supervision is being requested by the supervisee and being offered by the supervisor, and what sort of match or mismatch exists (Dryden & Thorne, in Bernard & Goodyear, 1998:213).
- Establishing a contract is a good way to ensure that supervision gets off the ground as smoothly as possible in order that the work with the client can then become the sustained focus of attention (Page & Wosket, 1994:44-46).
- Contracting is a process, which occurs regularly or irregularly, over a number of sessions and the supervisor should be sensitive to the needs and preferences of the supervisee in the way that the contract is constructed and implemented.
- Ground rules are very important; frequency, duration, venue, how cases are to be brought, and also how the supervision contract and the work will be reviewed and evaluated (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006:63).
- As part of contracting, the supervisor needs to be aware of the context in which supervision takes place.
- Supervisors should be more equipped to deal with aspects of contracting in social work supervision.
- Contracting should occur at the beginning of any supervisory relationship. It can however also occur as re-contracting throughout the

process of supervision. The fact that re-contracting occurs at various stages is usually the sign of a healthy and growing relationship and a developing task (Page & Wosket, 1994:34-36).

- Expectations over issues such as aims, goals, functions, and purposes of supervision together with the preferences, anticipations and responsibilities of the parties concerned needs to be clearly defined in a supervision contract.
- Contracting for a particular supervision style is very crucial.
- The supervisor must encourage feedback from the supervisees on what was helpful about the supervision process, what was difficult and what they would like to be changed in future supervision sessions
- Supervisor and supervisee must agree on how the planned action will be reviewed at future supervision sessions.
- In order to accomplish effective supervision, it is generally accepted that the supervisor must receive training on a continuous basis in performance of supervision.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter attempts to provide a starting point for both supervisor and supervisee on how crucial contracting is in social work supervision and how they should structure their task appropriately through contracting. It is aimed at equipping both supervisors and supervisees with the best strategies to make supervision more productive, effective and efficient. It is not a final guideline, but it highlights the key aspects important in achieving contracting in the true sense. A lot has been done in social work supervision by supervisors, but supervision at any stage of development should be specified on contracting.

The chapter recognizes the fact that there is supervision in place, but it should be geared towards achieving a particular goal, i.e. making both parties happy through a goal attainment process.

It is important that further comparative studies be done with different welfare sectors to establish the manner in which contracting is applied in practice. There is certainly no way that the magnitude of a social work caseload can be carried out without contracting in social work supervision. Contracting enables both supervisor and supervisee to reflect on what was done previously and what needs to be done in the future. It provides opportunities for forward thinking.

#### 4.6 ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

**Goal of the study:** To explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.

Table 2 focuses on how the above goal and resulting objectives of the study were accomplished:

**Table 2: Accomplishment of the study objectives**

Nr.	Objective	Objective achievement
1.	To determine the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision by conducting a literature study.	This objective was achieved as reflected in the discussion presented in chapter 2.
2.	To conduct an empirical study to explore the nature and the role of contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.	This objective was accomplished successfully through a detailed discussion in chapter 3 on the qualitative findings on contracting in social work supervision in the SANDF.
3.	To develop guidelines and recommendations regarding contracting in social work	This objective was achieved through a detailed presentation of a guideline and recommendations in chapter 4.



	supervision in the SANDF.	
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#### **4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Contracting in social work supervision should focus on all functions of supervision and learning styles of supervision and must be appropriate to the needs of the supervisee. Both the supervisor and supervisee are to lay a good solid foundation of social work supervision relationship, built on supervision sessions and aimed at successful and purposeful contracting.

There should preferably be a written agreement between the supervisor and the supervisee in a contract form about the nature of their professional relationship. In this case it is recommended that it involve all the aspects discussed in this research study. Contracting must be interpreted in simple but goal-oriented statements of understanding between supervisor and supervisee. It is important that the supervisor get to know the supervisee, his/her strengths and weaknesses, what he/she already knows and what he/she will need to learn to promote his/her learning growth in supervision.

Every circumstance differs, taking into consideration the professional working relationship between supervisor and supervisee and the level of maturity of a particular social worker. As a result it is significant for both supervisor and supervisee to enter into some kind of supervision contract.

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