Editor’s notes

Introducing this issue, Blaž Mesec writes on qualitative analysis. The chief value of his method is that it may be applied to all sorts of personal notes and recollections that emerge in social work, as for instance those he uses to demonstrate it — the diary of a participant observer in a psychiatric hospital. Qualitative analysis can give us «the theory of a given case», that is, a theoretical construction in which the given case figures as «empirical material», but it can also give us a clue about the implicit theory (or theories) applied by the observer.

The contributors mentioned in this section are discussing supervision in social work. First, there is Vida Milošević’s description of the development, assumptions and place of supervision in social work, with regard to the situation in Slovenia. The very basic assumption, however, is this: good supervision is essential for good practice.

Alenka Kobolt brings in the particularities of team supervision as related to and distinct from group supervision. It appears that group and team supervision do not differ only in the «type of group» they deal with but in the different subjects they address: the group in group supervision is merely a setting for what remains basically individual supervision (supervision of a competent, autonomous individual worker), while in the other case it is the institution represented by the team (or the team as an institution) that is under supervision, with the individual taking the very partial position of either an example (if he or she does well as to the expectations of the institution) or a symptom (if he or she does not). So that team supervision seems to be a very difficult job, as the author herself points out. In team work, the benefit for the user (the ultimate aim of all this work) depends not on the competence of an individual but on a presumed co-ordination; and a team may certainly not be considered a group of autonomous individuals, if the individual is but a function in the working process, indeed, more in service to the institution than to the user.

Supervision in social work is not exactly news, as it has been practiced in several fields of welfare work for years. Doris Erzar, for example, describes supervision in family work. Another such model — of elderly people’s groups — is later described by Jože Ramovš.

Next, Marta Vodeb Bonač describes her and her colleagues’ work with the students of School of Social Work. It combines elements of education, tutorial and supervision. But even though the authors inevitably point out that supervision is a form of teaching/learning, it obviously also represents a distinct issue. What, then, is specific for supervision, that which is not contained in the educational process or not altogether contained? There are several answers to this question. In any case, at least for the supervisee, supervision is a form of professional self-control, as well as a form of personal support; both for the purpose of good practice.

That supervision is at bottom the work done by the supervisee (who, some authors say, forms a self-reflecting discourse), is inferred also in Henk Hanekamp’s contribution. His «intervision» (better known in English as «peer supervision») is still supervision, despite the absence of a formal supervisor. But that is also its limit: supervision work ends if instead of the working goals of supervision, group-dynamic knots prevail in an intervision group. But this also happens in a group with a supervisor who is not well acquainted with what we vaguely call the group processes.

Therefore, supervision is not in the first place a special method but primarily a special practice and a method only in the second step (a setting for a ritualised practice), and supervisor is not a special
ABSTRACTS

Blaž Mesec

"A DAY IN PSYCHIATRY": AN EXAMPLE OF QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Psychologist Blaž Mesec, Ph. D., is a senior lecturer of methodology at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.

The technique of qualitative analysis is presented as applied to the diary of a volunteer worker in the women’s department of a psychiatric clinic. A short definition of qualitative analysis is followed by the description of the procedure, beginning with the transcription of the original material and extending to: breaking down of the text into topics, naming those topics in ordinary language, posing questions and reformulating the topics as research problems, coding (indexing), defining the terms ascribed as codes, selecting key terms, defining relations among the terms, representing these relations in a diagram, and formulating trial theories. Qualitative analysis turns out to be a surprisingly attractive and fruitful procedure of creating theories, relevant for practice, that may also be tested by quantitative methods.

Vida Milošević

SUPERVISION — THE METHOD FOR PROFESSIONALS

Social worker Vida Milošević is a lecturer at the University of Ljubljana School of Social Work; she specialised supervision at the Hogeschool Nijmegen (the Netherlands).

The author presents the development of supervision and the reasons for it in social work and in other professions in which workers relate very closely with people in distress. The goals of supervision — learning by experience, support and guidance at work — are helpful in particular to the professionals, but indirectly also to the users, as they promise better practice. Conditions for good supervision are defined: a link between learning and practice, a trained supervisor, safe surroundings, a suitable room and an agreed institutional frame. The author presents supervision as a systematic and continuing process with phases, and in the end she describes a supervision session and the documentation needed in the supervision process.

Alenka Kobolt

GROUP SUPERVISION AND WORKING GROUP OR TEAM SUPERVISION

Psychologist Alenka Kobolt, Ph. D., is a senior lecturer at the University of Ljubljana Pedagogic Faculty, dept. of social pedagogy, and Chairperson of the Slovenian section for Extrafamilial Education of the International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE).

On the one hand, the author defines supervision as a particular didactic and supportive method, and on the other hand, as a process of reflection and evaluation of what takes place in the professional work with people and of the worker’s experience of it. She describes the features of group and team supervision, what is common to them and what distinguishes them. She elaborates on what supervision has to offer to the supervisees and what are its limitations.

Doris Erzar

THE CONTENTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISION

Social worker and pedagogue Doris Erzar is co-ordinator of the spouse and family counselling team at the Kranj Social Work Centre; she specialised supervision at the Hogeschool Nijmegen (the Netherlands).

Supervision as a supportive method meets the needs of expert workers at social work centres and in other institutions of social welfare. In the social work centres, it has been practised for years, originating in the needs of the expert workers mainly in the fields of family, partnership, parenthood and prevention. Supervision also offers the worker an opportunity for personal growth and a relief at work. In a supervision group, we learn to freely reflect our practice and to link our former working experience with the newly acquired knowledge into new solutions.

Marta Vodeb Bonač

SUPERVISION ON PLACEMENT FOR THE 1ST YEAR STUDENTS OF SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK — A MODEL

Marta Vodeb Bonač is a social worker at the Ljubljana Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Parents; she specialised supervision at the Hogeschool Nijmegen (the Netherlands).

The author describes the goals, the contents and the organisational context of supervision, the modes of work and the foreseen improvements. A supervisor is not the person who knows it all and passes knowledge
to the (implicitly) ignorant, but supports and stimulates a supervisee in the process of his or her own learning. This is the basis of the supervision on placement for the School of Social Work students. Supervision enables the students who, within their respective placements, visit children in their families to learn by reflecting their own practical experience.

Henk Hanekamp

INTERVISION

Psychologist Henk Hanekamp, Ph. D., is a psychotherapist and teacher of supervision at Hogeschool Nijmegen (the Netherlands).

»Intervision« is a form of group supervision without a formal supervisor; the supervisor’s tasks pass from one member to another. The author analyses the conditions and the rules needed to be observed for successful intervision. He portrays the forming of an intervision group, its goals, the contents and the course of this specific mode of learning for professional work. He lays great stress on reflection that makes it possible to apply one’s own experience to practice. The settled techniques of intervision work are described, such as the technique of incident, the technique of guided interaction, co-counselling, the technique of problem solving, and narrative analysis. Finally, the issues of particular importance at work in intervision group are listed in the form of questions.

Jože Ramovš

FROM TEACHING TO TUTORING TO SUPERVISION

Anthropologist dr. Jože Ramovš is a senior lecturer at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work and researcher at both the Institute for the promotion of health and at the Anton Trstenjak Institute in Ljubljana.

In the first part of the article, the author presents the project of self-help groups for the elderly in Slovenia. Education for their conductors is organised by the Association of Social Gerontology and Gerontagogy in co-operation with the Anton Trstenjak Institute. In the past seven years, they have been extended to 36 locations, so that now, they number about 120 groups. Such expansion is due to, first, the actual needs of the elderly (their loneliness and existential void), and second, the elaborated system of permanent education for voluntary conductors. The latter consists of, firstly, theoretical and practical teaching, secondly, tutoring the novices in conducting groups on their own, and thirdly, supervision at this work as well as at expanding the local network of such groups.

Srečo Dragos

ETHICS IN SOCIAL WELFARE OR SOCIAL WELFARE ETHICS?

Sociologist Srečo Dragos, M. A., is an assistant lecturer of sociology at University of Ljubljana School of Social Work.

The question in the title refers to the project developed by the ethical commission of the Social Chamber of Slovenia. The author points out the difference between the ethics in social welfare that already forms part of each of the participating professions and the new, specific, ethics of social welfare that is apparently needed for this field. Such a code of ethics might produce some confusion as to its relation with the existing professional codes, and it could also raise the question of the autonomy of those professions. Instead, the author supports the idea that the actual principles of action in the field be stated and founded in technical rather than ethical requests, to avoid a mere repetition of the professional codes of ethics.

Vida Miloševič

THE MODEL OF THE TRAINING OF SUPERVISORS IN SOCIAL WELFARE IN SLOVENIA — A PROPOSAL

Social worker Vida Miloševič is a lecturer at the University of Ljubljana School of Social Work; she specialised supervision at the Hogeschool Nijmegen (the Netherlands).

Supervision network in the field of social work, the author estimates, should take care of roughly six hundred social and other expert workers in the different regions of Slovenia. The Dutch model of group supervision is suggested, in which one supervisor works with three supervisees. The fastest way to establish regular supervision is to ground the network in the existing model of supervision in family work. The experts who have acquired experience in supervision through training and supervision groups can be the key persons in the development of a supervision network and in the specialisation supervision studies that is in preparation at the School of Social Work. A draft of the programme and the dynamics of training are presented.