

# The 1st Conference on Supervised Practice of Psychologists

Report

August 25 – 26, 2017

Hotel Lev,

Ljubljana, Slovenia



# The 1st Conference on Supervised Practice of Psychologists

## Report

### *Overview*

The Conference was organized by the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, in collaboration with the Slovenian Psychologists' Association, the Norwegian Psychological Association, the Andrej Marušič Institute at the University of Primorska, and the ISA Institute of Psychological Counseling and Educational Developmental Projects. The conference was placed under the auspices of the *EuroPsy* European Awarding Committee.

Its organization was supported by Norway Grants 2009 – 2014 and national funds of the Republic of Slovenia as part of the project "Super Psiholog." Participation by EFPA NAC Chairs or Members was partially funded by EFPA (travel and accommodation expenses for one person per NAC up to €300). There was no registration fee.

Sixty participants attended the two day conference took place that took place at Hotel Lev. Fourteen were NAC/EFPA MA representatives. Materials provided free of charge included the publication which resulted out of the bilateral project titled "*The Development of the Supervised Practice of Psychologists in Slovenia*" edited by Dr Anja Podlesek. Lunch and refreshments were also offered free of charge.

Overall, the conference provided an opportunity to present the state of affairs in supervised practice in different European countries, showcasing good practices in supervision, and discussing the challenges remaining to be solved in the future.



Photo of the participants at the end of the conference.



### Day 1

The day started with registration and opening/welcome by Dr Anja Podlesek, representing the organizing committee, Dr Valentin Bucik, Head of Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, who welcomed everyone and wishes a productive conference, and last, Dr Eleni Karayianni on behalf of the EC, who welcomed the participants, congratulated the organizers for the initiative and briefly discussed the importance of supervised practice for EFPA and psychology.

The first invited talk was by Dr Ingrid Lunt, Former Chair of EAC, who spoke on *EuroPsy* and supervised practice's development in education for European psychologists. Some of Dr Lunt's key points included that diversity is welcome and should exist, that the aim is to enhance quality of education and professional services, and that competence can't simply be evaluated by academic and theoretical knowledge, that supervised practice is needed for that purpose. The identified challenges pertain to training supervisors and introducing supervised practice where there are no requirements.

A series of presentations on the status of supervised practice in countries with NACs ensued. NAC or MA representatives from Portugal, France, Belgium, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Italy, Malta, UK, Croatia, and Czech Republic presented. The presentation only made it clearer that while there are notable differences in education standards, the challenges are quite similar and identical to the ones identified by Dr Lunt. Norwegian and Slovenian representatives presented separately in order to discuss project findings. We were presented with a unique aspect of two different systems' collaboration to bridge differences, learn from each other, and help each other grow further.

The day proceeded with a brief presentation by Mr Monishankar Singha, who spoke from the viewpoint of a participant of the project "Super Psiholog" and noted the importance for such opportunities especially in countries where supervised practice is not well established, a keynote speech by Dr Aisling McMahon, and a workshop by Dr Vlasta Zabukovec. Dr McMahon's keynote focused on the "Four guiding principles for the supervisory relationship" providing a lot of "food for thought" on incorporating personal style with competence in order to provide the best possible supervisory experience. It was noted that enabling the supervisee in his professional development is crucial. This occurs by a supervisor who has emotional presence and sensitivity, by developing a supervisory relationship that supports continued personal and professional growth, by being a supervisor who offers knowledge and expertise with humility, and who values the process of the supervisory relationship. It was emphasized that for these principles to be evident, one needs to be competent and have obtained supervisory training. Lastly, Dr Zabukovec led participants through an interactive workshop on the use of experiential learning as an added method to supervised practice. The workshop drew increased interest due to its hands on nature and the introduction of a new, perhaps different topic for many participants, on the active, experiential aspect of learning in



supervision. All agreed that they would have liked more time to develop even further their understanding of the concepts and practice even more.

Thus, day 1 ended with a lot of new, useful information leading to discussions among participants and presenters even after the end of the presentations. A walk through downtown Ljubljana in the company of an entertaining tour guide and a wonderful dinner was offered for active participants.

### *Day 2*

Day 2 began with an invited talk by Mr Per Atle Straumsheim of the Norwegian Psychological Association and the *EuroPsy* S-EAC Work & Organizational Psychology on “what to assess and what to develop in supervision.” Mr Straumsheim emphasized aspects discussed during day 1 pertaining to a safe supervisory environment, the use of different supervisory styles to best help the supervisee develop professionally, and also the balancing act between growth and assessment. Qualitative data presented from an NPA survey of supervisors indicated that there are differences in supervisor training and knowledge, as well as approach to supervision. The need for affordable courses, guidelines on assessment and feedback, competence development and assessment via feedback, as well as the value of the supervisory contract were outlined.

The second presentation by Mr Matic Kadlicek and Ms Brigita Voncina from Slovenia presented the challenges and creative use of supervision at a distance when dealing with professionals in remote workplace settings (e.g., exchange of information, modes of supervision, expectations and assessment, etc). The significance of supervision available especially in cases where psychologists are isolated location-wise was made.

The third presentation/workshop by Ms Ingvild Stjernen Tisløv from Norway presented more extensively on the challenges of supervision (e.g., reaching a plateau vs ongoing development), bridging the gap between supervisee competence-based assessment and development, and discussed the theory and application of using a feedback learning model as best practice. This interactive presentation gave the opportunity for participants’ active learning and connection with one’s own supervisory practice.

The final invited talk was given by Dr Rosaleen McElvaney on incorporating supervised practice within educational training programs. In particular, Dr McElvaney discussed the model of training implemented in Ireland and the benefits of having supervised practice incorporated within a training program. This led to a discussion of differences between supervised practice within and without formalized educational programs in different countries and how aspects could be borrowed, adapted, and/or implemented in different countries.



The last activity of the day involved separating participants into groups to discuss two different topics: a) supervisors and supervisory training and b) challenges in supervised practice and how they could be faced. Guidance was given in the format of questions. Once the exercise was completed, groups reconvened to present shortly their findings and participated in a big group discussion.

Key conclusions from topic 1 (supervision) included the following:

- Competent supervisors ought to have at least 5 years work experience (inclusive of work experience during training), training in supervision (20 hours initial followed by CPD in supervision), knowledge of the field of practice wherein they provide supervision, positive attitude towards life-long learning, as well as theoretical and practical competence in building healthy relationships;
- In terms of supervisor education on supervision, needs outlined included knowledge on supervision models/theories, teaching and learning methods, professional/ethical/legal issues, and use of experiential learning methods in supervision. Supervisors should develop individualized learning plans/goals for their training to be used in their assessment, and various assessment methods to be used for this purpose (e.g., self-report, feedback by various informants, role playing or video observation, etc.);
- Ongoing supervision of supervision is a must.
- EFPA could support supervisory training as follows:
  - Develop guidelines for supervisor training and supervised practice
  - Develop a bank of training materials to be made available to all MAs
  - Develop a bank of assessment materials to be made available to all MAs
  - Develop a contact list of specialists available for cross-consultation and training
  - Sponsor biennial conference on supervised practice to continue to develop/review practice.

Key conclusions from topic 2 (challenges in supervised practice) included the following:

- Several challenges were identified such as supervision offered primarily in the context of psychotherapy than psychology, the voluntary vs obligatory nature of supervised practice and motivating novice psychologists to obtain supervision, documentation and costs, availability of supervisors – especially trained ones, motivating professionals to want to become supervisors and to be supervised, lack of support from the work environment, and the potential dual role in supervision (gatekeeper vs supporting development);
- Evaluation presents with a distinct challenge of transparency, clear criteria and regulations, “proven” competences and their further development, supervisory intervention, etc;
- Special attention was given to supervised practice for W/O psychology. The diversity of one’s background within this field of practice and specialization need to be taken into consideration (e.g., need for knowledge from fields outside of psychology), the need for promotion with the employers in terms of making space for supervised practice in the format of lifelong learning focusing on benefits of supervised practice as well as losses in its absence, the development of mentoring relationships and the provision of feedback by other professionals were all delineated.
- EFPA, and especially the *EuroPsy* EAC, could support the resolution of these challenges by:
  - Reframing supervision in a context-specific manner (reorienting it to the field of practice)
  - Creating a special working group that will focus on translating the model of supervised practice (supervision, principles, methods of supervision) to the field of W/O psychology



- Addressing the need for supervisor training.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

Overall, the conference was a great success! The program put together by the organizers was well thought out and pertaining to the topic covering various aspects of supervised practice in an engaging and educational manner. The conference covers a significant gap in the availability of similar events addressing the specific topic, all the while providing a forum wherein the exchange of ideas and best practices is supported and promoted. Participants reported not only having been informed about the state of affairs in supervised practice around Europe, but also motivated to continue working towards the attainment of higher educational standards for psychologists as they relate to the *EuroPsy* in their own countries. The ideas put forth (i.e., as proposed above) and the materials provided (e.g., methods presented, publications) are applicable and feasible. They are also a step in the right direction of promoting *EuroPsy* and the recently adopted marketing strategy.

The continuation of this conference in the future with the support of EFPA (financial and otherwise) is strongly encouraged as a separate event to the annual (S)NAC Chairs' meeting and the biannual European Congress of Psychology. It would be a means of bringing together people to discuss most recent developments in the area, creating common ground on important aspects of supervised practice, addressing further the challenges outlined above by proposing pertinent solutions, and further promoting the understanding, acceptance and appreciation of the existing diversity in Europe. It is deemed crucial to build upon the momentum created in Ljubljana during these two days for the future success of *EuroPsy*.