

# MODELS FOR SUPERVISION

## THE 4x4x4 MODEL OF SUPERVISION

The 4x4x4 Model is based on the Four Functions of Supervision, the Four Stakeholders of Supervision, and the Four Stages of Supervision as follows:

### FOUR FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION:

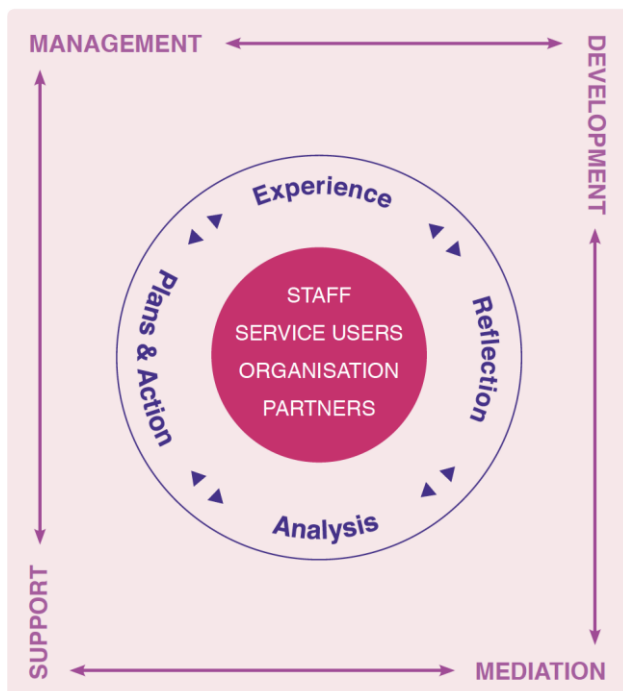
1. **Competent, accountable performance** (*managerial function*)
2. **Continuing professional development** (*formative function*)
3. **Personal support** (*supportive function*)
4. **Engaging the individual with the organisation** (*mediation function*)

### FOUR STAKEHOLDERS OF SUPERVISION:

1. **Workers**
2. **Organisation**
3. **Partners**
4. **Service Users**

### FOUR STAGES OF THE SUPERVISION CYCLE:

1. **Experience** (*what happened?*)
2. **Reflection** (*what was it like?*)
3. **Analysis** (*what does this mean?*)
4. **Action Plan** (*what next?*)



The 4x4x4 Model is an integrated framework that brings the above elements into a single model (left). The model defines supervision as a process that involves a professional relationship and involves all staff. It recognises that the needs of the supervisee, service users, and other stakeholders may be aligned, or they may conflict at times. The model enables the process of supervision to account for the different needs, stakeholders, and stages involved in supervision.

The 4x4x4 Model can be used during supervision meetings to guide the conversation by focusing on different aspects of a staff member's role depending on functions, stakeholders, or experience. This can help to identify some of the tensions in service delivery that may arise when, for example, the expectations of a stakeholder conflict with the purpose/scope of a staff member's role.

## GIBBS' REFLECTIVE CYCLE

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle is a popular model for reflection, which includes the following six stages:

1. **Description** – *what happened?*
2. **Feelings** – *what did you think and feel about it?*
3. **Evaluation** – *what were the positives and negatives?*
4. **Analysis** – *what sense can you make of it?*
5. **Conclusion** – *what else could you have done?*
6. **Action** – *what will you do next time?*

The cycle can be a useful way to frame a conversation during supervision to encourage the supervisee to reflect on their experience. The questions in the cycle are designed to get the person undertaking reflection to think about the actions and events as well as their feelings and responses. This type of structured debriefing facilitates the holistic reflection that is involved in Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

## KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is a related model of supervision that makes clear links between reflective supervision and delivering improved outcomes. Kolb's experiential learning theory is based on two levels: a four-stage cycle of learning and four separate learning styles.

The Four Stage Learning Cycle 'touches all the bases' and includes:

1. **Concrete Experience** (*doing/having an experience*)
2. **Reflective Observation** (*reviewing/reflecting on the experience*)
3. **Abstract Conceptualisation** (*concluding/learning from the experience*)
4. **Active Experimentation** (*planning/trying out what you have learned*)

Kolb's learning theory also sets out four distinct learning styles based on the above learning cycle.

These are:

1. **Accommodation** (*feeling and doing*)
2. **Converging** (*thinking and doing*)
3. **Diverging** (*feeling and watching*)
4. **Assimilating** (*thinking and watching*)

Kolb theorised that people tend to prefer a certain learning style, which is influenced by personal preferences and environmental factors. Being aware of individual learning preferences aids supervision by focusing on the needs of staff and offering them the best chance to engage and improve.