

## **Work Supervision for Master's Degree Students in Management in the Social and Health Care Field**

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This study targets university students of development and management in the social and health care field, and its goals were to discover 1) how does group supervision suit supporting college students, 2) what benefits can students receive from supervision and 3) how can group supervision be developed? The Tampere University of Applied Sciences' supervisor training program piloted a supervision program for master's degree students (N=30) in management in September 2021. The purpose of the study was to chart the possibilities of supervision in advancing students' team formation and commitment to their studies. The master's students in management were divided into teams of 4-6 people and each team was supervised by one work supervisor. There were five team meetings during the six months. The supervisor trainees could practice their skills while the master's students could process feelings related to their studies and receive peer support in their challenges. The results show that team formation was successful and deepened during the process. The supervision received by individual teams affected the entire group's class spirit and commitment. Developing the contents of supervision should focus on good planning, structure and initiation. The supervisor's role was emphasized in development, particularly their approach, activity and reinforcing dialogue between participants. Based on the positive experiences, collaboration between the supervisor training and master's students will be continued and developed further.

*Keywords:* work supervision, Master's student, team commitment, team spirit, Finland

### **Introduction**

Work supervision (henceforth supervision) started in the 1920s in the American social care field. It arrived in Finland in the 1950s, and became established in social care, the health care field and within the Lutheran church. Currently supervision is used in many fields in developing and supporting work, workplace communities and management work. Its forms include individual, group, workplace and peer supervision (Cutcliffe et al., 2011; Fowler & Cutcliffe, 2011).

Many scholars have tried to define supervision, but finding an exact unambiguous definition is challenging, as it can be understood as both a tool and a method, as well as a service and a profession (Cutcliffe et al., 2011). Supervision has emerged from practice and been influenced by many sciences, such as health care, social psychology and various theories of personality, interaction and organization. Supervision is thus considered a reflective learning process based on interaction between the supervisor

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and supervisee. The supervisee's work and its assessment are key to the process. Supervision is not about the supervisor training or teaching the supervisee (Hyrkäs et al., 2005). Rather, the supervisee learns new and meaningful things about their work and work experiences in collaboration with other members of the workplace community and the supervisor (Niemelä, 2019, pp. 57, 64). As a process, supervision thus requires both time and processing matters together.

Supervision is always confidential communication between the supervisor and supervisee, in which the supervisor respects the supervisee's expertise in their own work. The supervisor's role is to help the supervisee discover new perspectives on matters important to them. The supervisor is not meant to give ready-made answers and solutions but will help the supervisee process matters through their expertise (Kivinen, 2018, p. 54). Ethics are a central part of supervision. The supervisee's situation may be very sensitive and delicate, which requires ethical skills and professional communication skills.

There has been fairly little student-directed group supervision and research into it in Finland. In a study on supervision of classroom teacher students (Savolainen, 2015), the students felt that supervision should be confidential, regular, pre-emptive and voluntary. Students saw supervision as something needed only after other tools had been exhausted. They wished that supervision would be available quickly and easily to all who desire it. Regarding contents, the respondents discussed matters related to their work, supporting wellbeing and difficult situations, which could be processed in supervision. In addition, they wished for new perspectives on their work.

Kattainen (2016, pp. 161-175) has studied master's students' supervision from the perspective of self-management, learning and development. The study examined two groups, which met for six 90-minute sessions. The groups' goals were to help with managing studies and support for graduating. They wished for empowering discussions and processes. Central results were recognizing one's own learning style, strengthened team spirit, learning from experiences and support in combining studies, work and family.

The goal of Tikkanen's (2017) study was to develop students' group supervision to better support their learning needs. The study also wished to increase students' interest in mental health and substance abuse work in a criminal psychiatric unit. The study produced a model of group supervision, which includes the purpose and goals of student supervision and four themes related to criminal psychiatric care. However, the model could not be tested with new students due to a lack of time. The results show that the students had not received sufficient information about supervision, which was unfamiliar to them even as a concept. Its purpose and goal had remained unclear to them.

This study charts the potential of supervision in advancing students' team formation and commitment to their studies. The pilot group consists of master's students in development and management in the social and health care field. The degree program is started by 30-40 students each year, who work in teams throughout their studies. Quick commitment to their team and its work will also help the students commit to their studies. However, one to four students quit their studies within the first six months each year, which is unfortunate from the perspective of

cost-effectiveness. Some students' graduation may also be delayed, which can lead to them quitting their studies. Sometimes the teams have internal problems which have required intervention from teachers.

Student teams are extremely important in this program, as work in the social and health care field is largely organized as teamwork, which they can thus practice as part of their studies. Various courses also include team assignments, which require cooperation and sharing of responsibility. The teams assess their own functioning in writing every six months, whose results the project manager sends to the teacher-in-charge. In case a team has problems functioning and sharing responsibility, the project manager contacts the teachers-in-charge, who discuss the matter with the team as necessary.

The purpose of this study was to chart the experiences of master's students in social and health care development and management on group supervision organized for them. The study questions were 1) how is group supervision suited to supporting college students, 2) what benefits can students receive from supervision and 3) how can group supervision be developed. The goal of the study was to produce new information on group supervision aimed at students, which can be utilized in both supervisor training and in developing supervision aimed at students. The benefits of this pilot study may be obvious to student teams from the perspective of quicker team building, more committed students, fewer students quitting and more graduations on time. These are, however, long-term effects, which may be difficult to prove as results of supervision.

### **Literature Review**

Supervision is defined and understood, both as a concept and a practice, in highly variable ways. Its background consists of several theoretical perspectives and tendencies, upon which it is built (Kärkkäinen, 2012). Some frames of reference include e.g., psychoanalytical, solution-centric, dialogic and resource-centric tendencies. Other influences include psychodynamic, psychotherapeutic, learning theoretical and positive psychology. In the Finnish context supervision refers to guidance and support organized by a trained supervisor, in which the supervisee's work-related questions and phenomena are processed reflectively to attain work goals. The goal is to develop the supervisee's work, increase their readiness, preserve their resources and improve workplace wellbeing (Ollila, 2006; 2008; 2014).

Supervision does not merely seek to solve problems arising from work or ensure the completion of tasks, but to increase the supervisee's understanding of various individual and communal processes and challenges at work and offer support (Alila, Määttä, & Uusiautti 2015). The principal goals are to defuse work pressures, process ethical challenges (Blomberg & Bisholt, 2016) and to act as support to each individual's professional identity (Berggren, Barbosa da Silva, & Severinsson, 2005; Ollila, 2014). The strengths of the individual and the workplace community should not be forgotten, as processing and emphasizing them reinforces a positive attitude towards overcoming challenges. Supervision thus also acts as a forum that preemptively lessens work-related stress.

Supervision proceeds from the supervisee's needs, experiences and questions in different situations. The supervisor does not act as a teacher, mentor, facilitator or a consultant. Their role is to help the supervisee discover new perspectives, meanings and insights into their work through reflection. Open and confidential discussion, reflecting together and maintaining reciprocity are central principles of supervision (Knight, 2011). Supervision also offers the possibility of peer support.

Coaching and supervision are very close to each other. Supervision was originally used as a problem-based way of processing difficult client experiences, while coaching has been associated with sports (Kupias, 2022). The methods have their own approaches and goals, but both depend on the guide's frame of reference. Both seek to aid the employee in managing work as variedly as possible. Supervision has an important role as a method that advances learning and develops the organization's functioning (Immaisi, 2012). Supervision is a process of professional support, reflection and learning, which affects individual development at work (Evans & Marcroft, 2015).

The principal forms of supervision are individual, group, workplace, peer and management supervision (Kivinen & Ollila, 2023). The first two are, as the names imply, conducted individually or in groups with the supervisor. Group supervision can however be conducted both as supervision between professions or as peer support between people in the same profession or performing the same tasks (Vanne, 2021). Workplace supervision involves the entire workplace community and their manager. Peer supervision consists of a group that performs supervision without a specific supervisor (Kärkkäinen, 2012). One may also speak of peer group supervision, in which an outside supervisor familiar with the profession supervises employees or managers (Valtasaari, 2023).

Supervision has traditionally been highly process-like and lasting from one to three years. Due to the hectic pace of modern workplaces, such long-term supervision has become rare and processes generally last only for a few meetings (Paunonen-Ilmonen & Heinonen, 2020). Relatively brief processes can also yield good results, particularly in group and management supervision (Bullington & Cronqvist, 2018). Methods have also, sometimes forcibly, become increasingly digitalized, which can be seen as an opportunity to increase supervision's accessibility to various professions (Kivinen & Ollila, 2023).

The effects of supervision are varied, but fundamentally positive. According to several studies, people who have received supervision have experienced better job satisfaction and flexibility and improved workplace communication and interpersonal skills. It is generally experienced as an important forum that enables the safe processing of difficult matters and is important both personally and professionally (Austin, 2016; Barham, de Beer, & Clark, 2019). Group supervision in particular was seen as useful when participants were willing and motivated to participate comprehensively, the sessions reflective and goal-oriented, the participants respectful of each other, sessions regular and confidential and processes suitable to the participants' workplace conditions, i.e., available to them (Allbutt et al., 2017). Committing to the supervision process strengthens the advantage of individual and group-based peer support.

## **Methods**

### **Research Setting and Sampling**

Management studies in the social and healthcare field are conducted as multiform learning the students perform alongside their work. They have approximately three to six in-person or remote learning days per month. The class that started in Fall 2021 consisted of 30 students. The students all had a bachelor's degree or equivalent related to the social and health care field. All students were also required to have at least two years of work experience in the field.

This qualitative study utilized elements of action research in the form of a "marketplace stroll" (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The class's studies started in August 2021 through two orientation days. Permanent student teams were formed on the morning of the second day, which was followed by group supervision in the afternoon. The teams were formed by first allowing the students to meet each other through an "Italian marketplace stroll", which is a modified version of a "cocktail party" meeting game (Vanninen & Nieminen, 2016). The stroll was conducted inside a large lobby. The students (N=30) were instructed to talk with any other student they met for two minutes about whichever subject to get to know them better. Each meeting would last for two minutes, after which the teacher-in-charge would give a sound signal announcing a switch of conversation partners. During the stroll each student had time to talk with ten other students.

After the stroll, the students were sorted into groups based on their previous degree (nurse, public health nurse, midwife, physical therapist, laboratory assistant, social worker, etc.). The guiding teacher then observed the groups and chose one with six members of the same profession. They were then asked to form teams that were as heterogenic as possible. All students were allowed to be active and express their wish to join particular teams to their leaders. The guiding teacher did not participate in the team formation further and waited until the students were done.

Afterwards the six supervisor students presented themselves to the teams. From now on, "supervisor students" will be referred to as work supervisors. The teams moved to a separate location with their own work supervisor, where they became acquainted better and agreed on initial dates for supervision dates in the Fall. The organization had defined the following goals for the supervision: 1) team members becoming acquainted and building trust, 2) establishing ground rules for the team, 3) commitment to ground rules and studying and 4) successful team formation. At the beginning of supervision each team discussed these goals and potentially set their own goals for supervision. Each team gathered for five 90-minute sessions of supervision during Fall 2021. Some meetings were organized through the Teams platform. The work supervisors had their own group supervision, during which they discussed contents of management students' supervision and potential challenges.

The six work supervisors, who participated in the study had the following earlier degrees: Master of health science, nurse, psychiatric nurse, master of pedagogy, medical doctor and licenciante degree in political science. All had several years of experience in their field and two had training as therapists. A supervisor agreement

was made with each of the six supervisors. The work supervisors conducted their supervision without pay.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The students who participated in supervision provided information on the group supervision's implementation, benefits and development needs through writing and themed interviews. The written questions were formed based on the goals of the supervision:

- How was group supervision implemented as a whole?
- How did group supervision reach the goals set by the team?
- What benefits have you gained from group supervision?
- How could student group supervision be further developed?

The written questions were sent to the student teams as e-mail attachments approximately a month before the planned themed interviews. They were asked to submit their answers at least a week before the themed interview. A study conductor read the responses before the interviews and formed the following supplementary questions for the themed interviews:

- Which themes did you discuss in supervision?
- Which theme was most useful and why?
- Which methods did the supervisor use in addition to discussion?

The interviews were conducted in February 2022 via Teams by interviewing each team for 30 minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The themed interview started by discussing the team's responses to the written questions. All potential additions and clarifications were recorded. Afterwards the interviewer asked the above supplementary questions. The written answers consisted of eight pages written on size 12 Arial font and a line spacing of 1.5. The transcribed interviews consisted of 14 pages, using the same settings. Authentic expressions are quoted in the results to increase reliability.

The data were collated by adding both the written and transcribed oral responses under each question. The data were then read several times. The sentence was chosen as the unit of analysis, after which the data were compressed, grouped and abstracted into subcategories, categories and main categories (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

### **Respondents' Background**

The management students (N=30) had an average of 14 years of experience in their field and 43% worked as managers. Approximately 57% had a nursing degree, along with various specializations. Of the rest, 13% had a social work degree. The rest were radiographers, laboratory assistants, physical therapists or midwives (Table 1). The data were collected during the interviews.

**Table 1.** *Respondents' Background*

<b>Background degree</b>	<b>Number %</b>
nurse (n=17)	57
radiographer (n=3)	10
midwife (n=3)	10
bioanalyst (n=1)	3
social worker(n=4)	13
physical therapist (n=2)	7
works as manager (n=13)	43
<b>Work experience</b>	<b>Average years</b>
Experience in the social and health care field	14

### **Ethical Approval**

Ethical approval was obtained in June 2021 from the head of the health care unit. As the class started their studies, they were told about supervision and its goals, purposes and implementation. They were told at the earliest point that they would be asked to provide feedback and to participate in a themed interview. The students were given a privacy notice and a research notice, which provided information on the interviews and data handling, storage and protection. Consent to participating in the study was asked through the electronic eLomake editor. All stages of the study have followed scientific principles such as honesty, diligence and accuracy (TENK, 2012).

The supervision was part of an obligatory course. The students were given the chance of not participating in the themed interview and a small portion did not participate in the Teams interview, but all participated in forming the written responses. Individual students could be absent from supervision meetings, but generally all participated. The teams' answers were not individual opinions but collective ones. It is thus not possible to identify individual students from the answers. The data have been presented in a way that also obscures the identity of the supervisor. No answers can be connected to individual supervisor students. They participated in a feedback discussion as part of their training.

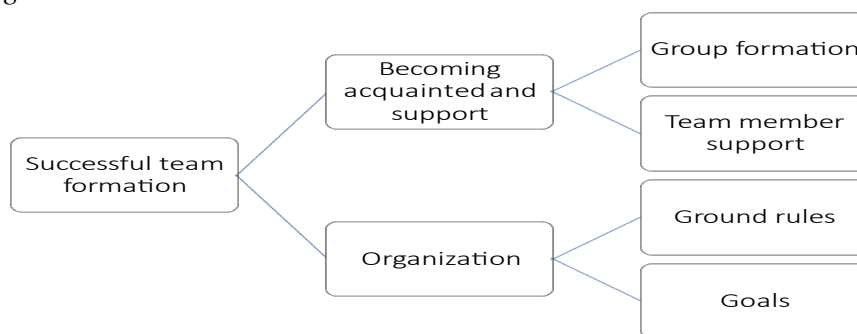
### **Results**

The results of the study are presented below in the order of the study questions, starting from the supervision goals set by the teams, followed by assessing the supervision as a whole and its benefits, ending in ideas on further developing it.

## Reaching Goals

The supervision groups were asked how well the teams were able to reach the goals they set for themselves. Thoughts on setting goals for supervision were split among the teams, as four had set goals for themselves while two claimed they had not set goals at the start of supervision. Some set goals included team formation, becoming acquainted, successful cooperation, self-management and graduating on time. Content analysis was used to abstract these into the main category of *successful team formation*, which contained the categories of *becoming acquainted and support* and *organization*. Their subcategories were *group formation*, *team member support*, *ground rules* and *goals* (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Successful Team Formation



The responses show that the teams built their own ground rules: “*everyone committed and kept to the ground rules*”. The team members’ multiform support was seen in the replies as flexibility, as “*cooperation has been flexible and proper*”. Support was also experienced as guidance, listening, openness, encouragement and consideration. The teams became acquainted on a deeper level and built trust with each other. Discussing challenges in their studies made them feel calm and “*we could support our self-management well*”. Team building under supervision was successful, as “*the team became a tightly knit unit that listened to each other*”. However, some of the respondents were not sure about the effect of supervision on team formation, as the teams generally spent a great deal of time together outside supervision.

## Implementation of Supervision

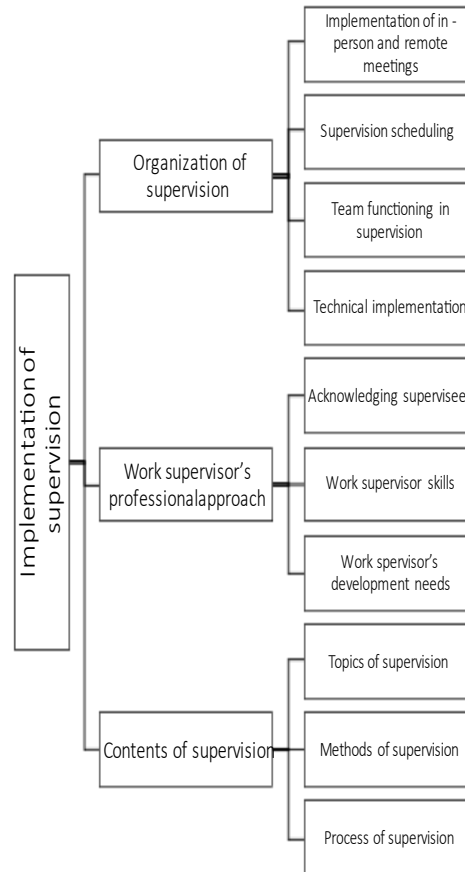
The teams’ responses on how supervision was implemented as a whole were analyzed through inductive content analysis, forming three categories: *organization of supervision*, *contents of supervision* and *supervisor’s professional approach*. Supervision was seen as a pleasant part of one’s studies and an important gesture of the university’s support to students. Organization of supervision also contained the following subcategories: *implementation of in-person and remote meetings*, *technical implementation*, *supervision scheduling* and *team functioning in supervision* (Figure 2).

Supervision was conducted remotely or in-person, depending on the teams’ wishes and needs. Remote meetings had a policy of keeping cameras on so that



everyone's face would be visible. The technical implementation had occasional difficulties, such as dropped connections, problems with headphones, weak noise signal and dark video. Sufficient lighting was considered important so that all faces could be seen properly.

Figure 2. Implementation of Supervision



Agreeing on scheduling for supervision could be difficult, as “*it was challenging to find time among all other school work*”. Other teams had an easier time of finding time and scheduling meetings beforehand, while others had more challenges. Some found the 90-minute length of the session suitable, while others found it too long, particularly for the later sessions. The functioning of the teams in supervision was seen as positive and “*the implementation was overall very effortless*”. The students praised their own teams for functioning well.

The second category, *work supervisor's professional approach*, contained the following subcategories: *acknowledging supervisees*, *work supervisor skills* and *work supervisor's development needs*. The students felt that they had equal opportunities to speak and that “*even the quiet ones were heard*”. The work supervisor gave the students space and was interested in them and their assignments.

The *work supervisor skills* subcategory contained the work supervisor's ability to ask further questions, form wholes out of the topics of discussion and raise matters

to a more abstract level. The work supervisor's presence gave the meetings structure, and their calmness was seen as an advantage.

The responses also mentioned some challenges related to the work supervisor's work, which are here categorized as *challenges of professional development*. Work supervisor could forget scheduled things or to provide final feedback. Some work supervisor multitasked during the meeting, which could be seen as unprofessional. The work supervisor's "*negative emotional states*" or "*personality analysis*" were seen as uncomfortable. Personality analysis in particular, in which the work supervisor categorized students based on their temperament, was not seen as proper, particularly given how little time they spent together.

The contents of supervision category contained the following subcategories: *topics of supervision, methods of supervision and process of supervision*. The respondents felt that the topics or supervision were suitable and good. They especially mentioned situations where the respondents felt that the supervision was well-structured and the work supervisor capable of altering the theme to suit the participants' needs. The supervision groups discussed many topics, as shown in Table 2. The students felt that the work supervisor asked them for topics of interest and that they could affect the themes of supervision. In case the students did not suggest any themselves, the supervisor had prepared topics.

Table 2. Topics Discussed in Supervision

Case studies	My strengths and weaknesses as a manager
Challenges	Relaxation
Combining work and leisure	Self-knowledge
Conflict case	Self-management
Discussing group work	Sharing experiences
Future plans	Stress, anxiety
Goals	Successes
Ground rules	Use of time
Group dynamics, functioning in a group	Values
Handling others' strengths	What is a good manager
I as a manager in five years	What is supervision
Managing studies	Workplace wellbeing
My feelings	
My resources and wellbeing	

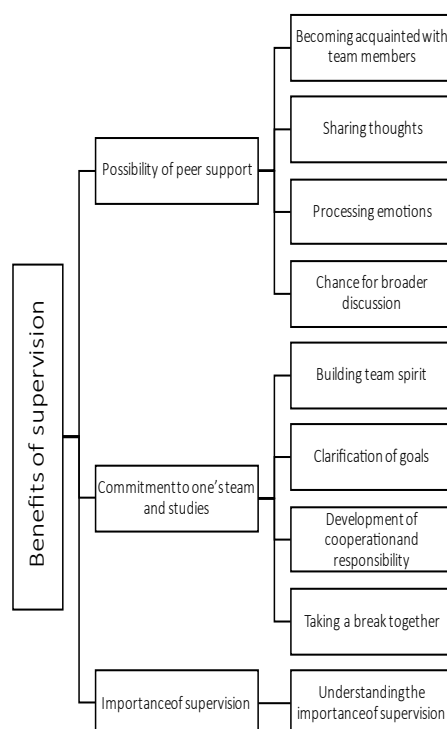
There were some responses contrary to the above. Some felt that not all sessions had a clear theme, which they found frustrating. Some wished for more varied perspectives and a clearer structure. Some sessions did not reach a relaxed atmosphere, which bothered the participants. The sessions were partially seen as additional work that gave "*only a little added value*".

The most common method of supervision was discussion and listening, which sought to form a genuine dialogue. Some sessions started with a relaxation exercise followed by examining one's feelings. Some work supervisors also assigned a topic that was then discussed together during the next session. Some work supervisors kept records of previous topics and would start the following session by asking if the participants still wished to discuss something related to the previous topic. During the final session, the supervisor reviewed the team's journey together.

## Benefits of Supervision

The benefits of supervision included the possibility of peer support, commitment to the team and studying and understanding the importance of supervision (Figure 3). Peer support “*deepened us getting to know each other*”, gave an opportunity and courage to “*share thoughts*” and to hear “*others have the same thoughts*”. It deepened discussions about feelings and reflection on topics such as “*uniting personal life and studies*”. Part of sharing thoughts included the courage to present one’s own thoughts and to receive advice from team members.

Figure 3. Benefits of Supervision



Processing emotions as part of supervision was discussed in diverse ways. The participants felt a need to share their emotions, unburden themselves and “*to be able to tell how it feels*”. They talked about their stress and anxiety as part of supervision, which made them feel better. Supervision thus offered a chance for broader discussion.

Commitment to one’s team and studies could be seen in building team spirit, clarification of goals, development of cooperation and responsibility and taking a break together. Supervision united the team members and increased their group spirit, not only within their own team but with the entire class, so that “*we learned to trust each other*”.

The students’ personal goals became clearer during the process and were shared with their team. Supervision made reaching their goals easier. Developing cooperation and responsibility were seen as clear benefits of supervision, as “*all took responsibility for the team’s results and actions*”. During the process, the students

discovered “*ways of self-management*” and learned to recognize their own strengths. All teams receiving supervision may have had a positive effect on the entire class’s commitment and teamwork skills.

The teams’ answers emphasized using supervision as a way to take a break, despite busy study schedules. It “*made us make time*”, which enabled the teams to discuss matters in greater depth and to share their thoughts. The students felt that this would not have happened without supervision and the teams would have merely rushed through their assignments otherwise. The responses emphasized the importance of supervision as support for studying. Supervision was empowering and gave resources for starting their studies. The experience also gave them understanding of the role of supervision and that it did not always require a major issue; supervision could also focus on matters such as the team’s functioning.

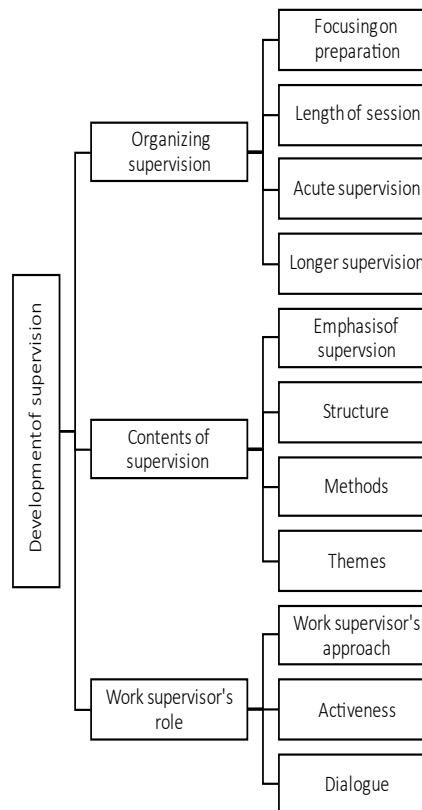
### **Development of Supervision**

The *development of supervision* main category contained three categories: *organizing supervision*, *contents of supervision* and *role of the work supervisor* (Figure 4). *Organizing supervision* included preparation, length of session, acute supervision and longer supervision. Supervision started on the students’ second day of studying, which the students considered insufficient preparation. They wished for more explanation of supervision on a theoretical and practical level from the perspective of goals and purpose. Some students had no previous experience of supervision, which also caused confusion.

The students pondered the length of the session and suggested shorter durations than the program’s 90 minutes, usually 60-minute sessions. They also considered the length of the program. They wished for “*supervision until graduation*” and “*more sessions early on, followed by fewer sessions through the year*”. It would be good to have a final summary of the process and everything the team learned towards the end of their studies. In case it is not possible to have supervision throughout their studies, they wished for the opportunity to receive crisis supervision if necessary.

The *contents of supervision* category contained the subcategories *emphasis of supervision*, *structure*, *methods* and *themes*. The emphasis of supervision should be on the students and not the supervisor’s opinions. The supervisor should be neutral and not introduce their personal views into the discussion. The structure should focus on clarity, good planning and initial orientation and tuning. Along with discussion, the students wished for “*more tools for studying*”, “*more versatile use of tools*” and “*some assignments*”, as they would be useful in their studies. The students suggested that suggestions for themes they wished to discuss could be collected from the entire class through e.g., an online form or as direct suggestions to the supervisor.

Figure 4. Development of Supervision



The *work supervisor's role* category contained the subcategories *work supervisor's approach*, *activeness* and *dialogue*. The students wished that the supervisor's approach would be firm in directing the discussion to the desired direction. They hoped that the supervisor would have prepared topics, new perspectives and approaches and the ability to stimulate conversation. They also hoped for more “*attempts to challenge and reach a realization*” and attempts to “*dig out the leadership from the participants*”, as they were students in management. Dialogue is important in supervision and there should be a focus on including even quieter students. They wished for more “*dialogue between team members*” and “*both the work supervisor and supervisees throwing themselves*” into the discussion.

### Conclusion and Discussion

This study charted the experiences of master's degree students in social and health care management on group supervision organized for them. It also sought answers to the study questions: 1. How was group supervision implemented as a whole? 2. How did group supervision reach the goals set by the team? 3. What benefits have you gained from group supervision? 4. How could student group supervision be further developed? The results to the research questions were collected into a SWOT

analysis, which is presented in table 3. The analysis contains a distillation of factors supporting and hindering management students' group supervision.

Table 3. Study Results on Management Students' Supervision

	<b>Supportive Factors</b>	<b>Hindering Factors</b>
<b>Internal</b>	<p><b><u>Strengths</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-including supervision as part of course work</li> <li>- support for team building</li> <li>- permanent team work for students during education</li> <li>- common goals and ground rules</li> <li>- flexible practices regarding in-person and remote meetings</li> <li>- possibility of processing the team's needs</li> <li>-some of the work supervisors had sufficient guidance skills</li> <li>- work supervisors' background training in the social and health care field and long-term work experiences</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Weaknesses</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- insufficient initial information on work supervision</li> <li>- Lack of clear goals in teams' supervision</li> <li>- work supervisors' failure to grasp structure of the process</li> <li>- work supervisors' unfinished training and undeveloped professional skills</li> <li>- unprofessional behavior from work supervisors</li> <li>- work supervisors' unclarified professional growth</li> <li>- multitasking during remote meetings</li> </ul>
<b>External</b>	<p><b><u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- versatile implementation of in-person and remote meetings</li> <li>- remote meetings through Teams, no travel required</li> <li>- supervision supports studying management and team formation</li> <li>- experience of supervision during studies makes it easier to seek supervision at work</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Threats</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-lack of motivation of the supervisees</li> <li>- dropped remote connections and low quality of equipment</li> <li>- scheduling challenges</li> <li>- in-person meeting locations, reserving spaces</li> <li>-management students get a wrong picture of work supervision, if the professional approach of the work supervisors is insufficient</li> </ul>

Based on the results presented in the SWOT analysis, group supervision is suited for supporting university students in their studies. Supervision improved team formation and commitment to goals and commonly accepted ground rules. Successful team formation also allowed the students to receive support from other team members. The supervision was organized as remote and in-person meetings and scheduled according to the wishes of each group. The teams' functioning in supervision was seen as fluent and positive. However, some remote sessions faced challenges such as dropped connections. Remote supervision requires sufficiently good technical connections (Kivinen & Ollila, 2023).

The work supervisor's professional approach meant versatile acknowledgement of supervisees, listening, giving space and showing interest in supervisees' opinions. Even quiet participants were included in discussions. Other shows of professional approach included the ability to ask additional questions and to raise matters to a more abstract level. The supervisors could, however, also have challenges in their

professional development, such as occasional lapses in attention, showing negative emotions, forgetting schedules, forgetting to give feedback and multitasking during supervision.

Under supervision contents, the topics, methods and process were separated. Supervision's topics arose from the team's needs, but in case they failed to suggest one, the supervisor had prepared topics for discussion. The participants were satisfied with structured supervision, in which the supervisor could alter the theme based on the team's needs. Supervision that lacked a clear theme was seen as frustrating. Tikkanen's (2017) study contained four prepared themes for the supervision process related to the students' field. This model could also be piloted for supervising university students.

The methods of supervision were discussion and listening, which sought to create a genuine dialogue. Some supervisors gave assignments, which were then discussed during the following session. Summarizing the previous session at the start of each new one was seen as a good procedure. One session started with an activity, such as a greeting round or a relaxation exercise. Afterwards they summarized the key observations from the previous session's topic and potentially continued discussing it. They would then discuss the assignment, if applicable, followed by the session's theme. At the end of the session, the supervisor summarized the day's discussion.

The benefits of supervision were shown to be peer support, commitment to team and studying and understanding the importance of supervision (Vanne, 2021). Supervision allowed the teams to have broader discussions, process emotions, share their thoughts and become acquainted on a deeper level. The work supervisor's role is to help the supervisees to discover new perspectives on topics that are important to them (Kivinen, 2018), which was realized in the students' dialogic reflection.

The students shared their feelings and expressed themselves on topics such as the challenges of combining work and family. The teams felt their trust and relationships with their teammates had deepened during the supervision process. They felt that supervision had increased group spirit within the entire class, as was also found in the study by Kattainen (2016). Supervision helped clarify goals and improve cooperation and responsibility. Supervision making the team take a break and analyze matters was seen as significant. An understanding of the importance of supervision in today's hectic work culture also grew. It is, however, worth considering whether team formation could have happened equally effectively in the teams' normal meetings without supervision.

The supervision provided for management students offered its participants support and a chance to manage stress, as theoretical literature has discussed (Alila et al., 2015; Blomberg & Bisholt, 2016; Vanne, 2021). Supervision offered a space for confidential discussions in which matters were reflected on dialogically according to the principles of supervision (Knight, 2011). Supervision is a learning process (Alhanen et al., 2016; Immaisi, 2012), which was realized for each team in this study through a strong communicative relationship with team members and the supervisor. The learning process could be seen concretely in the teams' deep considerations of case studies of various themes and in their analyses of supervision.

Supervision aimed at students should be developed in the facets of organizing, contents and the supervisor's role. Preparing the group beforehand is an important aspect of the supervision's success. This includes explaining the purpose and goals of guidance to students both theoretically and practically, in which issues in this study were found to be lacking in the work supervisor's actions. A similar development need was identified in the study by Tikkanen (2017). Some students felt that 90-minute sessions were too long, and some wished the sessions were spread over a longer period of time, even the whole duration of their studies. They also wished for acute supervision, to which the team could have access on short notice. A similar wish was expressed in the study by Savolainen (2015).

In some supervisions, the work supervisor talked too much about her-/himself, the structure of the supervision was not clear, and the supervision could lack a theme. It is important for the contents of supervision that the focus of discussions is on the students, the supervision's structure is clear, and each session has a meaningful theme. Supervision's methodical activities should be broadened through e.g., operational methods. Some wished that the supervisor's approach should be stronger and even more dialogic, which requires professional skills from the supervisor in helping the supervisees process matters (Kivinen, 2018). The results form a partial picture of the supervisor student as a teacherly and guiding role, which some of the students expected. They particularly wished for the supervisor to use more methodical activities, to challenge the supervisees more and to join in bravely themselves.

Although in this study it was found that the supervisors had professional weaknesses and they were also students themselves learning about supervision, in spite of that, the study yielded many good results. The work supervisors' professional weaknesses were presumably partly due to the fact, that some of them still had relatively little experience in acting as a work supervisor. Perhaps the next step would be to recruit work supervisor students who are in the final stages of their studies. Presumably, their professional skills may have developed further.

Supervision is generally recommended as a one-to-two-year process. In this manner, its benefits are surely greater than those of a brief supervision process. However, according to Bullington and Cronqvist (2018), even a relatively brief supervision process can have good results, particularly as group supervision. The social and health care management degree program could be piloted as a longer-term project, such as ten 90-minute sessions spread over the entire student period. Longer-term student supervision would give new information on the potential of supervision in defusing conflicts within teams and managing stress.

The pilot program described in this study gave the management students personal experience of supervision, which may inspire them to seek supervision for themselves or their employees in the future. The supervisor students have their own challenges in finding sufficient opportunities to reach their training quotas, so the university offering them ready-made groups is also helpful to their studies.

Student supervision could have also been studied via individual interviews, which might have given deeper results. Charting the experiences of supervisor students would also give further information on further developing supervision for



students. The results of this study can be used in developing both supervision aimed at students and supervisor training.

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