Short Communication

The Influence of Generations on the Supervisory Process

Ana Almeida[1*], Luciana Cunha[2]

[1]Hospital das Forças Armadas-Polo Porto (HFAR-PP), Nurse

[2]Escola Superior de Saúde Santa Maria, Nursing student

Corresponding Author: Ana Almeida, Hospital das Forças Armadas-Polo Porto (HFAR-PP), Nurse

Abstract

In clinical supervision, learning takes place in a real practice context, developing skills that will be the basis for the construction of professional identity. In this process, stakeholders such as the supervisee, the supervisor and the care recipient are considered, who, as they represent different generations and sometimes with antagonistic characteristics, may influence the supervision process. Throughout the supervision process, the tutor/supervisor has the moral duty to manage possible conflicts that may arise, ensuring ethical principles. Based on the descriptive method and reflective analysis, after a literature review, some typical characteristics of different generations are described, seeking to understand their influence on the supervision process, as well as reflect on possible intergenerational conflicts and associated ethical aspects.

Keywords: Ethics, Generation, Supervision

1. Introduction

Supervision is an interpersonal, dynamic and formal process in which an experienced person accompanies, collaborates and helps another, with the aim of facilitating the development of professional knowledge and skills [1-3].

In the supervision process, there are several stakeholders to consider, such as the supervisee, the supervisor and the care recipient, each belonging to different generations in most cases, which can lead to conflicts that must be overcome, with the supervisor having an important role, as he/she has to manage differences and ensure ethical principles.

The objectives proposed for this reflection seek to understand the influence of different generational characteristics in the supervisory process, identify some ethical aspects in the context of generational conflict and recognize the contributions of supervision in a real practice context.

2. Results and Discussion

When talking about the supervision and training process, we consider the learning that will take place in a real practice context, this being a unique space to consolidate, integrate and practice knowledge and skills, the knowledge, developing competences that will be the basis for the construction of professional identity. These skills that are intended to be developed in a supervisee fall within the cognitive, technical, behavioral, attitudinal and communicational domains, valuing the continuous and solid updating of knowledge, the promotion of autonomy, rigor, safety, effectiveness and independence in the execution of practices and the improvement of interpersonal qualities, in terms of communication, responsibility, integrity, honesty, respect, initiative and creativity, as well as assiduity, posture and image [4].

During the training process in a clinical context, the supervisee goes through different phases of learning and reflection, until he "finds his path", these phases depending on his didactic preparation, his individual characteristics and the tutor's style [5].

In the supervision process, several stakeholders must be considered, such as the supervisee, the supervisor and the target of care, and in most cases, each of the participants represents a generation that is distinct from the others. Therefore, and because the various generations have different characteristics that will influence the supervisory process, we can consider the existence of 5 generations:

Baby boomers (60 to 80 years old): They represent the generation that emerged after World War II, appearing in the United States of America and in which there was an increase in the birth rate, the so-called "baby boom". They are followers of "peace and love", with an aversion to conflicts and arguments. They like music, art, theater, cinema and culture in general. They enjoy entertainment such as popular and religious festivals, and as such, they value traditions. They are individuals with a stable life, they prefer quality over quantity and value past experiences, which is why they are always expressing them as an example for the future. They are generally firm, mature and conservative people, and represent "our elderly people". In Portugal they lived through the period of dictatorship and with few financial resources.

Generation X (40 to 60 years old): They were born after the baby boomers, and therefore, they still had the influence of the dictatorship in their childhood and, consequently, a traditional and rigid education (home-school, school-home). They lived in an uncertain and ill-defined time with the revolutions, resulting in people who still fear an uncertain future. They have little experience in the world, but they already have a more open view of the outside world. In general, they are people who fight for better living conditions, for their rights and freedom and value economic stability, which is why they work with motivation if they do what they like, with good teamwork, representing loyalty to institutions. They are motivated by new challenges and enjoy the search for new knowledge as a way to advance in their career, with some adaptation to new technologies. They want a balance between personal and professional life and have different ideas from the previous generation. They are known as the "group without identity".

Generation Y (20 to 40 years old): known as the "i generation or millennial generation", they are multitasking individuals, with more than one professional activity and with the ability to work on more than one project at the same time. From an early age, they seek more ambitious salaries, which is why they constantly seek more challenging opportunities, and therefore change jobs frequently with the aim of professional growth, not subjecting themselves to menial tasks at the beginning of their careers. They are constantly searching for new technologies, being agile with them, resulting in them always being connected in search of immediate information. They type and don't write, and they value virtual relationships and social networks, so they share everything that is theirs (data, photos, habits, thoughts, trips...). They are used to getting what they want and only doing what they like, not liking to be outdone. As they quickly become saturated with what they do, they do not settle and seek development, being ambitious, self-confident and competitive people, communicative, but superficial in their analyses.

Generation Z (10 to 20 years old): known as "digital natives", since they were little they have been familiar with the internet, tablets, cell phones and others. They are hyperconnected and have never known a world without computers, always having a lot of information in real time. Suspicious about the importance and usefulness of studies and careers, they do not believe that they will do the same thing for the rest of their lives, nor that they will always remain professionally in the same company. They don't like imposed and inflexible schedules or hierarchies and prefer professions linked to digital. They think about informal jobs like blogging, influencing and advertising and value teleworking. They learn very quickly, but have difficulty concentrating. They read little (libraries are a thing of the past) and they hardly use pens or paper, but rather their cell phones. They are considered citizens of the world and without geographical borders, they socialize through electronic means and as a consequence they have difficulties in social relationships and intimacy. They represent strong ideals of social responsibility and are very tolerant of other cultures and diversity. Being very critical and anxious, they have a need for interaction and expression of opinion. They are far ahead of other generations who are still focused on adapting "to the new times".

Generation Alpha (under 10 years old): the newest generation of the 21st century that is already 100% digital, for which the analog world is a distant past. As technology is their context, they will have privileged access to information, even considering that they will be the most intelligent generation.

It can be seen that the different generations have different characteristics, values and interests. As there is no one better than the other, it is necessary to take advantage of and value what each one has to offer, knowing how to deal with the differences [6].

When teaching practice in a real context and in the health area, the difficulties of the new generations are essentially seen in terms of human relations and therapeutic interaction (relationship with the tutor/patient), in terms of knowledge integration, time management and self-assessment. Most of the time, there is little consideration for older generations and their values, indifference towards preserving the privacy and intimacy of others (touch, curtains, doors), disrespect for body exposure, violation of data confidentiality, abusive use of technology, inappropriate professional behavior. The problems triggered are related to the management of emotions, self-control and confrontation with others, which is why, when in a practical and training environment in a real context, an emotional imbalance is generated, with considerable levels of stress, anxiety, impatience and abandonment.

When faced with new contexts that are different from their generational reality, the supervisee will experience difficulties. The lack of knowledge about certain situations, the new experiences you will be subjected to, the demands that will be placed on you and the associated responsibilities will lead to disorientation. Added to the described situations of bullying, or situations of loss of identity ("the student…the student of professional X…the intern"), these are factors that can inhibit the supervision process [7].

The tutor/supervisor must contribute to development and growth in new contexts, always with an atmosphere of trust, readiness and availability, ensuring stable environments, providing attractive learning and experiences, creating a calm relationship, choosing the best strategies and models for each supervisee [8].

The moral duty to manage possible conflicts that may arise, ensuring ethical principles, is also inseparable from the role of the supervisor. It must ensure respect for autonomy, by respecting the value of each person's freedom, by making decisions that are appropriate for the person being supervised, different decisions for each person and by encouraging the expression of emotions. It must ensure the principle of beneficence, by guaranteeing that all situations provided to the supervised person will be useful and will occur at the appropriate time. It must ensure the principle

of non-maleficence, by obliging itself not to cause harm or discomfort to the supervisee, reflecting on questions such as: is this situation pleasant for the supervisee? Is this the right way to get attention at this moment? Is this learning safe? It should ensure the principle of fairness, recognizing whether and in what form opportunities will be provided and whether all supervisees will have the opportunity to receive supervision tailored to their situation [9].

3. Conclusions

The different generations have different characteristics, values and interests, and there is no "best" generation. It is necessary to know how to deal with the differences and value what each one has to offer. The supervisee in contexts different from his/her generational reality will present difficulties, and must realize that he/she must, wants and has to be helped. The supervisor, in turn, must have the availability and qualities to monitor, ensuring attractive environments, learning and experiences, a calm and empathetic relationship, effective communication, management of emotions and conflicts, the best strategies and models for each supervisee, which presupposes dedication and patience. This condition leads to the premise of responsibility and commitment on the part of both parties, so that a set of beneficial results can be achieved, with a view to the quality of nursing care, the protection and safety of users and increased personal satisfaction.

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