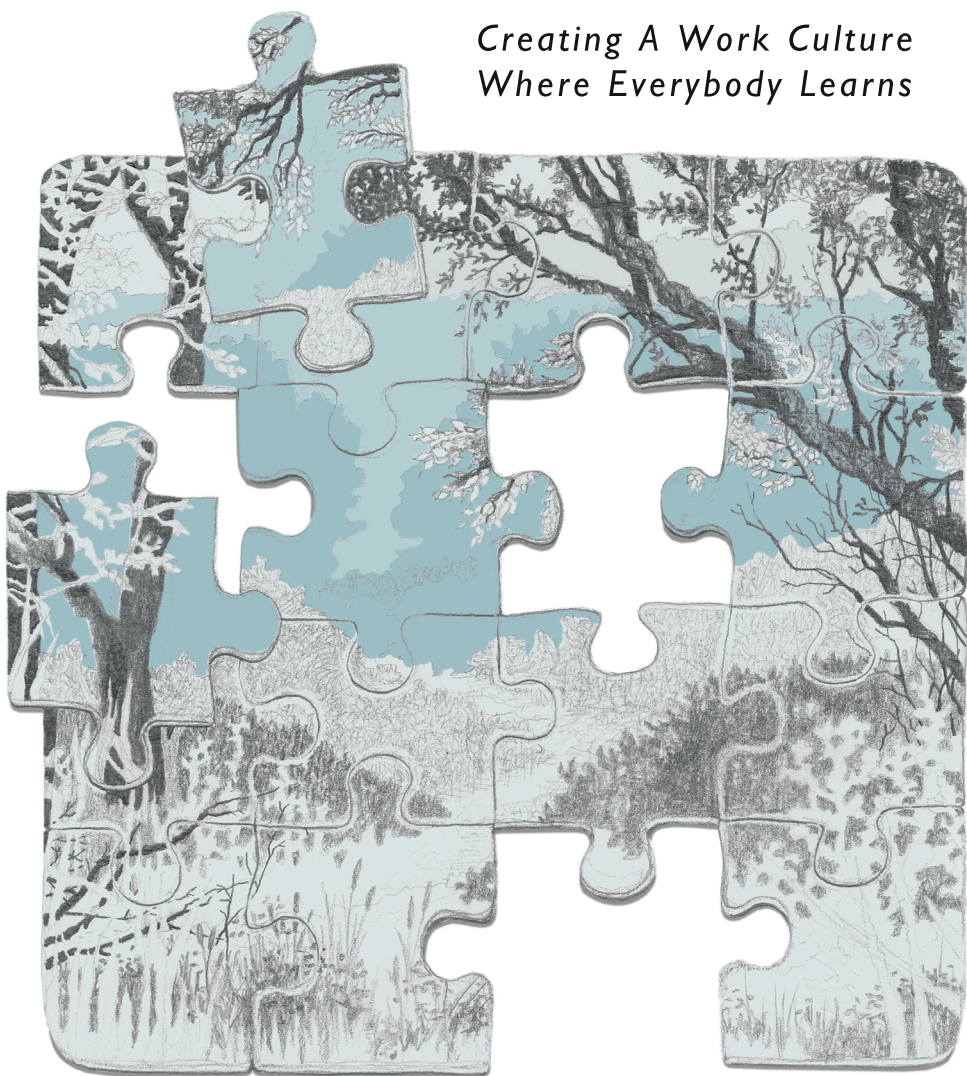


Kai Alhanen • Anne Kansanaho • Olli-Pekka Ahtiainen
Marko Kangas • Katriina Lehti • Tiina Soini • Jarkko Soininen

DIALOGICAL SUPERVISION

*Creating A Work Culture
Where Everybody Learns*



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Translated by Helena Lehti

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Marko Kangas, Katriina Lehti, Tiina Soini, Jarkko Soininen

This book was originally published as *Työnohjauksen käsikirja*,
by Tammi, Helsinki, 2011.

Cover art and layout: Vappu Rossi

Publisher: BoD – Books on Demand, Helsinki, Finland
Printer: BoD – Books on Demand, Norderstedt, Germany
ISBN: 978-952-318-658-3

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FOR THE READER

This book is written especially for professional supervisors and students of supervision, but we hope it also reaches many managers who act as “everyday supervisors” for their employees. The work is composed as a practical handbook in which we offer a coherent description of the fundamentals and practical implementation of supervision. The central ideas are based in constructivist learning theories, John Dewey’s philosophy of experience, and theories of dialogue. On many occasions, we also rely on solution-focused and resource-oriented methods as well as sociometry and psychodrama. We have aimed to write as smooth and readable a text as possible, and for this reason have left out direct references to our sources. At the end of the book is an overview of literature and other sources, in which we state where and from whom many of the ideas originate.

The first part of the book addresses the fundamentals of supervision: learning, reflection and dialogical interaction. In the second part we focus on the practical implementation and methods of supervision. In the third part we go deeper into different types of supervision relationships and their special features. All the examples in the text are imaginary, but they are based on situations and circumstances encountered in our own work. The

different chapters of the book contain methods we have found to be effective and which together form a kind of a “toolbox for supervisors”. The methods we describe are used in many professional fields and yet are ultimately derived from humanity’s ageless traditions.

Dialogical Supervision is the result of the persistent professional work undertaken at Aretai, as well as the examination of and reflection upon that work. We strive to work consciously as a learning community and to pursue shared dialogue in which we can unhurriedly and experimentally both deepen the points of view of all participants and develop new ideas. This is something, we have noticed, that is definitely worthwhile, leading to the enriching of one’s own experiences and the possibility to create together something that is larger and more diverse than the thoughts of any individual. All the writers have participated so fundamentally in shaping the contents of this book that the result is truly shared.

The original Finnish version of this book was published in 2011, and we would here like to thank its sharp-eyed proof-readers. Harri Hirvihuhta was the “godfather” of our book from an early stage. Harri delved into our manuscript and gave us the confidence to bring forth our own views. Many of the ideas presented here have come from Liisa Valve-Mäntylä, in whose supervision sessions we were able to develop many of themes of the book. Liisa also offered rigorous but constructive comments and ensured that we did not lose our investigative outlook and diversity of thought. Liisa Raina kindly read the contributions of writers she did not know, focusing in particular on the chapter on community supervision. She expanded our thoughts through many sharp

observations and questions. Anna Länsitie commented on the text from the point of view of a supervisee and as a graduating supervisor and highlighted what we had been able to express clearly and what still needed addressing. We have also received valuable help with the book's conceptual content, language and expression. Tuuli Hirvilammi improved our text at a stage when we were already completely blind to it. Finally, the masterful Sara Heinämaa offered her confident sense of style and her marvellously logical wit to refining our book. We would also like to thank all our supervisees, who all share in our expedition into Finnish working culture.

The Finnish version was well received in our country's field of professional supervision. Although we still think most of the content is relevant, we have continued to develop our understanding of dialogue and wish to include some new insights in the English edition. The most important of these is a clearer understanding of the multiple ways in which the supervisor can use her own experiences and her own acts to engage in dialogue with her supervisees. In addition, we emphasise more strongly the importance of dialogue in creating a fundamentally different work culture than that which currently predominates to celebrate mainly economic growth, ruthless competition and individual achievements. We live in a world that faces unprecedentedly intertwined economic, political and ecological crises. These crises impact more and more upon the everyday work of many professionals. In order to deal successfully with the challenges we encounter, we need to utilise the skills and knowledge of every single employee. We also need to build networks and to facilitate encounters through which professionals

from different fields join forces and strive to understand together the complex phenomena of the modern world. Such tasks seem unlikely to succeed unless dialogue becomes a basic skill of every employee and a more widely spread practice.

In preparing the English edition the group of the original writers was joined by Katriina Lehti who, along with Kai Alhanen, has re-written parts of the text. In particular, the fourth chapter, on Dialogical Interaction, has been updated to reflect our developing understanding of dialogue. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Helena Lehti and Donna Roberts for preparing and polishing the English text. We also thank Vappu Rossi for the design of the book and Auli Kurvinen for her assistance in grooming the book for print. In addition, we greatly appreciate the help of our colleagues Janne Kareinen, Tomi Lammppula and Pekka Lavila for checking the final version of the text.





THE FUNDAMENTALS

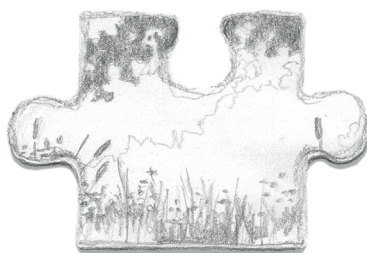
The chapters of the first part of the book describe the fundamentals of supervision. First, we examine the role of supervision in current work culture and explain our way of defining the central ideas of supervision. After this we move on to discuss learning at work and how supervision constitutes a learning process. This in turn leads to our examining the process of reflection as practiced in supervision, as well as certain specific questions about how reflection can be directed. At the end of this section we describe how dialogical interaction supports good-quality learning and reflection. These fundamentals create the matrix for a genuinely inclusive, learning-oriented and dialogical work culture.

DIALOGICAL SUPERVISION

Dialogical Supervision – Creating A Work Culture Where Everybody Learns is a guide to professional supervision in various fields of expertise. It is written especially for professional supervisors and students of supervision, and yet it also provides insights and tools for those team leaders and managers who act as “everyday supervisors” for their employees. The work is composed as a practical handbook which offers a coherent theoretical description and practical implementation of a new kind of professional supervision.

The book addresses the fundamentals of supervision: learning, reflection and dialogical interaction. It then presents guidelines for practical implementation, diverse orientations, and methods of supervision. The work also includes sections dealing with various types of supervision relationships: individual, community, group and managerial supervision. The different chapters of the book also contain several practical methods which together form a “toolbox for supervisors”.

The basic premise of the book is to emphasise the importance of dialogue in creating a fundamentally different work culture to that which predominates. In celebrating economic growth, ruthless competition and individual achievement, this culture has led to an increasing fragmentation of people’s experiences and the loss of their sense of agency. At the same time, we need to solve extremely complex problems that require unprecedented creativity. In order to deal successfully with the challenges of modern work, we need to utilise the skills and knowledge of every single employee. This book offers clear methods for this to be realised.



Cover art and lay out: Vappu Rossi
ISBN 978-952-318-658-3

