# Definition and Functions of Supervision within Case Management

**Interagency Case Management Guidelines definition:**

*“Supervision is a relationship that supports the caseworker’s technical competence and practice, promotes wellbeing and enables effective and supportive monitoring of casework.”*

Coaching is at the heart of supervision. It is an attitude that places the case worker as the driver of their own development. The supervisor’s role as coach is to use specific practices to help the caseworker recognize their strengths and challenges, and assist them to set – and realize – realistic goals towards achievement. Coaching also helps the caseworker to *reflect* upon his or her work and role.

**Functions of Supervision within Case Management:**

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| **Functions:** | **Purpose:** | **Includes:** |
| 1. **Accountability and Administrative** | To ensure competent, accountable practice of staff | * Human resources * Planning and assigning and overseeing the quality of case work * Coordinating with other actors * Documentation * Reinforcing safety and ethical standards |
| 1. **Educational and Professional Development** | To ensure staff are continually updating their knowledge and skills and applying them to their daily work. | * Assess competencies * Collaborate on personal learning plans * Promote reflective practices * Reinforcement of guiding principles * Encourage self-awareness |
| 1. **Supportive** | Ensuring the emotional and psychological wellbeing of case management team | * Creation of a safe space for reflection * Promotion of self-care * Having empathy and normalizing feelings * Reinforcing realistic expectations and healthy boundaries * Recognition and encouragement |

**Balance of the Functions**:

**EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION**

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**DEVELOPMENT**

**SUPPORT**



In order for caseworkers to provide quality CM to vulnerable children, all three functions of supervision must be provided.

***The role of consistent, quality supportive supervision directly relates to positive outcomes for children.***

**Supervision is a Protective Practice:**

* Children should remain at the center of the supervision process
* Protects children and families from caseworkers who have inadequate experience, are careless, or who breach professional boundaries
* Protects caseworkers from making mistakes, burn-out or over/under involve themselves which may cause harm to children
* If processes are designed in such a way that staff are encouraged and supported to reflect on their practice, a culture of openness and transparency is more likely to be fostered, resulting in better outcomes for children

**Supervision Structures:**

* Suggested ratio: 1 Supervisor: 5-6 caseworkers
* Individual supervision on a regular basis
  + 1 hour per week
  + No less than 1 hour every 2 weeks
* Carried out by someone who has substantive child protection and case management experience
* Complemented by weekly case management meetings
* Supervisor can be different than line manager such as an external agency/consultant if confidentiality measures are put in place