

## BALANCING SUPPORT & CHALLENGE

01.

### Why it's Important

Supervision is most effective when it provides both reassurance and constructive feedback. Striking this balance helps supervisees feel safe while also stretching their practice, ensuring growth without overwhelm.



### Supervisor's Checklist

#### Support

- Am I creating a safe, respectful space where supervisees feel heard?
- Do I acknowledge and validate their strengths and successes?
- Am I checking in on wellbeing and workload stress?
- Do I provide reassurance when supervisees face uncertainty or self-doubt?
- Do I leave supervisees feeling more confident and supported after sessions?

#### Challenge

- Am I encouraging supervisees to critically reflect on their practice decisions?
- Do I provide constructive feedback that stretches their thinking?
- Am I identifying gaps, risks, or blind spots in their practice?
- Do I push supervisees to explore new perspectives or alternative approaches?
- Do I set clear, achievable action points that promote growth?

#### Balance Indicators

- Am I blending affirmation with constructive questioning in each session?
- Do supervisees feel safe enough to be stretched, and stretched enough to grow?
- Am I addressing both immediate support needs and long-term development goals?
- Is the supervision relationship collaborative rather than directive?
- Do supervisees leave sessions with clarity, confidence, and practical next steps?

02.

**Practical Activity**  
**Comfort vs Stretch Zone Mapping in Supervision**  
on the last page

03.

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03.

Support builds confidence, reduces stress, & validates professional identity.



Challenge encourages critical thinking, skill development, & resilience.

Together, they create a dynamic supervision space that is both nurturing and developmental.

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### The Support VS Challenge Toolbox

#### 1. Prompting Clarity

Ask: "Do you need support, feedback, or challenge on this issue?"

→ Helps supervisees identify what they're seeking from the conversation and encourages self-awareness. This question opens the door for a tailored supervisory approach that meets individual needs.

#### 2. Strengths + Growth Reflection

Encourage supervisees to name one strength and one growth area each session.

→ Balances affirmation with constructive focus, fostering a growth mindset. This reflection promotes continuous learning and helps supervisees recognize their progress over time.

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### Comfort vs Stretch Zone Mapping in Supervision

**Purpose:** Supervision should empower supervisees to grow without overwhelming them. The Comfort vs Stretch Zone model helps supervisors and supervisees identify where learning sits, ensuring sessions balance safety, challenge, and development.

#### Zone Mapping Exercise

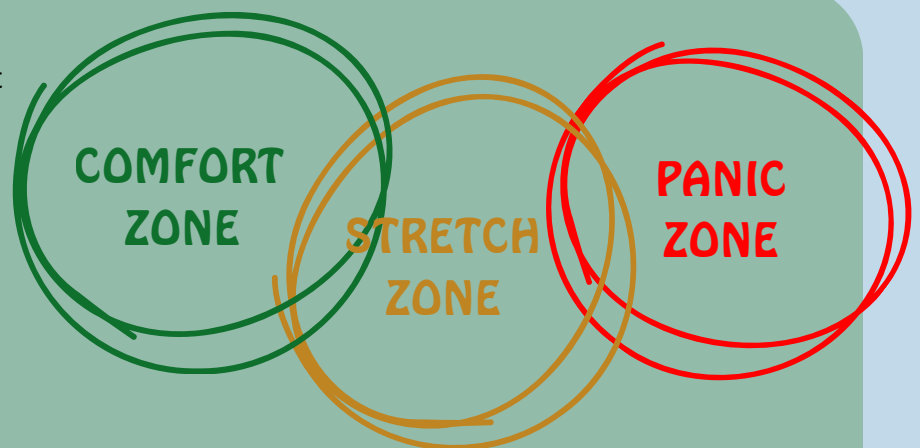
1. Ask supervisees to list recent tasks or cases.
2. Place each into Comfort, Stretch, or Panic zones.
3. Discuss how supervision can support movement from Comfort → Stretch.

#### Visual Reflection Tool

1. Use a diagram (see below) during sessions.
2. Invite supervisees to physically place sticky notes or write examples in each zone.

#### Action Planning

1. Identify one Comfort Zone task to stretch further.
2. Identify one Panic Zone task to scale back or add supports.
3. Agree on supervision strategies to maintain balance.



#### Why It Matters?

**Comfort Zone:** Tasks that feel familiar and safe. Supervisees are confident but may not be learning new skills.  
**Stretch Zone:** Tasks that are challenging yet achievable. This is the optimal learning space where growth occurs.  
**Panic Zone:** Tasks that feel overwhelming, unsafe, or unmanageable. These can cause anxiety and hinder progress.  
By mapping current practice issues into these zones, supervisors can strategically plan development that is both supportive and challenging.

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