

Workshop IBF Congress Aarhus/DK Sept 30-Oct 4 2026

“Containing the leader: Building up competence for supervision of accredited leaders”

Facilitators:

Philipp Herzog, Dr. med., accredited trainer and supervisor for Balint Group leaders - German Balint Society, GP, Specialist for Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

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Background and context

The idea for this workshop came up during the work of the special working group on “Supervision for Balint group leaders” in the Leadership Task Force. Historically almost from the beginning of the “research cum training seminars” supervision had been an element intrinsic to Balint work, as the method emerged from the psychodynamic background of Michael and Enid Balint. An IBF Task Force survey in 2022 showed that 95% of the IBF member societies would be interested in supervision groups for leaders at international IBF congresses. Supervision of leaders is not only a means of keeping quality standards of Balint group leadership and important for Continuing Professional Development (CMP), but it can also offer *containment for the leaders*, who do hard work in containing their groups.

Aim / purpose

The workshop addresses accredited and experienced leaders, running ongoing groups at home. They should be willing to present a challenge or problem that has occurred in their Balint group. The number of participants has to be limited to 12 for methodical reasons.

The workshop aims at giving an opportunity for experienced accredited leaders to have a glimpse on skills required for supervising other leaders. *The intention of the facilitators is to show how they do it as a practical live demonstration, followed by an analysis by the group members of the process, the method and the interventions made.*

The workshop does NOT offer or replace an undergraduate leadership training.

Methods or theoretical/reflective framework

The conception of the workshop is to have a “real session” of supervision for a group leader and his problem with an ongoing group. As a means of passing on competence in supervising, the workshop will mainly use the “Balint method”, working on the presented problem as if it were “the case”. The session will have two phases:

Phase 1: A 70-minute session of supervision in a small “fish bowl”- setting. The inner group will be the “supervision group”. The outside group will consist of a few observers of the process of the group and the interventions made.

Phase 2: 50 minutes debriefing of the session in the whole group, taking multiperspective views on the process, the method, the interventions and the outcome for the presenter as well as the group members.

The “7-eye model of supervision for Balint group leaders”, derived from Hawkins (2012), will be introduced as theoretical background.

Expected outcomes, key insights or guiding questions

We expect to pass on competence in supervising leaders beyond their leadership training and initiate further steps in acquiring competence and skills for supervising Balint group leaders. We intend to demonstrate a group technique of supervision and facilitate insights in the supervision process of leaders.

Philipp Herzog and Doris Salmen
German Balint Society
members of the IBF Task Force on Leadership

Literature:

Hawkins, P., Shohet, R. (2012): *Supervision in the Helping Professions* (3rd ed.), Open University Press McGraw-Hill, Maidenhead

Herzog, P. : „Supervision für Balint-Gruppenleiter: Luxus oder Notwendigkeit?": *Balint Journal*, Psychosozial Verlag, Giessen, 2026; 27(2).

Text in German. Abstract in English: „Supervision for Balint Group Leaders: Luxury or Necessity?"