



# International Society of Counselling and Clinical Supervisors (ISOCSS)

## Competency Standards

According to literature, it has become increasingly apparent that effective clinicians are not necessarily effective supervisors (cf. Bartlett, 1983; Holloway & Hosford, 1983; Leddick & Bernard, 1980). Specialized training in supervision is desirable and necessary as supervision is a distinct intervention that is different from counselling or clinical work, and supervisors have specific roles and goals and the ability to create a safe enough learning environment in which they can convey their counseling/clinical knowledge and skills in such ways that they can promote effectiveness and the professional identity of supervisees (Hess, 1986,1987; Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982; Stoltenberg, 1981; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987-cited at [http://files.acesonline.net/doc/ethical\\_guidelines.htm](http://files.acesonline.net/doc/ethical_guidelines.htm))

Presently in Australia, professional bodies in the Allied Health Sector recognize that supervision is a distinct intervention from counselling/clinical work and require their supervisors to adhere to certain standards relating to their preparation, education, and registration purposes.

These standards for supervisors are about areas that characterize an effective supervisor in terms of knowledge, competencies, and personal traits, as they have been consistently identified in supervision research and literature. They are initial standards that will be regularly reviewed on an annual basis by ISOCCS and peer supervisors.

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| <b>Definitions and Interpretations Used</b> | <b>‘Supervision’</b> is utilized to describe foundation skills relevant to counselling and/or clinical supervisory relationships that can be adopted in a range of supervisory relationships provided by professionals of different training and accreditation background, such as counsellors, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers, or any other professionals in the helping profession. |
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## Standards for Supervisors

1. A supervisor is an effective counselor/clinician whose knowledge and competencies have been acquired through training, education, and supervised employment experience, which demonstrate:
  - 1.1. Knowledge of a range of counseling/clinical theories, systems, and their related methods;
  - 1.2. Knowledge of supervisor's personal philosophical, theoretical and methodological approaches to counseling/clinical work;
  - 1.3. Knowledge of supervisor's assumptions about human behavior;
  - 1.4. Skills in the application of counseling/clinical theory and methods such as individual, group, or specialized areas (e.g. substance abuse, etc.) appropriate for the supervisory setting.
  
2. A supervisor is an effective supervisor whose knowledge and competencies have been acquired through training, education, and supervised employment experience, which demonstrate:
  - 2.1. Knowledge of a range of supervision theories, systems, and their related methods;
  - 2.2. Knowledge of supervisor's personal philosophical, theoretical and methodological approaches to supervision;
  - 2.3. Knowledge of supervisor's assumptions about human behavior;
  - 2.4. Skills in the application of supervision theory and methods such as individual, group, or specialized areas (e.g. substance abuse, etc.) within the supervision framework, appropriate for the supervisory setting.
  
3. A supervisor demonstrates *personal traits* and *characteristics* consistent with the supervisory role, and:
  - 3.1. Is committed to updating own counseling/clinical and supervisory skills;
  - 3.2. Is committed in undertaking supervision of own supervision practice;
  - 3.3. Is sensitive to individual differences;
  - 3.4. Recognizes own limitations via self-evaluation and feedback from others;
  - 3.5. Is encouraging, optimistic and motivational;
  - 3.6. Possesses a sense of humor;
  - 3.7. Is comfortable with the authority inherent in the supervisory role;
  - 3.8. Demonstrates a commitment to the role of supervisor;
  - 3.9. Can identify own strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor;
  - 3.10. Can describe own pattern in interpersonal relationships.
  
4. A supervisor is knowledgeable in *ethical, legal and regulatory aspects* of the profession, has the skills in applying this knowledge, and:
  - 4.1. Communicates to supervisee a knowledge of codes of ethics;
  - 4.2. Demonstrates and enforces ethical and professional standards;
  - 4.3. Communicates to supervisee an understanding of legal and regulatory documents and their impact on the profession (e.g. certification, registration with professional bodies, duty to warn, parents' rights to children's records, third party payments, etc.);
  - 4.4. Provides current information about professional standards (e.g. certification, registration with professional bodies);

- 4.5. Can communicate a knowledge of supervisee's rights and appeal procedures specific to the work setting;
  - 4.6. Communicates to supervisee a knowledge of ethical considerations related to the supervisory process, dual relationships, due process, evaluation, informed consent, confidentiality, and vicarious liability.
5. A supervisor demonstrates conceptual knowledge of the *personal and professional nature of the supervisory relationship*, has learnt the skills in applying this knowledge, and:
- 5.1. Demonstrates knowledge of individual differences such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture and age and is able to understand the importance of these characteristics in supervisory relationships;
  - 5.2. Is sensitive to supervisee's personal and professional needs;
  - 5.3. Expects supervisees to own the consequences of their actions;
  - 5.4. Is sensitive to the evaluative nature of supervision and effectively responds to supervisee anxiety relating to performance evaluation;
  - 5.5. Conducts self-evaluations as a means of modeling professional growth, as appropriate;
  - 5.6. Provides facilitative conditions (e.g. empathy, concrete-ness, respect, congruence, genuineness, and immediacy);
  - 5.7. Establishes a mutually trusting relationship with supervisee;
  - 5.8. Provides a balance between challenge and support;
  - 5.9. Elicits supervisee's thoughts and feelings arising from counselling/clinical work or supervision sessions, and responds in a manner that enhances the supervision process.
6. A supervisor demonstrates conceptual knowledge of *supervision methods and techniques*, and learned the skills in using this knowledge in promoting supervisee development, and:
- 6.1. Communicates the purposes of supervision and procedures to be used;
  - 6.2. Negotiates mutual decisions regarding the direction needed for supervisee's learning experiences;
  - 6.3. Engages in appropriate supervisory interventions, such as: role-play, role-reversal, live supervision, modeling, interpersonal process recall (IPR), micro-training,, reviewing audio and video tapes, etc.;
  - 6.4. Performs the supervisor's functions in the role of teacher, therapist, or consultant as appropriate;
  - 6.5. Elicits new alternatives from supervisee to identify solutions, techniques, or responses to clients;
  - 6.6. Integrates knowledge of supervision with their style of interpersonal relations;
  - 6.7. Clarifies their role in supervision;
  - 6.8. Uses technology to enhance learning;
  - 6.9. Interacts with supervisee in a manner which facilitates supervisee's self-exploration and problem solving.
7. A supervisor demonstrates conceptual knowledge of *supervisee's developmental process*, has learned the skills in applying this knowledge, and:
- 7.1. Understands the developmental nature of supervision;
  - 7.2. Demonstrates knowledge of various theoretical models of supervision;
  - 7.3. Understands supervisee's roles and functions in particular work settings;
  - 7.4. Understands the supervisor's roles and functions in particular work settings;

- 7.5. Can identify supervisee's learning needs and adjusts conference content based on supervisee's personal traits, conceptual development, training, and experience;
  - 7.6. Uses supervision methods appropriate to supervisee's level of conceptual development, training and experience.
8. A supervisor demonstrates knowledge and competency in *case conceptualization and management*, and:
- 8.1. Recognizes that a primary goal of supervision is helping supervisee's client;
  - 8.2. Understands the roles of other professionals (e.g., psychologists, physicians, social workers) and assists with the referral process, when appropriate;
  - 8.3. Elicits supervisee perceptions of counseling/clinical dynamics;
  - 8.4. Assists supervisee in selecting and executing data collection procedures;
  - 8.5. Assists supervisee in analyzing and interpreting data objectively;
  - 8.6. Assists supervisee in planning effective client goals and objectives;
  - 8.7. Assists supervisee in using observation and assessment in preparation of client goals and objectives;
  - 8.8. Assists supervisee in synthesizing client psychological and behavioral characteristics into an integrated conceptualization;
  - 8.9. Assists supervisee in assigning priorities to counseling goals and objectives;
  - 8.10. Assists supervisee in providing rationale for counseling procedures;
  - 8.11. Assists supervisee in adjusting steps in the progression toward a goal, based on ongoing assessment and evaluation.
9. A supervisor demonstrates knowledge and competency in client *assessment and evaluation*, and:
- 9.1. Monitors the use of tests and test interpretations;
  - 9.2. Assists supervisee in providing rationale for assessment procedures;
  - 9.3. Assists supervisee in communicating assessment procedures and rationales;
  - 9.4. Assists supervisee in the description, measurement, and documentation of client and counselor change;
  - 9.5. Assists supervisee in integrating findings and observations to make appropriate recommendations.
10. A supervisor demonstrates knowledge and competency in *oral and written reporting and recording*, and:
- 10.1. Understands the meaning of accountability and the responsibility in promoting it;
  - 10.2. Assists supervisee in effectively documenting supervisory and counseling/clinical related interactions;
  - 10.3. Assists supervisee in establishing and following policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of client and supervisory records;
  - 10.4. Assists supervisee in identifying appropriate information to be included in a verbal or written report;
  - 10.5. Assists supervisee in presenting information in a logical, concise, and sequential manner;
  - 10.6. Assists supervisee in adapting verbal and written reports to the work environment and communication situation.

11. A supervisor demonstrates knowledge and competency in the *evaluation of counseling/clinical performance*, and:
  - 11.1. Can interact with supervisee from the perspective of evaluator;
  - 11.2. Can identify supervisee's professional and personal strengths and weaknesses, and provides specific feedback relating to such performance;
  - 11.3. Has conceptualization, use of methods and techniques, relationship skills, and assessment;
  - 11.4. Determines the extent to which supervisee has developed and applied own personal theory of counseling/clinical work;
  - 11.5. Develops evaluation procedures and instruments to determine if program and supervisee goals have been attained;
  - 11.6. Assists supervisee in the description and measurement of his/ her progress and achievement;
  - 11.7. Can evaluate counseling/clinical skills for purposes of grade assignment, completion of internship requirements, professional advancement, etc.
  
12. A supervisor is knowledgeable about *research in counseling/clinical work and therapist supervision* and consistently incorporates this knowledge into the supervision process, and:
  - 12.1. Facilitates and monitors research to determine the effectiveness of programs, services and techniques;
  - 12.2. Reads, interprets, and applies counseling/clinical and supervisory research;
  - 12.3. Can formulate counseling/clinical or supervisory research questions;
  - 12.4. Reports results of counseling/clinical or supervisory research and disseminates as appropriate (e.g., in service, conferences, publications);
  - 12.5. Facilitates an integration of research findings in individual case management.

### **Technology in Supervision**

13. A supervisor demonstrate knowledge and skills in the application of the same definition of supervision and its processes regardless if supervision is provided face-to-face or by other methods using technology, in all disciplines and modalities.
14. The supervisor demonstrate knowledge and skills in the use of Informed Consent (during contracting), including:
  - 14.1. The method of delivery and the mode of communication
  - 14.2. Steps for technological glitches,
  - 14.3. Boundaries relating to scheduling sessions and immediate availability,
  - 14.4. Record keeping, methods, storage, ownership, and disposal,
  - 14.5. How misunderstandings will be negotiated,
  - 14.6. Clear rules and sanctions for group supervision,
  - 14.7. The method of authentication of the identity of both supervisor-supervisee
  - 14.8. Confidentiality, including:
    - Specifics, related to the use of technology, to supervisee's client. The supervisees' clients have the right to know if the details of their case will be discussed with the supervisor via distance using technology.
    - Incorporate encryptions or equivalent levels of security if communication is transmitted via the internet. If not possible, the lack of encryption and risk of confidentiality should be part of the informed consent process.

- The use of Verbatim material – data protection issues and issues of confidentiality - encryption software to preserve privacy for both client and therapist or anyone else who is directly related to the case,
  - An awareness of confidentiality issues when using mobile phone or SMS texting for conversation.
15. The supervisor demonstrates competencies and proficiencies in the technology being used and ensures the same with supervisee
  16. The supervisor demonstrates knowledge and skills in portability, versatility, ease of use and cost effectiveness of technology used
  17. The supervisor demonstrates responsibility in the use of liability (malpractice) insurance which include coverage when supervision is delivered via technology

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