



Guidelines on Supervision

FEBRUARY 2017¹

The purpose of the Board’s “best-practice” guidelines

Practice guidelines recommend specific professional conduct for psychologists to educate and inform practice. Guidelines are recommendations rather than mandatory standards, but supplement the Code of Ethics which is the highest and most aspirational regulatory document.

The Code of Ethics (the **Code**) delineates the manner in which psychologists ought to carry out their practice. All other statements of how psychologists should or must conduct their practice must be consistent with this document and its ethical principles of respect for the dignity of persons, responsible caring, integrity in relationships and responsibility to society. Guidelines adopted by the Psychologists Board (the **Board**) support psychologists in providing competent and ethical practice by translating or expanding on the Code in relation to more specific aspects of their professional behaviour.

By integrating the principles of the Code and current specialised knowledge in an area of practice, the Board develops guidelines to support quality services for the benefit of consumers and to protect the public. It is incumbent upon psychologists to be familiar with any Board guidelines relevant to each area in which they practise. Guidelines are not definitive, binding, or enforceable by themselves. They have the least authority of any of the regulatory documents. However, a disciplinary body may use the guidelines in evaluating a psychologist’s knowledge and competency. Guidelines that are relevant to a particular area in which a psychologist has chosen to practise help to define competent and skilled professional behaviour. Practice that is inconsistent with relevant guidelines may represent unskilled practice.

Introduction to the Supervision Guidelines

The Board is obliged under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the **Act**) to assure the public that each psychologist is maintaining their competence. The Board considers supervision, complemented by the Continuing Competence Programme, as a key mechanism to achieve this. Supervision is underpinned by reflective practice as a core competency, that is, one of the foundation competencies which all psychologists are required to have (Core Competencies for the Practice of Psychology in New Zealand, July 2008). The expectation of supervision is explicitly stated in the Code under Principle 2.2.6 (section “Responsible Caring: Competence”). Supervision is an intrinsic part of any programme the Board recognises, accredits, or sets to ensure the ongoing competence of psychologists.

¹ Officially adopted by the Psychologists Board on 07 May 2010, revised May 2016, February 2017 (Next review May 2017)

The generic competencies expected of a psychologist are contained in the Board's Core Competencies document. Supervision facilitates the enculturation and development of judgement to enable the application of the psychological knowledge to the practical situation. Competence includes being culturally competent. Within the practice of psychology cultural safety demands of the psychologist a high degree of awareness of one's own culture, the cultural bias inherent in some psychological practice, as well as the cultural identity of the recipient of the psychological service offered. Although the Board is committed to ensuring that the training and practice of psychologists in New Zealand reflects paradigms and world views of both partners to the Treaty of Waitangi, the main body of knowledge within the psychology discipline is derived from Euro-American traditions. Furthermore the population of New Zealand is becoming increasingly multicultural. Attention to the cultural dimensions of professional practice is an important part of supervision.

The Board's policy with regard to supervision

The Board expects all practising psychologists will engage in supervision, regardless of the stage of their career and work settings/contexts. Although supervision is continued throughout a psychologist's career, the nature of the supervision relationship may change as the career evolves.

All aspects of a psychologist's work (e.g. client contact, research, educational, managerial) should be supervised. However it is expected that the nature of the supervision will vary between individuals and across different work contexts. The Board does not believe that one model or style of supervision will apply to all psychologists in all areas of practice at all times in their career. "Supervision" may be referred to by different names in different settings, such as mentoring (in academic circles) or professional networking (in industrial and occupational psychology). However care should be taken that the special and additional features implied by the term supervision are not lost if practitioners rely solely on mentoring or professional networking.

What is meant by supervision?

Supervision is defined as a scheduled time to meet with a respected professional colleague for the purpose of conducting a self-reflective review of practice, to discuss professional issues and to receive feedback on all elements of practice, with the objectives of ensuring quality of service, improving practice and managing stress. A distinction is drawn between the term "clinical supervision" as used within the psychology profession and the way some other stakeholder groups use the term "supervision"; for example employers may use the term to refer to line management monitoring. Under the Act "supervision" is defined as "the monitoring of, and reporting on, the performance of a health practitioner by a professional peer" whereas "oversight" is defined as "professional support provided... by a professional peer for the purposes of professional development". The latter definition more closely reflects supervision as it is routinely practised within our profession, and as it is used in these guidelines.

The process of supervision

A trusting and collaborative relationship between supervisor and supervisee is an essential component of effective supervision. The supervisor should be mindful of the implicit power imbalance in the relationship. Careful attention to discussing expectations in order to form an agreement, transparency on any constraints to confidentiality and a respectful relationship are helpful to managing this issue. Regular review of the process and steps that may be taken in the event of a disagreement occurring should be built in and made explicit at the start of the supervisory relationship.

The initial task in establishing a supervision process will be for the supervisor to conduct a needs assessment to establish the strengths, values, cultural and professional development needs of the supervisee and the expectations of any stakeholder interests. In this discussion, and throughout the process of supervision, the supervisor should also acknowledge their strengths and limitations in

meeting the identified needs of the supervisee, in order to clarify where further resources should be sought.

The key component of supervision is the opportunity to self-reflect and review one's professional practice with one or more informed and respected professional colleagues(s) with the object of formulating constructive critique.

Although supervision may vary according to the supervisee's needs, the process involves reflection, meaning the supervisee gives careful and detailed consideration to some aspect of their recent work; conceptualisation, where the supervisor assists the supervisee to relate their experience to the perspectives of others, as well as relevant theories and research; formulating the implications for action; and then in due course reporting back the experience of the enactment.

The supervisor gives formative and summative feedback during the course of supervision. Formative feedback provides encouragement and corrective feedback. Summative evaluation concerns the provision of feedback of the extent to which standards are achieved.

Functions of supervision

The overarching goals of supervision are the promotion and maintenance of high professional and ethical standards in the assessment, conceptualisation, planning, and service delivered to the supervisee's clients. "Clients" may include (but is not limited to) organisations, contractors, groups and individuals. It allows time and space for review, reflection, conceptualisation, and planning of interventions. Supervision has the following functions:

- It promotes the ongoing professional development of psychologists;
- It offers a form of accountability for psychologists in order to ensure that the service they provide is both professional and appropriate;
- It provides a restorative function where, in the course of the supervision process, the supervisor will also focus on the emotional demands of the work and the well being of the supervisee; and
- It assists the psychologist to monitor the wellbeing of the client in their family, whanau or community context.

Supervision is the main method by which trainee psychologists are assisted to acquire the professional skills and judgement necessary to practise as a psychologist.

In an employment situation supervision is one means whereby the employer can fulfil their obligations as a good employer to address occupational stress.

Supervision is integral to the role of the psychologist

Most psychologists will provide supervision to other psychologists or student psychologists at some stage of their career. This activity is regarded as a core part of a psychologist's work. Given its importance, psychologists should undertake training in supervision. Psychologists may also provide supervision for practitioners in other professions.

The Board considers it is important that organisations, managers, or persons responsible for employing psychologists recognise that receiving and providing supervision are essential core functions for the practice of psychology. It is integral to accountability and quality assurance processes for case work and training, and must be allowed for in the setting of case load expectations.

Competencies for the supervisor

Key competencies for the supervisor include relationship management skills and general knowledge and skills relating to the domain of professional activity. Successful supervisors demonstrate an interest in and commitment to the supervisee's professional development.

Effective supervisors are able to:

- create a safe environment so that supervisees can openly discuss their work, acknowledge any difficulties and have the freedom to experiment or try new strategies;
- respond to the individual supervisee's style of learning and development;
- offer constructive feedback while maintaining empathy and respect;
- be non judgemental, validate and normalise the supervisee's experience;
- model ethical and professional conduct, including maintaining appropriate boundaries and practising/ supervising within their competence;
- attend to personal wellness issues in the supervisee that may impair effectiveness;
- pay appropriate attention to diversity issues;
- increase the supervisee's awareness of their impact on others and any biases they may have;
- evaluate progress regularly to adjust the process accordingly;
- recognise the impact of personal values, assumptions and biases on the supervision relationship and respond appropriately ; and
- recognise their potential to be defensive and respond appropriately when students whom they supervise are being evaluated, or examined.

The supervision relationship

In order to fulfil the functions of supervision, psychologists must present their professional work with openness and honesty to their supervisor. The supervisee's responsibilities are to strive to maintain ethical and professional standards by allowing a comprehensive review.

The supervisor's role will involve assisting the supervisee to gain a critical awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and what might be required in addressing the latter aspects of their work.

During supervision there may be times when it is necessary for a supervisor to highlight and/or clarify some personal issue of the supervisee that impacts on their work. Should significant issues arise or remain from this process, which may indicate some form of assistance or psychological therapy is warranted, the supervisor should encourage the supervisee to arrange this with an independent therapist. It is the supervisee's responsibility to engage in an appropriate process to resolve such issues.

Supervisors should also attend to issues of stress within the supervisee, such as that arising from burn-out or post-traumatic stress.

Supervision may include various approaches to sampling the supervisee's work, including face-to-face discussion of case work, direct observation of the supervisee's work through audio or video recording, and file or report review. The validity of the supervision is increased by drawing on multiple aspects of a supervisee's work and by systematic review, rather than only discussing the material elected by the supervisee.

Cultural issues in supervision

Psychologists' awareness that they embody their own culture is fundamental to cultural safety. Cultural competence may be promoted in supervision by increasing awareness and respect of the cultural diversity between supervisee and recipients of services. Discussion should encompass exploration of the ways the various cultural assumptions and bias may influence interactions. The organisations in which psychologists work are also subject to cultural influences that may impact on the client, the supervisor, and supervisee. Appropriate knowledge, recognition, and management of these factors is needed.

The Board recognises that the partners of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ The Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa/New Zealand have different paradigms and world views. Māori, as tangata whenua in Aotearoa/New Zealand and partners in the Treaty, have a right to expect that psychologists will make efforts to understand, honour, and work with Māori world views, values, and systems of meaning in their professional endeavours. To facilitate professional practice that is culturally

sensitive and appropriate, psychologists who work with Māori supervisees or clients should seek supervision from or consult with practitioners who are recognised as being knowledgeable and skilled to provide advice on issues related to Māori. Cultural supervision may need to be sought separately from clinical supervision to ensure one form of supervision does not dominate the other.

Cultural supervision also includes kaupapa Māori supervision (by Māori, for Māori) for the purpose of building Māori cultural identity, cultural knowledge and cultural skill to assist with the management of complex issues. This form of supervision may be utilised in response to the additional expectations often placed on Māori psychologists to represent tangata whenua and to support non-Māori psychologists in their bicultural competence. Cultural supervision in this form can also apply to diverse cultural groups who struggle with competing cultural and psychological demands. This may be an adjunctive supervision process.

All psychologists working with culturally diverse individuals or groups should have in place or seek a formal cultural supervision arrangement for any other culturally related components of their professional practice.

The structure and frequency of supervision

Supervision will usually involve one-to-one meetings rather than a group format. However, at some times and in some situations (e.g. experienced or senior psychologists) group or peer supervision may be an appropriate adjunct, particularly for educational purposes. The supervisee needs to ensure that the format and frequency of supervision is meeting their needs.

As psychologists gain experience across their professional life, the nature of supervision will vary, moving from a more hierarchical relationship to a more collegial relationship where the practice may reflect a more peer consultation model.

The frequency and duration should be set at a level to allow all aspects of the supervisee's work to be discussed and to enable the development of a beneficial supervision relationship.

It is recommended that the frequency of routine supervision will be a minimum of two hours per month for psychologists who work full-time and one hour per month for part-time psychologists (6/10ths or less). The frequency of supervision may need to be increased in some situations, including (but not limited to):

- where the supervisee is a trainee or student psychologist,
- is an inexperienced psychologist,
- when undertaking a new area of work or learning a new skill, and/or
- when undergoing a monitoring/ remedial programme for a competence or conduct concern.

Supervision frequency will also be determined in some circumstances by special needs. For example, where an assessment report is being prepared to advise or inform a decision making body such as a Court or Parole Board, it is advisable to seek a peer review or supervisor input. The Code of Ethics (3.1.3 and 3.1.6) requires conclusions and reports to be supported by an adequate standard of evidence. The greater the weight of the decision to be made, the more robust the evidence should be to inform that decision. It is considered best practice to check the rigour of a report before it is released to ensure this ethical principle is upheld. A client crisis is another situation that may prompt seeking an additional supervision session. The guiding principle is that supervision frequency should be adapted for the purposes served.

Each psychologist and their supervisor should review the effectiveness of their supervision regularly and at least annually.

Record keeping

Records of supervision need to be kept which include:

- Copies of all supervision contracts and updates.

- The date and duration of each session.
- A supervision logbook which shows brief notes on the agenda, the main points discussed and agreed actions. The log book may be kept by either the supervisor or the supervisee, or in duplicate, as agreed between the parties.
- In particular, ethical or safety issues should be noted in the log book, including any risk assessments.

The supervisee and the supervisor should both retain notes arising from the supervision process. It is suggested that practitioners retain supervision records for a period of ten years, even if a practitioner leaves the employing organisation or practice setting in the meantime. This would enable the psychologist to meet his or her obligations under the Health (Retention of Health Information) Regulations 1996 that clinical records are to be for ten years; to respond to any complaint or competence concern arising; and to maintain records for the Continuing Competence Programme.

The supervision agreement or contract and the attendance record may be a public document whereas the supervision records, which may contain client details or other sensitive material, should be kept confidential. It may be preferable to store supervision content directly relevant to a client on the client file.

Competency concerns

If a supervisor has any concerns about the supervisee's practice, if the supervisee misses supervision appointments without discussion or arrangement, or if the supervisor is concerned about the number of sessions the supervisee has not attended, these problems should be discussed with the supervisee. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the supervisor it should be discussed with a third party agreed upon by the two parties at the time the contract was drawn up or a person mandated by the employing organisation.

Remedial and training supervision is likely to require more systematic review and greater attention to record keeping.

Choice of supervisor

It is the responsibility of each psychologist to find a suitable supervisor, and negotiate their own supervisory arrangements. These arrangements should be communicated as appropriate/required to the psychologist's professional leader, professional body, or to the Board. If a psychologist is unable to find a supervisor they should consult with professional bodies such as the New Zealand Psychological Society or New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists.

Characteristics the psychologist may wish to look for in selecting a supervisor include their philosophical and theoretical orientation, experience, and possibly gender and culture. Given the need for trust and a good working match between the psychologist and their supervisor, the choice of supervisor should be the psychologist's and should not be imposed. Where choice is not possible, the parties should discuss the implication of this on the supervision process to identify difficulties that may impact on the relationship.

Wherever possible dual relationships should be avoided. The blurring of social and supervisory relationships may compromise the supervision. Overlap of line management and supervisory relationships may reduce the safety for the supervisee to acknowledge areas of difficulty. In circumstances where dual relationships are unavoidable the supervisor and supervisee should discuss the implications of these relationships on the supervision process and note any agreed steps for managing the dual relationships in the contract.

Supervisors would be expected to have attended (or be planning to attend) at least one entry-level supervision course recognised/accredited by psychology professional bodies such as The New Zealand Psychological Society (**NZPsS**) and the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists (**NZCCP**) or other recognised training providers and be conversant with current supervision theory, practice, and research.

Supervisors will themselves have regular supervision of their work, including supervision of work as a supervisor. Their supervisees have the right to know who this third person is and should be informed at the outset of discussing a supervision contract so they can make a fully informed choice when selecting a supervisor.

Setting up supervision

A supervisory contract between the psychologist and their supervisor should be developed and signed. The contract should be a written document that specifies the goals of supervision and the specific process to be utilised. If appropriate, copies may be sent to the supervisee's manager, professional leader, or the psychologist's professional body. If appropriate, managers, professional leaders and the professional body should also receive amendments to supervision contracts. Supervision contract templates are available from the NZCCP or NZPsS. (See Appendix One for an example of a basic contract).

The contract should be reviewed regularly as part of the ongoing evaluation of the supervision process.

If it is not possible to arrange a suitable supervisor within the same geographical area it is acceptable for the prospective supervisee to identify a supervisor in a different location. In this case supervision sessions can be conducted electronically (e.g., via telephone, email, Skype or teleconference). However in such distance supervision arrangements it is recommended that some face-to-face meetings are also held (ideally at least once within each 3 month period).

In some situations it may be appropriate for psychologists to have supervision with a person who is not a psychologist. For example in rural areas there may be more restricted choice or there may be a professional from another discipline who offers specialty skills of interest to the supervisee. However this person should be registered or affiliated with a recognised professional body.

Accountability and confidentiality

Any expectations and obligations of the supervisor should be clarified and made explicit at the time of drawing up a supervision contract. The supervisor has parallel responsibilities to the supervisee, the consumers of treatment (clients, their families and associates), to the supervisee's professional colleagues and to any organisation to which they are providing services. There may be additional responsibilities to training organisations and professional organisations such as the NZPsS and NZCCP.

Where supervision is provided to an intern psychologist, the supervisor is accountable to a greater extent for the supervisee's work. The supervisor's responsibilities include:

- ensuring that client referrals are appropriate for the level of competence of the intern or trainee
- providing sufficient oversight and support to ensure safe practice
- checking and countersigning any documentation arising from the professional service.

In post-registration supervision both the supervisor and the supervisee are individually accountable for their own professional conduct and competence. However, the supervisor remains responsible in the general sense of providing appropriate and ethical guidance.

The supervisee for their part has clear responsibilities towards the supervisor in terms of openly and honestly presenting material to the supervisor.

It is important that any conflicts arising between the supervisor and supervisee are explicitly addressed as they arise.

The contents of the supervisory relationship will normally be confidential. Any constraints on confidentiality should be explicitly stated. The supervisor has a primary professional duty to monitor and to manage risk of emotional/physical harm to the client, the supervisee, or to others that may

arise within the sphere of supervisory responsibility. This duty may, in exceptional circumstances, override a duty to preserve the confidentiality of the supervisory relationship such as situations where there are perceived to be serious risks to the emotional or physical safety of the supervisee or client. Other exceptions to confidentiality may arise from obligations to report on training supervision; the supervisor's own supervision process; disciplinary processes; and processes which require a supervisor to recommend a psychologist for professional purposes (such as promotion or employment).

Where such circumstances arise the supervisor should inform the supervisee of their intended actions. The supervisor would be expected to exercise care and judgement with regard to the nature and extent of information disclosed and the selection of those with whom the information is shared. The supervisor would be explicit in transferring (to those with whom it is necessary to share information) any duty to preserve confidentiality of the supervisee or third parties.

Under the requirements of the Act the supervisor may also be required to provide information to statutory bodies such as the Board.

Under section 34 of the Act, if the supervisor has concerns that the supervisee may pose a risk to the public by practising below the required standard of competence, they may notify the Board. Similarly, under section 45, if the supervisor believes the supervisee may be unable to perform required functions due to a mental or physical condition, he/she must notify the Board.

Clients of the supervisee have a right to be informed that supervision occurs, the purpose of this process, the identity of the supervisor, and the degree to which this may compromise confidentiality.

It is desirable that supervisors have contact with the professional leader and to the relevant director(s) and manager(s) of any organisation/service in which the supervisee is working. The nature of this contact, and the extent and limits of confidentiality in respect of such contact, should be determined at the outset of the supervision process and noted in the supervision contract. The contract should specify who, and under what conditions, will have access to any information about the supervisee. Supervision should be distinguished from performance management such that only limited information about the supervisee's progress should be conveyed to employers. Any information transfer should be done as an open process transparent to the supervisee.

As potential conflicts of interest may arise it is desirable that supervisors have personal professional indemnity insurance and access to independent specialist legal advice on professional matters.

Acknowledgements

This document draws on material from the following sources:

Canterbury District Health Board Mental Health Service Supervision Guidelines,

The British Psychological Society, Division of Clinical Psychology Supervision Policy Guidelines,

The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (North America): Supervision Policies.

Barnett, J.E., Cornish, J., Goodyear, R. and Lichtenberg "Commentaries on the ethical and effective practice of clinical supervision" *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 2007, Vol 38, No 3, 268-275

Falender, C. and Shafranske, E. "Competence in competency-based supervision practice: Construct and application" *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 2007, Vol 38, No 3, 232-240

Howard, F., Burns, B. and Waitoki, W. (2007) Clinical supervision in New Zealand In Evans, I., Rucklidge, J. and O'Driscoll, M. (editors) Professional Practice of Psychology in Aotearoa New Zealand, published by The New Zealand Psychological Society, Wellington.

Thank you also to Ms Bev Burns, Registered Psychologist, and Ms Fiona Howard, Clinical Psychologist for their input as external consultants.

**APPENDIX ONE
A MODEL SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

Agreement between: _____ (Supervisee)

and: _____ (Supervisor)

1. a) Supervisors are expected to address professional, cultural, ethical, and educational issues, and personal issues which relate to and affect the supervisee's work performance. Specific expectations, the purpose of supervision, and any limitations, are listed in an appendix to the Contract.

b) Supervisees are expected to have reviewed their current work and clarified their priorities and needs before the supervision session.

c) The discussions which occur in supervision are confidential. The limitations to this confidentiality are the supervisor's own supervision process and where concern arises for the safety of the client or the supervisee. Any other limitations to confidentiality, and the circumstances in which these limitations may apply, are also attached to the Contract.

d) In the event of some concern arising for the supervisor that involves issues of safety or propriety either the supervisor or the supervisee should promptly contact the psychologist's employer or the Psychologists Board if appropriate.

e) Both supervisor and supervisee have a responsibility to keep notes on the supervision process pertaining to their respective roles.

f) The supervisee is responsible for ensuring that his or her professional practice is ethical and competent.

g) In the event that the supervisee has a complaint or concern, then in the first instance it should be addressed directly with the supervisor. If this proves to be not possible, then an agreed course of action to be followed should be made explicit and included in the supervision contract.

h) Both supervisor and supervisee remain responsible for their own professional conduct and competence. The supervisor of a Trainee or Intern Psychologist carries higher responsibility reflecting the hierarchical nature of the relationship and the requirement for close oversight. The supervisor is clinically accountable for providing appropriate oversight to an Intern or Trainee Psychologist and should co-sign all formal documentation (including letters, reports and progress notes) prepared by a Trainee or an Intern Psychologist accordingly.

i) Any specific responsibilities, and the actions that may arise, should be made explicit at the time of signing the contract. This may include, but is not limited to, obligations to the supervisee's training institution, an employer and the Board.

Obligations:

Actions arising:

Constraints on confidentiality:

2. a) The frequency of the supervision will be:

fortnightly
monthly
other

b) The protocol for cancellation and rescheduling is:

c) The duration of the supervision sessions will be:

d) The supervision will be reviewed:

e) Specific goals/focus areas for attention for the next months are:

f) It is agreed the following methods of accessing case material will be used (e.g., discussion, review of case notes, video recordings, etc):

g) The supervisor will make the following (if any) evaluations of the supervisee's work:

3. The following documents pertaining to the supervisee's role and responsibilities have been provided and reviewed:

4. Any specific additional duties or expectations attaching to the supervisor or supervisee should be noted below.

Signed: (Supervisee) Date:

Signed: (Supervisor) Date:

Copy sent to supervisee's manager, professional leader, or professional body (if appropriate).....

APPENDIX TWO
SAMPLE Annual Record of Supervision

Year: _____

Name of Supervisee: _____

Name of Supervisor: _____

Review Date: _____

Month	Date	Signature: Supervisee	Signature: Supervisor
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			