

Checklist 2

Guidelines for Developing Practice Supervision Policy¹

It is necessary to develop clear policy directives on supervision for community mental health workers to ensure the successful implementation of a supervision program.

The following guidelines outline the elements to consider when developing supervision policy within a workplace or organisation. Differences in the context, environment and service provision / workforce undertakings will require specific consideration. However this checklist aims to provide three fundamental criteria applicable to all supervision programs.

1. Consistency with the organisation's mission / goals / philosophy
2. A specific purpose or direction
3. A clear structure for the development of the supervision program.

It is recommended that a supervision policy addresses the following

1. Clearly state the importance of practice supervision and expected benefits, value to consumers, workers and the organisation

For example:

- Improves consumer engagement / quality of care
- Improves work practices and professionalism
- Offers support to mental health workers, reducing burnout, job dissatisfaction and job stress
- Development of collegiate processes

2. Develop policy statements that provide information related to the organisation's commitment and contributions to supporting and developing supervision and clearly state the conditions under which supervision is provided.

For example:

1. Organisational commitment

- All staff with direct client contact will have regular access to supervision on an individual; and/or group basis
- Supervision will be provided by internal/ external supervisors
- Allocated time for supervision for a worker - per week/month
- Where supervision may be held and allowance for travel if required

2. Conditions of supervision

- All supervision plans will be responsive to workers' needs
- Worker choice of supervisor parameters clearly stated
- Ongoing evaluation of supervision processes and issues concerning requests by workers to change a supervisor

¹ Adapted from National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA). 2005.

3. Communicate the aims and intended goals of the policy consistent with organisational philosophy

For example:

- Supervision will be provided in line with the philosophy underpinning recovery orientated practice
- The aim of supervision is to develop the skills of mental health and support workers, address areas of need and encourage high standards of practice

4. State the standards that the organisation aims to achieve as a result of the program

For example:

- The supervision program aims to enhance quality care to consumers by the organisation
- The supervision program will assist identification of problems within the service, and ensure best practice
- Supervision will promote high standards of practice by identifying the learning needs of individual workers, monitoring and improving these areas

5. Establish a process through which the supervision program will be evaluated

The process of evaluating and measuring outcomes of the program is described including outcomes for workers as well as consumers.

For example:

- The number of staff receiving supervision and the frequency of sessions is monitored
- Arrangements for supervision will be incorporated into work plans
- An annual survey administered to workers and supervisors
- The date that the program evaluation will take place is identified
- Consumer satisfaction questionnaires
- Line management involvement specified

6. Identify all key players in the supervision policy that relate to all the different professions/roles within and external to the organisation

The roles and responsibilities of these different parties must be clearly outlined.

For example:

- Managers are responsible for ensuring all workers are aware of the supervision policy and that they all must/have access to supervision
- Supervisors are responsible for negotiating arrangements, utilising ethical practices and working within confidentiality laws

- Clearly set out requirements re mandated reporting for supervisors/ supervisees
- Supervisees are/ responsible for organising and making appointments with supervisors
- Supervisor/ supervisee roles, obligations (e.g., supervisor reporting and evaluations; supervisee preparation for supervision)

7. Supervision arrangements

The specifics of the supervision arrangements should be clearly outlined i.e., location, frequency, area of focus/ ongoing review, supervisee learning objectives.

For example:

- Supervision will be granted on an individual or a group basis
- Supervision will target: e.g., practice improvements in harm reduction interventions
- Supervision will occur at a place agreed upon by supervisor and supervisee
- Supervision sessions will be one hour sessions occurring e.g., twice per month.