

3.19 Professional Supervision

FOR THE PURPOSES OF MEMBERSHIP OF NZAC

RATIONALE

This document aims to provide clarification about supervision for:

- (a) People seeking provisional membership of NZAC;
- (b) For provisional members who want to upgrade to full membership;
- (c) For members of NZAC who are maintaining their membership.

It should be read in conjunction with the Code of Ethics Section 9 “Professional Supervision.”

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION OF MEMBERS OF NZAC IS EXPECTED TO CONFORM TO THE FOLLOWING PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

1. PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1.1 The profession of counselling requires that all practising counsellors seek supervision. Supervision supports accountability to clients, employers, the public and the Association.
- 1.2 Professional supervision is a primary resource for every counsellor in the maintenance and development of safe, ethical and effective practice.
- 1.3 Counsellors wishing to be granted **Provisional Member** status shall have a supervisor who:
 - a) Is a current, full member of NZAC or a similar professional body with a Code of Ethics who requires supervision of their members
 - b) Has been a member of that body for at least three years and
 - c) Has been the candidate’s supervisor for a minimum of twelve months
- 1.4 Counsellors wishing to be granted **Member** status shall have a supervisor who:
 - a) Is a current, full Member of NZAC
 - b) Has been a Member for at least three years and
 - c) Has been the candidate’s supervisor for a minimum of twelve months.
- 1.5 Counsellors **maintaining their membership** shall have a supervisor who: is a current, full Member of NZAC or a similar professional body with a Code of Ethics who requires supervision of their members. The supervisor should have been a full member of their professional body for at least three years.
- 1.6 The supervisor is also expected to be an experienced practitioner, to have had training in modalities of supervision and to be able to describe the methods they use. The supervisor is also expected to be in supervision for themselves and be continuing their own professional development thus modelling the maintenance and development of effective, safe and ethical practice. (See Code of Ethics 9.3.(c))
- 1.7 A supervisor should not be in a position of authority over the counsellor. (See Code of Ethics 9.1 (c))

2. CONTRACTING

- 2.1 The structure for supervision is provided through a mutually agreed contract that identifies the nature of the professional alliance between supervisor and counsellor. Expectations of the roles and parameters that will apply should be negotiated, clearly stated, understood and agreed to by both parties. The contract should be regularly reviewed and time limited.
- 2.2 Where applicable the contract should define the nature and responsibilities that relate to wider relationships such as training institutions, third party funders and employers.

3. RELATIONSHIP

- 3.1 Professional Supervision is a partnership. It is a contractual, collaborative and confidential process based upon informed consent.
- 3.2 Counsellors are responsible for selecting and taking to supervision relevant aspects of their work and their personal functioning.
- 3.3 Supervisors are responsible for assisting counsellors to explore and address their

professional practice; for helping counsellors to monitor their competence, safety and fitness to practice; and disclosing concerns about the counsellor's work to the counsellor, before taking further action.

4. PURPOSE

- 4.1 Professional Supervision is for counsellors to reflect on and develop effective and ethical practice. It also has a monitoring purpose with regard to counsellors' work. Supervision includes personal support, mentoring professional identity development and reflection upon the relationships between persons, theories, practices, work contexts and cultural perspectives.
- 4.2 Supervision both builds on the strengths and successes of the counsellor and is expected to address weaknesses and areas for development by the counsellor.
- 4.3 Supervision should be consultative and collaborative without being collusive.

5. REFLECTION

- 5.1 Supervision is a time for the counsellor to explore the relationship between theory and practice in their work with clients with an experienced practitioner.
- 5.2 In supervision counsellors are expected to examine all aspects of their practice, seek and get feedback, guidance and evaluation of their work. Supervision provides the opportunity for focussed reflection on the counsellor's interactions with their clients, unconscious processes and systemic and cultural issues affecting the interactions.
- 5.3 It is primarily the responsibility of the counsellor to identify the content of a supervision session. However the supervisor may also have an influence in setting the agenda.
- 5.4 It is not the primary aim of supervision to offer the counsellor being supervised personal counselling. However as personal material arises from client work, the issues should be identified and decisions made about how they may be addressed appropriately.
- 5.5 It is important to seek cultural consultation when a counsellor is working with a person/persons of a different background from their own.

6. REGULARITY FREQUENCY AND DURATION

- 6.1 Supervision should take place regularly with the same supervisor over a continuous period of time.
- 6.2 Counsellors might consider increasing how often supervision occurs dependent on the counsellor's developmental stage, the size of their workload, the existence of current personal stressors and the difficulty of the client work and/or the counsellor's workplace.
- 6.3. The frequency of supervision shall be in relation to workload and relative to the experience of the counsellor. It is the responsibility of the counsellor and their supervisor to discuss regularly the frequency of supervision in relation to the counsellors' workload. The recommended guideline is that while working full-time, the counsellor averages one hour of supervision per fortnight (Code Of Ethics, 9.1 (b)).
- 6.4 As long as counsellors are seeing clients they are required to be in supervision. As long as members are supervising counsellors they are required to have supervision for their supervision work.-(See Code of Ethics 9.3.(c))

7. MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

- 7.1 The supervisory relationship should exclude family relationships, sexual relationships and other relationships where there are connections which could adversely affect the professional interactions that take place between supervisor and counsellor being supervised, and the counsellor and their clients.
- 7.2 The supervisor is responsible for maintaining the boundaries between supervision and other relationships the supervisor may have with the counsellor.

8. DEVELOPMENTAL FOCUS

- 8.1 The supervisory relationship is expected to change and develop as counsellors gain experience and broaden their competence to deal with more complex issues.
- 8.2 Supervisors should take into account limitations to their competence and suggest consultations and referrals where appropriate.