

Supervision – School Guidance Counsellors

Why do school counsellors need professional supervision?

- To support safe practice by disclosing current risk profiles of students, particularly those who are suicidal or suffering abuse
- To help manage caseloads to support a counsellor's effective and safe practice
- To provide opportunities for reflective learning conversations and ethical practice
- To assist in preparation of NZAC, NZCA membership
- To support the growth of the counsellor's professional identity

These guidelines are offered to support safe and ethical practice of Counsellors within the specific contexts of schools. They are to be read in conjunction with the NZAC Supervision Policy (www.nzac.org.nz/policy.cfm) and the NZAC Code of Ethics (www.nzac.org.nz/code_of_ethics.cfm)

'Counsellors shall arrange for regular and ongoing supervision with competent supervisors who should be either NZAC members, or members of another professional body with a Code of Ethics acceptable to the NZAC National Executive' (NZAC Code of Ethics, 9.1)

From the School Guidance Counsellors Appointment Kit:

(www.nzac.org.nz/school_guidance_counsellor_appointment_kit.cfm updated 2015, NZAC/PPTA)

Supervision

A guidance counsellor should have regular professional supervision with a supervisor who is a member of an appropriate professional association, bound by a Code of Ethics and subject to a complaints procedure.

In supervision, a guidance counsellor will:

- *Examine their current practice, including discussion of particular cases*
- *Evaluate safety assessments and planning and associated professional decisions*
- *Ensure ethical concerns are explored and clarified*
- *Explore and address ways that the personal and professional life of the guidance counsellor impact on work with clients*

Supervision should be regular, ongoing and in the region of one hour per fortnight. The school must be aware of and supportive of the supervisory needs of the counsellor and make the appropriate budgetary arrangements. Requiring a counsellor to engage in regular supervision is important, not only for the wellbeing of their clients, but also for the wellbeing of the counsellor.

Stress from the demands of counselling work could be deemed to be a hazard under health and safety legislation and the employer must take every step to eliminate or minimise such a hazard.

The supervisory relationship is regarded in the same light as the counselling relationship and shares the same ethical principles. The supervisor may be asked, from time to time, to share information with the school principal. Such sharing of information must be done with due regard to the provisions of the Code of Ethics (see Appendix 2) and the wishes of the counsellor. In order for a member's annual NZAC practising certificate to be renewed, a guidance counsellor's supervisor must verify the number of hours of supervision that have occurred and the professional development undertaken.

Supervision would usually be provided by a senior, experienced practitioner with specific training in supervision and membership of a professional association such as NZAC (NZ Association of Counsellors); NZAP (NZ Association of Psychotherapists); Register of Psychologists (Psychologists' Registration Board); ANZASW (Aotearoa NZ Association of Social Workers — if retrained as a counsellor)

To ensure safe practice and accountability professional supervision is an expected, work related activity and expense. This is usually paid for by the school (94.8%, NZAC School Counsellors Survey 2011).

Usual practice would involve fortnightly supervision during the school terms for a full time counsellor, pro rated for part time staff. Other forms of supervision can include facilitated group supervision and peer supervision, which requires a clear contractual agreement about how supervision is provided for each practitioner. Group or Peer Supervision can be an additional form of supervision, but does not usually replace one to one professional supervision particularly for inexperienced counsellors.

Full time counsellors would usually undertake professional supervision within their normal working hours. That is, not outside of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Approved: May 2016

For Review: May 2019