



Guidelines for Direct & Remote Supervision on a Clinical Psychology Placement.

Supervision is a core aspect of clinical psychology training and an integral part of ongoing professional development. It is a structured, collaborative, and supportive process where an experienced psychologist provides guidance, feedback, and mentorship to a trainee. During placement, the supervisor assumes several roles, including teacher, mentor, evaluator, and advocate.

A critical component of supervision involves the supervisor directly observing the trainee's interactions with clients, either through live observation or recorded sessions.

The following outlines key considerations and processes for incorporating direct observation or session recordings into supervision during clinical psychology placements, while recognising that the broader scope of supervision extends beyond the focus of this document.

“Evidence shows that the quality of clinical supervision is key to student learning while on clinical placement. Effective supervisors should be trained in teaching and mentoring, establish a positive relationship with their students, provide progressive and structured learning opportunities and constructive feedback to students.

Supporting student health and wellbeing while on placement may support student learning outcomes from clinical placements. Evidence suggests that student learning outcomes from clinical placements must be assessed and measured using rigorous assessment methods and validated instruments” (AHPRA – Information paper)

APAC standards state:

“Supervision is the process of guiding trainees in their acquisition of graduate competencies (Level 3 or 4) through their direct client activities in a workplace or a simulated learning environment. It can be undertaken either individually or in a group. Supervision may use a range of methodologies that allow for face-to-face communication either in person or electronically”

Essential Considerations

Observations of Client Sessions

Minimum – It is required that trainees be observed **on at least two (2) occasions**. Full sessions are a rich and wonderful opportunity to provide comprehensive feedback on the development of a trainee’s skills (however we understand that this may not always be possible). Preferably one assessment session and one intervention/treatment session, however this may vary depending on context of placement.

Where possible the Primary Supervisor should complete the reviews of sessions, however, in special circumstances (e.g., such as workplace limitations or policy issues) a Secondary Supervisor may be considered.

- **Observations:** What is likely to be reviewed during the observations (live or recorded):
 - *Ethical and Legal issues*
 - Discussion of confidentiality, informed consent, boundaries, professionalism
 - *Psychological Assessment*
 - Assessment of Risk, ability to obtain necessary information, the appropriate use of any assessment tools.
 - *Intervention*
 - Use of intervention/treatment strategies, effective and appropriate psychoeducation, appropriateness and fidelity of strategies, evidence-based approach
 - *Communication and Interpersonal Skills*
 - Use of body language and facial expressions, tone and volume, pacing of session, rapport building, reflective listening skills, use of various types of questioning, appropriate session structure and time management.
 - *Diversity*
 - Appropriate use of language, cultural sensitivity.

- **Direct Supervision:**
 - Supervision of a trainee conducting a session with a client, where the Supervisor is present in the room.
 - It is recommended that in this instance, and where possible, the Supervisor, sits outside of the line of sight of the client, and where possible, also the Supervisee.
- **Remote Supervision:**
 - This may be either video and audio recorded sessions or live, through the use of platforms such as your University Zoom account. Using the Zoom sharescreen function enables you to share the recorded session with your supervisor. Recorded sessions need to provide a clear image of both Trainee and Client, including facial expressions and body language (where possible).
 - Audio-only sessions (live or recorded) should realistically only be used in rare circumstances (e.g., client does not have access to video). A different client should perhaps be considered for review.
 - *It is encouraged that trainees regularly record sessions throughout their placement and utilise Supervision sessions to show excerpts to gain direction, feedback and support.*
 - Supervisors should use observations to provide constructive feedback to trainees, ensuring it aligns with learning objectives.

Evaluation and Reflection

- Supervisors should engage trainees in reflective practice post-observation, discussing ethical, interpersonal, and clinical considerations observed during the session.
- Trainees should also reflect on their performance, both in terms of what they have done well (strengths) as well as assessing areas for growth and development. This information can be included in their log or in their personal journal.

Informed Consent

- Clients must be fully informed about the trainee's role, as well as the purpose of any direct observations or recordings.
- Clients should be aware that they can decline without consequences to their care.
- Use plain language to explain the observation or recording.
- Obtain **written consent** for any recordings.
 - This consent should include clear explanations about how their information will be stored and when/how it will be deleted.

Use of Recordings

- **Purpose:**
 - Recordings should only be used for supervision, training, or assessment and should be deleted immediately after the supervision session has occurred or when no longer required.
- **Written Policies:** Organisations must have policies covering:
 - The permissible uses of recordings.
 - Consent documentation.
 - Storage and disposal practices.
- **Minimisation:** Recordings should only be made when absolutely necessary to achieve learning objectives.

Cultural Sensitivity

- Consider the cultural and individual needs of clients, which might impact their comfort with Supervisor's presence or recordings.
- Tailor consent processes to accommodate diverse communication needs, including translation or additional supports.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- **Compliance with Laws:** Follow relevant laws (e.g., [Australian Privacy Act 1988](#)) and [AHPRA](#)
- **Storage and Access:**
 - Store recordings securely and limit access to authorised individuals.
 - Recordings should be kept in encrypted formats on a password protected device to prevent unauthorised access and consider aspects such as systems that provide two-factor authentication.
 - Cloud platforms must comply with Australian data privacy laws and ensure that data is stored on Australian servers. Platforms such as Microsoft OneDrive (Business) and Google Workspace (Business) are commonly used.
 - Follow organisational and regulatory body policies regarding retention and destruction.

References:

1. **Australian Health Practitioners Board Australia- Psychology**
 - [Professional Competencies](#)
 - [Code of Conduct](#)
2. **Australian Psychological Society (APS) Code of Ethics:**
 - This document outlines the ethical responsibilities of psychologists, including obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality.
[Australian Psychological Society](#)
3. **APS Ethical Guidelines on Confidentiality:**
 - Provides detailed guidance on maintaining client confidentiality, crucial when involving trainees in client interactions.
[Australian Psychological Society](#)
4. **APS Ethical Guidelines on Record Keeping:**
 - Offers best practices for maintaining client records, including considerations for recordings and data storage.
[Australian Psychological Society](#)
5. **Privacy Act 1988 (Cth):**
 - Australian legislation governing the handling of personal information, relevant to client data and recordings.
[Federal Register of Legislation](#)

USEFUL DOCUMENTS or WEBSITES FOR REVIEW

Guidelines for Direct Client Activities:

- Outlines key principles for program authorities in determining appropriate direct client activities for trainees, including observations and recordings.
[Placement Review](#)

Good Practice Approaches to Embedding Clinical Placements:

- Provides guidance on roles and responsibilities during clinical placements, ensuring ethical and effective trainee involvement.
[AHPRA](#)

Practicum Competencies Assessment Measure

- A practicum assessment tool specifically designed for Masters of Professional Psychology (Level 3) programs to evaluate trainees in the practicum aspects of training.
[Placement Review](#)