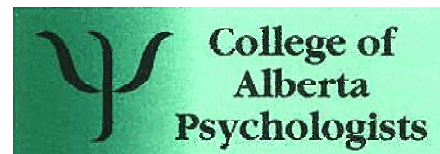


Professional Guidelines for Psychologists

**SUPERVISORS AND
REGISTERED PROVISIONAL
PSYCHOLOGISTS**

February 2006



COLLEGE OF ALBERTA PSYCHOLOGISTS
**GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS AND
REGISTERED PROVISIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with relevant sections of the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* and of the *College of Alberta Psychologists Standards of Practice*.

The *College of Alberta Psychologists Standards of Practice* addresses supervision in Sections 1(i), Section 16, and 17.

The *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* establishes an ethical decision-making process, which can be of some assistance to psychologists in determining the nature and extent of issues that may arise in the supervision process.

Psychologists engaged in the professional practice of psychology are likely to find themselves in a position to deliver supervision of some form and duration to a provisional psychologist. These guidelines address issues of ethics and practice that may arise in this context.

A. DEFINITION

Supervision is a kind of management that involves responsibility for the services provided under one's supervision and may involve teaching in the context of a relationship focused on developing or enhancing the competence of the person being supervised. Supervision is a preferred vehicle for the integration of practice, theory and research, with the supervisor as a role model. (Mutual Recognition Agreement, 2001).

Supervision is a distinct professional activity in which education and training aimed at developing science-informed practice are facilitated through a collaborative interpersonal process. Supervision ensures that consultation is conducted in a competent manner in which ethical standards, legal prescriptions, and professional practices are used to promote and protect the welfare of the client, the profession, and society at large. (Falender, C., & Shafranske, P. [2004]. *Clinical supervision: A competency-based approach*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association).

Supervision is defined as a "relationship that focuses on developing, enhancing and evaluating the supervisee's knowledge, skills, judgment, diligence and behaviour in the practice of psychology." This document addresses the specific context of the supervisory relationship between a psychologist and a provisional psychologist. For the purposes of this document, the term "supervisee" will be used to refer to a provisional registered psychologist.

Supervisory skills include the abilities to observe, evaluate, provide constructive feedback, facilitate supervisee self-assessment, instruct, model, and enhance mutual problem solving. These skills are not necessarily possessed by every competent practitioner, and rarely learned in professional training programs. It is important in a changing practice world to learn how to think rather than only what to think.

The term guidelines refer to statements that suggest or recommend specific professional behaviour, endeavours, or conduct for psychologists. Guidelines are intended to facilitate the continued systematic development of the profession and to help assure a high level of professional practice by psychologists. Guidelines are not intended to be mandatory or exhaustive and may not be applicable to every professional and clinical situation. They are not definitive and they are not intended to take precedence over the professional judgment of psychologists.

B. OBJECTIVES FOR SUPERVISION OF PROVISIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

1. The development and demonstration of knowledge, skills, judgment and diligence by supervisees to ensure competent practice in psychology.
2. Assurance of competent and ethical services for clients of supervisees.
3. Protection of the credibility of the profession in regulating competency.
4. Meeting requirements of the supervisees to become a registered practitioner.
5. Adherence to administrative rules and policies of the employing organizations.

C. THE SUPERVISOR-SUPERVISEE RELATIONSHIP

The success of supervision in achieving its objectives depends on the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, regardless of the content and style of supervision. It is based on a strong mutually respectful working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee. Good supervisory relationships result in an effective integration of knowledge and practice skills that are the basis for competent, caring and ethical practice. Both supervisors and supervisees have responsibilities to maintain a respectful professional relationship that will enhance the learning acquired through supervision. A power differential always exists in the supervisory relationship. The supervisor has the greater knowledge and responsibility for facilitating the supervisee's development of competence, of evaluating the supervisee's practice, and always protecting the well-being of the supervisee's clients. The supervisor is ethically responsible for providing competent supervision and may be legally liable if harm is proved to result from the supervisor's incompetence or negligence. In terms of the hierarchy of power, the supervisee is the more dependent and vulnerable.

A written contractual arrangement should be developed between a supervisor and the supervisee, in addition to a supervision plan, stipulating the goals, evaluative procedures, and expected procedures during the supervisory relationship. Both supervisors and supervisees have responsibilities to enhance the competence acquired through supervision. A supervisor is responsible for facilitating the supervisee's development of competence, of evaluating the supervisee's practice, and always protecting the well being of the supervisee's clients.

In contrast to supervision, consultants are responsible for sharing information and problem solving skills, but are not responsible for how the consultee acts on this guidance. In contrast to supervision, therapists are responsible for treating clients for personal and emotional concerns. Both supervisors and supervisees are responsible for not engaging in dual roles, although supervisors have the greater responsibility to manage the relationships because of their assumed greater knowledge and positions of power. If conflict arises, consultation should be considered with professional colleagues, e.g. supervision consultants available through the College of Alberta Psychologists.

D. A COMPETENT SUPERVISOR

As the supervisee pursues competence toward independent practice the supervisor recognizes that educational institutions have assisted the supervisee in the acquisition of knowledge, and to a certain extent, skills as relevant to practice. For competent practice the supervisee will also need to develop good judgment and diligence in applying their knowledge and skills. While within the supervision further knowledge and skills will be developed, it is in the supervisory relationship that judgment and diligence are best acquired. The supervisor, through modeling and feedback, will set a standard of critical judgment and diligence in meeting necessary care and ethical requirements which will complete the initial development of competence in the supervisee.

The ethical principles of the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* guide supervisors and supervisees in their professional relationships.

PRINCIPLE I: RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

The Principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons requires supervisors and supervisees to demonstrate respect for each other as well as for all other persons with whom they relate as psychologists.

Supervisors will:

1. Seek full and active participation with supervisees in defining goals and procedures and conditions for supervision.
2. Disclose supervisor preferences for theories, practices, biases, and beliefs as they may affect supervision.
3. Be vigilant to prevent discrimination against supervisees and clients on the basis of personal characteristics, e.g., ethnicity, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.
4. Maintain confidentiality of supervision discussion except for stated limitations, such as, to consult clinically, to prevent danger to others, or to meet administrative requirements e.g., performance appraisal, internship evaluation, assessment to meet requirements for licensing, or to co-operate relative to a complaint.

5. Address professional or interpersonal differences between supervisor and supervisee in as open, amicable and constructive way as possible.
6. Make reasonable accommodations for valid crises or unexpected events in the life of the supervisee that may temporarily interfere with supervision.
7. Not exploit or discriminate against a person they supervise.
8. Be aware of their own limitations, and be open to feedback regarding issues, and concerns that may affect their work.

PRINCIPLE II: RESPONSIBLE CARING

The Principle of Responsible Caring requires supervisors to actively care for the well being of both clients and supervisees and to be competent in serving their best interests. Supervisors recognize that they are ethically and legally responsible for the quality of services provided by their supervisees.

Supervisors will:

1. Establish their competence as supervisors through such means as training, supervised experience, self-monitoring, and consultation.
2. Establish their competence in the general and specialty areas of practice of the supervisee.
3. Maintain the same standard of care for clients of supervisees as for clients of independent practitioners.
4. Ensure availability to supervisees at all times, including emergencies and cover-off arrangements when not personally available.
5. Maintain supervision on site to the fullest extent possible, and where not fully possible ensure that the supervisee has reasonable access as needed.
6. Maintain regular supervisory times.
7. Ensure dates and content of supervision are documented.
8. Limit the number of supervisees at a given time to the number that one is able to provide competent supervision.
9. Provide adequate physical space and resources to support supervisee learning.
10. Be responsible for maintaining sufficient familiarity and currency regarding the contents of client files, such as for matters relating to court.

PRINCIPLE III: INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

The Principle of Integrity in Relationships requires openness, objectivity, honesty, and straight forwardness and avoidance of conflict of interest.

Supervisors will:

1. Provide information on an ongoing basis to the supervisees on their development of competence.
2. Maintain boundaries of a professional relationship.
3. Not engage in dual relationships, or undertake or continue a professional relationship when they are aware or should be aware that they face a potentially harmful conflict of interest as a result of a current or previous psychological, familial, social, sexual, emotional, financial, supervisory, political, administrative or legal relationship.
4. Inform clients honestly on the status of the supervisee and inform them of their right to meet with the supervisor at their request.
5. Maintain accountability for competence and reduce potential for liability suits through continuing education, consultation, and documentation of supervisory activities.

PRINCIPLE IV: RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

The Principle of Responsibility to Society requires psychologists to promote the welfare of all human beings in society. There are many ways in which supervisors can contribute to the welfare of society.

Supervisors will:

1. Provide the highest quality of supervision in order that psychologists are competent and committed to serving the best interests of society.
2. Ensure that supervisees are knowledgeable of ethics and practice standards and regulatory requirements of the profession.
3. Familiarize themselves and supervisees of civil and criminal law as it applies to actions that may be taken against psychologists, with specific reference to high-risk areas of practice.
4. Provide guidance in managing conflicting interests of clients, professional standards, and third party expectations.
5. Assist supervisees to understand systemic issues in order to serve the best interests of their clients.

6. Encourage supervisees to participate in educational activities and professional organizations related to psychology.
7. Be honest in writing letters of references and do not provide false assurance of supervisee competencies.

E. A RESPONSIBLE SUPERVISEE

Supervisors have greater knowledge and power than supervisees, and therefore have greater responsibility for managing the relationships and addressing difficulties that may arise. Supervisees, however, are also bound by the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and they also contribute significantly to the success of the supervision. Supervisees are respectful of others, are open to supervision, are well prepared, are able to use time efficiently, are non-defensive and are aware of their own limitations. Supervisees are referred to the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and Professional Guidelines for Psychologists in order to guide their actions and development of competence.

PRINCIPLE I: RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS

The Principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons requires supervisors and supervisees to demonstrate respect for each other as well as for all other persons with whom they relate as psychologists.

Supervisees will:

1. Participate with supervisors in defining goals and procedures and conditions for supervision.
2. Disclose to the supervisor preferences for theories, practices, biases, beliefs as they may affect supervision.
3. Address professional or interpersonal differences between supervisor and supervisee in as open, amicable and constructive way as possible.
4. Be well prepared, efficient in use of time, and open to supervision.
5. Be aware of their own limitations, and open to feedback regarding issues, and concerns that may affect their work.
6. Operate with an appropriate level of autonomy as approved by the supervisor.
7. Disclose any discriminatory biases that they may have and strive to modify them.

PRINCIPLE II: RESPONSIBLE CARING

The Principle of Responsible Caring requires supervisees to actively care for the well being of clients and to be competent in serving their best interests. Supervisees recognize that they, along with their supervisors, are ethically and legally responsible for the quality of services provided.

Supervisees will:

1. Inform the supervisor of important information regarding the client-supervisee relationship.
2. Manage case records through accurate and complete recording.
3. Maintain regular supervisory times.
4. Engage in professional development activities.

PRINCIPLE III: INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

The Principle of Integrity in Relationships requires openness, objectivity, honesty, straight forwardness, and avoidance of conflict of interest.

Supervisees will:

1. Accept feedback and criticism from the supervisor as a constructive means to increase the supervisee's competence.
2. Be accurate and transparent in providing information concerning client contact to the supervisor so that the supervisor can make appropriate judgments concerning the quality of the supervisee's work with the client.
3. Maintain appropriate boundaries of the professional relationship, recognizing that the supervisor and supervisee together should be vigilant to avoid dual relationships.
4. Address conflict with the supervisor in open, honest and appropriate ways.
5. Inform clients honestly on the status of the supervisee and inform them of their right to meet with the supervisor at their request.

PRINCIPLE IV: RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

The Principle of Responsibility to Society requires psychologists to promote the welfare of all human beings in society. There are many ways in which supervisees can contribute to the welfare of society.

Supervisees will:

1. Become knowledgeable of ethics and practice standards and regulatory requirements of the profession.

2. Familiarize themselves with civil and criminal law as it applies to actions that may be taken against psychologists, with specific reference to high-risk areas of practice.
3. Report to the supervisor all difficulties in navigating larger systems so that the best interests of individual clients are served.

REFERENCES

- Canadian Psychological Association. (2000). *A Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists*. 3rd Ed. Ottawa: Author.
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DEFINITIONS

Supervision (from Mutual Recognition Agreement, 2001)

A kind of management that involves responsibility for the services provided under one's supervision and may involve teaching in the context of a relationship focused on developing or enhancing the competence of the person being supervised. Supervision is a preferred vehicle for the integration of practice, theory and research, with the supervisor as role model.

Knowledge:

1. Models for the acquisition of competencies under supervision.
2. Methods and techniques of supervision.
3. Evaluation modalities.
4. Available technical resources.
5. Power relationships as well as cultural, gender issues and ethnic differences.

Skills:

1. Sensitivity to power, cultural, sex, and ethnic issues.
2. Articulation of clear learning objectives.
3. Creating an open and participatory climate.
4. Learning to be a good supervisee (open to supervision, well prepared, able to use time efficiently, non-defensive, aware of limits, etc.).
5. Ability to link learning approaches to specific evaluation criteria.
6. Being able to differentiate between teaching and therapy.
7. Integration of knowledge.
8. Awareness of one's own strengths and limitations as supervisor.
9. Preparing a coherent evaluation based on precise learning objectives.

Competence (from definition of College of Alberta Psychologists)

Competence is a multidimensional construct that is comprised of four major components: knowledge, skills, judgment, and diligence.

Knowledge involves having absorbed and understood a body of information sufficient to understand and conceptualize the range of professional issues that we can reasonably expect to encounter. Knowledge is a necessary but not sufficient foundation for competence. Knowledge can be understood as covering a continuum from basic information that all psychologists should know such as ethics, to specific knowledge necessary for specialized areas of practice such as neuropsychology.

Skill is the ability to effectively apply knowledge in actual practice. As with knowledge, skills cover a continuum from basic practice skills of listening and interviewing, to technical proficiency for specific psychotherapeutic assessment or other professional procedures. It is generally accepted that supervised field experience such as practica and internships are necessary to acquire the required skills for the practice of psychology.

Judgment involves knowing when to apply which skills under what circumstances. It also involves self-reflection regarding how our own values, attitudes, experiences, and social context influence our actions, interpretations, choices, and recommendations. Good judgment incorporates the intent of increasing the probability that our activities will benefit and not harm the individuals, families, groups, and communities to whom we relate in our role as psychologists. Judgment is much harder to assess and is usually indirectly addressed during supervised experience.

Diligence involves consistently attending to our knowledge, skills and judgment as they are applied in our professional activities and being careful to give priority to our clients' needs over any other concerns. Diligence involves a willingness to work hard to provide the best service possible for each and every client, and in honestly evaluating our own skills and seeking additional training when appropriate. A diligent psychologist seeks out professional standards and guidelines that identify the knowledge, skills, and judgment essential to practice. Being diligent also incorporates self-awareness of any personal or situational circumstances that might diminish our competence.

This document shall be reviewed by 2015.

After this date, users are encouraged to contact the CAP Practice Advisory Committee to confirm that this document remains in effect.