



Offender Services & Programs Corrective Services NSW

Policy for Professional Supervision for OS&P Staff

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Policy for Professional Supervision for OS&P Staff

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1 Policy statement and purpose

CSNSW is committed to providing offender support services and behaviour change programs to the highest standards.

As an integral part of this commitment, the Offender Services & Programs Branch offers professional supervision to staff engaged in the delivery of services and programs.

Professional supervision is group-based, equitable, planned and delivered to Services and Programs staff on a continuing basis by qualified staff.

CSNSW has a duty of care for staff working in difficult and challenging roles, and supervision ensures quality in service delivery as well as the safety and well-being of staff. This policy provides the methodology to ensure that OS&P staff who deliver offender services and intervention programs receive regular professional supervision.

2 Professional supervision guidelines

2.1 What is professional supervision?

Professional Supervision is defined as “a process in which the supervisor enables, guides and facilitates the supervisee in meeting certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives are professional competence, accountable and safe practice, continuing professional development, and education and support.” (Morrison, 1993).

The aims of professional supervision are to:

- provide the best possible support to OS&P staff in accordance with CSNSW’s responsibilities and professional standards. CSNSW will achieve these aims through having OS&P staff that are skilful, knowledgeable, clear about their roles, and assisted in their practice by sound advice and support by a professional supervisor, who is not their manager, and with whom they have a good professional relationship.
- fulfil a duty of care by assisting OS&P staff in their work in difficult and challenging roles.

2.2 How does professional supervision differ from line management, program quality assurance and therapy?

Professional Supervision is separate from line management: Alcohol & Drug Workers, Welfare Officers, Senior SAPOs and SAPOs are administratively managed by Cluster MOSPs.

Professional supervision is not group program quality assurance. Program quality assurance is performed by the State-wide Programs staff when they review sessions of a compendium program – either through program development workshops, file review, observing sessions, or through use of video recording. Program quality assurance is carried out in accordance with procedures set out in the Policy for Implementation, Delivery and Evaluation of the EQUIPS Suite of Programs (D14/444894). The intent of program quality assurance is to review all aspects of the program delivery (not just the facilitation) against the CSNSW Offender Program and Facilitation Standards (D14/404041) to ensure that programs are being delivered to a consistently high standard.

Professional supervision is not therapy for the supervisee. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential service that is available in the event that a supervisee requests or

requires support in relation to health and wellbeing issues.

Staff Support is another valuable resource in this respect.

2.3 Supervision arrangements for Offender Services and Programs staff

The supervision arrangements for Offender Services & Programs Staff include:

1. Professional supervision groups are to be arranged by Cluster MOSPs and should normally be arranged within the cluster where the staff members operate. In exceptional cases or with the approval of the relevant Regional Support Manager OS&P, inter-cluster arrangements can be made where staff may attend a supervision group outside of their cluster. Such arrangements should not incur any financial or work time cost to CSNSW.
2. Cluster MOSPs are to ensure that all OS&P staff are able to attend a professional supervision session each month and that allocation to a professional supervision group occurs in a consultative manner.
3. Senior SAPOs are to deliver professional supervision to their team of SAPOs, Alcohol & Drug workers and Welfare Officers once a month for a maximum of two hours per session. Where SAPO/AOD/Welfare Officer Peer Group Supervision takes place, this should also occur once a month for a maximum of two hours per session. To create efficiencies in regional areas only (due to distance and resource constraints) an alternative to monthly sessions is one full day (6 hours) per quarter.
4. Senior SAPOs, in turn, are to receive professional supervision from a CSNSW Senior Psychologist once a month in a group setting for a maximum of 2 hours per session. To create efficiencies in regional areas only (due to distance and resource constraints) an alternative to monthly sessions is one full day (6 hours) per quarter.
5. While Aboriginal staff have the same access to professional supervision as non-Aboriginal staff, the Regional Aboriginal Program Officer (RAPO) can provide a service to Aboriginal staff when cultural issues arise; however, this is for cultural issues only and **not** an alternative to professional supervision as outlined in this document.
6. Supervision will occur within the work place within work time.
7. The group size will differ in locations, but there should be no more than six supervisees.
8. Regular individual professional supervision sessions should only occur in exceptional circumstances, following the approval of the relevant Regional Support Manager OS&P.
9. The mode of delivery should be chosen to maximise consistent access for staff. Options include face to face, telephone, and videoconferencing delivery.
10. The minimum standard that is required for professional supervision provided by CSNSW for SAPOs and SSAPOs is 18 hours. This may equate to 9 out of the 12 monthly 2-hour sessions per year or 3 out of 4 full day (6 hour) sessions in regional areas. All Alcohol and Drug Workers, Welfare Officers, SAPOs and SSAPOs are strongly encouraged to attend all scheduled sessions either in person or by phone; however at least 4 monthly sessions per year, and 3 out of the 4 quarterly sessions in regional areas, must be attended in person. Should a staff member appear at risk of not meeting the minimum standard the supervisor will inform the MOSP who should address this as part of the staff member's myPerformance development goals.

11. It is acknowledged that personally arranged supervision can be seen as an acceptable alternative to the professional supervision described in this document. However, personally arranged supervision must be taken in staff members' own time and at their own expense.

2.4 Training in professional supervision

CSNSW will commit to ensuring that all Senior SAPOs have received, as a minimum, a one-day workshop for supervisors.

CSNSW will offer workshops for Alcohol & Drug Workers, Welfare Officers, and SAPOs to ensure that they have also been trained in the professional supervision model – ie how to utilise supervision effectively as a supervisee. It is important that supervisees of professional supervision have an opportunity to learn about the supervision model used.

Senior Psychologists are externally trained and endorsed as supervisors in line with requirements of their professional regulatory board.

2.5 Monitoring and review

The quality of professional supervision practice will be monitored by the State-wide Manager Services and the State-wide Manager Programs.

Under the Director OS&P's authority, supervision evaluation will be carried out every six months and the results submitted anonymously by the supervisees to their relevant Cluster MOSP, who must forward these to the State-wide Manager Services.

Monthly reports are to be maintained by the supervisor and stored within a secure EDRMS container, using the naming convention: Staff Development →Professional Supervision→Offender Services and Programs→[Correctional Centre].

These reports, when collated, will contribute to a regular review regarding professional supervision and will assist in the ongoing planning of professional development for Alcohol & Drug Workers, Welfare Officers, Senior SAPO's and SAPOs.

2.6 Supervision agreements

It is fundamental to the supervision process that the supervisor and supervisee have an agreement in place.

A supervision agreement can:

- create a foundation for both the supervisee and the supervisor to feel safe, respected and supported;
- ensure that the style of working in supervision is structured and collaborative;
- establish professional boundaries;
- avoid a situation where the supervisee and supervisor have different expectations of supervision that might damage the normal supervisory relationship;
- help avoid problems later in supervision.

The *Professional Supervision Group Agreement* is completed by all participants. ([See Agreement at Annexure 1](#))

The following key points should be discussed before finalising the agreement:

- mutually agreed dates, times and places for supervision to take place;
- rules and policy regarding confidentiality;
- methods and techniques that will be used during supervision;
- goals, aims and objectives of supervision;
- the method of handling any problems within the supervisory alliance from both the supervisor and the supervisee perspective;
- the method of handling issues which are outside the competence of the supervisor.

2.7 Responsibilities of supervisors, supervisees and line Managers in professional supervision

2.7.1 Supervisees (SAPOs and SSAPOs)

Supervisees are responsible for:

- maintaining an ongoing commitment to professional supervision and incorporating its outcomes into their work practice by attending a minimum of 18 hours in a 12 month period (9 out of 12 monthly 2-hour sessions or 3 out of 4 full day sessions in regional areas)
- negotiating short term changes to supervision arrangements with their Cluster MOSP, including any required changes to working times;
- discussing any changes to work practices or professional development needs with their Cluster MOSP;
- adhering to all aspects of the Supervision Agreement, especially the need to maintain confidentiality;
- for peer group supervision, one member of the group must take responsibility for completing the *Peer Group Supervision Session Report* ([See Annexure 3](#))

2.7.2 Supervisors (SSAPOs and Senior Psychologists)

Supervisors are responsible for:

- maintaining their own professional practice standards to provide quality group based professional supervision services;
- adhering to the terms of the *Professional Supervision Group Agreement* ([See Annexure 1](#));
- negotiating local provision arrangements with the relevant Cluster MOSP;
- completing a *Professional Supervision Session Report* ([See Annexure 2](#)).
- ensuring the above-mentioned brief written report, which includes a record of attendance and the supervision themes, is to be stored within a secure EDRMS container;
- ensuring that alternative supervision is available to supervisees in the event of absence.

2.7.3 Cluster MOSPs

Cluster MOSPs are responsible for:

- ensuring release of staff to attend professional supervision;

- arranging a suitable local venue for supervision sessions;
- keeping local staff informed of professional supervision arrangements;
- administrative management and workplace supervision of their staff members;
- establishing supervision groups within their cluster
- managing their staff who do not meet the minimum standard for attendance at professional supervision using the myPerformance framework

2.7.4 Regional Support Managers

Regional Support Manager are responsible for:

- ensuring relevant Services and Programs staff are aware of this policy and have access to relevant training;
- ensuring Senior SAPOs have acquired supervision knowledge through appropriate training;
- approving individual or inter-cluster arrangements (under exceptional circumstances).

2.8 Content of professional supervision group session

Professional Supervision sessions will vary in their content depending on the knowledge and skills of supervisees and the context and environment within which the supervisees practise.

Each Professional Supervision group session should aim to include a focus on:

- resolving challenges regarding content of services delivered to offenders;
- resolving challenges regarding the context and environment within which services and programs are delivered;
- developing solutions for any concerns and anxieties;
- reviewing new learning knowledge and skills and maintaining progress toward professional development goals and achievement;
- reflecting on skills practice;
- self-care, focusing on minimising the impact of work on the self. (Hewson, 1993)

The supervision would:

- employ a strengths based approach (focusing on strengths and positive aspects) around the needs of the supervisees that arise from their work roles and their relationships with offenders;
- be of a collaborative and conversational nature where supervisees offer an account of their work, reflect on it, and receive feedback and appropriate guidance (in a positive manner);
- provide a regular protected time for facilitated, in depth consideration of the consequences of the supervisees' work practices;
- evaluate interactions with offenders while identifying and reinforcing effective actions;
- normalise the difficult nature of working with offenders in a correctional setting.

Personal issues of concern to either the supervisee or the supervisor should not disrupt or dominate the group session. If necessary, the Employee Assistance Program or a private clinician should be considered by staff for these matters.

Exchange of information in supervision sessions follows the usual requirements for, and limits to, confidentiality agreed to within Supervision Agreements.

2.9 Possible topics for exploration during supervision

Supervision can cover a wide range of topics. Examples of relevant topics include but not limited to the following:

- role, approaches and expectations of supervision
- confidentiality
- debriefing of critical incidents and provision of support
- presentation and discussion of case studies and new learning
- boundaries and defence mechanisms
- ethical and professional practice
- communication skills
- teamwork and team building
- stress and burnout
- skills acquisition
- coping with frustration
- interpersonal conflict and group functioning – understanding of process and how to apply learning to work with inmates
- transference and countertransference
- education about personality disorders, effects of different types of drugs
- education and skills development in relation to stages of change
- motivational Interviewing using role plays with assessment and feedback.

2.10 Reflective practice in supervision

Adopting a reflective practice model within supervision enables the supervisor to focus on the clinical interactions of the supervisee in a treatment setting. This mechanism will allow for the promotion of reflective practice by the facilitator under the guidance of the supervisor.

Reflective practice involves thoughtfully consideration of one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached and guided by professionals. Reflective practice is associated with learning from experience, and is viewed as an important strategy for OS&P staff for ongoing learning.

The act of reflection is seen as a way of promoting the development of autonomous, qualified and self-directed professionals. Engaging in reflective practice is associated with the improvement of the quality of services, stimulating personal and professional growth and closing the gap between theory and practice (Jasper, 2003).

Reflective practice requires the staff member to reflect on activities and integrate new information where it is relevant, in order to improve practice. It may include:

- self-assessing practice/competence in a given situation to identify areas for development and ultimately improve competence
- looking for learning points within the scenario or situation on which to reflect and consider how that learning might be applied in other situations to further enhance performance
- identifying learning/development needs and planning to meet these in order to improve practice
- changing or modifying practice in response to the learning undertaken

Structured reflection involves systematically moving through one or all of the following questions for reflection with the assistance of a supervisor:

- What happened?
- What significant events/incidents were identified?
- What were the feelings, thoughts and actions?
- What assumptions, beliefs, customs, or values underlie the event?
- What were the environmental demands?
- What are the implications for future practice?
- What was learned?
- What could be changed or done differently?
- What concepts/assumptions could be challenged?

3 Peer group supervision

Peer group supervision utilises a structured process that allows a group of facilitators or clinicians to provide professional support to each other as part of their day to day work practice. It is fundamental to the supervision process that the participants in Peer Group Supervision have an agreement in place. ([See Peer Group Supervision Agreement at Annexure 3](#)). This Agreement is to be completed by all participants.

This model allows members of the group to collaboratively contribute to the learning and development of each group member. The process enables members, individually and as a group, to engage in clinical problem solving using reflective practice techniques. The process can distribute information, promote learning, discuss ethical boundaries and practice and explore difficult clinical and professional situations that may have arisen during the course of program facilitation.

This model can be especially beneficial to participants when there is a frequent absence of a professional supervisor or 'expert' to take on a support role. Some of the advantages include:

- increased access/frequency of supervision
- reciprocal learning through the sharing of experiences
- increased skills and responsibility for self-assessment through reflective practice
- decreased dependency on expert supervisors
- increased self-ownership of professional development

This model requires supervisees to be self-directed learners, determining their own supervision needs, choosing methods and tools that will meet them and using the group as a resource for

learning and practice development.

4 Resolving disputes

Supervisees, Supervisors and Cluster MOSPs are encouraged to resolve any difficulties that may arise during the supervision process in a collaborative manner.

Workplace grievances are generally dealt with most effectively when the intervention is early, local and generally informal. Therefore all staff members are encouraged to initially seek resolution of their concerns through direct dialogue in the workplace. If informal means are unsuccessful, formal processes can then be utilised to achieve resolution of the issue.

For further information, employees should refer to the CSNSW's Grievance Resolution Policy and Guidelines (2011). Advice can also be sought from the Senior Project Officer, Workplace Behaviour on (02) 8346 1056.

5 Application

This policy applies to all Senior SAPOs, SAPOs, Welfare Officers and AOD workers and to their professional supervisors.

6 Definition of terms

Terms	Definition
Cluster MOSP	Cluster Manager of Offender Services and Programs
EDRMS	Electronic Document & Records Management System
OIMS	Offender Integrated Management System
OS&P	Offender Services and Programs
RAPOs	Regional Aboriginal Program Officer
RSMs	Regional Support Managers
SAPOs	Services and Programs Officers
Senior SAPOs	Senior Services and Programs Officers

7 Annexures

7.1 Annexure 1 Professional Supervision Group Agreement

STAFF NAME	DESIGNATION	WORK LOCATIONS

This document is saved in EDRMS _____ In the course of finalising this Agreement with the group, the following key points were discussed (please tick):

- Agreed dates, times and places for supervision to take place;
- Rules and policy regarding confidentiality;
- Methods and techniques that will be used during supervision;
- Goals, aims and objectives of supervision;
- Rights and responsibilities of both the supervisee and the supervisor;
- The method of handling any problems within the supervisory alliance from both the supervisor and supervisee perspective;
- The method of handling issues outside the competence of the supervisor.

Professional Supervision Timetable - (Dates recorded here to be set electronically using Outlook calendar)

Dates: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Times: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Location: _____

We have read this Policy and agree to operate in compliance with it. We agree to keep all discussion in professional supervision confidential, understanding that there is a legal duty of care that may override confidentiality in exceptional circumstances, such as if a supervisee or supervisor were describing unsafe, unethical or illegal practice and unwilling to go through appropriate procedures to address these after initial discussion between supervisor/ supervisees.

(Professional Supervisor Name)

(Signature)

(Supervisee)

(Supervisee)

(Supervisee)

(Supervisee)

(Supervisee)

(Supervisee)

7.2 Annexure 2 Professional Supervision Session Report

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION SESSION REPORT	
Location of supervision session:	Date and time of supervision session:
Supervisor's Name:	
EDRMS reference:	
Attendance Record: (List of names of staff members)	
Themes or topics covered, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritising referrals and other aspects of practice; • realigning boundaries of practice; • provision by peers of critical, analytic and reflective feedback about practice; • discussion of ethical practice and professional conduct issues – 'grey areas'; • examining conceptual issues raised by practice; realigning and reconnecting with theories associated with practice and the organisation; • general support, encouragement and validation regarding contextual issues around practice; • aligning practice within the boundaries of organisational policies • case presentations 	
Plan for future supervision:	
Next meeting (date, time & place):	

7.3 Annexure 3 Peer Group Supervision Session Report

PEER GROUP SUPERVISION SESSION REPORT	
Location of supervision session:	Date and time of supervision session:
Names of colleagues in attendance:	
Please list the topics covered in this session (see Page 6 for examples), and record significant outcomes	
Plan for future supervision:	
Next meeting: - (date, time & place)	

8 Document history

Version	Date	Reason for Amendment
1.0	20/02/2015	Initial publication
1.1	08/12/2016	Updated format and removed intranet and EDRMS links
1.2	23/10/2017	Updated supervision arrangement for regional areas