

# SUPERVISORS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

## Ethical Guidelines

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Purpose of the ethical guidelines .....	1
3.	The Nature of Supervision .....	2
4.	Basic Assumptions .....	2
5.	Issues of Responsibility .....	2
6.	Issues of Competence .....	4
7.	The Management of the Supervision Work:.....	4
8.0	Supervision of Trainees: .....	6
9.0	Confidentiality .....	5

### 1. Introduction

The Supervisors Association of Ireland (SAI) is comprised of individuals that work in the fields of supervision, teaching supervision and training supervisors.

The individuals mentioned above are termed members in the following. Supervisee refers to a person who receives supervision. Client refers to a client of the supervisee. A trainee is someone who participates in a training programme for supervisors.

All members of this Association are required to abide by existing Codes appropriate to them.

### 2. Purpose of the ethical guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish and maintain standards for supervisors who are members of the Supervisors Association of Ireland.

The ethical guidelines for members of SAI shall help: -

1. To guarantee clients, supervisees and candidates protection against ethical and legal claims
2. To fulfil the requirements of the supervisees and their professional development in a manner benefiting the client
3. To fulfil the requirements of the candidates pertaining to their training and professional development in a manner benefiting the client and conforming to the requirements of the training programme
4. To draw up processes, procedures and criteria for the implementation of training programmes.

These guidelines enable members to study and clarify the ethical aspects of their work. They also serve to inform the public what it can expect in this regard from the members.

Whilst these guidelines cannot resolve all ethical and practical related issues, it aims to provide a framework for addressing ethical issues and to encourage optimal levels of practice.

### **3. The Nature of Supervision**

Supervision is an evolving and distinct form of professional practice. It is underpinned by a growing body of literature and knowledge.

The supervisory process is a complex interpersonal encounter encompassing a network of intertwining relationships. It utilises a wide variety of different forms. At the heart of the supervision process is the professional relationship, which promotes the welfare of the client and the development of the supervisee.

There are various models and modes of supervision. These guidelines refer to all supervision arrangements.

### **4. Basic Assumptions**

Supervisors respect the dignity of all people. They do not discriminate on the basis of cultural or ethnic origin, physiological, psychological, sociological, economic condition or sexual preference.

Supervisors practice their occupation in full awareness of the law of the land.

Protecting the supervisee and his/her clients is the supervisors' primary responsibility. Members shall therefore provide the supervisee the best possible service and shall do nothing that could intentionally or through negligence harm a supervisee.

Supervisors shall attempt to awaken the awareness of the supervisee to the dignity, autonomy and responsibility of the human being and to promote actions arising from this awareness.

Supervisors shall make every effort to ensure that their supervisee's assignment is optimally fulfilled.

## **5.0 Issues of Responsibility**

The role of supervisor includes the following responsibilities:

- 5.1 Supervisors shall ensure that their supervisees have the following in place:
  - a. Belong to an appropriate Professional Association and abide by the Code of Ethics and Practice of that Association.
  - b. They are subject to the Associations Complaints procedure.
  - c. They have appropriate malpractice and professional indemnity insurance as well as public liability cover.

- 5.2 The supervisor shall hold appropriate malpractice and Professional Indemnity Insurance, as well as Public Liability Insurance.
- 5.3 The supervisor shall be responsible to facilitate supervisees to reflect and explore critically upon their work, while acknowledging that clinical responsibility remains with the supervisee.
- 5.4 Supervisor and supervisee have a shared responsibility in ensuring that the best use is made of supervision time in order to address the needs of the client.
- 5.5 The supervisor will aim to create a safe and trusting climate to enable maximum exploration and learning to occur.
- 5.6 Supervisors shall be responsible to ensure that supervisees undertake only the level of work with clients appropriate to their competence on the basis of their education, training and experience.
- 5.7 Supervisors are responsible for setting and maintaining the boundaries that characterise professional supervisory relationships. This is particularly so with trainees, in relationships with training programmes, and when supervisors are also involved in management of such programmes.
- 5.8 Supervisors shall take all reasonable steps to avoid dual professional relationships.
- 5.9 Supervisors are prohibited by this code from exploiting their supervisees financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way. Such actions shall be deemed to be boundary violations and shall be subject to Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures
- 5.10 Supervisors are prohibited from engaging in active sexual relationships with present supervisees
- 5.11 Supervisors have a responsibility to enquire about any other relationships that may exist between supervisees and their clients, as these may impair the objectivity and professional judgement of supervisees.
- 5.12 Supervisors shall recognise and work in ways that respect the values and dignity of supervisees and their clients with due regard to issues such as, origin, status, race, gender, age, beliefs, sexual orientation and disability.
- 5.13 Supervisors shall take all reasonable steps to conduct themselves in their professional activities in way that do not undermine public confidence in either their role as supervisor or the work of other supervisors.
- 5.14 Supervisors shall take all reasonable steps to exercise appropriate self-care.
- 5.15 Supervisors shall engage in continuing personal supervision as a matter of professional responsibility.

- 5.16 Supervisors working with trainees shall conduct themselves according to best educational practice and be fair and just in all their assessments.

## **6 Issues of Competence**

The role of supervisor includes the following competencies:

- 6.1 Supervisors shall have undergone appropriate training in Supervision prior to initiating their role as supervisors. They shall pursue ongoing Professional and Personal education on a continuing basis.
- 6.2 Supervisors shall not work beyond their professional training or competency.
- 6.3 Supervisors shall discern when to recommend that supervisees consult with another supervisor with specific competencies.
- 6.4 Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their own emotional needs are appropriately met outside their supervision work.

## **7 The Management of the Supervision Work:**

- 7.1 Supervision refers to a contractual agreement which regulates the supervisory relationship and makes provision for supervisees to discuss their professional work on a systematic and regular basis.
- 7.2 The supervisor in collaboration with the supervisee is responsible for drawing up the contract and clarifying all contractual obligations in relation to supervision. The contract should make explicit the terms on which supervision is being offered including the contracting period, frequency, fee structure, cancellation policy, procedures for handling crisis situations and evaluation procedures.
- 7.3 When supervision takes place in an organisational setting the contract shall ideally embrace the supervisor, supervisee and the organisation. The supervisor has the responsibility to ensure that issues such as role, expectations, responsibilities, and boundaries of confidentiality are addressed in the contract. The mechanisms by which the supervisor and supervisee will be held accountable for the work they do should be included in the contract. It is recommended that such contracts be explicit and stated in writing.
- 7.4 Supervisors together with supervisees should explore and make explicit the expectations they have of each other. This should include the manner in which any formal assessment of the supervisee's work will be conducted. Each party should assess the value of working with each other and review this regularly.
- 7.5 Supervisors shall inform supervisees of the goals, policies, theoretical orientations, qualifications and supervision model or approach on which the supervisory practice is based.
- 7.6 Supervisors shall assess supervisees' skills and experience in order to establish standards for competent professional practice and try to ascertain that

supervisees' activities are commensurate with their current level of skills and experience.

- 7.7 Supervisors shall provide supervisees with ongoing feedback on their performance. This feedback can take a variety of forms, both formal and informal. Supervisors have responsibility for recommending remedial assistance and training to supervisees when this seems warranted.
- 7.8 Supervisors are responsible for helping their supervisees recognise when their functioning in practice is impaired. This can be due to personal or emotional difficulties, any condition that affects judgement, illness, influence of drugs or alcohol or for any other reason and to ensure appropriate action is taken.

## **8.0 Supervision of Trainees:**

8.1 A three-way contract should be put in place detailing the responsibilities of the trainee, supervisor and the training institution. The respective roles of the trainee, the training institute and the supervisor shall be clearly differentiated in areas such as evaluation, programme requirements and confidentiality.

8.2 Supervisors shall establish clear lines of communication between themselves and the training institute in order to best serve the needs of the and the client.

8.3 Supervisors have the responsibility for evaluating the competency of trainees. The procedures for such an evaluation should be clearly and professionally explained in writing to the supervisees who are so evaluated.

8.4 Supervisors should not endorse a supervisee for certification or completion of a training programme or continued employment if the supervisor believes the supervisee is impaired in a way that would substantially interfere with the performance of their duties.

8.5 Where it occurs that a supervisor is in a dual role relationship with a supervisee arising out of administrative or academic responsibilities boundaries need to be put in place to safeguard the rights of the supervisee. Such dual relationships are not to be recommended.

8.6 Trainers shall observe the following sequence of priorities in case of conflicts between the requirements of the client, the trainee and the training programme or the organisation conducting the programme.

- a. Client's welfare
- b. Trainee's welfare
- c. Supervisor's welfare
- d. The requirements of the training programme and/or the place where the programme is being conducted.

## **9.0 Confidentiality:**

9.1 Supervisors are responsible for indicating clearly the limits of confidentiality offered.

9.2 Supervisors are bound by the principles of confidentiality regarding all information that has become known to them during their supervisory practice, with the following exceptions:

- a. where they are required by law e.g. child protection.
- b. When the supervisor considers it necessary to prevent serious emotional or physical damage to the client, the supervisee or a third party.

9.3 Whenever possible the supervisor's decision to breach confidentiality in any circumstances should be made in consultation with an experienced supervisor. In circumstances where the supervisor is in doubt about breaching confidentiality, she/he should consult with a legal expert and record the outcome.

9.4 In circumstances where the supervisor intends to breach confidentiality they have an obligation to inform the supervisee of this situation.

9.5 The disclosure of confidential information relating to supervisees is relevant in the following situations:

- a. recommendations concerning supervisees for professional purposes, e.g. references and assessments
- b. pursuit of disciplinary action involving supervisees in matters pertaining to standards of ethics and practice.

9.6 Supervisors should have supervisees inform clients that they are being supervised and that observations and/or recordings of the session may be reviewed by the supervisor. They should seek signed consent from the supervisee.

## **10.0 Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures**

SAI has a duty to investigate any complaints which allege violation by a member of these ethical guidelines in the course of his/her relationship with a supervisee, client or trainee. The allegation shall be investigated in accordance with the norms outlined in the appendix Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures