



Spiritual Care Australia

Supervision Guidelines

(Updated October 2020)

Introduction

Spiritual Care Australia (SCA) is the peak association of practitioners in spiritual and pastoral care and chaplaincy in Australia. It seeks to support and encourage the development of spiritual care for all people in Australia, acknowledging that both those offering spiritual care and those receiving it will come from a wide variety of worldviews and faith traditions. SCA does this through the development of agreed standards for training, competency, professional practice, accountability and adherence to a Code of Ethics. Throughout this document the terms chaplaincy, pastoral care and spiritual care are synonymous. Spiritual care has been used as an inclusive term.

Purpose: This paper outlines the SCA expectations for the supervision of Spiritual Care Practitioners.

Supervision

Effective supervision is a developmental and educative process that is both supportive and challenging with the aim of the supervisee growing professionally and personally. Supervision helps practitioners develop expertise, gain confidence and be supported and assisted with their delivery of service to clients.

Terminology

Practitioner is used to refer to someone who provides spiritual care.

Client refers to those who receive spiritual care. The client may be an individual, family or group.

Supervisor is an experienced practitioner who works with a Practitioner to assist professional and personal development.

Who should be Supervised?

It is a requirement of SCA that practitioner members receive regular professional supervision. The amount and type of supervision will vary depending on a number of factors including level of

membership, hours worked and type of workplace. Required hours are specified on the SCA website in the document *Requirements for Professional Development and Supervision*.

Reasons for Supervision

Supervision is a process to maintain adequate standards of professionalism and to widen the horizons of an experienced practitioner. It provides a means of passing on skills and knowledge to newer members of a profession and ensures that clients receive adequate support.

All professional groups expect a level of supervision that exists to:

- protect clients
- improve the ability of practitioners to provide an appropriate service to their clients
- enhance reflection on practice
- provide practitioner accountability
- monitor the self-care of the practitioner
- consider ethical practice in the practitioner's context

The Scope of Supervision

Supervision for practitioners involves debriefing, reflection on work, development of skills, ethical reflection on practice and attention to self-care. It is a formal arrangement for professionals to work regularly with someone who is experienced in supervision.

The supervisor's task is to work together with the supervisee to assist professional development. The supervisor assists the supervisee through reflecting with them on their practice including their actions, behaviour and service delivery. The supervisor offers critically constructive feedback and guidance throughout this process.

Supervision is not a form of therapy or counselling. Issues arising in supervision that may require therapy or counselling must be referred on to a suitable professional practitioner and appropriate support offered as part of ongoing supervision.

A supervisor's role is to develop the practitioner's ability to reflect on practice, think and act ethically, ensure accountability, professional development and offer professional support.

Appropriate Supervisors

For Members and Associate Members – SCA requires Members to work with a supervisor who is an experienced practitioner able to work with another to review their practice with clients. The supervisor could be from the member's faith organisation, a senior member of the chaplaincy/pastoral care team, or other professional arrangement. While recognising the

difference between management and supervision, members who work in a pastoral or spiritual care team with a team leader may receive supervision from that person.

Alternatively they may receive supervision from another suitable person either within or outside of the organisation/institution. Members who are in sole practitioner situations or who lead teams would be expected to receive supervision from an appropriate person outside of their organisation.

For Certified and Certified Advanced Members SCA requires supervision by a qualified and/or accredited supervisor, someone who has undertaken accredited training in supervision e.g. ministry supervisors appointed by a faith group, Supervised Field Education supervisors, Clinical Pastoral Education supervisors. A practitioner with 5 years experience at a certified level may also be considered suitable to provide supervision.

SCA expects any supervisor of members to be able to work with another to review their practice with clients. All supervisors will also be able to assist practitioners consider issues such as:

- ethical practice
- professional development
- personal development
- self awareness and,
- self-learning

which results in ongoing professionalism.

The Agenda of Supervision

The agenda of supervision will normally be set by the practitioner but is expected to cover the range of professional issues indicated in this document. As supervision is a relationship, it is also expected that the supervisor will assist the practitioner to identify issues for the practitioner to work on. It is good practice for the practitioner to negotiate with their supervisor a learning contract/covenant that includes clear achievable goals for the supervisory relationship.

Relationship and Supervision

The quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is an important component of supervision and needs to be one of openness and trust. Ideal supervisors are those who respect, support and nurture practitioners' resources and strengths in a learning environment, conducive to professional development.

Confidentiality and Supervision

Confidentiality is an indispensable requirement of both practice and supervision. The supervisory relationship explores issues related to the practitioner not their clients, although

developing skill and ability in working with clients is a supervisory role.

Exceptions to confidentiality may include the following:

- suspected abuse by practitioner or client
- the practitioner or client pose a danger to themselves or others
- risks associated with practice have occurred
- breach of SCA Code of Conduct by an SCA member
- actions subject to legal process

Types of Supervision

Supervision may occur in a number of settings such as:

- personal supervision - one-to-one
- peer supervision - members of a group provide supervision to each other
- group supervision - a meeting of a number of practitioners with a designated supervisor.

Cost of Supervision

The cost of supervision is best met by the employer of the practitioner. If this is not possible it should be met by the practitioner.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

- **How often should I have supervision?**
 - Fortnightly or monthly depending on the issues and employment arrangements
- **How much time does it take?**
 - Usually 1 hour direct supervision but there may also be preparation time required.
- **What is discussed in supervision sessions?**
 - Issues associated with your workplace, service provision, peer relationships, career, professional, legal and ethical issues and reflection on practice.
- **How often do I review my supervision?**
 - Either 6 or 12 monthly. Individual supervision agreements should be clear and achievable.
- **What if I feel the 'match' with my supervisor is not positive?**
 - Discuss it with your supervisor. On occasions the relationship doesn't work and a new supervisor will be needed.