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Counselling Supervision Agreements

◆ Points from COSCA for Organisations to Consider

Counselling supervision of counsellors and psychotherapists, including those in training, is a significant element of good quality service provision and safe practice.

Counselling supervision may be provided internally within an organisation or by an external supervisor. It is important that counselling, and training, organisations ensure that their particular arrangements for counselling supervision provide the key functions of support and development for counsellors and psychotherapists, whilst monitoring adherence to ethical and safe practice.

The following points may be helpful to consider when compiling an agreement with an internal or external supervisor. These points envisage a triangular relationship being established among the supervisor, supervisee and the counselling or training organisation.

Organisations may benefit from considering that internal and external supervisors:

- have successfully completed supervision training and have relevant and/or appropriate experience in supervision of client work and issues pertinent to the organisation (e.g. substance misuse, bereavement, sexual abuse) and the developmental stage of the supervisee
- adhere to the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice or equivalent ethical framework

- have supervision in relation to their supervisees (see COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice 7.4 and 7.5)
- have awareness of, and agrees to work within, the organisation's guidelines, procedures and confidentiality policy
- provides regular supervision on a monthly basis (COSCA recommended ratio 1:12), however the ratio should be proportionate to the training, experience and nature of client work of the supervisee
- use supervision to ensure efficacy of the working relationship with clients and that the needs of the clients are being addressed
- provides supervision to support, challenge, and share information and skills with the supervisee, within a developmental, respectful and open supervisory relationship
- agrees that the relationship between counsellor and supervisor be reviewed on a regular basis, perhaps 6 monthly, ensuring that supervision remains focussed, effective and positively contributes to the support offered by the supervisee to the client
- has a clear line of communication with the supervisee's organisation
- provides a yearly/6 monthly report to a named person within the organisation, advising dates that the supervisee attended supervision (perhaps there could be space on this document for both supervisee and supervisor to make any comments, if relevant, and all parties are in agreement)

If relevant, an organisation should provide a written agreement of the fee paid to the external supervisor by the organisation.

For further information and guidance, see the 'COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice'.