



The Australian College of Clinical Psychologists

Response to the Psychology Board of Australia

Re: Guidelines for Approved Training Programs in Psychology Supervision

Issued 17 May 2010

Response due date: 14 June 2010

'Attention: Chair, Psychology Board of Australia' at chair@psychologyboard.gov.au

Written on behalf of the Australian College of Clinical Psychologists (ACCP):

(Organisation formed 1980; purpose – to maintain the standards of the profession; to support psychologists working in the clinical field and to protect the public from malpractice).

Our Council of seven branches covering the Eastern States, met on the 4th and 5th June. Members made the following comments of concern about the present state of supervision:

The ACCP recognises that there currently are insufficient psychologists trained in the practice of supervision. Research suggests that only approximately 30% of registered psychologists have received formal training in supervision (Paynter, 2009; Kavanagh, Worrall et al. 2001; Kavanagh, Spence et al. 2001).

Recommendation:

The ACCP strongly supports the need for psychologists who are delivering supervision to interns to have received formal training in this area to guarantee the maintenance of the standards of the profession in accordance with our mission statement. The core skills and competencies of the psychologist need to be thoroughly and systematically assessed during internship in a manner which will protect the health and safety of the public and ultimately ensure that the 'psychologist' is fit to practice.

The supervision of interns is conducted by many psychologists who are untrained in the practice of supervision and also do not receive their own peer supervision at the time of supervising interns who are entering the clinical field.

It is acknowledged that the PBA has outlined a requirement of 10 hours annual peer supervision for psychologists as part of ongoing registration requirements.

The ACCP has long supported a requirement for ongoing peer supervision as a mandatory requirement of ongoing membership to our College. Peer supervision has been an integral part of our membership requirement as this then ensures that psychologists supervising others as well as interns are current in their clinical knowledge.

Comments on Summary of Guidelines

re *All trainers must be psychologists who hold registration and have endorsement in at least one area of practice*

- a) If interns can only be supervised by endorsed psychologists then their expense of the supervision will be increased from that operating in present day practice
- b) If interns can only be supervised by endorsed psychologists, there may be some cities and country placements who cannot find enough supervisors. In such cases, the need for e-mail and telephone supervision is valid, as long as the supervisor is also prepared to travel to observe the work of the intern at regular intervals. Also it is encouraged for the intern in a rural area to have a placement in a city area to broaden their clinical experience.
- c) If interns need to find a psychologist with a specific endorsement then they will need to make a decision early in their career about their area of speciality. The Australian College of Clinical Psychologists abides by the principal of generalist first then proceed to specialist areas. These guidelines are expecting interns to make their decisions early which follows that they will not have the wider experience and knowledge to diagnose correctly which ultimately is not in the best interests of protecting the public
- d) A variety of placements for the intern would enable them to gain the broad clinical experience required for registration. Interns generally change supervisors during the two-year internship. This flexibility of supervisors and clinical experiences must exist in the new guidelines.

Recommendation:

The ACCP recommends that generalists psychologists provide intern supervision and that the intern program should be covering basic competencies. Once an unconditionally registered psychologist wishes to proceed to an endorsed area then an endorsed supervisor must undertake any training supervision.

The Australian College of Clinical Psychologists looks forward to feedback

Signed: Carolyn Rolls

(National President,)

References:

Kavanagh, D., Worrall, L., Spence, S., Strong, J., Wilson, J., Sturk, H., & Crow, N. A. (2001). *Research Evaluation of Professional Supervision and Mentoring of Allied Health*

Professionals in the Mental Health Service. Report 3. January 2001 Survey of Allied Health Staff of Mental Health Services in Queensland: Charting the Territory. The University of Queensland and The Queensland Government, Queensland Health.

Kavanagh, D., Spence, S., Sturk, H., Strong, J., Wilson, J., Worrall, L., Crow, N. A., & Skerrett, R. (2001). *Research evaluation of professional supervision and mentoring of allied health professionals in the mental health service. Report 6. April 2001 Three-month. outcomes of training in supervision: A randomised controlled trial. The University of Queensland and The Queensland Government, Queensland Health.*

Paynter, C. F. (2009). *Supervision Among Mental Health Workers in the ACT.*