

Introduction

The Department of Education and Training of Western Australia is committed to strengthening professional excellence in public schools. This Competency Framework for School Psychologists forms a major part of the Department's continuing promotion of quality services and support to schools to assist them improve the outcomes for all students.

The Department recognises that School Psychologists are highly dedicated and strive to assist schools improve outcomes for their students. Professional learning is seen as a key means of ensuring that School Psychologists have the skills, knowledge and understandings necessary to provide targeted, relevant and contemporary high quality support.

The Framework has been developed through analysis of national and international School Psychologist competencies, and consultation with Associations, Universities, the Australian Education Union, and members of the School Psychology profession.

This Competency Framework describes professional standards for school psychology practice, and makes the knowledge and capabilities of School Psychologists explicit for those within and outside the profession. It provides the means by which good practice can be identified, rewarded and celebrated.

The Framework articulates competency standards for School Psychologists working within Western Australian public schools. Competency standards outline the varying degrees of effectiveness School Psychologists demonstrate when applying their professional knowledge, skills and attributes to the various contexts in which they work.

By providing explicit standards that guide School Psychologists in their work to improve students' learning, behaviour and health and wellbeing, the Framework is a valuable tool for increasing public confidence in the support services provided within the school education system. It emphasises that the school psychology profession requires psychologists to be life-long learners who engage in ongoing professional learning during the course of their careers.

The Department's development of this Framework provides School Psychologists, psychology educators and professional associations, with a description that establishes agreed dimensions of effective school psychology practice, and offers a common reference point for professional reflection, discussion and action.

Professional reflection is central to improving School Psychologists' standards of practice, and supporting the development of career pathways.

The Framework is a tool for School Psychologists to:

- reflect on their professional effectiveness
- determine and prioritise areas for professional growth
- identify professional learning opportunities
- assist their personal and career development planning.

Competency framework for school psychologists

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Background

Context

- School Psychologists support schools to implement the Plan for Government Schools. They provide psychological input to assist schools build capacity to achieve system priorities and maximise learning outcomes for students. School Psychologists provide this support through negotiated service agreements.

Rationale

The framework:

- provides a structure and language within which statements of professional standards are defined. Setting out essential elements of effective school psychology practice acts as a common reference point for dialogue between members of the profession and the community.
- promotes and supports quality school psychology practice by making explicit knowledge, skills and attributes that characterise good psychological practice. Understanding what School Psychologists know, do and value is an important step in enhancing the profile and standing of the profession.
- gives School Psychologists a tool that outlines a continuum of abilities and responsibilities central to professional excellence. This enables School Psychologists to make informed decisions about the direction of their professional learning as they aspire to a higher level of performance.
- identifies knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to assist practising School Psychologists move along their chosen career path.
- raises the quality of education in Western Australian schools by providing School Psychologists with a means to improve their professional practice thereby enhancing student outcomes.
- provides direction for tertiary institutions and professional development providers to develop programs that ensure the development of quality School Psychologists.

The development process

This Framework is the product of a comprehensive consultation process involving School Psychologists, professional associations, tertiary institutions, the Australian Education Union and other key stakeholders. From the outset, the Department acknowledged that in order for the Framework to be a credible and valuable tool School Psychologists needed to have a significant role in the development process.

The Framework has been developed on the understanding that any consideration of what constitutes quality school psychology practice needs to take into account the diversity of contexts and conditions in which School Psychologists work. All efforts will be made to ensure the continued involvement of School Psychologists with a range of experience and practice.

Key principles

Principle 1

The Framework articulates professional knowledge, skills, and attributes essential for all School Psychologists, operating across three broad phases of competency. The competencies are generic.

Principle 2

The competency standards are represented through five dimensions of School Psychologists' work. Effective school psychology practice requires successful integration of these dimensions.

Principle 3

School Psychologists assume wide ranging roles in endeavouring to maximise student outcomes.

Principle 4

The phases frame general and recognisable aspects of professional capacity and achievement.

Principle 5

Knowledge, skills and practices are developed throughout the professional lives of School Psychologists. This development is not linear. Many enter the profession with varying levels of prior learning, work experience and professional preparation, working in a range of different contexts that combine to shape their professional profile.

Principle 6

There are essential attributes that people wishing to enter the profession of School Psychology should have if they are to be effective School Psychologists.

Principle 7

School Psychologists are guided and directed by a range of departmental and professional acts, regulations, policies and guidelines such as:

- The Western Australian Psychologists Registration Act and Regulations
- The Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines
- The Education Act and Regulations
- Curriculum Framework.

The Department also promotes through its Staff Conduct policy ethical practice and appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour.

Principle 8

The actions of effective School Psychologists are guided by the Department's values. These values are:

- learning, where a positive approach to learning is taken for ourselves and others
- excellence, reflecting high expectations for students and ourselves
- equity, where the different circumstances and needs of others are recognised
- care, fostering a relationship based on trust, mutual respect and acceptance of responsibility.

Understanding the structure

The Competency Framework for School Psychologists articulates the complex nature of school psychology by describing three professional elements of School Psychologists' work: attributes knowledge and practice. These elements work in an interrelated way as they are put into practice in schools.

The Framework consists of:

Three phases

The Framework outlines competency standards for effective practice for School Psychologists across three broad phases along a continuum of practice.

The phases are dynamic and not related to length of service. A School Psychologist may operate at any phase at any stage of their career.

As School Psychologists become familiar with the competencies of each phase they will be able to determine the types of professional learning activities that best address their individual needs.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Attributes that are expected of a competent School Psychologist during the period after registration as a School Psychologist.	Attributes that are expected of a School Psychologist with a high level of competence who supports and influences other School Psychologists.	Attributes that are expected of a School Psychologist demonstrating exemplary skills and a capacity to influence the system.

Dimensions of School Psychologists' work

The Framework is based on a construct of five dimensions, each describing the generic characteristics of School Psychologists' work that are central to the attainment of professional effectiveness.

Competency standards

The term competency standard refers to "a combination of attributes underlying some aspect of successful professional performance" (Gonczi et al., 1990, p.9). Competency standards are concerned with application of professional knowledge and skills within the workplace and are underpinned by professional values.

Each competency standard is a statement of the level of competency exhibited for that dimension.

Critical elements of competency

Critical elements of competency are the basic building blocks of each competency standard. They map a range of professional actions engaged in as School Psychologists apply their professional knowledge, skills and attributes to the education context. They are identifiable characteristics that contribute to the achievement of the overall competency standard.

Indicators of effective practice

Indicators of effective practice are competency-related professional actions that provide examples of the professional behaviours likely to be demonstrated by those who have attained a particular competency standard. The indicators listed are examples only.

Professional attributes

Professional attributes outline the characteristics that are readily identifiable as essential to effective interventions by School Psychologists. These attributes ensure that School Psychologists are prepared for the challenges, demands and obligations of their profession. The Framework describes the way School Psychologists work.

Professional attributes provide the underpinning values, beliefs and skills for the decisions and actions School Psychologists make in their day-to-day work. They describe the attitudes and behaviours through which School Psychologists can demonstrate their ability to facilitate student learning and assist school administrators, teachers and parents/caregivers and community members.

Attribute descriptors

Effective School Psychologists throughout all phases of their career demonstrate the following professional attributes.

Collaboration

School Psychologists demonstrate sound interpersonal skills by creating opportunities to communicate and share knowledge, ideas and experience with others. They provide and seek input from colleagues, clients and other professionals.

Commitment

School Psychologists are dedicated to the psycho-educational process. They are committed to the learning, pro-social development and health and well-being of all members of the school community. They assist schools in their aim to foster life-long learners and active pro-social members of society.

Effective communication

School Psychologists have effective interpersonal and communication skills. They are reflective listeners and articulate communicators who modify their language and approach according to the context and audience.

Ethical behaviour

School Psychologists adhere to the Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines of the Australian Psychological Society. They act with care, respect the rights of others and advocate for the principles of social justice for all.

Innovation

School Psychologists are creative problem solvers. They are enterprising and inventive in seeking solutions to educational issues and in developing programs. They provide a variety of strategies to assist school communities engage student interest and enhance learning.

Positiveness

School Psychologists are supportive and constructive in their interaction with others. They show flexibility in an ever-changing work environment in which they are willing to critically consider and initiate change. They are advocates of their profession at all times.

Reflective scientific practitioner

School Psychologists are insightful in analysing their professional practice and can demonstrate evidence and/or practice based decision-making. They draw upon their professional knowledge to plan preventative and responsive courses of action, and to determine goals that enhance their practice and student outcomes. They are informed professionals who avail themselves of professional learning opportunities in order to critically examine new and emerging psycho-educational trends.

Inclusivity

School Psychologists act with care and sensitivity when supporting schools to identify and address the educational, physical, emotional, social and cultural needs of students. They are astute in recognising and responding to inclusivity issues.

Professional knowledge

The Competency Framework for School Psychologists is based on the premise that effective School Psychologists draw on a professional body of knowledge, to enhance health and well-being, behaviour, social competency and educational achievement.

This knowledge is applied in individual, group and school-based interventions, through a process of problem solving, collaboration and consultancy within a psycho-educational framework. This requires a thorough knowledge of student development, psychological theories and practice, the Curriculum Framework, and contemporary pedagogical practice, change management processes, professional codes of practice and relevant legislation and policy.

The Competency Framework is intended to support School Psychologists as they build upon their professional knowledge and skills. It promotes ongoing professional learning and skill development.

Underpinning professional knowledge

The competencies within the Framework are underpinned by core professional knowledge. These competencies require School Psychologists to have a knowledge base of psychology and education, including theories, models, empirical findings and techniques for each domain.

School Psychologists need to understand:

- biological, perceptual, cognitive, social and emotional aspects of behaviour and learning.
- research design, models and evaluation of data
- effective individual, group-based and whole school psycho-educational prevention and intervention programs
- the purpose, nature and use of a variety of assessment strategies and how information acquired through assessment processes can be used to reflect upon and modify teaching, learning and behaviour
- that learning and behaviour are influenced by the school environment and by students' development, experiences, abilities, interests, language, family, culture and community
- the social dynamics of groups and organisations
- change management principles as applied to individuals, groups organisations and systems
- the structure and function of teaching and learning practices
- government, departmental, district and school policies and procedures that underpin schooling educational programs
- the law and regulations affecting the education system and psychological practice

Five dimensions of School Psychologists' work	
Dimension 1	Outcome-Focussed Practice-Based Decision-Making (The purpose and rationale of the work undertaken)
Dimension 2	Application and Evaluation (What is done and to what effect)
Dimension 3	Reporting and Providing Feedback (Communicating and Explaining)
Dimension 4	Partnerships in Education (Collaborating and team building)
Dimension 5	Professional Learning and Leadership (Developing self and Others)

Professional practice competencies

	Phase 1 School Psychologists operating in the first phase demonstrate the competencies individually:	Phase 2 School Psychologists operating in the second phase demonstrate the individual competencies and the capacity to instruct and mentor their peers:	Phase 3 School Psychologists operating in the third phase demonstrate advanced skills with regard to individual competencies and the capacity to influence the system:
Dimension 1 Outcome-focussed practice-based decision-making	Use scientific practitioner/ practice-based models in developing appropriate interventions	Use and encourage others to apply scientific practitioner model and to incorporate research, other data collection and system level understandings in decision-making	Demonstrate highly proficient application of scientific practitioner models that contribute to and influence system level decision-making.
Dimension 2 Application and evaluation	Apply an understanding of psycho-social, learning and cognitive theories to enhance student learning and behaviour and health and well-being outcomes	Apply extensive knowledge and skills to complex and/or critical situations, and evaluate the effect of this application.	Apply specialist skills and provide leadership in the development and evaluation of appropriate programs and interventions at school or district level
Dimension 3 Reporting and providing Feedback	Communicate and report on assessment and intervention procedures for a variety of audiences	Assist others to communicate and provide explanations of complex concepts for a variety of audiences	Provide critical evaluation and feedback to system policy, direction and operation.
Dimension 4 Partnerships in education	Establish and support partnerships with the school community, colleagues other professionals and agencies to formulate outcomes	Collaborate at the school level and facilitate diverse partnerships to formulate and implement outcomes	Engage in strategic partnerships to influence system policy, interventions and prevention programs
Dimension 5 Professional learning and leadership	Articulate and reflect on practice APS Ethical Guidelines DET Values, Curriculum Framework Values, and professional experiences to enhance professional effectiveness	Share knowledge, understanding and skills to support and facilitate the professional learning of colleagues	Lead and engage in a variety of professional activities that promote critical self reflection and the development of learning communities

Understanding the dimensions of School Psychologists' work

Dimension 1

Outcome-focussed practice-based decision-making

School Psychologists apply skills in situational analysis, problem conceptualisation and identification of strengths and needs to inform decision making. These skills include research, development, implementation and evaluation processes to enhance educational outcomes.

Phase 1

Use scientific practitioner / practice-based models in developing appropriate interventions

Phase 1 School Psychologists will be developing the following skills and may require support to collaboratively and consultatively engage with schools to improve the learning outcomes for students. They apply a problem solving process to clarify problems, analyse data, determine hypotheses, negotiate outcomes to be achieved, develop appropriate evidence and or practice based interventions to achieve outcomes, support the implementation of strategies and the evaluation of the outcomes.

Overview

- Apply principles of research design using qualitative and quantitative techniques.
- Collect, analyse, and utilise data to inform interventions.
- Evaluate outcomes of intervention strategies with respect to desired goals.
- Contribute to and support the development, implementation and evaluation of programs, processes and practices.

Example

A school requests assistance with the decision making regarding the placement and provision for a student from an NESB who is exiting a specialist placement. The student has made very limited progress in both English language learning and in other learning areas. Staff who work with the student hypothesise that the student has an intellectual disability. The School Psychologist planned a process of information gathering that will provide an evidence base regarding the student's level of functioning and learning capacity. This included intensive observations over a range of learning situations, with and without support and also different types of support (models, human and visual prompt, guided instruction). The School Psychologist also administered components of a formal Intelligence test that provided practice preparation and reported on the student's performance in these subtest areas. Information was also gathered from parents in a case conference during which the outcomes of the School Psychologist's observations and assessments were shared with them. The psychologist had prepared key questions to ensure that the student's capacities, independence and social skills in the home and community context were included in this overall assessment process. The family noted that the student was very different to their other children and needed to learn different things and in different ways with a lot of support. The School Psychologist structured a written report around: Presenting concerns; Background information; Current learning context; Assessment (intellectual, learning, social, physical, communication,); Family perspectives; that presented the student as having a profile of a student with an intellectual disability.

Phase 2

Use and encourage others to apply scientific practitioner model and to incorporate research, other data collection and system level understandings in decision-making

Phase 2 School Psychologists integrate the above processes into their practice and apply them independently in a wide range of situations. They influence and encourage others to use the scientific practitioner model and demonstrate the capacity to analyse and synthesise the data gathered to ensure the planning of effective interventions.

Overview

- Assess the adequacy and validity of intervention designs.
- Evaluate and use published research.
- Apply understanding of system implications to decision-making and interventions.
- Provide leadership and support in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs, processes and practices.

Example

A school requests assistance to manage a situation where two year 7 students had engaged in self harming behaviour. When gathering information the School Psychologist established what had occurred, who was involved, and the principal's management plans and actions to date. The principal had made arrangements for the psychologist to intervene with both the cohort of year 7's and the individual students engaging in self harm. The School Psychologist clarified that the problem was more complex than at the initial point of request for assistance and that the strategy of addressing a large group of young adolescents regarding self harm was counter to research and would pose risks of contagion, rather than the desired protective outcomes. The School Psychologist needed to work within the principal's planning which involved parents, and at the same time respond in accord with research-based practice. Contact was made with the manager of student services requesting assistance from colleagues so that the Year 7 students could be provided with individual access to a School Psychologist. He led a planning session with colleagues so that processes, discussion points and responses to students needs were standardised and consistent with good practice. He organised small group sessions thus maintaining the principal's commitment to parents that students would be involved in a group session with a district School Psychologist. The two students actively engaging in self harm were individually case managed and appropriate plans and support from other agencies / district services coordinated. All students were assessed to be low, medium or high risk and appropriate plans put in place. The School Psychologist provided authoritative information to the principal on responding to a young person self harming and promoted protective behaviours and mental health curriculum.

Phase 3

Demonstrate highly proficient application of scientific practitioner models that contribute to and influence system level decision-making

Phase 3 School Psychologists possess highly developed processes and apply them to an extensive range of presenting problems. They provide a focused and insightful perspective to complex situations. They apply their skills to develop system initiatives and facilitate systemic change.

Overview

- Provide leadership in the use and understanding of research and evaluation data.
- Apply expert problem-solving and decision-making processes to highly complex and/or critical situations.
- Provide leadership in research design, implementation and application of findings at an individual, group or systemic level.

Example

A District Director initiated support for a school to reduce the number of critical incidents in managing student behaviour. A School Psychologist operating in a specialist role reviewed the school's reported incidents over the previous year noting patterns and frequency of types of incidents and school management approaches that were taken. During an initial consultation with school management team and the District Director the School Psychologist negotiated timelines, relationships and roles between service providers and key school personnel, school outcomes and initial problem solving steps. The School Psychologist established a rationale and need for quantitative and qualitative data collection for the purposes of:

- clarifying issues/problems
- engaging staff through their provision and analysis of school data and
- establishing school based systems to monitor critical data on student behaviour and school responses.

The School Psychologist adapted relevant sections of the Behaviour Self Review (BSR) to suit the school context and surveyed administrative, teaching, support and specialist staff. She then collated, analysed and presented data in a report format for school management and utilized a presentation of results in a whole of staff development day to engage and focus staff on whole school improvement in practices to manage student behaviour. Following this she facilitated a review process ('stop, start, stay review and change') using existing teams within the school's operational structure. This was followed by facilitation of a priority decision making process to further process this data. These group processes provided a rich source of 'staff owned' data for the school behaviour management committee to draw upon to strategically plan for improvement. The School Psychologist continued to work with the committee to design the School Behaviour Management Plan incorporating improvements and consistent with features of effective schools management of student behaviour. She also collaborated on the design of a school based review process for managing challenging incidents based on PART. Involvement in these processes led to the School Psychologist making a significant contribution to DET's review of it's state-wide BMIS policy.

Dimension 2

Application and evaluation

School Psychologists use their knowledge of child development, psycho-social and learning theories, and assessment processes, to support schools to develop, implement and monitor interventions to achieve appropriate outcomes for a diverse range of students and school communities.

Phase 1

Apply an understanding of psycho-social, learning and cognitive theories to enhance student health and well-being, learning and behaviour and health and well-being outcomes

Phase 1 School Psychologists will be developing an assessment and intervention framework to enable them to intervene appropriately in a wide range of situations in schools and a rationale to inform their intervention strategies. They will recognise the need to access appropriate supports to maximise effectiveness of their interventions.

Overview

- Assist schools to develop effective strategies for a diverse range of students' needs.
- Apply consultation, assessment, intervention, evaluation and counselling processes to modify learning social and behavioural outcomes.
- Assist schools with teaching and learning strategies to address student diversity within an inclusive context.
- Assist schools to implement system initiatives.

Example

A school is having difficulty with a pre-primary child whose unpredictability, naughtiness and behaviours with sexualised overtones have upset the teacher, early childhood education assistant parent helpers. Although the situation had been discussed with the child's parents, there was very little change in the child's behaviours. The teacher had been considering alternative ways of getting the child to change his behaviour and decided to call the School Psychologist for advice. The psychologist impressed upon the teacher and principal the necessity for parent involvement prior to intervention, even observation. Parent permission was sought and reluctantly given. Child Protection protocols and processes were discussed and child abuse ruled out, however the School Psychologist considered that an interview with the parents prior to involvement was necessary to ensure that they were fully informed. This established rapport with the parents and an admission on their part that they too needed some assistance with their child.

Observations began and a profile was established indicating target behaviours, reinforcers and triggers. Comparisons were made with other children in the class, in both inside and outside locations. An overall impression of developmental and adaptive behaviour was gained. These were discussed with the child's parents, teacher and early childhood education assistant. Further difficulties at home emerged which triggered the opportunity for the School Psychologist to involve external agency support and intervention to assist the whole family. Monitoring target behaviours and a concentration on positive replacement behaviours enabled acceptable behavioural targets to be established with proactive roles being defined. Further meetings were arranged to discuss everyone's involvement, continued maintenance of the program, and the extent to which each participant had achieved their own targets.

Phase 2

Apply extensive knowledge and skills to complex and/or critical situations, and evaluate the effect of this application

Phase 2 School Psychologists will have developed a range of intervention frameworks and have a clear rationale to inform their practice. They are able to work independently across a wide range of situations including those that are complex and critical in order to engage with schools to facilitate optimum change in the promotion of safe, supportive and inclusive environments.

Overview

- Assist in developing alternative instructional methodologies and interventions for students with diverse strengths and needs.
- Apply and encourage others to utilise current information and research knowledge.
- Work collaboratively to facilitate workable solutions.
- Collaborate and consult with school communities to create learning environments that maximise engagement and encourage practices that promote safe and supportive schools.

Example

Following a series of critical incidents with an autistic child where the education assistant had been bitten and severely kicked and other children assaulted, the school principal began to apply pressure on the School Psychologist to assist in the child's relocation to a more appropriate site. The school's Occupational Health and Safety committee were contemplating *persona non-gratia* for the child.

The School Psychologist decided that a situational analysis was necessary. This process was discussed with the parents of the child and their permission was sought to observe him in class. The child's behaviour was all that had been reported and appeared to be deteriorating. The problem and actions were broken into several distinct parts.

1. The education assistant was encouraged to participate in ASD training and was offered support by the Centre for Inclusive Schooling (CIS)
2. The teacher was offered support by the Autism team from CIS and given time to develop a differentiated plan
3. The Occupational Health and Safety committee were asked to draw up a crisis intervention plan within which each of their concerns could be addressed.

This plan was presented to the school staff as a whole, which enabled their concerns to be addressed and developed some group and whole school responsibility for the outcomes.

The Local Area Co-ordinator for the Disability Services Commission was approached and a joint DSC/DET parents' evening was implemented in the school to discuss inclusion and inclusive practices and to allow concerns to be aired and addressed. With the assistance of from the Social-Psycho Educational Resource (SPERC) and the Autism team an intervention plan was formulated for the child.

These issues and interventions were discussed with the parents who then volunteered to discuss their own child's feelings, frustrations and behaviours with the class.

The School Psychologist monitored the situation, evaluated the effectiveness of the interventions and provided ongoing support to the school.

Phase 3

Apply specialist skills and provide leadership in the development and evaluation of appropriate programs and interventions at school or district level.

Phase 3 School Psychologists will demonstrate exemplary practice and specialist skills. Their expertise will be recognized and applied across the system and they will provide leadership to others to inform their professional practice. They will contribute to the development and evaluation of systemic interventions at the school, district and system levels.

Overview

- Evaluate the effectiveness of practices and programs and develops appropriate adjustments.
- Provide leadership to others in the development of appropriate programs, interventions and evaluations.
- Apply expert knowledge of school psychology practice to enable effective leadership/consultation at interagency, system, district and school level.
- Promote practices that create an inclusive educational ethos and culture.
- Apply due process and guide others in determining and implementing appropriate professional standards and practice.

Example

Following a series of incidents reported on the Department's on-line critical incident reporting process form a School Psychologist was asked to provide input into the review of a schools behaviour management plan, which on the surface appeared to comply with the systems BMIS policy in all aspects. Subsequent information gathered on the school indicated that :

- suspensions were significantly high in the more than five days category
- absenteeism, both explained and unexplained was considerably higher than comparable and local schools, with unexplained absence as a proportion of absence running at 80%.
- Disenchantment amongst the staff was rife, each day being filled with a series of unacceptable personal challenges.

The psychologist initially facilitated a small administration group where they examined the issues and debated their respective responsibilities in doing something about the situation.

It was decided to conduct a survey of staff, students and parents to determine attitudes and beliefs about the school. This process was greatly enhanced by the psychologist's knowledge of survey construction and interpretation.

Following on from this work, small internal working parties were established to address a whole range of identified issues that impacted on both staff and students in the school. Parents were consulted on a range of issues including bullying, harassment, attendance, and student suspensions, including procedural fairness etcetera.

Post investigation and implementation of a range of agreed changes to address the identified issues, suspensions were reduced, especially in the 5-10 day period, a positive change in the student absence rate in the unexplained category, which quickly fell from 80% to 20% of the total, and in general a more positive, welcoming and friendly atmosphere across the school, which increased staff morale and student belonging.

The psychologist found that she had to seek assistance in the development of an adolescent counseling program as students appeared more willing to discuss issues at school, this eventually provided access to inter-agency support.

Dimension 3

Reporting and Providing Feedback

School Psychologists' communicate and report psycho-social and educational knowledge, research and findings.

Phase 1

Communicate and report on assessment and intervention procedures for a variety of audiences.

Phase 1 School Psychologists will have developed a reporting and communication process consistent with professional practice and ethical guidelines. They will adjust communications to ensure reports of assessments, interventions and outcomes meet the needs of the intended audience and the feedback to stakeholders is timely.

Overview

- Communicate the purpose and nature of assessment and intervention procedures for the intended audience.
- Provide timely and appropriate information to school community members, colleagues and other agencies.
- Report the outcomes of assessments and interventions to inform future planning.
- Apply ethical standards, including the principles of confidentiality and informed consent.

Example

A school receives a new enrolment of a Year 6 boy who is under the care of the Department for Child Protection. Within the first two days of attending school, the boy has refused to comply with instructions numerous times, sworn and thrown objects at staff in different contexts, and has hit other students in the playground and classroom.

The boy is referred to the School Psychologist who, as an action coming from a Case Conference (where a DCP representative was present and provided written consent), agrees to begin a series of observations).

The School Psychologist carried out descriptive observations in the class and playground, and a frequency observation during a music class.

A report was written summarising the observation information within the context of the student's psychological intervention history. This information was shared at a case conference where the psychologist recommends a psychiatric assessment referral and the development of individual behaviour management and risk management plans.

Phase 2

Assist others to communicate and provide explanations of complex concepts for a variety of audiences

Phase 2 School Psychologists demonstrate the capacity to deliver complex information to a variety of audiences and accommodate the diversity within an audience taking into consideration the context and dynamics of the participants. They provide formal and informal professional supervision and critical feedback.

Overview

- Clarify and communicate complex concepts for a variety of audiences.
- Develop and synthesise a variety of perspectives and information on complex issues.
- Provide comprehensive and objective reporting on complex situations.
- Supervise and mentor colleagues.

Example

As a result of a psychiatric referral, a child is diagnosed as having Oppositional Defiance Disorder.

Through a Case Conference process, it is agreed that the School Psychologist facilitate a professional development workshop on Oppositional Defiance Disorder to the whole school staff. Information on ODD is presented appropriate to the audience, and behaviour management strategies are discussed.

Implications in regard to various teaching practices and approaches are discussed through a small group exercise. Comments from staff that reflect a range of opinions and points of view are fielded.

Phase 3

Provide critical evaluation and feedback to system policy, direction and operation.

Phase 3 School Psychologists clarify and communicate complex concepts. They are skilled to provide critical analysis of system policies and processes to inform effective implementation.

Overview

- Lead the development of processes and procedures for monitoring, recording and reporting at a systemic level.
- Use systemically gathered information to provide critical evaluation and feedback on program and service effectiveness.
- Utilise situational analysis assessments to inform resourcing needs and distribution for effective service provision.
- Clarify and communicate complex concepts for policy making purposes.

Example

As a result of consultation between the Principal and School Psychologist on the case of the Year 6 boy (Dimension 3, Phase 1 example), it is identified that the school needs to review its incident management procedures.

The Behaviour Management In Schools (BMIS) policy is used to inform the process but it is identified that the policy does not fully meet the need in this context.

A range of resources (including PART) are drawn upon to further develop the incident review process, based upon the Escalation Profile and Recovery approaches.

Subsequently, the psychologist advises the Student Services Manager of the gap within the BMIS policy in the area of incident review, and works with the Manager to advise a BMIS central office representative on the need to update the policy in this specific area, and provides information on what will be required.

Dimension 4

Partnerships in education

Dimension 4 focuses on School Psychologists using a variety of collaborative and consultative skills to foster and support partnerships within school communities and with other agencies

Phase 1

Establish and support partnerships with the school community, colleagues, other professionals and agencies to formulate outcomes

Phase 1 School Psychologists establish effective collaborative and consultative processes; including clarifying their role and negotiating agreed outcomes for all parties.

Overview

- Consult collaboratively with students, teachers, parents and administrators in developing effective strategies.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities and negotiate service outcomes.
- Participate as an effective team member.

Example

A Pre Primary Teacher reports to a School Psychologist that many of the students in her class appear to be struggling to adapt to classroom routines. During a consultation more clearly identifying the issues of concern, the teacher commented that some parents had approached her with home management issues. One of the strategies discussed was the Triple P Program. As the teacher was new to the district, the School Psychologist consulted with her Triple P District Liaison Officer, accessed a variety of promotional resources and program details, and then next date for a Triple P Teachers information session. Upon attending the session, the teacher was able to promote the program in a supportive, global manner and outline the program for interested parents.

Example

When new to a school, the School Psychologist spent her first visit meeting with the Administration team, the SAER coordinator, and the Learning Support Coordinator. Having listened to perspectives of the school, its needs, and the outcomes sought, the School Psychologist acknowledged the difficulties faced by the school. She then clarified her understanding of the school's SAER process, and the expectations of her within it. After negotiating some details and clarifying implementation issues (i.e. who would contact parents, how meeting times will be set, who will usually be present), it was agreed that a Collaborative Case Conference Model will be used when individual case work is required.

Phase 2

Collaborate at the school level and facilitate diverse partnerships to formulate and implement outcomes

Phase 2 School Psychologists establish positive partnerships with school communities, so that as valued members of school teams they can collaboratively consult and provide constructive feedback, and advocate for safe and inclusive practices in schools. They support colleagues in the management of diverse and complex partnerships.

Overview

- Facilitate partnerships using a broad repertoire of skills.
- Select and use the collaborative process appropriate to the context.
- Plan with others to develop appropriate consultative groups.
- Support colleagues to intervene and advocate in complex contexts.

Example

As part of the Student Services Team, a School Psychologist attended a Triple P Presenters meeting. After negotiating with his Triple P District Liaison Officer, the School Psychologist was allocated to present a Triple P program with a child health nurse. The School Psychologist contacted the organiser to clarify dates, times and resources available. At the first meeting the School Psychologist and Nurse negotiated ground rules and parameters for co-presenting to reduce the potential for future overlap and conflict. With this common understanding, the two presenters then negotiated tasks to prepare for each session, materials to be provided, and presentation sections. The School Psychologist was responsive to the Nurse's preferences for delivery mode and was prepared to be flexible in negotiating the presentation format. During the four weeks of the presentations, the psychologist and nurse worked collaboratively to present the course. They shared responsibility to build rapport with parents, establish a process for phone call sessions, presenting the final session and compiling assessments. The School Psychologist sought and accepted feedback regarding his own presentation. Through this process the psychologist learnt a variety of techniques that could assist in improving the scoring process for the program, and was able to use these to inform district wide practice.

Example

A student was referred to the School Psychologist with concern regarding her transition from a Language Development Centre to a mainstream year 3 class, and her lack of progress within that environment. During a case conference with the Class Teacher, Learning Support Coordinator, Parent, SAER Coordinator and School Psychologist, it was established that the student was still attending a private speech therapist. Her current IEP was not resulting in the learning that was predicted. Concerns regarding the student's intellectual functioning were discussed with the parent, and an assessment of current functioning was agreed upon. Permission to contact the LDC and the Speech Therapist was granted, and the School Psychologist gathered background information regarding the student's challenges in her development and lack of progress in the LDC. A review case conference was held, and the results and information collected were shared. After discussing a range of educational options, it was agreed that a Schools Plus application be completed. The School Psychologist consulted a member of the Inclusive Education team. Information from the private Speech Therapist and the expertise of the Visiting Teacher from the Inclusive Education Team were accessed during a collaborative planning meeting. This resulted in a more detailed and resource intensive IEP to better meet the student's needs. The teacher felt more confident in her teaching practice, and both she and the School Psychologist commented that they had greatly increased their own knowledge in designing IEP's and making curriculum adjustments to support students in the least restrictive environment.usually be present), a collaborative case conference model was utilised when individual case work was required.

Phase 3

Engage in strategic partnerships to influence system policy, interventions and prevention programs.

Phase 3 School Psychologists are skilled facilitators who engage in the consultation process with partners within and external to the education sector to maximise school and system outcomes.

Overview

- Initiate consultative and collaborative partnerships within the education sector and between education and other agencies.
- Use a repertoire of skills across a range of complex, highly sensitive and critical situations.

Provide leadership to schools, colleagues, districts and the wider community to empower them to develop effective partnerships within the educational process.

Example A

Triple P is a joint funded and collaborative program between the Department of Health, and the Education and Training. A management framework has been negotiated at a state level outlining roles and responsibilities of each contributor. At a local level, each district has a School Psychologist performing the duties of a Triple P District Liaison Officer to facilitate the implementation of Triple P in collaboration with their local Health Services. To begin negotiation of an Operational agreement, the Triple P District Liaison Officer met with the Nurse Manager to discuss current Triple P provision. Recognising the potential for interdepartmental conflict, she was complimentary of current program provision and diplomatic in seeking background information regarding the theory behind the current model. After collaboratively identify a variety of limiting factors and challenges in providing the service, the Triple P District Liaison Officer was able to discuss this joint project as a supplementary service that may be able to resolve some of the current challenges. Trust was built over a number of meetings, and the use of resources contributed by each department negotiated in an atmosphere of goodwill. Roles and resources to be provided by each department, and of each presenter per program, were clearly articulated and documented. Joint briefings with Child Health Nurses, School Health Nurses, and School Psychologists were held to keep all presenters informed. This partnership has become a true collaboration resulting in many informal consultations, problem solving phone calls, and informal collaborative links strengthened between local health and education staff. This partnership has produced an increase of the provision of Triple P programs within the District by 200%. Schools are informed of the number of parents from their intake area who have attended, and a report for district council prepared. Some aspects of the local agreement were adopted at a state level to maximise the outcomes of the program as identified by the education sector.

Example B

Upon reflecting on her work in a cluster of schools, a School Psychologist identified that a number of referrals from the Kindergartens she visited resulted in referrals for an Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment for gross and fine motor development. Given the near vicinity of Curtin University, she contacted the Head of the School of Occupational Therapy to propose a joint venture to provide early intervention in the school setting as a practical placement for OT students. During a number of negotiation and planning meetings, she engaged the key stakeholders (school representatives from each school, and University staff) in a collaborative problem solving process. After identifying the needs and restrictions of each group, a common goal was agreed upon. An agreement was made outlining roles, timelines and resources required. In consultation with three Kindy Teachers from three schools, the School Psychologist applied for District funding to partly resource an independent OT supervisor. Each school had a coordinator. The School Psychologist facilitated a number of meetings to clarify expectations and the process that was required in each setting. The group collaboratively developed common documentation for each coordinator to facilitate the process within their school. A letter was sent to inform parents of the program, its aims and what would be involved. Parental permission for involvement and for their child to be initially screened by the OT students was sought. The School Psychologist provides an orientation day for the OT students regarding DET, the broader educational setting, and the Kindy environment. Once the screening was completed, the OT student and their supervisor developed a program to meet the needs of the student. Supporting material and feedback was provided for the teachers to supplement the class program. Post testing occurred and individual reports and recommendations made available to parents and teachers. In her role as facilitator of the process, the School Psychologist negotiated an agreement between the three respective registrars regarding payments processes. Her role in The School Psychologist provided an orientation day for the OT students regarding DET, the broader educational setting, and the Kindy environment. Once the screening was completed, the OT students and their supervisor developed a program to meet the needs of the children. Supporting material and feedback was provided for the teachers to supplement the class program. Post testing occurred and individual reports and recommendations made available to parents and teachers. In her role as facilitator of the process, the School Psychologist negotiated an agreement between the three respective registrars regarding payment processes. Her role in supporting the partnerships between these schools has resulted in a stronger relationship not only between them and their Kindy staff, but also with Curtin University. This program has run for 4 years and is expected to continue.

Dimension 5

Professional Learning And Leadership

School Psychologists are actively involved in the development of the profession. They routinely evaluate their own knowledge, skills and practice, and use this for ongoing professional development of themselves and others.

Phase 1

Articulate and reflect on practice APS ethical guidelines DET values, curriculum framework values and professional experiences to enhance effectiveness.

Phase 1 School Psychologists define their professional practice within the relevant ethical, moral and organisational frameworks, including the APS Ethical Guidelines, DET Values, and Curriculum Framework Values. They use their professional experiences to enhance their professional effectiveness, and they develop an understanding of the conflicting beliefs associated with being a psychologist within education.

Overview

- Reflect on professional experiences and identify professional learning needs.
- Seek feedback and direction from a variety of sources to plan for and participate in professional learning.
- Explain own approach to psychological and professional practice.
- Share professional learning with colleagues.

Example

A student in an ESC is due for a review assessment to determine whether they are eligible for ongoing placement and Schools Plus funding. The School Psychologist completes the assessment, and the results indicate that the student's IQ and adaptive behaviour scores no longer meet the Schools Plus criteria for Intellectual Disability.

At the feedback meeting with the parents and school, the school expresses a strong opinion that the student would not cope in mainstream, and suggests that continued ESC placement is sought via the 'grandfather clause'. The School Psychologist provides objective information and discusses the implications of continued education support placement in terms of social appropriateness, and non-eligibility for Centrelink disability payments even if remaining in education support.

Example

In Term Two a Year One teacher refers three children to the School Psychologist in Term Four because they are not yet reading or writing, and do not seem to be able to 'hear' sounds in words. The School Psychologist consults with the Speech and Language Support Officer to clarify processes the teacher can follow to identify each child's level of phonological awareness, and to obtain ideas for appropriate teaching strategies to implement. The School Psychologist shares this information with the teacher, and keeps copies of the resources for future reference. When a Professional Learning session about oral language development and phonological awareness is offered by the Speech and Language Support Team later that term, the School Psychologist attends.

Phase 2

Share knowledge, understanding and skills to support and facilitate the professional learning of colleagues

Phase 2 School Psychologists have a clear understanding of the practice of psychology in education; have a commitment to ongoing learning and a responsibility to share that learning. They are exemplary mentors facilitating the growth of the profession and they support their supervisees and other colleagues to develop skills required to provide professional psychological assistance to schools.

Overview

- Commit to ongoing professional learning.
- Support the induction of colleagues.
- Share professional knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Provide professional support, supervision and mentoring to colleagues.
- Provide and facilitate professional learning for others.

Example

During a supervision session, the supervisee asks the supervisor about a case where a school is advocating for a student to remain in an ESC, even though the student no longer meets the Schools Plus criteria for intellectual disability. The supervisee believes that the ESC placement would not be appropriate for the student, but is anxious about appearing to contradict the school. The supervisor reviews the reasoning with the supervisee and gives reassurance that it is ethically appropriate to ensure that the parents are able to make an informed decision. An action plan is developed during the supervision session and the supervisor offers to participate in a further meeting with the supervisee, school and parents if required.

Example

As part of a district induction program, a School Psychologist presents a session for graduate School Psychologists about managing challenging behaviour. The session covers the relevant DET policies and processes to follow in assisting a school to develop and implement individual behaviour management plans, and a discussion of how to manage difficulties that arise, for example, a school indicating that exclusion is seen as a preferred option to revising behaviour management approaches for the student.

Phase 3

Lead and engage in a variety of professional activities that promote critical self reflection and the development of learning communities.

Phase 3 School Psychologists promote a psychological perspective to emerging issues within the DET. They facilitate the development of learning communities. They provide leadership in the management of complex and critical incidents, and engage in a variety of professional activities that promote critical self reflection.

Overview

- Model and provide leadership in the provision of professional learning for others.
- Support colleagues' application of ethical practice in complex situations.
- Apply psychological theory and practice to generate ideas that contribute to the improvement of educational outcomes and leadership.
- Commit to specialised professional learning.

Example

An ESC in the district has a number of students enrolled who have had review assessments and no longer meet criteria for intellectual disability. The ESC is keen for all the students to continue in the ESC because it is felt that they would not receive sufficient support in mainstream classrooms. The School Psychologist arranges a series of consultation meetings between the principal of the ESC and the principal of the on-site mainstream school. The relevant long term implications are discussed, including coverage of educational, social, legal, financial and ethical areas. A plan is developed for the gradual re-integration of the students into mainstream, with professional development and mentoring for the mainstream teachers and a fully consultative process with the parents. The School Psychologist subsequently works with the two principals to develop a position paper for the district that details best practice in exiting from ESCs for those students who no longer meet the Schools Plus criteria for intellectual disability.

Example

A School Psychologist has completed the 'train the trainer' course for Gatekeeper Suicide Intervention, and has had extensive experience in the area of suicide risk assessment and intervention. The School Psychologist continues to work with children at risk of suicide in contact schools, and also acts as a consultant for colleagues in the district for cases in their contact schools. The School Psychologist has organized an annual schedule to facilitate Gatekeeper sessions for District student services staff, and for District schools, and represents the Student Services team on various relevant interagency committees in the local area.

Appendix 1:

	Dimension information sources
<p>Dimension 1</p> <p>Outcome-Focussed Practice-Based Decision-Making</p>	<p>British Psychological Society Professional Practice Guidelines Division of Educational and Child Psychology</p> <p>National Association of School Psychologist Standards</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society Competencies 2 and 3</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society School Psychology Standard 4</p>
<p>Dimension 2</p> <p>Application and Evaluation</p>	<p>British Psychological Society Professional Practice Guidelines Division of Educational and Child Psychology</p> <p>National Association of School Psychologist Standards</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society Competencies 4 and 8</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society School Psychology Standard 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8.</p>
<p>Dimension 3</p> <p>Reporting and Providing Feedback</p>	<p>Australian Psychological Society Competency 6</p>
<p>Dimension 4</p> <p>Partnerships in Education</p>	<p>National Association of School Psychologist Standards</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society Competency 4</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society School Psychology Standard 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11</p>
<p>Dimension 5</p> <p>Professional Learning and Leadership</p>	<p>British Psychological Society Professional Practice Guidelines Division of Educational and Child Psychology</p> <p>National Association of School Psychologist Standards</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society Competencies 5 and 7</p> <p>Australian Psychological Society School Psychology Standards 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25.</p>

The Australian Psychological Society standards for the delivery of school psychological services

Standard 1:

School Psychologists (i) receive referrals from, and (ii) provide a range of high quality direct and indirect services to, the school community.

Those who refer students for assistance have responsibility to work together with the School Psychologists to implement the recommended intervention strategies.

- a) School Psychologists apply techniques designed to enhance the mental health, behaviour, personality, social competency and educational achievement of the student, or prevent difficulties in these areas. These techniques include individual or group counselling and individual and classroom based assessments and interventions.
- b) School Psychologists consult with others to discuss and decide the reasons for an identified problem, and plan and evaluate interventions. In such instances School Psychologists provide a pivotal consulting and liaison role.
- c) When referring a student for psychological assistance the person making the referral must:
 - (i) provide full information of the reason for the referral
 - (ii) recognise the psychologists' responsibility, in consultation with all stakeholders, to determine the most appropriate assessment and intervention strategies;
 - (iii) recognise the psychologist's responsibility to refer the individual on for further professional assistance, or to maintain or terminate the intervention.
- d) School Psychologists provide skill enhancement activities regarding issues of human learning, development, and behaviour. Such activities include in-service training, organisational development, parent counselling, program planning and evaluation, and parent education to school personnel, parents and others in the community.

Standard 2:

School Psychologists promote mental health, facilitate optimal learning of students, and design and develop procedures for preventing disorders, promoting mental health and learning, and improving educational systems.

Standard 3:

School Psychologists recommend interventions that are appropriate and responsive to the particular and identified needs of each circumstance and each setting.

Standard 4:

School Psychologists employ empirically validated strategies and interventions to achieve optimum teaching and learning outcomes for all within the school community.

Standard 5:

School Psychologists cooperate in and facilitate quality assurance processes in which the particular school or school system participates. To enable the School Psychologists to achieve this standard it is necessary that:

- a) Each school has in place a process to monitor and achieve continuous quality improvement;
- b) The mechanisms for implementing the policy are clearly delineated and applied; and
- c) The policy procedures are regularly reviewed.

Standard 6:

School Psychologists facilitate and support management procedures within the school and the school system. They work with Principals to develop management processes that foster professional proficiency and independence, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of professional processes through involvement of the School Psychologists in a full range of educational and organisational policy processes such as:

- a) Curriculum design;
- b) Creation of policy;
- c) Participation in quality assurance procedures;
- d) Evaluation of outcomes; and
- e) Crisis intervention in collaboration with other stake-holders.

6.1 Management recognises the professional responsibility of the School Psychologist to refer 'clients' to other professionals for specialized assistance when and if necessary.

6.2 The School Psychologist requires the professional support and assistance of colleagues, particularly other psychologists.

Standard 7:

School Psychologists are involved in decision making at the system level.

Psychology as the scientific study of behaviour, contributes to all aspects of human activity. Consequently the School Psychologist may participate in discussions of all aspects of education, for example, curriculum, teaching methods, behaviour management, and organisational structure.

School Psychologists consult and collaborate with other educational professionals in the design and content of curriculum material and teaching strategies, particularly for student with specific learning needs.

Standard 8:

School Psychologists are involved in decision making at the individual level. The School Psychologist contributes to the discussion of matters related to particular students and educational practitioners and into decision making about those individuals.

Standard 9:

School Psychologists facilitate collaborative relationships within the school and the school system. That is, School Psychologists consult and collaborate with parents, school, and other relevant professionals regarding mental health, behavioural and educational outcomes.

Standard 10:

School Psychologists facilitate decision making within the school and the school system.

To enable the School Psychologist to achieve this standard it is necessary that:

- a) The school encourages and facilitates input from all stake-holders into its policy and decision making processes;
- b) All decisions making processes within the school and the school system are open and transparent; and
- c) Decision making processes are supported by all necessary, current data.

Standard 11:

School Psychologists are respected, autonomous participants in professional decision making and practice within the school and the school system. The School Psychologist is bound by a professional Code of Ethics proscribing his/her professional behaviour.

To enable the School Psychologists to achieve this standard it is necessary that:

- a) Psychologists are not subjected to administrative constraints which prevent them from providing services in accordance with the APS Code of Ethics or other professional standards
- b) Where administrative policies conflict with these ethical and professional standards, the general principles of the Code of Ethics take precedence in determining appropriate practice for School Psychologists

Standard 12:

School Psychologists are accountable for the professional decisions they make. In making these decisions they are guided by the need to protect the welfare of their 'clients', of the public, and the integrity of the professions, particularly those of psychology and education.

Standard 13:

School Psychologists negotiate and plan intervention time and costs of the service, acknowledging their own and other participants, boundaries of expertise.

Standard 14:

School Psychologists are cognizant of, and adhere to relevant legal requirements that may impact on their work and the settings in which they operate: for example, the Family Law Act, Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Procedures, Freedom of Information, and anti-discrimination legislation.

Standard 15:

School Psychologists cooperate in and facilitate discussion of professional issues within the school and the school system to ensure the best outcomes for referred clients.

To enable the School Psychologist to achieve this standard it is necessary that:

- a) Regular and confidential case discussions meetings are established for psychologists to share necessary issues with other psychologists; and
- b) Confidential case conferences involving other stake holders are encouraged and facilitated.

Standard 16:

School Psychologists respect and actively foster the right of each participant in the educational process to confidentiality of information

Standard 17:

School Psychologists ensure the privacy of confidential information about others to which they may have access.

Standard 18:

School Psychologists ensure that other persons, including other professionals, are given access to confidential information only on an essential "need to know" basis, and with the consent of the student and/or parent.

The School Psychologist expects the same rigorous maintenance of confidentiality of information that may be accessible to her/him, both about himself/herself and about others, from other participants in the educational and professional process.

Standard 19:

School Psychologists' files regarding clients should be regarded as confidential information.

- 19.1 The School Psychologists' files are to be kept separate from other school files or records about each student.
- 19.2 The School Psychologist's clients files are accessible only other psychologists, and then only when it is professionally appropriate for the psychologists to have access to that information.
- 19.3 The School Psychologist's client files are accessible under legal processes by subpoena, or through statutory obligations.
- 19.4 The School Psychologist's files will be stored in a secure, locked location.
- 19.5 The School Psychologist's files, when being transported, will be securely bound and carried in an appropriate, securely clasped case/bag.

Standard 21:

School Psychologists adhere to the standards delineated in the Australian Psychological Society's *Code of Ethics*.

Standard 22:

Breaches of ethical practice will be investigated and decided upon by the relevant State Psychologists Registration Board and/or by the Australian Psychological Society' Ethics committee.

Standard 23:

School Psychologists provide, and engage in supervision, peer review, and continuing professional development.

- 23.1 The School Psychologist participates in professional supervision which may be required for the purposes of registration, APS College membership, or as an ongoing requirement of employment.
- 23.2 The School Psychologist provides, as part of his/her responsibility to the educational system and to the profession of psychology, professional supervision, and peer review supervision to less experienced psychologists, and to other professionals as appropriate.
- 23.3 The School Psychologist, when acting as a compulsory supervisor for another psychologists share professional responsibility and accountability for the services provided:
 - a) While the level and extent of supervision may vary, the supervisor maintains a sufficiently close relationship to meet this standard.
- 23.4 The School Psychologist continues, after the completion of compulsory supervision requirement to engage in supervision and or peer review on a regular basis, and furthers his/her professional development by actively participating in professional development activities. The level and extent of these activities may vary depending on the needs, interests, and goals of the psychologist working in educational settings.
 - a) The School Psychologist engages in peer review activities, such as discussion of cases and professional issues designed to assist with problem solving, decision making, and appropriate practice; and
 - b) The School Psychologist actively seeks additional assistance with particularly complex or difficult cases, and/or when expanding services into new areas or those in which he/she infrequently practices.

Standard 24:

School Psychologists join and actively pursue the benefits of membership in relevant professional associations, research and professional interest groups.

Competencies of aps psychologists

Competency 2 – Research:

This set of competencies is concerned with the skill required to add to the body of knowledge underlying the science and practice of psychology. It addresses the collection, recording and analysis of data, as well as the communication of research outcomes. Its component parts involve the capacity to: identify research problems; design research investigations; conduct research investigations; evaluate research findings; and, communicate research outcomes.

Competency 3 – Framing, Measuring and Solving Problems:

This set of competencies is concerned with the organisation and planning involved in systematic psychological assessment, evaluation and problem solving with individuals, groups, organisations and the community. It addresses knowledge and skills required from the initial definition of the problem to the evaluation of the outcome. Its component parts involve the capacity to: define the problem; gather and evaluate data; determine strategies; and, implement ongoing evaluation.

Competency 4 – Service Implementation:

This set of competencies covers the steps involved in the planning, design, provision, and evaluation of psychological services to the discipline and to individual, group, or organisational clients and other interested parties. It includes the range of service provided the types of clients involved and the contexts in which component performance is required. It draws on knowledge base of the discipline and problem solving skills. Its component parts involve the capacity to: establish professional relationships; explore the nature of the service required; negotiate each service contract; investigate identified issues relevant to the delivery of services; develop and/or plan preventative or remedial services; implement preventative and/or remedial service; and, evaluate the impact of services.

Competency 5 – Professional, Legal and Ethical Approach:

This set of competencies is concerned with the legal and ethical aspects of psychological practice, as well as an ability to apply informed judgement and current scientific principles in the workplace. It also addresses the knowledge and skills required for professional development and continued education through contact with advances in the discipline and practice of psychology. Its component parts involve the capacity to: recognise boundaries of service provision; behave in accordance with relevant ethical and legal regulation; behave in a responsible and autonomous fashion; manage professional activities; and maintain and update knowledge base.

Competency 6 – Communication:

This set of competencies deals with communication by psychologists with their individual or organisational clients, other psychologists, other professionals, and the public. It recognises the importance of clearly conveying psychological ideas derived from discipline knowledge, research practice, and include the response of psychologists to feedback and information from others. Its component parts involve the capacity to : communicate effectively and appropriately, appraise research and communicate information to wider audiences; and communicate information about relevant psychological services to clients.

Competency 7 – Professional and Community Relations:

This set of competencies addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes involved in establishing and maintaining effective relationships with clients, other psychologists, and with members of other professional and non-professional groups. It recognises the central role of working with people in the practice of psychology. It includes clarifying roles and responsibilities, and conveying possible contributions of psychological expertise to other professionals and the community at large. Its component parts involve the capacity to: adopt an independent or team approach as appropriate; engage the client or clients; clarify roles and responsibilities in consultation with other relevant individuals; accept and initiate supervision of projects or people as appropriate; and apply knowledge to the community.

Competency 8 – Influence and Change:

This set of competencies addresses the role of psychologist as agents of change at individual, group, organisational and community levels. It covers their influence in adapting psychological principles to assist clients to achieve positive outcomes, to promote the implementation of appropriate recommendations and to show leadership. Its component parts involve the capacity to: provides direction in individual, group, organisational and societal change; and, identify career opportunities in the profession and develop new applications of psychological research.

The British Psychological Society Division of Educational and Child Psychology Professional Practice Guidelines

2. Relationships between client and professional power issues.

Educational psychologists need to attend to the potential power imbalances that arise in their work. Much of their work is problem-oriented and on many occasions psychologists may be entrusted with private information which may be essential to assist their understanding of a problem. Entrusting information of this nature almost inevitably puts clients in a position of vulnerability. Educational psychologists have a responsibility to clients to reduce this kind of power imbalance by attending to issues such as confidentiality.

For some clients, vulnerability may not simply result from voluntarily entrusting a professional with information. Most young people and some parents are vulnerable in their dealings with professionals because of relative lack of professional knowledge and, in some cases, lack of skills and resources. Educational psychologists in this context have a responsibility to make particular efforts to ensure their clients understand fully the services available and their rights in respect of these. They also have the responsibility to redress the potential power imbalance by involving clients fully in decision-making. In particular, professional educational psychologists should endeavour to make sure that they obtain informed consent, establish a climate of open communication and attend to issues of confidentiality.

2.1 Informed Consent

- 2.1.1 The concept of 'informed consent' relates to the client's right to choose whether to receive psychological services, and to make this choice on the best information available. Educational psychologists should give particular attention to providing the opportunity for informed consent to those with the least power and those who are potentially most vulnerable. Thus, particular attention should be paid to clarifying this issue with parents and young people themselves.
- 2.1.2 In the usual course of events, educational psychologists should seek the consent of the young person's parents or legal guardian before becoming professionally involved on an individual basis. They should ensure that this is 'informed consent' as far as possible by explaining the purpose and likely form of their involvement.
- 2.1.3 There are a number of situations where the educational psychologist may not be working directly with a young person but is advising other professionals (e.g. teachers). In these circumstances, educational psychologists should establish that informed consent has been obtained from the parent/carers. If informed consent is being obtained indirectly educational psychologists should endeavour to ensure that parents are given adequate information about the psychological services available.
- 2.1.4 There may be exceptional reasons for not seeking consent, particularly if the young person's best interests would be significantly impaired by the educational psychologist's failure to act. If this is thought to be the case, educational psychologists should discuss the matter with a colleague within the profession, preferably one who is in a supervisory relationship with them.
- 2.1.5 There are some circumstances in which a young person seeks help directly without parent consent. It is now recognised that as a child becomes increasingly independent with age, parental authority diminishes correspondingly. It is lawful, therefore, for an educational psychologist to see young people under the age of 16 without parent consent provided that she/he is satisfied that the young person is of sufficient understanding (awareness state of mind) to make an informed decision. However, in such instances, the educational psychologist should always encourage the young person to discuss the matter with his/her parents before any active involvement takes place.
- 2.1.6 Educational psychologists should gain the informed agreement of the young person, wherever possible before commencing involvement. They should explain in terms that the young person can understand, what is to happen at each stage of their involvement.

- 2.1.7 In order to make consent as 'informed' as possible educational psychologists should endeavour to ensure that parents (and young people where appropriate) have information on:
- The particular role and function of educational psychologist including qualifications and areas of expertise
 - The extent of the educational psychologists' powers and responsibilities.
 - The activities which the educational psychologist might undertake with respect to the young person e.g. gathering information directly or indirectly from third parties, report writing etc.)
 - The confidentiality with which information will be treated, along with the limits to this.
 - The nature and location of any records which will be kept by the educational psychologist and rights of access to these.
- 2.1.8 Informed consent should be obtained from young people, parents (and others as relevant) if video or audio tapes are to be used.
- 2.1.9 Educational psychologist should respect the right of the young person or his/her parent/guardians to withdraw consent at any stage, yet endeavour to continue involvement if this can be demonstrated to be in the best interests of the young person concerned.

2.2 Open Communication

- 2.2.1 Educational psychologists should ensure that the verbal and written information conveyed to parents, guardians or to young people will be conducive to the well-being of the young persons.
- 2.2.2 Educational psychologists should make every effort to ensure that all communications between them and clients are open and easily understood. Professional reports should be written with parents/careers in mind: the language used should be as plain and clear as possible. For some families English will not be their first language. Every effort should be made.
- 2.2.3 Educational Psychologists should inform parents of the probable forms of written communication which they are likely to produce. They should negotiate those documents of which parents would wish to receive copies and be prepared to discuss the content further where necessary.
- 2.2.4 Educational psychologist should allow parents/careers reasonable access to records concerning a young person.

2.3 Confidentiality

- 2.3.1 While open communication is desirable, educational psychologists should be aware that their practice is subject to the law of the land. At times, they will be presented with information which clients require to be confidential. A commitment to confidentiality implies that such information will not be divulged to third parties without the consent of the information provider. The duty to preserve confidentiality extends to a commitment not to pass on information where confidentiality has clearly already been broken.
- 2.3.2 As a general principle, educational psychologists should only divulge to a third party information that is relevant and necessary in promoting the best interests of the young person. Where a report is requested by anyone not personally known to the member, it will be the responsibility of the member to verify the bona fides of the person making the request.
- 2.3.3 The requirement for confidentiality will be explicit in some cases. In others, educational psychologists will need to make a judgement about the status of the information provided. If in any doubt about this, the educational psychologist should consult the person who provided the information, directly.

- 2.3.4 Confidentiality may be broken in exceptional circumstances where failure to share information more widely would not be in the best interests of the young person, or would contravene the law. In such complex cases, educational psychologists should seek advice and support from other relevant professionals.
- 2.3.5 At an early stage in their involvement with young people, parents, teachers and others, educational psychologists should discuss their commitment to preserving confidentiality, but also to make clear the limits of this.
- 2.3.6 Educational psychologists should ensure that the storage of written information is adequately secure.

2.4 Other Power Issues

- 2.4.1 Educational psychologists need to be aware of the extent to which those with more power seek to determine their actions and they should be prepared to maintain their professional perspective.
- 2.4.2 The power brought to the educational psychologists by their professional knowledge and experience can be used in a positive way, provided it is acknowledged and not abused. Power is entrusted to professionals on the understanding that they will use it responsibly and reasonably. An important further expectation is that professionals are competent in the areas of service which they claim they claim to provide.

3.1 Conduct

- 3.1.1 Educational psychologists, in dealing with young people, their parents/guardians, teachers and others, should always conduct themselves in a manner which is conducive to the good reputation of the profession and which does not undermine public confidence in the services it offers.
- 3.1.2 Educational psychologists should be aware of and adhere to the Society's Code of Conduct, and Ethical Principles and Guidelines.

3.5 Competence

- 3.5.1 Educational psychologists should make no claim to any degree or professional qualification they do not possess, nor to membership of any professional body of which they are not a member.
- 3.5.2 Educational psychologists should make known the limitations of their professional competence and skills and offer only those skills, services or techniques that meet professional standards. They should inform parents or other professionals when they are not competent to address the problem presented.
- 3.5.4 Educational psychologists should report other psychologists or professional colleagues whose work and conduct do not reach professional standards. Before reporting and if appropriate an educational psychologist should take steps to resolve matters informally.
- 3.5.5 The science and practice of educational psychology is constantly developing at a great pace, with consequent requirements for change by practitioners if they are to maintain their competence. There is, therefore, a duty of care on all educational psychologists to update their professional knowledge and skills continuously post-qualification.

3.6.2 When working with other professionals, educational psychologists should endeavour to :

- Observe and respect the professional standing of other colleagues and make no comments or criticism of their conduct, competence or character unless or until they have attempted to resolve matters informally.
- Be sensitive to the effects of offering contradictory advice and work towards a co-ordinated view where possible
- Make clear what other professional colleagues can expect from them as a minimal response to a request for collaborative work
- Establish arrangements for working jointly with other professionals, making clear the conditions of the association and the point at which work will be terminated.

4. Professional Practice

4.2 Information gathering

4.2.1 When working with young people, educational psychologists should base assessment, intervention and advice offered on the fullest and most accurate information that is available. They should consult as widely as possible with other people who know the young person concerned within their limits with regard to confidentiality and consent.

4.2.2 In assessment educational psychologists should endeavour to use the means of communication which is most accessible to the young person concerned, given his/her cultural background, preferred language and level of understanding.

4.2.3 Educational psychologists should make assessment as objective as possible. They should also make clear the sources on which the assessment is based and make known the limitations of any assessment.

4.2.4 Educational psychologists should only use those forms of assessment in which they are competent (unless they are receiving appropriate supervision) and only when these are judged to be in the young person's interest.

4.2.5 The educational psychologist should present as full and objective an account as possible of information gathered. Other involved should be assisted in putting forward their own views. If these views differ from the views of the educational psychologist, the nature of any difference should be made clear. However, the educational psychologist should not seek to impose his/her own views. In any reporting of differences to a third party, the educational psychologist should make every effort to articulate these in an unbiased manner.

4.3 Interpretation Of Data

- 4.3.1 Educational psychologists should establish clearly between reporting data or information and offering possible interpretations. They should be careful in generalising from the particular set of circumstance, which they have sampled. They should not allow personal views, opinions, or biases to obscure the possibility of alternative interpretation. Nor should they allow the interest or requirements of their employers restrict the interpretations they offer.
- 4.3.2 Educational psychologists should convey information about results of tests and assessments in a way which guards against misinterpretation and also assists with interpretation. They should take care in the written presentation of information to ensure that people reading any form of report have the best possible chance to gain an accurate picture. Limitations of tests and other assessments should be made clear. Written reports about young people, schools etc. should be based on facts which can be substantiated. Where opinions are being expressed, they should be clearly identified as such.

4.4 Intervention

Educational psychologists should encourage the young person to participate in processes and decision making as far as possible. The informed agreement of the young person should be obtained before proceeding with an intervention (if it is possible to convey the information in terms he/she can understand). An exception to the would be those situations in which failure to intervene would result in harm or danger to the young person concerned. Educational psychologists should consider thoroughly the most easily reversible and least intrusive interventions before embarking on less easily reversible and more obtrusive course of action. Educational psychologists should rigorously evaluate their involvement with young people, schools and families in order to review and modify intervention strategies.

Appendix 2:

A framework for psychological assessment and intervention

Psychological Assessment:

Psychological assessment of children and young people has moved beyond the positivist and reductionist frameworks that, for many years, dominated psychological thinking. Current models of assessment need to reflect the body of psychological knowledge, which emphasizes the dynamic interactive nature of children's learning and social behaviours with the environments in which they develop.

A psychological assessment involves the use of a variety of tools, techniques and approaches that draw on relevant psychological theory and research. The purpose of the assessment is to generate understanding of what is happening, who is concerned, why there is a problem and what can be done to make a difference to the situation.

Assessment of children and young people seeks to provide information on the processes of learning, the young person's cognition, social and emotional development and the impact of the context to those areas.

Principles Of Educational Psychological Assessment

1. Assessment techniques and models are based on an understanding of current psychological theories and research.
2. Assessment techniques and materials are selected on the basis of:
 - Relevance to the presenting problem and to the purpose of the assessment (for example, to address concerns about a child's or young person's learning or behaviour, to monitor progress, for purposes of accountability etc.)
 - Sensitivity to ethnic, linguistic, and cultural background as well as the emotional and developmental levels of the child or young person
 - When psychometric or standardized measures are used, these should be used with reference to their reliability, validity and possible bias. Any references made should be based on an appreciation of the statistical properties of the instrument and detail how these have been derived from the data.
 - Positive steps will be taken to avoid bias in the process of assessment.
3. Assessment acknowledges that children and young people develop as a result of an interaction between themselves and their environment. Assessment will therefore:
 - Be conducted over time and in relation to different contexts;
 - Be formative and provide the necessary results to inform any required intervention;
 - Involve parents and/or carers as essential contributors to the process;
 - Consider the young person's strengths and difficulties, and generate a number of hypothesis that consider the range of issues having a possible impact on learning, social or emotional development;
 - Incorporate the child's understanding of his or her world;
 - Draw, where appropriate, on views of other professionals.
4. Educational and child psychologists will be aware of the impact of their own belief systems and attitudes on assessment practice. These should be based on sound psychological principles and focused upon solutions rather than problems.

5. Educational and child psychologists will be aware of and acknowledge the impact of assessment processes and activities on:
 - The child or young person., e.g. self esteem, self perception, motivation;
 - The family, e.g expectations of the child;
 - The school system, e.g curriculum, teaching and learning, and expectations.
6. The reporting of assessment outcomes and data should be sensitively presented and relate to the purpose of the assessment.
7. Assessment practice is informed by continuing professional development.

National Association Of School Psychologists

- 2.1 **Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability:** School Psychologist have knowledge of varied models and methods of assessment that yield information useful in identifying strengths and needs, in understanding problems, and in measuring progress and accomplishments. School Psychologists use such models and methods as part of systematic process to collect data and other information, translate assessments results into empirically-based decisions about service delivery, and evaluate the outcomes of services. Data-based decision-making permeates every aspect of professional practice.
- 2.2 **Consultation and Collaboration:** School Psychologists have knowledge of behavioural, mental health, collaborative, and/or other consultation models and methods andof their application to particular situations. School Psychologists collaborate effectively with others in planning and decision making processes at the individual, group and system levels.
- 2.3 **Effective Instruction and Development of Cognitive/Academic Skills:** School Psychologists have knowledge of human learning processes, techniques to assess these processes, and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of cognitive and academic skills. School Psychologists, in collaboration with others, develop appropriate cognitive and academic goals for students with different abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implement interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Such interventions include, but are not limited to instructional interventions, and consultation.
- 2.4 **Socialisation and Development of Life Skills:** School Psychologists have knowledge of human developmental processes, techniques to assess these processes, and direct and indirect services applicable to the development of behavioural, affective, adaptive and social skills. School Psychologists in collaboration with others develop appropriate behavioural, affective, adaptive and social goals for students of varying abilities, disabilities, strengths, and needs; implement interventions to achieve those goals; and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Such interventions include, but are not limited to, consultation, behavioural assessments/ interventions, and counselling.
- 2.5 **Student Diversity in Development and Learning:** School Psychologists have knowledge of individual differences, abilities, and disabilities and of the potential influence of biological, social, cultural, ethnic, experiential. Socioeconomic, gender-related, and linguistic factors in development and learning. School Psychologists demonstrate sensitivity and skills needs to work with individuals of divers characteristics and to implement strategies selected and /or adapted based on individual characteristics strengths and needs.
- 2.6 **School and Systems Organisation, Policy Development, and Climate:** School Psychologists have knowledge of general education, special education and other educational related services. They understand schools and other settings as systems. School Psychologists work with individuals, and groups to facilitate policies and practices that create and maintains, safe, supportive and effective learning environments for children and others.

- 2.7 Prevention, Crisis Intervention, and Mental Health: School Psychologists have knowledge of human development and psychopathology and of associated biological, cultural, and social influences on human behaviour. School Psychologists provide or contribute to prevention and intervention programs that promote the mental health and physical well-being of students.
- 2.8 Home/school/community Collaboration: School Psychologists have knowledge of family systems, including family strengths and influences of student development, learning, and behaviour, and of methods to involve families in education and service delivery. School Psychologists work effectively with families, educators, and others in the community to promote and provide comprehensive services to children and families.
- 2.9 Research and Program Evaluation: School Psychologists have knowledge of research, statistics, and evaluation methods. School Psychologists evaluate research, translate research into practice, and understand research design and statistics in sufficient depth to plan and conduct investigations and program evaluations for improvement of service.
- 2.10 School psychology Practice and Development: School Psychologists have knowledge of the history and foundations of their profession; of various service models and methods; of public policy development applicable to service to children and families; and of ethical, professional, and legal standards. School Psychologists practice in ways that are consistent with applicable standards, are involved in their profession and have the knowledge and skills needed to acquire career-long professional development.
- 2.11 Information Technology: School Psychologists have knowledge of information sources and technology relevant to their work. School Psychologists access evaluate, and utilize information sources and technology in ways that safeguard or enhance the quality of service.