

The Chair
Associate Professor Brin Grenyer
Psychology Board of Australia
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2nd June 2010

Dear Ass. Prof. Grenyer,

RE: Guideline for Approved Training Programs in Psychology Supervision
Consultation Paper, dated 17th May 2010.

Background

The Guideline recognises the following supervisory competencies:

1. "Understanding of the fundamental principles of competency-based supervision
2. Knowledge and skills in effective supervision practices
3. Ability to assess the psychological competencies of the supervisee
4. Ability to develop and manage the supervisory alliance, including addressing personal factors such as countertransference and self-disclosure
5. Ability to address the legal and ethical considerations related to the professional practice of psychology
6. Capacity to evaluate the supervisory process" (page 4).

The Guideline establishes a requirement for formal training of supervisors involving 15 hours of training in the first instance (plus a further 15 hours of preparation time), along with a seven-hour revision course to be completed "within five years of approval" (page 4). Training is to be made available through modular, workshop format, which could be delivered face-to-face or online. Supervisor competencies would then be assessed through multichoice test, short answer examination, case scenarios and observed consultations (video format or equivalent).

It is also noted that the PBA-approved trainers of supervisors would be expected to engage in ongoing research on supervision.

On the Provision of Training and its scope

The introduction of mandatory training for supervisors in all states is a welcome requirement. The training should cover each of the PBA-identified competencies for supervisors. With the requirement for trainers to engage in ongoing research, one might hope that such training would reflect the latest available knowledge and best practice on supervision. Moreover, at a practical level, it would be of value to include training on the administrative requirements for supervisors. Supervisors may also find it of value to be provided a list of useful resources.

Moreover, whilst the revision course is required to be completed "within five years of approval", it may be more useful for supervisors to complete this training at least once every five years; and more frequently, when the professional knowledge on supervision is advancing rapidly.

On the Assessment of Training Outcomes

It is not clear whether assessment will apply to the initial training or both forms of training. On a practical note, it may be worthwhile to broaden the scope through which consultations are observed so as to include direct observation, skype or audiotape as well as videotape.

On the Expectation for Research on Supervision

The requirement that trainers of supervisors engage in ongoing research is also welcome. However, this requirement may inadvertently discriminate against trainers operating outside a university setting. It is therefore recommended that the scope of ongoing research include theoretical work, case studies as well as empirical research.

I look forward to the next steps in this process and welcome the opportunity for further dialogue on supervision.

Yours sincerely,

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