



Christian Counsellors Association of Australia

National Supervision Chair – Dominie Nelson

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Supervision Letter to Members April 2010

PACFA and Supervision

PACFA's initiatives towards the regulation of the area of supervision intend to guarantee the high professional standard of clinical counselling. Supervision is an important part of counsellor training, one of its focuses being the development of clinical competence and ethical practice in counsellors. Supervisor standards and training, therefore, become, among other things, an issue of quality control. Development and maintenance of high professional standards occurs when counsellors, faced with complex or difficult case presentations, consult with supervisors, as recommended in the majority of ethical codes. It is incumbent upon supervisors, even more so than counsellors, to remain conversant and up to date with relevant research and best practice. PACFA seeks to establish minimum generic standards for supervisors, while recognising that additional modality-specific components may be necessary in training courses for supervisors. At this stage, we anticipate that a minimum of 4 years clinical experience, together with the commensurate number of supervisory hours, will be a necessary pre requisite to becoming a supervisor. PACFA continues to debate and define the specific functions of supervision, for example, the balance between training (skills, modalities and techniques) and developmental (self awareness, learning about the impact of counsellor thoughts and feelings on the counselling process) needs.

How much supervision is enough?

PACFA identifies the minimum amount of supervision as ten hours per year. Counsellors, however, are wise to take into account personal and professional needs when deciding if and when the minimum is sufficient for safe and competent practice. As your counselling case load increases, consider a commensurate increase in supervisory hours. Ten sessions may be inadequate if you carry a complex or heavy caseload. Increasing personal supervision at times of increased counsellor stress may protect against burnout, and ensure the best possible outcome for your clients. Supervision has many different elements, and may include:

- Ongoing training in therapeutic techniques, micro skills and counselling interventions.
- Reflective space to help the supervisee learn about their own thoughts and feelings, and the effect of self on clients.
- Case management, including assessment and development of treatment plans.
- Evaluation of counsellor practice.
- Attention to legal and ethical issues regarding counsellor practice.
- Monitoring counsellor wellbeing, providing supportive and preventative measures to guard against burnout or impairment.

How can I become a supervisor?

We expect that applicants for supervisory training will have completed a formal training program in counselling and/or psychotherapy, and have accrued a minimum of four years' clinical experience post-qualification, together with at least the commensurate number of hours of personal supervision for their own professional development, prior to enrolment in a supervisor training course. While there are many courses available, we recommend careful investigation of content and duration, competent supervision



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requires in-depth understanding and knowledge, skills and awareness that cannot be acquired within a short space of time. Supervisor trainees must demonstrate suitable human qualities as well as clinical competencies, evidence a capacity for relational, facilitative, supportive, reflective and educative skills, adhere to a Code of Ethics, demonstrate ethical practice, and display the capacity to reflect on and learn from experience, including openness to constructive and challenging feedback. Information regarding training courses currently available will be displayed on the Supervision page on the CCAA website.

Supervision and your Association

Here are some of our objectives:

- Connecting counsellors to other counselling professionals, including listing supervisors.
- Providing quality professional development meeting emerging industry standards.
- Providing up to date information on professional counselling and supervisory standards
- Promoting the highest ethical standards – as Christians who counsel and supervise, we are both aspirational and inspirational.
- Your voice to PACFA – together we shape our profession and our future.

CCAA works together with PACFA to keep our Members up to date with the development of our profession. We live in exciting times, as counselling becomes established as a profession having high clinical and ethical standards, with the ability to regulate and develop its members. Counselling makes a much-needed and effective contribution to Australia's mental health, providing a viable and credible work force at a time when we are experiencing the impact of relationship break down through every level of society. Counsellors make a difference, CCAA support you as you make that difference.

Dominie Nelson

Chair of Supervision, CCAA.