

Clinical Social Workers as Clinical Supervisors

Clinical Supervision as a Practice Specialty of Clinical Social Work.

Clinical supervision, an advanced-practice aspect of clinical social work, is the provision of supervisory services by one who has mastery of a range of competences and years of education and experience. The beneficiary of these services is a supervisee who is less advanced in practice and needs more knowledge and better skills in order to serve clients well. The quality and outcome of the supervisee's work is the supervisor's formal, legal responsibility, a function recognized in the laws of most states as fundamental to protecting the public.

The Nature of the Specialist.

The clinical supervisor specialist has mastery of relevant knowledge and skills, and excels in helping supervisees to work effectively with clients in many settings. Advanced supervisors are better than intermediate-level supervisors in the interpretation of practice, in skillful interaction with supervisees, and in generalizing from specific practice issues. Experience counts in clinical supervision, whose providers' competence is enhanced by length of time in practice, special attention to supervisee-client issues, and development of practice wisdom. An advanced supervisor should have at least five years' clinical experience, of which a significant portion is provision of clinical supervision. The specialist helps the supervisee to do the following:

- demonstrate an appreciation and acceptance of the dignity and well-being of the individual and his/her right to self-determination, privacy, confidentiality, and informed choice
- advocate for clients in service provision, access to care, and program evaluation
- practice ethically and legally, with competence and integrity
- practice with respect and sensitivity for culture and diversity
- contribute to a society that offers opportunities to all of its members in a just and non-discriminatory fashion
- deliver the most appropriate service and level of care, according to client needs and informed consent.

Competence: Professional Knowledge and Practice Skills.

The proficiency of the clinical supervisor is best evaluated in terms of competence in professional knowledge and practice skills, each of which can be measured in the following terms:

- Creation of a Supervision Contract
- Supervision of the Processes of Intake, Assessment, and Diagnosis
- Supervision of Treatment Planning
- Creation of Supervision Plan
- Supervision Process
- Supervision of Appropriate Professional Impact
- Evaluation of Practice Outcome
- Evaluation of Supervision Outcome
- Consultation, Teaching, and Writing.