

Standards for Counseling Supervisors

SUPERVISION INTEREST NETWORK, ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELOR EDUCATION AND SUPERVISION

The Standards for Counseling Supervisors consist of 11 core areas of knowledge, competencies, and personal traits that characterize effective supervisors.

STANDARDS FOR COUNSELING SUPERVISORS

(As adopted by the AACD Governing Council, July 13-16, 1989)

The Standards include a description of eleven core areas of personal traits, knowledge and competencies that are characteristic of effective supervisors. The level of preparation and experience of the counselor, the particular work setting of the supervisor and counselor and client variables will influence the relative emphasis of each competency in practice.

These core areas and their related competencies have been consistently identified in supervision research and, in addition, have been judged to have face validity as determined by supervisor practitioners, based on both select and widespread peer review.

1. Professional counseling supervisors are *effective counselors* whose knowledge and competencies have been acquired through training, education, and supervised employment experience.

The counseling supervisor:

- 1.1 demonstrates knowledge of various counseling theories, systems, and their related methods;
- 1.2 demonstrates knowledge of his/ her personal philosophical, theoretical and methodological approach to counseling;
- 1.3 demonstrates knowledge of his/her assumptions about human behavior; and
- 1.4 demonstrates skill in the application of counseling theory and methods (individual, group, or marital and family and specialized areas such as substance abuse, career-life rehabilitation) that are appropriate for the supervisory setting.

2. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate *personal traits and characteristics* that are consistent with the role.

The counseling supervisor:

- 2.1 is committed to updating his/her own counseling and supervisory skills;
- 2.2 is sensitive to individual differences;
- 2.3 recognizes his/her own limits through self-evaluation and feedback from others;
- 2.4 is encouraging, optimistic and motivational;
- 2.5 possesses a sense of humor;
- 2.6 is comfortable with the authority inherent in the role of supervisor;
- 2.7 demonstrates a commitment to the role of supervisor;

- 2.8 can identify his/her own strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor; and
- 2.9 can describe his/her own pattern in interpersonal relationships.

3. Professional counseling supervisors are knowledgeable regarding *ethical, legal and regulatory aspects* of the profession, and are skilled in applying this knowledge.

The counseling supervisor:

- 3.1 communicates to the counselor a knowledge of professional codes of ethics (e.g., AACD, APA);
- 3.2 demonstrates and enforces ethical and professional standards;
- 3.3 communicates to the counselor an understanding of legal and regulatory documents and their impact on the profession (e.g., certification, licensure, duty to warn, parents' rights to children's records, third party payments, etc.);
- 3.4 provides current information regarding professional standards (NCC, CCMHC, CRC, CCC, licensure, certification, etc.);
- 3.5 can communicate a knowledge of counselor rights and appeal procedures specific to the work setting; and
- 3.6 communicates to the counselor a knowledge of ethical considerations that pertain to the supervisory process, including dual relationships, due process, evaluation, informed consent, confidentiality, and vicarious liability.

4. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate conceptual knowledge of the *personal and professional nature of the supervisory relationship* and are skilled in applying this knowledge.

The counseling supervisor:

- 4.1 demonstrates knowledge of individual differences with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, culture and age and understands the importance of these characteristics in supervisory relationships;
- 4.2 is sensitive to the counselor's personal and professional needs;
- 4.3 expects counselors to own the consequences of their actions;
- 4.4 is sensitive to the evaluative nature of supervision and effectively responds to the counselor's anxiety relative to performance evaluation;
- 4.5 conducts self-evaluations, as appropriate, as a means of modeling professional growth;
- 4.6 provides facilitative conditions (empathy, concreteness, respect, congruence, genuineness, and immediacy);

- 4.7 establishes a mutually trusting relationship with the counselor;
 - 4.8 provides an appropriate balance of challenge and support; and
 - 4.9 elicits counselor thoughts and feelings during counseling or consultation sessions, and responds in a manner that enhances the supervision process.
5. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate conceptual knowledge of *supervision methods and techniques*, and are skilled in using this knowledge to promote counselor development.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 5.1 states the purposes of supervision and explains the procedures to be used;
 - 5.2 negotiates mutual decisions regarding the needed direction of learning experiences for the counselor;
 - 5.3 engages in appropriate supervisory interventions, including role-play, role-reversal, live supervision, modeling, interpersonal process recall, micro-training, suggestions and advice, reviewing audio and video tapes, etc.;
 - 5.4 can perform the supervisor's functions in the role of teacher, counselor, or consultant as appropriate;
 - 5.5 elicits new alternatives from counselors for identifying solutions, techniques, responses to clients;
 - 5.6 integrates knowledge of supervision with his/her style of interpersonal relations;
 - 5.7 clarifies his/her role in supervision;
 - 5.8 uses media aids (print material, electronic recording) to enhance learning; and
 - 5.9 interacts with the counselor in a manner that facilitates the counselor's self-exploration and problem solving.
6. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate conceptual knowledge of the *counselor developmental process* and are skilled in applying this knowledge.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 6.1 understands the developmental nature of supervision;
 - 6.2 demonstrates knowledge of various theoretical models of supervision;
 - 6.3 understands the counselor's roles and functions in particular work settings;
 - 6.4 understands the supervisor's roles and functions in particular work settings;
 - 6.5 can identify the learning needs of the counselor;
 - 6.6 adjusts conference content based on the counselor's personal traits, conceptual development, training, and experience; and
 - 6.7 uses supervisory methods appropriate to the counselor's level of conceptual development, training and experience.
7. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate knowledge and competency in *case conceptualization and management*.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 7.1 recognizes that a primary goal of supervision is helping the client of the counselor;
 - 7.2 understands the roles of other professionals (e.g., psychologists, physicians, social workers) and assists with the referral process, when appropriate;
 - 7.3 elicits counselor perceptions of counseling dynamics;
 - 7.4 assists the counselor in selecting and executing data collection procedures;
 - 7.5 assists the counselor in analyzing and interpreting data objectively;
 - 7.6 assists the counselor in planning effective client goals and objectives;
 - 7.7 assists the counselor in using observation and assessment in preparation of client goals and objectives;
 - 7.8 assists the counselor in synthesizing client psychological and behavioral characteristics into an integrated conceptualization;
 - 7.9 assists the counselor in assigning priorities to counseling goals and objectives;
 - 7.10 assists the counselor in providing rationale for counseling procedures; and
 - 7.11 assists the counselor in adjusting steps in the progression toward a goal based on ongoing assessment and evaluation.
8. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate knowledge and competency in client *assessment and evaluation*.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 8.1 monitors the use of tests and test interpretations;
 - 8.2 assists the counselor in providing rationale for assessment procedures;
 - 8.3 assists the counselor in communicating assessment procedures and rationales;
 - 8.4 assists the counselor in the description, measurement, and documentation of client and counselor change; and
 - 8.5 assists the counselor in integrating findings and observations to make appropriate recommendations.
9. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate knowledge and competency in *oral and written reporting and recording*.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 9.1 understands the meaning of accountability and the supervisor's responsibility in promoting it;
 - 9.2 assists the counselor in effectively documenting supervisory and counseling-related interactions;
 - 9.3 assists the counselor in establishing and following policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of client and supervisory records;
 - 9.4 assists the counselor in identifying appropriate information to be included in a verbal or written report;
 - 9.5 assists the counselor in presenting information in a logical, concise, and sequential manner; and
 - 9.6 assists the counselor in adapting verbal and written reports to the work environment and communication situation.
10. Professional counseling supervisors demonstrate knowledge and competency in the *evaluation of counseling performance*.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 10.1 can interact with the counselor from the perspective of evaluator;
 - 10.2 can identify the counselor's professional and personal strengths, as well as weaknesses;
 - 10.3 provides specific feedback about such performance

- as conceptualization, use of methods and techniques, relationship skills, and assessment;
- 10.4 determines the extent to which the counselor has developed and applied his/her own personal theory of counseling;
 - 10.5 develops evaluation procedures and instruments to determine program and counselor goal attainment;
 - 10.6 assists the counselor in the description and measurement of his/ her progress and achievement; and
 - 10.7 can evaluate counseling skills for purposes of grade assignment, completion of internship requirements, professional advancement, and so on.
11. Professional counseling supervisors are knowledgeable regarding *research in counseling and counselor supervision* and consistently incorporate this knowledge into the supervision process.
- The counseling supervisor:
- 11.1 facilitates and monitors research to determine the effectiveness of programs, services and techniques;
 - 11.2 reads, interprets, and applies counseling and supervisory research;
 - 11.3 can formulate counseling or supervisory research questions;
 - 11.4 reports results of counseling or supervisory research and disseminates as appropriate (e.g., inservice, conferences, publications); and
 - 11.5 facilitates an integration of research findings in individual case management.

The Education and Training of Supervisors

Counseling supervision is a distinct field of preparation and practice. Knowledge and competencies necessary for effective

performance are acquired through a sequence of training and experience which ordinarily includes the following:

1. Graduate training in counseling;
2. Successful supervised employment as a professional counselor;
3. Credentialing in one or more of the following areas: certification by a state department of education, licensure by a state as a professional counselor, and certification as a National Certified Counselor, Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, or Certified Career Counselor;
4. Graduate training in counseling supervision including didactic courses, seminars, laboratory courses, and supervision practica;
5. Continuing educational experiences specific to supervision theory and practice (e.g., conferences, workshops, self-study); and
6. Research activities related to supervision theory and practice.

The supervisor's primary functions are to teach the inexperienced and to foster their professional development, to serve as consultants to experienced counselors, and to assist at all levels in the provision of effective counseling services. These responsibilities require personal and professional maturity accompanied by a broad perspective on counseling that is gained by extensive, supervised counseling experience. Therefore, training for supervision generally occurs during advanced graduate study or continuing professional development. This is not to say, however, that supervisor training in the pre-service stage is without merit. The presentation of basic methods and procedures may enhance students' performance as counselors, enrich their participation in the supervision process, and provide a framework for later study.