

# Supervision Guidelines

---



# 1. Summary information

## Minimum level of supervision

Annual minimum of ten months within each twelve-month period (to allow for periods of leave and/or illness)

- Student members = 1.5 hours<sup>1</sup>
- Registered counsellors = 1 hour<sup>2</sup>
- Registered counsellors *working towards accreditation* = 1.5 hours
- Registered Counselling Practitioners and Accredited Counsellors = 1.5 hours

## Group supervision

- Supervisor with 2 supervisees - each counsellor can claim the whole time.
- Peer Supervision<sup>3</sup> with 2 counsellors - each counsellor can claim the whole time.
- Supervision with 3 or 4 supervisees - each counsellor can claim half the time
- Peer Supervision<sup>4</sup> with 3 or 4 counsellors - each counsellor can claim half the time.
- Larger groups - the time claimed is the result of the total time divided between the number of supervisees (or peer counsellors) in attendance.

## Supervision of supervision

To be contracted and conducted separately from supervision of counselling practice. There is no fixed time requirement.

## Who can supervise?

Supervisors must normally meet ACC's guidelines for who can be a supervisor<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation only, subject to placement/training course provider requirements

<sup>2</sup> Only advisable for those working regularly with between 1-3 clients

<sup>3</sup> To participate in peer supervision counsellors must have accrued 650 hours of practice

<sup>4</sup> As above

<sup>5</sup> Please see pages 5-7 below

## **2. Policy guidelines - undertaking supervision**

### **Counsellors**

We require all Counsellors (Students, Overseas Counsellors, Registered Counsellors, Counselling Practitioners, Accredited Counsellors and Senior Accredited Counsellors) to engage in the level of supervision they need.

The professional norm is 1½ hours per month. ACC recognise that some highly experienced counselling members maintain a minimum caseload of between one and three clients in a voluntary capacity, and in these circumstances 1 hour of supervision per month is acceptable. We expect you to agree with your supervisor what is the correct amount for your client load and context, accepting the minimum requirement outlined.

To allow for holidays/annual leave periods a minimum of 10 sessions per annum is required. When your supervisor is on leave or otherwise needs to take a break in practice, they should advise you about what arrangements they have put in place with other suitably qualified counsellors to deal with urgent issues that arise during their absence.

Members should review their supervision arrangements regularly with their supervisor(s) of counselling practice to ensure that the ratio of supervision to client numbers/hours remains appropriate for their workload, setting, professional development goals and level of support you need.

Members should, where possible, select a supervisor who has been trained and practises in the UK. A member who has trained outside of the UK and who joins ACC through an equivalence route must have supervision from a UK based supervisor who has a thorough understanding of the UK professional and legal framework.

### **Students**

Students on counselling courses must ensure they are fulfilling the supervision requirements of their course and/or placement provider. These may vary depending on your training provider and/or level of training. The recommended minimum expected for ACC membership is 1.5 hours per month.

### **Supervisors of counselling practice and of supervision practice**

We expect all supervisors to engage in regular supervision according to workload. Supervision of Counselling Practice and of Supervision Practice should be contracted separately, even when the same supervisor is used for both activities. Ideally there should be a clear demarcation between the time spent discussing client caseload and that focused on supervisee caseload.

Members should consult their supervisor of supervision about their ratio of supervision to supervisee numbers/hours. There are no fixed requirements, but a suggestion would be 1.5 hours every 6-8 weeks for around 5 supervisees.

### **Practice breaks**

Prior to going on a practice break, counsellors will have discussed their plans and agreed with their supervisor(s) how to manage the planned break with their clients. During a practice break there is no requirement to have regular supervision and practice breaks are taken into account when applying for accreditation. For further details please see ACC Practice Break Guidelines available for download on ACC's website.

### **Claiming and recording group supervision time**

ACC counselling members can accrue hours through both one-to-one and group sessions. Although it may seem strange to be able to claim more than the allotted time for your caseload in a small group setting, experience suggests that you will be learning from your colleague's practice and the group as well as the supervisor's input to discussion.

Please note that the number of supervisees in your group supervision must always be declared on your supervision logs for accreditation.

- If the group is 1 lead supervisor to 2 supervisees (1-2), each supervisee can claim and log the whole time i.e. if the session is 1½ hour each person can claim and log 1½ hour.
- A group with 1 lead supervisor and 3 or 4 supervisees (1-3; 1-4), each supervisee can claim half of the time, e.g. if the session is 2 hours each person can claim and log 1 hour.
- If the group is 1 supervisor and 5 supervisees or more (1-5+), each supervisee can claim and log the total time divided by the number in the group e.g. if the session is 2.5 hours (=150 minutes) and there are 5 supervisees, each person

can only claim and log 30 minutes. Please see point 8 below about the advisability of large groups.

- Peer supervision should take place amongst practitioners who have accrued a minimum of 650 hours of supervised counselling practice. The ratio of peer group members to hours described above also applies to this supervision arrangement.

### **3. Summary points for managing your supervision**

- 1) You are responsible for your own supervision needs. Your choice of supervisor(s) and the amount of supervision you engage with should reflect your caseload, setting and complexity of work undertaken. Your choice of supervisor, especially once qualified, should ideally be a personal one, to allow you freedom to develop a safe, developmentally supportive supervisory relationship.
- 2) All members need to ensure that their supervisor is sufficiently knowledgeable about the UK's professional framework and about ACC's ethics and practice standards. If you have trained and practised overseas before joining ACC, you must engage with a UK based supervisor.
- 3) ACC counselling organisational members may offer supervision to their counsellors through a designated supervisor. In cases where a qualified counsellor is not happy with the allocated supervisor or if there is a dual relationship, we encourage ACC affiliates to allow the counsellor to appoint their own supervisor. In these circumstances the ACC affiliate can set criteria to guide the selection of an alternative supervisor, and if they desire a process by which they approve the external supervisor. Issues relating to the payment of supervision in these circumstances may need to be set out in the organisation's terms and conditions of employment, or otherwise negotiated.
- 4) You should set the frequency and duration of supervision, in discussion with your supervisor, so that it reflects your experience and training, your counselling approach/philosophy, the complexity of your work, your development needs and aims, specific specialism etc. ACC does not therefore specify a ratio of hours to clients/supervisees, as it is recognised that different counsellors, supervisors and registrants will have different requirements.
- 5) It is advisable to regularly review your supervisory arrangements and requirements with your supervisor. This especially applies if there is a

change in the scope of your practice or your personal circumstances. ACC recommends you consider, in consultation with your supervisor, moving to a new supervisor at least every 5 years. This is to ensure that you have a fixed point to review your supervision with a view to moving on and being open to new perspectives, fresh challenges and opportunities for growth.

- 6) Large supervision groups are not recommended as a sole source of supervision but may be helpful as part of a portfolio of supervision support. This is because large groups can be hard to manage and there may be insufficient time and space for individual counsellors to have their supervision needs met in a session. There is also a confidentiality issue as more people hear client information being discussed.
- 7) Having a portfolio of supervision input is to be welcomed. You may wish to combine individual supervision with sessions of peer or group supervision especially for work in differing settings. If you take on a client and find that you are in need of more specialist support than your current supervision can provide, it is good practice to seek out a specialist supervisor to support you on an ad hoc or interim basis.

## **4. Guidelines on who can be a supervisor**

Supervisors should have appropriate training, knowledge and expertise in the supervision of counselling practice, underpinned by extensive counselling practice experience in order to provide a supportive and competent supervisory role. This includes keeping up with developments in the profession, changes in the law and regulatory systems etc.

### **ACC members advertising on 'Find a supervisor'**

ACC counselling members have the option to advertise themselves on the website under the 'Find a supervisor' function. Counsellors must be open about their level of training and experience. ACC has an accreditation process for supervision which is open to accredited counsellors.

The following represent ACC's expectations with regard to how you advertise your supervision practice.

To be **in training** as a supervisor, the counsellor:

- must have a minimum 450 hours of supervised practice, and be
- maintaining exemplary professional practice and ACC's ethical standards in keeping with ACC's policies on record keeping, CPD, supervision including supervision of supervision practice and insurance
- can evidence ongoing, recently completed or planned training in supervision practice

To be **qualified** as an ACC Supervisor, the counsellor must:

- have a certificate or ideally a Diploma in Supervision from a recognised training organisation, plus
- 60 hours of supervision of counselling practice  
OR
- be able to evidence that they have been practising as a supervisor with at least 3 years and 100 hours+ of supervision practice, and a record of CPD activities relating to supervision practice<sup>6</sup>

To be **accredited** as an ACC Supervisor, the counsellor must have

- been awarded accredited supervisor status with ACC or equivalent membership body

### **Additional requirements**

If you are practising as a supervisor, you must have an appropriate supervisor for your supervision practice and make sure that your professional liability insurance covers you for supervision as well as counselling practice.

### **ACC members contracting with a supervisor**

ACC counsellors must undertake to work only with supervisors who are trained, competent and insured and who meet the criteria outlined in the table below. There may be exceptional circumstances where a counsellor/psychotherapist wishes to work with specialist supervisor who does not meet the criteria. If this is the case, please contact the Registrar to discuss your situation at [registrar@acc-uk.org](mailto:registrar@acc-uk.org).

---

<sup>6</sup> For a short period of time ACC may consider this experience as entry to ACC's Supervision Accreditation process + cut off process time or before December 2022.



We would expect that your supervisor enters into a professional supervisory relationship with you, with a formal agreement setting out for example, the roles, responsibilities and expectations of each party; frequency and duration of sessions, arrangements for between-session contact, emergency or temporary cover arrangements, fees, confidentiality and privacy etc.

## **Dual roles**

Dual roles occur where you have another relationship with a colleague, in this case your supervisor. Dual roles in counselling are best avoided if at all possible, especially when your supervisor holds another position of authority over you (for example as a manager, counselling tutor or church leader).

If you feel that there is a justification for entering into a dual role, you must be able to articulate a clear rationale for doing so and be able to identify the benefits and risks involved and put in place mitigating factors. We believe that funding issues alone should not justify entering into dual relationships.

Mitigating factors should include:

- A completely independent route for the supervisee to raise concerns about their supervisor within an organisation where both have an involvement.
- An agreed process by which the supervisor can raise concerns about their supervisee's fitness to practice, under for example, a duty of candour, and how these concerns will be managed within an organization.
- A time-limit on the dual relationship.

Where you are a supervisor and have a dual role with your supervisee, you will need to ensure that your own supervisor supports you in undertaking the role and will work with you to manage the risks and sensitivities involved.

Some dual roles are unavoidable, especially where they occur retrospectively, for example if one party joins a church fellowship, charitable project, or work setting etc. In these circumstances, dual roles need to be managed well by agreement with all relevant parties. These may include setting boundaries or limits, for example the parties avoiding being in groups where personal sharing is encouraged (prayer support groups) or where decisions are made about promotion to leadership roles.



## Criteria for selecting a supervisor

The following set out criteria that you can apply when selecting a supervisor.

**Please contact us if your supervisor does not meet these criteria.**

Your supervisor	Details
Holds a relevant accountable professional membership in a counselling or psychotherapy membership body, ideally accredited with the PSA	On a PSA accredited register: ACC, UKCP, BACP, NCPS, COSCA, BPS, BPC  Other: BABCP accredited, HCPC registered (Counselling/Clinical Psychologist), Registered Art Therapist
Is an experienced counsellor/psychotherapist/psychologist	Minimum of 450 hours of supervised counselling practice  Minimum of 650 hours for peer supervision
Has sufficient specialism in an area that matches your own specialism, i.e. one that is advertised to members of the public	For example: complex trauma/PTSD, EMDR, eating disorders, children and young people, addictions, couples/family counselling, psychosexual counselling

AND

Is in training or has completed training in supervision practice or is otherwise competent, which can be demonstrated by them meeting one or more of the requirements set out below:

- a) is a trainee supervisor: enrolled in training course to become a counselling supervisor, OR
- b) has completed training in supervision practice at certificate, ideally diploma level, OR
- c) is a highly experienced practicing supervisor with at least 3 years or 100 hours+ supervision practice, OR
- d) has otherwise a depth of relevant practice experience which **by exception** makes them suitable for the role (please check with ACC office).