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# GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION PRACTICE

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## INTRODUCTION

In order to complement the existing organisational edifice of the profession, namely through Law 57/2008, of 4 September (as amended by Law 138/2015, of 7 September) and the Code of Ethics for Portuguese Psychologists Association (OPP) considers important to analyse some specific dimensions of the conduct of professional Psychologists concerning the practice of Supervision, which deserves further clarification, with the aim of promoting the adoption of good practices, agreed by the psychological community and to assist psychologists who act as Supervisors.

The professional practice of psychology is in constant development and change and therefore requires a fundamental investment in **continuous professional development and lifelong learning**. In this context, **supervision processes** are of crucial importance.

Supervision is a **critical mechanism for facilitating the training and continuous development of psychologists**, as well as ensuring the **safe and high-quality of Psychology practice**. It is, therefore, crucial that all psychologists engaged in research, training and psychological intervention, in its various fields (health and clinical, social and community, organisational and work, school and educational, sports, justice, among others), have consolidated and empirically validated information on the competences and specificities of supervision. In this context, the Guidelines for Supervision Practice have been established, based on the aspirational dimension of the Code of Ethics, as well as the precepts of our founding Law.

The Guidelines for Supervision Practice result from a systematisation of recommendations and best practices, transversal to different theoretical models, contexts and professional experiences of psychologists, in a meta-theoretical approach that aggregates the knowledge, skills and attitudes that make up the competences of Supervision, seeking to integrate the entire field of action of psychologists and in line with the European Model of European Competences, on which the conceptual and legal framework of the profession of psychologist in Portugal is founded. These are not intended to serve as a regulatory document, but rather as a basis for guidance for psychologists in resolving ethical and professional dilemmas in the field of supervision, constituting a resource to support supervision practices in order to promote their quality and effectiveness, defined and duly integrated in the various contexts of intervention.

The process of developing these Guidelines for Supervision Practice followed a process of consultation with a range of experts relevant to the topic in question, and was based on the Recommendations for Supervision Practice developed by the Temporary Committee on Supervision and Intervention<sup>2</sup>, published in 2020 by the OPP.

The Temporary Committee for the elaboration of the Guidelines for Supervision Practice<sup>1</sup> prepared a document which, after approval by the OPP Board, was put up for public discussion among the professional community. The contributions received were then integrated to the extent of their relevance and consensus.

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# 1. FRAMEWORK

## 1.1. CONCEPT OF SUPERVISION

**Supervision is a specialised area of psychologists' professional activity, based on their own knowledge and skills, which can be learned and improved through appropriate training (APA, 2015). The practice of supervision takes place in a wide range of contexts in which psychologists work, individually or in groups, involving learning dynamics and requiring guarantees of safety, effectiveness and quality of performance (CPA, 2017).**

In the psychological literature, one can find the most **diverse definitions of supervision:**

- Falender and Shafranske (2004) define Supervision as a distinct professional activity in which the education, training and development of scientifically validated practice is facilitated by a **collaborative interpersonal process involving observation, assessment, feedback, facilitation of self-assessment and the acquisition of knowledge** and skills by the Supervisee through instruction, modelling and joint problem solving. By promoting recognition of the Supervisee's strengths and skills, the Supervisor encourages the Supervisee's self-efficacy, ensuring that practice is conducted competently, according to ethical standards, legal prescriptions and professional practices, towards the promotion and protection of the well-being of the client, the profession and society at large.
- Bernard and Goodyear (2009) define supervision as an **intervention in which a more experienced member supervises the work of a less experienced junior member of the same profession**. The established relationship is evaluative and hierarchical, extends over time and has the purpose of enhancing the professional functioning of the inexperienced team-member, monitoring the quality of the services provided and **ensuring the quality of the beginning of the professional practice**.
- The British Psychological Society (BPS, 2007) reflects on the complexities of supervision describing it as an activity, a process, a relationship and a practice. Supervision is defined as a process of "**ongoing collaborative, experiential and transformational learning**" which is based on **scientifically validated practice and knowledge**. It is a "flexible" relationship of "mutual trust, respect and integrity" that considers the learning needs of the Supervisee. Finally, it is a **practice bounded by an explicit contract**, which is based on "shared and explicit models of Supervision" (BPS, 2007).
- APA (2014) defines Supervision as a distinctive professional practice that utilises a **collaborative relationship with facilitative and evaluative components**, which extends over time and aims at **improving professional competences and scientific practices of the Supervisee**, monitoring the quality of their services, protecting the public and acting as a **guarantee for entry into the profession**. According to APA (2015), it is also a practice that is distinct from consultancy, psychotherapy or mentoring practices, focused on the acquisition of competences and professional development of the Supervisee, while prioritising the care of clients and the protection of the population.
- Supervision can also be defined as an **interactive process**, which implies a **specific professional relationship**, in which the Supervisor provides the Supervisee with direction by engaging him/her in **facilitative activities**, mediated by **constructive criticism**, in order to support the Supervisee in the process of achieving its professional goals (PBA, 2018).

These different definitions have in common the ideas that a) Supervision is an **interactive and collaborative process** anchored in scientific evidence on supervision and supervised competences, whose main goals are to **improve capacity of the Supervisee's professional capacity**, ensuring the **quality of the services provided**, in order to **ensure the protection of clients and the profession itself**; and b) the Supervisor must have specific competences that allow him/her to maintain a **good working alliance**, provide support, instruct, serve as a **professional model**, give constructive criticism as well as assist in **problem solving** (CPA, 2012).

Thus, in general terms, we can define **Supervision** as a **professional practice** that uses a **dynamic collaborative relationship**, which Supervisor and Supervisee share responsibilities, which includes **facilitative and evaluative components**.

The Supervision process translates into experiential learning based on feedback between Supervisor and Supervisee, reflection and self-evaluation with the intention of improving in the future.

Being a **process shaped by personal and professional factors**, including values, attitudes, beliefs and preconceptions, Supervision should always be, like other psychological practices, **anchored in ethical and deontological principles of the profession and in the most**

**recent scientific evidence** on the Supervision process and the competences and functions being supervised.

Supervision is **distinct** from Intervention (even when in a group context), mentoring, personal psychotherapy or counselling.

## 1.2. EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SUPERVISION

The concept of supervision is almost as old as the profession of psychologist itself, and the prevailing theoretical models at any given time also determine the characteristics and framework of supervision processes. The concept developed over three historical periods: a) the 1920s, based on the psychoanalytic tradition; b) the 1950s and 1960s, when the humanistic/existential and cognitive-behavioural schools emerged; and c) from the 1970s onwards, when supervision began to emerge as a learning activity.

**In the 1920s**, S. Freud was the first professional in psychological science to acknowledge the importance of the process of clinical supervision. The Berlin Institute of Psychoanalysis makes case **supervision a compulsory process in the training of psychoanalysts**, followed by the recognition of the centrality of the supervision process by the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), which establishes criteria for the training of psychoanalysts and formalises supervision as a crucial requirement in the training of these professionals. Psychoanalysis sees Supervision as a key element of the continuous process of professional development, focussing the process on intrapsychic phenomena and interpersonal processes, and seeking the development of insights on the part of the Supervisee. Therefore, until the 1930s, the senior professional held a dual role of Supervisor and personal therapist to the Supervisee, a scenario which resulted in some ethical concerns.

Secondly, **from the 1950s onwards**, the person-centred approach developed by C. Rogers instituted changes in the classical conception of clinical supervision developed by psychoanalysts. The author believed that supervision can be seen as a **modified form of therapy** in which the focus is placed on the development of the Supervisee's self-confidence, self-esteem and professional growth. The main conditions and characteristics of the person-centred therapeutic process are also present in the Supervision process: empathy, genuineness, acceptance, belief in competences and intrinsic motivation for growth and ability to actualise (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

With the advent of **cognitive-behavioural psychothera-**

**pies**, the emphasis on establishing a **genuine relationship between Supervisor and Supervisee** is strengthened, as well as empathy and the possibility of mutual collaboration. Supervision sessions become structured, with clear and well-defined objectives, with the Supervisor acting as a role model for the Supervisee and using Socratic dialogue, role-playing and external tasks (practice between sessions).

Finally, from **the 1970s onwards, constructivist approaches** place the Supervisor in the role of consultant in the Supervisee's development process, deconstructing the importance of hierarchy in the learning process.

The **1980s saw an explosion of studies on supervision**, suggesting that during the process of professional development, Supervisee and Supervisor go through sequential and hierarchical stages, starting from a simple structure, and progressively evolving towards greater complexity and integration of knowledge and experience. From this idea emerge models of Supervision centred on the Supervisee's experience, focused on their competences and learning objectives, proposing that Supervision should start by analysing the Supervisee's competences and experiences in order to structure the process towards specific outcomes.

## 1.3. RELEVANCE AND OBJECTIVES OF SUPERVISION

Supervision is considered a **key competence of Psychologists** and contributes to:

- Ensure the **quality of the process of development and continuous improvement** of the personal and professional competences of Psychologists.
- Develop **reflective practice**, professional awareness and sensitivity, and an understanding of the **ethical** issues and **dilemmas** of practice.
- Facilitate the critical and reflective construction and consolidation of **professional identity**.
- Maintain high ethical and professional standards of psychological intervention and practice.
- Ensure the **quality of the initial training of psychologists**, as well as the safety of the activities carried out by junior psychologists during the professional internship that grants access to the profession (Junior Professional Year).
- Promote the **quality and safety of psychological care** and thereby the health and well-being of citizens.

Supervision processes, while mandatory to access the profession, can also take place at any time during professional life and in any context of psychology intervention

and **fulfil three fundamental objectives:**

- **Development of the Supervisee's competences**, which will allow the Supervisee to reflect on the content and process of his/her intervention, as well as develop theoretical and technical skills, stimulate critical analysis, self-assessment and autonomy and serve as a facilitator of the process of transferring theoretical knowledge to his/her practical application. This role includes support, guidance, training, evaluation and feedback.
- **Support for practice and personal and professional development**, seeking to support the Supervisee cognitively and emotionally so that they feel secure and confident in their intervention and skills development.
- Contribute to the prevention of burnout, vicarious trauma, "secondary stress" or compassion fatigue in Supervisees (Knight, 2008).

## 1.4. SUPERVISION COMPETENCES

While there is consensus that supervision processes are crucial to the professional development of psychologists, there is still debate about **supervision competence**.

Currently, **very diverse models of Supervision** can be found in the literature, all of which seem to refer to the idea that Supervision competence is a distinctive competence, requiring **the Supervisor, not only to have functional competence in the supervised domains, but to acquire and continuously develop a set of specific competences through formal education** (specific training in Supervision) **and training** (professional experience) throughout his/her professional career (Falender, 2004).

At the same time, although widely recognised as a distinct professional practice, formal education and specific training in supervision have been neglected (CPA, 2017). Supervision competence is therefore often inferred, with a wide range of practices recognised across different countries, reflecting different stages of the profession's development in relation to recognising competences for supervision (Europsy, 2015). For example, in some countries, receiving Supervision is a requirement to be developed along the career path (UK and Australia), while in others (such as Portugal) it is a requirement for access to the profession.

**Supervision competence** is a result of several competences that combined, determine a psychologist's competence as a Supervisor. According to the available literature (e.g. Falender et al. Competency Matrix (2004), APA Guidelines on Supervision (2014), Psychol-

ogy Board of Australia list of supervision competencies (2013) and New Zealand Psychologists Board proposals (NZPB, 2010), **the Supervisor should, at least, show...**

- **Knowledge.** Specific knowledge of the area being supervised; of psychological theories and models, scientific evidence of theories and models and their applications to practice; of the process of evaluating the effectiveness of psychological intervention and the results of Supervision; specific knowledge of Supervision practice; of models and theories of competence development; of models, theories and research on Supervision; of legal, ethical and deontological aspects of Supervision.
- **Capacities.** Ability to build a Supervision relationship and alliance, at different stages of relationship development and modalities of Supervision (e.g. individual and group); to fulfil different roles simultaneously (e.g. teaching, supporting and assessing Supervisees); to provide effective feedback; to promote growth, reflection and self-evaluation in the Supervisee (and in oneself); to set boundaries and seek help when the Supervisee's needs are outside their area of competence; to respond appropriately to the Supervisee's level of competence, experience and needs; to identify and manage personal factors and self-revelation affecting the Supervision alliance, including responding to problems and breakdowns in the Supervision relationship; to think scientifically and critically and to translate this into practice and to promote professional development.
- **Values.** Responsibility for the client and the Supervisee; respect and promotion of the Supervisee's personal and professional development; sensitivity to diversity and difference in its various forms; balance between supporting and challenging the Supervisee, between clinical and training needs; commitment to lifelong learning; modelling and facilitating ethical practices, analysing ethical dilemmas based on the profession's Code of Ethics; valuing reasoning based on scientific evidence; flexibility and openness to experiences brought by the Supervisee and to various interventions in psychological practice.
- **Context.** Awareness and knowledge of the complex network of social and socio-political relationships and contexts in which Supervision takes place, as well as knowledge of the system itself, expectations and responsibilities involved in the Supervision process. Establish a supervision contract at the beginning of the supervision process. Define boundaries and dual relationships. Respond appropriately to legal and ethical issues. Ensure that records of supervision are kept by the Supervisor and Supervisee.
- **Training.** Undertake specific supervision training and continuing professional development activities. Receive

Supervision for the Supervision they undertake. Identify limitations in their knowledge and competence, seeking others where necessary.

- **Assessment.** Successful completion of Supervision training; evidence of ability to supervise independently (e.g. audio or video recording); documentation of feedback to Supervisees and a diverse Supervision experience; self-assessment; evaluation of individual and group outcomes and impacts of Supervision; regularly assessing Supervisee progress and adjusting the Supervision process accordingly; knowing when to bring a subject to Supervision from their Supervision practice.

## 1.5. RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE SUPERVISION PROCESS

### Supervisor's responsibility

The Supervisor has an **ethical responsibility** to continuously update his/her knowledge and skills, respecting the Code of Ethics, as well as to provide opportunities and resources to the Supervisee and to continuously improve his/her competences as a Supervisor through formal (e.g., workshops and Supervision training) or informal (e.g., research, peer consultation) mechanisms (CPA, 2017).

It should also assume a **set of responsibilities** that ensure both the objectives of Supervision and the smooth functioning of the Supervision process, including the following:

- Commit to the Supervision process (ensuring availability, dedication and Supervision skills);
- Set up a Supervision contract at the beginning of the Supervision relationship;
- Undertake, together with the Supervisee, professional co-responsibility for the Supervisee's practice;
- Ensure that the Supervisee's duties are consistent with its level of training, competence and learning needs;
- Ensure that the Supervisee is familiar with relevant theory, scientific literature and contextual factors related to the area of practice they are supervising, supporting the Supervisee in relating to and working with professionals from other disciplines where necessary;
- Know the clients, even if their identity is not disclosed, through the Supervisee's reports and the services provided by the Supervisee, so as to be able to ensure the well-being and safety of the clients and intervene whenever it is necessary to protect the client;
- Ensure that the Supervisee knows a set of procedures needed in crisis and emergency situations;

- Informing and ensuring that the Supervisee complies with the law, regulations and good practice, including obtaining informed consent from the client to be able to share information with the Supervisor, being available to the Supervisee in emergency situations or referring to a qualified Supervisor;
- Report bad practices, ethical or legal violations of the Supervisee; constantly updating their knowledge and skills in Supervision, as well as in the technical fields they supervise;
- Maintain professional boundaries by managing multiple relationships, not supervising current or former clients or their family members, and not developing sexual or other relationships with the Supervisee that might interfere with the Supervisor's objectivity and ability to provide effective Supervision;
- Keep records of the Supervision and the records produced by the Supervisee;
- Develop a sense of meta-competence (e.g. ethical and professional behaviour, effective communication and collaboration), personally and in the Supervisee (von Treuer & Reynolds, 2017).

### Supervisee's responsibility

Regardless of the specific moment of the professional pathway at which the Supervision is received, the Supervisee has, as well as the Supervisor, the **ethical responsibility** to act in compliance with the Code of Ethics. He/She must also assume a set of responsibilities towards the Supervisor and towards the supervision process, namely:

- Respect the Supervisor, other Supervisees and other colleagues in their work context;
- Act with integrity and professionalism, taking responsibility for all work assigned;
- Set achievable goals in collaboration with and with the support of the Supervisor;
- Ensure respect for the boundaries of the relationship established with the Supervisor and clients;
- Demonstrate awareness of and respect for diversity (e.g., cultural, religious, age, ethnic, socio-economic, educational, sexual or gender);
- Prepare the Supervision work/sessions as foreseen in the established Supervision contract;
- Collaborate actively in the process, taking the initiative to request specific support if necessary;
- Act within the agreed Supervision tasks and areas of competence and within the agreed timescales;
- Provide input regarding skill development, interaction with Supervisor and interaction with clients;
- Mindful of own behaviours and reactions in order to build self-awareness and strengthen interactions;
- Share relevant questions and concerns with the Supervisor;

- Be available to receive feedback and integrate the Supervisor's recommendations;
- Provide feedback to the Supervisor on aspects of the Supervision and perceptions of the quality of the Supervision working alliance;
- Actively participate in the evaluation of the work done (self-evaluation);
- Develop a sense of meta-competence (e.g. ethical and professional behaviour, effective communication and collaboration) (von Treuer & Reynolds, 2017).

## 1.6. SUPERVISION IN PORTUGAL

In Portugal, and in the other countries where the profession is regulated based on the European Competence Model Europsy, **supervision is a recommended practice throughout the professional career of psychologists.**

**It is also a mandatory requirement for access to the profession and to the European Certificate in Psychology,** and all psychologists must complete one year of supervised practice after completing their academic training and before beginning autonomous professional practice. The statutes of the OPP, approved by Law no. 57/2008 of 4 September, as amended by Law 138/2015 of 7 September, regulated the rules regarding this condition, providing that all professionals whose training was obtained in Portugal must compulsorily complete a professional internship (junior professional year) lasting one year (12 months), promoted and organised by the Portuguese Psychologists Association and in accordance with an internship project submitted and monitored by an internship Supervisor.

In compliance with the international guidelines, Europsy and the OPP Code of Ethics, namely (Principle B - Competence), the Supervisor must have functional competence (training and/or experience) in the area of internship that he/she proposes to supervise. It is also recommended that they develop specific Supervision skills, as a way of enhancing the Supervision process as a central component of the junior professional year, as well as homogenising the conditions of access to the profession and the training and performance evaluation of trainee members. For this reason, OPP suggests that all professional trainee Supervisors undertake training, freely available, in the European Certificate of Psychology - Competence Model.

The junior professional year is regulated in the **OPP Internship Regulations (REOPP)**. In addition to the rights and duties of the Internship Supervisors (described in Article 19 of the REOPP), some conditions are specified for the realisation of Supervision in the context of the junior professional year, namely that the Supervisor

must be a full member of the OPP and have at least five years of professional practice. It is also stipulated that an internship guidance contract must be signed, in which the objectives of the process are duly specified and accepted by the parties involved.

## 2. GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Considering the specificities of professional practice in the context of Supervision and some ethical issues potentially involved, a set of guidelines is suggested below which aim, on the one hand, to respond to relevant challenges and questions and, on the other hand, to set out good practices in this context. As the Supervision relationship is two-way, some of the following recommendations are applicable to both Supervisors and Supervisees.

### GUIDELINE 1

**The Supervisor has Supervision skills that ensure the development of the Supervisee's competences and ensure the quality of the services provided to the public.**

The Supervisor is aware of the ethical, legal and regulatory requirements of his/her activity and ensures that It has up-to-date knowledge, competences and skills in the areas it supervises, corresponding psychological theories and models, dimensions of individual diversity (e.g. age, gender, identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socio-economic status) and intersectionality.

Thus, the Supervisor does not supervise activity for which he/she does not have specific experience or training, and seeks to achieve and maintain professional, besides Supervision competences through continuous training and in accordance with the best available scientific evidence.

Although the Supervision competences guidelines in the literature are diverse, they include: a) interpersonal/relationship competences of Supervision; b) scientifically validated models, theories and practices of Supervision; c) competences of evaluation of results of the Supervision process; d) social and multicultural competences and, e) competences in ethical problem solving. In Portugal, OPP recommends that all Supervisors complete training in the European Certificate of Psychology - Competence Model.



## **GUIDELINE 1.1.**

**The Supervisor establishes a relationship with the Supervisee that continuously promotes respect for diversity and inclusion.**

Respect is a crucial characteristic of the Supervision relationship. In the Supervision relationship, Supervisor and Supervisee show respect, tolerance and understanding for each other and their respective roles, as well as for all other people with whom they relate in their activities.

As diversity is present inside and outside the supervision process, it is important to discuss its impact on the Supervision relationship and process, as well as on the Supervisee's relationship and intervention.

Within the Supervision relationship, Supervisor and Supervisee address professional and personal differences in an open and constructive manner, considering third party consultation or mediation if necessary, collaborating in establishing goals and expectations for the Supervision relationship, and discussing preferences for theories and practices, biases, values, beliefs and characteristics that may be relevant to maintaining the objectivity necessary for the Supervision relationship and process.

The Supervisor is aware that he/she should be a role model with regard to knowledge, behaviour and skills to manage and promote diversity and inclusion, facilitating the development of cultural and inclusion competences of the Supervisee. The Supervisor functions as a role model for maintaining respectful relationships and problem solving in this regard, keeping abreast of scientific evidence about the effects of prejudice and stereotyping, being attentive to issues of inequality that may impact the Supervision power differential, Supervision interactions, as well as client relationships.

## **GUIDELINE 1.2.**

**Where technology is used in Supervision or technology-based interventions are supervised, the Supervisor should be competent in the use of such technologies.**

Conducting supervision at a distance, or the use of psychological interventions at a distance by the Supervisee, may pose new challenges for the Supervisor. It is his/her responsibility to check that the ethical and practical procedures involved in carrying out psychological interventions mediated by information and communication technologies are ensured.

## **GUIDELINE 2.**

**The Supervisor ensures that the Supervision process takes place in a safe, trusting and enabling environment.**

The Supervision site should be perceived as a context for modelling and facilitating the ethical framework of the profession, allowing other ethical dilemmas to be analysed in accordance with the Code of Ethics.

The Supervisor should carry out the Supervision in a suitable location and build a safe environment that facilitates learning and a good Supervision relationship. The supervision contract should be adapted to different supervision contexts, safeguard necessary adaptations for unexpected moments or crises that may temporarily interfere with supervision, as well as include communication alternatives in case of unforeseen events or emergencies.

## **GUIDELINE 3.**

**The Supervisor and Supervisee share responsibility for the collective well-being, complying to high standards and to the public's best interest.**

This principle requires both Supervisor and Supervisee to look after the welfare and best interests of individuals and groups who benefit directly or indirectly from their services.

Supervisor and Supervisee demonstrate up-to-date knowledge of the ethical dimensions of their profession, evidencing knowledge of the Code of Ethics, professional guidelines, recommendations for practice and general laws of the country, as well as those that intersect specific issues in the practice of psychology.

Supervisor and Supervisee actively seek to develop awareness of personal aspects, behaviour and beliefs that may influence the way they conduct their activities. The Supervisor has an added responsibility to model professionalism in behaviour and interactions with clients and other professionals, conveying and modelling attitudes associated with good professional practice and ensuring that other ethical dilemmas are analysed in accordance with the principles of the Code of Ethics.

Supervisor and Supervisee are committed to the social responsibility of serving the public, besides contributing to necessary social change. They both understand and advocate for the role of psychologists in promoting well-being and social justice.

## **GUIDELINE 4.**

**The Supervisor seeks to create a collaborative relationship that promotes transparent communication and Supervisee competence.**

The quality of the Supervision relationship is crucial for effective Supervision and is also the most important variable for satisfaction with the Supervision process.

The Supervision relationship requires an attitude of openness, objectivity, honesty, directness and avoidance of conflicts of interest, where all exceptions can be anchored in the principles of the Code of Ethics. The Supervisor should endeavour to establish an empathetic, respectful and responsive relationship that fosters the Supervisee's trust.

The Supervisor should support the Supervisee in exploring difficulties and sharing differences of opinion, regularly reviewing the progress and effectiveness of the Supervision and resolving issues that may arise in this feedback process.

#### **GUIDELINE 4.1.**

##### **The Supervisor ensures that the boundaries of the Supervision relationship are duly maintained.**

The Supervisor ensures that the boundaries of the relationship are duly maintained and takes the initiative in resolving problems that may occur in this regard, so that both can identify and resolve conflicts in the Supervision relationship in an open, honest and beneficial way. If necessary, the Supervisor clarifies that the Supervision process does not correspond to a clinical, counselling or individual psychotherapy process, and refrains from providing any such advice or assessment to the Supervisee.

Whenever there is an identified need to intervene in the Supervisee's psychological health and personal well-being difficulties or problems, the Supervisor should refer the Supervisee to appropriate psychological health care.

#### **GUIDELINE 4.2.**

##### **Supervisor and Supervisee are aware of possible multiple relationships that may interfere with the Supervision process.**

Prior to entering into a Supervision relationship, Supervisor and Supervisee are aware of the professional boundaries required and alert to potential multiple relationships that may be detrimental to one or both of them or interfere with the objectives of the Supervision process, managing additional roles (e.g. Supervisor should avoid supervising, close friends or relatives) so as not to jeopardise the integrity of the Supervision relationship, in particular by avoiding the establishment of romantic or sexual relationships, as well as all forms of exploitation or actions that harm Supervisor or Supervisee (e.g. harassment, false allegations, coercion). Depending on their reading of the issue of multiple relationships, the Supervisor or Supervisee may exercise the right of excuse by refusing to initiate a Supervision process.

#### **GUIDELINE 4.3.**

##### **Supervisor and Supervisee establish two-way communication for evaluation and feedback.**

Communication and feedback should be constant two-way processes. Feedback should be direct, clear and contingent, anchored in the behaviour and responsive to the actions of the Supervisee/Supervisor, taking into account the potential impact on the Supervision relationship and enabling performance problems to be identified and managed in an appropriate and timely manner, providing opportunities for change, as well as assessing progress on a regular basis and jointly reviewing objectives and tasks.

Regarding the assessment of the Supervisee, the Supervisor should promote a relationship of collaboration and open and transparent communication, which allows for active feedback and assessment, anchored in the development of the Supervisee's competences, not neglecting the co-responsibility that he/she assumes in the Supervisee's performance with the client(s). Thus, it should be especially attentive to the technical, theoretical, ethical and personal capacities of the Supervisee.

The Supervisor acknowledges the value of and supports the Supervisee's reflective self-assessment and incorporates it into the competence assessment process. Can assess the usefulness and impact of supervision on the professional and career development of the Supervisee and the clients with whom he/she works. This evaluation should be continuous, carried out through the methodologies used to carry out the supervision or assisted, at specific moments, by auxiliary techniques (e.g. questionnaires).

Methodologies for assessment and provision of feedback should be explicit in the Supervision contract and may include self-reporting, audio and video recordings, presentation of work, role play, etc. The more direct the Supervisor's access to the Supervisee's work, the less bias and the more useful the feedback will be.

The Supervisor has also the responsibility to directly address potential problems in professional skills and performance with the Supervisee, supporting the Supervisee's professional development process, but always considering the protection of the client and Public Health.

Each Supervisee may have different reactions to feedback and evaluation. As such, Supervisors should be sensitive to the power differential in the Supervision relationship; diversity; the Supervisee's developmental level; the possibility of the Supervisee feeling demoralised or embarrassed in response to feedback; and the timing and amount of information the Supervisee is able to assimilate at any given time.

The Supervisor should be receptive to mutual learning, seeking feedback from the Supervisee on the quality of the Supervision they provide, valuing difference and diversity, concerned with maintaining a balance between support and challenge, as well as using the Supervision context to improve their own Supervision skills. Supervisor and Supervisee respect each other's contribution to the outcomes achieved, sharing credit for them.

## **GUIDELINE 5.**

### **Supervisor and Supervisee respect the principles of Privacy, Confidentiality and Informed Consent in both the relationship with the client(s) and the Supervision relationship.**

In the Supervision relationship, Supervisor and Supervisee must first observe the standards in the Code of Ethics, sharing responsibility for the privacy and confidentiality of information.

Supervisor and Supervisee jointly define clear parameters of confidentiality, including personal information shared during supervision and limitations that may interfere with the planning of the process (objectives, learning, evaluation) in order to prevent harm. At the same time, they recognise that the sharing of personal information within the process may serve the purpose of developing a specific professional competence or reflective practice.

The Supervisor discusses with the Supervisee the need for sharing information relevant to the Supervision process and ensures that all parties (e.g. clients) are duly informed that services and activities are carried out under Supervision and discussed with a Supervisor. Sharing information about clients should always involve obtaining the client's consent as well as a) concealing the client's identity or, b) obtaining the client's consent for its identity to be disclosed in the context of Supervision.

## **GUIDELINE 6**

### **Supervisor and Supervisee establish a Supervision Contract.**

Supervisors should make explicit their objectives for supervision, individual learning objectives, roles and responsibilities, a description of the structure of supervision, supervision activities, how performance will be evaluated, as well as the limits of confidentiality. In addition, it is also the responsibility of Supervisors to help Supervisees define and specify their own expectations, responsibilities, learning objectives and performance standards.

One of the most effective ways to establish the expectations and responsibilities of the Supervision process in

a collaborative manner is through a Supervision contract or agreement, which is made before the start of the Supervision process.

The Supervision Contract may include references about:

**a) the type of process.** Supervision can be an individual or group process. If it is a group process, it is recommended that the number of participants is between 2 and 5, but this number can be adjusted according to the objectives. The Supervision group can be a closed group (not allowing members to join or leave during the Supervision cycle) or an open group (allowing members to change during the Supervision cycle). The specificities of a Supervision group should be clearly spelt out in the Supervision contract.

**b) the objectives.** The objectives of the Supervision will be the guiding line of the process, but also of the relationship between the Supervisor and the Supervisee, so the Supervision contract should clarify what is intended to be achieved by the Supervision process, the lines of responsibility of both actors, as well as information that should be brought to the Supervision between both parties.

**c) theoretical guideline.** In establishing the Supervision relationship, the theoretical and practical preferences of each party should be shared, as these may affect the Supervision process.

**d) the supervision methodology.** The chosen techniques, or the collection of techniques, is a responsibility of the Supervisor, and all of those that may be used throughout the Supervision cycle should be described.

**e) the duration of the sessions.** It is proposed a minimum duration of one hour and a maximum duration of two hours. This time may be adjusted by the Supervisor according to the number of members of a group, or the specificity of the situation, provided that it is justified for the benefit of the objectives established for the Supervision process.

**f) the frequency of the sessions.** Supervision sessions can be monthly, weekly, ad hoc or at another frequency agreed between the Supervisor and Supervisee and duly justified for the benefit of the process.

**g) the Supervision cycles.** A Supervision cycle is considered to be the period over which both parties undertake to carry out Supervision taking into account the objectives set out in the contract. In general terms (and considering there might be exceptions), it is recommended that Supervision cycles should not be shorter than 12 sessions, corresponding to a minimum of 12 hours

for individual Supervision and 24 hours for group Supervision. Supervision cycles may be renewed if agreed between both parties.

**h) remuneration.** The forms and amounts of remuneration for the Supervision process, where and if applicable, should be explicit and part of the agreement between the parties involved.

**i) evaluation.** The methodology for evaluating the sessions, as well as the specific moments when this occurs and the instruments to be used should be described in the Supervision contract, where applicable. Likewise, the competences required for satisfactory performance should be stated, as well as the procedures that take place if the criteria for good performance are not met.

**j) record keeping.** Supervisee's records of Supervision should contain, above all, the main conclusions of the Supervision session, particularly those that allow their professional or personal development, beyond the moment of Supervision. The Supervisor's records should contain, in addition to the main conclusions of the Supervision moment, the date of the session and those present, in the case of a group session. The record can be made in minutes format, keeping the signature of those present.

**k) absences.** Any absence of one of the parties after an appointment being made with agreement and confirmation by the parties concerned shall be considered as an absence. Absences may be justified or unjustified.

In keeping with the commitment to long-term supervision work, Supervisor and Supervisee periodically review the supervision contract or agreement and note any necessary changes.

Whenever one of the parties breaches the Supervision contract, the process can be broken unilaterally (see below, breaks in the Supervision relationship). If this happens, the reasons should be discussed between the parties. In the case of practices that contravene the ethical principles of the profession, this should be reported to the OPP Supervisory Board.

## **GUIDELINE 7.**

### **The Supervisor should tailor the Supervision process to the professional experience of the Supervisee.**

The supervision process should be adapted according to the Supervisee's experience and there may be differences in the methodologies used during the process.

When Supervisees are more experienced, a relationship can be established that involves more questioning and exploration among colleagues. This approach does not

mean that the Supervisor does not fulfil its professional responsibilities, but it underlines its respect for the Supervisee's autonomy and competence.

When working with early career Supervisees, more structure and a more directive, but always collaborative, approach may be required.

In both cases, the Supervisor should help the Supervisee to recognise the importance of self-care as an ethical imperative and professional responsibility.

## **GUIDELINE 8.**

### **Conflicts and ruptures in the Supervision relationship.**

Stakeholders in a Supervision process should have different roles. A distinct and asymmetrical relationship between these two roles can be expected, and disagreements or differences of opinion may occur between the parties. The Supervisor has a major responsibility to model respectful and constructive disagreement and to suggest alternatives.

Either party may, at any time, discontinue the Supervision process by mutual agreement or partially (e.g. due to loss of motivation of one of the actors in the process, repeated neglect of the Supervisor's indications by the Supervisee or the existence of conflicts).

Whenever practices are identified that are contrary to the ethical principles of the profession, the Supervisor must report them to the OPP Supervisory Board. Irrespective of whether an excuse is requested for a given situation, the Supervisor who identifies any practice that is detrimental to a client may, in defence of the profession, take the steps it deems necessary to minimise possible damage.

## FINAL NOTES

The Guidelines for Supervision Practice provide a framework for psychologists undertaking individual or group supervision activities in a wide range of contexts in psychology. These Guidelines were developed as a result of the difficulties and constraints that psychologists encounter in the practical exercise of supervision in the profession and are based on the OPP Code of Ethics and international best practice guidelines.

We acknowledge that the work that psychologists do in supervision is one of the cornerstones of the continuing training of professionals working in this area, we hope that these Guidelines will provide a guide so that psychology and psychologists can continue to make an increasingly effective contribution in this area.

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