

BYE LAW 5

CODE OF ETHICS AND PRACTICE FOR SUPERVISORS

Adopted at September 2001 Annual General Meeting

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code is to establish and maintain standards for supervisors of psychotherapy who are members of the Irish Association for Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy and to inform and protect those seeking and using their services.
- 1.2. Members of this Association accept a common code of reference within which to manage their responsibilities to supervisees, as well as clients, members of this Association and the wider community. Whilst this code cannot resolve all ethical and practical related issues, it aims to provide a framework for addressing ethical issues and to encourage optimum levels of practice. Supervisors will need to judge which parts of this code apply to particular situations. They have to decide between conflicting responsibilities.
- 1.3 The term supervisee refers to all the following but not exclusively: recipients of individual, group or peer supervision, including trainees on courses.
- 1.4 Members of this Association are expected to inform supervisees and trainees that their practice is governed by this Code of Ethics.
- 1.5¹ Minor infringements of the core concepts of these Codes may, after investigation, lead to a letter of admonition that will be kept on the member's file. Serious contraventions, such as clear cases of professional negligence or abuse of power, or a number of minor infringements may, after formal procedures, lead to a loss of membership and/or withdrawal of accreditation.

2. The Nature of Supervision

- 2.1 Supervision is an evolving and distinct form of practice within IAHIP. It is underpinned by a growing body of literature and knowledge. It occupies a pivotal position in professional training programmes as well as post-training situations.
- 2.2 The supervisory process is a complex interpersonal encounter encompassing a network of intertwining relationships. It utilises a wide variety of different forms. At the heart of the supervision process is the professional relationship which promotes the welfare of the client and the development of the supervisee.
- 2.3 Supervision is a formal and mutually agreed arrangement for psychotherapists to discuss their work regularly with someone who is normally an experienced and competent psychotherapist and also has experience or is trained in the process of supervision.

¹ As approved at March 2005 AGM

2.4 Supervision is an essential part of good practice for psychotherapy. It is different from training, personal development and line management.

3. **Status of the Code**

3.1 This Code of Ethics and Practice for Supervisors is set in the context of other IAHIP Codes of Ethics and Practice and the Association's Complaints Procedure. It is based on the fundamental values of the psychotherapy profession which include worth, dignity, integrity, respect and the uniqueness of all persons. It aims to create the conditions which uphold these values.

3.2 The intention of this Code is to offer general principles and to guide and assist supervisors/supervisees in dealing with the practical and ethical complexities of their work.

3.3 Supervisors are encouraged to develop a model of ethical decision-making within their supervision practice which will help guide their work. This document is intended to form a basis for this process.

3.4 Members of IAHIP who are practising as supervisors are required to subscribe to this Code in conjunction with other IAHIP Codes of Ethics and Practice. Supervisors are required to co-operate in its implementation, as well as abide by any disciplinary procedures and rulings based upon it.

4. **Issues of Responsibility**

4.1 Supervisors are required to hold appropriate malpractice and professional indemnity insurance as well as public liability insurance.

4.2 Supervisors will satisfy themselves that prospective supervisees (other than trainees²) have the following measures in place:

- (i) they belong to an appropriate professional association;
- (ii) they subscribe to and abide by the Code of Ethics and Practice of that Association;
- (iii) they are subject to the Association's complaints procedure;
- (iv) they have appropriate malpractice and professional indemnity insurance as well as public liability cover.

4.3 While it is the role of supervisors to facilitate the supervisee to explore and reflect on their psychotherapeutic work with clients, it is acknowledged, subject to Section 4.14³, that the legal and ethical responsibility for work remains with the supervisee. The exception to this is in the case of trainee psychotherapists where the legal and ethical responsibility may rest with the supervisor and trainers concerned.

4.4 Supervisors have a shared responsibility with supervisees for ensuring that maximum benefit is gained from the supervision time.

4.5 The supervisory process is set within the context of the professional relationship. The supervisor will aim to create a safe and trusting climate to enable maximum exploration and learning to occur.

² As approved at March 2005 AGM

³ ditto

- 4.6 Supervisors are responsible for setting and maintaining the boundaries between the supervisory relationship and other professional relationships, e.g. training and management.
- 4.7 Supervisors will work in ways that respect the value and dignity of supervisees and their clients with due regard to issues of age, origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ⁴race, religion and family status.
- 4.8⁵ Supervisors should ensure that there is no duality of interest or confusion of roles between them and their supervisee.
- 4.9⁶ A supervisory relationship prohibits a sexual relationship between supervisor and supervisee.
- 4.10 A supervisor will not hold the dual relationships of supervisor-supervisee and psychotherapist-client at the same time. As a general principle it is not advisable to contract supervision work with a former client or a former student⁷ unless there has been a lapse of considerable time and full consideration of the implications.
- 4.11 All reasonable steps must be taken to provide appropriate privacy and safety to the supervisee.
- 4.12 The supervisor must not exploit the supervisee either financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way.
- 4.13 Where a supervisor has serious concern regarding the quality of a supervisee's work they should ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to resolve the situation. This process may include options such as consultation on the matter, restructuring the supervisory methods, encouraging the supervisee to seek psychotherapy.
- 4.14 In the event of suspected misconduct of a supervisee the supervisor will take all reasonable steps to resolve the matter. ⁸This may include referral of the matter to the Ethics Committee of IAHIP.
- 4.15 Supervisors must ensure that their own personal emotional needs are met outside the supervision work.
- 4.16⁹ Supervisors must strive to be aware of their own issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and consider ways in which these may affect the supervisory relationship.

5. **Contracting**

- 5.1 Supervision refers to a contractual arrangement which enables supervisees to discuss their professional work on a systematic and regular basis. It is a process which involves all aspects of setting up, maintaining, reviewing, and terminating a supervisory agreement.

⁴ As approved at March 2005 AGM

⁵ ditto

⁶ ditto

⁷ ditto

⁸ ditto

⁹ ditto

- 5.2 It is important that supervisors inform the prospective supervisee of their philosophy, qualifications, experience and the approaches and methods offered.
- 5.3 Supervisors must attend to the task of clarifying all contractual obligations in relation to the supervisee.
- 5.4 The supervisor is responsible for communicating to the supervisee the terms on which supervision is being offered including the contract period, frequency, fee structure, cancellation policy and any other significant matter.
- 5.5 Supervisors together with their supervisees should explore and make explicit the expectations and requirements they have of each other. This should include assessment methods and procedures.
- 5.6 Where assessment or reports will be required as part of the supervision, the supervisor should discuss and clarify with the supervisee the assessment methods and procedures involved.
- 5.7 Supervisors who undertake supervision with trainee psychotherapists should include in their contracting with supervisees and training organisations such issues as accountability, responsibilities and boundaries of confidentiality.

6. **Confidentiality**

- 6.1 Supervisors are responsible for indicating clearly the limits on confidentiality offered.
- 6.2 Supervisors are bound by the principles of confidentiality regarding all information that has become known to them during their supervision practice, with the following exceptions:
 - (i) where they are required by law;
 - (ii) when the supervisor considers it necessary to prevent serious emotional or physical damage to the client, the supervisee or a third party. In such circumstances the supervisee's consent to a change in the confidentiality agreement should be sought, unless there are good grounds for believing that the supervisee is no longer able to take responsibility for their own actions.
- 6.3 Whenever possible, the supervisor's decision to breach confidentiality in any circumstance should be made after consultation with an experienced supervisor. In circumstances where the supervisor is in doubt about breaching confidentiality, she/he should consult with a legal expert and record the outcome.
- 6.4 In circumstances where the supervisor intends to breach confidentiality they have an obligation to inform the supervisee of this intention.
- 6.5 Supervisors have a responsibility to inform themselves of all prevailing statutory obligations and guidelines (and any changes therein) in child protection legislation. Attention is drawn to the Childcare Act 1991 and the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Dept. of Health, 1999.
- 6.6 The disclosure of confidential information relating to supervisees is relevant to the following situations:

- (i) recommendations concerning supervisees for professional purposes, e.g., references and assessments;
- (ii) pursuit of disciplinary action involving supervisees in matters pertaining to standards of ethics and practice.

In the latter instance, any breaching of confidentiality should be minimised by conveying only information pertinent to the immediate situation on a need-to-know basis. The ethical considerations needing to be taken into account are:

- (a) maintaining the best interests of the supervisee;
- (b) enabling the supervisee to take responsibility for their actions; and
- (c) taking full account of the supervisor's responsibility to the client and to the wider community.

7. **COMPETENCE**

- 7.1 Guidelines for what constitutes an experienced supervisor are determined by IAHIP.
- 7.2 Supervision is a particular field of practice and as such requires a specific array of knowledge, skills and personal characteristics which are necessary for the effective performance of that role. Such competence is acquired ordinarily by extensive supervised psychotherapy and/or specific trainings in supervision.
- 7.3 In the interest of maintaining competence, supervisors should be actively engaged in practising psychotherapy.
- 7.4 Supervisors are required to practise their profession in a competent and ethical manner. They must limit their practice to those areas in which they have gained sufficient knowledge and expertise.
- 7.5 Supervisors must¹⁰ have supervision/consultative support for their supervision work. The volume of such supervision should be in proportion to the supervision work undertaken.
- 7.6 Supervisors should not practise when their professional competence is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, illness or any other reason.
- 7.7¹¹ IAHIP must be informed if the supervisor has a criminal or civil judgement entered in relation to his or her professional work, or has had a complaint upheld against him or her in another organisation.
- 7.8 The practice of psychotherapy supervision may take different forms including the following:
 - (i)¹⁴ (i) One-to one supervisor-supervisee: The supervisor should have considerable experience.
 - (ii) Group supervision: One identified supervisor who is more experienced than the supervisees and has appropriate group work experience.

¹⁰ As approved at March 2005 AGM

¹¹ ditto

¹⁴ As approved GB 15th January 2012

- (iii) One to one peer supervision: This method is not suitable for trainees and inexperienced psychotherapists. ¹²An experienced psychotherapist is deemed to be one who has been re-accredited at least once by IAHIP or has equivalent professional accreditation.
- (iv) Peer group supervision: All participants should have adequate group work experience in order to harness the group process effectively. It is only suitable for experienced psychotherapists, ¹³that is those who have been re-accredited at least once by IAHIP or have equivalent professional accreditation.

With regard to all the above forms of supervision it is important to ensure that each participant has sufficient time for adequate supervision of their psychotherapy work.

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¹² As approved at March 2005 AGM
¹³ ditto