

4 Benefits of Clinical Supervision

Particular requirements must be met in order for clinical supervision to bear fruit for workers and the organisations employing them; specifically, clinical supervision must be accessible, regular, and consistent and must be provided by clinical supervisors who have the necessary experience, skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the work. Effective clinical supervision that is perceived by workers to be at least satisfactory, or of high quality, benefits them, their organisations and their clients in the following ways. It:

- aids workers' acquisition of complex clinical skills, expands their clinical practice and increases their competence and confidence
- fosters professional development of workers at all experience levels
- is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction or morale
- safeguards against worker burnout and encourages worker retention
- potentially improves communication and team cohesion among workers
- promotes development of specified skills and competencies, to bring about measurable outcomes
- raises level of accountability in counselling services and programs
- provides a mechanism by which consistency in treatment modalities and other service delivery standards can be established across the organisation
- ensures client welfare, in relation to clinical safety and competence, professional and ethical standards and organisational service delivery protocol, thereby functioning as a risk-management tool

... the strongest benefit is the clear parallel between the worker-client relationship and the line management-worker relationship. So I think that in a sense the supervisory relationship at its best can model an effective worker-client relationship, particularly in terms of establishing rapport and coming up with agreements about how to work. (Manager, CMMH Service)

A major benefit is that what comes out in supervision is able to be fed back into the organisation for our learning and development goals (i.e. bring to our attention on the workforce strategy committee, such as staff feeling like they are stuck, not being challenged enough anymore, etc.). We like to address issues with more than just a particular individual, on an organisational level. The learning that comes out of supervision with one person can be extended and shared with other staff. That is a benefit, because those "light bulb" moments do not have to be kept exclusive to one supervisor and one supervisee. (Manager, AOD Service)

... and that's to me fundamentally why supervision exists – to ensure a great service and the psychological and physical safety of the worker and consumer. (Manager, CMMH Service)

References for this section: Bambling, King, Raue, Schweitzer & Lambert (2006); Bernard & Goodyear (2004); The Bouverie Centre (Ryan, Wills et al., 2009); Kavanagh, Spence et al. (2002); Powell & Brodsky (1998); Roche, Chelsea et al. (2007).