

7.5.1 Benefits of Contracting

Having an open and explicit discussion in the beginning about expectations, and difficult, or typically unspoken, topics can have many advantages, including:

- Supports the development of a trusting and safe relationship.
- Promotes joint responsibility.
- Helps to develop a collaborative relationship in which the supervisee is given authority and is encouraged to participate actively.
- Prepares for the management of disruption.
- Creates a reference point for subsequent reviews of the process.

References for this section: The Bouverie Centre (Moloney, Vivekananda & Weir 2007, 2010).

7.5.2 Key Areas of Contracting

Hawkins and Shohet (2006) suggest six key areas that should be covered in contracting: practicalities and meeting arrangements, boundaries, the working alliance, session format, organisational and professional context, and note-taking. Examples within these areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Objectives of supervision, including personal learning objectives and expectations of supervision
- Practicalities, e.g., frequency and duration of sessions, suitable days and times and protocol to follow if a cancellation is necessary
- What form supervision will take, e.g., who will be involved, what methods, models and theories will be used
- Boundaries
- Responsibilities of each party
- How assessment and evaluation will occur and how feedback will be managed
- Accountability both to the organisation and to the supervisee and how that will be managed
- Note taking and record keeping
- Issues of confidentiality
- Grievance processes for both supervisor and supervisee(s)
- Whether supervision is a compulsory part of the employment contract

References for this section: The Bouverie Centre (Moloney, Vivekananda & Weir 2007, 2010); Hawkins & Shohet (2006).

7.5.3 Negotiating the Contract

While the final product (i.e. the contract) is important, it is the discussion and processes that have to occur to produce the contract that are most important. Supervisors can help supervisees prepare for the discussion by giving them a list of questions to consider. Supervisors might also invite their supervisees to ask questions of them.

The supervisee and supervisor should then discuss their different views, expectations and experiences of clinical supervision before developing the contract. The contract should be reviewed and updated periodically throughout the supervisory relationship.

7.5.3.1 Questions and Topics for Negotiation

Table 8 Questions and Topics for Negotiation

Area to be Negotiated	Questions and Topics for Negotiation
Practicalities and past experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times, dates, location of sessions • Supervisor’s and supervisee’s educational and professional backgrounds and relevant work experience • Previous difficult and positive experiences of supervision and lessons that have been learned • What are the lines of accountability: who is accountable to whom and for what?
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the supervisee wants to gain from supervision and the preferred methods of achieving that (i.e. goals and processes) • Areas of competence and learning needs of the supervisee
Session content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views about models and theories to be used (inc. supervisor’s and supervisee’s own theoretical orientations) • How each party will prepare for supervision • What types of issues should be brought to supervision? Are there any no-go areas for either party?
Session process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred teaching (supervisor) and learning (supervisee) styles and techniques • What the functions and tasks of supervision will be and how these will be prioritised in each session • What methods and techniques will be used (e.g., self-report, videotaped session, direct observation; talk only, or mix of talk and expressive art techniques, use of objects.) • How feedback and evaluation should be managed

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Area to be Negotiated	Questions and Topics for Negotiation
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the supervisee’s learning style fits with supervisor’s style • Boundaries, e.g., limits of confidentiality and inclusion of personal material in supervision sessions (should only come into sessions if it is relevant to the work, or if it is affecting the supervisory relationship) • Culture and context (e.g., cultural differences that are significant for either party; contextual factors that influence the work) • Areas which are difficult for either party to discuss and how such discussions can be facilitated, or supported • How will one person know when, or if, the other is becoming defensive and how should they best handle that? • How to recognise ruptures in the supervisory relationship and how they should be managed • What to do if either the supervisor or supervisee has major concerns in relation to the work being described
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical and legal codes of conduct to be followed (e.g., professional bodies; local, state and federal policies; sector protocol and organisational standards) • Limits of confidentiality • Process when ethical or legal breach occurs