

Guidelines for Counselling Supervisors - Chapter: About Supervision

The first part serves as guidelines for the basic principles that regulate the practice of supervision in counselling as stipulated in the Laws of Malta (Chap. 538) (Clauses 1 to 4), while the second part lists the regulations that need to be followed by the Council for the Counselling Profession, Counsellors' Supervisors and Counsellors (Clauses 5 to 11).

1. Definition

The core task of supervision is to engage in a relational process that provides containment and safety to help the supervisee's professional growth through reflection on their client work. The counselling supervision is an opportunity to create a reflective space on the practice for the counselling profession. This will provide the Counsellors with the opportunity to evaluate, reflect, discuss and be given feedback on the aspects for ethical practice, training on competences and new skills. The creativity, empathy and confidence in the practice will be deemed as being essential aspects for the supervision. Restorative supervision is an important part of this process and needs to be at the very heart of the supervisory relationship.

2. Accountability

The accountability will strengthen professionalism since this will protect the client and the Counsellor¹ as well as the counselling profession. The supervisors will be accountable to the Council for the Counselling Profession (CCP)² pursuant to the provisions of the Laws of Malta and the Code of Ethics.

3. Supervision loyalties

Double and/or multiple relationships as well as conflicts of interest between the supervisor and the Counsellor might easily arise due to the fact that Malta is a small country as well as the nature of the counselling work. As much as possible these are to be avoided. If unavoidable, the supervisor and the Counsellor might have different loyalties due to the diverse nature of the work that they would be carrying out together. Therefore:

¹ The term 'Counsellor' refers to the person receiving supervision (*supervisee*).

² Council for the Counselling Profession in Malta

- a) The supervisor and the Counsellor must reach a clear agreement, at the beginning of the supervisory relationship, on the manner in which they will be working together as well as addressing any issues that might arise during the supervisory relationship.
- b) The supervisor and the Counsellor will exchange views, from time to time or as required by the loyalties that might arise and the manner in which these will affect the supervisory relationship and the Counsellor's client.
- c) The supervisor must never take advantage or abuse the Counsellor from a financial, psychological, physical, sexual, emotionally and/or spiritual aspect.
- d) The supervisor must never show any behaviour having sexual connotations, have intimate relationships with the Counsellors, or with their relatives, even if this is consensual. The supervisor must stop the supervision immediately should this difficulty arise.
- e) The supervisor and the Counsellor (those still attending as well as those who stopped attending) must be very careful of the dual relationship and conflict of interest that is brought about by a business relationship.

4. Diversity issues

Malta is intrinsically and extrinsically a multicultural society even though it is a small island.

- a. Supervisors and Counsellors should always consider and remember any issues arising from the different cultures present in the Maltese society as well as any new developments in the different sectors.
- b. Supervisors and Counsellors have to look at multicultural issues as a learning opportunity for the developments of specific skills in accordance with the clients' needs.
- c. Supervisors and Counsellors have to show respect towards the beliefs, cultural aspects, different values and the various traditions of the supervisors/Counsellors, unless these are in breach of the Laws of Malta.

5. Responsibilities of the Counsellors

Counsellors should take those clients' cases, which they are following for supervision to exchange views on the standards and practices of the said cases.

The Counsellors are responsible to adhere to and follow the following rules:

- a. To adhere and follow the Code of Ethics stipulated by the Council for the Counselling Profession (CCP).
- b. To be prepared for supervision.
- c. To preserve client confidentiality while presenting cases.
- d. To be honest, authentic, and genuine during supervision.
- e. To follow up from supervision in their personal and professional growth.

6. Responsibilities of the Supervisors

The supervisors need to ensure that support and empowerment are at the very heart of the supervisory relationship. Their responsibilities include:

- a) Assist the Counsellors under their supervision to address any difficulties they might be encountering with the clients and to improve their personal and professional skills on a continuous basis.
- b) Assess that the Counsellors work is in accordance with the practices and Laws of Malta.
- c) Always keep their boundaries and relationships on a professional basis.
- d) Continue attending professional training in order to continue developing their personal skills and those related to supervision.
- e) Support Counsellors psychologically when the latter are going through a difficult period that could lead to a negative impact on the client/s.
- f) Point out and discuss, with the Counsellors, the quality of the work being carried out by the Counsellors and take all the necessary steps if the Counsellors persist in serious malpractice in order to stop the serious malpractice.
- g) Be aware of their areas of competence and seek support or refer the matter as required by the case, including referral to other professionals.
- h) To be registered with the CCP. The list of registered Counselling Supervisors need to include area of specialisation.
- i) To attend supervision regularly.
- j) To be attending supervision of supervision.

7. Types of Supervision

The Supervision can be carried out in various ways, including:

- a) *Individual supervision*: entails having qualified supervisors who carry out supervision with one Counsellor. This can be provided to Counselling students and Counsellors having a full, temporary or restricted warrant.
- b) *Peer supervision*: entails a meeting amongst colleagues in the absence of a qualified supervisor. Colleagues meet together in order to exchange views on their individual cases. This type of arrangement should be encouraged but it should not be deemed as being a supervision due to the absence of a qualified supervisor.
- c) *Supervisory cell*: entails a small number of Counsellors (minimum 5 and maximum 8) having at least two (2) qualified supervisors that have a minimum of three (3) years supervisory experience, who create a cell and take a commitment of supporting each other as one (1) group. The members belonging to the cell are deemed as carrying out collective supervision, by sharing their research and work. Through their leadership they will be supporting the Counselling profession to continue with its growth and development.
- d) *Group supervision*: entails a small group of colleagues in the presence of a qualified supervisor.

The Counsellors can make use of the qualified supervisory services in kindred therapeutic professions (psychologists and psychotherapists). These supervisors need to be recognised by their professional bodies.

Counsellors who receive their full or temporary warrant following the issuing of this document must however carry out at least eight (8) hours of supervision with a counselling supervisor if working as full-time Counsellors. Those Counsellors working part-time need to apply this clause on a pro-rata basis.

8. Eligibility for a Qualified Counselling Supervisor

To be eligible as a qualified counselling supervisor the person must have the following:

- a) A Counsellor having a full warrant.
- b) Must have attended training which has to be in line with the training stipulated by the law regulating the Counselling profession. This type of training will only be provided to those Counsellors in possession of a full warrant.

- c) The Counselling Supervisor needs to be registered with CCP. The supervisors within a cell, in the case of a supervisory cell, are compelled to register the cell and to take responsibility in line with the regulations applicable for individual and group supervision.

9. Training

- a) In accordance with the law regulating Counselling in Malta, specialised training in Counselling Supervision should consist of a minimum thirty (30) ECTS at Level 7 or equivalent (Maltese Framework for Qualifications)³ that must be provided by licenced higher educational institutions.
- b) It is suggested that this training includes:
- Training for individual supervision;
 - Training for group supervision;
 - Ethics for supervision;
 - Practice under supervision (minimum of thirty (30) hours);
 - Reflection and research.

10. Keeping records

- a) Keeping records is an integral part of Counselling practice. These records must be kept up to date on a regular basis in order to serve as a reference point for how Counsellors who attend supervision will carry out their practice. This will enable the supervisors to assist them in order to continue developing their skills. Therefore, the supervisors need to:
- b) Keep records of the sessions held with the Counsellors in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any other applicable laws and/or organisational requirements.
- c) Validate the official returns submitted by the Counsellors to the Council for the Counselling Profession (CCP) to confirm their attendance for supervision.
- d) Submit feedback to the Courts in Malta as and when required by them according to the laws of Malta.
- e) Be fully aware of the Data Protection Act (Chap. 586) and its application within this sector in order to guide those Counsellors who are being supervised by them.
- f) Keep records for a maximum of five (5) years from the end of the supervision relationship.

³ This is issued by the NCFHE (National Commission for Higher Education).

11. Reporting by the Supervisors

The Supervisors have the duty to keep the Council for the Counselling Profession (CCP) informed on the supervision activity in the following manner:

- a) Report any kind of serious malpractice when supervisee fails to take action to rectify the situation.
- b) Make CCP aware of any Organisational Practices that are deemed unethical.

12. Supervision Hours

The Code of Ethics for Counsellors will be developed at a later stage; the following are being deemed as the minimum number of supervision hours that Counsellors must attend:

Student: for every ten (10) counselling hours they have to attend one (1) hour of supervision; Counsellors with a temporary warrant: for every fifteen (15) counselling hours they have to attend one (1) hour of supervision; Counsellors with a full warrant: for every forty (40) counselling hours they have to attend one (1) hour of supervision.