

ALWAYS CONSULT COMPANY POLICIES AND/OR LEGAL ADVICE

SUPERVISION AND CONSULTATION

Mental health supervision and management generally include three primary aspects of the supervisory role:

- Administration
- Support
- Education

While the supervisor of mental health work is increasingly involved in the administrative and political realm to get the work done, supervision, coaching, mentoring, and consultation remain key roles. Mental health practitioners need to be keenly aware of the role of a supervisor, because he/she is responsible for both the actions and omissions by a supervisee, aka vicarious liability.

To provide competent supervision, supervisors, particularly those in clinical settings should remember the following:

- They need to possess the necessary knowledge and skill and do so only within their area of competence
- They must set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that would include confidentiality, sexual appropriateness and others outlined earlier in this training
- They should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with supervisees when there is risk of exploitation or potential harm
- They should fairly and respectfully evaluate supervisee performance
- They should avoid accepting supervisees when there has been a prior or an existing relationship that might compromise the supervisor's objectivity
- They should take measures to assure that the supervisee's work is professional
- They should not provide therapy to current students or supervisees

Supervisors should consult their particular professional association' guidelines regarding supervision, human resource policy, and other applicable resources. Effective and ethical supervisory practices not only benefit the supervisees and their clients but the supervisor as well.

Supervisors can manage their vicarious liability in several ways though:

- Clearly defined policies and expectations
- Awareness of high-risk areas
- Provision of appropriate training and supervision
- Understanding supervisee strengths and weaknesses as practitioners
- Developing an adequate feedback system
- Supervisors knowing their own responsibilities