

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISION REPORTS

The Board very much appreciates the work completed by the Supervisors of Psychologists on the Candidate Register. The Board has been impressed with the complexity and diversity of the cases and situations being addressed by the candidates and their supervisors, often at early stages in the supervision process. The Board views the Supervision Reports as critical in maintaining the Board's due diligence in protecting the public and ensuring that psychologists are properly prepared for independent practice. Every month, an average of 40 supervision reports (some are monthly reports, others are six-month reports) are submitted to the Board. Each of these reports are carefully and thoroughly reviewed by the Registrar, the Assistant Registrar, and often by at least one Board Member. If there are any concerns arising, the reports are further reviewed by a Registration Subcommittee consisting of two or three psychologist members and one or two public members of the Board

Reporting styles differ widely, but for the most part the contents of the reports are fine. There are, however, a few areas we would like to comment on.

DETAIL

The Board does not require narrative descriptions of therapy or assessment sessions, situations or events. Often a sentence or two can be used to set up a situation. What is more relevant to the Board is information about how the situation was dealt with, how it led to the growth of the candidate, or how it relates to their goals. (See Appendix A for an example.)

In some situations, there is not enough detail provided. For example, statements such as "The Department of Children's Services was contacted." or "An ethical situation was discussed and there was a decision that no further action is required." Given the Board's primary role of protecting the public, the Board would like enough detail to understand the nature of the incident, and the reasoning or process that went into the decision making. These types of incomplete descriptions almost always lead to a letter from the Board asking for more information. (See Appendix A for an example.)

Knowing the types of situations that Candidates deal with can also be helpful to the Board in developing guidelines and FAQs to help other psychologists address similar issues.

SOCIAL COMMENTARY AND ISSUES

Issues may arise in supervision which relate to problems that are societal or systemic in nature. While it is understood that the discussion would be briefly outlined in the report, the supervision report would not be an appropriate forum for detailed discussion of these matters. NSBEP certainly acknowledges the efforts of psychologists to consult and educate others. Rather than providing a detailed narrative in the supervision report, NSBEP would suggest that the supervisor work with the candidate so that he/she can consider whether to address their concerns directly with those at a more appropriate administrative level at the institutions. This would be in keeping with IV.22 of the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists: "Speak out, in a manner consistent with the four principles of this Code, if they possess expert knowledge that bears on important societal issues being studied or discussed."

EMPLOYER CONTACT

Employer Contact should be completed by the Supervisor as part of their assessment of the Candidate's progress at least once a year. In reports, we sometimes encounter statements such as "There was employer contact." A few more details, such as the nature of the feedback provided would be helpful in adding to our appraisal of the candidate, such as "The Supervisor contacted the Candidates employer and received positive feedback regarding the candidate's professional presentation". It is recognized that in the past, it was more likely than today that an employer or manager would be a psychologist who could comment on the psychological practice of a candidate. However, non-psychologist employers or managers should be able to comment on professionalism, interpersonal ability, work ethic, and feedback received from clients.

In January 2019 the Supervisor's Reports was revised to include a section which should make it easier for supervisors and the Board to track the date of last Employer Contact,

DIRECT OBSERVATION

Direct observation (in vivo, audio-taped, video-taped) should be completed by the Supervisor as part of their assessment of the Candidate's progress at least twice a year. While reviewing reports, engaging in role plays, or observing Candidates consulting with other staff can be important assessment tools for the supervisor, they should not be substituted for direct observation of the candidate with their actual clients.

In January 2019 the Supervisor's Reports was revised to include a section which should make it easier for supervisors and the Board to track the date of last Direct Observation.

REPORTS PROVIDED BY CO-SUPERVISORS

During the monthly reviews, the Board may be reviewing the report of one supervisor but may not yet have received the other supervisor's report, giving it only half the picture. The Board would prefer to look at the reports from both supervisors for the same time period. The Board office is considering procedures it may be able to implement to hold back from the review process reports from one supervisor until the other reports arrive. It may be an easier process and certainly appreciated if the supervisors try to coordinate the timing of submission their reports (e.g., agree on a date every month, or every six months if applicable, when they would submit their reports).

SIX MONTH REPORTS

Normally, supervision reports are submitted to NSBEP monthly for the first six months of candidacy. Unless otherwise directed by NSBEP, supervisors should then move to submitting their monthly reports every six months and begin using the Six-Month Reporting Form. For co-Supervisors it would be very helpful to the Board that the six-month reports from both supervisors cover the same period of months. If after checking with a Co-supervisor you find that you are reporting on different periods, the supervisor who made the most recent submission to the Board should, for their next submission, cover only the months needed in order to bring their reporting period in line with the other supervisor.

CORE COMPETENCIES

The Board expects that each of the core competencies (Assessment and Evaluation, Intervention, Research, Ethics, Interpersonal Issues) be addressed at least once during a six month period. In many cases, but not all, it is the Research competency that is not fully addressed. The goal of the Research Competency is not necessarily for the candidate to demonstrate ability to conduct research, but rather to be able to use research to inform their practice. For example, reviewing articles that have examined the pros or cons of using specific assessments or interventions with a specific population (e.g., adults with ADHD). Other research examples would include searching the literature for suggestions to deal with a difficult case, or critically analyzing some current articles related to one's area of practice.

GAPS IN SUPERVISION

Regular supervision and the associated accountability are an important part of ensuring that the public is protected, and that Candidates are adequately prepared for independent practice. Some gaps in supervision may be inevitable, and how gaps are dealt with are outlined in the Handbook. It is important to describe the reasons for any gaps or missed sessions in the monthly or 6-month reports. Unexplained gaps will almost always lead to a letter from the Board asking for an explanation.

FINAL NOTE

The Board hopes that these guidelines will make it easier for supervisors when preparing their reports, as well as for the Board members who are reviewing the reports by highlighting important components of the reports. We would like to hear from you if you have questions or suggestions regarding the above, or if you have other areas that you think would benefit from some clarification or direction from the Board.

Comments or Questions: registrar@nsbep.org

Revised 2019/10/02

Appendix A – Example of a Less Helpful and a More Helpful description of Content of Supervision (see the section on DETAIL above).

Example of a description **less helpful** to the Board (more information than necessary to describe situation, little detail of how situation was actually dealt with):

Describe the Focus and Content of the Supervisory Meeting:

The Candidate reported on an ethical issue regarding an adolescent. The adolescent has a long-standing social anxiety that began when they did poorly during a school class presentation, and they were laughed at. They had developed few friendships over the years as at the time their family had just moved to the new town and they avoided making new contacts. The Candidate has been helping the adolescent deal with social anxiety and as part of their work, had encouraged the adolescent to become involved in an after-school science group at the school. There the adolescent had become involved with a peer from the science group who also dealing with social anxiety, and they began spending some time together outside of school and the science group. The other adolescent lives with their working-class family. The adolescent's parents are upper middle class highly educated professionals and had already made it known to the adolescent's older siblings that they should only date people from families with similar backgrounds. The adolescent did not want the psychologist to bring up the matter at an upcoming meeting with the parents.

We discussed the issues involved and the Candidate made a plan.

More Helpful to the Board (just enough information to describe the context of the situation, with more detail of what was discussed with the candidate about handling the situation):

Describe the Focus and Content of the Supervisory Meeting:

The Candidate reported an ethical issue regarding an adolescent client. The adolescent (who was being seen for social anxiety) was secretly dating someone whom their parents did not approve of because of their socioeconomic status. The adolescent did not want the psychologist to bring up the matter at an upcoming meeting with the parents.

The situation was discussed with reference to the adolescent being considered a mature minor, that the situation did not appear to involve imminent harm, that disclosure could harm the therapeutic relationship and that the purpose of the meeting with the parents was to discuss ways they could help with the adolescent's social anxiety. There was also discussion of approaching the adolescent to review ways they might talk to their parents about their friend. Barring any change in the adolescent's decision, it was decided that it was appropriate to maintain their confidentiality.

Published by the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology
October 2019