

Clinical supervision

It is recommended that all health professionals, from any discipline, working with individuals with eating disorders receive clinical supervision.

Effective clinical supervision will support a health professional to build and apply knowledge and skills, increase competence and confidence, manage your own feelings and challenges that arise when working, and ensure a safe and ethical practice. Clinical supervision should be goal directed and evaluative.

It is important to first identify your learning needs. There may be a range of different knowledge and skill areas that you would like to develop in order to feel confident and competent in the work that you do. Some examples may include counseling skills, therapeutic approach, knowledge of clinical aspects or exploring your own emotional reactions towards clients. Identifying key learning goals can guide your professional development in this area. You may also identify some learning strategies that do not need to be a focus of supervision and may be achieved by conducting literature searches or attending workshops or conferences.

It is important to note that reflection is a crucial part of clinical supervision. This will involve identifying competency areas, reviewing knowledge and practice, and utilizing relevant knowledge aspects. Reflective practice is a means by which clinicians can develop a greater self-awareness about the nature and effectiveness of their clinical practice. Discussing your ongoing needs and how these can be met is an essential ongoing component of clinical supervision.

Finding a Clinical Supervisor

A clinical supervisor should be an experienced practitioner that is trained to facilitate the supervision process. Your clinical supervisor can come from any clinical discipline.

It will be most useful to seek a clinical supervisor who has the knowledge, skills and practical experience that you could learn from and who you would feel comfortable working with in a clinical supervisory relationship. Additionally, most clinical supervisors will have done some specific training in supervision, so it is appropriate to ask about this prior to engagement.

It is important to enquire about how supervision will work, including the frequency and length of supervision, whether this will be conducted face to face or via telephone or video conference, and the format the supervisor would like to use. Some supervisors for example might ask you to prepare a particular case for discussion, or bring examples of specific aspects of your work that you are aiming to develop. A supervision session can alternatively be a space for you to debrief about the difficulties that just came up in your last session.

If you are looking for a clinical supervisor, InsideOut's Treatment Services Database has a listing of practitioners who have >10 years experience in working with individuals with eating disorders and who have nominated themselves as providing clinical supervision.