



GUIDE TO
SUPERVISION

March 2019

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DISCLAIMER

This guide has been prepared by Volunteering and Contact ACT (VCA) for the ACT Government in accordance with a contract executed in July 2018.

The information contained within this guide has been prepared by VCA from material obtained through an environmental scan and extensive consultation with the ACT Community Services Industry (the Industry). VCA has relied upon the accuracy, currency, and completeness of the information obtained through the environmental scan and consultations. VCA is not in any way liable for the accuracy of any of the information used or relied on by the ACT Government or a third party.

The project methodology has been limited to assessing available information, resources, tools and templates, and working with the Industry to create a curated set of fit-for-purpose resources. The broad nature of the research and analysis is such that this guide, including the accompanying tools and templates, are intended to be examples only, and do not reflect the opinion or views of VCA.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Volunteering and Contact ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra Region. Volunteering and Contact ACT pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their vital ongoing contribution to the Canberra Region. Volunteering and Contact ACT acknowledges the volunteers of all sexualities and genders, from all cultures, and with all abilities, and the volunteer involving organisations that contribute to the health and happiness of our city.

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been developed as part of one of the foundation actions in the ACT Community Services Industry Workforce Plan. The ACT Community Services Industry Strategy recognised that workforce attraction and retention were issues for the sector and is seeking to address this through the Workforce Plan. This guide is part of a framework that encompasses onboarding, supervision, peer support, coaching and mentoring with supplementary information on performance appraisal and probation.

It is envisaged that the availability of information, tools and templates across these five areas will enable organisations in the Industry to streamline their policies and procedures. Further, the implementation of like policies and procedures across organisations will result in staff having a more consistent experience when moving within the Industry.

This guide is focused on both paid employees and volunteers who work in the Industry. Throughout the guide employees and volunteers are referred to collectively as 'staff'. This language is important because it identifies that volunteers are a critical part of the Industry's workforce and should be recognised and valued as such.

This guide was created using research obtained through an extensive environmental scan, as well as through consultation with the Industry. The information and tools provided throughout have been curated from research and developed to cater to the unique characteristics of the Industry. The research consulted, and the information provided are not exhaustive, but are examples of good practice that can be implemented by any organisation. Where a concept, statistic, model, tool or template has been copied or adapted from a specific source this source has been provided in the endnotes.

This guide is by way of general information and is designed for discretionary use. It does not replace the requirement to obtain specific operational, legal, insurance, or other advice. Volunteering and Contact ACT accepts no liability for any errors in the information provided, nor the effect of any such errors. The project was finalised in March 2019.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to give an overview of what is involved in supervision. It provides information on the different elements of supervision and how your organisation can implement a process that suits your needs and the needs of your staff. The guide contains tools and templates that may be used during the supervision process.

When using this guide, it is imperative that you consider the risk profile of your organisation. For example, some of the tools and templates, whilst providing a baseline, may not be enough if your organisation must adhere to specific legislation or national quality standards. In these circumstances it is recommended that you seek further advice, especially regarding policies, to ensure they are compliant with all requisite legislation, standards, and other safeguarding mechanisms.

When considering your organisation's supervision process, it is important to consider your risk profile and the level of supervision required to ensure staff feel supported in the workplace. Not all the concepts introduced in this guide may be relevant for your organisation – they are provided so that you can decide what is appropriate for you. The tools and templates provided can be considered the foundational building blocks for supervision. They are not designed to be all encompassing, rather they provide a starting point that your organisation can adapt and improve.

ORGANISATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

You are reading this guide because you are interested in supervision. This guide has been structured to provide information on the key components of supervision and how supervision can be structured in your organisation. The following questions can be used to help you determine your organisation's level of maturity and competence when it comes to supervision. If you identify areas of deficiency in your organisation's supervision process, example tools and templates have been provided to accompany the theoretical concepts in this guide. These tools and templates are included as appendices and are available as individual, editable PDFs and Microsoft Word documents.

Supervision Self-Assessment Questions

- ▼ Does my organisation have a policy on supervision?
- ▼ Does my organisation have a procedure for supervision?
- ▼ Are staff within my organisation aware of our supervision policy and procedure?
- ▼ Is supervision being conducted in line with my organisation's policy and procedure?
- ▼ Does my organisation make supervision a priority?
- ▼ Do staff in my organisation feel like they have sufficient time to invest in supervision?

- ▼ Do the supervisors in my organisation have adequate training, resources and knowledge to administer supervision effectively?
- ▼ Do those participating in supervision feel it is effective?
- ▼ Is supervision helping to create a happier, healthier and more productive workplace?

In addition to ensuring you have adequate policies and procedures in place to support supervision there are other important aspects to consider, including:

- ▼ How does my organisation store confidential information? Is this in line with privacy and confidentiality requirements and is this communicated with staff?
- ▼ Does my organisation know if supervision is consistent among staff?
- ▼ How is my organisation monitoring compliance with our supervision policy and procedure?
- ▼ How often is my organisation reviewing our supervision policy and procedure?
- ▼ Are all staff, employees and volunteers, being supervised in the same way? If not, what are the differences and why?
- ▼ Is supervision an effective mechanism that enables ongoing support and development for staff?

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

Supervision is the act of overseeing the activities and responsibilities of staff. Supervision is a contractual, relational, collaborative process, which facilitates the ethical and professional practice of the supervisee.¹ Fundamentally, supervision is about organising people to do work. Supervision is a critical component of staff wellbeing and performance, and assists organisations to comply with their work, health and safety obligations.

Broadly speaking, the goal of supervision is to equip staff with the knowledge and skills required to execute their role and ensure they are supported in doing so. Supervision plays a critical role in leveraging and maximising resources within an organisation. Supervision is also a monitoring mechanism that contributes to professional development and performance appraisal. Supervision plays a critical role in linking individual roles with organisational objectives. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to bring together workers, resources, and strategic goals. In addition to general supervision, there is also clinical supervision, which is a formal, professional relationship that facilitates reflective practice and develops skills.

Supervision has the aim of meeting certain organisational, professional and personal objectives, including competency, accountability, performance, continuous development, and personal support.² Research demonstrates that effective supervision makes workers feel valued, prepared, supported, and committed.³ Workers who feel supported and confident to undertake their role show reduced rates of absenteeism and are more likely to remain in the workforce.⁴

Many organisations use external supervision to great effect. Organisations who use external supervision should consider how it sits alongside internal supervision, and have policies and procedures in place that refer to both arrangements. The information in this guide is focused on internal supervision and does not consider external or clinical supervision.

WHY IS SUPERVISION IMPORTANT?

Supervision is important for multiple reasons:

1. It ensures staff are supported and feel confident to perform the duties of their role;
2. It ensures your organisation is meeting legislative requirements and quality standards; and,
3. It acts as the glue between organisational goals and the staff who operationalise these goals.

Supervision is critical for all staff, supporting performance development and performance appraisal. Access to a supervisor is essential during every stage of a staff member's tenure. When a staff member comes on board they need access to supervision to ensure they are performing their duties properly and in line with the expectations of their role. New staff need someone they can ask practical, role-related questions of and need to understand if they are doing their job well. Supervision allows your organisation to set expectations and guide performance of new staff and address any issues as they arise.

As staff become more experienced, supervision is still critical to aid ongoing development. Irrespective of how long a person has been in their role, they need structured opportunities, planned in advance, to talk about their role, any issues they are experiencing, and to celebrate their success stories.

WHAT DOES SUPERVISION INVOLVE?

Supervision includes regular one-on-one meetings between a staff member and their direct supervisor/manager. The frequency of supervision will be dictated by the type of work being undertaken by staff, how long a staff member has been in their role, and any risks associated with the service or program the staff member is delivering. For example, a frontline worker who is working one-on-one with vulnerable people may require more frequent and intense supervision than a worker performing non-client facing work. It is up to your organisation to determine what the frequency of supervision should be. All staff should be provided with the amount of supervision required for them to undertake their role proficiently, confidently, and in line with organisational policies and procedures.

The supervision relationship needs to be based on trust and mutual understanding, and the supervisee needs to feel comfortable disclosing information and experiences to their supervisor. Supervision has strategic and operational objectives and should be structured in a way that is beneficial to staff and not seen as a mechanical management requirement aimed at forcing compliance. Supervision is not intended to be a performance management tool. Management of underperformance, where a staff member is not meeting the expectations of their role, is a separate and distinct process and your organisation should have another mechanism to support this process. Further information on performance appraisal and managing underperformance is provided in the Guide to Performance Appraisal.

Formal vs Informal Supervision

Your organisation may have formal supervision and/or informal supervision mechanisms in the workplace. Formal supervision is a planned, one-on-one session between the supervisor and supervisee. Formal supervision usually occurs frequently and requires pre-planning by both parties. Informal supervision occurs when a supervisor and their supervisee have a less-formal, unplanned conversation. Informal supervision is not scheduled in advance and is usually more casual than formal supervision.

It is recommended that your organisation makes a commitment to providing supervision based on your risk profile and the needs of your staff. In determining whether both formal and informal supervision are required your organisation should consider the nature of the roles your staff are performing. Generally speaking, client-centred roles are more likely to require formal supervision processes, as these conversations aid learning, reduce the likelihood of vicarious trauma, and encourage an environment of continuous improvement.

Conversely, non-client-centred roles may not require as stringent formal supervision, but it should be recognised that these staff have the same needs to de-brief, share, and learn. This is where informal supervision processes can be useful.

Your organisation should consider building both formal and informal supervision processes into your culture and encourage staff to interact with these processes to aid their own learning and development. The remainder of this guide is about formal supervision.

Power, Confidentiality and Ethics

Supervisory relationships naturally have components of authority and influence, whereby the supervisor is usually in a position of seniority compared with their supervisee. For this reason, it is essential that the impact of this influence and authority and other relevant ethical considerations form part of your organisation's approach to supervision in the workplace.

Individual internal supervision involves task supervision, debriefing, performance feedback and forward planning. Supervisors have a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of their supervisee, and it is likely that supervision conversations will result in personal discussions as well as professional ones. For this reason, it is integral that supervision is undertaken in an ethical manner and any influence or authority is appropriate for the relationship.

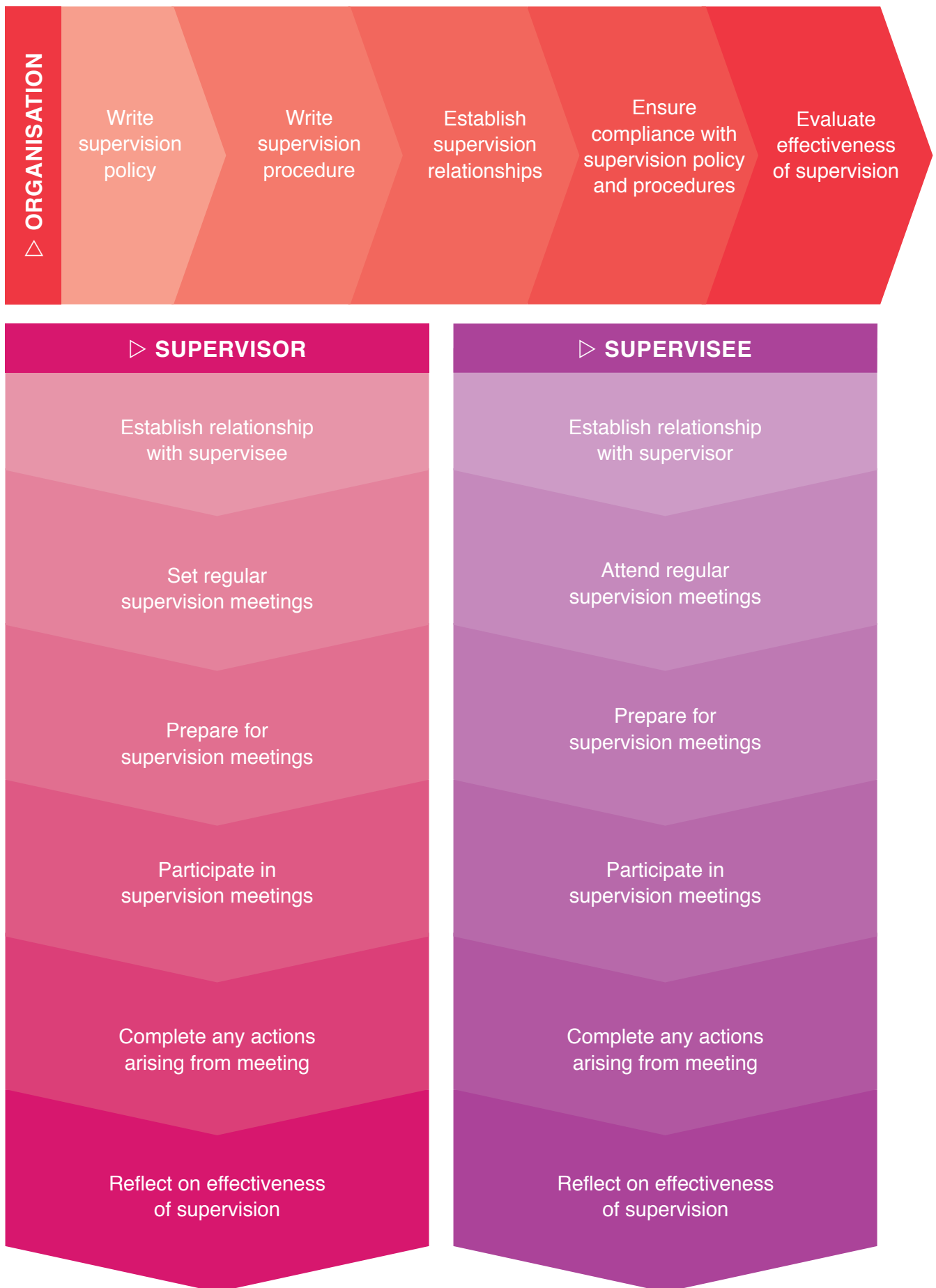
Trust is the most critical component of effective supervision. If the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is not built on trust and mutual respect it is unlikely the supervisory relationship will be successful. Therefore, organisations need to consider the selection, training, supervision and support provided to delegated supervisors. The efficacy of supervision can be undermined if the supervisor does not behave in an appropriate manner.

Organisations should ensure supervision is conducted within the following parameters:

- ▼ The boundary of confidentiality should be understood and maintained by all parties.
- ▼ Supervisees should feel comfortable and safe to share their experiences and feelings without fear of reprimand or the conversation being repeated.
- ▼ Where a supervision meeting is documented, it should be approved by both parties and the document stored in a secure location.

Human resources and feedback mechanisms are two ways to build a check-and-balance system into the supervision function. Having a third party, internal or external, for supervisees to consult with if they are having issues with their supervisors, allows any issues to be investigated impartially and in line with the principles of natural justice. Further, feedback mechanisms such as staff feedback surveys provide all parties with the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the supervisory relationship. Feedback mechanisms can be problematic for small organisations where it can be easy to trace responses back to the respondent. If your organisation is concerned about this, you could consider outsourcing evaluation to a third party to protect the anonymity of respondents.

SUPERVISION PROCESS MAP



CORE VALUES OF SUPERVISION⁵

- ▼ Supervision is a formal, active process based on a two-way professional relationship.
- ▼ Supervision is designed to support and develop the knowledge, skills and performance of workers.
- ▼ Supervision should be a constructive experience.
- ▼ Supervision should take place in a safe space that promotes effective decision-making, reflection, learning, development, and problem solving.
- ▼ All staff should have access to high quality supervision.
- ▼ Supervision should ensure the effective management of practice.
- ▼ Supervision should be inclusive, taking into account the experience and needs of people of all genders and sexualities, from all cultures and with all abilities.
- ▼ All staff should prepare for and make a positive contribution to the supervisory process.
- ▼ Supervisors have a responsibility to promote good supervision.
- ▼ Training should be provided to supervisors and supervisees.
- ▼ Supervisory processes should be reviewed to ensure they comply with policy and standards and deliver a benefit to participants.
- ▼ Supervision should comply with anti-discrimination legislation and should promote equity and equality.
- ▼ Supervision should enhance the quality of service, performance and staff competence for the benefit of the organisation and its stakeholders, including service users.

TOP TIPS FOR SUPERVISION

- ▼ Ensure all staff have access to a dedicated supervisor
- ▼ Have a structured approach for how and when supervision will occur
- ▼ Ensure staff understand that supervision is intended to aid their development and engagement
- ▼ Include reflective practice in supervision
- ▼ Monitor, measure and improve the practice of supervision

LINK WITH OTHER GUIDES

This Guide to Supervision is the second guide in a series aimed at enhancing staff onboarding and ongoing support. Two supplementary guides have been developed that are interlinked with supervision:

1. A Supplementary Guide to Performance Appraisal
2. A Supplementary Guide to Probation

These two supplementary guides go into further detail on how performance appraisal and probation processes occur in the workplace. In most organisations, these two processes are driven through the supervision process. It is important to remember that supervision should not be the only mechanism in place to address any performance issues. Your organisation should have a separate and distinct process for performance management, of which supervision is just one component.

PRINCIPLES OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Models of supervision are not mutually exclusive, and many organisations use hybrid-models that have been adapted to the unique characteristics of their workplace. Existing models provide a conceptual basis for your organisation to explore which model of supervision best fits the needs of your staff and your organisation.

Reflective practice is a process of thoughtfully considering one's experiences and using them as a tool for continuous learning. It allows people to identify strengths and weaknesses and improve their practice. Reflective practice usually involves two types of reflection: reflection *on* action and reflection *in* action. Reflection on action is retrospective contemplation of practice. Reflection in action occurs when a person recognises a situation and thinks about it while still acting. The basic premise of reflective practice is that experience alone does not foster learning and development. Instead, learning requires deliberate reflection on experience.⁶

Reflective practice is often used in community services and other care-based professions to encourage learning and foster continuous improvement. Reflective practice increases confidence and competence by using prior experience as a reference point to identify strengths and weaknesses and come up with creative solutions and new ways of working. In reflective practice it is important to focus on situations that have gone poorly, as well as situations that have gone well.⁷

The process of reflective practice is useful and effective in the ACT Community Services Industry, which delivers significant face-to-face and one-on-one services to clients, including people experiencing disadvantage. Reflective practice is beneficial for workers who may be vicariously exposed to trauma and who may experience catharsis through sharing their experiences with others.

There are many models of reflective practice that have been used over time to guide reasoning about action and experience. Examples of some of the more popular models, which find a basis in social care, can be found at [Appendix A](#).

POLICY

Your organisation should have a supervision policy that applies to all staff. The policy should be a high-level statement of intent about your organisation's supervision process. Organisational policies are usually endorsed by the Board of Directors or similar, and rarely change over time. One of the things to consider in writing your supervision policy is the difference between formal and informal supervision. Both have a role in most organisations and creating a workplace culture that facilitates and supports both will have a positive effect on staff engagement, productivity, and team morale.

When creating your supervision policy, it is important to consider all of the factors in your working environment that need to be reflected in your policy. This includes references to legislation, insurance, quality standards, or other safeguarding mechanisms that apply to your organisation. There may also be specific provisions in your funding agreements that affect your policy, and this should be reflected in the content.

The Supervision Policy Template found at [Appendix B](#) provides a starting point, but it is likely there are additional additional considerations for your organisation based on your risk profile and the programs and services you deliver. This may be one area where you choose to seek further advice, such as legal advice.

PROCEDURE

Your organisation should have a supervision procedure that sits alongside your policy. The procedure should detail how your organisation will approach both formal and informal supervision, and what mechanisms you will put in place to support this function of staff support and development. The supervision requirements in your organisation will likely be dictated by the type of work you are undertaking and the services you are delivering. It is important to remember that all staff, irrespective of their role, have a right to supervision and benefit tremendously from participating in it.

A Supervision Procedure Template can be found at [Appendix C](#)

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Supervision plays a critical role in the support and ongoing development of staff. Supervision meetings should be conducive to constructive outcomes for the supervisee and should encourage critical reflection that enables the identification of strengths and weaknesses. Supervision should seek to empower the supervisee to recognise good practice and identify how practice could be improved. Supervision should always be conducted with the aim to enhance the quality of services, the performance of the supervisee, and the outcomes for the organisation. It is the role of the supervisor to facilitate a conversation that allows their supervisee to share their experience in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

Set out in the remainder of this guide are the following tools to assist organisations to design, document and manage a supervision process:

- ▼ Responsibilities of the supervisor
- ▼ Responsibilities of the supervisee
- ▼ Communicating expectations including communication protocols
- ▼ A supervision framework;
- ▼ Examples of models for supervision

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR

- ▼ Apply supervision policy and procedure
- ▼ Communicate expectations
- ▼ Articulate how individual performance expectations align with organisational goals
- ▼ Develop performance goals in collaboration with the supervisee
- ▼ Provide fair, constructive, and timely feedback
- ▼ Be prepared for meetings
- ▼ Ensure there are no surprises by regularly communicating feedback and identifying areas for improvement
- ▼ Provide assistance, guidance, and coaching support as needed
- ▼ Conduct performance appraisals

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISEE

- ▼ Be prepared
- ▼ Comply with supervision policy and procedure
- ▼ Track and communicate progress towards performance goals
- ▼ Communicate workload challenges
- ▼ Identify professional development needs and opportunities
- ▼ Be willing to share positive and negative experiences
- ▼ Be open to receiving feedback
- ▼ Participate in performance appraisal processes

COMMUNICATING EXPECTATIONS

Expectations are best communicated by associating them with specific behaviours. For example, if there is an expectation for staff to act professionally, provide examples of behaviour that exemplify this such as arriving to work on time, being punctual for meetings, adhering to the organisational dress code, and using appropriate tone.

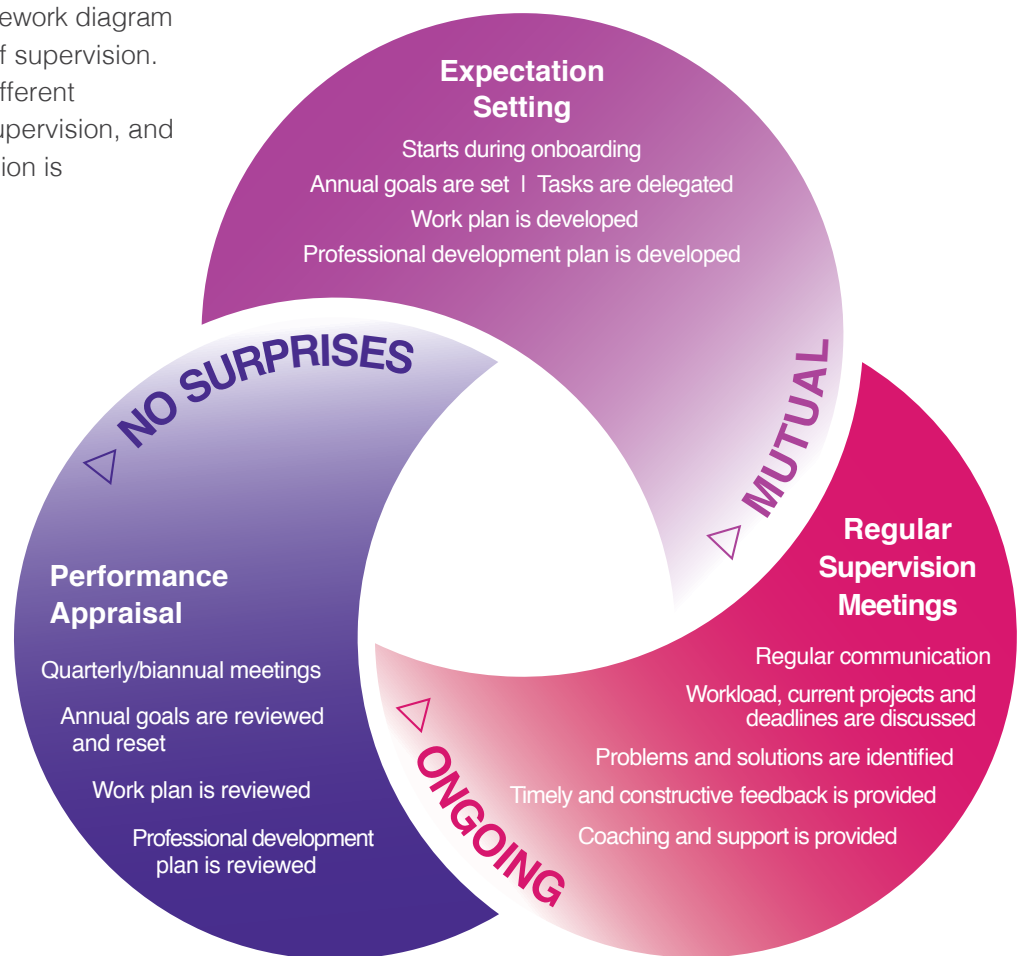
When communicating expectations remember to:

1. Phrase the behaviour as a positive action – explain what you want staff to do, rather than what you don't want them to do.
2. Make sure you model the behaviour you expect of other staff.
3. Refrain from making comments about a person's character and limit any comments to observable behaviour.

Information on Communication Protocols can be found at [Appendix D](#)

SUPERVISION FRAMEWORK⁸

The below supervision framework diagram distils the core concepts of supervision. The diagram depicts the different stages and objectives of supervision, and demonstrates that supervision is an ongoing process.



EVALUATION

Evaluating your supervision process is an important part of your organisation's feedback strategy. As identified in this guide, supervision is a critical and non-negotiable aspect of staff engagement, support, and performance. Supervision is a right of all staff members and should be a process that staff actively engage in to support their ongoing development.

Your evaluation should consider the viewpoints of supervisors and supervisees in your organisation. A subjective survey administered to all staff will enable you to understand if your supervision process is effective, and if there are areas for improvement. As an organisation you may also seek to evaluate the effect that supervision has on staff performance, engagement, and management. The subjective surveys will contribute to this, but a more thorough evaluation will be required to determine cause and effect.

Sample Supervision Feedback Questions can be found at [Appendix E](#)

CONCLUSION

Supervision is a critical but often neglected function of staff support and development. Investing in a sound supervision policy and accompanying procedures will have tangible benefits for your organisation including more engaged staff and better outcomes for stakeholders. As identified throughout this guide, the supervision requirements of your staff will be dictated by the nature of their roles. It is imperative to remember that all staff have a right to, and need for, supervision in the workplace.

In addition to the elements outlined in this guide your organisation may have other processes in place for supervision. This may include outsourcing supervision to a third party. Irrespective of what supervision processes you have in place, they should be fair, equitable, and conducted in a manner that is beneficial for all parties.

FURTHER RESOURCES

This guide has been developed using information and adapting material obtained through a variety of sources. A curated list of these sources has been provided below for those interested in further information or research regarding the concepts, tools and templates provided in this guide.

PROCESSES

[Preparing for Supervision](#) – a comprehensive resource on supervision including definitions, models, preparation, and evaluation.

INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

[Communication Skills for Managers](#) – a great resource on how to become confident, comfortable and consistent with staff communication.

[Achieving Effective Supervision](#) – further information on how to achieve effective supervision including explanations of how to apply different models of supervision.

[Kolb's Learning Styles and Experiential Learning Cycle](#) – information on Kolb's learning styles including an explanation of each style.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

[Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities: Helping People Succeed](#) – a practical resource for supervision

[Supervision Framework](#) – a comprehensive supervision framework that could be easily adapted by an organisation.

[The Art of Supervision – A Manager Essentials Toolkit](#) – a toolkit for managers who have supervision responsibilities, including information on how to drive motivation and engagement and manage teams.

[3 Simple KPI Templates for Managers](#) – useful templates for creating key performance indicators pitched at different levels of complexity and maturity.

APPENDIX A – MODELS FOR SUPERVISION

▷ THE 4x4x4 MODEL OF SUPERVISION

The 4x4x4 Model is based on the Four Functions of Supervision, the Four Stakeholders of Supervision, and the Four Stages of Supervision as follows:

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION:

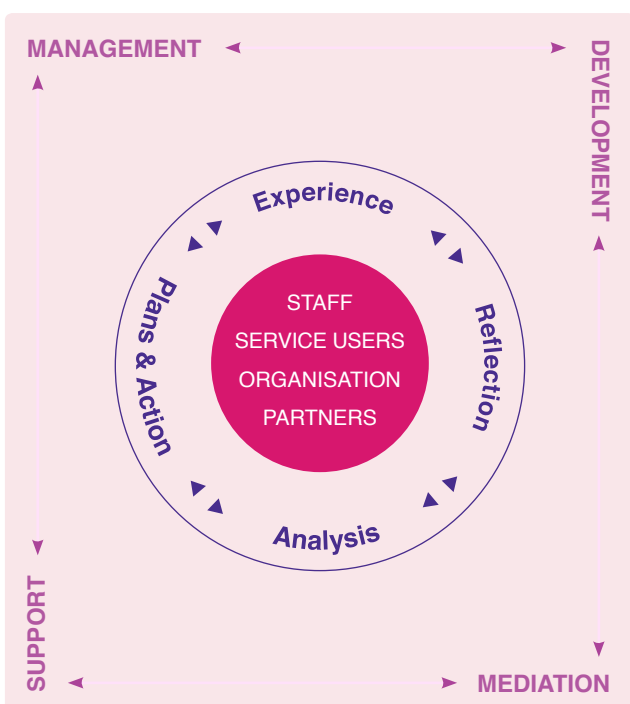
1. **Competent, accountable performance** (*managerial function*)
2. **Continuing professional development** (*formative function*)
3. **Personal support** (*supportive function*)
4. **Engaging the individual with the organisation** (*mediation function*)

FOUR STAKEHOLDERS OF SUPERVISION:

1. **Workers**
2. **Organisation**
3. **Partners**
4. **Service Users**

FOUR STAGES OF THE SUPERVISION CYCLE:

1. **Experience** (*what happened?*)
2. **Reflection** (*what was it like?*)
3. **Analysis** (*what does this mean?*)
4. **Action Plan** (*what next?*)



The 4x4x4 Model is an integrated framework that brings the above elements into a single model (left). The model defines supervision as a process that involves a professional relationship and involves all staff.⁹ It recognises that the needs of the supervisee, service users, and other stakeholders may be aligned, or they may conflict at times. The model enables the process of supervision to account for the different needs, stakeholders, and stages involved in supervision.

The 4x4x4 Model can be used during supervision meetings to guide the conversation by focusing on different aspects of a staff member's role depending on functions, stakeholders, or experience. This can help to identify some of the tensions in service delivery that may arise when, for example, the expectations of a stakeholder conflict with the purpose/scope of a staff member's role.

▷ GIBBS' REFLECTIVE CYCLE¹⁰

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle is a popular model for reflection, which includes the following six stages:

1. **Description** – *what happened?*
2. **Feelings** – *what did you think and feel about it?*
3. **Evaluation** – *what were the positives and negatives?*
4. **Analysis** – *what sense can you make of it?*
5. **Conclusion** – *what else could you have done?*
6. **Action** – *what will you do next time?*

The cycle can be a useful way to frame a conversation during supervision to encourage the supervisee to reflect on their experience. The questions in the cycle are designed to get the person undertaking reflection to think about the actions and events as well as their feelings and responses. This type of structured debriefing facilitates the holistic reflection that is involved in Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

▷ KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is a related model of supervision that makes clear links between reflective supervision and delivering improved outcomes. Kolb's experiential learning theory is based on two levels: a four-stage cycle of learning and four separate learning styles.

The Four Stage Learning Cycle 'touches all the bases' and includes:

1. **Concrete Experience** (*doing/having an experience*)
2. **Reflective Observation** (*reviewing/reflecting on the experience*)
3. **Abstract Conceptualisation** (*concluding/learning from the experience*)
4. **Active Experimentation** (*planning/trying out what you have learned*)

Kolb's learning theory also sets out four distinct learning styles based on the above learning cycle. These are:

1. **Accommodation** (*feeling and doing*)
2. **Converging** (*thinking and doing*)
3. **Diverging** (*feeling and watching*)
4. **Assimilating** (*thinking and watching*)

Kolb theorised that people tend to prefer a certain learning style, which is influenced by personal preferences and environmental factors. Being aware of individual learning preferences aids supervision by focusing on the needs of staff and offering them the best chance to engage and improve.

APPENDIX B – SUPERVISION POLICY TEMPLATE

Policy Title	Staff Supervision Policy
Policy Owner	
Policy Approver	
Related Policies	
Related Procedures	
Storage Location	
Effective Date	
Review Date	

PURPOSE

The Staff Supervision Policy governs the supervision process for all staff at

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, including employees and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

Supervision: the act of overseeing the activities and responsibilities of staff; a contractual, relational, collaborative process, which facilitates the ethical and professional practice of the supervisee.

POLICY STATEMENT

is committed to supporting and developing its staff through access to robust supervision that meets good practice guidelines.

recognises that supervision plays an integral role in staff development, learning, and continuous improvement.

The content of supervision meetings will remain confidential between the supervisor and supervisee except for agreed actions and goals, or where the disclosure of the information is consented to or required by law.

PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

This policy is accompanied by the Staff Supervision Procedure that provides detailed information on the process of supervision at

The Staff Supervision Procedure details the persons responsible for supervision.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change

APPENDIX C – SUPERVISION PROCEDURE TEMPLATE

Procedure Title	Staff Supervision Procedure
Procedure Owner	
Procedure Approver	
Related Policies	
Related Procedures	
Storage Location	
Effective Date	
Review Date	

PURPOSE

The Staff Supervision Procedure details the supervision process for all staff. The procedure also details the roles and responsibilities associated with supervision.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all staff, including paid employees and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

Supervision: the act of overseeing the activities and responsibilities of staff; a contractual, relational, collaborative process, which facilitates the ethical and professional practice of the supervisee.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The _____ has responsibility for ensuring all staff are aware of aware of this supervision procedure and their responsibilities under the procedure.

The _____ will delegate different parts of the supervision process to members of the _____ team who will be responsible for supervision. Anyone who has been delegated responsibility by the _____ to conduct an aspect of supervision must comply with the Staff Supervision Policy and this procedure.

Both supervisors and supervisees have a responsibility to participate in the supervision process and recognise it as an important part of their professional development and career progression.

The _____ values ongoing professional development. Supervision plays a critical role in reflecting on practice in the workplace, thinking of new ways of working, and identifying areas for improvement.

The _____ prides itself on being a workplace of choice and recognises supervision as a powerful means of ensuring staff feel supported in the workplace and recognise their own potential for growth.

Supervisor Responsibilities:

- ▼ Apply supervision policy and procedure
- ▼ Communicate expectations
- ▼ Articulate how individual performance expectations align with organisational goals
- ▼ Develop performance goals in collaboration with the supervisee
- ▼ Provide fair, constructive, and timely feedback
- ▼ Be prepared for meetings
- ▼ Ensure there are no surprises by regularly communicating feedback and identifying areas for improvement
- ▼ Provide assistance, guidance, and coaching support as needed
- ▼ Conduct performance evaluations.

Supervisee Responsibilities:

- ▼ Be prepared
- ▼ Comply with supervision policy and procedure
- ▼ Track and communicate progress towards performance goals
- ▼ Communicate workload challenges
- ▼ Identify professional development needs and opportunities
- ▼ Be willing to share positive and negative experiences
- ▼ Be open to receiving feedback
- ▼ Participate in performance appraisal processes

PROCESS

All staff will be delegated a supervisor, who may or may not be their direct manager.

Supervision meetings will take place _____ and is mandatory for all staff.

Supervisors will be provided with training and support to enable them to become effective in providing supervision.

Staff participating in supervision will be made aware of and be required to comply with their responsibilities detailed in this procedure.

Supervision will be monitored and reported on to management _____ and evaluated on _____ basis. Per the Staff Supervision Policy, the content of supervision meetings will remain confidential between the supervisor and supervisee except for agreed actions and goals, or where the disclosure of the information is consented to or required by law.

APPENDIX D – COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Effective workplace communication is critical for building relationships, providing services, and delivering outcomes. The implementation of communication protocols in the workplace assists to set expectations and prioritises open and frequent communication between all staff. Communication protocols also represent commitment to organisational values such as teamwork. Good communication improves the productivity of staff and has a demonstrable effect on creating a good workplace culture.

▷ PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is based on a connection between two or more people that allows for the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas.¹¹

There are four primary principles of communication:

1. The message that is sent (what is said) is not necessarily the message that is received (what is heard)
2. All actions communicate certain messages
3. All messages have content and feeling
4. Non-verbal cues are paramount

To be an effective communicator people need to be cognisant of their audience and any internal factors that may affect that person's interpretation of the communication. The process of feedback enables better communication by reiterating the message and checking the accuracy of the information repeated back. Verbal communication is only a small part of the larger communication process, with body language, facial expressions, tone and volume all playing a role in how communication is received.

If there is a discrepancy between content and feeling in a message, the receiver can become confused. There is heightened risk for written communication to be misunderstood because the content is not supplemented by non-verbal cues. Where there is a discrepancy between content and feeling, it is likely the receiver of information will rely more heavily on feeling. For this reason, it is important to align content and feeling as much as possible to reduce the likelihood of confusion.

▷ BENEFITS OF COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

- ▼ Establishes expectations for all staff
- ▼ Ensures accountability
- ▼ Builds consistency in messaging
- ▼ Creates alignment between staff at all levels
- ▼ Fosters connection in the workplace

▷ COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

It is important to humanise interactions between staff in the workplace, especially in instances where there is a reporting hierarchy. The following additional principles can help to create two-way relationships that are conducive to effective communication¹².

- 1. Start with safety** – all communication, especially confidential communication, should occur in an environment that is conducive to safety for all parties. This is especially important for conversations that involve negative feedback.
- 2. Build trust** – in the absence of trust, communication is likely to be misconstrued and create tension in the workplace. Where there is trust between parties there is a higher likelihood that the conversation will be productive and effective.
- 3. Listen to understand** – it is imperative that two-way conversations have a goal to listen to understand how the other person feels and to understand their point of view.
- 4. Align the verbal and non-verbal parts of your message** – if non-verbal cues do not mirror the content of the message the receiver is likely to become confused and make their own inferences about the true purpose of the conversation. When faced with a mismatch between verbal and non-verbal cues the receiver of information will believe the non-verbal as the true message.
- 5. Stay low on the ladder of inference** – in all communication both parties absorb information and make inferences based on both content, feeling, and their own experiences and biases. This leads to beliefs and assumptions about people, topics, or situations that may not be grounded in fact.

APPENDIX E – SUPERVISION FEEDBACK QUESTIONS¹³

SUPERVISOR EVALUATION OF SUPERVISION

Please respond to the following statements using the rating scale.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt accepted and respected by my supervisee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisee willingly participated in supervision and was open to feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisee actioned feedback given during supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisee was prepared for our meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I recognise the benefits of providing supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt well equipped and supported by my organisation to provide supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt supervision enhanced the performance and wellbeing of my supervisee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think supervision is important in our organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I think I provided helpful and valuable supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What skills, knowledge or tools do you think your supervisee gained through supervision?

In what ways could the supervision relationship have been more effective?

Do you have any further comments about the supervision process or suggestions for improvement?

SUPERVISEE EVALUATION OF SUPERVISION

Please respond to the following statements using the rating scale.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My supervisor made me feel accepted and respected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor created a safe and trustworthy environment for supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor provided me with useful feedback and provided specific areas for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor adequately emphasised my strengths and capabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor was open to receiving feedback from me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor was prepared for our meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I recognise the benefits of supervision and valued regular meetings with my supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervision made me better at my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I found supervision to be helpful and valuable ¹³	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What skills, knowledge or tools do you think you gained through supervision?

In what ways could the supervision relationship have been more effective?

Do you have any further comments about the supervision process or suggestions for improvement?

ENDNOTES

- 1 Australasian Association of Supervision (2018) What is Supervision? available online at <http://www.supervision.org.au/what-is-supervision/>
- 2 Nottingham City, Nottingham Children's Partnership Supervision Framework, available online at <http://www.nottinghamchildrenspartnership.co.uk/media/362101/ncp-supervision-framework.pdf>
- 3 Ibid, p4
- 4 Ibid
- 5 Values adapted from The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Directorate of Children's Services (2017) Supervision Policy available online at http://rbwm.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_supervision_pol.html#process
- 6 Loughran, J (2002) Effective Reflective Practice: in search of meaning in learning about teaching, available online at <https://cpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/global2.vic.edu.au/dist/d/26225/files/2014/09/Loughlan-242761j.pdf>
- 7 Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health, Reflective Practice, available online at <https://sarrah.org.au/content/reflective-practice>
- 8 CompassPoint Nonprofit Services (2012) Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities: Helping People Succeed available online at <http://www.gnof.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Supervisor-Roles-and-Responsibilities-Packet.pdf>
- 9 Children's Workforce Development Council (2009) Guide for Supervisors: Newly Qualified Social Worker Pilot Programme 2009-2010 available online at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11248/2/2009_-_10_NQSW_guide_for_supervisors_-_Electronic_Workbook.pdf
- 10 University of Cumbria (2016) Gibbs' Reflective Cycle available online at <https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/mycumbria/documents/ReflectiveCycleGibbs.pdf>
- 11 Mager, D (2017) The 4 Primary Principles of Communication available online at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/some-assembly-required/201702/the-4-primary-principles-communication>
- 12 TalentGrow (2018) Six Principles of Effective Communication available online at <https://www.talentgrow.com/blog/6-principles-of-effective-communication>
- 13 Questions adapted from Syracuse University (2019) Student Evaluation of Supervision available online at http://soe.syr.edu/academic/counseling_and_human_services/modules/Preparing_for_Supervision/student_evaluation_of_supervision.aspx