

Supervisors: Are you in the Know?

The position of *supervisor* is a very important one in the supervisory process of clinicians obtaining licensure (as clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists and professional counselors) in the Commonwealth of PA. Supervision is a significant responsibility in the formation and development of clinicians. This article will help you determine what you know and need to know by taking the following “True/False Quiz,” which is followed by answers and explanations.

- 1) It is permissible for supervisors to meet with 6 supervisees on an individual basis, as well as 6 different supervisees in a group setting, during any given month.
- 2) Anyone who holds a license can provide supervision.
- 3) The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the supervisee’s supervised clinical experience are met.
- 4) There is no limit to the number of hours a supervisor can supervise per week.
- 5) It is the responsibility of the supervisor to make sure that the supervisee completes at least 500 hours and no more than 1800 hours of supervised clinical experience in any 12-month period.
- 6) There is provision in the regulations that allow supervisors to work with more than 6 supervisees.
- 7) It is the responsibility of the supervisor to maintain records of scheduled supervisory sessions.
- 8) It is not the responsibility of the supervisor to make sure that the supervisee informs each client/patient that he/she will discuss the client’s/patient’s case with the supervisor.
- 9) All 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience must be direct contact (face-to-face).
- 10) One hour of supervision is required for every 20 hours of supervised clinical experience.
- 11) Now that Act 76 has gone into effect since the end of October 2018, supervisors will be able to continue to provide supervision to those clinicians in private practice (not affiliated with any other practice, health care facility, government agency or government-regulated social service agency) who are working toward licensure.

Answers:

- 1) **False.** A supervisor may supervise no more than 6 supervisees at the same time. In any given period of time, supervisors are limited in providing supervision to 6 supervisees.
- 2) **False.** For supervisory clinical experience after Jan. 1, 2010, 1500 hours of the 3000 hours must be provided by a licensed professional in that particular profession. (This means that LSWs must be supervised by LCSWs, Professional Counselors must be supervised by LPCs, and MFTs must be supervised by LMFTs who are also AAMFT Approved Supervisors.) The other 1500 hours may be supervised by another licensed mental health professional in a related field and has 5 years experience within the last 10 years in that field. (For experience prior to Jan. 1, 2010, the regulations are slightly different.)
- 3) **True.** This is the regulation for supervisors for LCSWs (Section 47.12d(4)), for LMFTs (Section 48.14(4)), and for LPCs (Section 49.14(4)).
- 4) **False.** Supervised work activity can count when it takes place in a single setting for either 30 hours per week but no more than 50 hours per week for at least a 3 month period, or 15 hours per week for at least a 6 month period. This means that the supervisee is limited to no more than 50 hours of clinical experience per week.

- 5) ***This was true, but is no longer part of the regulations.***
- 6) ***True.*** When the regulation of no more than 6 supervisees at a time creates an undue hardship on a supervisee, the supervisee and supervisor may request an exception, in writing, stating reasons why this creates a hardship and why the supervisee is unable to obtain a supervisor who meets the requirements of this requirement.
- 7) ***True.*** It is the responsibility of the supervisor to keep notes or records of scheduled supervision sessions. This is also good practice.
- 8) ***False.*** It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the supervisee's status is made known to the supervisee's clients/patients, as well as to ensure the client's written permission has been given for the supervisee to discuss his/her case with the supervisor.
- 9) ***False.*** Of the 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience, at least 1500 hours must be direct contact (face to face). These may include assessment, consultation, therapy, psycho-education. The additional 1500 hours may include activities that are part of one's professional responsibilities but are not direct client contact. Examples of these are case documentation and recordkeeping, client advocacy, activities that involve, support or enhance work with clients. Administrative duties cannot be counted, e.g. completing budget documentation, administrative supervision of another individual, office procedures. (A supervisee may count more than 1500 hours of direct contact.)
- 10) ***True.*** One hour of supervision is required for every 20 hours of supervised clinical experience (1:20), or 2 hours for every 40 (2:40). This means that when a therapist acquires 20 clinical hours during a week, that person must have at least 1 hour of supervision, and if (s)he acquires 40 hours during a week (s)he must have 2 hours of supervision. Half of the supervision hours (75 hours) must be done individually and in person, and the other half may be done in a group. (Group supervision needs to be done in concurrence with individual supervision.)
- 11) ***True.*** On the Board's website there is an announcement that clarifies that practitioners who are actively working toward licensure (as LCSWs, as LMFTs, and as LPCs) in a private practice setting may not be considered to be engaging in independent practice so long as they are receiving regular supervision by a supervisor who meets the Board's qualifications for supervisor until they actually obtain their respective license. Please review the announcement at the following link:
<https://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardsCommissions/SocialWorkersMarriageandFamilyTherapistsandProfessionalCounselors/Documents/Special%20Notices/Clarification%20of%20the%20Act%2076%20-%20Independent%20Practice.pdf>

We highly recommend that both supervisor and supervisee understand the process and the requirements from the beginning of the journey toward licensure. Sadly, we on the Board too often see that requirements have not been fulfilled in applications. While we sympathize with the applicants, it is the Board's job to uphold the requirements of the Act and Regulations. Unfortunately, it is the applicant who suffers when requirements are not met. Therefore, we strongly encourage supervisors to become familiar with the details of the requirements in order to provide your supervisees what they need. Checking the FAQs page on the website would also be helpful, and when in doubt, please contact the Board.

We rely on you supervisors to maintain the excellent standards of our professions! Providing quality supervision ensures this, along with the future of the supervisees. Thank you!

Joy E. Corby, Ph.D., LMFT, Board Member