Supervision: Working with adolescents


**Understanding adolescents**
- Develop knowledge of adolescence
- Discuss clients’ behaviour
- Discuss clients’ limitations and strengths

**Reflection**
Reflect on your practice:
- What’s working? What’s not?
- Explore emotional effects of your work
- Articulate strengths and weaknesses

**Time**
- Outline expectations and responsibilities
- Create a meeting schedule
- Write a formal supervision agreement

**Supervisor skills**
An effective supervisor should:
- Share a range of interventions and strategies for adolescent clients
- Be familiar with signs of vicarious trauma
- Identify training and development needs

**Tools**
- Apply theoretical perspectives to practice
- Examine appropriate interventions
- Explore evidence-based practice

**Environment**
- Examine the limitations of your role
- Recognise the challenges of your work
- Review policies and procedures

**Discussion**
Discuss other issues such as:
- Caseloads
- Ethical issues
- New programs or services


The reflective nature of clinical supervision helps practitioners identify and respond to the emotional effects of their work, prevent burnout, reduce stress, and avoid vicarious trauma.

The learning component of supervision can assist in better understanding adolescent behaviour, determining suitable interventions, and evaluating their effectiveness.

“Good” supervision is regular, focused, and facilitated by a skilled and confident supervisor. It should include all of the elements of the T.R.U.S.T.E.D. Guide.

Visit the CFCA information exchange website: www.aifs.gov.au/cfca
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Roles and responsibilities

Youth worker

Competencies
- Firsthand knowledge and observation of client’s issues
- Feedback on implemented interventions
- Specialist adolescence knowledge and skills
- Awareness of:
  - stressors
  - self-care needs
  - own behaviour with adolescent clients

Responsibilities
- Disclose biases, fears, concerns etc.
- Apply recommended interventions
- Implement any actions discussed
- Explore effects of current caseload and work plan
- Disclose any concerns of stress or vicarious trauma
- Acknowledge observations and participate in discussion
- Identify learning needs
- Commit to supervisory relationship—prioritise supervision meetings and “homework”

Supervisor

Competencies
- Proficient in supervision modalities
- Superior communication and listening skills
- Reflective practice facilitation skills
- In-depth understanding of youth sector, worker’s role and adolescent issues and needs

Responsibilities
- Facilitate reflective practice
- Review current client plans and recent interventions
- Provide guidance on evidence-based strategies for client interventions
- Review caseload and work plan
- Address suspicions or disclosure of vicarious trauma
- Raise ethical concerns
- Identify training needs
- Undertake performance appraisal

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