Supervision

Supervision in practice

Supervision is an essential, ongoing component of professional dietetic practice that supports reflective learning, skill development, and workforce sustainability. It is central to lifelong learning and is recognised globally as vital for advancing the profession and improving client care.

Supervision is a structured, professional development process where two or more professionals engage in reflective discussions to enhance practice, service quality, and health outcomes. It encompasses professional, clinical, or practice supervision and is a key contributor to professional growth and workforce wellbeing.

Reflective practice

Reflective practice–critical, honest thinking about one's professional actions–is the foundation of effective supervision. A supportive, psychologically safe environment is necessary for supervisees to share openly and learn from their experiences.

Key Elements of supervision

1. The supervisory alliance and contract

- **Core Components**: Supervisor, supervisee, the supervisory relationship (alliance), and a clear supervision contract.
- **Supervisory Alliance**: Built on trust, respect, empathy, and mutual goals. It involves:

1. **Bond** – supportive relationship

2. **Goals** – agreed learning aims
3. **Tasks** – strategies to achieve these goals

- **Supervisor skills:** Active listening, open questioning, motivational interviewing, and balancing teaching with reflection.
- **Contracting:** Should specify frequency, process expectations, evaluation methods, confidentiality, and management boundaries.
- **Supervision of Supervision:** Supervisors should engage in their own reflective supervision to maintain ethical and effective practice.

2. Functions and outcomes (Proctor's model)

Functions:

1. **Formative (Learning):** Enhances knowledge, skills, and competence.
2. **Restorative (Support):** Provides emotional support, reduces stress, and promotes wellbeing.
3. **Normative (Accountability):** Ensures ethical and professional standards are met.

Outcomes:

- Improved practitioner competence, confidence, wellbeing, and job satisfaction.
- Reduced stress and burnout.
- Enhanced quality of care, safety, and professional accountability.
- Strengthened professional standards and workforce retention.

3. Frequency and continuity

Supervision should commence early in a dietitian's career and continue regularly throughout professional life. Ongoing, structured engagement ensures sustained learning and professional growth.
Effective supervision in dietetics fosters reflective, safe, and ethical practice. It strengthens professional capability, supports emotional resilience, enhances service quality, and sustains the workforce. Commitment to regular supervision is a hallmark of contemporary, high-quality dietetic practice

DNRC Supervision video

Remote video URL

Resources

Crow?T,?Kiely?L,?Harris?D,?Palermo?C.?Professional supervision in dietetics: A comprehensive, narrative literature review.?Nutrition & Dietetics.?2025;?1-10. doi:10.1111/1747-0080.70023

Dietitians Australia: Supporting Growth and Competence- Webinar

Dietitian Supervision Resources Australia & International

Removal of provisional status FAQs

Get in touch

If you have questions about supervision, contact us at **apd@dietitiansaustralia.org.au**