

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION

Qualified school mental health staff must have appropriate supervision and receive ongoing training in a range of practices including: service delivery, [crisis intervention](#), [cultural competence](#), [stakeholder involvement](#), and state and federal mandates, standards, and regulations.

RATIONALE

An environment supportive of professional growth can influence the quality of care and improve job satisfaction. In order for school mental health programs to meet high standards of quality, providers must have access to appropriate supervision and receive continuous professional development and ongoing training. Standards in the field evolve quickly and it is important that school mental health staff remain current on issues of practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations offer schools, collaborating community agencies, and school mental health providers guidelines to ensure effective supervision and relevant professional development.

Supervision

Role

1. Establish the role and responsibilities of a supervisor. For example:
 - Availability in and out of meetings to provide support and advice.
 - Availability for consultation in crisis situations.
 - Commitment to the process of clinical supervision.
 - Being knowledgeable about school mental health.
 - Serving as a mentor to other school mental health providers.
 - Understanding and enforcing [confidentiality](#).
 - Awareness of limitations in knowledge.
 - Accepting responsibility for personal professional development by seeking out additional resources, as necessary.
 - Being empathetic, flexible, practical, analytic, respectful, focused, reliable, and organized.

Structure

1. Designate a private and respectful environment for supervision of all school mental health providers.
2. Establish guidelines for supervision which may include:
 - A minimum of one hour of supervision every two weeks, unless the staff member is pursuing state licensure and receiving regular, weekly clinical supervision.
 - Supervision notes kept on file for review as required by applicable state laws.
 - Mandatory consultation in the event of life threatening situations (e.g., suicidal/homicidal or involving accessing hospitalization for the student), crisis situations, personal safety issues, or potential legal situations.

Expectations

1. Ensure adherence to the *professional code of ethics* for each professional discipline.
2. Encourage supervisors to help school mental health providers feel supported by offering:

MHPET Dimension 3: STAFF AND TRAINING/ Indicators 11, 12

- Fair productivity standards
 - Enhanced training and professional development opportunities
 - Support to obtain licensure
3. Encourage supervisors to use the following strategies for addressing clinical skills in supervision:
- Review treatment plans, diagnosis, goals, and objectives.
 - Incorporate theoretical frameworks into clinical feedback.
 - Use videotape, audiotape, or live supervision if appropriate
 - Schedule case presentations and/or a [peer review](#) process.
 - Conduct a formal evaluation of the school mental health providers' strengths and weaknesses.
 - Conduct a self-evaluation of clinical skills.

Professional Development/Training

1. Survey staff in order to ensure that trainings are developed with their input. Surveys may include questions about:
 - Convenient times for training
 - Important topics that need to be covered (e.g., evidence based practice, cultural competence)
 - Barriers to participation
 - Suggested trainers (staff may know about training resources that the supervisor does not)
2. Hold discussion groups with school mental health providers on predetermined topics identified as *targets for improvement* from the [quality assessment and improvement](#) plan.
3. Contact your state mental health department for a list of pertinent local trainings, conferences, and workshops.
4. Consider attending presentations that are outside of the staff's field of training to broaden their scope of knowledge.
5. Identify topics for upcoming teacher professional development days and, if appropriate, attend those trainings.
6. Provide opportunities for staff to attend national conferences if possible. In order to cut costs, consider presenting a workshop or hosting a roundtable discussion at the conference.
7. Subscribe to a professional journal like Professional School Counseling, School Social Work Journal, or School Psychology International.

REFERENCES

National Association of School Psychologists (n.d.) *Position Statement on Supervision in School Psychology*. Retrieved from http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/pp_supervision.aspx

The University of Maryland's Center for School Mental Health (2008). *School Mental Health*

Quality Assessment Questionnaire (SMHQAQ) Quality Indicator Power points, Indicators 7,30.
Retrieved from <http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/Resources/Clin/QAIRsrc/QAQP>

RESOURCES

<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=325&sl=129&contentid=129>

The American School Counselor Association website offers resources, information and professional development opportunities on ethical practice in the field.

<http://www.nasponline.org/profdevel/index.aspx>

The National Association of School Psychologists offers continuing professional development opportunities including conferences, a speakers' bureau and educational modules.

http://www.socialworkers.org/sections/credentials/school_social.asp#prep

National Association of Social Workers' standards of Professional Preparation and Development for School Social Workers