

Offender Programs Unit

# Program Supervision Framework



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## Foreword

Since its inception in 2004 the Offender Programs Unit (OPU) has had three tasks: 1) To decide which programs Corrective Services NSW should endorse through its Accreditation Framework, 2) to provide training for the facilitation of these programs and 3) to provide ongoing program supervision in order to monitor quality and to support facilitators.

The first task was accomplished with the publication of the Compendium of Correctional Programs, now an electronic and interactive document on the CSNSW Intranet. For the second task, the OPU has provided over 3000 training places between 2005 and 2010. This document provides the basis for accomplishing the third task: to provide ongoing program supervision and support in the pursuit of excellence in delivery.

The document is in two parts, the first more theoretical, the second more practical. Feel free to go straight to the practical if your interest is in seeing how the process works, but please read the first part as well. This gives an excellent summary of why supervision is important in program delivery and provides the rationale for why we do what we do. The theoretical section is our own “reflective practice”.

Corrective Services NSW aspires to lead the field in the delivery of evidence – based, effective rehabilitation programs for offenders. This Program Supervision Framework represents a significant step towards this goal.

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### Introduction

The supervision of Program Facilitators and other staff who deliver programs is a major task for the Offender Programs Unit (OPU). To support this there is a need for a program supervision framework that promotes reflective practice and professional development and in which a quality assurance tool can be applied. This process will give greater clarity to all staff involved in the implementation of programs about what best practice standards entail.

Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW) has also begun to place greater emphasis on outcome evaluations of its offender management programs and it is timely that greater focus be placed on the support and guidance that is given by the OPU to staff who deliver these programs. The primary objectives of this are 1) to ensure program integrity and delivery standards are met and, 2) to measure this through the development and use of a quality assurance measurement tool.

There are a number of fundamental components that enhance program delivery. An important factor of an effective supervision framework is that it considers what characteristics are essential in achieving and sustaining what is commonly viewed as best practice. One example is that, when delivering offender intervention programs, facilitators should base their interactions with group participants on research and evaluation findings (evidence-based practice) and with a high level of proficiency and skill.

A program monitoring and evaluation process must be implemented as part of program development, delivery and outcome evaluation. Findings from this process should undergo critical analysis by OPU in order for program implementation to stay on track, to achieve the intended program goals and objectives and for improvement and maintenance of best practice program delivery.

Supervisors and supervisees have specific roles and responsibilities within the program supervision process. Both parties need to be clear about these within the context of a standardised program supervision model.

Part of the role of OPU staff is to provide a supportive quality monitoring service to program facilitators and other staff who deliver programs. This consists of reviewing all aspects of program delivery to ensure that they comply with CSNSW Practice Standards and the Accreditation Framework.

Cultural diversity and awareness of such is an important element of effective program delivery. It is therefore recognised that all staff who deliver programs should undertake appropriate training in the area of cultural inclusiveness.



### 1.1 What do we mean by Program Supervision ?

Program supervision is made up of four components that work together to form a purposeful process. Good supervision is a well-organised, reflective process where principles are transformed into practical skills. The four overlapping aspects of program supervision for the purpose of this framework are described as being administrative, evaluative, clinical and supportive.

There have been many attempts to clearly define the fundamental principles of what makes up clinical or professional supervision within the provision of therapeutic services and delivery of treatment programs. Wright (1989) has defined the process of supervision as:

*A meeting between two or more people who have a declared interest in examining a piece of work. The work is presented and they will together think about what was happening and why, what was done and said, and how it was handled. Could it have been handled better or differently, and if so, how?*

Winstanley & White (2003) have set out the following 'working' definition of supervision:

*Clinical supervision provides time out and an opportunity, in the context of an ongoing professional relationship with an experienced practitioner, to engage in guided reflection on current practice in ways designed to develop and enhance that practice and competencies in the future.*

Both definitions share similarities: supervision provides empathic support to improve competencies and skills, transmits knowledge and facilitates reflective practice. This process seeks to create an environment in which the participants have an opportunity to evaluate, reflect and develop their own practice.

In the context of program supervision provided by the OPU, it is defined as *Consultative Supervision* which put simply is the relationship between a program supervisor and a person who delivers programs. The supervisor's role is to facilitate a relationship in which the supervisees (those who deliver programs) are able to reflect upon, critically analyse and evaluate their everyday practice, which, in turn, facilitates professional development.



### Accreditation Strategic Framework

Program supervision is required by CSNSW Strategic Accreditation Framework (2003). The present supervision framework specifically puts into practice the requirements of Part B of the Accreditation Criteria and integrates the following relevant criteria:

The consistent and professional supervision of staff involved in the delivery of accredited programs is an important method to ensure quality of practice.

All program facilitators must have access to peer and other support mechanisms to enable them to address any issues which may occur as a result of delivering programs.

It is crucial that program delivery by all staff is assessed through supervision with regularity so that there is continuing opportunities for further training and professional development.

Program facilitators can meet regularly for mutual support and guidance and that co-facilitation of programs is used as an important means of peer support.

*CSNSW Accreditation Strategic Framework, Criterion 2 Program Staff Supervision June 2005*

### Definitions

Program Supervision is the overarching term used that encompasses program monitoring and evaluation and is inclusive of the supervisor developing a supportive relationship with the supervisee that allows for engagement in guided reflection on current practice in ways designed to develop and enhance that practice and competencies in the future.

Program Monitoring refers to the regular observation of the facilitator's competencies and the ongoing activities, achievements, and constraints of the program implementation. It helps to ensure that program activities are carried out as planned and outlined within the program manual and intervention methodologies are followed.

Program Evaluation refers to the assessment of success in achieving the pre-determined program goals outlined in the program manual.

Best Practice refers to the delivery of services in accordance to evidence-based practice when providing behavioral interventions for which research (the What Works literature) has provided evidence that supports their effectiveness in achieving the desired outcome.



### 1.2 What will we achieve by having a Supervision Framework?

The primary goal of the *Program Supervision Framework* is to provide all Offender Programs Unit (OPU) staff and CSNSW Program Facilitators involved in program delivery with an understanding and guidance of best practice program supervision and how successful program delivery can be achieved.

In so doing the Framework aims to:

- Create and communicate clarity for best practice program delivery amongst all program facilitators involved in the implementation
- Assist the implementation of programs by OPU in a way that promotes standardised delivery throughout CSNSW
- Function as the foundation on which program facilitators and other staff involved in the offender program delivery are engaged in consistent and standardised program supervision to enhance program implementation
- Identify systemic processes and communication pathways to minimise or remove obstacles to change and enable program facilitators and other staff to achieve best practice program delivery
- Strengthen CSNSW capacity and commitment to the implementation of best practice programs and ongoing program facilitator professional development
- To require the monitoring and evaluation of all offender programs managed by OPU that are being delivered across all sites within CSNSW
- Strengthen the key stakeholders' response to, and commitment to, best practice in the program delivery
- Strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and supervision capacity of the OPU
- Ensure that all monitoring and evaluation of programs by the OPU follows an agreed procedure that adheres to accepted ethical and quality standards



### **1.3 Why do we need a Program Supervision Framework?**

This Framework is for staff who deliver Compendium programs that are developed and/or managed by the Offender Programs Unit. It concerns all staff whether or not they are designated 'Program Facilitators'. For the sake of simplicity, this Framework will use the term 'program facilitator' to mean anyone who delivers a compendium program.

The Framework is important for the following reasons:

- It provides direction about the nature and process of program supervision
- It promotes the importance of program monitoring and evaluation in CSNSW for quality assurance
- It promotes knowledge and collective understanding amongst the key stakeholders of what is involved in, and required for, effective program supervision, monitoring and evaluation
- It provides clarity in understanding skills and competencies required for successful program delivery

### **1.4 What will you find in the Framework Document?**

To achieve the goals listed on pages 5 and 6, the Framework provides:

- A description of successful program delivery and what "best practice" includes
- A description of key skills and competencies of program facilitators
- An account of the key players of program implementation
- Clarity about roles and responsibilities of key players in the program delivery and supervision process
- An account of the core elements and strategies of best practice program delivery
- A description of how program delivery will be monitored and evaluated



## **PART 2 – How does supervision work in practice?**

### **2.1 Purposes of Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation is required to ensure and maximise *effectiveness*, *efficiency*, and *appropriateness* of program content and facilitator delivery. Specifically the purposes are to:

- Ensure program activities are achieving the program goals (effective)
- Contribute to maximising the cost-effectiveness of program delivery (efficient)
- Make transparent where things are going right and wrong (accountable)
- Aid the consistent and appropriate implementation of the programs
- Aid ongoing improvements and refinement in the programs
- Aid informed decision-making and ownership at all levels of program implementation
- Ensure genuine evidence-based practice in program delivery

Monitoring and evaluation of programs during the course of their delivery should not be a 'one-off' event. It is an important ongoing process in which the information gained through frequent monitoring and evaluation feeds back into the OPU for continued improvement and maintenance of best practice program service delivery.

### **2.2 Roles and Competencies in Supervision**

Quality input is required for quality outcomes. Competent staff with necessary skills, experience, and credentials as well as ongoing training and support structures are some of the key inputs for quality program outcomes.

Program supervision happens in the context of a professional relationship to which both parties contribute. Within their role, each party commits to bringing knowledge and skills and using them to reflect on the professional practice. The following sections we will list the skills and competencies that have a significant bearing on program outcomes.



### 2.3 The Program Supervisor

#### Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities

A Program Supervisor must:

- Identify standards of best practice and performance and communicate these to program facilitators and other staff who deliver programs.
- Work with program facilitators and other staff to guide and assess their performance on a regular basis against evidence- based best practice standards.
- Formally meet with each program facilitator and other staff who deliver programs and engage them in the process of program supervision (monitoring, evaluation, reflective practice and professional support) on at least one occasion during a six-month period.
- Provide feedback to facilitators and other staff about their performance that promotes a strength based, skill building, coaching and supportive approach.
- Ensure that the supervisory relationship is clearly distinguished from any line management responsibilities.



### Supervisor Competencies

Competency is defined as “A knowledge, skill or attitude that enables one to effectively perform the activities of a given occupation or function to the standards expected in employment.”

International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction, 2003  
Identified program supervisor competencies include:

- A sound understanding of the different types and levels of reflection
- Understanding and the ability to implement models for reflective practice within program supervision including the Kolb's Adult Learning styles (1984) and Daphne Hewson (2004) Supervision Triangle
- Knowledge and understanding of tools for reflective practice
- The skills required for the development and maintenance of effective supervisory relationships
- The ability to identify and manage challenging attitudes and behaviours
- The ability to use appropriate strategies for dealing with emotional responses to complex situations
- A sound understanding of the theory underpinning and techniques required for effective supervision i.e. reflective practice, communication, adult learning and developmental frameworks

For the purpose of delivering effective supervision to program facilitators within CSNSW, the term *professional* with reference to supervision refers to the educational and training functions of supervision. This focuses on the enhancement of facilitator knowledge and skills, their application of cognitive behavioural techniques and principles within a treatment setting, the identification of learning goals, and the determination of practice strengths, the promotion of self awareness and reflective practice as well as professional growth. The role of the OPU in the supervision of facilitators should be one of coach, mentor, practice leader, expert, trainer and professional role model.

Supervisee observation is a critical component of *clinical evaluation*. Adopting a reflective practice model within supervision enables the supervisor to focus on the clinical interactions of the supervisee in a treatment setting. This mechanism will allow for the promotion of reflective practice by the facilitator under the guidance of the supervisor. *Reflective practice* involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached and guided



by professionals or 'experts' in the discipline such a program supervisor. Reflective practice is associated with learning from experience, and is viewed as an important strategy for program facilitators for ongoing learning. The act of reflection is seen as a way of promoting the development of autonomous, qualified and self-directed professionals. Engaging in reflective practice is associated with the improvement of the quality of services, stimulating personal and professional growth and closing the gap between theory and practice, (Jasper, 2003).

Reflective practice requires you to reflect on your activities and integrate new information where it is relevant to improve your practice. It may include:

- Self-assessment of practice / competence in a given situation to identify areas for development and ultimately improve competence
- Looking for learning points within the scenario or situation on which you reflect and considering how you might apply that learning in other situations to further enhance performance
- Identifying learning / development needs and planning to meet these in order to improve practice
- Changing or modifying practice in response to the learning undertaken

**Structured Reflection:** Structured reflection involves systematically moving through one or all of the following questions for reflection with the assistance of a supervisor:

- What happened?
- Identifying significant events/incidents?
- How did you feel, think, feel, and do?
- What assumptions, beliefs, customs, or values underlie the event?
- What were the environmental demands?
- What are the implications for future practice?
- What was learned?
- What could be changed or done differently?
- What concepts/assumptions could be challenged?



### 2.4 The Program Facilitator

#### Facilitator Roles and Responsibilities

- Making a commitment to developing experience and expertise in the program for a period of time agreed by the OPU.
- Preparing for each session including session plans and materials where required.
- Ensuring that sessions (where required) are video-recorded and the tapes fully and clearly labelled with the required information
- Proper completion of data recording after every session
- Undertaking video monitoring for peer assessment when required.
- Proper completion of pre/post program evaluations.
- Being honest, open, prepared to learn and responsive to feedback
- Changing practice if necessary
- Facilitators should not practise beyond their level of competence or in area where they have not received training.
- To undertake the required assessment interviews of potential participants.
- To attend team meetings, supervision and training sessions as required in order to promote and maintain best practice and effective teamwork.
- To behave in a professional and respectful manner towards group members and colleagues.
- To adhere to the Program Manual unless agreed in advance with the Offender Programs Unit.
- To seek assistance in areas where they need further development.
- To undertake additional training if required and to adopt new program methods as disseminated from OPU.



### Facilitator Key Competencies

Program supervision happens in the context of a professional relationship to which both parties contribute. Each party commits to bringing knowledge and skills and using them to reflect on the professional practice. For their part, the attributes that group facilitators should include:

- Ability to understand the key principles that underpin Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Group Facilitation and Motivational Interactions (MI)
- Understanding of the key principles of the Cycle of Change Prochaska, and DiClemente (1984) and Adult Learning Cycle (Kolb 1984)
- Ability to discuss topics that are difficult and uncomfortable for the participants. To achieve this without being confrontational, but by enhancing the participant's motivation to address these topics and to remain focussed on positive change
- Ability to guide the participants through the program material, taking into consideration differences in learning styles, educational and literacy levels and cognitive ability
- Ability to maintain objectivity
- Ability to be non judgemental, non discriminatory and not place their own values or beliefs onto the offenders
- Demonstrated confidence in facilitating a group session
- Knowledge of session content and program materials
- Ability to facilitate learning of participants in a group setting and engage participants in all aspects of the group process
- Ability to explain core concepts and engage the group in cognitive behaviour therapy principles
- Ability to reframe information and ask questions to generate continued learning of participants
- Ability to respond appropriately to questions in an open and transparent manner that is non-judgemental and respectful of the participant's views



- Ability to effectively engage group participants in experiential learning exercises including roles plays
- Ability to work with conflict within a group using appropriate strategies and techniques while applying specific tools such as the Focal Conflict Model (Whittaker 1985)
- Demonstration of creative group work skills

The fundamental characteristics of program facilitators should include accurate empathy, genuineness, and an ability to build rapport and well developed communication skills.

In addition facilitators should have:

- Sensitivity to minor issues and ability to respond to crisis in an effective manner using appropriate conflict resolution techniques.
- An ability to balance a supportive attitude to the offender with the need to challenge their unhelpful thinking patterns.
- Pro-social modelling and established problem solving ability.
- A strong understanding of what makes an effective group leader.
- Ability to work with immediacy within groups.
- Understanding the stages of group development including communication interaction patterns in groups.
- Understanding Cognitive Dissonance and its use in assisting behavioural change in a group setting.



### 2.5 Program Supervision Schedule and Contracting

All program facilitators who deliver offender intervention programs as outlined in the *Compendium of Correctional Programs in New South Wales* should receive 3 hours of supervision specific to program delivery every 6- months or at least on one occasion during the course of program delivery. This includes observation.

Program supervision sessions should be carefully structured and managed with clearly defined goals and objectives and should follow the monitoring and evaluation principles within this Framework. To establish a guided and consistent approach to supervision a standardised structured template (Program Supervision Feedback Form- see page 16) should be used for the purpose of facilitator evaluation, reflective practice and program quality assurance that include:

- A set process
- An evaluation procedure (integrity checklist)
- Outcomes to measure success and best practice principles
- Facilitator feedback
- Practice reflections and supportive discussion
- Opportunities for professional development

As part of adopting consistent approach to facilitator/program monitoring/support and evaluation a quality assurance template should be implemented during supervision specific to program delivery. This template (Program Supervision Feedback Form- page16) addresses the following key areas:

- Adherence to program manual, content and material
- Adherence to treatment style and understanding of intervention methodologies. (Linking theory to practice using CBT principles)
- Group work skills and participant engagement
- Program responsivity and professional discretion
- Facilitator strengths and competencies
- Areas for learning and practice development



### **Proforma for Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

To assess each of the above key areas, specific questions should be followed to assist in developing a prescriptive and measurable evaluation process. The following questions should be administered under each assessment domain:

#### Adherence to program manual, content and material:

- (a) Were the program activities set up, explained to the group clearly and delivered correctly?
- (b) Did the session follow the suggested timing schedule?
- (c) Was the session delivered at a pace that met the learning needs of the group?
- (d) Were clear and appropriate links made between thoughts, feelings and behaviour?
- (e) Where all learning points covered?
- (f) Where program related activities followed and completed correctly?

#### Adherence to treatment style and understanding of intervention methodologies:

- (a) Was there clearly demonstrated motivational interaction skills?
- (b) Did the facilitator actively demonstrate listening, reflecting and paraphrasing skills?
- (c) Was the facilitation delivery style warm, genuine and empathic towards the participants?
- (d) Did the facilitator appropriately challenge the participants criminal and anti social attitudes and beliefs?

#### Group works skills and participant engagement

- (a) Were participants encouraged, motivated and engaged by the facilitator in the group treatment process?
- (b) Effective co-facilitation of treatment group

#### Program responsivity and professional discretion

- (a) Flexible program delivery that responds to the needs of all group participants.
- (b) Appropriate adaptation of program material to reflect differences in culture, ethnicity, gender, age social background and various life experiences of participants.



### Facilitator strengths and competencies

- (a) Confidence in style of presentation
- (b) Did the facilitator display the ability to engage offenders in intervention and enhance motivation for change?
- (c) Did the facilitator demonstrate analytical skills and a non-judgemental attitude?

### Areas for learning and practice development

## **2.6 The Supervision Contract**

It is fundamental to the supervision process that the supervisor and facilitator have an agreed contract in place that highlights key principles of supervision. The rationale for a supervision contract is:

- A contract can create a foundation for both the facilitator and supervisor to feel safe, respected and supported
- A contract ensures the style of working in supervision is structured, collaborative and helps to direct supervision to process, content and relationship
- Professional boundaries can be established through making explicit the developmental, professional and organisational functions of supervision
- A contract is designed to avoid a situation where the facilitator and supervisor have different expectations of supervision that might damage the normal supervisory relationship
- The amicable negotiation of mutual expectations at the formative stages of supervision helps avoid problems later in supervision

Key points to consider when developing a supervision contract are:

- Rules and policy regarding confidentiality
- The methods and techniques that will be used during supervision
- Goals, aims and objectives of supervision
- Discussion of prior experiences of supervision, so that supervision can be promoted as a positive developmental experience



- The rights and responsibilities of both the program facilitator and supervisor
- How the effectiveness of supervision will be measured/evaluated
- How any problems within the supervisory alliance will be handled from both the facilitator and supervisor perspective
- How issues that are outside the competence of the supervisor will be handled
- How the development of competencies will be addressed from both a facilitator and supervisor perspective
- The method of reviewing or renegotiating the supervision contract if necessary

For program supervision to be effective it must explore all relevant parts of a facilitator's professional practice. This includes:

- The therapeutic alliance/relationship and participant engagement issues
- Program/group participant formulation/group dynamics
- Use of therapeutic techniques, e.g. simulation, role-plays
- Discussion about therapeutic and group work strategies
- Case presentations
- Review of audio and videotapes
- Direct observation of practice
- The facilitator's thoughts, attitudes, beliefs with exploration of the impact of these on therapeutic and professional behaviour
- Knowledge and review of treatment underpinnings/program manuals
- Psycho-educational material
- Experiential exercises



### 2.7 Peer Group Supervision

Peer group supervision (PGS) utilises a structured process that allows a group of facilitators or clinicians to provide professional support to each other as part of their day to day work practice. A PGS model allows members of the group to collaboratively contribute to the learning and development of each group member. The PGS process enables members too individually and as a group to engage in clinical problem solving using reflective practice techniques. The process can distribute information, promote learning, discuss ethical boundaries and practice and explore difficult clinical and professional situations that may have arisen during the course of program facilitation.

A PGS model for professional support can be especially beneficial to participants when there is a frequent absence of a professional supervisor or 'expert' to take on a support role. PGS clearly has many advantages for participants. Some of which include:

- increased access/frequency of supervision
- reciprocal learning through the sharing of experiences
- increased skills and responsibility for self assessment through reflective practice
- decreased dependency on expert supervisors
- increased self ownership of professional development

Peer supervision can play a valuable role in providing more people, more access to more supervision which in turn impacts on the quality of interventions to program participants. It has the potential to provide valuable skills building for individuals in reflective practice and promotes a positive learning and practice culture. PGS requires supervisees to be self directed learners, determining their own supervision needs, choosing methods and tools that will meet them and using the group for as a resource for learning and practice development.

However literature suggests (Hawkins and Sholet 2007) that in the absence of a supervisor there is a greater need for firm and clear structure, identified objectives, clarity of purpose as well as a high level of commitment from each member to make the process beneficial.



### **Self-assessment**

The responsibility of maintaining program integrity falls heavily on facilitators delivering the treatment program. To assist in achieving this, facilitators undertake self-assessment following every session delivered to determine the extent to which they have optimised the group member's engagement in the program and minimised problems associated with program drift, reversal and non-compliance. PGS sessions are a forum where these can be aired and explored.

### **Peer assessment/video monitoring**

Peer/Program Supervisor assessment of videos can be used to measure the quality of program delivery and to provide facilitators with feedback on practice strengths and areas for further development. The facilitator should be provided the opportunity to monitor at least one session from each program they deliver as well as adopting the practice of completing detailed case notes where required specific to program delivery on the Offender Information Management System (OIMS) for the OPU program supervisor to review as part of the supervision and quality assurance process.

## **2.8 Key Stakeholder Communication**

Ongoing collaborative relationship building between the OPU and the organisational environments responsible for delivering programs are vital so that the support mechanisms are clear for the program facilitators. Program facilitators need an avenue to communicate any issues or concerns relating to program delivery, professional development and training, and support needs so these problems are resolved.

OPU staff must follow management reporting lines when scheduling and providing program supervision. These include the direct line manager of the staff member being supervised such as Manager Offender Services and Programs (MOSP), Regional Operations

Manager (RMO) District and Area Managers. The role of OPU in the provision of supervision to program facilitators and other staff who deliver programs is a non-managerial function. A program supervisor does not have any line management responsibility for the supervisee; therefore appropriate communication pathways must always be used when formally addressing issues relevant to program delivery and professional development.



The direct line managers should be the program facilitator's initial port of call to notify issues that may arise in the implementation and delivery of programs. It is the role of the manager to support the program facilitator in everything that concerns the local planning of the service to be delivered, clients to be assessed, data to be provided. The manager, not the program facilitator, should deal with local management issues concerning programs.

The supervision feedback that is provided to managers by the program supervisor is to be in writing following the format as outlined in the Supervision Feedback form. To enable supervision transparency this written feedback will also be provided to the supervisee. As part of the consultative supervision process verbal feedback is also given to the supervisee at the time of group observation.

Where there is any doubt as to the conditions under which the program should be run, in the first instance advice must be sought from the program supervisor (OPU). Suggestions about possible changes to the programs should be referred to the Offender Programs Unit so that any changes can be made centrally and be available to all.



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