

Code of Ethics and Practice for Supervisors

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Ethics and Practice applies to all COSRT Members who are working as Supervisors, and who are required to adhere to this at all times.
- 1.2 Supervisors are responsible for adhering to the latest version of this Code. Sanctions may be imposed if it is contravened. (See [COSRT Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure](#))
- 1.3 This Code is to be read in conjunction with the [COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice for Members](#), which can be obtained from COSRT PO Box 13686, London SW20 9ZH or online at www.cosrt.org.uk.

2. Ethical Principles of COSRT

The Code is underpinned by the following ethical principles:

- 2.1 Trustworthiness: striving for the highest standards of professional competence and fitness to practise as a Supervisor.
- 2.2 Respect: for the dignity, autonomy and right to self-determination of the Supervisee and his or her Clients.
- 2.3 Beneficence: promotion of the wellbeing of the Supervisee and his or her Clients and acting in his or her best interests.
- 2.4 Non-maleficence: avoidance by the Supervisor of exploitation and abuse; to do no harm to the Supervisee or his or her Clients.
- 2.5 Anti-discrimination: commitment by the Supervisor to equality transparency and fairness in all interactions.

3. Guidance for Ethical Supervision Practice

- 3.1 Fitness to practise as a Supervisor
 - 3.1.1 Psychological and emotional health and fitness to practise must be maintained at a level that ensures the provision of an effective supervision service. There is an expectation that this will be monitored by the Supervisor and his or her supervisor of supervision.
 - 3.1.2 Advice from a supervisor of supervision or other suitable colleague should be sought if a Supervisor's effectiveness becomes impaired for any reason, including health or personal circumstances.
 - 3.1.3 Self-awareness is essential for safe practice as a Supervisor. It is recommended that Supervisors continue working on their own self-development and self-awareness throughout their professional lives, using personal counselling, personal therapy or other appropriate means e.g. attending self-development workshops.
- 3.2 Competence as a Supervisor

- 3.2.1 Supervision is an essential part of maintaining competence as a supervisor. Supervisors must have access to experienced supervisors of supervision or consultants for appropriate personal and professional support and development in their supervisory practice. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 1: Supervision and the Supervision Contract](#) which also applies to the supervision of supervision)
- 3.2.2 Continuing professional development as a Supervisor is required by COSRT for all Supervisors. (See COSRT Practice Guideline 3: Continuing Professional Development)
- 3.2.3 It is recognised that during a Supervisor's career, breaks in therapeutic practice may occur for various reasons. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to ensure he or she is competent to practise on their return to work.
- 3.2.4 Awareness of new developments in the fields of supervision and sexual and relationship therapy is necessary for all Supervisors, in order that the Supervisee and his or her Clients can be offered options in the light of the fullest available knowledge.
- 3.2.5 Awareness should be maintained of any statutory legislation that may impact upon a Supervisor's work or the work of Supervisees with their Clients.
- 3.2.6 Recognising individual limitations as a Supervisor is important, as is having knowledge of the availability of other consultants or supervisors to whom referral can be made.
- 3.2.7 Transparency regarding qualifications is essential. Supervisors must make apparent to the Supervisee the level of his or her qualifications and whether they are in training.
- 3.3 The Supervisory Relationship
 - 3.3.1 Appropriate professional care of the Supervisee and his or her Clients must be maintained in the supervisory relationship and in all interactions between the Supervisor and the Supervisee.
 - 3.3.2 A contract, preferably in writing and signed by the Supervisor and the Supervisee, needs to be in place before embarking on any supervision. This establishes the rights and responsibilities of both parties in their working relationship. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 1: Supervision and the Supervision Contract](#))
 - 3.3.3 Supervisors must not abuse the supervisory relationship financially, emotionally, sexually, or in any other way.

- 3.3.4 Appropriate boundaries to the supervisory relationship must be made, understood and maintained both during and after the supervisory relationship has ended.
 - 3.3.5 Dual relationships require careful consideration of the possible implications for the Supervisee. Every effort should be made to avoid risking confusion between the pre-existing relationship and the professional relationship, which may impact adversely on the supervision.
 - 3.3.6 Trust and safety in the supervisory relationship can be undermined if conflicts arise that are not dealt with effectively. Where these arise, the Supervisor is expected to manage the situation honestly and to refer on appropriately if the issues cannot be resolved, or if the supervisory relationship becomes untenable for any other reason.
- 3.4 Safekeeping
- 3.4.1 Appropriate premises are necessary, where privacy can normally be ensured and there is a minimum likelihood of interruption.
 - 3.4.2 Record keeping is expected in good supervision practice. Arrangements for the safekeeping and disposal of records require consideration in line with legal requirements. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 6: Record Keeping](#)).
 - 3.4.3 Adequate insurance cover is mandatory for Supervisors to cover all their professional supervision activities. The insurance needs to be sufficient to meet any legal claim made by a Supervisee or third parties, either through the Supervisor's own professional insurance or public insurance where an employer provides cover. It must also be sufficient for legal representation and expenses in the event of a complaint being raised against the Supervisor.

Supervisors working online should ensure that they are covered for working in this environment.

Supervisors are reminded that insurance cover is required for five years after the cessation of supervision practice. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 10: Supervisors' Professional Insurance](#))
 - 3.4.4 A Professional Executor should be appointed to ensure appropriate care of Supervisees in the event of unplanned cessation of practice. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 7: The Appointment and Duties of a Professional Executor](#))
- 3.5 Anti-discriminatory practice (See also [COSRT Rule 6: Equal Opportunities Policy](#))
- 3.5.1 Anti-discriminatory practice should underpin all professional activities. The value and dignity of Supervisees and their Clients must be recognised at all times. The Supervisor must work in ways that respect the individuality of the

Supervisee, his or her Clients, and colleagues with regard to issues of difference, such as religion, race, gender, age, beliefs, orientation, sexuality and disability.

3.5.2 Issues of prejudice and stereotyping are universal. Supervisors have a duty to bring possible prejudices into their conscious awareness and to consider ways in which this may affect the supervisory process.

3.5.3 Attitudes, assumptions and values can be identified by the language used and interventions offered. Supervisors must ensure that interventions offered are culturally acceptable to the Supervisee and his or her Clients.

3.5.4 Autonomy and right to self-determination of Supervisees and their Clients must be protected, subject to the limits of confidentiality and safety.

3.6 Conducting Therapy Online

3.6.1 Supervisors must ensure that they have appropriate training to work electronically. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 9: Online Therapy and Supervision](#))

3.6.2 Adherence to COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice applies to all virtual and electronic environments.

3.6.3 It is recommended that online supervision be conducted by experienced Supervisors only.

3.7 Research and Publication

3.7.1 Any research involving Supervisees, their Clients or other participants must conform to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki 1964 www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/ as modified by the 59th WMA General Assembly, Seoul, Korea, October 2008, or such other declaration or modification which may be adopted from time to time. This provides guidelines and basic principles for combining research involving human subjects with professional care.

3.7.2 The research methods used must comply with the COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice and must not affect Supervisees, their Clients or other participants adversely. The dissemination of research in any format, which includes clinical material, must safeguard the welfare and anonymity of Supervisees and their clients. (See [COSRT Practice Guideline 8: Research](#))

3.7.3 Publication of work within the field of supervision of sexual and relationship therapy develops the Profession by communicating research and knowledge to the community. COSRT Supervisors are encouraged to publish their work. It is the responsibility of authors to be both objective and critical and not to abuse the trust of the reader. Informed written consent must be

obtained from the Supervisee, and his or her Clients if relevant when supervisory or clinical material is offered for publication.

3.7.4 Correctness and accuracy of work reported in publication are essential to avoid bringing COSRT and the Profession into disrepute. Research misconduct such as falsification, fabrication, plagiarism and the misappropriation of credit in publication are all unacceptable.

3.8 Working with Agencies

3.8.1 In agency work it is essential to be acquainted with agency policies or codes of conduct with regard to such matters as supervision, contracting, child protection, record keeping, research and publication, Supervisees' access to records, correspondence etc.

3.8.2 Where there is a discrepancy between COSRT standards and agency standards, the Supervisor is responsible for bringing this to the attention of both agencies and seeking further guidance

3.9 Advertising

3.9.1 The Supervisor commits to ensuring their advertising or promotions undertaken must be accurate.

3.9.2 Where a Supervisor promotes any particular therapy, product or service, this must be done in an accurate and responsible way.

3.9.3 Testimonials from Supervisees in any advertising material are not allowed.

3.9.4 Supervisors in training, whether on a COSRT approved course or other appropriate training, must not advertise themselves as supervisors until they have obtained their qualification.

3.9.5 Only Supervisors who have had their Accreditation ratified may use COSRT Accredited Supervisor in advertising and promotion.

3.9.6 Online advertising and promotions including web sites must meet the above requirements. Attention should be given to the requirements of COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice for Supervisors when using information leaflets, forums, email, social network sites and blogs.

3.10 Responsible Standards of Conduct to COSRT and the Profession of Supervision and Sexual and Relationship Therapy

3.10.1 Supervisors must pay their subscriptions on time (See [COSRT Rule 2: Policy for Members Who Do Not Pay their Subscription](#))

3.10.2 Where there is a concern about another Supervisor's fitness to practice, a Supervisor has a duty to respond appropriately and to take action if necessary. The Supervisor may consult his or her supervisor of supervision if this is considered appropriate. Due attention must be paid to the possibility of breaching confidentiality.

- 3.10.3 Supervisors should conduct themselves responsibly at all times. Any activities which could bring COSRT or the profession of supervision of sexual and relationship therapy into disrepute should be avoided. Caution should be exercised when participating in social activities in all public venues including social networking sites on the internet, where information about and images of the Supervisor are made public.
- 3.10.4 Conviction of a criminal offence wherever entered against a Supervisor must be reported to COSRT.
- 3.10.5 A complaint upheld against a Supervisor in another organisation must be reported to COSRT by the Supervisor. COSRT reserves the right to investigate, with the possibility of imposing sanctions.
- 3.10.6 Failing to abide by COSRT's Code of Ethics and Practice for Supervisors may result in sanctions being applied. If the Supervisor does not comply with the sanctions Membership will be terminated.

(See [COSRT Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure](#)).