College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists

Good Therapy

COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice for Supervisors 2019

Good Therapy (Supervisors)

This guidance has been edited for plain English. Published August 2019

Comes into effect 5 August 2019

This guidance should be read and implemented alongside and in addition to Good Therapy – COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice 2019

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Good therapy (Supervisors) in action

1. Therapists need good supervisors. Good supervisors make the care of supervisees and service users their first concern: they are competent, keep their knowledge and skills up to date, establish and maintain good relationships with service users and colleagues, are honest and trustworthy, and act with integrity and within the law.

2. Good supervisors work in partnership with supervisees and respect their rights to privacy and dignity. They treat each supervisee as an individual. They do their best to ensure supervisees receive support to help them provide excellent therapy whilst maintaining their own wellbeing.

3. "Good Therapy – COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice for Supervisors" describes what is expected of all COSRT Supervisors. It is your responsibility to be familiar with Good Therapy (Supervisors) and all other related ethical and conduct policies and guidance.

4. You must use your judgement in applying the principles to the various situations you will face as a supervisor. You must be prepared to explain and justify your decisions and actions.

5. In Good Therapy (Supervisors) we use 'you must' and 'you should' in the following ways:
   - 'You must' is used for an overriding duty or principle.
   - 'You should' is used when we are providing an explanation of how you will meet the overriding duty.
   - 'You should' is also used where the duty or principle will not apply in all situations or circumstances, or where there are factors outside your control that affect whether or how you can follow the guidance.

Underlying principles

6. Five fundamental ethical principles underpin and inform this Code of Ethics, inspiring COSRT and its Supervisors towards excellence. COSRT recognises that ethical decision making is contextual. A framework of principles is suitable to allow consideration of the context of the situation and practitioner involved. The fundamental principles of this code are:

Working towards the good of service users and doing no harm (Beneficence and Non-maleficence)

7. Supervisors must hold the welfare of supervisees central to their work and commit to avoiding harm.

Being trustworthy and responsible (Fidelity)

8. Supervisors should work to establish trust with all. Therefore, you should not only honour the trust placed in you by supervisees, but also act in a respectful, professional and ethical manner as a representative of your profession.

Respect for the dignity and rights of the service user (Autonomy)

9. Supervisees have the right to self-determination and to be shown dignity and respect for making their own lawful decisions.

Justice

10. Supervisors should be aware their own judgements are informed by experience, and need to take precautions to provide supervision unrestricted by prejudice and limitations of experience. This also means showing respect for diversity without prejudice to colour, race, belief, gender, sexuality, social context, and mental and physical abilities.

Integrity and self-responsibility

11. Supervisors work to be as honest, truthful and accurate as possible. You are also responsible for looking after your own needs and health. So, you must only commit to a practice that you can offer being aware of your own expertise, training, health and wellbeing and let the service user know if anything changes.

Section 1: Maintaining standards as a supervisor

Fitness to practice

12. You must maintain psychological and emotional health and fitness to practice at a level that ensures the provision of an effective supervision service.

13. You should have your fitness to practice monitored by a supervisor of supervision.

14. You should seek advice from a supervisor of supervision or suitable colleague if your effectiveness becomes impaired.

15. You should continue working on self-development and self-awareness throughout your professional life, using personal counselling, personal therapy or other appropriate means.

Competence as a Supervisor

16. You must have access to experienced supervisors of supervision or consultants for appropriate support and development in your supervisory practice.

17. You must adhere to COSRT's requirements for continuing professional development as a Supervisor.

18. You should ensure you are competent to practice when you return to work after any career break.

19. You must keep your knowledge of relevant statutory legislation up to date.

Maintain professional boundaries

20. You must not abuse the supervisory relationship financially, emotionally, sexually, or in any other way.

21. You must not enter a supervisory relationship with intimate partners, relatives, close friends and business associates.

22. You must ensure that appropriate boundaries to the supervisory relationship are made, understood and maintained during and after the supervisory relationship.

23. You must carefully consider dual relationships and the possible implications for the Supervisee and Supervisor.

24. You should take steps to avoid risking confusion between any pre-existing relationship and the professional relationship, which may impact adversely on the supervision.

25. You should avoid dual relationships where possible they should be avoided.

26. You should manage any conflict within supervision honestly and refer the situation appropriately if the issues cannot be resolved, or if the supervisory relationship becomes untenable for any other reason.

Contract properly

27. You must agree a contract with the supervisee before starting supervision. This should:
    a. be written and signed by both parties
    b. establish the rights and responsibilities of both parties in their working relationship
    c. outline aims of therapy when and how and when supervision will end.

Section 2: Safety

Protecting supervisees

28. You must have adequate insurance cover 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.

29. You must have insurance cover for five years after the end of supervision practice.

30. You should appoint a Professional Executor to ensure appropriate care of Supervisees in the event of unplanned cessation of practice.

31. You should use appropriate premises for supervision, where privacy can normally be ensured and there is a minimum likelihood of interruption.

Respond to risks to safety

32. If you have concerns that a supervisor may not be fit to practice you must ask for advice from a colleague, another professional body or us. If you are still concerned you must report this to COSRT or the appropriate body, and make a record of the steps you have taken.

Working online

33. You should only conduct online supervision if you have relevant training.

34. You should only conduct online supervision if you are an experienced Supervisor.

Section 3: Communication and information sharing

Research and publications

35. You must ensure that any research involving supervisees, their Clients or other participants conforms 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.

36. You must use research methods that comply with the COSRT Code of Ethics and Practice and they must not affect Supervisees, their Clients or other participants adversely.

37. You must ensure that the dissemination of research in any format, which includes clinical material, safeguards the welfare and anonymity of Supervisees and their clients.

Act with honesty and integrity

38. You must make apparent to all parties, the level of your qualifications and whether you are in training, and this must be clearly stated on the COSRT website and personal websites.

39. You must not advertise as a supervisor until you have obtained your qualification.

40. You must only use COSRT Accredited Supervisor in advertising and promotion if you have had your Accreditation ratified.

Openness and legal or disciplinary proceedings

41. You must tell us without delay if, anywhere in the world:
    a. you have accepted a caution from the police or been criticised by an official inquiry
    b. you have been charged with or found guilty of a criminal offence
    c. another professional body has made a finding against your membership or registration as a result of fitness to practise, complaints or conduct procedures.

42. If you are suspended by an organisation from a post, or have restrictions placed on your practice, you must inform COSRT and any other organisations you carry out work for and any supervisees.