



BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

# TIPS WHEN TAKING ON A NEW SUPERVISEE

The Board recognizes that serving as a supervisor entails dedication and responsibility, and commends licensees who work hard to develop new mental health professionals contributing to the provision of quality mental health services in our state. Following is guidance to both new supervisors as well as experienced supervisors seeking to refresh their approach.

While ensuring the quality of services provided to clients by supervisees is paramount, it is equally essential for supervisors to nurture the professional growth and competence of their supervisees. Following are some tips to help achieve this balance, especially when taking on a new supervisee:

**Develop a Supervisory Plan:** California law requires a supervisor and supervisee to sign a **Supervision Agreement** within 60 days of commencing supervision. This agreement requires the inclusion of a Supervisory Plan, outlining collaboratively set goals and objectives. Use this initial 60-day period to get to know your supervisee and develop a plan together tailored to their needs:

- Take the time to understand your supervisee's cultural identity, including personal and professional background, experiences, interests, and perceived strengths and weaknesses.
- Encourage your supervisee to reflect on their clinical goals and aspirations to pursue during supervision, including specific skills they wish to develop.
- Ensure that the goals and objectives set are both meaningful and measurable to evaluate the supervisee's progress.

**Determine Your Supervisory Approach and Methods:** Consider your supervisee's level of training, experience, and proficiency when deciding on your supervisory approach. Different methods of supervision may be more suitable at different stages of their development. For instance, less experienced supervisees may benefit from individual supervision sessions. When considering providing supervision via videoconferencing, the law requires supervisors to assess the appropriateness of this method. This assessment must include, but is not limited to, the abilities of the supervisee, the preferences of both the supervisee and supervisor, and the privacy of the locations of the supervisee and supervisor while supervision is conducted.

Best practices include conducting one or more initial in-person meetings to jump-start the relationship-building process, develop the Supervision Agreement, and establish protocols

for use of the technology. It is important to ensure that the supervisor and supervisee have reliable and private Wi-Fi access. In terms of monitoring and assessing performance, for less experienced supervisees you may wish to use live observation of therapy sessions. For more experienced supervisees, review of video or audio recordings regularly may suffice.

**Develop a Strong Working Relationship:** Invest time in fostering a collaborative relationship with your supervisee. Be aware that factors such as culture, race, ethnicity, age, gender/gender orientation, academic background, religious and spiritual practices, romantic/sexual orientation, and disability may affect the supervisory relationship and process, and should be discussed. Open discussions about responsibilities, expectations, and contextual factors will foster the trust and understanding that is essential for effective supervision.

**Avoid Your Supervisee Losing Experience Hours:** Several avoidable factors could result in your supervisee losing valuable experience hours towards licensure. Take the following proactive measures to prevent such occurrences:

- Ensure your compliance with all requirements for serving as a supervisor. (BBS website: [Supervisor Resources](#) page).
- Be fastidious about renewing your license on time, including completing the continuing education required for renewal.
- Complete a [Supervision Agreement](#) within 60 days of commencing supervision with each supervisee.
- Sign the supervisee's Weekly Log of Experience Hours on a weekly basis.

- If you're not employed by your supervisee's employer, ensure a Written Oversight Agreement is in place prior to commencement of supervision. The supervisee is required to provide this signed agreement with their application for licensure (see the [Sample Written Oversight Agreement](#)).
- Ensure that you provide the amount of weekly supervision necessary for a supervisee to count the hours worked in that week.
- Confirm that your supervisee is classified as either a W-2 employee or a volunteer, and not as an independent contractor.

For further details, refer to the Board's FAQs for Associates (access at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)>Applicant>(select the Associate's license type)>Forms/Pubs).

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**Note:** This article provides introductory information to help support supervisors. Please read the Statutes and Regulations pertaining to supervision to familiarize yourself with all requirements. A list of legal references can be found [here](#). Check with your professional association about best practices for supervision sessions.

**References:**

**Quick Guide for Clinical Supervisors**, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4770 Printed 2013, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

**APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology** (2014), American Psychological Association.

**Planning to Supervise via Videoconferencing?** (2023) Board of Behavioral Sciences.



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