

Clinical educator tip sheet: Student supervision

Occupational Therapy Clinical Education Program

What are clinical educator tip sheets?

The contribution of clinical educators to a student's learning and development while on placement is fundamental to the success of the placement and the overall outcomes for the student. This series of tip sheets aim to equip clinical educators with knowledge, information, processes and tools on key topics related to placement organisation and student learning.

Why is this topic relevant?

Supervision is a key component which supports the success of a placement. The relationship between the student and the clinical educator is critical to the supervisory process and the overall success of the placement (Kilminster and Jolly 2000). This tip sheet aims to guide clinical educators to provide effective supervision during placements.

What are the expectations regarding student supervision?

It is recommended that students and supervisors meet formally each week for at least 1 hour. Using a consistent time will assist the student in creating a routine for their week. Particular elements have been identified which are considered to represent good practice in student supervision. Supervision should:

- Be structured and scheduled- not reactive
- Be enabled or guided – not controlled or directed
- Encourage self-reflection, learning and self-appraisal
- Encourage problem solving

- Include questions, reflection, clarification and discussion
- Clarify expectations – use learning plan and SPEF-R
- include feedback
- Identify goals for improvements and strategies to achieve these
- Be conducted in a safe environment

(adapted from Fone, 2006)

What should student supervision include?

Student supervision can be used for a variety of purposes and include a range of strategies and techniques to support learning. Clinical educators might consider the following for inclusion into planned sessions:

- Discuss and review written work such as progress notes and home visit reports
- Discuss the clients the student is working with including any difficulties.
- Discuss assessment procedures and planned treatment programs
- Discuss challenges (clinical or otherwise) and develop strategies to address these
- Review learning contracts and learning plans
- Check that administrative requirements such as statistics are being completed correctly
- Review progress with projects
- Review the SPEF-R items in relation to the student's learning goals and to any learning opportunities the workplace can offer.

(OTPEC-Q 2007)

An experiential learning diary or a reflective self appraisal tool can provide an indication of a students' level of understanding and enable in

depth reflection without the need for excessive questioning by the clinical educator. They can be completed prior to or within the supervision session. Situations could be identified by either the student or supervisor. This enables the supervisee to direct the supervision agenda (Todd and Freshwater, 1999) and allows the learner to receive feedback on clinical and reflective practice skill (Clouder and Sellars, 2004).

What format should a supervision session take?

The Ask-Listen-Tell approach in both formal and informal supervision sessions can be helpful way to promote a collaborative approach to reviewing the students progress. At each of the following stages, ask the student first, listen to their responses, then tell providing empathic, assertive and specific feedback.

- What is going well? Students strengths, highlights, times of success.
- What are the areas for development? Skills or competencies to be worked on.
- What are the strategies? The way that the student will work on these areas and continue to develop their strengths.
- What are the opportunities? The times that the student can use the strategies to develop their skills.

(Government of Western Australia On Track elearning Module 3: On the road of supervision)

A range of supervision resources are available from Module 3 of the Western Australia On Track elearning package available at the following link: http://www.health.wa.gov.au/wactn/home/wachs_resources.cfm

The Occupational Therapy Practice Education Collaborative- Queensland have produced a series of videos to support clinical educators, including: [Supervision sessions with students](#), [Occupational Therapy theory and clinical reasoning](#), [Scaffolding student learning](#), [Promoting reflective practice](#)

References

- Clouder, L. and Sellars, J. (2004). Reflective Practice and Clinical Supervision: an interprofessional perspective. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 46(3), 262-269.
- Fone, S. (2006) Effective supervision for Occupational Therapist: the development and implementation of an information package. *Australian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 53, 2-7.
- Todd, G. & Freshwater D. (1999) Reflective Practice and guided discovery: clinical supervision. *British Journal of nursing*, 8(20), 1383-1389.
- Kilminster, S.M & Jolly, B.C (2000) Effective Supervision in Clinical Practice Settings: a literature review. *Medical Education* 34; 827-840.
- Occupational Therapy Practice Education Collaborative - Queensland (2007) [Clinical Educator's Resource Kit](#) WA On Track elearning package Module 3; On the Road to Supervision. WA Country Health Service & NT Regional training Network.

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