



SUPERVISION POLICY

1. Background and context

Supervision is the regular meeting together between a staff member with the designated responsibility for supervision (Supervisor) and another staff member to meet organisational, program and professional objectives. It is a two-way process between the Supervisor and the staff member to ensure competent, accountable performance according to the work role, collaborative resolution of issues, continuing professional development and support. Supervision is a core process utilized by Berry Street to ensure that we meet our goal to have the “best staff”.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all Berry Street staff. Supervision should provide an opportunity to:

- Ensure accountability to and understanding of Berry Street’s vision, principles, values, policies and procedures.
- Discuss workplan and revise work priorities in accordance with the Position Description.
- Identify general issues and areas for improvement and develop strategies to address these.
- Explore strengths and resources - individually, within team, region, organisation, etc.
- Reflect on and learn from practice, build knowledge, skills and capacity to work independently.
- Identify organisational, program and professional boundaries and requirements.
- Review professional relationships within the team.
- Receive guidance, support and practice directions.
- Relate theory to practice (e.g.: policy to implementation).
- Discuss complex practice standards and workplace issues (e.g.: duty of care, confidentiality, privacy, health and safety requirements, etc)
- Receive feedback about achievements and contribution to Berry Street.
- Maximise the opportunities to communicate important issues through line management.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities according to the Position Description.

3. Definitions

Staff member - An employee of Berry Street, employed on a permanent part-time, or full-time basis.

Supervisor - An employee of Berry Street with designated responsibility for providing supervision on a one-one basis for one or more staff members. No supervisor will be expected to supervise more than six people.

Induction - The initial 3-month period of employment with Berry Street. This induction period may be otherwise referred to as 'probationary period' and is further explained in the Berry Street Victoria Enterprise Agreement 2005-2007.

Administrative Staff Group - A staff member employed to undertake administrative-type roles with Berry Street including, but not limited to, positions covering: Human Resources, Finance, Reception, Personal Assistants, Property Services, Information Technology, Community Relations.

Residential Staff Group - A staff member employed, on a roster, to work within Berry Street's residential services programs.

Client/Community Service Staff Group - A staff member employed to undertake program/client service delivery including, but not limited to, positions such as: Case Management, Outreach Work, Foster care, Networking, Educational Work, Counselling.

One-One Supervision - A regular, scheduled meeting between a Supervisor and a Staff Member which is private, confidential, uninterrupted and provides a forum in which to meet the Purpose of Supervision as outlined in Section 4 (below).

Informal Supervision - Informal supervision may take many forms, can occur on an ad hoc basis and may be provided by people other than the Staff Members' Supervisor, with the focus on meeting the Purpose of Supervision as outlined in Section 4 (below).

Mentoring/Coaching - Mentoring/Coaching provides an opportunity to problem-solve and/or improve a specific competency in relation to a staff members' work role. As such, one staff member may engage with different coaches/mentors in relation to different issues over time.

Confidentiality in Supervision - Supervision is confidential between the supervisor and the staff member, except where work performance or issues are impacting on duty of care and legislative requirements of Berry Street.

Minimum Standards - Minimum standards provide a baseline practice and measurement guide for implementation of this policy. Minimum standards cannot be lowered, however exceeding the minimum indicators is acceptable where the particular requirements of the work area, demands on the employee, etc warrant additional supervision, which may be on a time-limited basis.

4. Policy provisions

4.1. Frequency and Forms of Supervision

The frequency and forms of supervision will vary throughout Berry Street to reflect the diversity of the programs, the nature of the work and the varying responsibilities, needs and experiences of staff.

4.1.1. One-One supervision is a common form of formal supervision provided to staff and sets the minimum standard required in this policy. Additional forms of supervision are

encouraged to complement one-one supervision. The forms and methods used in addition to regular one-one supervision must be discussed between the Supervisor and the Staff Member when negotiating the Supervision Agreement during the Staff Member's induction period.

- 4.1.2 The table on the following page outlines minimum standards of individual supervision during and post induction and identifies additional forms of supervision that may augment this. The minimum standard for one-one supervision is based on full-time employment with Berry Street. (pro-rata).
- 4.1.3 One-one supervision, as set out in the minimum standards, is a key component of Berry Street's organizational culture and day-to-day operations. It is as such required that one-one supervision is planned and occurs within the core working hours of the staff member.
- 4.1.4 If supervision is cancelled, it must be re-negotiated. The person requesting the cancellation is responsible for ensuring a mutually agreeable new time is scheduled as soon as possible. The Supervision Record should demonstrate a pattern of regular supervision.
- 4.1.5 From time to time, staff may need an immediate response when guidance or defusing is required. This does not necessarily need to involve the staff person's direct Supervisor and may be provided by other staff person(s) as nominated by the Supervisor.
- 4.1.6 Berry Street is firmly committed to providing quality supervision through existing supervision structures within the organization. Where there is a requirement for external supervision, the relevant Director will need to authorize an external supervision agreement.
- 4.1.7 Berry Street recognizes that Indigenous staff may require Cultural Supervision to be effective in their roles. Discussions regarding a need for cultural supervision should be directed to the workplace supervisor, the Director or to the Manager Aboriginal Service Development.
- 4.1.8 Where the allocated time, as per minimum standards, for supervision is deemed to be inadequate by either or both parties, an extra amount of time may be negotiated and a timeline agreed for the review of this arrangement. Additional supervision time may be required if issues of poor performance, communication difficulties or high workload are identified by a manager.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ONE-ONE SUPERVISION			
Staff Groupings	Induction Period	Post Induction (Pro-rata)	Additional Forms of Supervision
Administrative	½ hour per week	1 hour per month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site meetings ▪ Team meetings ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Regional staff meetings ▪ Informal supervision
Residential	1 hour per week	1 hour per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team meetings ▪ Peer/unit meetings ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Informal supervision
Client / Community Services	1 hour per week	1 hour per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team meetings ▪ Case reviews ▪ Intake meetings ▪ Reflecting teams ▪ Peer supervision ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Informal supervision
Resi, Supervisors, Coordinators	1 hour per week	1 hour per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team meetings ▪ Case review ▪ Peer supervision ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Informal supervision
Team Leaders and Managers	1 hour per week	1 hour per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer supervision ▪ Regional Management mtgs ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Informal supervision
Senior Managers	1 hour per week	1 hour per fortnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Senior Managers' meetings ▪ Regional Management mtgs ▪ Peer supervision ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Informal supervision
Directors	1 hour per week	1 hour per month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer supervision ▪ Mentoring/coaching ▪ Informal supervision ▪ Executive Retreats

4.1.9 Under exceptional circumstances a supervisor and staff member may decide to reduce the regularity of supervision for a period of time. This request must be made and approved by the Director- HR in conjunction with the relevant Director.

4.2 Supervision Agreements and Record Keeping

4.2.1 Supervisors are required to develop a supervision agreement with staff they have direct responsibility for using the form Supervision Agreement. This agreement will identify how often supervision will occur and the expectations of both parties. The Supervision Agreement is to be completed within two months of the staff member commencing employment with Berry Street, but should be raised for discussion within the first month. A copy of the Supervision Agreement is to be forwarded to HR and kept on the staff member's personnel file. This Agreement should be reviewed each 12 months as part of the Performance Review.

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- 4.2.2 Supervisors are required to keep a written summary of key issues and subjects discussed in supervision. This is to ensure the continuity of supervision from one session to the next and assist the staff Performance Review process. This document should be forwarded to HR every 12 months with the Performance Review.
- 4.2.3 More detailed notes regarding the discussions held in supervision should also be kept. It is important to remember that these documents may form part of other processes and may be reviewed by external bodies. For this reason they should be factual and accurate. Any notes taken should be agreed by both parties. You may either both sign the notes or simply read them back at the end of supervision to ensure they are an accurate record of events.
- 4.2.4 Regular reviews of supervision objectives, forms and methods are to occur. A formal review of supervision is to occur as part of the annual staff Performance Review process. Both parties may agree to use a Workplan to assist in the process but it is not required if there are other methods of reviewing that key tasks are being completed as required.
- 4.2.5 All written records relating to supervision must be securely stored in a manner which ensures privacy and confidentiality, which is only accessible by the Supervisor and Staff Member, and where necessary by the appropriate line manager. When either party to the supervision agreement leaves their position, supervision records should be forwarded to HR where they will be securely stored and only referred to in the event that there is a significant performance issue or allegation made.
- 4.2.6 Where a supervisor is leaving the organization, ideally a handover meeting will be held with the supervisee, the old and new supervisors. This meeting will discuss the current workplan and any outstanding issues.

4.3 Training for Supervisors

All designated staff given the responsibility of providing staff supervision who have not completed an appropriate supervision course, must complete a course approved by Berry Street within 12 months of undertaking their role as Supervisor. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that this training occurs and to support supervision prior to this training.

4.4 Resolving Disputes

Disputes may arise from the supervision process. Both parties are encouraged to address disputes as they arise and in a collaborative manner. If disputes are not able to be resolved collaboratively, the Berry Street Grievance Procedure should be followed.

5. **Authorities and accountabilities**

5.1 **Employees**

All employees at Berry Street have a responsibility to:

- familiarize themselves with the Supervision and Support Policy after being provided with an overview by their Supervisor;
- work with the Supervisor and mutually negotiate the Supervision Agreement;
- actively participate in the supervision process, in keeping with the requirements of the Supervision Agreement;

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- come prepared, taking the time before supervision to reflect on work events or issues that have occurred since the last supervision session and the desired outcomes for each session;
 - be open and honest in discussing work issues and to actively raise subjects for discussion;
 - provide their Supervisor with regular feedback about the supervision arrangement and how this can be improved;
 - take responsibility for initiating the Berry Street Grievance Procedure if they have unresolved issues stemming from the supervision process;
 - undertake to complete an annual review of supervision as part of the Performance Review

5.2 Supervisors

All Supervisors at Berry Street have a responsibility to:

- provide new staff with an overview of this Supervision and Support Policy during their Induction period;
- negotiate the Supervision Agreement with the staff member within the first two months of new staff commencing employment with Berry Street. A copy of this Agreement must be given to the staff member and a copy forwarded to Human Resources to be placed on the staff member's personnel file;
- keep Supervision appointments as detailed in the Supervision Agreement;
- record key issues and subjects discussed during supervision sessions;
- build trust and encourage the staff member to actively participate in the supervision process;
- continue developing their supervision and support skills by participating in training and other professional development opportunities;
- informally review the Supervision Agreement on an on-going basis and to formally review the Supervision Agreement at the annual Staff Appraisal;
- inform their Line Manager of the frequency, forms and any pertinent themes/issues arising from supervision with their staff;
- inform staff about the existence of the Berry Street Grievance Procedure

6. Specification of related Berry Street and other relevant documentation

6.1 Related Policies and Procedures

- Performance Review Policy
- Professional Development and Training Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy

6.2 Related Tools

- Annual Training Plan
- Berry Street Victoria Grievance Procedure outlined in 'BERRY STREET Enterprise Agreement 2001-2003' and 'Information Kit for new staff' handbook

7. Evaluation

Key performance indicators for this Policy are:

- (a) Regular supervision sessions are being conducted as per policy; and
- (b) Organisational, program and professional objectives are being met.

The Director People, Work and Culture will report on these factors as required

8. Approval and revisions table

8.1 Approval

Approved by:	Board of Directors:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	CEO:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deputy CEO:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Exec Management Team:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date of Approval:	March 1998	
Effective Date:	March 1998	
Review Date:		
Accountable Officer:		
Current incumbent:		
Contact Details:		
Berry Street File Name:	Policy Staff Supervision	

8.2 Revision/modification history

Date:	March 2002
Version:	2
Current title:	Policy - Staff Supervision
Summary of changes:	Consultation draft
Approved/rejected:	
Approval authority:	

Date:	April 2002
Version:	3
Current title:	Policy - Staff Supervision

Summary of changes:	Updated with feedback from consultation
Approved/rejected:	
Approval authority:	

Date:	January 2009
Version:	4
Current title:	Policy - Staff Supervision
Summary of changes:	Updated with font and logo
Approved/rejected:	
Approval authority:	