

# **DHBs FAILING TO PROVIDE SENIOR & SPECIALIST CLINICIANS ADEQUATE SUPERVISION**



In December, 203 psychologists took part in our audit of supervision provided by employers. This issue of the APEX Psychologists' Newsletter contains a breakdown of some of the survey's results and highlights some of the over 60 comments that you made about supervision.

The audit has highlighted three key problems:

- **Difficulty accessing adequate supervision for senior clinicians.**
- **Being unable to access supervision in specialist fields.**
- **Employers ignoring problems of dual relationships.**

As highlighted in our last newsletter clause 15 of the DHB MECA entitles members to appropriate supervision in relation to the psychologist's "level of clinical specialisation and experience, developing specialist skills, dual relationships and supervisory needs."

Appropriate supervision is essential to you and your patients' safety. The Psychologists Board recognises supervision as integral to

ensuring professional competency. Safe and robust supervision is an essential component of safe and effective practice.

Although 78% of members were largely satisfied with their supervision, DHBs are sometimes turning a blind eye to less than ideal supervision, including ignoring considerations like dual relationships.

It is not good enough for DHBs to refuse adequate supervision because of cost. The MECA explicitly states that external supervision may be necessary to provide adequate supervision. APEX will be presenting the results to DHB Allied Health Directors and psychology professional leaders/advisors.

It is important that if your employer is not providing appropriate supervision for your specialist role or for your level of experience that you raise this issue in writing with your service manager or professional advisor.

If you have unresolved concerns with your supervision arrangement after engaging with your employer, contact your delegate for assistance. A list of APEX delegates is available at [apex.org.nz/psychologists](http://apex.org.nz/psychologists)

# **SUPERVISION AUDIT RESULTS**

**1 IN 4**

**SAID  
EXTERNAL  
SUPERVISION  
WAS NEEDED  
BUT NOT MADE  
AVAILABLE AT  
THEIR  
EMPLOYER**

**44%**

**ARE  
UNSURE  
WHETHER  
THEIR  
EMPLOYER  
HAS A FORMAL  
SUPERVISION  
POLICY**

**78%**

**SAID THEY WERE  
LARGELY  
SATISFIED WITH  
THEIR  
SUPERVISION**

**39%**

**SAID THERE ARE NOT  
CLEAR UNDERSTANDINGS  
OF SUPERVISION  
STANDARDS**

**SUPERVISION AT MY EMPLOYER  
INVOLVES A DUAL RELATIONSHIP:**

**4.5%**  
**ALWAYS**

**19.4%**  
**OFTEN**

**38.8%**  
**SOMETIMES**

**26.9%**  
**RARELY**

**10.4%**  
**NEVER**



*"I have provided supervision to others in my service and felt management have tried to use supervision to sort out organisational and performance issues, which I have resisted."*

*"Our supervision policy contains reporting requirements I am very uncomfortable about and threaten the safety of supervision for me."*

*"I am expected to personally fund or do without specialist supervision. Very disappointing."*

*"Heaps of support to access external supervision in the face of personal crisis, paid for by DHB for extended period. Feel well supported."*

*"We have very good psychology practice supervisors and a professional leader who are approachable, knowledgeable and provide excellent support."*

*"In the Ministry of Education there is a growing issue with the limited availability of experienced psychologists to provide supervision."*

*"The DHB has been largely unsupportive of funding specialist supervision."*

*"While it is theoretically possible to access external supervision, the number of hoops you have to jump through makes it essentially impossible."*

*"Seems to be a move to management asking for feedback through supervisor on supervisees work and patient safety. Was in a contract I was given to have my supervisor sign."*

*"I don't think our DHB does a good enough job of holding onto enough senior staff to meet supervision needs."*

"Supervision of very senior staff can be extremely difficult to obtain especially in rural areas. Some flexibility of arrangement needs to be accepted, even using systems like Skype."

"I was declined external supervision when there was a clear dual-relationship need. My supervision did not feel safe for approximately two years."

*"I work in a specialist sector for a very small team. It would be nice if off-site options like driving or Telehealth were more accessible."*

"I struggle to access appropriate supervision funded by the DHB."

*"As i am a senior psychologist of almost 40 years experience it is hard to find someone of similar age and experience within my DHB, who is not also in a dual role. I had to relinquish an external supervisor a few years back as my employer would no longer pay for it."*

"External supervision is sometimes hard to organise if you work in a specialised area. the DHB doesn't seem to want to pay for supervision. Even just getting time off for this can be difficult given the workload, when you work part-time."

*"I pay for my external supervision."*

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