

NRCFCP/IDHS Conceptual Model of Supervision*

Theoretical Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Systems · Developmental · Adult Education · Social Justice
Guiding Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Competency-based · Strength-based · Outcomes-driven · Culturally Competent · Reflective · Learning Organization · Stewardship of Resources · Organizational Development · Individual Development
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Legal · Economic · Social · Technological · Political · Ethical · Organizational
Purpose of Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support mission of organization · Ensure quality of services · Foster staff professional development · Contribute to the ongoing vitality of the organization
Domains of Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Case/Clinical Supervision (including Transitioning Youth) · Human Resources · Public and Community Relations · Staff Safety and Well Being
Competencies (domain-specific)	<p>“A cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes . . . [integral to one’s major job responsibilities] that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development.” **</p>
Supervisory Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Administration · Education · Consultation/Coaching · Counseling · Evaluation
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Developmental Process of Supervisor and of Supervisee · Supervisory Relationship (individualized approach) · Teaching/Learning Strategies · Formats (e.g., Questions for Supervision, Group Supervision, In-Service Training) · Resource Allocation · Managing “Up” and “Out” · Community Advocacy · Community Collaboration

*An earlier version of this conceptual Model of Supervision was developed through an extensive collaborative process between the NRC and IDHS through the supervisory training project, “Committed to Excellence through Supervision”. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau, #90CT0111.

**Training magazine, July 1996

Guidelines for Effective Supervision

Supervision is a specific and essential practice designed to 1) support the mission of the organization, 2) ensure quality of services, 3) foster staff professional development, and 4) contribute to the on-going vitality of the organization. To be effective, supervision must address all domains of practice to address short-term case needs, as well as longer term organizational needs. A supervisor's ultimate goal is to create a high performing workforce that can work both autonomously and interdependently with stakeholders, colleagues, and within the larger organization. The following principles are important to remember in developing an effective supervision practice:

1. **Acknowledge strengths** – All supervisors, workers, and colleagues have strengths that contribute to the organization's functioning.
2. **Respond to individual developmental needs** – All people also have individual developmental needs and deserve to work in an environment that honors their competencies and their continued growth. The developmental process should begin with a transparent assessment of expected competencies; an affirmation of worker strengths; an intentional assessment and diagnosis of workers' challenges and a mutually agreed upon individual development plan. Interventions on lower competencies occur within the context of an on-going supervisory relationship, not as a stand-alone deficit-only intervention.
3. **Integrate the impact of diversity** – Supervisors must also understand how a worker's diversity may impact their workplace experience and integrate this understanding into their supervision practices. They must also understand the demographics of the communities served and develop staff's cultural competence.
4. **Balance task and relationship responsibilities** – Supervision is inherently a leadership process that requires integrating a balance of task and relationship behaviors. The supervisory relationship is essential to the development of an effective and engaged workforce. The relationship should encourage worker autonomy and interdependence by facilitating critical thinking.
5. **Make management transparent and collaborative** – Staff should know the basic expectations and participate in setting their own goals and methods of achieving them. Supervisors assist in providing information, advocating for needed resources, articulating consistent feedback and accountability measures, and offering worker support to meet those goals.

6. **Provide regular feedback** – Feedback should be provided on an on-going basis, not just during annual performance evaluations. Supervisory evaluation should be both formative and summative; directed toward improving worker professional and career development, and should focus on strengths concurrently with challenges and goals.
7. **Use multiple forms of supervision** – At a minimum, each worker should have one-to-one supervision. The *content* and *frequency* of which will vary based on worker stage of development and complexity of the work. Multiple forms of supervision such as group supervision, peer supervision, on-the-job observations (intake meetings, case discussions among peers, case audits), mentoring, and training. (Austin, 2004)
8. **Arrange for professional development** – Attention to the professional development of staff contributes to job satisfaction, the quality of client services, and the vitality of the organization. Supervisors should provide regular in-service and facilitate other forms of professional development.
9. **Document supervision** – Effective supervision requires documentation to establish a historical record of staff growth, supervisory actions, and areas needing improvement. The file for each worker should include: record of meeting dates, negotiated goals, activities, expected outcomes and accomplished outcomes. The documentation should serve as transparent communication between supervisor and supervisee, as well as a record of legally required supervision for the supervisor's file.
10. **Advocate for system change** – The supervisor should identify and advocate for larger system change as organizational barriers become apparent. Given the “middle” position of supervisors, up-the-chain advocacy skills are essential for supervisors as well as tools to attend to down-the-chain boundaries with which the supervisor can take care of her/his needs and frustrations so as not to pass on cynicism and disengagement to staff.

Supervisor Competencies for Improving Outcomes for Transitioning Youth

1. Uses supervision and the supervisory relationship to promote a positive youth development approach to work with youth/adolescents.
2. Coaches staff in the importance of and the skills necessary to support youth in identifying and sustaining permanent connections.
3. Advocates for/allocates resources which respect the diverse needs of youth.
4. Uses supervision to assure culturally competent practice with youth.
5. Ensures that DHS is an effective partner on the transition committee.
6. Develops and sustains collaborative community relationships (including foster parents and group care providers) that support youth in transition.
7. Coaches workers to incorporate knowledge of adolescent development, characteristics, behaviors, and social challenges into assessment and case planning.
8. Recognizes indicators of mental illness and developmental disabilities and provides consultation to workers
9. Supervises workers in implementing policy and programs relevant to adolescents in transition.

Caseworker Competencies for Improving Outcomes for Transitioning Youth

1. Involves and supports youth in an ongoing process to develop skills, resources, knowledge, and attributes that the youth defines as necessary for survival and success.
2. Supports youth in establishing relationships and maintaining permanent connections.
3. Understands the unique cultural self-identity of youth and incorporates this understanding into case planning.
4. Effectively collaborates with youth, the youth's support system and with community agencies in developing, implementing, and evaluating a transition plan.
5. Advocates for youth's needs with outside agencies (i.e., schools) as warranted.
6. Understands the factors that contribute to placement stability and implements strategies to achieve placement stability (including sensitive management of placement transitions).
7. Demonstrates knowledge of adolescent development, characteristics, behaviors, and social challenges through thoughtful assessment and case planning.
8. Recognizes indicators of mental illness and developmental disabilities and initiates evaluation and potential service planning.
9. Demonstrates current knowledge of policies and programs relevant to adolescents in transition.

Practice Goal 1: Infusing Principles of Positive Youth Development into Practice

What can be done ?

Who could to do it?

What would it take?

What actions can I as a supervisor take to improve practice:

- Administrative (including case assignment, allocating/advocating for resources)

- Direct supervision (education, consultation, counseling)

- Community collaboration/advocacy

- Other

Practice Goal 2: Cultural Competence in Work with Older Youth in Care

What can be done ?

Who could to do it?

What would it take?

What actions can I as a supervisor take to improve practice:

- Administrative (including case assignment, allocating/advocating for resources)

- Direct supervision (education, consultation, counseling)

- Community collaboration/advocacy

- Other

Practice Goal 3: Helping Youth Establish Permanent Connections

What can be done ?

Who could to do it?

What would it take?

What actions can I as a supervisor take to improve practice:

- Administrative (including case assignment, allocating/advocating for resources)

- Direct supervision (education, consultation, counseling)

- Community collaboration/advocacy

- Other

Practice Goal for Older Youth in Care:

What can be done ?

Who could to do it?

What would it take?

What actions can I as a supervisor take to improve practice:

- Administrative (including case assignment, allocating/advocating for resources)

- Direct supervision (education, consultation, counseling)

- Community collaboration/advocacy

- Other

A Picture of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: Iowa and National Data

Iowa

5,384 children in foster care

- 24% between ages 0-5
- 23% between ages 6-12
- 53% between ages 13-21

Percent of Iowa's children in care who "aged out" in 2004 – 6% (319 youth)

Nationally

513,000 children in foster care

- 4.9% (24,407) aged out in 2004

Outcomes of concern for youth who age out:

Over one-fifth will become homeless at some time after age 18. (Northwest Foster Alumni Study, Casey Family Programs, 1998)

Approximately 58% earn high school degree by age 19, compared to 87% of national comparison group (Chapin Hall: Midwest Evaluation, 2005) (but note Iowa sample:72%)

Less than 3% of youth who aged out earned a college degree by age 25, compared to 28% of the general population.(National Census Bureau, 2007)

Low earnings: Among those employed at age 19, 75% of Iowa youth reported earning less than \$5000 (mean hours worked 35.9) and 90% earned less than \$10,000. (Chapin Hall)

One in four males will be spend at least one night in jail, prison or juvenile hall within the first two years after they leave the system. (Chapin Hall Midwest Evaluation, 2005)

Health insurance:

- Chapin Hall Midwest Evaluation: 47% of nineteen year olds who aged out of care were insured, compared to 78% of national sample

Foster teen pregnancy/birth rates

- One-third of girls pregnant by age 17; nearly one-half of girls *pregnant* by age 19; girls (32%) and boys (14%) more than twice as likely to have a child compared to national sample. (Chapin Hall three state study)
- Iowa does not keep data on prevalence of or health care usage of pregnant and parenting teens
- Pregnant adolescents who exited the system were more likely to have received prenatal or post-partum services than those still in foster care.