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Chapter:	Supervision and Training	
Subject:	Supervising Casework Staff	Page 1 of 6
Approved:	Frederick M. Ober, Division Director	Effective: 10/16/98 FINAL
Supersedes:	Casework Procedure 6000	Dated: 9/26/88

Purpose

To describe the important role of the social services supervisor in meeting the supervisory needs of casework staff, and to set minimum standards for supervision.

Policy


The social services supervisor plays a critical role in the delivery of quality services by casework staff. In supervising casework staff, in general, the supervisor is expected to provide a mix of administrative, educational and supportive supervision, as described in the section headed General Guidance. The social services supervisor may also perform other duties as assigned by the district director.

The basic supervisory forms used by the division include:

- Supervisory Conference Summary (FS-261) -- used to record supervisory sessions, major case transactions (such as reviews, placements, specific directives to the worker, etc.), waiving of contact standards, etc.; and,
- Supervisory Tracking Form -- used to record basic information about each case open for services.

Supervisors should meet with casework staff no less frequently than described below. Supervisors should use their discretion to determine when more frequent supervision is indicated.

Type of Case/Work Unit	Frequency of Supervision
Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation	Weekly
Chapter 55 Assessment	Weekly
Delinquency Disposition Report	At least once before disposition hearing
Entry cases	Weekly during the thirty days after assignment
Chapter 55 Disposition Report	Bi-weekly
Family Services Case – Levels I, II and III	Monthly

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Family Services Case – Administrative Level	Quarterly
Committed Child – Levels I, II and III	Monthly
Committed Child – Administrative Level	Quarterly

General Guidance on Supervising Casework Staff


Administrative Supervision

Administrative supervision is directed toward implementing the mission, policy and procedure of the division. Through administrative supervision, the supervisor ensures that the quality and quantity of work meets standards articulated by the division.

Administrative supervision includes planning, executing, monitoring and evaluating activities:

- Foster ownership of division mission, goals, values, policies and procedures by:
 - communicating with staff about mission and goals;
 - supporting and modeling behaviors consistent with division mission and goals, as well as social work ethics;
 - establishing goals and priorities within the unit that reflect division goals;
 - articulating the connection between mission, policies and the worker’s daily tasks;

- Assure cohesion and high performance in the unit by:
 - Identifying and analyzing critical functions;
 - developing a system to support their successful achievement;
 - developing a system to assure equitable assignment of work;
 - selecting and monitoring key indicators for success in the unit;
 - maintaining documentation necessary for program compliance;
 - summarizing and evaluating data to identify problems and trends for unit planning;
 - appropriately modifying plans to adjust to crisis and changes;
 - convene regular meetings of the unit;
 - communicate in a culturally responsive manner.

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- Encourage maximum performance of individual staff by:
 - meeting with staff in supervisory conferences at least weekly;
 - clearly communicating expectations for staff performance related to client outcomes and program compliance;
 - evaluating the quality, quantity and timeliness of staff performance, including a written performance evaluation at least annually;
 - providing frequent, timely and specific positive feedback and constructive criticism;
 - being available for consultation as needed;
 - taking appropriate positive or corrective personnel actions;
 - identifying strengths and helping workers to develop them.

- Facilitate open communication between staff and management by:
 - demonstrating state-of-the-art knowledge of the social work profession;
 - keeping staff informed of changes, trends, plans and proposals;
 - soliciting information about problems, concerns, issues and recommendations from staff about programmatic and systemic issues;
 - communicating recommendations to management in a way that promotes understanding, implementation and/or resolution.

- Foster collaborative relationships within the division, department and with community agencies by:
 - participating in the development of positive relationships and workable systems for communication;
 - providing staff with feedback about the messages they communicate to others;
 - educating the community regarding division mission and goals;
 - helping staff to understand roles and parameters of other units and agencies;
 - model cultural responsiveness.

Educational Supervision

Educational supervision is directed towards helping staff to learn what they need to be effective in their jobs, including helping new workers to develop basic competencies and

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experienced workers to grow in their careers:

- Provide or assure orientation for new staff by:
 - assessing their knowledge, skills and learning style;
 - developing a method for orienting new staff that builds on existing resources and accommodates learning style, and includes agency structure, mission, values and culture;
 - legal mandates; community context; job responsibilities; client population and cultural sensitivity
- Create and implement a training and/or development plan with each staff member by:
 - helping staff to assess their strengths and needs initially and on an ongoing basis;
 - examining alternatives with staff to meet these needs, and developing an individual plan;
 - reviewing that plan periodically, adjusting as appropriate;
- Encourage personal and professional growth and advancement by:
 - assisting staff in finding education and training opportunities;
 - assisting staff to assess professional goals;
 - encouraging development of specialized expertise;
 - encouraging creativity and innovation, independence and autonomy whenever appropriate;
 - modeling and mentoring continued growth;
 - encouraging staff participation on committees to address systemic change.
- Provide case supervision and consultation by:
 - appropriately considering the worker's strengths, interests and areas of needed professional development in assigning work;
 - discussing the worker's entire caseload with him or her at least monthly;
 - assisting in client assessment including identifying strengths and needs, family


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- dynamics, likely barriers, resources and strategies for intervention;
- increasing worker awareness of how their experiences, attitudes and cultural background potentially impact on their relationship with the client and on the outcomes of intervention;
- assisting in assessment of ongoing progress and in making critical case decisions;
- encouraging staff to identify cultural diversity of all families and how cultural factors may affect assessment and planning.

Supportive Supervision

Supportive supervision is directed towards creating a physical and psychological climate in which staff can feel positive about their job. It includes showing empathy and concern towards staff:

- Establish a positive work climate in the unit by:
 - treating staff as professionals, with importance, dignity and respect;
 - acknowledging individual and unit efforts and contributions;
 - acknowledging effective performance and client progress;
 - being sensitive to feeling and needs of staff, supporting staff to take care of themselves emotionally and physically;
 - encouraging staff to express themselves about clients, as well as the agency, and helping them to resolve their feelings;
 - creating a sense of safety in which to take risks;
 - creating an atmosphere in which cultural differences are appreciated;
 - referring staff to outside assistance, such as employee assistance, when needed;
 - using mistakes as an opportunity for learning;
- Develop and support a teamwork approach in the unit by:
 - involving staff in decision-making whenever appropriate;
 - encouraging peer collaboration, consultation and shared decision-making;
 - promoting a sense of unit identity, team role and norms;
 - assessing strengths and needs of the team as a whole, capitalizing on strengths to enhance the functioning of the team.

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- Facilitate successful resolution of conflict within and without the agency by:
 - creating a safe environment that encourages staff to raise issues;
 - acknowledging the positive value of conflict;
 - demonstrating a respect for difference of opinion;
 - facilitating discussions focused on creating solutions and meeting the needs of participants;
 - intervening when lack of resolution effects the unit, client or relationships in the district;
 - assisting staff with depersonalizing conflict.

- Develop self-awareness of one's own attitudes, needs and behavior and its effect on the supervisory relationship by:
 - increasing awareness of how one's personality and style affect staff;
 - increasing awareness of how one's life experience and cultural background can impact;
 - seeking supervision and consultation to enhance supervisory effectiveness;
 - developing a system for receiving feedback from staff on supervisory practice;
 - taking care of personal physical and emotional needs;
 - demonstrating flexibility and positive acceptance of change;
 - improving job skills;
 - performing with stability under pressure and during crises;
 - learning from one's mistakes.