



Southern California Counseling Center

Supervisor Handbook

Revised Fall 2017

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WELCOME to the Southern California Counseling Center! We are grateful for all of our volunteer supervisors. You are the backbone of the Center's high-quality service and a critical component of our counselors' outstanding training. It is our hope that this manual will orient you to the Center. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Clinical Director Robert Mendelsohn or Assistant Clinical Director Marisa Ice.

Before you begin supervising, we will ask you for copies of your current California practice license, your practice insurance policy summary sheet, and a certificate of completion of six hours of supervision training. Of course, you are also covered by the Center's liability insurance.

I. Basic Center Requirements

- A. All Center clinical supervisors are expected to uphold BBS regulations and the Ethical Standards of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.
- B. All supervisors who are licensed clinical psychologists are expected to fulfill the Board of Psychology (BOP) requirements for clinical supervisors, uphold BOP regulations and comply at all times with the provisions of the Psychology Licensing Law, the licensing laws of the BBS and the Medical Practice Act. They are expected to follow the APA Ethical Guidelines.
- C. Weekly supervision is mandatory for all counselors. State law provides that all trainees and interns must be supervised during each week that they provide client services. Center policy extends this requirement to paraprofessionals as well. All counselors are expected to notify their supervisor in advance if they cannot attend supervision. If you believe that a counselor's attendance is problematic, please communicate with the Clinical Director or Assistant Clinical Director.

- D. All supervisions, whether group or individual, meet weekly. Group supervisions meet for two hours weekly; group supervision is limited by law to eight counselors. Individual supervision (one-on-one) meets for one hour weekly.
- E. Counselor cohorts begin in September and March each year. All counselors change supervisions in September.
- F. We feel strongly at the Center that counselors benefit from direct observation of their clinical work by their supervisor and/or supervision group. SCCC's policy is that each counselor will receive live supervision (audio or video taping and/or live one-way mirror work) at least once during the supervision year. We encourage each supervisor to use direct observation with all supervisees. We have available four one-way mirror counseling rooms as well as audio and video equipment. These resources can be arranged at the Front Desk.
- G. Supervisors are encouraged to develop written goals with each of their supervisees at the beginning of the supervision year.

II. Counselor Reports

- A. Counselors are required to provide supervisors with the Monthly Summary of Clinical Activity. This will assist you in tracking your supervisees' caseloads, current issues, outstanding fee balances and cancellations. Please go over this information, paying particular attention to whether or not the counselor is fulfilling their Center commitment, has outstanding client balances and/or patterns of client or counselor cancellation.
 - 1. Center counselors on a licensure track are required to maintain a caseload of eight clients.
 - 2. Paraprofessional counselors are required to maintain a caseload of four clients.
 - 3. If for some reason a counselor requests a reduced caseload, consult with the Clinical Director or Assistant Clinical Director. Our usual practice, where justified, is to ask the counselor to sign a contract agreeing to a reduced caseload for a specific period of time.

III. Supervision Concerns

- A. The Center's staff relies on supervisors to track counselor progress. In general, our counselors are conscientious and professional. However, at times a problem may develop, perhaps involving attendance at supervision, quality of participation in supervision, timeliness with clients, caseload size or an ethical issue. If a problem

develops with a particular counselor, we ask that you consult with our staff promptly, so that the problem does not go unaddressed.

B. Here are our usual steps for remediation:

1. We may arrange a meeting with supervisor(s) and staff to discuss the issue and determine a course of action.
2. The course of action may or may not include a meeting with the counselor, supervisor(s) and the Clinical Director and/or Assistant Clinical Director.
3. In many cases, we develop a written agreement to be signed by the counselor and the Clinical Director specifying steps to be taken by the counselor, a means of monitoring progress and a specific length of time for the agreement.
4. Most contracts are successfully completed and counselors continue their work at the Center. In the few cases where counselors are not able to fulfill their commitment or remediate the problem, we may ask them to take a leave from the Center for a fixed time or, in a more problematic case, ask them to discontinue their training here.

C. Case Notes

1. Effective January 1, 2000, a California state law stated it is “unprofessional conduct for MFT’s and LCSW’s to fail to keep records consistent with sound clinical judgment, the standards of the profession and the nature of the services being rendered”.
2. Please refer to the Counselor Handbook for the instructions given to counselors on writing case notes.
3. We rely on supervisors to monitor the quality of case notes. We ask new counselor supervisors to have their supervisees provide them with copies of case notes along with reaction notes for their first several months at the Center.
4. Case files are randomly checked throughout the year by clinical staff members. Supervisors will be alerted if case files are not up to professional standards.

D. Evaluations

1. We ask supervisors to engage their supervisees in an evaluation process, once for six-month groups beginning in March and twice for year-long groups beginning in September, once mid-way through and again at the end.

Evaluation forms will be distributed by Center staff. We encourage you to make these evaluations a group process.

2. We also encourage periodic check-ins with your supervisees as to how the supervision is working for them.

IV. Clinical Issues

- A. Fee setting and collection - As a privately funded non-profit agency, SCCC depends upon client fees to provide approximately 60% of its operating budget. From the beginning of their training, counselors are supported in exploring their own history with money and finances, money as metaphor for power, love, competence, worth, etc., and their responses to taking a fee in the context of a therapeutic relationship. We ask our supervisors to give attention to these issues as well.
- B. Legal Procedures - The Center is represented by Locke Lord LLP, a full service law firm. When the Center receives a subpoena or request for records or information in a legal proceeding, a copy of the request must be given immediately to the Assistant Clinical Director, who will obtain legal consultation. Counselors should never communicate directly with outside attorneys without prior discussion with the Clinical Director or Assistant Clinical Director. We ask supervisors to be sure that the appropriate release has been signed before communication with an outside professional, such as a psychiatrist, probation officer or social worker. And, of course, a consent needs to be signed by a client before an observed session or recording takes place.
- C. Abuse Reporting - The Counselor Handbook on the Center website provides reporting procedures. Please keep in mind that counselors may never report child abuse to a child protection agency outside the state of California, even if advised to do so by the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. The laws protecting mandated reports are California State laws and do not pertain or protect the reporter out of state.
- D. Multiple Supervisions - Often our counselors are in more than one supervision, for instance group and individual supervision. Center policy is that the counselor's clients are allocated to specific supervisions so as to keep the lines of supervision clear and to avoid receiving conflicting supervision.
- E. It is Center policy that counselors may not be in more than one simultaneous supervision with the same supervisor, that is, individual and group supervision at the same time, or individual or group supervision and a private practice supervision at the same time. The purpose of this is to prevent legal and ethical conflicts.
- F. Termination – We train counselors to conduct the termination process with their clients. We ask our supervisors to support them in learning this process. Please

encourage them to allow four to six weeks for a termination process whenever possible.

- G. When a counselor leaves the Center, they must schedule an exit interview with the Clinical Director a week or two before they leave. Kathryn Heymann, the Client Coordinator, will work with them to provide reassignments for their clients where needed. If a counselor has fulfilled their SCCC commitment and is entering private practice, we encourage them to take their clients with them when it is appropriate for the client and economically practical. When clients follow a counselor to a new setting the counselor, supervisor and client should agree this is clinically wise. It is unethical to put clients in a position to pay more to follow a counselor to a new location. If clients are in a position to pay more for therapy, it is reasonable to ask why the counselor has not raised their fee while they are at the Center. “Cherry picking” higher fee clients to later take to one’s private practice is unethical and grossly unfair to clients and the Center. It is also unethical for counselors currently at the Center to transfer a Center client to his or her private practice.

H. Client Reassignments

1. Whether a request for reassignment comes from the client or the counselor, supervision attention will be required: what is the reason for the request? Often counselors are quick to fire themselves. Please explore with them whether there is a way for the counselor and client to discuss their process and preserve the relationship. Please do not hesitate to request a staff consultation if needed.
2. If after discussion reassignment is agreed upon, continuity of care will best be served if the client is reassigned to another counselor within the supervision group. If that is not possible, please request that the counselor seek a replacement outside the supervision group to minimize the client’s wait for a new counselor.

- V. Supervisor Vacations or Absences - Supervision is required weekly so you will need to arrange coverage for absences. You may ask a colleague to fill in or contact the Clinical Director or Assistant Clinical Director to designate a staff person to do so.

- VI. Supervisor Meetings - Supervisor meetings are scheduled periodically. You will receive notice well in advance of the meeting. These meetings are very valuable to the Center as we draw on your experience and expertise to help us improve programs and develop new ones, as well as to share your experiences as supervisors and, when needed, receive advice from the group on a supervision matter.

VII. The Retreat - The Fall Retreat traditionally occurs each year in September or October.

While it is a combination of fun and learning, it is more importantly a chance to gather as a community and reaffirm the values underlying our work. We strongly encourage all community members to attend.

VIII. The BBS and School Paperwork - The majority of SCCC counselors are fulfilling school and/or state licensing requirements. Therefore, you will be signing off on clinical hours as well as providing evaluations for schools. Many supervisors find it effective to sign paperwork at the beginning of each session. Required BBS paperwork includes the following:

- A. Letter of Agreement - All volunteer supervisors must sign a Letter of Agreement with SCCC for each supervisee. The Center provides a form for this and the counselor is responsible for obtaining all appropriate signatures.
- B. The Responsibility Statement – All supervisors must sign the Responsibility Statement, a BBS form available at the Center.
- C. Weekly logs - The BBS requires that all trainees/interns maintain weekly records for counseling and supervision hours. It is the counselor's responsibility to maintain this log and have their supervisor sign it; however, it is helpful to let counselors know your expectations for submission at the beginning of session, etc.
- D. Verification of Experience - This is the form you will be asked to sign at the end of a supervision. It verifies the clinical hours achieved during the supervision and will be submitted with the intern's final paperwork.

—Digital communication - Here is an excerpt from the Counselors' Manual on digital communication:

IX.

- ~~A. Cellular Telephones—Personal cell phone numbers are not to be given to clients. The best policy is to use Center telephones to contact clients; next best is to use an off-site telephone with your telephone number blocked.~~
- A. Cell phones and the use of E-mail and Text messaging – Email communication and text messaging with a client is ~~strongly~~ discouraged because it involves giving the client personal contact information. Counselors at the beginning of their careers have not yet acquired skill and experience at setting boundaries around communication. ~~Giving your cell phone number or email address to your clients opens you up to boundary issues that need to be carefully considered. However, given the times we live in, we~~ understand, ~~however,~~ that these means of communication are ~~in very commonly~~ used and that it would be useless to ban them. Therefore, we have established a policy that if there are such communications, they should be limited and advise that if you do communicate by text or email, the communication be

~~limited~~ to matters of logistics and scheduling. ~~_~~Be aware that texting with clients means that they clients will have your personal cell phone number unless you use a service such as Google Voice. It is important to avoid conducting therapeutic conversations by email or text. In most circumstances the confidentiality of email and text communication cannot be guaranteed.

- B. Social Networking Websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. – Be aware that any information about you that is generally available online is also available to your clients. Therefore, you should be sure that your internet presence is restricted to those persons with whom you are personally and ethically comfortable sharing details of your personal life. Discuss with your supervisor any decision to view a client's social networking site.

Please monitor your supervisees' use of digital communication and support them in maintaining reasonable boundaries around it.

X. On-line Psychotherapy

The Center has subscribed to Wecounsel, a HIPAA-compliant on-line live psychotherapy portal. It is used under these circumstances:

- A. ~~For use by second-year counselors~~Starting in 2018, new counselors are trained in Wecounsel about half-way through their first year;
- B. Wecounsel can be used ~~For use~~ when a client is out of town (within the State of California) or unable to come to the Center;~~attend sessions, or~~
- ~~B-C.~~ In addition, we plan to begin encouraging counselors to use Wecounsel with incoming clients who have been deemed appropriate for it in the intake after two face-to-face meetings with the counselor that are used to become acquainted and assess fully the appropriateness of on-line work;
- C. ~~For use with ongoing clients, after first having two in-person sessions.~~
- D. **Wecounsel cannot be used with a client who is outside the State of California.**
- E. As a supervisor, we ask you to monitor the on-line therapy process to be sure it is going well and to intervene if you believe that face-to-face therapy becomes the appropriate choice. Once the counselor and supervisor(s) have agreed that the use of Wecounsel is appropriate, the counselor should see the Assistant Clinical Director for training and a "seat" as a provider on Wecounsel. We will train counselors in Clinical Skills Class to monitor the process as well. If you ever have questions or concerns, or if you have a supervisee that you do not believe is ready to do on-line work, please consult with a clinical staff member. You are the gatekeeper of this process.

- XI. . The Supervision Rep Meeting - To facilitate communication among counselors, supervisors and the Centers' administration, each supervision group is asked to appoint a representative to attend the monthly Supervision Rep meetings after the monthly Saturday Workshops in order to pass on questions or concerns and to bring back to the group announcements from the staff. Please encourage your representative to share these

announcements with the group. And please ask your group to suggest questions or concerns to the monthly meeting. We consider this a vital part of staying in touch with our counselors and supervisors.

XII. And, in general . . .

As you know, the Center is a learning community with many facets and many opportunities for involvement and growth, both personal and professional. Together we strive to make it the best site for counseling and training in Southern California, a place that embodies our best hopes and values. We welcome you and thank you for being a part of it.