

Summary

Supervision of employees, carers and volunteers is an integral part of the provision of services and is closely linked to a culture of continual improvement and quality practice. This policy describes our approach to supervision and the expectation that all staff, carers and volunteers, regardless of their role in the organisation, will have the opportunity and the responsibility to engage in regular and planned supervision with their immediate supervisor. In the case of carers, supervision will be provided by the key worker closest to the child, commonly a case manager, child and family practitioner or other appropriate role. This does not preclude the possibility of some supervision being provided by people other than the line manager from time to time.

Supervision in Life Without Barriers is multi-functional. It is comprised of support, accountability/managerial, learning and teamwork functions. Supervision is integrated into our Performance Development suite of activities. It relies on a culture of learning and support. It is the cornerstone of good practice and needs to be modelled by all LWB leaders.

Supervision should occur in regular supervision sessions but is not limited to these. Rather the supervisory relationship and the functions of supervision are integrated into all our interactions with staff, carers and volunteers.

Who needs to read this document?

People responsible for staff, carer and volunteer supervision. Staff, carers and volunteers are also welcome to read this document.

What is our aim?

For direct service delivery roles our aim is to ensure clients are safeguarded, supported and served through their relationships at Life Without Barriers. Supervision and the supervisory relationship are seen as fundamental and part of our intervention in clients lives – not separate from it.

For both direct service delivery and non-direct roles our aim is to develop an organisational culture of ongoing learning and continual improvement which is required to provide effective and efficient services.

Life Without Barriers Pillars of Practice

Our Pillars of Practice framework relies on effective supervision. One of our six pillars is to “supervise our staff well”.

“Supervision is the cornerstone of good practice. It is the way helping professionals check in with staff, carers and volunteers to clarify client progress, employee /carer wellbeing and keep on track with achievement of client goals. Supervision is one of the main mechanisms through which the organisation can monitor the implementation of our values and evaluate competency and capacity” *Pillars of Practice Framework, p. 12.*

The CARE model

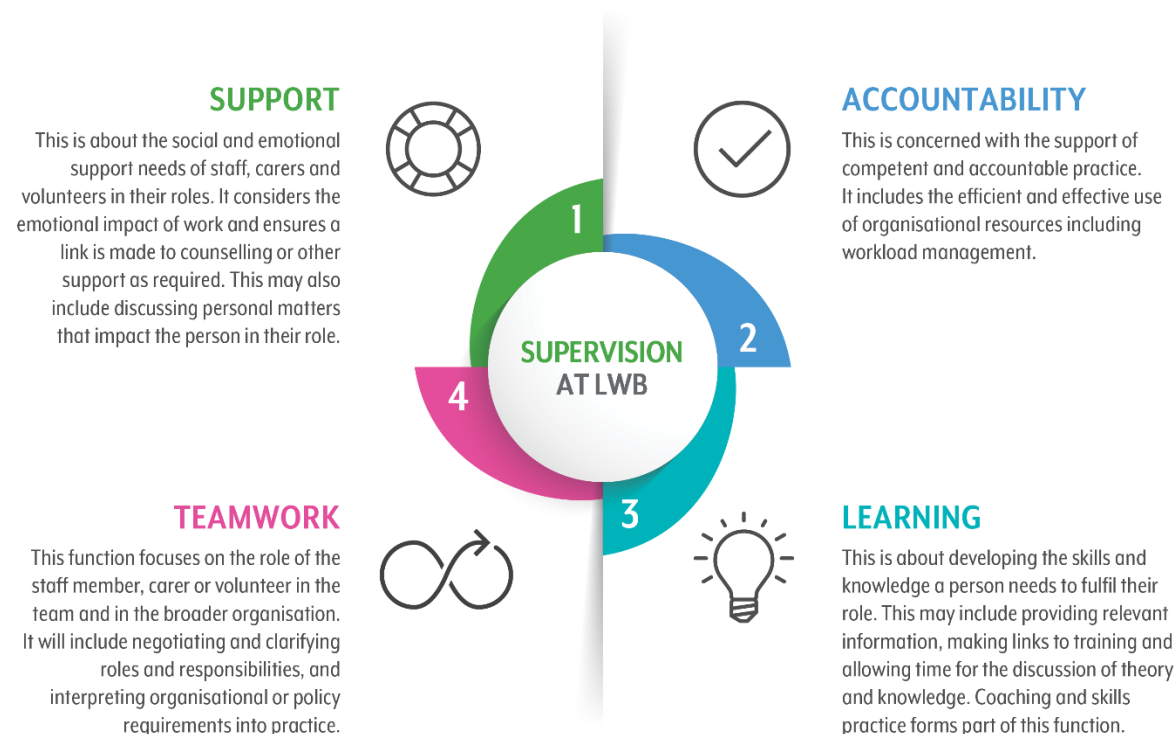
CARE drives all our practice with children, young people and families. Supervision is an important way we implement CARE and ensure congruence with CARE in the interests of children. Supervision provides a place for staff, carers and volunteers to practice CARE and TCI skills and to consider how to improve. For more information about CARE visit:

<https://lifewithoutbarriers60.sharepoint.com/sites/caremodel>

Definition of Supervision in Life Without Barriers

Life Without Barriers has adopted a definition of supervision that applies across all program areas and in non-client related work. This definition is applicable for supervision of casework and for all other types of work. It is applicable when we do not provide casework or case management services. It is also applicable for administrative staff and staff employed in roles that are not client facing.

Supervision in Life Without Barriers is a multifunctional relationship-based process between staff, carers and volunteers and their immediate supervisor. The four functions of supervision are support, accountability /managerial, learning and teamwork.



Importantly supervision in Life Without Barriers is a **process** rather than an event or series of events and is primarily concerned with clients. Although supervision does occur in regularly scheduled formal sessions it also occurs across many other interactions as part of an ongoing relationship between supervisors, staff, carers and volunteers. Supervision relies on a culture of learning in teams and workplaces.

Supervision includes team, group and one on one interactions and sessions on the phone, face to face and in other ways. Some elements and the structure of formal supervision (ie: individual, group, virtual or face to face sessions) will vary across the organisation dependent on operational, team and individual requirements. See the frequency matrix for more information.

Other relevant policies

This policy is supported by our organisational values and our pillars of practice framework. This policy is relevant to a range of policy statements in Life Without Barriers:

- Management Systems
- Performance Development
- Knowledge management
- Focusing on positive outcomes
- Ensuring cultural safety and appropriateness
- Confirming consumer rights
- Incorporation and contribution to good practice.

Further exploration of how this guideline supports our values, the pillars of practice and our policy areas follows.

Organisational values

Our values underpin our work across service sectors including providing quality supervision of staff, carers and volunteers.



Relationships come first. The functions of supervision can only be successfully carried out in the context of a positive and supportive supervisory relationship. By contributing to respectful relationships, supervisors are role modelling relationship based practice with our clients.



We are **Imaginative** in our thinking and practice. Our clients need us to be innovative in our practice and to imagine new ways of working when change is needed. Supervision is an opportunity to encourage imaginative and creative ideas in our staff, carer and volunteers and for them to consider how they might facilitate imagination and innovation in clients' lives.



We are **Courageous** in practice. Our clients are often marginalised and stigmatised in society. It takes courage to walk beside clients every day and to advocate for needed change. Staff, carers and volunteers need support and encouragement to continue this work and the supervisory relationship is part of this.



We are **Respectful** and caring in our dealings. Our work often requires us to have challenging conversations with clients and with each other. Supervision is an opportunity to practice and role model practice which facilitates those conversations happening in respectful ways.



We are **Responsive** because our organisational history has taught us that responding to unmet need with care and creativity solves problems and makes change. Being responsive means being available. Supervisors should be available for staff, carers and volunteers in the interests of clients.

Management Systems

We provide supervisors, staff, carers and volunteers with training, procedures, templates and resources to undertake quality supervision together. Some processes and templates are prescribed and others are offered as resources and guides to be adapted to the individual supervisory and practice styles of supervisors, staff, carers and volunteers. Management systems to support supervision are part of our strategy to embed supervision into everyday practices, actions and decision making.

A range of resources to support quality supervision in LWB are available [here](#).

Performance development

Supervision forms part of the performance development framework in Life Without Barriers. It is required that all staff, carers and volunteers engage in supervision with their supervisor on a regular basis. However, the nature of supervision is less prescribed than other performance development functions and staff, carers and volunteers enjoy a greater level of confidentiality than in other processes such as induction or carer reviews.

Supervision is mandatory for all staff, carers and volunteers. Some similar related processes are not mandatory such as coaching or mentoring which some people may participate in for a variety of reasons. Coaching and mentoring activities can also occur within supervisory relationships.

Staff in supervisory roles will receive training and access to learning resources. A range of resources to support quality supervision is available [here](#). The place of supervision in our performance development framework with staff is described in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – the integration of supervision into a broader performance management framework



Knowledge Management – documenting supervision.

Our supervision practice is required to be documented in a range of ways:

- For carers, material related to carer supervision should be documented on CIRTS in the carer file. Information relating to children should not be duplicated.
- For staff supervision the MyHR supervision forms (groups and individual session forms) are to be used to record formal supervision sessions. For support to use the MyHR form please contact sharedservices@lwb.org.au.
- Resources to guide supervision recording are available [here](#).
- Any decisions made during supervision sessions, or supervisory discussions outside formal sessions relating to clients, should be documented on client files only.

Focusing on positive outcomes for clients

Supervision is a crucial part of achieving positive outcomes for clients of Life Without Barriers. Supervision should model and reflect the relational style of practice we expect staff, carers and volunteers to use in their interactions with clients.

Our pillars of practice framework links supervision to client outcomes. Supervision in Life Without Barriers should be client focused. A range of theories and ideas can be incorporated into supervision dependent on the needs, wishes and circumstances of clients. These will include and not be limited to:

- Culturally respectful supervision
- CARE /TCI (for all our work with children, young people and families)
- Reflective practice and ongoing learning
- Adaptive and dispersed leadership
- Critical thinking
- Person centred approaches
- Child safety and wellbeing and child safe organisations

Promoting cultural respect & cross cultural learning in supervision

One of the strengths of Life Without Barriers is the diversity of our people. We engage people from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and from many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, language groups and nations. Our diversity improves our practice and increases our responsiveness with clients.

Our supervision with staff, carers and volunteers needs to be culturally appropriate and culturally respectful. Our approach to supervision needs to take account of culture and embrace difference. Being a culturally respectful supervisor essentially relates to the supervisor's willingness to adapt their approach in order to meet the needs of staff, carers and volunteers with a focus on client outcomes. A culturally respectful approach is being genuinely curious, flexible and welcoming of cross-cultural learnings. Supervisors have a responsibility to actively seek opportunities to reflect on their own cultural lens through supervision processes and maximise their cross-cultural learnings through training or other similar opportunities.

Diversity and Inclusion

Our approach to supervision needs to fully embrace the diversity of our workforce and the clients and communities we serve. Our staff, carers and volunteers need supervision that enables their continued reflection and learning about how they embrace and support diversity, individual choices and inclusion in relation to the client experience. Leadership, including supervision is a crucial step in recognising and celebrating diversity and inclusion and to identify and reject discrimination in all its forms.

Confirming consumer rights, wellbeing and safety

Although supervision is supportive of staff, carers and volunteers in direct service roles and contributes to a range of positive outcomes for staff, carers and volunteers, it is ultimately aimed at interactions with clients and at improving outcomes for clients. Put another way, clients of Life Without Barriers have a right to be supported by staff, carers and volunteers who are well supervised.

Maintaining a focus on client rights, wellbeing and safety requires the consideration of issues such as professional relationships between staff, carers, volunteers and clients, ensuring that practice promotes client wellbeing and safety and proactively addressing any concerns about client wellbeing and safety. Relevant strategies to support client safety include We Put Children First and Stop it Before it Starts.

We Put Children First -

<https://lifewithoutbarriers60.sharepoint.com/sites/ChildrenFirst/SitePages/Children-First.aspx>

Stop it Before it Starts - <https://lifewithoutbarriers60.sharepoint.com/sites/Stopitbeforeitstarts>

Ongoing learning and continuous practice improvement

The functions of supervision include staff, carer and volunteer learning and development. Supervision provides staff, carers and volunteers with an opportunity to:

- Regularly reflect on own practice and consider the effectiveness of practice. Think critically and constructively about ways to improve own practice and organisational approaches.
- Consider the evidence around particular theories, research findings and how these might be supportive of client wellbeing on an individual and all of practice level
- Consider what knowledge /skill gaps there are and how this might be addressed in supervision or in other ways such as training.

Review of this policy guideline

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required and in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.