

# ***CSCT Suggested Guidelines for Supervised Client Work Experience within a Voluntary Counselling Agency ("The Placement")***

## **Introduction**

Prospective candidates for Advanced (Level 3) counselling training must meet all of the awarding body assessment requirements. Please study your awarding body's guidance documents relevant to this qualification. Bear in mind that CSCT is not an awarding body. The suggestions contained in this booklet are for guidance only. Tutors will confirm the centre's requirements, in accordance with the awarding body's specifications.

Before commencing supervised client work experience, (a placement) trainees will be individually assessed by tutors for their readiness to begin counselling.

**Candidates are responsible for arranging their own supervised client work experience (subject to tutor's approval) in order to comply with assessment requirements. Please be aware that the time and commitment required to find an appropriate voluntary counselling agency in which to undertake the supervised client work experience, should not be underestimated.**

Voluntary counselling agencies frequently have many more applicants than places available, and trainees may need to exert considerable effort to secure a suitable setting that provides adequate support.

Tutors and centres are advised to ensure that the voluntary counselling agency is appropriate for the trainees' work with clients, and that there is a named person who is willing to give written feedback on the trainee's practice. Throughout the course, tutors are encouraged to carefully monitor feedback on all trainees' supervised work with clients.

### **Choosing a Voluntary Counselling Agency for the Supervised Client Work Experience**

The supervised client work experience is a crucial aspect of trainee counsellors' development. It is vital that this is undertaken in a safe counselling setting, which has clear policies supporting professional, ethical practice. The supervised client work experience needs to be undertaken with an appropriate organisation that enables the trainee to:

- ❖ practise counselling ethically within a specified theoretical model
- ❖ receive a suitable level of supervision
- ❖ receive adequate support within the counselling agency
- ❖ receive verbal and written feedback on progress and achievement

We recommend that trainees approach established voluntary counselling agencies that have a proven record and reputation in providing counselling services. There are many such

voluntary organisations offering counselling, and in general they are willing to offer client work experience to trainees.

Here are some examples of where to look:

- Alcohol/Drug Counselling Agencies
- Bereavement Counselling Services
- GP Practices and other Health Service Departments, e.g. termination clinics, HIV units, psychiatric units, etc
- Counselling within Prisons/ Probation service
- Colleges - Student counselling services
- Women's counselling centres - Refuges
- Counselling and Psychotherapy centres
- Schools/Youth Counselling Services (subject to Children's Act 1989)

An agreement with a voluntary counselling agency needs to allow for case studies to be written using client material *subject to the client's prior consent*.

Whilst many trainees find counselling work experience in voluntary agencies that offer short-term counselling, it is important for trainees' development of therapeutic relationship that they have the opportunity to work with clients over a number of sessions, rather than one or two sessions of crisis intervention.

### **Recommendations for a formal agreement/contract**

When considering the suitability of a counselling agency or organisation for the trainee's supervised client work, it is important for his/her own protection, that this supervised client work experience is subject to a formal agreement or contract. This agreement needs to clarify the trainee's duties, responsibilities and liability regarding the client work they undertake whilst at the agency.

It is recommended that trainees have their tutor's approval of the setting for their counselling work experience before they begin working with clients.

A supervised client work experience agreement is between the voluntary counselling agency and the trainee, and it is advisable for this to be countersigned by the tutor and the supervisor. It should ideally address the following points:

1. The identity of a responsible person at the agency who will:
  - Manage and support the trainee in their supervised client work experience
  - Provide written feedback to the college on the trainee's progress
  - Sign a summary sheet of sessions logged, confirming the trainee's work whilst protecting the client's confidentiality
2. The trainee's induction into the organisation.
3. The basis on which clients are to be allocated to the trainee, and how their caseload will be managed.

4. The clients assigned to the trainee remain the responsibility of the voluntary counselling agency. The agency needs to state clearly its acceptance of accountability for the trainee counsellor's work with clients.

5. Agency aims and policies, including:

- Codes of conduct
- Codes of Ethics and Practice in relation to counselling
- Arrangements for professional indemnity insurance
- Complaints and health and safety procedures

6. The ethical requirement for anti-discriminatory practice.

7. The identity and suitability of the trainee's counselling supervisor.

8. The level and frequency of the trainee's counselling supervision.

9. Permission for case studies to be presented for assessment.

### **Responsibilities for Trainees' Counselling Practice**

CSCT Ltd will not accept responsibility for trainees' counselling practice with clients. Responsibility for clients assigned to trainees remains with the counselling agencies, the supervisors monitoring the trainee counsellors' practice, and the trainees.

Should the agency or the supervisor have any concerns about the trainee's practice, it is their responsibility to contact the tutor in writing, and to discuss their concerns with the trainee wherever possible.

Correspondingly, should the tutor have any concerns about the trainee's ability to practise safely and ethically, s/he should contact the agency manager, in writing, having discussed these concerns with the trainee.

### **Guidelines for Trainee Counsellors**

When seeking a position for the supervised client work experience, trainees should treat it as a professional application. Trainees are advised to research Yellow Pages, libraries, BACP journal (CPJ), and The Guardian on Wednesday. It is recommended that trainees consider their curriculum vitae and how they present themselves.

- It is important for trainees to check that voluntary counselling agencies are able to provide them with a professional counselling contract as defined by BACP, not befriending, or listening support with the use of counselling skills.
- There should be a clear, contractual agreement between the trainee and the clients about entering into a client counselling relationship.
- The supervised client work must take the form of a counselling relationship as laid down in BACP guidelines within the context of face-to-face individual counselling. Supervision is not included in the required number of client hours.

- Private practice at the trainee's own premises or elsewhere is not recommended. It is considered unethical for unqualified counsellors to be working in private practice.
- Trainees must not counsel other trainees in counselling training.
- Both agency manager and supervisor provide feedback on the trainee counsellor's practice.

### **Counselling Minors**

When trainees are counselling minors, they need to read and abide by relevant regulations of the Children's Act 1989, be willing to undergo police checks, and ensure that they have parental/carer's consent before embarking on a counselling agreement with the young person.

### **The Role of the Tutor**

The role of the tutor is to:

- Advise trainees with regard to suitable counselling agencies for the client work experience, and facilitate their understanding of the nature and use of supervision.
- Allocate sufficient time at the beginning of the course to respond to any questions regarding beginning counselling work with clients and supervision issues.
- Check that their trainees' agency settings and supervision arrangements meet all the guidelines outlined in this booklet.
- Once confident that all the points in the agreement have been satisfactorily addressed by the voluntary counselling agency, and that the trainee understands what is expected of him/her: countersign the Agreement after it has been signed by Agency Manager, Trainee and Supervisor.
- Ensure that progress reports from agency and supervisor are received according to awarding body requirements.

Tutors are advised not supervise trainees for whom they have other responsibilities at the same time, i.e. structured course input, assessment, moderation.

### **Supervision Requirements**

Supervision is a requirement for all client work. This should be differentiated from line management.

Trainees will have to make their own arrangements if the counselling agency cannot provide adequate supervision. It is the trainees' responsibility to organise supervision and to let their supervisors know of the course requirements for client work experience and supervision at the contracting stage of the supervisory relationship.

Before embarking on supervision, trainees are encouraged to ensure that their supervisor is willing to:

- Countersign the agreement
- Sign the log book/record of client hours
- Provide written feedback on the trainee's work as required by the diploma tutor/awarding body.

### **Minimum Number & Frequency of Supervision Sessions**

Trainees are advised to consult centre and awarding body requirements, and ensure that supervision meets these and BACP guidelines.

### **Supervisors' Qualifications**

Supervisors of trainees' counselling practice are not required to be formally qualified as supervisors. However, when seeking a supervisor, trainees are advised to ensure that the supervisor:

- Has a professional counselling qualification, (FE) Diploma or above, in counselling or psychotherapy.
- Has a theoretical approach to supervision that is clear and appropriate for the trainee's training needs and chosen theoretical orientation.
- Has at least three years of post-qualifying supervised counselling/therapy practice.
- Is currently in supervised practice as a counsellor or psychotherapist.

### **The Role of the Supervisor**

Supervisors of trainee counsellors share responsibility for monitoring trainees' counselling practice with the counselling agencies.

In their supervisory practice, supervisors are expected to respect a relevant code of ethics (e.g. BACP, UKCP), which clarifies the duties, responsibilities, functions, tasks and liabilities of the supervisory role.

### **Training Supervisor's Feedback**

Supervisors of trainee counsellors may be asked to give written feedback on the trainee's counselling practice, outlining their overall opinion of the trainee's clinical practice, for example:

- Ability to abide by Professional Codes of Ethics
- Ability to practise safely and within professional boundaries
- Trainee's understanding of their relationship with their clients
- Ability to relate theory to practice
- Development of anti-discriminatory practice
- Ability to receive and use feedback
- Development of reflective practice
- Understanding of and practice within Health and Safety guidelines
- Further development needs

N. B. Should the trainee change supervisors mid-course, then feedback must be submitted for the client hours supervised by each supervisor.

### **Professional Boundaries**

Supervisors are expected to maintain clear and explicit professional boundaries in respect of trainees' client work and assessed course work.

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Do trainees need to have insurance?**

Professional indemnity insurance is *essential* for any counsellor's practice. Even if the voluntary counselling agency provides insurance cover for trainee counsellors, CSCT recommends that trainees take out their own professional indemnity insurance. A useful source of information is BACP who have details on insurance procedures and agencies.

**If the trainee needs a reference can this be provided in support of their application for client work experience?**

Any tutor who is familiar with the trainee's course work, can individually provide references, according to their knowledge and experience of the trainees. Trainees should ask their tutor if they are willing to provide them with a reference before entering their name as referee.

**Is it unethical to have one supervisor supervising client work at two different agencies?**

No, but trainees should consult their tutor before finalising any supervision arrangements.

**Does the supervisor have to be someone from the voluntary counselling agency?**

Supervisors do not have to be from the counselling agency and in some cases it is not possible. It is often useful and practical to have a supervisor who is familiar with the agency's policy. In addition to the supervisor from the agency, trainees sometimes decide to have an external supervisor, for additional learning. Reports will be required from every supervisor.

**Does the feedback from the voluntary counselling agency and the supervisor influence the trainee's assessment results?**

Yes. Satisfactory agency and supervisor's interim and final feedback are usually course requirements. They provide essential feedback for trainees, tutors and the college, and without them successful completion of the course is not generally possible.

**What is the purpose of supervisor's feedback?**

- To ensure that the trainee's client work is safe, competent and ethical, and that the supervisor has no major concerns in relation to standard, quality or any other aspects of the trainee's practice.
- To provide feedback to tutors, the centre/college and the trainee, about specific areas of the trainee's practice and areas for future development.
- To enable the tutor to ensure that there is consistency with the trainee's counselling work and his/her knowledge, understanding and presentation of this work on the course.
- Feedback may be included in an evaluation session, and can provide trainees with a useful learning experience.

**If a trainee wants to undertake their supervised client work experience in their current workplace, should they have to have a formal agreement?**

It is recommended that all assessed client work has to be clearly and explicitly defined and contracted, with a formal agreement. It is important to clarify the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the assessed counselling work with clients within the workplace, and to make a clear contractual arrangement with the clients. In this case, a line manager can

"manage" the client work experience, but supervision of counselling should be with someone external to the agency, or someone internal but not the line manager.

**Can trainees undertake client work experience in other counsellors' private practices?**

It is not advisable for trainee counsellors to practise privately in order to fulfil their supervised client work experience. If, however, a qualified counsellor offers client work experience to trainees, it must meet the course requirements and be subject to the formal agreement. Please consult your centre and the awarding body requirements.

**Is counselling at a client's home acceptable?**

If counselling takes place in a residential home for example, or in the client's own home, according to the policy of the counselling agency, it is acceptable for trainees to adhere to this policy, in as much as it is within the professional contract and is the way in which this particular agency operates. It is not otherwise acceptable.

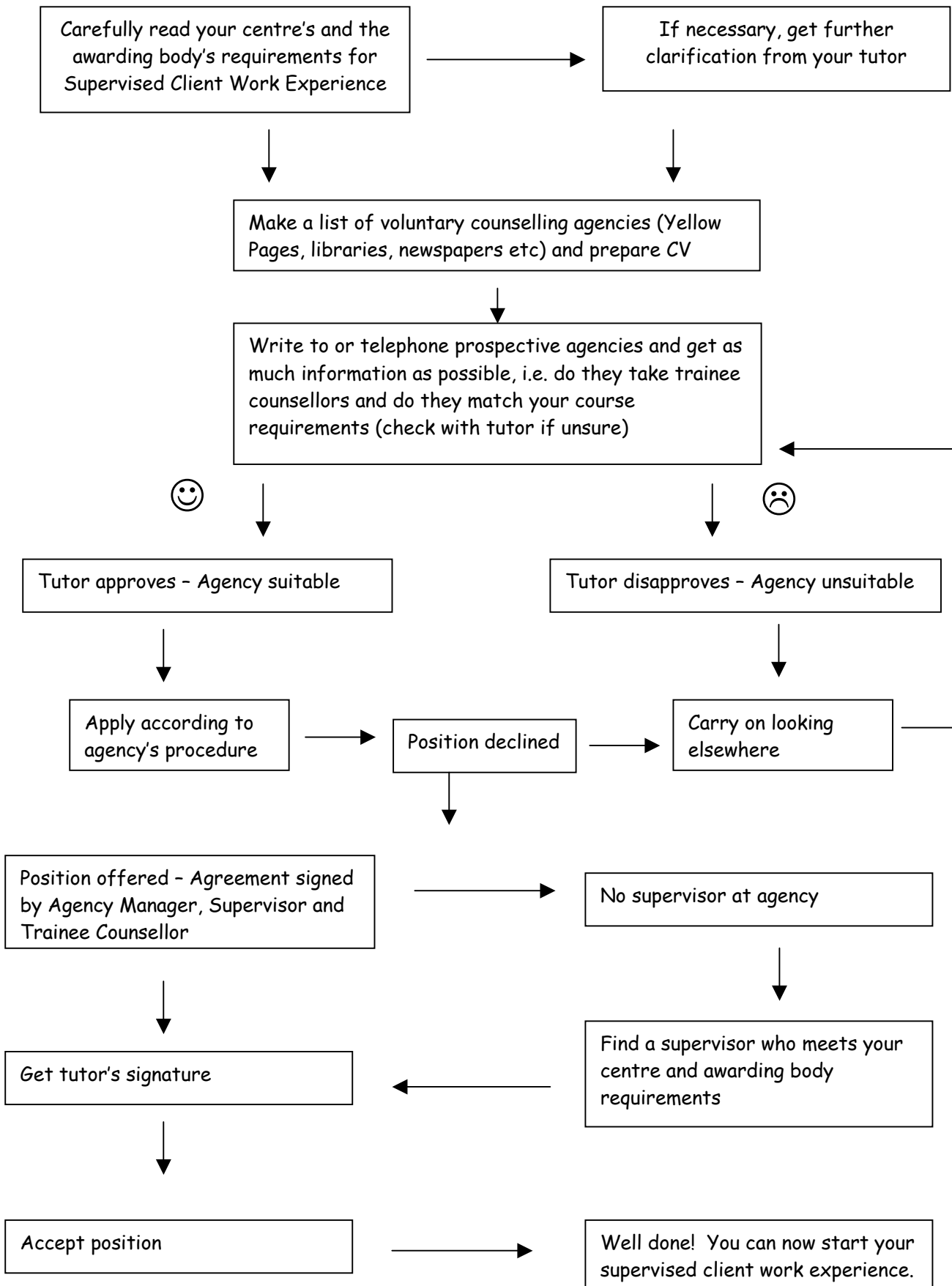
**Do trainee counsellors need to have a contract for counselling with clients?**

Trainees must always establish a counselling contract with their clients, and are expected to maintain professional boundaries in this setting as they would in any other agency and institutional context. Any difficulties and dilemmas around professional boundaries are to be brought to supervision and reflected upon in the trainee's course work, as part of their learning about ethical counselling practice.

**How long is a counselling session?**

A counselling session, for supervised client work experience requirements, is usually not longer than 60 minutes or less than 50. A "50 minute hour" is usually acceptable, which means that after 50 minutes spent with the client in the session, the following 10 minutes are used for administrative tasks, such as making another appointment, notes for the file, etc.

# Arranging your Supervised Client Work Experience



# An Example AGREEMENT BETWEEN TRAINEE COUNSELLOR AND COUNSELLING AGENCY/ORGANISATION

To be approved and countersigned by Tutor, and countersigned by Supervisor

Trainees who are studying an Advanced Level counselling training programme are required to complete \_\_\_\_\_ hours of supervised counselling practice with clients in an agency setting that has been approved by the diploma tutor. For the trainees' and their clients' protection, it is important that this is subject to a formal agreement where professional boundaries and accountability have been thoroughly explored and agreed before the trainee counsellor commences work with clients. Once drawn up, an agreement needs to be signed both by the trainee, and by the "Agency Manager" responsible for the trainee, countersigned by the tutor, and then countersigned by the supervisor.

Trainee \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Named agency contact responsible for managing and reporting on the trainee counsellor's practice: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Position in Agency \_\_\_\_\_

1. a) Does the agency understand that it is accountable for the trainee's work with clients?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Does the agency have professional indemnity insurance that includes cover for the trainee counsellor's work with the agency's clients?

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2. How will clients be allocated to the trainee, and how will the caseload be managed, including client confidentiality?

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3. Please outline here, or include a copy of your agency's policies, including:

a) Codes of conduct

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b) Codes of Ethics and Practice in relation to counselling

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c) Complaints and health and safety procedures

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4. How does your agency adhere to the ethical requirement for anti-discriminatory practice?

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5. Does your agency provide counselling supervision? YES NO

6. If so, please give the name and qualifications of the supervisor:

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7. Is supervision provided in a group? Yes/No Ratio of: \_\_\_\_\_

8. How often is supervision provided? \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Will the agency allow case studies, as per course requirements, to be presented for assessment?

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10. What arrangements are made for completing the client work at the end of the trainee's work experience?

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This written agreement between the above trainee and agency confirms that the following have been made explicit and are understood by the undersigned:

1. The identity of a responsible person at the agency who will:
  - Manage and support the trainee counsellor's client work experience
  - Provide regular feedback to the college on the trainee counsellor's progress
  - Sign a summary sheet of sessions, according to course requirements, confirming trainee's work whilst protecting the client's confidentiality
2. The trainee counsellor's induction into the organisation
3. The basis on which clients are to be allocated, and how the caseload will be managed
4. The agency's acceptance of accountability for clients assigned to the trainee counsellor
5. Agency aims and policies, including:
  - Codes of conduct
  - Codes of Ethics and Practice in relation to counselling
  - Professional indemnity insurance
  - Complaints and health and safety procedures
6. The ethical requirement for anti-discriminatory practice
7. The identity and suitability of the counselling supervisor
8. The level and frequency of counselling supervision
9. Permission for case studies to be presented for assessment

### **Agency Manager**

As the agency's representative I am responsible for ensuring the trainee's practice is safe and ethical. I will provide written feedback and reports as required, I will contact the trainee's tutor and supervisor in writing, and discuss my concerns with the trainee counsellor.

Agency Manager's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

### **Trainee**

I understand and accept the terms of this agreement. In the event of the counselling agency or my supervisor(s) having concerns about my counselling practice, I consent to any necessary consultation between my tutor(s), agency manager(s) and supervisor(s). I understand that relevant feedback on my work may be shared between the signatories of this agreement, and that satisfactory reports from both counselling agency and supervisor(s) are necessary for successful completion of the Diploma.

Trainee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor**

As the trainee's supervisor I am willing to provide written feedback and reports as required. Should I have any concerns about the trainee's practice, I will discuss these with the trainee, and will contact the tutor and counselling agency in writing.

Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

**Tutor**

I have read the above agency's proposals, and am confident that these client work experience and supervision arrangements are satisfactory. It is my responsibility to ensure that regular feedback is received from the counselling agency and supervisor. Should I have any concerns about this trainee's practice, I will discuss these with the trainee, and will contact the agency and supervisor in writing.

Tutor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_



## An Example SUPERVISOR'S FEEDBACK FORM

Supervisor's Feedback for \_\_\_\_\_ Report No. \_\_\_\_\_

Centre/College \_\_\_\_\_

Term \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Date you started supervising this trainee: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of group sessions \_\_\_\_\_ No. in group \_\_\_\_\_ No. of individual sessions \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency of sessions \_\_\_\_\_ No. of clients presented \_\_\_\_\_

Please use your professional expertise and knowledge of the supervisee to comment upon the trainee counsellor's preparedness to practise counselling, and give examples of any areas of concern to you.

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your co-operation

## An Example DETAILS OF PERSONAL COUNSELLING/THERAPY FORM

To be submitted to the Diploma Tutor

Name of Trainee: \_\_\_\_\_

Diploma Course \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSONAL COUNSELLOR / THERAPIST

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_

Theoretical Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Registration or Accreditation: \_\_\_\_\_

### Declaration:

I declare that I have begun work with \_\_\_\_\_ for personal counselling/therapy.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Course Tutor's statement: I have discussed these arrangements with \_\_\_\_\_ and am satisfied that the personal counselling is appropriate.

Name of Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Changes in these arrangements must be agreed with your tutor.

**An Example**  
**CONFIRMATION OF \_\_\_\_ HOURS**  
**OF PERSONAL COUNSELLING/THERAPY**

Please ask your counsellor to return this complete form to your tutor by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date of final session of the course)

**DETAILS OF PERSONAL COUNSELLING/THERAPY**

Name of Trainee: \_\_\_\_\_

Diploma Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

College Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL COUNSELLOR/THERAPIST**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_

Theoretical Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Registration or Accreditation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration:**

I confirm that \_\_\_\_\_ has completed \_\_\_\_\_ hours of personal  
counselling with me.

Date of Final Counselling Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_