

Best Practice Guidelines for School Psychology Intern Field Supervision and Mentoring

The internship is critical to the preparation of professionals capable of providing comprehensive, integrated school psychological services, and high-quality supervision is critical to a successful school psychology internship. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services* (NASP, 2010a) and *Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists* (NASP, 2010c) call for school psychologists to engage in 10 domains of practice. These domains are:

1. Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability
2. Consultation and Collaboration
3. Interventions and Instructional Support to Develop Academic Skills
4. Interventions and Mental Health Services to Develop Social and Life Skills
5. School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning
6. Prevention and Responsive Services
7. Family–School Collaboration Services
8. Diversity in Development and Learning
9. Research and Program Evaluation
10. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

Effective supervision helps interns successfully participate in experiences and acquire competence throughout these domains to become professionals capable of having a positive, measurable impact on children, youth, and families.

The following best practice guidelines for school psychology intern field supervision and mentoring were developed from a variety of sources, including NASP’s *Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists* (NASP, 2010c) and *Best practice guidelines for school psychology internships* (NASP, 2009) as well as research by the NASP Graduate Education Workgroup Internship Team. In addition, the following resources provide useful information relevant to supervision of interns: Bernard and Goodyear (2008); Harvey and Struzziero (2008); Harvey, Struzziero, and Desai (2014); Ladany, Mori, and Mehr (2013); and Prus and Harvey (2010); and Sullivan, Svenkerud, and Conoley (2014).

An effective school psychology intern field supervisor:

I. Demonstrates commitment to supervising the intern.

- 1.1. Shows willingness to give priority to the learning, development, and needs of the intern.
- 1.2. Is accessible/available to the intern through a variety of means (e.g., face-to-face meetings, phone, e-mail, Skype or FaceTime).
- 1.3. Is open to realistically answering questions about the placement site’s policies, practices, and decision-making process.
- 1.4. Models appreciation for continuing professional development (i.e., shows interest in learning and trying new approaches).
- 1.5. Commits to the internship as a significant part of the intern’s graduate preparation and accepts responsibility for helping the intern acquire needed experience and competence.

II. Helps the intern obtain the resources, support, and experiences needed to complete requirements and be successful.

- 2.1 Helps orient the intern to the department, schools, district, and community of the placement site.
- 2.2 Works with personnel at the placement site to help acquire office, technical, and support resources needed by the intern.
- 2.3 Serves as liaison with administrators and other staff at the placement site to help obtain experiences needed by the intern and required by the graduate program.

- 2.4 Advocates for the intern, intervening with school and district staff if/when necessary.
- 2.5 Helps the intern set professional development/learning goals and determines activities relevant to accomplishing those goals.
- 2.6 Assures that the intern engages in a comprehensive breadth of training and experience across and acquires competence across NASP domains of practice¹, with no single major function predominating the intern's time.
- 2.7 Encourages intern participation in professional development opportunities beyond the intern placement, such as attendance at local, state, regional, and national conferences and workshops.
- 2.8 Encourages and promotes self-care.

III. Establishes a strong working relationship with the intern and graduate program.

- 3.1 Clarifies placement site requirements and expectations with the intern and graduate program.
- 3.2 Recognizes the importance of the internship objectives/requirements of the graduate program, and helps the intern balance program requirements and placement site needs.
- 3.3 Provides appropriate structure and support to beginning interns.
- 3.4 Communicates openly and frequently with the intern through scheduled meetings and in-the-moment discussions.
- 3.5 Communicates in a manner that is clear to the intern.
- 3.6 Builds trust and respect in his/her relationship with the intern, while establishing appropriate boundaries.
- 3.7 Collaborates/communicates with faculty from the intern's graduate program on a regular basis¹.
- 3.8 If areas of needed remediation are identified, addresses them promptly and works closely with program faculty to devise an intervention plan.
- 3.9 Fosters opportunities for the intern to collaborate with other staff and interns.
- 3.10 Provides an average of at least 2 hours of direct, scheduled individual supervision per full-time week¹.

IV. Models and promotes best practices and ethical principles.

- 4.1 Demonstrates knowledge of and compliance with the NASP *Principles for Professional Ethics* (NASP, 2010) and other relevant professional ethical principles.
- 4.2 Respects the confidentiality of communications with the intern, as appropriate.
- 4.3 Demonstrates knowledge of and compliance with relevant laws and regulations and fosters the intern's competence in their application.
- 4.4 Models and fosters best practices in school psychology service provision by providing "comprehensive, integrative services" consistent with the NASP *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services* (NASP, 2010a).
- 4.5 Models and demonstrates professional involvement through participation in local, state, and/or national professional associations or other opportunities for professional support and development.
- 4.6 Recognizes the limitations of one's own expertise and refers the intern to additional resources and other professionals for assistance and supervision as needed.
- 4.7 Sets high but reasonable expectations for the intern.
- 4.8 Assists the intern in meeting expectations while being open to intern feedback regarding those expectations.
- 4.9 Models respect for and collaboration with other staff and stakeholders in the placement site, and promotes the intern's development of effective relationships with others.
- 4.10 Emphasizes evidence-based practice and the importance of "direct, measureable, positive impact", and guides the intern in designing and implementing methods by which to assess such impact.¹

V. Uses and encourages a goal-directed, problem-solving model.

- 5.1 Assists the intern in setting goals for professional development and the internship in general.
- 5.2 Encourages the intern to conceptualize problems and solutions from multiple perspectives and at various levels, from the individual to the system.
- 5.3 Helps the intern use problem solving to deal with challenging issues, including ethical dilemmas.
- 5.4 Encourages the intern's ongoing self-reflection, self-evaluation, and strategic planning.
- 5.5 Guides the intern in effective use of supervision time.

VI. Determines the intern's developmental levels and gears assignments and supervision to those levels.

- 6.1 Provides an appropriate amount and level of supervision, with differentiated scaffolding in specific practice domains based on the intern's needs and competency levels.
- 6.2 Assists in obtaining/assigning cases appropriate for the intern's competency level (e.g., assigns less complex/challenging problems and cases to beginning interns and more complex/challenging ones to advanced interns).
- 6.3 Provides opportunities for observations, role-playing, shadowing advanced practitioners, and collaborative work during early stages of internship.
- 6.4 Monitors the intern's cases and assignments closely to ensure appropriate services are being provided.
- 6.5 Encourages greater independence as appropriate to the intern's development and skills.

VII. Assesses intern performance, and provides feedback to both the intern and program¹.

- 7.1 Effectively uses formative evaluation, including communication with program faculty, to assess the intern's needs.
- 7.2 Provides effective feedback to the intern on an ongoing basis and prior to summative evaluation.
- 7.3 Focuses on intern areas of development and improvement, and emphasizes positive qualities before providing critical feedback regarding deficits.
- 7.4 Addresses issues and areas of concern about intern performance and needed improvements in a constructive manner, including in communication with the program faculty, as warranted.
- 7.5 Provides valid, open summative evaluation and, as necessary, suggestions for future development.
- 7.6 Seeks evaluative data from multiple sources (e.g., intern self-report, observation, products) and individuals (e.g., other staff, clients).
- 7.7 Fulfills graduate program and/or placement site requirements for formal internship evaluations.

VIII. Demonstrates appreciation for and ability to address human diversity¹.

- 8.1 Models cultural responsiveness and promotes the intern's development of multicultural competence throughout all school psychology services.
- 8.2 Encourages and assists the intern in becoming familiar with and responsive to the diverse needs and characteristics of the children, parents, school personnel, and community members with whom they work.
- 8.3 As appropriate, discusses issues regarding race, class, gender, social status, disabilities, sexual orientation, language, religion, and other aspects of human diversity in an open, respectful manner, and assists the intern in gaining knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with diverse populations.

IX. Promotes an effective transition from internship to entry-level school psychology practice.

- 9.1 Encourages the intern's active involvement in the school psychology community, such as participating in Listservs/online professional learning communities, attending professional meetings and conferences, and conducting or contributing to scholarship.
- 9.2 Provides guidance, as requested, regarding career options and job searching.
- 9.3 Assists the intern in understanding credentialing requirements and in completing relevant documentation for internship and supervision.
- 9.4 Provides suggestions for future professional development including considerations for future professional support and mentoring.

Notes:

¹Signifies a guideline that is based directly on the National Association of School Psychologists *Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists* (2010c).

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