

Supporting your Practice Excellence

OT and Psychotherapy Supervision

What is psychotherapy supervision?

- A professional and educational working relationship to support and enhance the skills of a provider of psychotherapy to ensure safe and effective use of self
- A contractual agreement between the therapist and a clinical supervisor
- May include in person, live video/teleconferencing, or telephone interactions
- Formats include individual, dyad, or group
- May include a fee for formal psychotherapy supervision
- Supervision is distinctly different from one-time paid consultation and peer support

Who needs psychotherapy supervision?

- An OT who is training to provide psychotherapy
- An OT practising psychotherapy - for continuing professional development
- Psychotherapy supervision throughout your career for ongoing support, problem solving, and feedback
- An OT with less than 3 years experience in psychotherapy should engage in regular supervision
- An OT with more than 3 years of experience should reflect on practice and competence to determine their supervision needs ([Standard 4.2](#))
- The College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (COTO) requires OTs practising psychotherapy to seek supervision appropriate to their level of competence See [COTO's Standards for Psychotherapy](#).

What to look for in a supervisor?

- At least 5 years of practising psychotherapy prior to offering supervision with no restrictions on practice
- Knowledgeable and able to meet the [COTO's Standards of Practice](#)
- Trained in the therapeutic modality that you practice or wish to practice
- Addresses common factors of psychotherapy from a transtheoretical perspective
- Have they completed a formal supervision training program?
- Note: OTs dually registered with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO), should

Why OT psychotherapy supervision?

- Enhances the supervisee's safe and effective use of self in the therapeutic relationship
- Discusses challenges and direction of therapy. For example; ethics, techniques, transference or countertransference, and boundaries issues
- The well-being and growth of both the supervisee and the client are considered in supervision
- Protects the welfare of the client
- Provides accountability within COTO Standards of Practice
- Advances one's skills and competence

Does Supervision improve therapy outcomes?

- Evidence shows that supervision can lead to improved client outcomes, decreased symptoms, and increased adherence to therapy ([Bambling et al, 2006](#), [Bradshaw, Butterworth & Mairs, 2007](#))
- Supervision improves therapists' self-awareness and self-efficacy, the management of psychotherapeutic process and theoretical congruence ([Wheeler & Richards, 2007](#); [Leszcz, M, 2007](#))
- Supervision resulted in significantly higher client and therapist ratings of the therapeutic alliance relative to controls ([Hilsenroth et al, 2002](#))

How do I find a psychotherapy supervisor?

- Use OSOT's online [Find-a-Psychotherapy Supervisor Tool](#) to find OT colleagues who are willing to be contacted as potential supervisors
- Contact the institution where you were trained for psychotherapy. Training institutes usually have contact information for psychotherapy supervisors
- [Tips for assessing the right supervisor](#)