

# Association for Psychological Accreditation

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EMPATHY  
CONGRUENCE  
UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD

#theapaway



Home of The International Psychological Standards & Accreditation Council

## APA Recommendations & Advice



## Recommendations & Advice

**It is APA's intent to provide members, be they Qualified Accredited, In Training, or Psychologically Alert Level, with the best possible network from which to grow, develop and ultimately support those around them.**

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To this end, we respectfully offer all members our recommendations and advice. This is, as a supplement to all APA membership requirements and terms and conditions.

We will publish recommendations and advice in response to members' requests and sector developments.

### Public Reviews

APA has reviewed professional profiles from across the sector, as well as having explored the rising phenomenon of public reviews within the sector. It is APA's view that Professionals have been drawn into a world of public scrutiny through public reviews, that cannot be verified, contextualised or effectively responded to. This in the worst case scenarios can lead to negative experiences being suppressed or expressed without transparency or safeguards for the client or the professional.

This presents a false perception, can be counterproductive to effective therapeutic engagement, and can alter the dynamic of the client relationship with the professional.

APA has designed safeguards and enhanced promotional tools for professionals that strengthen the ethical representation of the Therapeutic relationship.

It is vital that the Mental Health sector remains true to its own ethical protections. Most notably:

1. The unending confidentiality of the client.
2. That the professional is there to support the client, Through empathy, Congruence and Unconditional Positive Regard.

APA acknowledges that much of the therapeutic journey will educate the client in many areas of the interactions in their lives. The Therapeutic relationship is not designed to be a mutual gain for the professional outside of the lessons learned through experience of supporting the client, and of course the financial transaction for the professionals time, experience and capacity to support the client.



## Types of Review

APA believes that the power of a verifiable review is immense, a review that the public can put into context is unquestionably beneficial to a professional that is open to public review of their work and professional practices. This public review of Therapeutic practice, however, is not possible, as the therapeutic experience can only ever be truly experienced in a life setting with a client. What one client experiences will differ to the next and prospective clients must be supported to develop the individual relationship, rather than perceive the Therapeutic experience of others as a benchmark expectation.

APA is therefore acknowledging that effective, transparent and professional reviews have an effective place in the Therapeutic arena. We are therefore clarifying the types of review that are truly beneficial to both prospective clients and the professional.

1. Peer Reviews
2. Client Reviews

### Peer Reviews

Reviews from professional peers are transparent, verifiable and do not breach confidentiality.

### Client Reviews

Unstructured Reviews from clients can be unclear, unverifiable, leave the client open to their confidentiality being breached, and do not allow a context or balanced view to be expressed, as it can come from a place of gratitude or sense of duty to the professional rather than an autonomous decision. Unsolicited reviews, where a client has chosen to open themselves for verification of their review, should be permitted. In such situations Professional are advised to accept the autonomy of the client.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Recommendation 1**

APA is Recommending that ONLY Professional Peer Reviews are requested and used publicly by Therapeutic Professionals and those in training.

#### **Recommendation 2**

No client, in any therapeutic setting should be asked to provide a review for public viewing. Any experience feedback should only be given as part of the therapeutic process and this remains confidential.



At the beginning of the Therapeutic Engagement, new clients could be advised that the therapeutic relationship does NOT require them to give public reviews for the benefit of the Therapeutic Professional. However, we acknowledge an autonomous decision by the client to write a public review, on completion of therapy, is their absolute right. This boundary should be explained during the 1<sup>st</sup> appointment.

## Supervision

APA acknowledges the importance of effective supervision; we actively encourage all members to follow the advice of their supervisor. Whilst APA accepts the Minimum Supervision requirements as below.

A minimum of 2 hours for each month you are practising. You can have more than one contract in place, however, the minimum requirement of 1 hours per month must be with a single supervisor, with the additional hour made through additional supervision, including formal peer supervision.

Our Recommendations are:

### Qualified Accredited Members:

#### Recommendations:

##### Recommendation 1

APA is acutely aware that the early years of therapeutic practice, following qualification, can be especially challenging for any new professional. It is vital for the development of best practice that all newly qualified professionals can access effective supervision. It is a requirement that any APA member offering supervision services, either paid or unpaid, are certified to offer such service. We therefore recommend all members ensure that the supervisor they use as their primary supervisor, is certified to provide supervision.

##### Recommendation 2

Just as it is vital that the supervisor is sufficiently capable of providing an effective service, APA advocates that all supervision is appropriate to the member's capacity, experience, and knowledge as a working professional. The supervision requirement is for a minimum of 2 hours per month with a single primary supervisor. (This must be declared and kept up to date, as part of the membership requirement.) APA recommends that all members use the minimum supervision guidance outlined below:



## Post Qualification – 2 years

**Recommended Supervision level = 1 hour per week. Average 4 hours a month.**

This can be composed of multiple supervisors, where a member may be providing services to multiple organisations for example. If a member is providing therapeutic services to a single employer, it may be prudent to secure the services of a supervisor, independent of the employer, as your primary supervisor.

## Post Qualification 3 - 5 years

**Recommended Supervision level = 45 minutes per week. Average 3 hours a month.**

This can be composed of supervisors, where a member may be providing services to multiple organisations, for example. If a member is providing therapeutic services to a single employer, it may be prudent to secure the services of a supervisor, independent of the employer, as your primary supervisor.

## Post Qualification 5+ years

**Recommended Supervision level = Average 2 hours a month.**

This can be composed of multiple supervisors, where a member may be providing therapeutic services to multiple organisations, for example. If a member is providing therapeutic services to a single employer, it may be prudent to secure the services of a supervisor, independent of the employer, as your primary supervisor.

### Advice:

Members are encouraged to follow the guidance of their supervisor(s) in relation to the type and frequency of supervision they would benefit from, based on the member's need in any given situation. (Members are reminded that, should they need to seek additional support, the APA Directory will highlight all members that are able to offer support.)

Members are advised *not* to use the Emergency Supervision component of their membership to resolve questions or disagreements between members and supervisors.

## Members In Training:

### Advice:

#### **Point 1:**

During your course of study, you will have various cause and opportunity to receive supervision. In addition to the MIT supervision requirements when in placement, APA



advise all Members In Training to consider utilising a supervisor for their own personal development.

**Point 2:**

Effective supervision has been shown to deliver the best outcomes for all 3 elements, (employee, client & supervisor) and the overall organisation, when supervision is delivered independently of the employee's operational management. We advise that this principle of operationally independent supervision is adopted.

**Psychologically Alert Level Members:**

**Advice:**

APA offers the following advice on the topic of supervision, to all sectors that use supervision as a means of developing effective professional conduct and protection of client interests.

**Point 1:**

A good operational manager does not automatically make a good supervisor. No one should be working in a supervisory capacity without having first obtained a professional competency certificate to deliver supervision.

**Point 2:**

Effective supervision has been shown to deliver the best outcomes for all 3 elements, (employee, client & supervisor) and the overall organisation, when supervision is delivered independently of the employee's operational management. We advise that this principle of operationally independent supervision is adopted.

**Specialisation Training**

**Member In Training:**

APA acknowledges the importance of effective training in specific specialisations or areas of professional practice. That said, APA accepts that the potential, for long term psychological damage to be inflicted, with no intent or immediate symptom, simply due to premature exposure to a specialised environment. APA encourages all members to ensure that children and vulnerable adults\* are protected from risk of psychological harm.

\*Vulnerable adult refers to any adult with a diagnosed vulnerability in learning capacity or physical frailty.



## Recommendation:

APA recommends that all psychologically based practice with children and vulnerable adults is classed as a specialised skill set. Therefore, all training in a specialised skill is only undertaken post qualification.

\*Vulnerable adult refers to any adult with a diagnosed vulnerability in learning capacity or physical frailty.

### Advice:

APA advises all organisations that currently use pre-qualified trainees to deliver psychological services to children or vulnerable adults to cease. The long-term impact of trainees on such groups is increasingly being discovered as negative, long after the trainee has completed the engagement with the individual. We acknowledge that this is wholly unintended and simply a side effect of inexperience being used in an environment where experience is critical. APA holds no prejudice to any member that has undertaken such training before qualifying.

## Placements During Training

Charities, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations, statutory providers and others working with pre-qualified trainees:

APA acknowledges that placements during training are of vital importance. This should never be eroded, and we encourage all those in training to use placements to increase and widen their knowledge base. APA recommends that placements during training do not include working with children or vulnerable adults: \*Vulnerable adult refers to any adult with a diagnosed vulnerability in learning capacity or physical frailty.

### Recommendation:

We recommend that charities, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations, statutory providers and others that benefit from providing training placements to pre-qualified professionals declare their commitment to working ethically in not exposing children or vulnerable adults to a pre-qualified trainee.

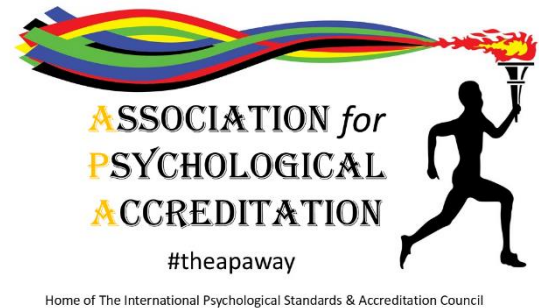
### Advice:

APA acknowledges that many placements will be currently underway, at the time of releasing this document. We therefore advise all organisations that are impacted by this point to cease commencing any new such placements. Replacing pre-qualified professionals with post-qualified professionals that wish to specialise in the specific skill set. At this time, we advise that no alteration is made to the operational safeguards and protections currently in place for those that are in training.



Please note the APA MIT (Member In Training) status extends to a minimum of 12 months following qualification. It is this first 12-month period that many newly qualified professionals will require the learning in their chosen specialisation.

# A new approach for new results



## Contact us

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