



SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

PEER SUPERVISION

AND SUPPORT

Seeking professional support is an important part of a speech pathologist's responsibilities to engage in reflective practice and life-long learning. The **Professional Standards (2.4)** indicate that "We participate in professional development, supervision and/or mentoring to develop knowledge and skills relevant to our roles and to maintain currency."

Likewise, the **Code of Ethics (1.1)** inform us that "We maintain our capacity and competence to practice. In particular we: engage in lifelong learning to maintain and continually update and extend our professional knowledge and skills. We do this by participating in professional development and seeking the support of a supervisor."

Supervision and Mentoring are mentioned specifically and **defined** in the profession's Core Documents. However, the Association recognises that speech pathologists may participate in a variety of professional partnerships that support their professional development and engagement in reflective practice. Two of these partnerships include Peer Support and Peer Supervision.

PEER SUPPORT

This type of partnership often occurs between similarly experienced professionals. Peer support can occur in a 1:1 setting or in a group. These interactions are typically informal and may be incidental or regular in their occurrence.

Colleagues who participate in peer support can help one another engage in reflective practice, collaboration, and problem-solving.

However, participants should also consider that peer support does not typically include elements such as a privacy agreement; verification of contributors' knowledge or experience; or a formalised learning plan with goals and reflection on outcomes. These considerations will impact on the type of information that would be appropriate to share.

However, peer support partnerships can be easily modified into a partnership called "peer supervision."

PEER SUPERVISION

Like peer support, this partnership often occurs between professionals who have a similar level of experience and can occur between two professionals or an appropriately sized group.

This makes peer supervision a helpful option where supervision from a more-experienced professional is not available, such as when a speech pathologist is already very experienced.

Peer supervisors engage in reciprocal learning by sharing the skills, experience, and knowledge available within the group of peers. This fosters and encourages mutual benefits, self-directed learning, and the exchange of feedback. It can provide a forum to share diverse knowledge and experiences.

Unlike peer support, peer supervision is formalised through (1) an agreement, (2) documented learner goals, and (3) reflection on learning outcomes.

These elements may allow participants to discuss information that meets their professional responsibilities to privacy and to "ensure our professional practice is underpinned by the best available and generally accepted evidence," **(Code of Ethics 3.2)**.

These three elements are consistent with the Professional Standards **definition of Supervision**, which states that "Supervision is collaborative and formalised by written agreements, learning goals, and documentation of supervisory activities and progress."

Incorporating these three elements will ensure your peer supervision partnership meets the CPD requirements for Certified Practising Speech Pathologist (CPSP) members.

Speech pathologists can find helpful resources for forming peer supervision partnerships on the **Supervision webpage**. This includes a supervision agreement template that may be modified for use in peer supervision.

Members are also invited to **contact the Professional Support Advisor** for more information about engaging in peer support and supervision.

Nathan Cornish-Raley
Professional Support Advisor



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