

Supervision facts and tips.

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NP intern

The NP ¹intern' is a relatively new term in New Zealand and in this case, it is being used to describe those who have entered into a formal contract (HWNZ, NP training Pilot program commenced 2016) with their employer and the academic facility at which they are completing their prescribing practicum. This contract provides support for the training NP intern across the practicum year, within this timeframe clinical supervision is provided by an appropriately trained supervisor. There is an amount of funding (HWNZ, 2016) for the interns, which supports the provision of protected time for study and learning with the understanding that at the successful completion of the practicum the student will be transition to an NP role within the organization. The positive aspects of this NP training program may be realized in the fact that these NP interns once trained will be appropriately acknowledged for their advanced level of skill, knowledge and practice.

¹ Also known as student or candidate

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All NP interns regardless of the model of training they are undertaking require clinical supervision to complete the prescribing practicum and required competencies to authorize as a NP by the NZ Nursing council.

The Supervisor Role.

²Clinical supervision in health areas provides oversight – either direct or indirect within broad areas or specific area of clinical practice. There is a professional undertaking and agreement whereby the supervisor provides guidance around personal, professional and educational development supporting the process of advancing the students abilities to provide safe appropriate and high-quality patient care.

More specifically within the practice environment the skills required to advance practice skills and develop critical analysis to support rational clinical decision relating to actual patient care and case presentation.

The Clinical supervisor

A clinical supervisor is an appropriately qualified and recognized professional who guides students' education and training during clinical placements or within clinical arenas.

Most supervisors are medical practitioners although increasing numbers are NPs. The supervisors are chosen by the NP student's (interns) and are aligned to the area of practice in which the NP intern is expecting to gain NZNC authorization to practice as an NP.

Mentors

Mentors are health professionals who provide support from a number of perspectives, these are not necessarily formal contracted relationships however provide are an important attribute to the professional development of the student. The intern mentors may include a variety of individuals across the health sector from academic, health management and allied health partners.

In a formal mentoring arrangement for an NP intern/student, it would be common place to meet regularly and provide documented evidence of these interactions. Outlining issues discussed and providing solution orientated feedback supporting professional growth of the student. Mentors take a specific interest in assisting another individual nurse with their professional and career development over time.

² Includes prescribing supervisor or mentor or preceptor

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Preceptors

In most instances within health environments the preceptor acts for the organisation or employer to assist a new employee or student to orientate and settle in to a new role.

Contracts for supervisors

Contractual requirements for the clinical supervision are sought via the training university and in most instances are negotiated via the administration bodies of the organization at which the student is employed. This agreement will be in most cases, be between the organization and the training university, it should not be the responsibility of the supervisor to prepare a contract.

The NP student/intern with the appropriate academic qualifications engages with the workplace/ organization to gain access to either the intern program or via existing academic method of training. The NP intern/student must secure in writing, organisational support and confirmation of clinical supervision prior to commencing the academic portion related to prescribing practicum.

It is from these negotiations that the contractual obligations for formal clinical supervision can be developed and agreements related to nominations of a supervisor are confirmed with both the workplace/organization and academic institution.

Time frames for clinical supervision

The length of clinical supervision agreements may differ depending on the university where the NP intern is completing the prescribing practicum. Some are one year where others are one semester. The formal relationship for the supervision will be outlined within the contract.

Clinical supervision for interns/students within prescribing practicum needs to reflect a minimum of 300 hour of clinical practice to allow consideration for NZNC competencies for NP. How this practice is observed is not rigidly outlined however it generally includes a variety of pedagogical methods including case study, presentations, tutorials, discussion and debate, debriefing and case conferencing. There is an expectation to encourage and observe full and focused history and physical examination, development of problems lists differentials and treatment plans. Supervisors are asked to challenge the students to demonstrate their ability to justify actions and demonstrate evidence-based practice highlighting developing advanced practice.

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There are a number of ways supervisors may decide to integrate clinical learning into day to day practice and this is dependent on the practice environment and the patient presentation model. It is thought that even small moments of teaching time can offer important learning opportunities to students by providing them with new insights and skills that they would not acquire from simply seeing patients on their own.

Methods of clinical review

'Buddy' sessions are often used, where the intern/student sits in with the supervisor either in a shadowing capacity or manages the patient consult under observation. This provides one to one learning which is suited to students in early learning phases.

Patient-witnessed teaching

A variation of the 'buddy' session, where the intern/student collects history and assessment data, the supervisor then enters the room for the case presentation and discussion of the learner's assessment. This model includes the patient in the discussions around differentials examination findings and planning of treatment plan and care

Traditional case presentation

Allows the student to interview the patient; collecting data around chief complaint and history, these findings along with etiology of present problem, plan of action are presented to the supervisor. Questions and feed-back are provided to assist learning.

The traditional case presentation frequently takes place after a learner has interacted with a patient to collect a chief complaint and history. Learners are asked to present pertinent findings, to assess the etiology of the problem at hand, or to propose a plan of action; preceptors then question learners to probe for details or justification.

There are a number of clinical supervision models which are used to hone the advanced practice skills of the NP intern/student all of which have merit in teaching circles. The models mention above are the most commonly utilized however One-Minute Preceptor model, SNAPPS model, "Think-aloud" model and Aunt Minnie are also used in suitable environments

How much time should be allowed for clinical supervision?

Dedicated weekly supervision meetings for approximately one hour would be ultimate, however this may not occur. Usually there is some common ground between the student and supervisor and that is why you have been chosen. I.e. either you work closely with the student or share common patients in some way.

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It is necessary to have a clinical relationship with the NP intern. Supervision meeting may take place more ad-hoc however they need to be formally documented or some form of patient case review needs to be the core of the meeting.

The NP may request that you review written material relating to their associated academic responsibilities, some of these will be clinical case studies, audits or essays related to vision of a NP role

Supervision may occur in a variety of occasions depending on the area of practice and type of patient interaction. At the commencement of the supervision relationship an initial meeting to assess competency of skill to attain a base line to determine further learning needs versus current capacity. In this way evaluation would need to be on a case to case basis.

Logistics with multiple clinical supervision students

In some organizations it would not be uncommon to find clinical supervisors with a number of students. The role of clinical supervisor is time consuming and a responsibility not to be taken lightly. The supervisor's reputation is under review by way of accepting the role of supervisor. There is an expectation that the supervisor will in-fact teach the student advanced practice skills.

The number of students that an individual can suitably provide adequate clinical supervision is not outlined however the supervisor must feel comfortable and not time constrained. If you were to feel overwhelmed with the work load it would be advisable to decline the supervision offer and perhaps suggest someone else who is suitably qualified.

If you were to feel you were not the right person for the role when asked to undertake supervision for a student, this needs to be made clear in the beginning, with referral to another practitioner.

A lifelong relationship

It is encouraged that the students maintain a clinical relationship with their supervisors after the supervision contract is complete at a collegial level for their future professional development.

Clinical supervision requirements for NP training program

- Each student will be supervised in the clinical practice time in practicum papers by an appropriately qualified prescribing health professional (NP preferred).

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- The appointment of a clinical supervisor must be negotiated with partner NP employers prior to enrolment in the practicum.
- The student must negotiate with their current employer prior to acceptance in the pathway with the support of the NP pathway coordinator.

NP intern candidates (NP training program) are asked to supply contact details of a prescribing health professional (NP or Medical Provider) who they have identified to provide one-to-one clinical supervision during the program.