



**ARBITRATORS' AND MEDIATORS'  
INSTITUTE OF NEW ZEALAND INC**

*Te Mana Kaiwhakatau, Takawaenga o Aotearoa*

# AMINZ Professional Supervision Protocol



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### AMINZ PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION PROTOCOL

Professional Supervision is a form of professional development. Professional Supervision may include or be used in conjunction with, and to enhance and compliment, other forms of professional development, such as debriefing, mentoring, consulting, and training.

Professional supervision aims to

- enhance professional development and strengthen competency
- improve the standard and delivery of best and safe practice

The purpose of supervision is the development of the dispute resolution practitioner by empowering and enabling, rather than by assessment, monitoring or oversight of practice.

Professional Supervision is a confidential process conducted between a professional supervisor and a dispute resolution practitioner (supervisee). The supervision process is designed to enhance practice by facilitating the dispute resolution practitioner to debrief and critically reflect on the actions, processes, people and context of their practice.

All dispute resolution practitioners' will benefit from professional supervision; however the focus and form of professional supervision will differ depending on the developmental stage of the practitioner and the area of work they are engaged in (eg. family, community, construction, contract etc).

Responsibility for the performance of the practitioner remains with the practitioner (and their organization if they are an employee).

There are three areas of focus in supervision

- Educative or formative - involves the development of skills, understanding and abilities of the DR Practitioner
- Restorative or supportive - deals with the feelings and emotions the practitioner is left with after working with clients; may include time out and space for thinking, colleague interactions, rumination and review, rejoicing, letting off steam, actualising feeling
- Normative - covers the professional, organisational and ethical standards required of the practitioner; eg. ethical dilemmas and concerns, professional and practice standards, case management, training, time management, team work etc.

#### **Setting up supervision**

Professional Supervision is a unique approach to professional development where the dispute resolution practitioner and professional supervisor negotiate the terms of their professional supervision relationship and share equal responsibility for ensuring it is efficient and effective.

Before beginning professional supervision the supervisor and supervisee decide if they can work well together and negotiate the supervision arrangements to meet the

supervisees' professional development needs and style of learning/working. This will include

- practical arrangements (may involve an employer if appropriate), how often, where, when, payment, form of supervision etc
- their working relationship - boundaries; expectations; process; learning objectives; areas of work to be covered; focus of the supervisor's input (challenge, support, clarification, information, options, resolving ethical dilemmas etc),

### **Professional Supervisors**

Professional Supervisors should be trained and competent in the process of supervision, preferably have an understanding of the dispute resolution practitioner role and the professional and ethical requirements of the dispute resolution profession. They ideally will have had experience of being supervised in their own practice. Professional Supervisors may be from other disciplines with a special interest in dispute resolution or be dispute resolution practitioners who have developed skills in professional supervision.

### **Recommendation**

AMINZ should

- Promote the value of Professional Supervision, and encourage members to undertake it
- Award CPD points for undertaking or providing Professional Supervision as with other forms of professional development (debriefing, mentoring)
- Hold a list of trained Professional Supervisors who are willing to provide Professional Supervision to members

## **Appendix 1 Options for implementing Professional Supervision**

The following options may be considered when negotiating Professional Supervision arrangements:

- Form of Professional Supervision:
  - by a specialist supervisor or peer
  - conducted one to one, or as a team or in a group
  - a mixture of different forms may be appropriate
  
- Mode
  - Professional Supervision is usually face to face
  - may also be by telephone or on line as circumstances dictate (geographical isolation, immediacy)
  
- Frequency and duration will depend on:
  - the mediator's or arbitrator's experience
  - number of mediations/arbitrations held
  - intensity and complexity of mediations/arbitrations
  
- Method of preparing for Professional Supervision
  - by report
  - by observation
  
- Supervision
  - on a regular schedule
  - on an "as required" basis

## **Appendix 2 Benefits of Professional Supervision**

For the dispute resolution practitioner:

- increases practitioner confidence, competence and effectiveness
- focuses on the individual's professional development needs
- forms part of continued learning and development
- facilitates integration of theory and practice
- widens access to different skills, strategies and techniques
- increases ethical practice
- improves job satisfaction
- reduces practitioner stress
- increases practitioner awareness in their role
- assists practitioners to use their own resources more effectively
- may be a central form of support

For the clients

- improves quality of service
- may increase client satisfaction
- increases ethical, professional and practice standards
- reduces risk of unsafe practice

For AMINZ and the dispute resolution profession

- increases the standard of professional development of members
- increases the standard of practice provided by members
- increases credibility of the profession
- is increasingly being expected for mediators as part of statutory mediation services
- reduces risk of complaints against practitioners/AMINZ members
- increases safety and best practice
- increases business for members through higher standards of practice and enhanced client satisfaction
- helps meet institute standards and goals

### **Appendix 3 Outline of Professional Supervision Agreement**

A Professional Supervision Agreement is an important element of the Professional Supervision arrangement between the supervisor and supervisee. The agreement should contain the following information:

1. Parties

2. Duration

- The length of the agreement  
Eg. 1 year, six months
- Frequency of Professional Supervision activity  
Eg. fortnightly, monthly, as needed (and how that would work in practice)

3. Relationship

How the parties agree to work together and what each is responsible for

4. Timeliness

Agreement regarding length of sessions, cancellation or postponement procedures etc.

5. Preparation for Professional Supervision

Could include any pre-session reflection, emailing a proposed agenda to the supervisor etc.

6. Procedure

How, where, when etc.

6. Confidentiality

7. Fees

Amount and process for payment

8. Signatures

#### **Appendix 4 Feedback from Dispute resolution practitioners who use Professional Supervision as part of their professional development**

“Some years ago, I received professional supervision as a requirement of an employment agreement. I found this incredibly useful as a way of continuing to challenge myself, develop my skills and increase my self-awareness. Since that time I have had a Professional Supervisor by my own choice. I deeply value my Professional Supervisor and the sessions I have which currently are at my request. I find I can, to some extent at least, maintain a “beginners mind” which enables me to be mindful in what I do, and much more effective in what I provide than would be otherwise possible.”

FAMINZ - Mediator and Educator

“Supervision gives me the benefit of someone else’s “vision” into my practice and ensures that I am not overlooking things that need to be addressed, for example, my blind spots, triggers, learning needs, ethical issues, standards of practice, etc. I use supervision to share and address my work concerns, challenges and conflicts; resolve professional and ethical issues, and receive challenge in a safe environment.

I have received professional supervision over the past 25 years in my social work, management, supervision, and mediation practices. Over the past 10 years I have also been a professional supervisor (group, peer and individual) for social workers and mediators. Supervising is a unique opportunity to enhance another person’s practice by providing an environment for them to share their work concerns and gain insights, support, challenge, guidance and follow up. I see supervision as an essential part of my professional development and for delivery of safe practice for both myself and clients.”

AAMINZ – Mediator and Supervisor

'I have used professional supervision to support and develop my work practice for a number of years. This was initially mandatory supervision in employment contexts where I worked alongside people in crisis, involving high emotional content and frequent ethical dilemmas. Professional supervision (with a supervisor outside of my work context) allowed me to examine my own practice openly in a confidential context. I now work as a sole DR practitioner, and currently undergo three types of supervision in different areas of practice; a regular peer supervision group (my choice, no cost); regular 'outside'supervision along with another practitioner with whom I work frequently (mandatory, the organisation pays); as-needed 'outside' one-to-one supervision (my choice, I pay!). All three serve as the 'net' which keeps my practice safe for myself and others; I now regard it as an ethical necessity. In addition it provides rich input for my own professional development.'

FAMINZ, Dispute Resolution Practitioner