**Towson University Counseling Center: TeleSupervisory Expectations Contract**

# Rationale for Telesupervision

# There are unique benefits to in-person supervision, including, but not limited to: professional socialization, assessment of trainee competence, and recognition and processing of subtle nonverbal and/or emotional interactions. As a result, in-person supervision is considered best practice unless significant barriers to in-person supervision exist. In the event that in-person supervision is not possible, telesupervision may be used to ensure trainees continue to receive the support and training required as part of an accredited internship program, and that all clients are appropriately cared for.

# Expectations of Telesupervisors

**Establishing the Telessupervisory Relationship**

1. *Telesupervisors are expected to practice within the bounds of the laws and regulations of the State of Maryland, the policies and professional standards of the Towson University Counseling Center, and the 2003 Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct set forth by the American Psychological Association.* Additionally, telesupervisors will adhere to the Counseling Center Diversity Statement: <http://www.towson.edu/counseling/diversitystatement.asp> in all interactions with trainees.

2. *Within the first three telesupervisory sessions, telesupervisors are expected to establish an understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of each party, including procedures specific to the use of technology for telesupervision and telemental health services.* These include the format, frequency, and content of telesupervision; the roles played by each party; the goals of telesupervision; due process procedures and the limits of confidentiality within the telesupervisory relationship; the handling of emergency situations; and the availability of supervision and telesupervision at unscheduled times.

***A note about limits to confidentiality in supervision and telesupervision:*** *We recognize that interns are vulnerable given their standing in the Center and the profession.  Supervisors are expected to regard personal information shared by trainees with utmost respect.  Information provided to supervisors is to be used to help supervisees in their professional and personal development.  It is important to note that unlike in therapy, confidentiality does not apply to information shared by trainees in supervision because supervision is a function shared by all senior staff at the Center.  Senior staff members do consult each other about their trainees in order to support the supervisor’s responsibility to provide appropriate support, direction, and evaluation.  If trainees choose to share particularly sensitive material with their supervisors, they and the supervisor should discuss what aspects of that information might be pertinent for a supervisor to share with other supervisors or senior staff members.  We hope this policy will not dissuade interns from sharing important information as we recognize the value of appropriate disclosure in promoting personal and professional growth.*

*This "Telesupervisory Expectations Contract Form" outlining these conditions must be signed by both parties, and approved by the Director of Training before the fourth telesupervisory meeting****.*** The contract should be reviewed periodically in the telesupervisory sessions to ensure compliance and/or to re-negotiate the conditions. If changes are made, these must be approved by the training director as well.

**Promptness & Availability of Telesupervisors**

*Telesupervisors are expected to be on time for their sessions.* Cancelled telesupervision sessions should be re-scheduled within the same week if at all possible. If a telesupervisor plans to be absent, it is the telesupervisor's responsibility to arrange back-up supervision or telesupervision as needed.

**Briefing on Policies & Procedures**

Telesupervisors are also expected to monitor the telesupervisee's understanding of, and compliance with, policies on such matters as crisis management, confidentiality, external communications, release of information, record keeping, etc.

**Intakes and disposition planning**

*The supervisor is responsible for providing intake training to the supervisee by having them sit in on intake sessions conducted by the supervisor and other staff members.*The supervisor has the responsibility of deciding when the intern is ready to perform their own intakes and for approving the disposition of clients seen by the supervisee

**Case Review & Documentation**

1. Teles*upervisors must maintain an ongoing awareness of all clients who comprise a telesupervisee's caseload.* While it is the telesupervisee's primary responsibility to brief the telesupervisor about each client, the telesupervisor is also expected to take the initiative in reviewing all cases on a regular basis. Each telesupervisor must decide the actual frequency and depth of such case briefings taking into account the telesupervisee's degree of competence and the level of liability risk acceptable to the telesupervisor.

2. *Telesupervisors are expected to review audio/video tapes on a regular basis* *when audio/video tapes are available.* If telesupervisees are providing telemental health services only, and are unable to conduct audio/video recording of session, review of audio/video tapes may be suspended temporarily***.*** At the discretion of the telesupervisor, the number of tapes reviewed each week may vary depending on the telesupervisee's degree of competence and the level of liability risk acceptable to the telesupervisor.

3. *Telesupervisors (including senior group co-leaders) should read and co-sign each progress note written by the telesupervisee***.** This includes entries regarding cancellations, no-shows, critical incidents, actions taken, etc. Teleupervisors are expected to provide evaluative feedback about the quality of progress notes and may require any editing which will improve the notes as written by the telesupervisee.

**Evaluative Feedback Processes**

1. *Telesupervisors are responsible for providing ongoing, timely, and accurate feedback to the telesupervisee regarding their progress, including strengths and areas needing improvement.* Telesupervisors are expected to attend formal feedback sessions scheduled by the training director. Also, written evaluations as requested by the training director must be provided in a timely manner.

2. *As the need arises, the telesupervisor and/or group co–leader are expected to contact the Director of Training in a timely manner to discuss questions or concerns about a telesupervisee***.** Telesupervisees need to be informed that problems or weaknesses in performance may be reported to the training director. Such reporting must be done in accordance with due process procedures, particularly in instances of problematic performance.

**Transfer of Supervisory and Telesupervisory Responsibilities**

Whenever there is a supervisory re-assignment (such as that which occurs at the end of the first semester), *the previous supervisor will continue to be responsible for case management until the first supervisory meeting occurs with the new supervisor.* The official transfer of cases will occur at that first meeting.

**Expectations of Teleupervisees**

**Ethical & Legal Practice**

*Telesupervisees are expected to practice within the bounds of the laws and regulations of the State of Maryland, the policies and professional standards of the Towson University Counseling Center, and the 2002 Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct set forth by the American Psychological Association.*

**Multicultural Competence**

Telesupervisors will discuss MC issues w/trainees and assess MC competence

**Professional Functioning**

1. *Telesupervisees are expected to make appropriate use of telesupervision.* This includes being on time and prepared to take full advantage of learning opportunities, maintaining an openness to learning, openly and directly communicating with the telesupervisor; and being able to accept and use constructive feedback.

2. *Telesupervisees are expected to function in a professional manner.* This includes balancing agency needs with personal needs, managing personal stress and monitoring commitments, maintaining appropriate interaction with peers, colleagues, and staff, using appropriate channels of communication; participating in meetings and staff development activities, and being alert and responsive to adjustment problems or emotional responses that may interfere with professional functioning.

**Expectations of Supervisors and Supervisees Specific to Telesupervision**

Telesupervision will be conducted and documented in a confidential manner according to applicable laws in similar ways as in-person supervision. In order to minimize risks, telesupervisors and telesupervisees will use secure video conferencing software, and follow established telesupervision requirements and procedures:

* Telesupervisors and telesupervisees will engage in sessions only from a private location where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
* Telesupervisors and telesupervisees must use their own computer or device, or TUCC computers or devices; do not use a computer or device that is publicly accessible.
* You will ensure that the computer or device you use has updated operating and anti-virus software.
* Telesupervisors and telesupervisees will endeavor to minimize technical failures that might disrupt, delay, or distort communications.
* Telesupervisors and telesupervisees may be anywhere during a telesupervision meeting; however, all clinical work that is being telesupervised must take place in Maryland.

Should there be technical problems with video conferencing, the most reliable backup plan is contact by phone. Telesupervisors and telesupervisees should have access to a correct phone number at which to reach one another, and have access to your phones at session times. If you are unable to connect to a video conference, or get disconnected, please try to connect again. Email is not a confidential method of communication, and should not be used to discuss confidential client information.

**Signatures**

Term of contract: Fall Spring 20\_\_

By our signatures, we affirm that we both understand the telesupervisory expectations noted in this document and that we both agree to the specific contracted goals and activities cited above.

Supervisor/Date Supervisee/Date