

What is Supervision?

Churches of Christ in Queensland (CofCQ) is committed to doing better at building “God-centred communities manifested in relationships characterised by love for God and others in response to God’s grace.” and developing leaders to lead them. We know we will be doing better when each affiliated community is a safe place for everybody to grow in their apprenticeship to Jesus, and in their relationships with one another. The Supervision of People in Ministry in CofCQ is a vital element in developing safe places. CofCQ hopes to support those in ministry to meet with the increasing demands of their role and better support their diverse communities so that together they can be a sign, witness, and foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

Supervision is a joint endeavour in which a minister, with the help of a Supervisor, develops themselves in relation to their ministry and wider context, attends to the people they minister to and, by developing their own practice, feeds back into the knowledge and effectiveness of the wider CofC Movement. To better understand the meaning behind the word Supervision, we delve deeper into each phrase below.

Supervision is a joint endeavour...

It is vital to recognise that Supervision is not a passive activity for the Supervisee, it involves both parties working in partnership, together facing the challenges of ministry, in service of the Supervisee and the wider mission.

...in which a minister develops themselves in relation to their ministry and wider context...

A key element of Supervision is to allow a minister to reflect on practise, learn, and be held and supported in that process.

...attends to the people they minister to...

Supervision always involves the community the Supervisee ministers in, otherwise it becomes an activity in counselling. Done well, Supervision is a time where the Supervisee can stand back and reflect on their community and the people they minister to so as to understand and serve them better.

...feeds back into the knowledge and effectiveness of the wider CofC Movement.

Supervision should be a source of organisational learning. It is important to note that Supervision is not a process where the more experienced shape the practise, behaviour, and understanding of the novice, but rather a place where the Supervisor and Supervisee are standing side by side to together face the challenges of ministry. Supervision can be an effective tool to support an organisational culture which aims to constantly learn and develop.

Supervision starts with the premise that we acknowledge God is active in the minister and the life of the church. CofCQ believes that healthy ministry requires those in ministry to continue in community with one another, it is the type of work that cannot be met with in isolation. A humble posture and a commitment to lifelong learning is required. Supervision lends itself to the practice of discernment, firstly about God's activity in both the minister and the church, and secondly in terms of our response—this will vary from situation to situation. In Supervision, we will learn, we will be challenged, we will be supported, and we will discover and face the risks of entering into the mystery of God's call and where it leads us. Whatever the circumstance, Supervision is to be one place where joy and pain can be freely expressed, but also a space of resurrection, redemption, and healing.

Supervision is not...

...mentoring or coaching if these merely focus on skills development and general progress. A mentor or coach may also become your supervisor, provided they are still able to meet the requirements in this Supervision document. As a Minister, your Senior Minister cannot be your Supervisor.

Vital keys for supervision:

- To oversee the wellbeing of the minister.
- To promote safe practices.
- To foster ethical understandings.
- To ensure they are in a healthy place.

CofCQ Supervision

CofCQ aims to enable those in ministry to access Supervision through professionally endorsed people-caring professionals participating in active supervision and affiliated with a professional body. They will have professional experience and qualifications in one of the following vocations: coach/mentor, counsellor, professional supervisor – clinical or pastoral, psychologist or a spiritual director.

They must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Formal qualifications in one of the following vocations:
- has an active membership/registration with a vocationally affiliated professional body
- is participating as a supervisee in professional supervision themselves

Governance and Accountability

Supervision is supported and highlighted in several COFCQ policies as a priority for providing care and accountability for People in Ministry. This includes the following policies (click for documents):

Endorsement & Ordination Policy

Code of Conduct

Supervision is a required practice within COFCQ, with the implementation and accountability sitting with both the Minister and their Employer.

How to get the best out of Supervision

Agreement

Supervisory relationships begin with an agreement which includes specific items of enabling the Supervisor and Supervisee to feel sufficiently safe and to have complete clarity around their roles, and the boundaries of the relationship. If there is a mismatch in expectations, the Supervisory relationship can become a token relationship with no real benefits.

Such an agreement will include basic elements like meeting frequency, duration, and place, as well as agreed upon standards for the relationship.

We encourage Supervisors and Supervisees to use the agreement below as an annually approved guide for their Supervisory relationship and add any specifics they require. (Remember that the agreement is in addition to the minister's annual wellbeing plan).

Please complete this document, making copies for the supervisor and supervisee, and also sending a copy to the COFCQ Leadership & Formation team.

Supervision Agreement ([hyperlink](#))

Supervisor's Role

Supervisors have a complex and enriching role and perform a variety of functions. They provide support and counsel, they guide the learning, development and reflective practice of their Supervisee, and they oversee their Supervisee's ministry to provide additional support and safeguarding for communities.

The task of a supervisor is to allow their Supervisee to feel held, valued, and understood so that they will be able to be open to review and challenge as well as able to value themselves and their own abilities. Supervisors can seek assistance and clarification from the COFCQ Leadership & Formation team, as needed.

An effective Supervisor has the knowledge, experience, integrity and skill to:

- Maintain 'professionalism' to assist in creating a safe space to work on the issues the Supervisee faces;
- Help those in ministry identify things that are happening in their practice that they might not see or understand;
- Recognise when the Supervisor does not have the level of skill to assist those in ministry appropriately, and so offer an appropriate referral to a person who has the needed skills;
- Respect the processes and diversities of learning modes;
- Recognise where cultural expectations may be affecting ministry practice; and
- Name under what circumstances a Supervision relationship needs to be ended.

Supervisee's Role

It is important to remember to be proactive in the Supervisory relationship. It is all too easy to slide into dependency and just accept the type of Supervision you receive once a support system is set up. To ensure that Supervisees receive the Supervision they require, they need to take responsibility in an ongoing way for contracting and negotiating how their Supervision will operate, what it will focus on and how the process will be monitored and reviewed.

Assistance and clarification can be sought from the COFCQ Leadership & Formation team, as needed.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisee to include the following in the Supervision conversation:

- Identify ministry practice issues they need help with;
- Become increasingly able to share freely;
- Clarify the style of feedback they respond to best;
- Be open to feedback;
- Monitor tendencies to justify, explain, or defend;
- Develop the ability to clarify what feedback is useful;
- Remember that what happens in response to Supervision is their responsibility;
- Remember that the purpose of the whole undertaking is to enhance the ministry they offer; and
- Discern God's presence and purpose.

FAQ

Q. How many times do I need to meet with my supervisor?

A minimum of four (4) times annually, our recommendation would be meeting monthly with at least one of your support team (Spiritual director, Supervisor, Mentor etc.)

Q. How will this be funded?

The proposal approved by conference council is that supervision would be employer funded.

Q. How will I find a supervisor?

CofC will provide a list of professional directories for Spiritual Directors and Pastoral Supervisors.

Q. Does this replace the Wellbeing Plan?

Yes. Although we would strongly encourage using the Wellbeing Plan as a framework for your supervision conversations.

Q. Does this apply to all ministering persons irrespective of the hours of engagement?

This requirement is for all ministering persons who are engaged in regular ministry exceeding 7.6 hours per week.

Supervision Resources

There are many helpful resources available on supervision, we highly recommend Rick Lewis's book - Mentoring Matters (2009) published by Monarch books.

Supervision Agreement ([hyperlink](#))

Coach/Mentor

- [Australian Christian Mentoring Network – A Community of Practice for Christian Mentors](#)

Professional Supervision

- [Australasian Association of Supervision](#)
- [Chaplaincy Australia](#)

Spiritual Director

- [ANSD – Australian Network for Spiritual Direction](#)
- [CSD Australia | Conference of Spiritual Directors Australia](#)