



# KA RANGATAHI

Youth Lived Experience Workforce Development

# Supervision toolkit

**A resource about  
supervision for young  
people working in  
lived experience  
and peer roles**



## WHĀRAURAU

Empower the Workforce | Manaaki Mōkōpuna



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AUCKLAND  
Waipapa Taumata Rau  
NEW ZEALAND



# Introduction

Kia ora, nga mihi nui kia koe. Welcome to the Ka Rangatahi Supervision Toolkit.

We're proud that this resource was created by young people working in lived experience roles. Their unique lived experiences hold a wealth of knowledge that we have tried to include in this concise resource. Whāraurau continues to champion the kaupapa of rangatahi with lived experience taking up youth consumer advisor and youth peer support worker roles in mental health and addiction services.

Supervision is essential for young people working in the mental health and addiction workforce. For young people working in lived experience roles, there are unique implications that need to be considered when thinking about supervision.

We hope this resource provides information on the types of supervision and reflective practice available for young people working in lived experience roles and guides line managers to set up supervisory experiences that assist and support young people in their roles.



## Who is this resource for?

### Young People

If you're a young person working in a youth consumer advisor or youth peer support worker role, and you're not sure where to start with supervision or what might be helpful for you, we hope this resource gives you some guidance.

*Youth Peers – Young people with lived experience of mental health and/or addiction*

### Managers and colleagues

If you're a manager supporting a young person with lived experience in their role, this resource provides ideas for supervision options. Managers and youth peers (consumer advisors and peer support workers) can discuss what's available in the service and make the necessary arrangements.

It is appropriate for both managers and youth peers to discuss supervision options during the interview and when negotiating employment; at the very least, a youth peer should begin work knowing that supervision is an intrinsic part of the role. As with anyone else on the team, it is the manager's responsibility to organise supervision, and if appropriate supervision is not available on the team, then outside supervision is essential.



# What is supervision?

Supervision is a collaboration between a supervisor and their supervisee that allows for guidance, support and ongoing opportunities for professional learning and development. This process makes room for individuals to develop and reflect on their skills, knowledge and competent delivery of services. Supervision provides the opportunity for people to think about their work, the impact it has on them and how they will use this information to improve their practice. Supervision happens at regular intervals whether that be weekly, fortnightly or monthly, to support people consistently in their practice.

Different kinds of supervision	
Cultural Supervision	Focused on ensuring the person is practicing in a culturally safe way according to the values, protocols and practices of that culture. Cultural safety doesn't necessarily mean you have to know everything about a culture. Cultural supervision supports youth peers to be aware of their own culture, and the different cultures they may be working with in a way that is non-judgemental and open minded. This type of supervision supports culturally responsive and safe practice.
Line Management	Focused on monitoring and evaluating a person's workplace activities such as work allocation, productivity, goals and administrative issues. It occurs within the workplace, typically within a clear, hierarchical relationship. A line manager can support staff in developing skills and abilities and understanding the responsibilities and ethical requirements of their role.
Mentoring	A mentor shares their practical experience and knowledge to support people to achieve their objectives and develop necessary skills, e.g., for specific projects, public speaking, advisory activities or research. The mentoring relationship may be formal or informal.
Clinical Supervision	Focused on providing professional information specific to working on the team, development of relevant skills and reflection opportunities pertaining to ethical and clinical issues that may arise when working therapeutically with people. Clinical supervision also supports people to manage the emotional burden of their role, which may come about from personal experiences. Clinical supervision is generally provided by an experienced clinician of the same discipline, within or external to the organisation. There are some clinicians who have completed formal supervision training and some are accredited by particular organisations, such as dapaanz.
Co-Reflection	Co-reflection is when two or more peers of similar disciplines reflect on their practice together. It's about creating expertise together through a process of learning, practice and reflection. It is designed to model the peer support relationship, where people with common experiences or similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive knowledge. Co-reflection can be done with peers in your organisation, or peers in similar roles who may work elsewhere.
Peer Supervision	Peer supervision involves peers who are at the same level of the work hierarchy and serve in the same or similar roles, providing support and feedback necessary for growth and success. It's a reciprocal process where each participant contributes to the discussion, sharing their knowledge and experiences.

# Tips for different kinds of supervision

Co-reflection and peer supervision are processes designed to support people in giving and receiving feedback to contribute to professional and personal development. The relationship in both practices should be mutual and reciprocal, meaning the expertise of all parties is recognised and respected and there isn't and shouldn't need to be the presence of a more qualified, identified expert in the process

Clinical supervision is great if you want support with issues that arise in clinical portions of your mahi. This might be things like transference and counter transference and navigating ethical issues around risk and legal issues. Clinical supervision provides a clinical perspective that might be different to what you are used to as a lived experience kaimahi. Clinical supervision supports you to be safe and ethical in your practice. As a youth peer, clinical supervision may be used to gather information about clinical issues discussed in meetings and reviews or while working directly with young people.

Line management focusses on the day-to-day issues that come up in your work (i.e., work hours, leave entitlements, role responsibilities), your development in your role and issues that might arise in the workplace. Line management can be helpful to understand more about your role and how you should be doing it. Line management may be provided by the team manager or another member of the team.

Clinical supervision is different from line management in that it focusses solely on your practice, and how your practice is influenced by your experiences. You and your clinical supervisor and line manager will have an agreement about how often you meet each, and what types of issues are suitable to be brought to supervision.



### What's it like getting supervision?

Amy – Young person volunteering on an anxiety helpline:

*Clinical supervision helped me with understanding how to maintain boundaries and how I can look after the wellbeing of our callers and myself.*

James – Youth Peer Support Worker:

*Supervision had been essential for my professional development, especially working in a clinical team as a youth peer worker. Having someone with experience that I feel comfortable going to with problems or concerns that my co-workers might not be able to help with has made my role a lot more comfortable.*

# What is the ‘right’ kind of supervision for young people working in lived experience roles?

There is no ‘right’ answer for which supervision is best for young people with lived experience in lived experience roles such as consumer advisors or peer support workers. You may find that your needs for supervision change over time.

Young people with lived experience bring different perspectives, educational backgrounds and experience to their role. This means that what works for some kaimahi in the mental health and addiction sector might not necessarily work for youth peers.

Supervision can occur across disciplines. For example, a clinical supervisor supervising a youth peer support worker. For youth peers, it might be difficult to find a supervisor with the expertise you need in your organisation. Peer or lived experience workers who are more experienced in their role and not necessarily be young people, could be appropriate to supervise you. A clinical supervisor who has experience working with young people could be appropriate too.

It’s important for both the employer and kaimahi to be open about what their needs and expectations are.



## Managers

If you’re not sure about how employing a young person with lived experience might be different to other members of your team, you can find more information in the Employing a Youth Consumer Advisor Toolkit.

Employing young people with lived experience requires important considerations:

**Preparing teams to work with a young person** – Teams might not be used to working with a young person with lived experience. Young people in lived experience roles are team members, just like everyone else. They are entitled to the same respect, benefits and opportunities as a fully functioning member of staff. Have a discussion with the team about their expectations for the role and be clear in your understanding of the role.

**Interviewing** – Young people in earlier stages of their career likely don’t have the same experience, qualifications and skills as more established members of the workforce. Interview questions should be specific to the position and the taonga that youth peers bring to the table. Be aware of human rights legislation and what are appropriate questions for a person with lived experience of mental health and/or addiction issues. **It is illegal for employers to ask questions about candidates’ history of mental health and/or addiction experiences.**

**Supporting a young person in their role** – The employment support needs of a young person may change over time. Regular check-ins with managers can be a helpful way to continue to assess what support might be most beneficial. Supervision is an imperative portion of supporting a young person in their role and managers should organise ongoing supervision that fits the young person’s needs.

## Kaimahi

If you’re having trouble understanding your role or what a youth lived experience role looks like, you can find more information through the Ka Rangathi Youth Lived Experience Workforce Development Programme.

Your lived experience is a taonga – Your personal experience with mental health and/or addiction and your experience of being a young person navigating that journey is a unique taonga that you bring to your role. You add value to your team by bringing this unique perspective.

Sharing in a safe way – You choose what you would like to share of your lived experience and what feels comfortable for you. Sharing your experiences when working with a young person should be for the purpose of supporting them on their journey. The same goes for the sharing of your experience with your team or manager, share what feels comfortable. Supervision and co-reflection can help you decide what and how to share.

Feeling supported in your role – You are entitled to the same support that other members of your team receive. You should feel respected as a member of the team, and not tokenised for being a young person. Your manager should organise supervision that supports you to improve your practice.



# Youth peers and supervision - What do young people need from supervision?

The type of support and supervision that is most helpful may change over time. The issues that youth peers bring to supervision will evolve as they navigate and grow their role. Regular communication between managers and employees about the young person's needs is important to ensure that supervision being provided is appropriate.

Everyone brings different issues, questions and challenges to supervision. For youth peers, their lived experience, experience of working in a lived experience role and experience of being a young person can bring unique challenges. Talking to your supervisor about what types of issues are appropriate to bring to supervision can make the support provided more effective.

Some common challenges that young people bring to supervision include:

- **Understanding how to effectively carry out your role** – Being a youth peer can be a confusing time. Learning how your unique lived experience is a taonga that you bring to your role and how that taonga can support the recovery of other young people is an important topic that supervision can support with.
- **Imposter syndrome** - Young people can often feel a sense of imposter syndrome – a sense of doubt about their skills or experience - when working within mental health and addiction services. You bring a unique expertise, different to years of work experience or qualifications that your colleagues may have. Transitioning from being a peer to kaimahi can be challenging for young people.
- **Professional support to help you grow in your role** – Supervision can be a tool for you to identify skills you would like to grow in your role. Supervision is an opportunity for you to explore these skills, whether they be communication, leadership, using your lived experience safely for yourself and the people you work with, or others.
- **Reflecting on your practice** – Supervision is a great opportunity to reflect on your practice and how you can improve it. It's also important that you celebrate the wins, the really great things you are doing in your role as well. Connecting with other people through supervision can help you reflect on your practice from multiple perspectives.
- **Boundaries** – Being a youth peer worker who supports young people entering your service can be a tricky thing to navigate. Boundaries can be difficult to define when working with people who are a similar age to you. Being clear on your boundaries and maintaining them helps keep both you and the person you are working with safe

## Examples of boundaries include :

*Time* – Sticking to the allocated amount of time when working with a young person

*Work hours* – Not working overtime because you feel like you must get things done

*Your safety* – Being mindful of the personal details you share with the young people you support

If you're struggling to identify and maintain boundaries, supervision is a great way to understand why that is and how you can change that.



# How do you find a supervisor?

It's important to have a conversation with your employer about what supervision looks like in your role. This includes details such as how often you will receive supervision, and who will provide it. Most kaimahi meet with their supervisor once a month, but more regular supervision may be helpful for you in the early stages of your role. Supervision may be offered within your organisation, or it may be externally. Ask your colleagues! They will most likely have a supervisor or will be able to help you find one.

**Clinical Supervisor** – Clinical supervisors are professionals who go through specific training to become a clinical supervisor. If you're signed up to a registration body like NZAC or dapaanz, they can be found on the website.

**Mentor** – You might have someone inside or outside your organisation who has had a similar experience to you and can mentor you. If you're a Youth Consumer Advisor, you can tap into a network of current and ex-Youth Consumer Advisors by getting in touch at [YCA@wharaurau.org.nz](mailto:YCA@wharaurau.org.nz)

**Peer Supervision/Co-reflection** – Peer supervision and co-reflection groups can happen with people in similar roles to you. If there is a team of young people working in roles like yours, approach them to see if this is something they might be interested in. More information on how to run a co-reflection can be found here.

## Having a support network and self-care routine helps you to stay safe

Alongside supervision, having a support network in your community and trusted colleagues you can talk to will help keep you safe in your practice. As young people with lived experience, we must put our wellbeing first, so we can give our best selves to the young people we serve.

*Who are the people you trust to have honest conversations with?*

*What are the things you do in your life that help keep you feeling well?*

## Want more information on supervision for young people with lived experience?

The Whāraurau Youth Advisory team, a group of young people with lived experience, work to make sure that both kaimahi and managers are best able to understand and thrive in youth lived experience roles. We are constantly expanding our network of young people working in lived experience roles in the mental health and addiction sector and would love to hear from you, so get in touch:

**[YCA@wharaurau.org.nz](mailto:YCA@wharaurau.org.nz)**

This work is part of the ongoing Ka Rangatahi Youth Lived Experience Workforce Development Programme. To access the free eLearning and upcoming workshops, [click here](#).





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