

SUPERVISION FOCUS AREAS CHECKLIST

What Do You Want Supervision to Help With?

A checklist for associates, interns, and clinicians to identify focus areas, set supervision goals, and arrive with clearer direction.

Created for clinicians preparing for structured supervision with Chelsea at Compass Counseling.

Use it before a consult, after a consult, or at the start of supervision.

Use this before or after your fit consult, and at the start of supervision.

Check everything that applies, then star your top 2-3. There are no wrong answers. Checking a lot is useful information, not a problem to hide.

NAME WHAT MATTERS MOST

Identify where you feel least confident or most stuck right now.

SET A DIRECTION

Arrive with enough clarity to use your first session well.

REVISIT OVER TIME

Return to it periodically as your focus areas shift.

HOW TO USE IT

Check all that apply. Star your top 2-3. Bring it to your consult or first session. You can print only the pages most relevant to your current situation.

SECTION 1 OF 4

Clinical Skills

Core competencies and areas of practice development.

DIAGNOSIS AND CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION

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|--|---|
| ☐ Diagnosing accurately and with confidence | ☐ Differential diagnosis |
| ☐ Understanding DSM criteria in practice | ☐ Case conceptualization |
| ☐ Applying a theory of change | ☐ Understanding presenting issues in context |

TREATMENT PLANNING AND INTERVENTIONS

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|--|---|
| ☐ Writing clear treatment plans | ☐ Selecting appropriate interventions |
| ☐ Applying a therapy model (family systems, EFT, CBT, DBT, ACT, etc.) | ☐ Adapting interventions to client needs |
| ☐ Pacing and structure in sessions | ☐ Working through treatment impasses |

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP AND SKILLS

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|---|--|
| ☐ Building and maintaining the alliance | ☐ Rupture and repair with clients |
| ☐ Stuck or plateaued cases | ☐ Countertransference and therapist reactions |
| ☐ Giving and receiving feedback in session | ☐ Managing strong emotional content |

SECTION 2 OF 4

Ethics & Risk

Documentation, legal questions, safety, and professional boundaries.

DOCUMENTATION AND CLINICAL WRITING

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|---|---|
| ☐ Writing clear, defensible progress notes | ☐ Documenting risk and safety planning |
| ☐ Clinical language and diagnostic accuracy in notes | ☐ What to include and what not to over-explain |
| ☐ Treatment plan documentation | ☐ Correcting or amending documentation |

RISK, ETHICS, AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

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|---|--|
| ☐ Risk assessment and safety planning | ☐ Mandated reporting decisions |
| ☐ Duty to warn or protect | ☐ Ethical decision-making frameworks |
| ☐ Scope of practice and referral decisions | ☐ Boundaries and dual-role concerns |
| ☐ Coordination with other providers | ☐ Agency policy vs. clinical judgment |

Use this section when you want supervision to slow down clinical judgment, documentation, consultation, or policy questions before you move forward.

SECTION 3 OF 4

Client Populations

Specific populations, presenting issues, and clinical contexts you want to strengthen.

AGE AND DEVELOPMENTAL POPULATIONS

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|---|---|
| ☐ Children under 12 | ☐ Adolescents 12-17 |
| ☐ Young adults 18-25 | ☐ Adults |
| ☐ Older adults | ☐ Parent and caregiver involvement |

PRESENTING ISSUES AND CLINICAL AREAS

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|---|---|
| ☐ Trauma and complex trauma | ☐ Anxiety and panic |
| ☐ Depression and mood disorders | ☐ Substance use and co-occurring disorders |
| ☐ Grief and loss | ☐ Self-harm and suicidality |
| ☐ Eating and body image concerns | ☐ Psychosis or severe mental illness |
| ☐ Personality disorders | ☐ Anger and emotional dysregulation |
| ☐ Neurodivergence, ADHD, or autism | ☐ Domestic violence or intimate partner violence |

SYSTEMS, MODALITIES, AND IDENTITY

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|---|--|
| ☐ Couples and relationship work | ☐ Family systems and family therapy |
| ☐ Group therapy facilitation | ☐ Cultural humility and identity factors |
| ☐ LGBTQ+ affirming practice | ☐ Racially and ethnically diverse populations |
| ☐ Clients with chronic illness or disability | ☐ Crisis or high-acuity cases |
| ☐ High-conflict custody or co-parenting | ☐ Religious, spiritual, or acculturation concerns |

PRACTICE SETTINGS

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|---|--|
| ☐ Community mental health or agency settings | ☐ School-based mental health |
| ☐ Private practice | ☐ Telehealth and remote practice |
| ☐ Inpatient or intensive outpatient | ☐ Multidisciplinary team coordination |



SECTION 4 OF 4

Your Development as a Clinician

Professional identity, confidence, licensure, and sustainability as a developing clinician.

These areas are normal to need support with. Check freely. This section often holds what matters most.

CONFIDENCE AND CLINICAL IDENTITY

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| ☐ Building confidence in session | ☐ Managing imposter syndrome |
| ☐ Tolerating uncertainty and not-knowing | ☐ Receiving critical feedback without shutting down |
| ☐ Trusting your clinical instincts | ☐ Finding your voice as a clinician |

LICENSURE AND PROFESSIONAL ROLE

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|---|---|
| ☐ Tracking hours toward licensure | ☐ Understanding the associate or intern role |
| ☐ Navigating your role within an agency | ☐ Transitioning toward independent practice |
| ☐ Understanding supervision requirements | ☐ Professional development planning |

SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLBEING

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|---|--|
| ☐ Managing caseload stress and burnout | ☐ Secondary trauma and vicarious traumatization |
| ☐ Setting limits in the therapist role | ☐ Navigating difficult agency dynamics |
| ☐ Work-life balance in clinical training | ☐ Knowing when to seek personal support |

FROM EVERYTHING I CHECKED, THE 2-3 AREAS I WANT TO FOCUS ON FIRST:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Next step: Bring your top 2-3 areas to a supervision fit consult or first supervision session. If you want structured clinical supervision with Chelsea, visit <https://compasscounselingwa.com/supervision/request-consult/>