



COUNSELLOR
W H O C A R E S

10 Questions to Ask Before You Choose a Clinical Supervisor

A practical guide for qualified therapists ready to invest in
the supervision they actually deserve

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Why the Right Supervisor Changes Everything

Choosing a clinical supervisor is one of the most important professional decisions you will make. The right person will challenge you, hold you, and help you grow into the practitioner you want to be. The wrong fit, however polished the website, can leave you feeling unseen, stuck, or quietly doubting yourself.

Good supervision is not just about ticking a professional box. It is an active, dynamic relationship, and it should feel safe enough for real honesty. That means bringing the things you want to grow with, not just the things you want someone to hear. The most valuable moments in supervision often come from vulnerability, from naming what feels difficult or uncertain rather than presenting the tidy version.

This guide gives you 10 questions to bring to any introductory conversation with a potential supervisor. They are designed to help you move past the professional polish and find out whether this person is genuinely the right fit for where you are in your practice right now.

How to use this guide

Take these questions into your introductory call. You do not need to ask all ten.

Notice the answers. And notice how the conversation feels to be in.

Trust is built in the small moments. Pay attention to them.

The 10 Questions

Question 1

What is your experience in the areas I work with?

Good supervision is grounded in genuine clinical understanding. A supervisor who has direct experience of the presenting issues you encounter, whether that is eating disorders, trauma, anxiety or complex relational work, will offer a very different quality of reflection to one who does not. Ask specifically, and listen carefully to how they answer.

What to listen for: Specific examples, not generalities. Confidence without arrogance.

Question 2

What is your supervisory approach and theoretical orientation?

Supervision is not one-size-fits-all. Understanding a supervisor's approach helps you judge whether it will complement your own way of working. For example, the seven-eyed model explores the supervisory relationship from multiple perspectives simultaneously, looking at the client, the therapist, the process, and the wider context. Knowing which framework your supervisor works from gives you a clearer sense of what to expect.

What to listen for: Clarity about their model, with flexibility to meet you where you are.

Question 3

How do you handle safeguarding concerns or ethical dilemmas?

This is non-negotiable. Your supervisor needs to be someone you can bring your most difficult cases to without fear of judgement or dismissal. Ask how they have handled complex situations in the past and whether they keep up to date with current BACP ethical guidance. Also ask clearly: as a qualified therapist, where does clinical responsibility sit? A good supervisor will be straightforward about this.

What to listen for: Decisiveness balanced with thoughtfulness. No vagueness on responsibility.

Question 4

What is your availability between sessions?

Crisis moments do not wait for scheduled appointments. Understanding whether your supervisor is accessible for a brief check-in when something urgent arises gives you a clearer picture of the support structure on offer. Some supervisors offer this; others do not. Both is valid, but you need to know before something difficult lands in your lap.

What to listen for: Clear, honest boundaries rather than vague reassurance.

Question 5

How do you give feedback, including when something concerns you?

The best supervision creates space for honest, sometimes challenging conversations. You want a supervisor who will name what they notice, even when it is uncomfortable, and who does so with care and respect. A supervisor who only ever agrees with you is not keeping you safe. Neither is one who challenges without warmth.

What to listen for: Warmth and directness held together. Discomfort with challenge is a red flag.

Question 6

Are you supervised yourself, and what happens if you get something wrong?

A good supervisor is also supervised themselves. It is not a sign of weakness to ask this question; it is a sign of professional maturity to care about the answer. Equally, ask what they do when they are uncertain. A supervisor who is willing to say "I didn't get that right, so I took it to my own supervision" is modelling exactly what they are asking of you.

What to listen for: Honesty, humility, and a genuine supervision relationship of their own.

Question 7

What does a typical session look like, and what if I have nothing to bring?

Ask how they structure their sessions and what happens if you arrive without a specific client to discuss. Some supervisors begin with a personal check-in before moving into client work, creating space for you as a person before the work begins. Others lead straight into caseload. Neither is wrong, but knowing their approach helps you show up prepared. And if your caseload is quiet? Good supervisors will use that space well, looking at your practice development, where you feel stuck, or what your clients going quiet might be telling you about the work.

What to listen for: Flexibility, creativity, and genuine interest in you, not just your cases.

Question 8

How do you support supervisees experiencing burnout or secondary trauma?

Therapeutic work takes a toll, and the absorptive nature of the work means therapists can carry more than they realise. Ask whether your supervisor actively creates space to check in on how the work is affecting you. Also ask: do they give you permission to rest? When clients go quiet, that can bring its own anxiety. A supervisor who can hold that space without rushing you to fill it is worth a great deal.

What to listen for: Personal awareness, genuine curiosity about your wellbeing. Not just lip service.

Question 9

What are your professional qualifications and ongoing CPD commitments?

You have every right to ask about training, specialist certifications, and continued professional development. A qualified supervisor should be comfortable sharing this. Look for BACP membership, a recognised supervision qualification, and a clear commitment to keeping their practice current. Ask specifically when they completed their training and what they have done to develop since.

What to listen for: Transparency, specific dates and institutions, and genuine enthusiasm for learning.

Question 10

What happens if this relationship stops working for me?

This is a question many therapists feel awkward asking, but it matters. Supervision relationships, like any professional relationship, have a natural lifespan. You may outgrow a supervisor. The work may shift. A good supervisor will not only be comfortable with this question; they will welcome it. The answer tells you whether endings will be handled with the same care as beginnings. Outgrowing your supervisor is not failure. It is growth.

What to listen for: Ease and openness, not defensiveness. An ending plan is a sign of security.

What to Look For (and What to Watch Out For)

Beyond the answers themselves, the atmosphere of the conversation tells you a great deal. Here are some signs worth paying attention to.

Green Flags

- + A working agreement is put in place from the start
- + They give you a clear structure and explain how sessions will run
- + They are clear about when they are available and how to reach them
- + Sessions are pre-booked well in advance so you can plan your practice around them
- + There is a clear, simple cancellation process with no ambiguity
- + Emergency contact is explained upfront, with realistic expectations set
- + They are supervised themselves and speak openly about it
- + You feel genuinely at ease, not like you have to perform or present the tidy version

Red Flags

- No working agreement is offered or discussed
- No clear session structure, or the session regularly overruns without acknowledgement
- Vague answers about availability or how to reach them between sessions
- No supervision of their own, or discomfort when you ask about it
- They agree with everything you say without ever challenging you
- You feel like you need to impress rather than be honest
- Boundaries feel inconsistent or unclear
- A sense that safeguarding and ethics are tick-box exercises rather than live commitments

Remember: a good introductory conversation should feel like a two-way exchange, not an audition. You are assessing them just as much as they are getting to know you.



Ready to Find Your Perfect Supervisor?

Becky Stone is a BACP Counsellor and Clinical Supervisor based in Canterbury, Kent. She holds a Level 6 Certificate in Supervision (ABC Awards / Certa Quality Licence Scheme, CCT Community Counselling Service (Kent) CIC, 2018), is trained in the seven-eyed model, and specialises in supporting qualified therapists working with eating disorders, disordered eating, body image and emotional wellbeing.

Sessions begin with a personal check-in, because supervision is about holding space for you as well as your clients. Client work follows, led by whatever you bring. If you have nothing to bring, that space is used for practice development. There is no rigid agenda, only a genuine interest in your growth.

**Book a free 20-minute introductory call to find out
if supervision with Becky is the right fit for you.**

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Supervision is available for qualified therapists working individually or in groups.
Sessions are offered in person in Canterbury or online via a secure video platform.
Fees: 60 per hour | 90 for 90 minutes

